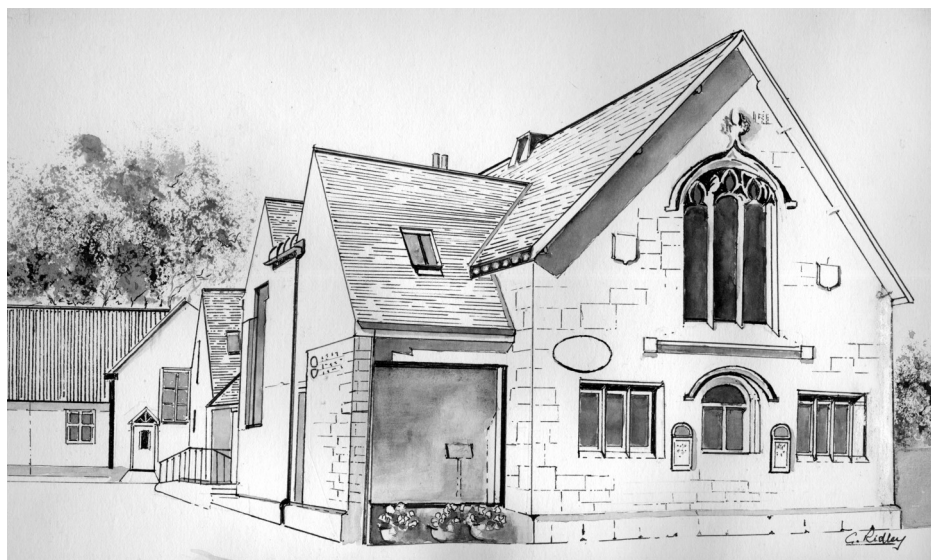


Ponteland Methodist Church

Cornerstone



March 2020

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 Morning Service and Sunday Club
6.30pm Evening Service
Holy Communion, morning and evening as announced

MONDAY

1.15pm Prayers
1.30pm Carpet Bowls
1.00pm Open Door
2.00pm Open Door Lenten Bible Study

TUESDAY

2.30pm Women's Fellowship (fortnightly)
6.00pm Boys' Brigade - Anchor Boys
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

2.15pm 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 hope by now you are aware that my sabbatical starts on the 23rd of this month. I return to work on Monday June 29. Please be aware that I won't be routinely checking emails or answering the phone during this period. Whilst I don't have a specific theme for my sabbatical, I will be using the time to go on retreat, travel, walk, rest, recuperate, recharge and read. At the moment, I am planning to focus my reading around spirituality, learning from Thomas Merton, and on exploring issues around self-care and rhythm of life. However, I remain open to any movement and leading of the Spirit in this.

I am hugely grateful to all who will be doing more in my absence, especially Pat and Robin Brooks who will be fulfilling more preaching appointments, covering the pastoral care of our Church, and looking after any funerals that arise. Any pastoral concerns or issues should be first passed on to Robin and Pat; please also keep Bev, in her role as pastoral secretary, in the loop. Tim Woolley will be chairing our Annual Church Meeting and June Church Council, and will also be the acting Circuit Superintendent. If you have any non-pastoral questions or queries during this time, then please contact the Stewards who can then direct you to the right person or people for help; my thanks to all.

I was asked recently what should happen if any significant issues or problems arise during my sabbatical. Other than what's outlined above, my response was to smile and say something along the lines of: 'then I would expect the Church, and all those involved, to listen with grace, to speak with love, to choose to forgive, to give the benefit of the doubt, to act with kindness, to be patient, and to always seek that which speaks of Christ'. But this shouldn't be a surprise to any of us as we are, after all, the body of Christ and so should always be striving for this kind of Spirit-filled living! But I really don't envision any problems, and I go with peace in my heart and sincere thankfulness for this gift of time and space.

I also wish to give my thanks to those who have encouraged me in recent months and who I know will be praying for me during this time.

See you in June.

God Bless





FAIRTRADE FORTNIGHT 24TH FEBRUARY – 8TH MARCH 2020

This year the Fairtrade Foundation is continuing its campaign to promote a living income for cocoa farmers, particularly women. Information on how to support the campaign can be found at www.fairtrade.org.uk

Unfortunately the fortnight got off to a blustery start, with the weather causing the postponement of the information stall outside the Co-op on Broadway. However, this has been re-scheduled to Saturday 7th March from 10am until 12noon. Please pop along to hear more about the commitment of one of our local supermarkets to fairtrade.

