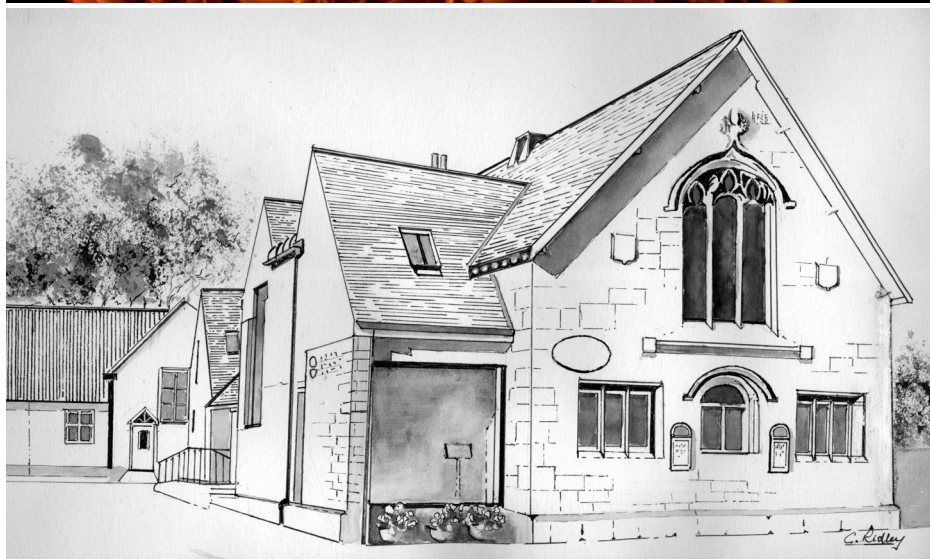


# Ponteland Methodist Church

# Cornerstone

COME, HOLY SPIRIT  
COME, SPIRIT OF JOY



**May 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

Friday the 8<sup>th</sup> May marks the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of VE day; the day when we remember the war ending in Europe. As someone who has never seen first-hand the horrors of war, I struggle to imagine what that generation must have gone through or the full cost and magnitude of the number of lives lost in the fight against the Nazis. The history of the world is littered with stories of people laying down their lives for the freedom of others, freedoms we so often take for granted. Though some of our freedoms are currently inhibited due to the lockdown, I think it's giving some people a new appreciation of just how much freedom (physical and otherwise) we usually enjoy. It's important that we remember with thankfulness those who paid the ultimate price and died that we might be free.

In these post-Easter days, we are also thankful for the freedom and fullness of life we enjoy because of the death of one man - Jesus. In Him we find a different kind of freedom; a freedom from guilt and fear, a freedom from the burden of worry, a freedom from our addiction to sin, selfishness, idolatry, and a freedom which ultimately leads to eternal life. The great paradox of course is that to fully inhabit and enjoy the freedoms Christ won for us, we have to first let go. In a sense we too have to die. Thankfully we don't need to die physically, but our death is to our own selves, our own ego and agenda, and following death we need to replace these things with Christ at the centre. When we do this then we find that different freedom so that, even when isolating and our physical freedoms are inhibited, we can experience a deep inner and spiritual freedom as we enjoy the abundance of life that Jesus offers.

So, in these lockdown and post-Easter days be thankful for freedom, and that this lockdown is temporary, yet the freedom we have in Christ is eternal.

God Bless



## **LISTENING AND PRAYER**

There's an old adage – God gave us two ears and one mouth so we could listen twice as much as we speak. I sometimes wish that someone would remind our politicians of this!

Listening is important. We all know how valued we feel when we are heard and truly listened to. I am so thankful that I am hearing stories that so many of you have responded to my challenge to make contact with two or three people each day. People are feeling listened to and heard. Thank you!

At this time of isolation when each of us is going through our own experience of lockdown, separation, grief and struggle, being heard matters now more than ever. I wonder though, do we take the same approach to prayer? It is so important that we speak to God. But what about listening to God? What would prayer look like if we listened twice as much as we spoke?

Let's be honest, if we met with a friend and just talked to them for ten minutes and then walked away without letting them speak in return, it wouldn't be a very good relationship. Yet so often our prayer life is like this.

The Psalmist wrote, 'Be still and know that I am God'. Jesus said when you pray, close the door. I don't think He was just saying find a place of quiet but I think He was saying find the quiet within. During these incredible and unprecedented times God is speaking, and I want to ask the question, what might God be saying to us as a Church? What might God be saying to you? How might we respond differently or better through such listening?

I want to encourage each of us to set aside time as part of our prayer routine to stop speaking and to intentionally listen to God. We do this by seeking a greater awareness of His presence, by sitting still, breathing slowly and deliberately, clearing our minds, opening our hearts, offering our lives and our very selves to God and simply saying, 'Here I am - speak'. As we do this then over time God will reveal God's self to us. Perhaps through a picture, a feeling, a word, a scripture, a hymn, a song, a conversation with a friend, but the more we stop and intentionally seek to listen, the more aware we will become of God in the world around us and of what God might be saying. So let's take this time to deliberately and intentionally seek to listen.

