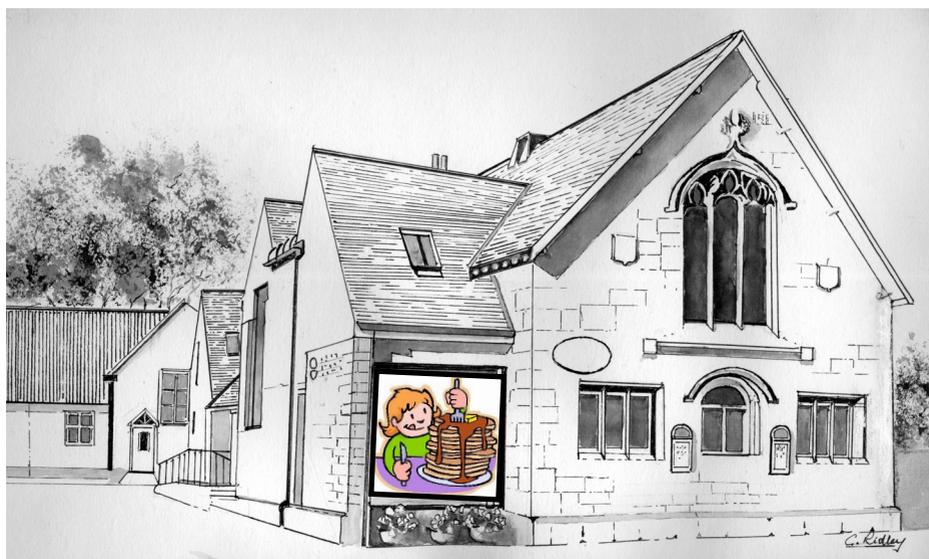


Ponteland Methodist Church

Cornerstone



March 2019

REGULAR CHURCH ACTIVITIES

The regular weekly activities within the church are outlined below.
There are phone numbers given to ring if you need further information.

SUNDAY

- 10.00am The Bridge
- 10.00am Morning Service and Sunday Club
- 6.30pm Evening Service
- Holy Communion, morning and evening as announced

MONDAY

- 1.15pm Prayers
- 1.30pm Carpet Bowls
- 2.00pm Open Door
- 2.00pm Open Door Bible Study (2nd & 4th Monday)

TUESDAY

- 2.30pm Women's Fellowship (fortnightly)
- 5.45pm Boys' Brigade - Anchor Boys (term time only)
- 7.00pm Boys' Brigade - Junior/Company sections

WEDNESDAY

- 5.45pm Girls' Brigade - Explorers (term time only)
- 6.00pm Girls' Brigade - Junior/Company sections

THURSDAY

- 9.30am Toddler Thursday (term time only)
- 7.30pm Women's Focus (fortnightly)
- 7.30pm Men's Forum (monthly)

FRIDAY

- 7.30pm Bridge Prayer meeting (monthly)
- 7.30pm Carpet Bowls

SATURDAY

- 9.30am Meanders (fortnightly, tel: 871844)
 - 10.00am Mini-Meanders (monthly, tel: 821845)
- For details of House groups phone Chris Cogan on 0191 271 2637

Minister: Rev Jona Sewell
61 Cheviot View, Ponteland, NE20 9BH. Tel: 822057
E-mail: revjsewell@gmail.com

Church website <http://www.ponteland-methodist-church.org.uk/>

MINISTER'S LETTER

I was asked recently why I think it's the right thing to bring our two morning congregations back together into one. I thought it sensible to share my thoughts, which I know many other people hold, through our magazine as it's likely others are asking the same question. It's a good and important question to ask as it gets to the root of who we are and what we are about. The reasons that I think it's the right thing to do, in no particular order, are:

1. **Unity** – even with the best of intentions having two morning services in the same building at the same time *may* communicate to visitors that we are not a fully united church; whether we think this is a fair judgment or not is irrelevant, it's the perception that matters and visitors may perceive disunity because of the current set-up. Whilst there's nothing wrong with having different preferences and points of view around worship, being one in morning worship speaks of family, acceptance of difference, and welcome; it says that worship isn't about 'me' and my preferences but about 'us' and 'our' journey together with God.