Many thanks to everyone who bought items from the Traidcraft stall at the Open Door. As well as purchases directly supporting producers, an additional donation has been made to Traidcraft Exchange.

An exciting feature this year was the speaker at the Big Brew at St Matthew's. More details on what Hugo, a coffee farmer from Peru, shared will be in April's Cornerstone. Fairtrade Fortnight concludes with a coffee morning at Merton Hall, between 9:30 and 11:30am on Friday 6th March.

Traidcraft catalogues are available in the church foyer. This year Traidcraft has introduced its own Easter eggs, as well as continuing to sell items from the Real Easter Egg range. Please take a catalogue, browse through the full range of clothes, gifts, food and household products and place your order by Sunday 15th March. The profit from orders will be donated to Traidcraft Exchange.



Bev

NEWS FROM THE DESERT

Alright, I can give you a few minutes now, we are on our meal break. I'm Oholiab, son of Ahisamach of the tribe of Dan and I work under the direction of Bezalel, son of Uri, our master craftsman. We were trained in all sorts of metalwork back in Egypt and now we are making beautiful things in gold, silver and brass for the Lord God's Tabernacle and its holy work.

Do I miss the life of Egypt? Well we were better fed there and housed, but we weren't free; taskmasters roused us from our beds at dawn and set us to work all day. Then they started their population control, and that was appalling and we were right glad to get away; we made sure we brought our tools and a good supply of stock: gold, silver and brass and that.

But the desert life is hard, very hard. Biting winds and cold of the nights, blazing heat and wind-blown sand taking the skin off your face by day, and food and water when you can get it. You can get bored with manna and spend too much of your day finding it, for tamarisk trees are scarce and that sticky stuff doesn't keep; migrant birds and locusts only come in season. Some reckon that desert life toughens us up and I suppose it does, but there are always grumblers. They wonder if the Lord God himself could go through what we get thrown at us in the desert!

The worst time was when the Great Leader went off up the sacred mountain. Discipline broke down terribly and without self-discipline all sorts of bad things can happen. I kept out of it, having plenty of work to do, but a lot of men thought Moses and his God had deserted us. He'd gone off mountain climbing and left us to get on with it. We weren't ready for self-government so early on – slaves and forced men don't learn self-control right away, we needed laws and had none. The hotheads went back to Egyptian ways and made a golden footstool for their unseen god, a calf and took a lot of our stock in trade to do it. (Never got it back again!) When Moses came back again with the Ten Laws, that was when we knew what temptation was and how we'd given way to it. Fair rubbed it in, he did!

But I heard that Moses really was on our side; he pleaded with the Almighty to forgive us all and to give us a second chance. Some say this desert life is a preparation for some great adventure in a land of plenty. I may not see it, but I hope and pray

that my kids will grow up and have something better in a better country, this place of promise. They'll have good food and, what is more, good principles to live by – Godly principles, and a Leader who has gone through it with them.

John M Gill



"COME TO ME, ALL YOU WHO ARE WEARY AND BURDENED
AND I WILL GIVE YOU REST. TAKE MY YOKE UPON YOU
AND LEARN FROM ME FOR I AM GENTLE AND HUMBLE
IN HEART AND YOU WILL FIND REST FOR YOUR SOULS.
FOR MY YOKE IS EASY AND MY BURDEN IS LIGHT."

MATTHEW 11:28-30

INVITATION

COME AND JOIN US WITH YOUR FAMILY AND FRIENDS
FOR A SHORT TALK, ACOUSTIC TUNES & TESTIMONIES.
FREE ADMISSION - HOT DRINKS AND CAKE
WILL BE SERVED

DATE: 14th March
TIME: 7.00pm
LOCATION: Whalton Village Hall


WWW.AWAKEINORTH.CO.UK

Hello Everyone

Hope you are keeping well. Just a quick update and reminder of the next event at **Whalton Village Hall NE61 3XA on Saturday 14th March at 7pm**. This will be the beginning of the third round.

Thank you for all your prayers for the outreach and for coming to the event in Ponteland. We've been really encouraged and blessed by what The Lord is continuing to do, prayers are being answered, manifesting presence of The Holy Spirit, meaningful Worship songs and amazing heart-stirring testimonies.