I have deliberately created the opportunity for those who wish to share in prayer together to do so. I am producing weekly prayer points in our notices and I want to encourage you to join in and use them when you can as an act of solidarity with each other and God.

I also want to offer the opportunity for a 'virtual prayer meeting'. This would be a gathering online – you would need access to the internet and a device (smartphone, tablet, laptop etc) with a camera to join in, you would then simply click on a link, and be able to join in with others in the prayer meeting, seeing their faces and hearing their prayers. I would hope such a gathering would be opportunity to pray for our current situation, community, church and world, but also to communally stop and listen together through quieter reflective prayer and moments of silence. Let me know if this is something you'd like to explore further.

God Bless

**Jona**



### **CHURCH SERVICES**

The ministers have been recording video services since the closure of the Churches and these are available on the internet from YouTube. There is

a special group set up called "Newcastle West Circuit" and it is the intention every Sunday to record a service from one of the Churches in our Circuit. Last Sunday service is at

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IbRU7mN6xck&t=1s>

Over 700 hits have been recorded against these services.

It is possible to get these on DVD if requested from Paul Mead at Westerhope. He can be contacted direct on 07400896006 or via his mum and dad 01912673558 / 07968651735.

Most morning services are recorded and may be listened to by going to "Listen Again" on the Church website.

**Andy Anderson**



## **COVID-19 UPDATE FROM TRAIDCRAFT AND FROM THE FAIRTRADE FOUNDATION**

The team at Traidcraft has been constantly reviewing and monitoring the situation regarding Covid-19 and its effects on producers and the overall business. It has become necessary for the company to take advantage of the Government's furlough scheme in order to guarantee the best on-going service to customers, as well as to maintain the safety of the team and security for producers. Therefore, from Monday 27th April around six team members are on furlough. However, no-one from the Customer Service Department is on furlough and the warehouse team has plenty of staff to fulfil orders. Encouragingly the current circumstances resulted in Traidcraft being inundated with orders in the run-up to Easter and the team is keen to get the message across that Traidcraft is in a good position and that the action to furlough staff should not be seen in any way that it is in immediate difficulty.

The Traidcraft business, together with the work of its sister charity Traidcraft Exchange, helps communities work their own way out of poverty. The uncertain times of Covid-19 mean that this is even more important for communities who are already starting at a level of housing, education and health care far lower than that which we enjoy, and who will not have recourse to furlough schemes or government loans to help them recover once the pandemic has passed.

For example, as clothes shops in the UK and around the world closed their doors, \$2 billion of clothes orders were cancelled in Bangladesh alone. The Fairtrade Foundation has warned that whole communities could be devastated as jobs and the demand for cotton disappear. Whilst some companies have made welcome commitments to their suppliers, many have not. As businesses here face the challenges of rebuilding, it has to be questioned whether they will have the capacity to look beyond their own immediate needs to those of producer groups abroad. We have just come to the end of Fashion Revolution Week, which marked the seventh anniversary of the Rana Plaza tragedy, an avoidable disaster in which at least 1,132 garment workers died. This year, the campaign has been asking big fashion brands to do more to help farmers and workers get through this

coronavirus crisis.

So, in these uncertain times, what can we do? Buy stock online from [www.traidcraftshop.co.uk](http://www.traidcraftshop.co.uk) or follow the links on [www.fairtrade.org.uk](http://www.fairtrade.org.uk) to source Fairtrade products; Help our Fairtrader colleague Steve Helm (from St Matthew's) clear his Traidcraft stock which will not now be sold at Party in the Park.....I can definitely recommend the biscuits, but please email me ([pmc.pastoral@sky.com](mailto:pmc.pastoral@sky.com)) for a full list of items available. I will deliver items locally and collect cheque payments for Steve;



Support Traidcraft Exchange by donating at [www.traidcraftexchange.org](http://www.traidcraftexchange.org) ;

Remember in your prayers the work of the Fairtrade Foundation, Traidcraft PLC, Traidcraft Exchange and all those helped and supported by them across the world, that they may have the reassurance that they are not forgotten and that we continue to stand with them.

Just as the coronavirus has shown how connected the world is when it comes to the spread of a disease, so too we are connected to producers across the globe, who rely on our support now more than ever before.

Thank you for your action and your prayers.

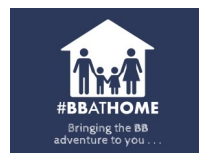
**Bev**



1st Ponteland Boys' Brigade may not be meeting during this period of lockdown, but we are certainly finding ways to engage with our young people.