2. **Welcome** – contrast the settings of our two morning services. The 'traditional' service takes place in the sanctuary, where the cross is permanent and has central place, where the AV system is top quality, the instruments permanent, and access is easy. The 'Bridge' service takes place in the hall where the cross is temporary – as is all of the furniture, the AV system can be temperamental, and access is via a windowless, fairly narrow, corridor. Now imagine you are a visitor arriving for a Bridge service for the first time; no matter how friendly and welcoming the people in either congregation may be (and they are!), can you see how a visitor might ask, why am I not in the part of the building specifically set aside for worship? Can you see how it might not seem entirely welcoming to send people to another room whilst worship also goes on elsewhere? If you don't feel entirely welcome somewhere then would you go back? I'm not saying that we are an unwelcoming church, not at all, but pointing out the perception that people *may* receive.

3. **Resourcing** – we all know it's getting more difficult to resource church groups and activities, and to fill roles within church life. All it takes is an illness, accident or holiday and the rota can be thrown into chaos. Pooling our resources together, rather than splitting them, seems sensible.

4. **The Spirit's leading** – this is the hardest to define yet it is unquestionably the most important. The Bridge leadership team agreed unanimously to make the proposal of uniting the two services, and then the church council supported the proposal unanimously. There is a sense that the time is right, that the Spirit is leading, and that God is at work. Uncertainty about what the new service might look like may be unsettling or even worrying for some people; we must hear, understand and respect that. We need to seek and trust God's leading to take us in the right direction.

God is at work and I am excited about this, I hope you are too; we must soak this process in God through prayer. With this in mind we are holding extra prayer events on Thursdays during Lent (March 7th – April 11th) at 4:30pm to pray specifically for this process and for our wider church and community; join us if you can! I hope nothing in what I have written is taken as a criticism of what is, or of what has gone before; it is certainly not meant that way. I am deeply thankful for the faithful journey of the church and all who have, and do, contribute to the life of our church and Sunday worship. Please join me in giving thanks for each other and in praying for us all over the coming months.

Jona

UPDATE FROM ISRAEL-PALESTINE

2019 has been busy in the Holy Land. Deacon Angleena Keizer (Mission Partner at the Methodist Church Liaison Office in Jerusalem) has provided the following update on her work in February:

It was a delight to welcome and host the Vice President of the Methodist Conference, Bala Gnanapragasam, and his wife Sylvia during their visit to the Holy Land. During their eight-day itinerary we visited some of the schools and projects that the Methodist Liaison Office staff are involved with. On their arrival in Jerusalem we worshipped alongside the Church of Nazarene in Jerusalem. We also worshipped at St Andrew's Church of Scotland, and participated in Sabeel Theological Centre, and the Lutheran Church bible studies and worship. Bala gave the message at the United Methodist Phillipino Church in Tel Aviv, and I had the joy of dedicating a newborn baby.



Wherever we journeyed, and listened to people's stories, they all shared about the importance of love for the other and hope. It was a joy to hear Bala share with those he met that the Presidential theme for this year is 'radical grace, transforming hope', as he presented them with a candle or the Sri Lankan cross with the words Grace and Hope on them.

With Revd John Howard I have also hosted the Living Christianity in the Holy Land trip for a group of nine people (including Gaye). It's been interesting to see how what they have seen and witnessed here in the Holy Land has challenged their thinking and their understanding of the conflict that affects both Palestinians and Israelis. As we have journeyed in the footsteps of Jesus we have encountered the lives of the elderly and youth living here in the Holy Land, heard the complexities of the situation and been transformed by those encounters. We have been urged 'to come and see, and go and tell' to share with others God's radical love and transforming hope.

Deacon Angleena Keizer





HELLO FROM ALISON

Easter journey is happening this month from the **25th to the 29th March**. It is a walk through seven stations that takes the children from Palm Sunday right through to Easter Sunday. It takes them on an interactive journey that will explain the Holy Week experiences of Jesus. It is so exciting as we have already 140 children (possibly 200) booked into the event from the primary schools in the town. I could still use some more help during that week and so if you can offer to narrate or act a character then please let me know. The sessions so far are at 10.30am Tuesday the 26th, Wednesday the 27th and Thursday the 28th at 10.30am and 1.30pm. There is always a need for prayer to cover these outreach projects and so if you don't feel able to help on the day then please pray for all the children, leaders and teachers that will attend. Pray that they might feel God's presence and love as they journey through the Holy Week experience.