Please don't miss this great opportunity to reach out to the people in the Villages and witness Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour. We also know people respond to personal invitations, and we don't want anyone to miss out. Please could you prayerfully invite family and friends, anyone you know who lives in the

nearby villages. I would be happy to drop off or post you some invites to give to them.

We believe in the power of interceding and praying, and that's very important. Please do join us for future events - if you can't come, please do pray. And if you live in any of these villages or know other Christians who do, please encourage them to join us and pray.

If you do have any prayer requests, please email them to prayer@awakeningnorth.co.uk

Let's continue to pray for a revival in our villages.

Please note other dates for your diary:

AN: Dinnington Village on Saturday 25th April at 7pm

AN: Stamfordham Village on Saturday 9th May at 7pm

AN: Westerhope Village on Saturday 20th June at 7pm

AN: Ponteland on Saturday 11th July at 7pm

We will group in front of **Whalton Village Hall NE61 3XA at 10.30am** for the Outreach in the Village until 12.30pm.

Shalom!

Abraham Matthews

TITU COMES TO PONTELAND METHODIST CHURCH!

Titu, renowned Indian chef, owner of Saathi's restaurant in Hexham (where some of you have previously shared a fund-raising meal with us) and a long-standing friend of ours, is making a sit-down, buffet, Indian meal at Ponteland Methodist Church on Friday, May 15th at 6.45pm.

This is to host Father Antony Paulsamy, the CEO of Reaching the Unreached, (the Charity we visit and support at our barbecue) who is visiting us from Tamil Nadu, S India.

Please join us for this Indian celebration at which Father Antony will speak personally about RTU.

Tickets, £20, will be available from Peter or Isobel Hindle. 15% of the takings will be given to RTU.

Individual tables for 6 – 8 people can be reserved if you would like to bring a group of friends.

If you would like further information, please call (01669 621347) or e-mail isobel@familyhindle.net or peter@familyhindle.net

Isobel Hindle

DESERT ISLAND DISCS BY ROSEMARY GRAY



I was born in 1953 in Newcastle General Hospital. I remember very little of our first house except I do know when my brother came along two years later he used to lie in his pram outside the front door virtually on the street and our neighbour, we called Auntie Bee (short for Beatrice) was a large lady who laughed a lot, she sat on a stool and kept an eye on us when Mum was busy.

We moved to West Hartlepool when I was 4 yrs old. When I was eight we moved to the posh end of Jesmond, near Osborne Road. It was a cul de sac so we played out on the street skipping in a big rope. We were within walking distance of Jesmond Dene and on a weekend I would wander down there with my friends to play all day long and only came back home when I was hungry.

I went to West Jesmond Primary School, walking down Queens Road to meet my friend Alison Bell and together we walked across the road to Mistletoe Road and the sweetie shop which we often went to for penny chews and gobstoppers after school. At that time I was a member of a Beatles fan club. The big girl Christine McCracken who organised the club asked me which one was my favourite Beatle. I always said George Harrison. She was probably the first bully I met at school and said she thought I was silly because obviously Paul McCartney was the best. I stuck to my opinion then and determined not to be overturned even though it was hard. School was hard for me but I never went along with the crowd. Hence my first tune.

Tune 1 It's been a hard day's night by the Beatles.

In my primary school days my favourite teacher was a Mr Jackson. I remember learning to write using the ink wells and italic pens. Very messy. He cast me in the school plays: first I was the Reverend Mother in the Sound of Music and I sang a solo "Climb every mountain". Also I was the judge in Toad of Toad Hall. Perhaps I was just too serious for my own good....

At home in the 1960s music was very much part of my life. My grandfather "Pops" was a church organist at Jesmond Baptist

church now demolished. I remember sitting beside him on the organ stool. My Dad was very musical and he ensured I learned to play the piano.

Tune 2. Für Elise by Beethoven

In 1971 I went to Durham University to study Geography. On my very first day at Fresher's Week I met the love of my life. Steve. I remember it like it was yesterday. He was dancing in his usual frenetic way at the first Fresher's Ball in St Cuthbert's Society which we both belonged to. We had three happy years in Durham and by the end of it he had asked me to marry him. His favourite singer at that time was Diana Ross and this song reminds me of those happy days.