One way is by the weekly activity sheets produced by the BB; they are designed for the different age groups and are based around the activities we normally do at Boys' Brigade. They are not just designed for the BB, anyone can access them, and there are loads of fun activities for all ages. You can find them at [boys-brigade.org.uk/bbathome/activity-packs](http://boys-brigade.org.uk/bbathome/activity-packs).

Another way of staying in touch is through our FaceBook page. You can find this by searching for '1st Ponteland Boys' Brigade' on Facebook. Please have a look and follow us on our journey. We send all our love to the whole Church family and we look forward to when we can meet again and join up with all our friends. Take care, stay safe and see you all soon.



**Les Dodd**



## ALIUD REMEMBERS

Aliud, son of Zerubbabel, son of Shealtiel, had grown to be a strong young man, despite the appalling conditions in which he had spent most of his youth. Son of the High Priest, he had much to measure up to, and the strenuous years through which he had passed his life had hardened him, but given him confidence, confidence in his calling and confidence in the Lord God who had fulfilled His promises. His heart rejoiced when Zerub-

babel called the Levites together and announced that the voluntary gifts made over the years since the Return were now sufficient for the rebuilding of the Temple. The days of serving the temporary altar put up when the first of the Exiles returned to Jerusalem were numbered.



“Daddy, do you remember what it was like when you were my age?” asked Aliud’s small son when he heard talk of the old days in Babylon.

“Well, I was even younger than you are, Eliakim, when we first heard that we were to be allowed to come back to the old country. I can remember my Dad coming home very excited. Of course things had been terrifying the year before, when Emperor Cyrus invaded and the country became part of his empire, but the ordinary folk saw little change until the announcement. There was great talk about packing everything up and wondering what would happen to the farms and shops and workshops people from Israel and Judah had built up over two generations.

“Grandpa Shealtiel said he was too old to uproot himself and lots of others said the same, but younger folk and those who really loved the idea of the old country, revived and purified and worship starting again in Jerusalem and all Canaan, were all for going back as soon as they could.”

“Did you come here as soon as you could?”

“I was only a nipper, but since then I have heard that my Dad felt it his duty as a Priest of the Most High to go with as early a convoy as he could.”

“How did you all travel?” “Well,” replied his father, “King Cyrus must have been moved by God, for he generously provided



camels and mules and waggons for the women and children and old folk and we trekked miles and miles and days and days up the Great River and then west and south until we reached the land promised to our Father Abraham. There were nearly fifty thousand of the People of God who made the trip during those years of Return.”

Not all came to Jerusalem, thought Aliud after that chat with his son. Most went back to reclaim their farms and vineyards if they could manage it, but what a mess the exiles found in Jerusalem itself! It took them more than twenty years to get to their present situation. And now, at last, the Temple rebuilding was happening. God was good, but what future had He in store for His People?

Aliud was not to know that his direct descendant would stand five hundred and fifty years later where he was standing and declare, “Destroy this Temple and in three days I will raise it up again!” *But He was speaking of the Temple that was his body.*

**John M Gill**

### **Answers to May Quiz**

- |                         |                                      |
|-------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1. Blackpool            | 16. Grace Darling                    |
| 2. Bamburgh             | 17. Keira Knightley                  |
| 3. Saltburn-by-the-Sea  | 18. Dire Straits                     |
| 4. Whitley Bay          | 19. Tim Healey                       |
| 5. Benidorm             | 20. Nico Rosberg                     |
| 6. Monte Carlo / Monaco | 21. Dennis Quaid                     |
| 7. Las Vegas            | 22. Nou Camp/Camp Nou                |
| 8. Barcelona            | 23. The Colosseum                    |
| 9. Rome                 | 24. A Gondola                        |
| 10. Venice              | 25. Champs-Élysées                   |
| 11. Paris               | 26. Royal Pavilion/Brighton Pavilion |
| 12. Brighton            | 27. Amstel                           |
| 13. Amsterdam           | 28. The Sound of Music               |
| 14. Salzburg            |                                      |
| 15. Stanley Matthews    |                                      |

## **CORONA VIRUS INSTRUCTIONS**

This is **funny**: As we enter the next three weeks of lockdown here is a summary of the advice:

1. You MUST NOT leave the house for any reason, but if you have a reason, you can leave the house
2. Masks are useless at protecting you against the virus, but you may have to wear one because it can save lives, but they may not work, but they may be mandatory, but maybe not
3. Shops are closed, except those shops that are open
4. You must not go to work but you can get another job and go to work
5. You should not go to the Drs or to the hospital unless you have to go there, unless you are too poorly to go there
6. This virus can kill people, but don't be scared of it. It can only kill those people who are vulnerable or those people who are not vulnerable people. It's possible to contain and control it, sometimes, except that sometimes it actually leads to a global disaster
7. Gloves won't help, but they can still help so wear them sometimes or not
8. STAY HOME, but it's important to go out
9. There is no shortage of groceries in the supermarkets, but there are many things missing. Sometimes you won't need loo rolls but you should buy some just in case you need some
10. The virus has no effect on children except those children it affects
11. Animals are not affected, but there is still a cat that tested positive in Belgium in February when no one had been tested, plus a few tigers here and there...
12. Stay 2 metres away from tigers (see point 11)
13. You will have many symptoms if you get the virus, but you can also get symptoms without getting the virus, get the virus without having any symptoms or be contagious without having symptoms, or be non-contagious with symptoms...