On the **17th April from 4pm – 8pm** I am running a Family Friendly Easter Journey which is an interactive 'do it yourself' Journey. It will be a space in the business of Holy Week for the whole family to stop, to reflect and think and pray about the journey Jesus took from Jerusalem to the Cross. It will have activities at each station for all ages, please come along and experience it for yourself.

Stop press—Easter Journey extended Monday to Friday due to popular demand –Extra help needed!



We have a Holiday Club booked in for the **29th July to the 2nd August** with a fun event on the 3rd and I hope to gather a team together to run this as it's a full week's worth of fun, games, bible stories and craft.

I continue to be involved in assemblies at Richard Coates Middle School and Ponteland Primary every month. They are going well and we are making good connections with the schools through these. The High School lunch club is still going and I am relaunching the homework group after half-term. Alongside that we are still very involved in the GB and BB on Tuesday and Wednesday evenings.

I continue to seek God's guidance in all that I am endeavouring to do here at Ponteland Methodist Church and to seek the way forward for this ministry alongside our Minister and the leadership team. I hope that you will continue to pray for me and for the work in which I am involved. Many thanks for all your support and encouragement, it is very much appreciated. Blessings to you all

Alison Maynard

MEANDERS ARE WALKING HERITAGE WAY

In 2018 the Tyne and Wear Heritage Way was created by the Ramblers Association. It is about 80 miles long and takes in the rich historic and industrial heritage of the area. The walk is divided into nine sections passing through pleasant countryside, taking in woodlands, coastal and riverside scenery, whilst visiting many places associated with our rich historical past.

Meanders started the walk on 2nd February. On a beautiful day 14 of us set off from Ponteland crossing snow-covered fields to Black Callerton, we descended through Throckley and Wallbottle Denes to reach Newburn and then continued along the river to Wylam. It was a very enjoyable walk and so close to home. The next Heritage Way walk will be from Wylam to Thornley Woods on 16th March. You are very welcome to join us on this or any of our other walks. If you would like a copy of our programme for 2019 please ask Matthew Cooper. **Alan Groves**



COATES SCHOOL BOOK

This year, 2019, marks 300 years since the death of Richard Coates, a Newcastle man who had grown rich working and dealing on the Tyne. His wife came from Horton Grange and they had no children so on his deathbed he wrote his will and after taking care of his relatives left all his money to the creation and running of a charity school in Ponteland. Poor children then, had no education, others had tutors or fee-paying schools. This was the time for creation of Charity Schools to teach poor children and the four Newcastle churches had each started their own.

The story of those years of Coates School is told in a new book to celebrate their 300 years. Copies can be obtained from Coates School, the Town Council or Muriel Sobo. Cost £5.

Muriel Sobo



The original Coates School, much altered, still stands by the roundabout in the centre of Ponteland.

VILLAGE NEWS

Northumberland Local Plan

There was a consultation event in the Memorial Hall on 26th February to discuss the latest version of the plan. The aim is to submit the plan for government inspection in May. To find out more see – Northumberland.gov.uk/localplan .

Dissington Garden Village – Proposed

The developer, Lugano, has withdrawn its plan for this scheme. Lugano is engaged in a legal dispute with Northumberland CC but states that it does intend to resubmit plans in future.

Ponteland Middle School

Next year this school is to convert to a primary school following consultation with staff and parents.

Jennifer Hardy

MARCH IN THE BRIDGE

The Bridge is a contemporary and informal gathering for worship that meets in the Church hall at 10am on Sunday mornings. All are welcome, including children, and there is opportunity for refreshments and fellowship both before and after the worship.

March Services are:

- 3rd March - Joint Service with Jona Sewell
- 10th March - Jona Sewell
- 17th March - Tim Woolley
- 24th March - Steve Small
- 31st March - David Forrester



A prayer evening is held on the second Friday monthly at Sue and Abraham Matthews's house. All are welcome. This month it will be Friday 8th March meeting at 7.30pm.

The Bridge is appropriate for the seekers, the questioners, the new to faith, the established in faith, the uncertain about faith, the doubters and the certain. Come along and find a welcome.

Nigel Bates

FAIRTRADE FORTNIGHT
25 FEBRUARY – 10 MARCH



FAIRTRADE

Rosine Bekoin is a mum of five, cocoa farmer and member of CAYAT co-operative in Côte d'Ivoire.