Tune 3 Touch me in the morning by Diana Ross

In 1975 I was very lucky to get into the Department of Employment on a graduate scheme which fast tracked me into management within two years.

The hardest part of this period of my life was I had to go back home to live with my parents now in Low Fell and my fiancé Steve chose a different path which took him to Sheffield on an MA course in Town and Country Planning. We wrote each other lots of letters during the week which we looked forward to because we missed each other so much. It was a stressful time. My next tune reminds me of this.

Tune 4 Mr Postman by the Carpenters

When my initial training period was over I was able to transfer to Sheffield and we lived in a small terraced house. There I became the youngest Jobcentre manager in the country in Chesterfield, my first job as a manager at the age of 24.

Things were going really well until Steve started looking for a job. He spent 6 months applying for jobs until out of the blue he phoned me and asked me if it was Ok for us to move to Truro. I asked him "Where on earth is that?"

We moved to Cornwall in 1978 which must have horrified my parents.

It may have been a troubled time workwise but it was a beautiful place to live hence my next tune as I remember we crossed over the Bridge into Cornwall and our lives were so different.

Tune 5. Bridge over troubled Water by Simon and Garfunkel

Six years later we moved to Taunton in Somerset. We wanted a family and so our Rebecca was born, a cider baby, we decided to have her christened in the Methodist church there which we both liked because it was a family-orientated church. Paul Hume was the minister. Then of course before Amy was born in 1988 we moved to Ponteland in 1986, some 34 years ago.

We were welcomed to Ponteland Methodist church where the family soon settled in to Sunday school.

However, I have picked one tune which I remember our Amy learning to play. She was a great musician and enjoyed her piano lessons.

Tune 6. The Entertainer by Scott Joplin played by Stephanie Trick

Our family has belonged to this church for 34 years now and we really are blessed by the time we have spent here. Steve became ill with his first brain tumour in 1991 when Amy was 3 and Rebecca 7 years old. He was given only six months to live and we prayed together for more time. We have been richly blessed and he was given 27 more years. A miracle. He retired early and he took up art. In 2008 I retired from work and together we went to Sunderland University where he achieved another degree, this time it was an MA in Fine art and I studied to become a Local Preacher. I have always belonged to Jesus and God has been an important part of my life but this was a turning point and so leads me to play my next song.

Tune 7. I believe by Russell Watson

Becoming a Local Preacher my belief was tested and my faith has developed on another plane. Indeed I realise my whole life has been pointing me in this direction. I was very busy raising the family, looking after Steve and working. However these years were not wasted years they shaped my faith and I grew in the knowledge that God was shaping my life and directing me to share my faith with others. I have tried to do this at all sorts of times and certainly God has been a part of all the troubles and trials that I have faced. I have never been alone because God has given me the strength and the faith to keep me always in his

love, which brings me to my final song. We sang this at Steve's funeral and I do find that it helps to trust in God the Good Shepherd. Please sing it with me.

Tune 8. The Lord's my shepherd



So that brings me to the end of my desert island discs. There are some questions they always ask at the end of the programme.

What will you do when you get there?

I will write my memoirs. I have collected a lot of creative writing over the years I belong to a creative writing group but I never seem to have time to put it altogether into a book. So that is what I will do given the time.

You are allowed to take the Bible and the Complete Works of Shakespeare with you. You can take one other book of your choice, what will you take?

I will take Rebecca by Daphne Du Maurier. It will remind me of the time Steve and I went camping and we sat in the evenings in our tent and read this book by torchlight before our Rebecca was born. That's how she got the name Rebecca.

You can take one luxury item with you. What will you take?

I will take a painting of Sunflowers either by Van Gogh or Steve Gray both are inspired luxuries. Not sure where I will hang it up!

If you can only take one track with you which will it be?

The last one of course. The Lord's my shepherd.

Rosemary Gray

FEBRUARY

This month derives its name from FEBRUARE meaning to purify or from FEBRUA a Roman festival celebrated through the later part of the month.

“Feast” days are Feb 2nd Candlemas Day, Feb 14th St Valentine’s and Feb 24th St Mathias.

The old rhyme for Candlemas Day was said to be accurate:

“ If Candlemas Day be fair and bright
Winter will have another fright
But Candlemas Day be clouds and rain
Winter has gone and will not come again”.