14. To help protect yourself you should eat well and exercise, but eat whatever you have on hand as it's better not to go out shopping
15. It's important to get fresh air but don't go to parks but go for a walk. But don't sit down, except if you are old, but not for too long or if you are pregnant or if you're not old or pregnant but need to sit down. If you do sit down don't eat your picnic
16. Don't visit old people but you have to take care of the old people and bring them food and medication
17. If you are sick, you can go out when you are better but anyone else in your household can't go out when you are better unless they need to go out
18. You can get restaurant food delivered to the house. These deliveries are safe. But groceries you bring back to your house have to be decontaminated outside for three hours including Pizza...
19. You can't see your older mother or grandmother, but they can take a taxi and meet an older taxi driver
20. You are safe if you maintain the safe social distance when out but you can't go out with friends or strangers at the safe social distance
21. The virus remains active on different surfaces for two hours ... or four hours... six hours... I mean days, not hours... But it needs a damp environment. Or a cold environment that is warm and dry... in the air, as long as the air is not plastic
22. Schools are closed so you need to home educate your children, unless you can send them to school because you're not at home. If you are at home you can home educate your children using various portals and virtual classrooms, unless you have poor internet, or more than one child and only one computer, or you are working from home. Baking cakes can be considered maths, science or art. If you are home educating you can include household chores to be education. If you are home educating you can start drinking at 10am
23. If you are not home educating children you can also start drinking at 10am

24. The number of corona-related deaths will be announced daily but we don't know how many people are infected as they are only testing those who are almost dead to find out if that's what they will die of... the people who die of corona who aren't counted won't be counted
25. You should stay in lockdown until the virus stops infecting people but it will only stop infecting people if we all get infected so it's important we get infected and some don't get infected
26. You can join your neighbours for a street party and turn your music up for an outside disco and your neighbours won't call the police. People in another street are allowed to call the police about your music
27. No business will go under due to Coronavirus except those businesses that will have already gone under.



HOW MANY MORE TIMES! Two metres you ..... !

## **FORGOTTEN**

I had forgotten how warm  
sunshine can be in Spring  
after long wintry days. I suddenly  
emerge to find its rays envelop  
me in a soft reassuring blanket.

I remember the brown autumn  
leaves, some still skittering behind  
the tree, but I had forgotten how  
fresh young shoots can unfold  
their tiny green leaves in the light.

I must have forgotten how urgently  
the nesting birds sing songs  
to their partners in nature,  
each one so busy building a safe  
place for raising new chicks.

After the winter of my indoor life,  
I come outside to find a welcome  
from cheery golden daffodils  
smiling in the gentle breeze,  
some even bold enough to wave.

I don't remember those deep  
blue anemones raising their faces  
to the light, still hiding shyly  
behind the hedgerow's  
sheltering kindness.

Spring has caught me  
by surprise this year, I am  
not ready to grasp those short-  
lived rays of warmth, quickly,  
before retreating in their wake.

Perhaps it is time to clean out  
the dusty world of darkness  
and move into fresh starts  
discarding the gloomy  
memories of winter times.

**Rosemary Gray**

# NAME THE FILM

1



2



3



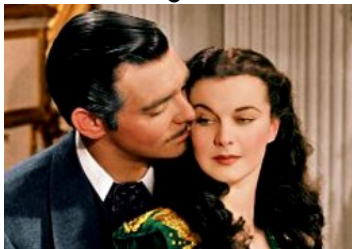
4



5



6



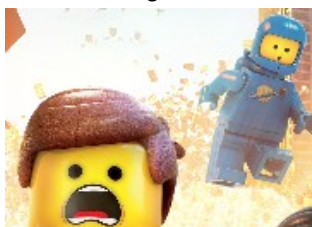
7



8



9



10



## FLOWER POWER

I've always been mad about flowers. When I was six I got the 'Observer Book of Flowers' and started a big collection of pressed flowers (I couldn't do that today). Although I lived in inner-city Coventry, we spent school holidays at our caravan in Wales, where we roamed free and I was able to find almost every flower in the book. My Biology teaching career began in inner London where the topic of 'Plant Reproduction' gave me a great opportunity to take classes to Kew to wow them with flowers. On my permitted lockdown walks my heart soars at the abundance of blossom and flowers at this special time of year. Flowers restore the soul and bring back happy memories.