Rosine is unusual because she owns and runs her 2.5-hectare farm, which was passed to her from her mother. Normally it is men who own farms and earn the income from them.

Rosine used to sell her cocoa to local middlemen, but it was difficult to get a decent income working and trading in that way. CAYAT held a meeting about Fairtrade in Rosine's village and convinced her that uniting with other farmers would actually make her more autonomous and independent.

Rosine first sold her cocoa as Fairtrade in 2016. Training in quality and good agricultural practices helped her production increase by 50% from 1 tonne in 2017 to 1.5 tonnes in 2018.

This was a welcome boost to her income since the price cocoa farmers received dropped by 30-40% in 2016 and in 2017, and still hadn't recovered in 2018.

Another major benefit from selling her cocoa as Fairtrade is the new house Rosine has been able to build since her income has increased. CAYAT also operate a subsidised hardware store in town, funded by the Fairtrade Premium, so that locals can access building materials and equipment at an affordable price.

Rosine is the Secretary of her co-operative's Women's Society, and is a graduate from the Fairtrade Africa Women's School of Leadership. There, she picked up lots of skills and ideas to share with other women in the co-operative to improve their situation. She believes firmly in the power of women to play a key role bringing communities out of poverty.

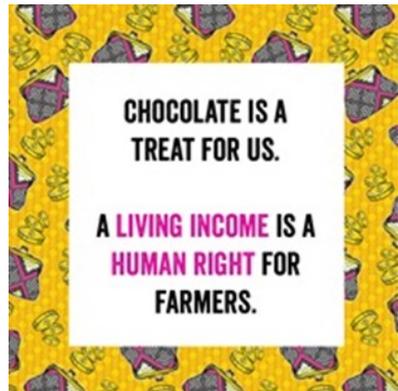
Rosine and over 400 other women in the society have invested their Fairtrade Premium in income diversification projects. They are mainly growing other food crops like cassava, aubergines and bananas, as well as raising chickens. The women are able

to produce natural, organic fertilizer each month from the chickens, which is sold to farmers for about £1.40 per bag to use on their farms. This is a big discount on the market rate of £24 per bag. These projects provide an independent income that supplements the income from cocoa, so they can meet year-round costs, like schooling.

Rosine is rightly proud of the changes she and her fellow farmers are already bringing about thanks to Fairtrade and to their own courage and hard work, but she also knows how far there is to go:

'I've seen that Fairtrade has helped us a lot in cocoa farming. The Fairtrade Premium has enabled us, especially women, to do many things. It has enabled us to advance our children and also we use the Fairtrade Premium to build for the future.'

Bev



FILM SHOWS IN ST MARY'S CHURCH

Saturday 9th March - Shadowlands, from 3-5pm

The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe, from 7-9pm.

All are welcome.

Chris Cogan



WALK THROUGH THE BIBLE

Bringing the Bible to life

NEW TESTAMENT

Ponteland Methodist Church Sat 6th

April 10am – 4.30pm

**Cost £14 including soup lunch and
booklets**

**Further information on the Church notice-
board if you wish to sign up**

**Relax & enjoy the journey as an experienced
guide encourages you to see God's Word
through the BIG picture**

**Cheques to be made payable to 'Walk Through
the Bible' post-dated 6th April and given to
Angela Lisle by Friday 15th March**



Marriage & Relationships Conversations

Following many years of conversation and changes in legislation the Methodist Conference has encouraged Districts to engage in prayerful discernment about matters relating to marriage and relationships. The District is offering a number of dates to offer people the opportunity to engage in some guided conversations:

**Brunswick Methodist Church
Monday 11th March, 1pm
Hexham Trinity Methodist Church
Tuesday 12th March, 7.30pm
Chester le Street Methodist Church
Wednesday 13th March, 7.30pm
Cullercoats Methodist Church
Saturday 30th March, 10am
Stakeford Methodist Church
Wednesday 3rd April, 10am**

For more information contact admin@newcastlemethodistdistrict.org



THE OPEN DOOR

I have had a number of requests for this recipe, which is frequently on the Open Door menu as it is one of my favourites. It was printed in Cornerstone a few years ago but I thought it would be worth repeating.

