

# Ponteland Methodist Church

# Cornerstone

HAPPY EASTER



**April 2023**

## **MINISTER'S LETTER**

As Jesus faltered under the load of the cross, Simon of Cyrene was given the supreme honour of carrying it for Him. Mark tells his readers (in 15:21) that Simon, a Jewish Passover pilgrim from North Africa, is the father of Alexander and Rufus. Alexander and Rufus were bishops in the first century church, and so presumably Simon himself, the one who had carried Jesus' cross to Golgotha, became a believer. I like to think about Simon of Cyrene worshipping in one of the first-century house churches and his fellow believers whispering to one another, "the cross-bearer is here". Can you imagine meeting the man who carried Jesus' cross?!

From the story of Simon of Cyrene we are reminded that there are limits to what we can bear, but when we reach those limits God will send someone to help. David was the great hero who had killed Goliath, but there was a giant David couldn't kill. When the brother of Goliath was about to kill David because the king had grown weary in battle, Abishai came to David's rescue and slew the giant.

Elijah was the mighty man of God who called down fire from heaven and prevailed in his contest with the four hundred prophets of Baal. But when the prophet fled and was depressed, curled up in a foetal position under a tree praying to die, God arranged for Elisha to become his companion and to share his prophetic mantle.

And when Jesus Christ the Son of God reached his limit and could carry his cross no more, there was Simon of Cyrene to carry it for him. Some days we can slay Goliath with a sling-shot, some days we can't. Some days we can call down fire from heaven, some days we're curled up under the broom tree. Some days we can handle anything, some days it's all too much. That's when we need someone to help us.

This is the beauty of the body of Christ and why the church is so necessary. Christianity is not a solo project; we can't go it alone. David couldn't do it by himself. Elijah couldn't do it by

himself. Even Jesus couldn't do it by Himself. I can't do it by myself. And you can't do it by yourself.

Some days we have the honour of being Simon of Cyrene and helping a brother or sister carry their cross when it has become too much for them. Other days we are the one in need of a Simon of Cyrene. Whether we are helping or being helped, it's all the grace of God. **I thank God for each and every member of our Church family who has helped others carry their cross.**

*Lord Jesus, send us a Simon of Cyrene when we've reached our limit; and help us to be a Simon of Cyrene to those faltering around us. Amen.*

Happy Easter.

*Jona*

(Taken and adapted from "The Unvarnished Jesus"  
by Brian Zahnd)



### **MEN'S FORUM**

The next meeting will be at 7:30pm on **Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> April** when Lord Stevens will tell us about his "Lifetime in Policing".

John Stevens (now Baron Stevens of Kirkwhelpington) was the Chief Constable of Northumbria before being appointed as the London Metropolitan Police Commissioner. Having an established reputation for integrity, thoroughness and independence he went on to conduct major inquiries into security breaches in Northern Ireland and the death of Diana, Princess of Wales. He has also led major investigations into equine doping, corruption in Premier League transfers and Formula 1 racing.

The talk should be very interesting to many friends so Forum would like to extend an invitation to anyone, men and women, who would like to join us on this occasion.

**Peter Michell**



## THE PROBLEM OF JUDAS

If you had been a listener in 1941/2 you would have heard a play-cycle on the Life of Jesus Christ which was broadcast on Sunday Children's Hour monthly for nearly a year and was also well received by many adults. Fortunately the author, Dorothy L. Sayers, published in 1943 the scripts and much introductory material and I have my late wife's copy before me now.

The argument about the character of Judas derives from that introduction.

Why, if as John's Gospel depicts Judas as a thief, paid for treason, and described by Jesus as "*diabolos*"-"*The Enemy*", would Jesus choose him as one of the Twelve? And why, having done his worst, would Judas bring back the money and go and hang himself? Not the action of a determined traitor. To choose an obvious crook as a follower was foolish, and Jesus was no fool, "*He knew what was in*" Judas.