My wedding bouquet included peach-coloured 'split' gladioli so every July I buy some. I took this picture at Harrogate Flower Show last year.



When we moved up from Berkshire in 1981 our house on Darras Hall had two gorgeous pink cherry trees in the front garden. From upstairs I looked down on a sea of pink froth. Alas, after a few years they had to be taken down as the roots were too near the house. But I always 'get my fix' from the lovely tree on our village green. The other day I took this picture of one branch with 'my' bench beneath it and the river Pont just behind: fab!





I had a lovely surprise last week when friends from Heddon left these tulips on my doorstep for my birthday. Two years ago I achieved a life-time dream of going to Amsterdam's Keukenhof – the most beautiful Spring gardens in the world. Words can't describe this heaven on earth - held for ever in my memory.

### **Flower memories**

Life is restricted at the moment but memory can still run free. Look at any flower in your home or garden, on your walk or on TV, in a picture....does it bring back memories?

Since 'lockdown' I exchange flower pictures with my cousin in Ontario. She's in lockdown and Spring is late there this year - yesterday it was snowing! But she sent a wonderful picture of daffodils in her house.

ENJOY THE FLOWERS - GOD'S SPECIAL BLESSING X

**Ann Cooper**

### **WASH BAGS FOR HOSPITAL PATIENTS**

You will have seen from last week's notices that we have had an appeal from Jim Magee, the hospital chaplain, for wash bags for hospital patients. This is something we can all help with.

Please try to collect the following items:-

A clear plastic bag to hold the basic essentials of soap, wash cloth, toothbrush and tooth-paste, plastic comb, small packet of paper tissues. This covers both men and women, the only extra for men would be packs of 5 or 10 PLASTIC DISPOSABLE RAZORS. Little extras like lip balm and shower gel are also appreciated. Also, wrapped chocolates and biscuits for the staff, this prevents handling open products. Staff appreciate the little treats that help them through their day. If you are able to do this, please contact me and I will arrange collection either of items or completed wash bags and onward delivery to the hospitals in need. Many thanks, contact details:- [rosemary.gray19@gmail.com](mailto:rosemary.gray19@gmail.com) or 01661 822493



**Rosemary Gray**

## HUSKY'S LITTLE HELPER

As permitted by 'Corona lockdown instructions' I take a walk. Sometimes I sit for a few minutes in our Church garden mesmerized by Husky. For those of you who don't know him, Husky is the robot who cuts the grass for us. This tiny little machine goes over and over the grass randomly and, amazingly, keeps what is quite a big area of grass really short. Every so often he takes himself to his charging corner for rest and renewal. I have heard tell that at least one of our Property Stewards keeps a



beady eye on Husky from a remote camera so they can be mesmerized for hours in their own home! It's quite exciting when he has a tussle with resistant nettles. Once when I was washing the Church garden benches, Husky crept up behind me and tried to eat my spare cloth, which I'd foolishly left on the grass: he's faster than you think. The other day

when I sat in the Church garden a rabbit appeared and started helping Husky to eat the grass. I took this photo with my phone but the rabbit got away! You just see valiant Husky battling on unaided and unfazed.

**Ann Cooper**

## WESTEND FOODBANK

It is very encouraging to hear from Peter Michell that he has been able to send a further **£499** to the Newcastle Foodbank. **£250** came from Ponteland Lions, and the rest has come from individual donations. If you would like more news about the Foodbank the link is:-  
<https://newcastlewestend.foodbank.org.uk>



**Andrew Pay**

## IMPORTANCE OF FAMILY GENERATIONS

During 'lockdown' those of us who are lucky enough to have families are communicating with them often. At least one person I know has had a reconciliation with her daughter due to Corona - wonderful! This picture is 14 years old but shows four generations...Aunt May, who many of you loved, was 90, I was 60, Tess was 30 and Amy was 0. The prayer goes with it.



God of birth, thank you for first steps and unconditional trust.  
God of growth, thank you for wide horizons and questioning.  
God of maturity, thank you for uphill struggles and downhill joy.  
God of ageing, thank you for level paths and sustaining love.  
God of death, lead us to heaven with cartwheels, star jumps, dancing.

God of companionship, bless us with fellow pilgrims along the way.

God of life's journey,  
feed us as children, enlighten us as young people,  
guide us as adults, support us in old age;  
meet each generation anew and travel with us. Amen ..