Judith

Mushroom Soup

- 25g/1 oz butter
- 25g/1oz flour
- 300ml/half pint milk
- 300ml/ half pint chicken stock
- 100g/4oz mushrooms finely chopped
- 1 tbsp chopped parsley
- 1 tblsp lemon juice
- 2 tblsp cream
- Salt and pepper



Place all the ingredients except for the lemon juice and cream into a large pan.
Bring to the boil, whisking continuously.
Cover and simmer for 10 mins.
Remove from the heat and stir in the lemon juice and cream.
Season to taste.

Summer Opening Times

From March 4th

**Mondays 2pm-4.30pm
(Except bank holidays)**



RACHEL'S STORY

You have come asking about Itzhak? Well they've sent you to the right woman, for I've been his wife for the past forty years, though we had to live apart for thirty of them. Yes, that was very hard for both of us. You'll have been told that he used to be a leper, but do you realise what that meant for him, and for me and our child?

We married young and he had inherited a bit of land, which we tilled together until the kid came along. The youngster was only three when Itzhak began to have a strange bump on his face; we didn't think much about it until another came on his head and the rabbi in our village raised the alarm. "You'd better go to Jerusalem straight away and see the priests there," he said. "I think that's leprosy you've caught! Don't touch your wife or child or anyone else but let the priests have a good look at you!"

So off he went and I got on with the housework and the gardening and waited until he came home. And he never did. The priests had certified him leprous and sent him away to the caves with all the others. I had to do his work and mine and find time in the day to take food to the place where all donations to the lepers were left for him and the others to pick them up. Sometimes I saw him waiting for it many yards away and my heart yearned for him, but I could see that he was getting worse and worse. He had the sort of disease that changes a face until it looks more like a lion's than a human's. He covered his face with a clout and I never let his son come with me: told him his Dad was gone, and it broke my heart to say so. He grew up and then I confessed and he was angry and sorry; we loved each other and prayed that God would bring his father home cured. But who had heard of such a thing!

Then one day, who should come bounding into our little hut but Itzhak! His face was scarred a bit and of course he was greying and a bit wrinkled, but he was waving a piece of paper which said he had passed examination by the priests at Jerusalem and was clean. He was ecstatic and excited and ran round the village showing everyone how fit he was again. "How did it happen?" we asked.

"That Jesus from Nazareth did it! Used to be a carpenter.

Even in the caves we'd heard that he had turned rabbi and a healer. I thought that surely he couldn't heal a bad case of leprosy, suffered for thirty years, but it was worth a try. I went to the edge of the town he was preaching in, as near as beggar lepers were allowed, and bawled out to him: 'Please for God's sake come and heal me!' And he heard and, you won't believe this, but he walked right up to me! No one had done that to me! Walked right up to me and, reached out his hands and touched my face and head, like a benediction. I should have drawn back, protected him against his own courage. But there was such love coming from him, such strength, such blessing - I just stood there and burst into tears as he stroked my hideous face. No one'd ever had that courage! He told me to go back to the priests and get a certificate – I was cured and for good. And I believed him.

"Off I went to Jerusalem rejoicing every step of the way and back home at last. He told me to keep it quiet but how could anyone keep the news of salvation quiet, I ask you!"

John Gill

LENTEN STUDY

2019 5 ECUMENICAL LENTEN STUDIES

themed Not a Tame Lion, is based on the writings of CS Lewis. Meetings will be held at Monday's Open Door sessions from 2–3.30pm.

Each study stands alone. All are welcome.

Study 1, on 11 March is - Living in the shadows.

Study 2, on 18 March is - Living with the beyond.

Study 3, on 25 March is -Living with the unexplained.

Study 4, on 01 April is - Living with what we've been given.

Study 5, on 8 April is - Living with absence.

Do come along!

Chris Cogan

THE MYSTERIOUS CASE OF THE DISAPPEARING BIRDS

This year the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds celebrated 40 years of the BIG GARDEN BIRDWATCH. This takes place at the end of January and everyone is invited to participate by counting the numbers of bird visitors in their garden, in a nearby park or even from the balcony of a flat.

The information is vital for the conservation work the Society undertakes. Some alarming figures are emerging. Song thrushes have dropped by 75% since the first Birdwatch and house sparrows by 57%.