There are signs of Spring everywhere with Aconites, Snowdrops and Primulas bravely appearing despite gale force winds. Even the Quickthorn in the hedgerows is starting to show tiny amounts of green as buds open. Days noticeably are lengthening and British Summer Time begins on Sunday 29th March.



This year Shrove Tuesday falls on 25th February and then Easter is celebrated six weeks later with Good Friday on 10th April. Easter is of course a moveable date as Easter Sunday falls on the first Sunday after the first full moon after 21st March.

St Valentine was a Christian Martyr in the reign of the Emperor Claudius whose festival was commemorated on Feb 14th. The custom of sending Valentines has its origins in a heathen custom associated with the worship of Juno about the date of 14th and had no connection with the saint. St Valentine was beheaded for his faith.



Activity on the peanut, fat ball and seed hoppers has been intense with eight long-tailed tits at one time on the peanuts and the nuthatch very efficiently feeding upside down. My single faithful robin is now being accompanied by a male so nature is preparing for better days to come.

Jean Tweedie



THE OPEN DOOR

Lighter Chocolate Cake

This chocolate cake is lower in fat, calories and sugar due to the ground almonds and yogurt used in the recipe.

Judith

Summer Opening Times

Mondays 2pm - 4.30pm
(except bank holidays)

25g butter
1 tsp baking powder
140g SR flour
25g cocoa
50g light muscovado sugar
70g caster sugar
25g ground almonds
175g natural yogurt
2 large eggs, beaten
2tbsp rapeseed oil

For the icing
25g dark chocolate (75g cocoa solids), finely chopped
50g icing sugar
1tbsp cocoa
25g butter
1tsp milk
100g light cream cheese
100g Quark cheese

Preheat the oven to 180°C/160°C fan.

Prepare two sandwich cake tins.

Melt the butter and set aside to cool.

Mix the flour with cocoa powder, baking powder, both sugars and ground almonds.

Stir the yogurt into the beaten eggs.

Pour this into the dry mixture with the melted butter and oil.

Briefly stir until just mixed, creamy and smooth.

Divide between the two tins and bake for 20 mins . Turn out to cool.



For the icing

Melt the chocolate.

Sift the icing sugar and cocoa together.

Add the milk and butter and beat until smooth.

Beat in the cream cheese and Quark.

Stir in the melted chocolate.

JOYCE KNOWLES

Joyce was born on the 20th July 1941, she was the only child of Esther and she was born in the Girls' Home in Bedford. Esther was a Domestic Servant, working in the Home of the Parkes family who were a well-known family of that time, in Blackheath.



Joyce with her mother

Joyce was then fostered by a family who lived on Darby Street, in Blackheath. She had a very loving environment there, remaining close to Paul all of her life. Despite this she was able to see her Mum regularly, they spent time together at weekends and during school holidays.

Joyce attended Beeches Road Infants and Junior school in Blackheath and later on attended Halesowen Grammar School; this was where Rachel was to attend high school, when it was known as the Earls High School.

In 1960, Joyce started work with Lloyds Bank in Colmore Row, in Birmingham. Here she made some life-long friendships, with Vivienne, Sue, Joyce and Charmian. This was, in fact, where she and Howard first met.

Throughout her early life Joyce attended Birmingham Road Church, in Blackheath - she carried out a number of roles, these

included being a Sunday School Teacher, starting a Ladies Friendship Circle in the 1980s and being Treasurer of a Redevelopment Fund, when the Church was completely refurbished during the mid 80s.

It was at this Church in March of 1965 that she married Arthur, they began their married life by buying a house in Hurst Green, along High Farm Road. Arthur worked in the Printing industry so his job was always quite unreliable so things were always tough. This meant that Joyce always had a job of some description {which nearly always involved money}: these included working in Sainsburys in Halesowen, working on Reception in a Local Sports Centre and as a Cashier in Britannia Building Society – here again she made some lifelong friendships.

Joyce was working in Sainsburys in the Autumn of 1973 when she found out that she was expecting Rachel, there was a joke within the shop at the time that everyone who sat at a particular till then became pregnant. Rachel arrived in April 1974, being early for once in her life!

In 1983, sadly and tragically, Joyce lost her Mum, Esther. Esther died suddenly having travelled to Keswick for a holiday with Church friends. Joyce and Esther had become very close in later years, Esther would regularly share Sunday lunch with them, Christmases, come around to watch the outcome of General Elections and every year to make a batch of Christmas Puddings – which were delicious.