Our author writes that "*the worst evil in the world is brought about, not by the open vices, but by the deadly corruption of the proud virtues .... Pride is the besetting sin of highly virtuous and intelligent people. Jesus, who dealt gently with publicans and sinners, was hard as nails about lofty-minded sins: He was a consistent person and if He spoke of Judas with unexampled sternness, it is likely that the sin of Judas was of a peculiarly over-weaning loftiness.*"

Therefore in these plays, Sayers assumes that Judas was one of the disciples who were formerly disciples of John the Baptist. He had taken seriously Jesus's predictions of arrest and crucifixion and understood them to be the true path of salvation, but considered himself to be wiser and more determined than his Master.

Aware that revolutionary bands were always gathering in the North and prepared for armed intervention, Judas is depicted as fearing that Jesus would weaken and turn for support to such ungodly forces. He was unaware that such an attempt had been secretly proposed by an insurrectionist group to Jesus and that a password "*The Master needs it*" had been given, whereby

a warhorse was ready at a village over the hill from Jerusalem; a refusal to join in rebellion would be indicated by the alternative choice of an ass. Judas in the play takes the actual action of Jesus in choosing to ride a donkey into the Capital as a change of plan and a choice by the Master of popular rebellion as a pathway to triumph. Judas in his pride thinks he knows better!

The diabolical decision of Judas to force the issue, the prophetic path to the Cross, leads him to accept money from the Priests to replace what he has filched to pay his intermediaries and deliberately to precipitate the arrest and condemnation of Jesus, so becoming unknowingly party to the Passion of Christ.

D L Sayers writes: *"He (Judas) sees the truth about himself – the itch for suffering that was only an inverted cruelty; the refusal to believe in innocence that was rooted in the envy and hatred of innocence .... but he cannot be saved because he will not be saved. He goes on, down and down to the lowest pit of all, where sits the devil of pride that makes the sin unforgivable because the sinner resents and hates and refuses forgiveness. At the bottom of that pit is only himself and his self-hatred, and here there is no place of repentance. So he goes to his own place."*

**John M Gill**



# **Fairtrade Fortnight**

## **FAIRTRADE 27 Feb – 12 Mar**

### **FAIRTRADE FORTNIGHT**

Many thanks to everyone who supported the Big Brew at St Matthew's on 11th March. It was good to see so many of you there. A donation of £826 has been made to Transform Trade. Thanks too for the money given to the retiring collection after services on Sunday 12th March. As a result a further £154 has been donated to Transform Trade.

**Bev**



## **MAURICE MILBURN**

Maurice was born on 27 February 1935 to George and Ellen Milburn. He was the oldest of five children with siblings Alan, Alice, Malcolm and David.

He was very much a Ponteland lad and his Father spent some time working at the Cottage Hospital. Maurice was schooled at the 'School on the Green' and then at the 'Top School', both of which have long since disappeared. He left school aged 15.

Maurice wasn't afraid of hard work and worked for Little Farm selling sausages

and pies, and then selling and delivering bread buns for the same company. He then worked for the council cleaning and keeping bus shelters in a good state of repair, and clearing paths and trimming hedges, including along the old railway line. He also loved gardening and would care for the gardens of other people too.

Even when he retired he didn't really stop as he liked to be busy. He would clear the roads up to the school after heavy snowfall, and would mow lawns for up to 20 other people around Ponteland and Darras Hall, even roping in Pat to help on her day off!

Maurice met Pat through the Order of Christian Witness at Dilston Road Methodist Church where Pat was a member. When they first started courting they alternated between attending worship at Dilston Road and Ponteland, and they wed at Dilston Road on 14 June 1958; that's 64½ years of marriage!

When they were first married they lived with Pat's parents before moving into their home on Pont View in 1961, for which they had to wait to be built. They've seen a lot of changes around the village in the years they've called Pont View home, but have always had each other and they did everything together.

In earlier years they enjoyed dancing and attended many in the villages in the surrounding area, however this came to an end due to the early starts when Maurice had to do the bread run.

Together they enjoyed day trips out to places like Jedburgh or Rothbury, usually taking a picnic with them or stopping for fish and chips. They were members of the National Trust and enjoyed visits to Cragside and Wallington Hall, where they enjoyed the houses and walking around the gardens. In fact they had a wander around the West Garden at Wallington just two days before Maurice's sad and sudden death.