In my own back garden I have a well-stocked bird table and from it are hanging hoppers containing seeds, peanuts, fat balls etc and the “takers” are fascinating. Daily the woodpecker comes plus nuthatches, every variety of the tit family, robins, bullfinches, dunnocks and ground feeders including jackdaws, collar doves, pigeons, magpies, crows and in the stone work a busy wren frequently flits in and out and a tree creeper zig-zags its way up the rowan tree.

On one of the days of the weekend 26/28TH January, I positioned myself to watch the bird table and to complete my form. I sat still as a stone partially hidden by a curtain and here is where the mystery starts! For a whole hour which was selected as a prime feeding time, not one single bird appeared!! It is just unbelievable because this happens every year and several keen bird-watching friends have experienced this total disappearance just when we especially wish to see them.

At the end of the hour I went into the kitchen to make a cup of tea and glanced out. There on the fat balls were six long-tailed tits and the nuthatch was on the peanuts! How can it be that birds simply go missing at the most vital time? No-one seems to have an explanation, it remains a mystery.

Jean Tweedie

GARDENING FOR MARCH 2019

It is welcome to the meteorologists' spring at the beginning of March but many of us will stick by the 21st March being the first day of spring. To date (20 February) we have had even less precipitation than in January so if we don't have any rain in the next few days it will be out with hosepipe to keep the planters thriving. The ground is in good condition for cultivating borders, spring planting of all hardy perennials and new shrubs and dividing hardy perennials that have been there for some time. Although I don't think there have been any sightings in the North of England an item in the national press reported that the cotton stringy scale (*takahashia Japonica*) from Asia has arrived in Britain (first seen in Berkshire). The bug causes no damage but its eggs can ruin the look of a manicured garden, with dozens left on branches. Juvenile scale insects that hatch from the eggs can spread to other plants in the wind. Control is by pesticides and most effective when the eggs hatch in the summer. I am sure the Royal Horticultural Society (RHS) will be pleased to have reports of any sightings.



The snowdrops are in full flower; we have moved a dozen planters with daffodils to the front of the house and also the planters with crocus. The dwarf iris is a wonderful show this year – again in planters. We are a little disappointed with the hellebores under the hedge but perhaps they had got too dry last summer. If you want to move or divide or acquire new, this is the time to deal with snowdrops.

Like all bulbs they will benefit from some feed. I use fish blood and bone on the smaller bulbs and then 7:7:7 on the larger ones. For the bulbs planted in the ground a little soil disturbance after you have applied the feed will help its incorporation into the soil. With planters we just have to rely on the rain washing the nutrients into the compost. If you are interested in adding new shrubs/hardy perennials in your borders now is the time to buy and plant. If you are not too concerned about the “show” from them this year buy smaller specimens ensuring that you leave plenty of space for them to fill as they grow. Nurseries may be the better venues (rather than garden centres) to select your new stocks and they often have specimens in different sizes. We go to Wylam Nurseries and Halls of Heddon where a lot of their of-

fers are home grown. Many quality plants can be acquired when going on garden visits.

Clematis are probably the most popular climbers we plant in our gardens. They come in so many different shapes and sizes, colours and species. Pruning is confusing but if you go by the time of flowering you should be able to ensure a satisfactory outcome. The early spring flowering such as *C. mantana* should be pruned after flowering and the new growth then carefully managed so that you get a good display next year. The next group to flower need only be lightly pruned now ensuring you do not take away this year's flowers. The third group that flower in late summer/early autumn (*viticella* or similar) can be hard pruned now down to strong buds up to 18 inches above ground, and then tied in to a framework as they grow (often very quickly). We have two winter flowering (November to April) which are tidied up in the summer removing any dead branches. Feed by applying some fish blood and bone and covering with a weed free mulch when the soil is moist.



We don't have buddleas in the garden as they attract butterflies which lay eggs on brassicas that hatch into hungry caterpillars. To enjoy flowers over most of buddleia bushes now is the time to cut back hard. We inherited a white one in our garden in Brecon. Not wanting the flowers I cut it back to ground level (to save disturbing the soil). Within a fortnight it was happily showing substantial new growth as the plant was so resilient. Cut back to 1-2 feet to get the best results.