The family enjoyed holidays, although Joyce was always reluctant to be away from home and that's something that was a feature all of her life. This was as a result of losing her Mum and the fact that Rachel was quite often ill or had an accident. Places visited included Devon, North Wales, Crete, Majorca and latterly Northumberland.

Then in July of 1990 the marriage between Joyce and Arthur completely broke down. This was an extremely traumatic time, but Joyce knew that she was surrounded by the love of those she was close to, her Church friends and those lifelong friendships she had made – we knew we were surrounded by love, prayer and support. There were lots of very unpleasant and traumatic experiences but we knew things would get better, as Mum had always been a very strong and determined person.

Out of this event Joyce and Rachel became exceptionally close and were, as a result, very protective of each other.

In September of 1990, Howard and she met up for the first time in nearly 30 years, subsequently they married in October of 1991, that was a very special day for all involved and they were married by Colin, at Wood Setton Methodist Church.

At this point it must be said that these last 28 years are the happiest that Mum ever was and they were absolutely perfect for each other.

They enjoyed lots of happy times and holidays together. In 1991, Howard introduced Mum to Austria and Switzerland, in fact on one afternoon we were in Salzburg and saw Margaret and Syd, Rachel and Joyce very hastily dived into a jewellery shop – we have laughed and commented about this on many occasions since, with Margaret and Syd, as we weren't known in Ponteland at that time.

They also enjoyed holidays all over Europe, America, three weeks in Canada {her longest-ever holiday} and it took Mum nearly three weeks to recover, Madeira, Cyprus and all around the UK. Rachel and she enjoyed a week in New York in 2007, they walked and walked, saw lots and shopped but it was a great week and lives long in the memory.

In June of 1992, Joyce and Rachel relocated to Ponteland, where they were both very happy and were welcomed with open arms by both the Church and friends that Howard already had. Many special friendships were made, and she got involved, she was happy as a part of the Women's Fellowship, a Door Steward, one of the Flower Ladies, a Church Steward and latterly as Secretary of the Finance and Property Committee. Joyce enjoyed being a member of Ponteland Floral Art Club and made lots of friends there too.

Friendships, loyalty, integrity and giving things 100% were key for Mum, as was a deep-rooted Christian faith, she wanted everyone to succeed and to be the best they could be. Mum was always immaculately turned out and liked to have nice things. You always knew what Mum thought about something, she was very direct and didn't ever sit on the fence, often when putting a point across or emphasising something there was a pointy finger in evidence. This said she always loved to people-watch;

this was something Rachel and she always used to do when they spent a few hours shopping in Newcastle every month or so - as a result, it's quite appropriate that her corneas were donated for transplant.

Mum loved the Archers, the world would stop at 2pm, so heaven forbid if the Emirates plane left then or someone rang up !

Mum also loved to follow News and Current affairs, she was a Leaver and quite a fan of Boris Johnson. She was also a great sports fan, following football, cricket and tennis – she loved to listen to Test Match Special and holidays couldn't be taken in Wimbledon fortnight.

I remember Mum for lots of things but perhaps a few funny things too;

She was an amazing cook: Christmas trifles were a speciality as was a Fish pie. This said, waste was never ever allowed and food ALWAYS had to be eaten up. Christmas lunch was always served promptly at 13.00 and all had to be eaten and cleared up for 15.00 when we ALWAYS sat down to watch and listen attentively to the Queen.

She could go shopping without needing a shopping list, things were never ever taken from the front of a supermarket shelf, bread and biscuit packets were always squeezed, tins were checked for dents.

Mum always had to dry washing outside, she loved a windy bright day, the washing line would always be full – when we moved into Hadrian Court she looked at the tumble dryer and said, “I won't be using that much”.

Mum always had to cut cherry tomatoes in half.

If you've ever stayed at Hadrian Court, it was often the case that the bed would be stripped and the washer on before you left, sometimes the washing was even on the line. Even though I say this, she loved to have people to visit.

Rachel Wood



HELLO FROM ALISON

Easter journey is happening this month from the **23rd to the 27th March**. It is a walk through 7 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 195 children (possibly 230) 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 or sign up on the notice in the foyer of church. The sessions so far are at 1.30pm Monday 23rd, 10.30am and 1.30pm Tuesday the 24th, Wednesday the 25th and Thursday the 26th. 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 also will attend. Pray that they might feel God's presence and love as they journey through the Holy Week experience.