***Ann Cooper 2006***

## **FURTHER CORONAVIRUS COMMENTS**

Today is Palm Sunday and we have come to the end of the second week of lockdown. The day started so warmly! Not only is the sky blue, the breeze soft and the temperature mild but some lovely items arrived on my doorstep, giving me the warm glow of the kind thoughts of Christian friends. The April edition of Cornerstone was in the bundle, the week's notices and the order of service prepared by Juliet and also a Palm cross. So I spent quality time reading the message and reading and prayers and I sang the hymns. So all in all it has felt a special day. Thank you to all for the preparation. Later in the day a parcel has arrived containing a home grown leek and potatoes, so another pot of soup is on the menu.

It's easy to feel completely taken over by coverage of the virus and so I spent some time looking at my collection of tapes. A few years since they last saw the light of day! However, they have proved an absolute joy and a lovely respite. Some of them were Highland and Scottish country dance selections so it was fun to dance around to their toe-tapping beat which also was delightful exercise.

Again I'm giving thanks for my garden. I have never really appreciated it so much. To have the freedom of the outdoors on a lovely day is just wonderful. Suddenly the grass is quite long and tufty. My gardener has been very ill with the virus. His wife is a pilot and has been to Spain, Italy and Portugal. She herself has not succumbed but must be a carrier as her husband has had no other contacts. He is coming next week, so it will be payment and any conversation at a distance. Also he is bringing his own coffee etc with him. Many of you will be familiar with the account of the "plague village" of Eyam in the 17<sup>th</sup> century which was sealed off and money and messages were hidden in an appointed place. Our present situation is somewhat similar!

Now Thursdays have a whole new point of interest. At 8.00pm the nation is invited to clap hands and bang the pans for the NHS, Carers and ancillary NH Workers. So each week I put on all the lights for house and garden and CLAP!! I can hear most of my neighbours participating and even a big drum is making a big noise. My nephew in North Aberdeenshire is out at 8.00pm with his bagpipes!

This entire time has so far been an excuse for that extra cup of tea. In 1660 Samuel Pepys recorded a new “exotic” drink which was China tea. He had never previously had a cup of tea! Thank goodness we still have tea so we can turn to this most delightful and refreshing of beverages.

Now a third of the way through April, a nice surprise has arrived, this time on four legs. A huge hedgehog came at 8.15pm to the French door and I hastened to find the hog dishes and some cat food. Before doing so, I went to the front door just to make sure it was locked for the night; another surprise, as a hedgehog was on the doorstep. So two dishes were prepared, water bowls



Hedgehog Highway

checked and tonight - and from now on - I shall have their meal ready. Both hedgehogs looked plump and spines and frills were silky and in good condition. Another happy sign of Spring and Summer.

As I write Boris Johnson is still in intensive care and it is most concerning that our Prime Minister should be so ill. Our prayers and wishes are with him. And indeed

for all those who are similarly afflicted.

Now it is the middle of week four of the lockdown so one whole month of the 12 week isolation period is over. Retrospectively the month has passed over more “pleasantly” than perhaps anticipated. Our thoughts every day are with the families who have lost a member to the virus, with those on 12 week lockdown, with those recovering and everyone working in hospitals, care homes and in services to the public – our postmen, bin men, behind-the-scenes people keeping the shops stocked and our gas and electricity supplies. We are so grateful to everyone who is helping to keep some semblance of normality in our present daily lives. We are thankful our Prime Minister is now at Chequers convalescing after being so ill and once again we are reminded that illness is no respecter of persons.

Do enjoy this very beautiful Spring and keep well everyone.

**Jean Tweedie**





## THE OPEN DOOR

The rhubarb looks to be growing well this year so I thought you might like to try this seasonal recipe.

**Judith**

### **Rhubarb and Custard Cake**

400g roasted rhubarb  
250g butter  
150g pot of ready made custard  
250g SR flour  
½tsp baking powder  
250g caster sugar  
4 eggs  
1 tsp vanilla essence



Preheat the oven to 200°C/180°C fan.

Cut 400g rhubarb into finger-sized pieces.

Toss in 50g of sugar and spread in a single layer onto a baking tray.

Cover with foil and roast for 15 mins.

Remove the foil, give the rhubarb a stir then cook for a further 5 mins.

Drain off the juices and set aside to cool.

Prepare a 23cm cake tin. Turn heat down to 180C/160°C fan.

Reserve 3 tbsp of custard.

Beat the rest of the custard with the butter, flour, baking powder, eggs, vanilla and remaining sugar until smooth.

Spoon a third of the mixture into the tin. Top with some of the rhubarb.

Spread on another third of the mixture then more rhubarb.

Top with the rest of the mixture, leaving it in rough mounds .

Then scatter the remaining rhubarb over the top and dot with the saved custard.

Bake for 40 mins. Cover with foil and bake for a further 15 - 20 mins until cooked. Cool in the tin then dredge with icing sugar.

## OVERWHELMED?

Are you finding in these extraordinary times that you are trying to do more and more, and not finding time to stop and recuperate? Is combining working from home with caring for and supporting children or older people, or both, meaning that you are finding it difficult to unwind, slow your mind and/or get a night's sleep? Is the worry of what is going to happen next causing anxiety and stress?