Maurice and Pat also enjoyed holidays and were regular visitors to Llandudno staying in the same hotel for many years and making friends with the owners and several others. Whilst there they enjoyed exploring the North Wales Coast, Anglesey, and Snowdonia National Park as well as the town of Llandudno itself.

Both Pat and Maurice liked being outside and Maurice especially enjoyed gardening; their garden is very well kept and, as well as flowers and bushes, Maurice also grew potatoes.

Maurice attended church his whole life and delighted in the fact that he was the longest-standing member of Ponteland Methodist Church. Over the years he contributed to the life of the Church in many ways: helping at BB until the early starts put an end to it, running a youth club, being part of the property committee and caring for the building, and running the Friday evening bowls and then the Monday afternoon group. He also served as funeral steward for many, many years and would be up early to put the cones out in the Church carpark before any interlopers parked there and took up any of the precious spaces.

Because of his longevity Maurice was well known around the village and within the Church and wider community, his kind smile of recognition and his friendship will be missed by all who knew and loved him.

**Rev Jona Sewell**

### **CHURCH HALL**

With the approval of the Church Council, the main hall will be having soundproofing installed and the floor varnished. **The hall will be unavailable to everybody from 0800/Fri 31st Mar > 1400/Sat 1st Apr and again from 0800/Mon 3rd Apr > 2000/Mon 10th Apr.** During this time, arrangements are being made to accommodate groups that use the hall to relocate to the Upper Hall or the Church.

**Geoff Lisle**

## REACHING 70

More behind me now than in front,  
so what is left to look forward to?  
Future looks bright when you're young,  
now it looks down with a grin.  
Upwards and onwards is positive  
keep going, make plans, never falter.

Age is only another number,  
it's how you feel today that matters.  
Gone are those teenage worries  
with hormones ready to self destruct.  
Keep calm, carry on with life as it is  
never look back with regret.

Watch the youngsters make mistakes,  
you know they will get things wrong.  
They don't listen, just learn to  
do things their own way, being modern.  
It's good when they never give up  
trying to be better than the last time.

Relax as the tough part's now over,  
time moves us to calmer waters.  
Give up the rush and the stress,  
you have earned those luxuries.  
You deserve a treat, go away and  
find that peaceful holiday dream.

Struggling to work out e tickets,  
surely someone will check.  
Alas, no, only screens revolve  
to hum their happy result.  
Check your electronic devices  
recharge your batteries, before you go.



They call it progress whenever  
machines can do the hard work.  
Empty desks manned by scanners  
just to check you are still alive.  
No smiling faces greet me now  
only beeps and flashing lights.

Gone are the days when real faces  
smiled and we joked with each other.  
As long as you keep moving forward  
the electronic world can detect, that  
life continues in all its fullness,  
hearts still pumping, but slower now.

**Rosemary Gray**

### **LEADERSHIP TEAM UPDATE**

The new Leadership Team has now established on the TLLC course (Transformation Leadership Learning Community). We meet monthly on Zoom with other course participants to hear a guest speaker, meet at the same frequency with our 'coach' Nigel Pimlott, and meet monthly together as a team to discuss future direction and plans. At the moment we have nothing concrete to share but the areas we are discussing include:

What's our vision and how do we act up on it?

How worship at Bouncy Church can develop

How we can build on the excellent work of Bouncy Church

Possible building changes – can we have a coffee point in Stobart Room?

We will aim to keep the Church informed of any outcomes or decisions. In the meantime if you have any questions, concerns or comments then please pass them on to myself or any other member of the team: Peter and Val Michell, Peter and Isobel Hindle, Steve Small, Ann Cooper, Chrys Hudson.

**Rev Jona Sewell**



## THE OPEN DOOR

An easy recipe that makes soft chewy cookies. You could add different flavoured chocolate or use smarties instead of mini eggs.

Judith

### Easter Egg Cookies

175g butter, softened  
200g light brown soft sugar  
100g caster sugar  
2tsp vanilla essence  
1 egg  
250g plain flour  
1/2 tsp bicarb  
50g white chocolate, chopped  
100g dark chocolate, chopped  
100g mini eggs, lightly crushed



Preheat the oven to 190°C/170 fan.