For those of you who raise annuals and food crops from seeds it is time to start planting indoors. I have broad beans potted on singly ready to move into a frame. The first mange-tout, cabbage, red and green, All Year Round cauliflower and calabrese are just through. Sweet peas are just showing. More mange-tout and sugar snap peas have been planted and tomatoes will be in by the end of the month.

I have been busy potting on some perennial plants aimed at The Plant Sale. This will be held on Saturday, 11 May. Contributions of plants to the sale will be welcomed.

Good Gardening in March.

Syd Cowan



UPDATE FROM COLOMBIA

Hello everyone! It's been one month since I left family in Ponteland to return to my family in Colombia. This time, from my departure from Newcastle to my arrival in Bogotá, has been interesting. To begin with, let me tell you about my trip, the journey was really long. I spent around 12 hours in the airports plus 11 hours flying. Even though I love travelling, after almost 24 hours travelling I was glad to be at home. Seeing my family

was really nice; it is amazing how no matter how far or for how long we go, family always welcomes us with open arms. After greetings, hugs and tons of questions, it was time to unpack. Seriously? Unpack after all those hours trying to pack? Well, apparently that's the only way to deliver the presents I brought for my family. Anyway, after some days in Bogotá, I went to visit one of my sisters and her two little boys in Medellín. I wasn't travelling on my own this time since Fudge, the GB's mascot, came with me. It was a huge change for the little dog who insisted on wearing his jumper even in that hot weather. I stayed with my sister and the "babies" for few days; we spent hours playing with a jigsaw I brought for the little one who is two years old, we also played in the park and went to the local library. It was a precious time. I still need to see some other members of the family, but I guess I will have plenty of time for that. Every new beginning comes with pros and cons; on the one hand, the thing I have struggled with the most is the time difference; I am as confused as I was when I first arrived in the UK, trying to figure out what time is it and to find out what time is it there (in the UK). On the other hand one of the things I am enjoying the most is the food, I won't lie, I enjoy most British dishes, but I absolutely love my mom's food. It is just yummy! Right now, my challenges are to find a job, to "settle down" and to work on my strategy to go back to the UK, haha☺. I am praying that the Lord will guide me through His Holy Spirit into the next stage and I trust that you will support me in prayer. Sending hugs and love to all of you.

Tatiana Mendez

Tatiana now has a job.

HOW LOVELY TO SEE YOU!

Last Sunday we were in Church for the first time this year and for one of just a handful of occasions in the last 12 months. What a lovely, warm welcome we received. It could not have been better had we been the prodigal son (and daughter). It demonstrated vividly the graceful, loving welcome that God gives each time we turn to him (**radical hospitality**, which we are called to imitate).

Some wondered where we had been all this time. How great that there had been little or no rumour-mongering about our absence. Some, naturally, knew what had been going on in our lives and we have experienced loving, supportive concern throughout our difficulties and joys (**extravagant generosity**). Probably most know that our adult son, Stephen, has major, ongoing, physical and mental health issues (including a learning difficulty) deriving from his rare chromosome disorder. He lives in semi-supported housing in Cramlington run by a charity (Azure) actively supported by members of the Methodist and Anglican Churches including Ponteland Methodist (not just us). Stephen had his right leg re-constructed in 2011 but it never fully healed, with repeated infected breakdowns. On February 4, 2018 he had a below-the-knee amputation. After a couple of weeks in hospital he was discharged into our care; we needed to be with him continuously (he is a big man to support as he moves). Come Holy Week 2018, he began a planned, gradual return to Cramlington starting with a couple of hours. On Maundy Thursday evening I was diagnosed with prostate cancer and, following various tests, it was agreed that my prostate would be removed by robotic, keyhole surgery (rarely done on over-70s but I passed the health and fitness tests with flying colours). Stephen's and my recoveries have gone extremely well. Stephen can walk with his prosthetic leg with the occasional help of a stick. My post-operative tests show that the cancer has been removed.

During the autumn, Isobel took me for warm-weather training in Spain to restore my fitness and we then took Stephen to Derbyshire for his first holiday away since 2011.

Towards the end of November 2018, we were invited to join a trip to the charity for rescued street children in South India (Reaching the Unreached) which we support, for which Isobel

worked after retiring as a school teacher and which we had last visited in 2012. Because we added on some vacation, we have been away since January 6, 2019.