On the **8th April from 4pm – 8pm** I am running Journey to the Cross, which is an interactive 'do it yourself' Journey. It will be a space in the busyness 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.

The Holiday Club is booked in for the **20th – 24th July 2020** with a fun event on the **25th July** 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. Lunch Club is going well at Richard Coates Primary School and the headteacher is pleased with what we are doing, this term we are doing Lent with the year 5/6 children. Alongside that I am still very involved in the GB and BB on Tuesday and Wednesday evenings. There is an exciting opportunity coming up at the High School which might give us a core of young people to be able to start a Sunday Evening youth

event. Watch this space for further details.

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

The wedding of Mary Lisle and Ben Hall at St Mary's Church on 20th February 2020



GARDENING FOR MARCH 2020

Rain! Rain! Rain. I think we will have viewed the problems created by the storms elsewhere and got wet infrequently. The rainfall in January was only 1.4 in (35.5 mm) and so far I have recorded 2.2 in (56 mm) in February. I think we may have had our fair share of the gales but the rain has been only enough to flood the bottom of our garden but not Waitrose Car Park!

March is a month when many gardening activities can be undertaken but work on the borders and cultivated areas only when the soil is a little drier than it is today. Taking advantage of the relatively dry January and part of February one lady told me she had got all light digging completed in quite a large garden.

Perhaps pruning is an important task in March and should be completed, where applicable, before the sap rises in the trees, plants and shrubs where pruning is necessary. To aid the work I have just bought a Bergman Cordless Electric Pruner which can effortlessly cut items up to about half an inch in diameter. It is battery powered and the battery is rechargeable. So where do you start? Apples, and pears, currants, gooseberry, blackberry and autumn flowering raspberries might be the first to target. Although not a rose grower I tend to leave roses until the end of the month when all but rambling can be pruned (and trained in the case of climbing). Rambling roses flower on stems produced the previous year and can be pruned and re-trained after flowering. Buddleja davidii will need pruning but B.alternifolia, like rambling roses, blooms on last year's wood so prune after flowering in summer. B.davidii is the more commonly grown buddleja. The



general advice is to establish a framework of 1 – 2 feet if you are buying a new one and cut back to suitable buds each spring. We inherited a beautiful white flowered buddleja when we moved into our house in Brecon in 1965. It didn't do much in the first year so I cut it back in March 1966 almost to ground level (I was going to dig it out if it didn't

grow) but it produced magnificent growth and was a feature on the edge of the vegetable garden until we moved in 1974. There were chemicals for controlling caterpillars on brassicas then as you know that buddlejas attract butterflies. You can decide what needs pruning but beware the sap produced when you cut eu-

phorbias and oleanders or phlomis which has irritating hairs. To be on the safe side wear waterproof gloves and long sleeved clothes to avoid any contact – and of course continue the protection for clearing and disposal of the prunings.

We will all be looking forward to spring bulbs flowering. We have mainly snowdrops and dwarf iris in flower with crocus very much in bud. As we grow so many of our flowers in planters the daffodils and tulips are due to be moved to the front of the house where they will get more sun but perhaps less shelter.

There is always the weeding and any cultivation in the borders in preparation for new plantings whether they are from splitting up clumps of perennials, new perennials and for some, eventually the summer bedding. After having had ten inches more rainfall than average in 2019 some of the nutrients will have been leached from the soil so March is the month for starting the replenishment. Depending on the subjects I use a phosphate and potash base followed by some nitrogen on the shrubs in planters and around many of the perennials limiting the nitrogen fertilizer where excessive top growth is to be avoided. Alternatives are “Growmore” (analysis 7:7:7:) or blood, fish and bone (preferably applied before it is going to rain). It is good to add a sprinkling of blood, fish and bone to compost/soil in holes dug for new plantings. Then there is the grass/lawn. It is good to have that green through the growth of grass rather than spongy through the ingress of moss. With my reduced mobility I have employed TruGreen to manage the grass – to scarify, spray for perennial weeds, and fertilize/moss kill. Scarification and collection of the debris will remove the moss but the spores still remain to start it growing again. Iron sulphate applied as a spray or as part of a lawn treatment top dressing should ensure that the lawn is free of moss. With treatment regular cutting will no doubt have to commence in late March/early April with the cutting height kept high until mid-May. Remember after any weed killer has been applied the grass should not be retained for garden compost at least for the first cut.