There has been much talk in recent years about using meditation to help with these situations, with mindfulness meditation being a particularly current trend. There is also strong tradition within Christianity of contemplative practice, Centring Prayer being, in my view, one of the easier places to start. This combines worship with a focussed mind.

My trouble is remembering to take time each day to maintain my practice and to give it the priority it needs. So, this is a small reminder to everyone to make a little bit of time for yourselves each day, so you continue to be able to help others, and to stay well.

Here are a couple of useful links:

Christian contemplative practice:

<https://www.contemplative.org/contemplative-practice/>

Meditation sessions online for the duration:

<https://newcastlemeditation.com/>

**Andrew Gonnet**



Pauline's birthday party



Iain reaching out to the neighbours!



## SCAMS

These are sadly on the increase. Both my parents have recently been contacted by people attempting to extract money from them. My father received an email where the 'from' address was the correct address for one of his friends. This was saying that his friend was in prison in Spain and needed bail money, but the language used was odd, so he was alerted.

It is sad there are organisations whose purpose is to scam people and extract money. In my opinion though, it is more sad that people are so desperate that they end up having to work for these organisations.

Citizens' Advice have a number of internet pages that offer advice about scams and even an "online scams helper". Search for "**citizens advice scams**" or see:

<https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/consumer/scams/check-if-something-might-be-a-scam/>

Some of the key alert points from here are:

- Something seems too good to be true;
- you're asked to transfer money in a hurry or in an unusual way;
- you are asked for personal information, like passwords or PINs;
- someone you don't know contacts you unexpectedly;
- there is no postal address given in documents or online.



**Andrew Gonnet**

## FORWARD PLANNING Christmas is coming!

My son Mike is renowned throughout the family for refusing point-blank to hear any mention of the word Christmas before 1 December. It was to my great amazement therefore that he rang earlier this week, first of all asking if I was sitting down, and then telling me that he has booked my flight down to Bristol for 21 December! He was a bit bored with working from home, he said, going on to add that he had floored his sister Toria. But what a way to make my day!

**Viv Whyte**

## VILLAGE NEWS

### **Proposal for coal surface mine on land north of Throckley east of Ponteland Road (B6323)**

Banks Mining were due to hear whether they could proceed with this scheme. I do not know if the timetable will be kept.

### **Homes at former Police Headquarters**

Bellway Homes are currently building the new homes on this site. The older houses on the site which used to form a home for children are classed as listed buildings. These are currently being renovated and there will be 22 of these older properties.

### **Belsay Hall, Castle and Gardens**

English Heritage have plans to repair the castle, replace the roof of the hall, create a new café, add a play scheme. Work was due to start this summer.



### **Callerton Lane Traffic Restrictions**

There will be a one-way system operating on Callerton Lane near the school for 30 weeks. Don't be fooled by the sign saying 14 weeks!

**Jennifer Hardy**



## GARDENING FOR MAY 2020

I would not be classed as a writer if I did not write “we live in unprecedented times”. And this is so with the weather. I have been self-isolating for over six weeks now (writing on 24<sup>th</sup> April) so I do not know what is going on locally, all I can thank God for is that this horrid Covid 19 has spread in the spring of the year and that we have a large garden (well over the Darras Hall quarter acre) where we have grown vegetables every year since we came to live here in July 1977. The weather has been in our favour as well but it now looks as though this “baking April” will be breaking weather records as well. Other than a few light showers we have not had soil-penetrating rain for 42 days, and counting. It is claimed that Britain is on course for the hottest April in 361 years since records began in 1659. April 2011 is the warmest on record. After all the rain we had the hot, dry weather doesn’t come without its problems. The heavy clay soil where shrubs, perennials and hedges grow in the garden, left undisturbed since the winter, is almost impenetrable with a spade unless it has been watered, and unless the area is level water just runs off. We will not have to complain about rain when it comes!!



I am pleased to report that the pansies and bulbs I planted in troughs and containers last autumn have been magnificent. With the pansies I believe that the long-life fertilizer that I incorporated in the home-mixed compost has continued to supply nutrients despite all the rain. All the planters need regular watering and I have even set up a blackboard chart to keep a record of where I last watered – e.g the front of the house, the back patio, the many other planters with developing hostas and lilies, and so the list goes on. With vegetables we have just lifted the last leeks, finished the spring broccoli which did not crop well after the heavy rain but we are eating spring cabbage grown in pots in the greenhouse after ground conditions were unsuitable for planting out in October 2019. Lettuce (again in pots) is nearly ready and I have now got ingredients for making rhubarb ginger jam tomorrow.