We have not finished yet! The young women in the charity who will be leaving school this summer need a four-week, total immersion course in English. They take the equivalent of A levels in March having been educated in their local language, Tamil. However, further education is totally in English (India has 22 officially recognized languages including Hindi and English, both widely-used as common languages, with English used in higher education). There is nobody available to run this year's course. Isobel and I have volunteered to fill in and so will be away from Friday March 29, living in the charity for a month providing the course to twenty-five 17 & 18 years-old young women. We look forward to cold showers, sitting on the floor, eating with our fingers, sleeping on a tin sheet bed with a slim mattress and a single cotton sheet, with no air conditioning, but (mercifully) with ceiling fans because day-time temperatures will be in the high-30s C – around 100^o F – and night-time in the high-20s C – low 80s F – (**risk-taking mission and service**).

Peter Hindle

FAMILY NEWS

We continue to pray for **Pauline and Bob Swift, Brian and Joyce Davis** and **Pat and John Turner**.

Marjorie Scarlett has had another short stay in hospital but is now home.

Ian Carswell and Janette Lee would like to thank everyone for their love & support after the passing of their wonderful Mum, Jessie Carswell.

Irene Holmes - Thank you all for the lovely flowers you sent me. Thank you too for all the cards I have received wishing me well in my new home and condolences on the death of my mum. I am settling well into my new home and attending the Methodist Church here in Norton. You have all been a tremendous love and support to me & my family throughout the 27 years I lived in Ponteland and attended PMC. Love & best wishes to you all.

DATES FOR THE DIARY

March

Friday 1st	2.15pm World Day of Prayer
Saturday 2nd	9.30am Meanders 10.00am Mini Meanders
Tuesday 5th	2.30pm Women's Fellowship
Saturday 9th	3-5pm Film Show at St Mary's
Wednesday 13th	Noon Bible Society Lunch at URC
Thursday 14th	7.30pm Focus and Forum—"Tensions in the Early Church" by Alan Scott
Saturday 16th	9.30am Meander
Tuesday 19th	2.30pm Women's Fellowship—"Looking after yourself" with Jane Harrington
Thursday 28th	7.30pm Focus—"Curiosities of Creswell" by Barry Mead
Saturday 30th	9.30am Meander

April

Tuesday 2nd	2.30pm Women's Fellowship –Spring tea
Saturday 6th	10-4.30pm Walk Through the Bible 10am Midi Meander

OPEN THE BOOK

Ponteland Methodist Church along with St Marys' & Richard Coates School are looking to introduce the 'Open the Book' project at the school in the near future. This would involve a team of people every two weeks going in to share a Bible Story with the children over the course of the school year. We have arranged an informal meeting with the North East Coordinator for Open the Book, Martha, to chat things over and to give us an idea of commitment required plus costs etc... If this is something you would like to be involved with or are interested in finding out more about it, then the meeting is on the

18th March @ 9.45am in the lounge here at Church. All are welcome, please come and support the work among our community.

Speak to Rev **Jona Sewell** or **Alison Maynard**

Preachers March

- 3rd 10.00am Sewell
6.30pm Woolley
10th 10.00am Sewell
10.00am Forrester
6.30pm Golphin
17th 10.00am Woolley
10.00am Cooper
6.30pm Sewell (S)
24th 10.00am Small
10.00am Sewell (S)
6.30pm Woolley
31st 10.00am Forrester
10.00am Barrick
6.30pm Sewell



We believe that when people engage with the Bible, lives can change, for good.

Ponteland Bible Society Action Group invite you to their

Spring Lunch

Wednesday 13 March 2019
at 12 noon
United Reformed Church

Ticket price £8 per person

hbbsociety.org.uk Registered charity 232791

Newcastle Methodist District Music Society

Maunder's 'Olivet to Calvary'

Saturday March 16th 2019
Brunswick Methodist Church
Newcastle upon Tyne

Come and sing:

Workshop at 1.30 for 2.00 p.m. Fee £3

Come to the evening worship:

Service at 7.00 p.m.

For further information or bookings contact

Monica Goldfinch 0191 285 6223; monica.goldfinch@btinternet.com

From The Editors

*Don't forget that copy for the April edition of Cornerstone should be with the editor by **Friday 29th March 2019**. The editor's email address is andrew73anderson@gmail.com. The editorial committee is Andy Anderson, Jennifer Hardy, Jona Sewell and Viv Whyte.*