Our Church Plant Sale is on Saturday 9th May at 10.00 a.m. I hope one or two more gardeners can contribute plants for the sale as Howard Knowles has now retired from growing plants for the Plant Sale.

Good gardening in March.

Syd Cowan

FAMILY NEWS

Congratulations to **Emma Tuckwood**, daughter of Fiona, and granddaughter of Jean Thompson, on her recent engagement.

It's good to see **Bev Mintern** back with us after a recent spell in hospital. We wish both her and Ron well as they prepare for their wedding this month.

Agnes Kay is settling well in Whorlton Grange Rest Home, by Westerhope Golf Club. She would be delighted to welcome anyone who is passing to catch up with old times.

Jenny Lewis is currently convalescing in Connie Lewcock Resource Centre, Lemington, following a spell in the RVI. We hope she will be back home again shortly.

We continue to think of **Barbara Bradley**, who is now convalescing at home after several weeks in Freeman Hospital. She is making good progress. We hope that it won't be too long before she is back worshipping with us again.

It is good to see **Christine Pay** back with us following her accident.

Many, many thanks for your good wishes for my birthday. I certainly do appreciate your kind thoughts and will reread the cards over again. Sorry I have not been able to join in with you in Church services for a while but hope to come again soon when I feel almost fit and well again.
My thanks again to all of you.

Noreen Green

DATES FOR THE DIARY

March

Friday 6th	14.15 World Day of Prayer at URC
Saturday 7th	10.00 Mini Meander 18.00 Celebration Songs of Praise at Brunswick
Tuesday 10th	14.30 Women's Fellowship Spring Tea
Thursday 12th	19.30 Focus 19.30 Forum—Seven Bridges—the crossing of the Tyne Gorge by Michael Taylor
Saturday 14th	09.30 Meanders
Wednesday 18th	Noon Bible Society Lunch at URC
Saturday 21st	15.00 Marriage of Beverley and Ronnie Dunn
Tuesday 24th	14.30 Women's Fellowship-“Looking after yourself”
Thursday 26th	19.30 Focus—Yorkshire's Golden Coast
Saturday 28th	09.30 Meanders

April

Thursday 2nd	19.30 Focus -'Prescription Laughter'
Saturday 4th	10.00 Mini Meander 19.00 Graeme and Valerie Danby in concert

VILLAGE NEWS

Dobbies Garden Centre

Dobbies has been given planning permission to extend its car park. 129 spaces will be created in addition to the existing 216 plus a new picnic area.

Car Parking in the areas of Cheviot View and Prestwick Road Ends

The Hexham Courant reports confusion over an experimental parking scheme for a one-year trial. The objective is to stop people parking instead of going to the airport. It sounds as if some residents support the initiative, but others oppose it.

New Schools and Leisure Centre on Callerton Lane

From 16th-19th March at 9.30am and 1.30pm there are to be tours of the new buildings. Places must be booked at

<https://opendoors.construction/site/550#/oc> about.....

Jennifer Hardy

Preachers March

1st 10.00am Ann Cooper
6.30pm Sewell
8th 10.00am Sewell (S)
6.30pm Wriglesworth
15th 10.00am Small
6.30pm Sewell (S)
22nd 10.00am Sewell
6.30pm *Circuit Event*
29th 10.00am P Brooks
6.30pm R Brooks

WORLD DAY OF PRAYER 2020 Praying with Zimbabwe **FRIDAY 6TH MARCH**



World Day of Prayer Service
to be held in
United Reformed Church,
Broadway, Darras Hall Estate
on
Friday 6th March 2020
at
2:15 p.m.

Everyone Most Welcome



Spring Concert
Graeme & Valerie Danby
With Friends
Saturday 4th April at 7:00pm
Ticket £7

Refreshments after the concert

From The Editors

*Don't forget that copy for the April edition of Cornerstone should be with the editor by **Friday 28th March 2020**. The editor's email address is andrew73anderson@gmail.com. The editorial committee is Andy Anderson, Jennifer Hardy, Jona Sewell and Viv Whyte.*