Although everything has been fairly free of disease except some Botrytis on early-arrived begonias we are now warned of the arrival of a plague of greenfly from Asia. Although there are more than 500 species of greenfly there are only about 10 that bother

us. The problem is that they reproduce extremely quickly (cloning themselves up to five times a day) and when the plants get overcrowded they produce offspring with wings that can fly off to new locations. You can control them on non-edibles with toxic chemicals (as I do) but otherwise rely on ladybirds, blue tits etc. to eat them, squash them or spray with a soap solution made up from soft soap.



The begonias, stored wrapped in newspaper, in boxes in the garage have been brought out and placed on moist compost in the greenhouse. There have, as usual, been some casualties as old corms dry out. I bought some new ones, planted them in pots

in March and although a visiting animal took a liking to them, most are growing strongly. A few *B.semperflorens* I retained missed being put away – they survived the winter in the greenhouse and are now growing away. I buy new begonia plugs to plant in the troughs – they are growing well. The perennial agapanthus in planters, kept under the bench in the greenhouse in the winter, are now due to come out. I stand them in water for about a week and apply growmore fertilizer – they bloomed very well last year. The sweet peas are planted out but with everything so dry establishment of anything in cultivated ground has been proving very difficult. I water the planting hole for every plant before planting and continue watering afterwards.

Ponteland Parish Flower Show is due to be held on Saturday 12 September in the Memorial Hall. The schedule is in draft, the judges have been appointed and we are ready to proceed unless the forecast of coronavirus suggests that we cancel. I would encourage exhibitors to plan, plant and preserve as usual. If the show has to be cancelled you will have quality produce, flowers and preserves to enjoy. Cancellation will be published if we can see no hope of staging the event.

With the Church Plant sale cancelled I said last month I would have some plants surplus and available for sale with all proceeds going to "Care and Share". I will use the Church Notices to advise on availability. They will be found at our drive entrance (30 Callerton Court) from Friday to Sunday with an honesty box for payment (please no small change!).

Enjoy your garden – it is a refuge for some but a pleasure for most. It is our salvation as we continue to self-isolate.

## FAMILY NEWS

The strong communication network that has developed during lockdown has proved invaluable to us all. Appropriately distanced chats have also been a good link. If anyone would like more links do ask. Many church folk are making regular calls to friends. Your name can be included too. Do link in if you would like to be included more in this.

This is a particularly difficult time for members who, because of health problems, are unable to leave their homes, and for those who also rely on carers. We have several church friends who live alone in these situations. This makes life more challenging.

We also need to both pray for, and to support, our younger church friends who are not only coping with new challenges this virus has thrown up in terms of their family situations, but who are doing frontline work in healthcare, Social Services and in other key areas. We need to remember them, and all the young people and children whose lives have been put on hold. There are some church members with non-Covid-related health problems.

Please remember **Marjorie Scarlett** and others in your prayers.

The church web site, the circuit link and our regular services, which are also being delivered in hard form for those unable to link, have been a great source of comfort too. They have also been appreciated by a wider church audience as friends from other churches have also linked. The efforts of many church folk to implement these have been greatly appreciated.

It is really encouraging to see that **Chris Matthew** has made such a good recovery from both Covid and pneumonia. We send our best wishes to both him and to Georgina.

A big thank you to everyone who has telephoned or sent cards to show your love and concern after Margit broke her wrist. It appears to be healing nicely and all your kind messages have been much appreciated. God bless you all and keep well.

**Margit and Albert Peterson**

## Preachers May

Look for YouTube on the internet and search for "Newcastle West Circuit".

[www.youtube.co.uk](http://www.youtube.co.uk)

Over 700 people are watching the services!

## HELP IS AVAILABLE

If you need any practical help of any kind (e.g. shopping, collecting prescriptions etc.) then please contact Pete Cowey. If you wish to volunteer to run errands for others then please pass your details on to Pete. Email:

[mrpetecowey@btinternet.com](mailto:mrpetecowey@btinternet.com)

Tel: 07771 8575



## Cornerstone Distribution

We will try and distribute to all those who are not on the internet but for those who are the full colour version will be on the Church website as soon as possible.

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

## Ponteland Methodist Church

Search ...

[Home](#) [About Us](#) [News](#) [Contact Us](#) [Newcastle West Circuit](#) [Premises](#)



### Ponteland Methodist Church

*'Let the love of Jesus be known'*



Welcome!

Welcome to the website for Ponteland Methodist Church.

Rev. Jona Sewell



Hi, my name is Jona Sewell and I'm the minister of Ponteland Methodist Church. I can be contacted at any time using the 'Contact Us' option at the top.

## From The Editors

*Don't forget that copy for the June edition of Cornerstone should be with the editor by **Friday 29th May 2020**. The editor's email address is [andrew73anderson@gmail.com](mailto:andrew73anderson@gmail.com). The editorial committee is Andy Anderson, Jennifer Hardy, Jona Sewell and Viv Whyte.*