Line 2 baking trays with baking parchment.

Cream together the butter, sugars and vanilla.

Beat in the egg.

Fold in the flour.

Fold in the chocolate and half the eggs, keeping the larger pieces to decorate.

Scoop golf -ball sized mounds of dough on to the baking trays, leaving lots of space for them to spread.

Push the remaining pieces of eggs into the tops.

Bake for 15-18 mins.

Cool for 10 mins before transferring to a wire rack.

## Summer Opening Times

**From April 3rd**

**Mondays 2.00pm-4.00pm**



We will meet in the foyer on 3rd April



COME AND JOIN US FOR OUR  
**ANNUAL SPRING PLANT SALE**  
**SATURDAY 20<sup>TH</sup> MAY 10am -12pm**  
LOTS OF BEDDING AND HOUSE PLANTS  
LIGHT REFRESHMENTS  
FREE EVENT ALL PROCEEDS TO CARE N SHARE



### **PLANT SALE**

The Care and Share team will be holding the annual plant sale on Saturday 20th May at 10am. Come and join us for spring blooms and refreshments.

**Alison Bates**

### **ONLINE WORSHIP**

The next Online Worship will be for the **Easter Sunday** Service led by **Rev Lynda Coulthard**.

## TEN LITTLE MEANDERERS SET OFF ON A WALK

On Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> March ten Meanderers set off on a journey. First stop was Callerton Parkway Metro Station to get tickets to Whitley Bay, which was closed, so Hadrian Road instead. Stopped at Kenton Bank Foot to pick up Chris then there were eleven. Walk along the river Tyne with lunch at North Shields. Timed for 12.30 but three minutes late and wrong benches! We lost two at Lord Collingwood's statue then there were nine. Through Tynemouth along the beach to Cullercoats then into Beaches and Cream for coffee and scones. Two went home early then there were seven. Seven tired Meanderers went to the Metro to get the train home and over the bridge at South Gosforth to get us home. Geoff and Angela did a magnificent job keeping us all together through all the transport stages but every stop did seem to involve taking the bridge over the railway line. Just an example of Geoff's "undulations". Next outing is Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> March.

**Andy Anderson**



## VISIT TO GRANGE-OVER-SANDS

We have had another wonderful time in this beautiful little town situated on Morecambe Bay. Amazingly again we had sunshine and only a light breeze so this added to the pleasure with a relaxing atmosphere. Some of our group walked along the prom without their jackets and sat watching the light on the water. Big crashing waves and tidal movements all conspicuous by their absence. Just that steady filling of the sands. We found ourselves recalling the tragic deaths of the cockle pickers and a local lady told us that as a result, a voluntary charity has set up “Bay Search and Rescue” and has over 30 members with equipment on call.



One of the highlights of our time was a visit to Barrow-in-Furness to the Dock Museum. An exhibition was on until the end of March which was superb and was situated in the “basement”, the dry dock area.

A Victorian lady called Minnie had throughout her lifetime produced the most beautiful illustrated diary which turned up in an Auctioneer’s showroom. A journalist spotted it and immediately recognised something special. He bought it and as a result her

lifetime's work came to light. She had visited Africa, Norway, Canada etc. at a time when travel was not so common for a single lady. The exhibition was quite extensive thanks to the diary being spotted by a journalist who saw the huge potential to bring the story to light.

Other outings included were Penrith, Ulverston and then returning home by a ferry ride from Lake End to Windermere. All enjoyed in sunshine!

So now we are looking forward to our next away time which is a visit to Harrogate from Friday 7<sup>th</sup> July to Monday 10<sup>th</sup> July. Singles have already been taken but there are still spaces with twin or double occupancy. You will be welcome to join us if you would like to enjoy this next outing.

**Jean Tweedie**

**CHURCHES TOGETHER IN PONTELAND**  
**Monthly Prayers 2023**  
**Always at 12.00**

Monday 3 <sup>rd</sup> April	St Mary's (Easter Monday is on the 10 <sup>th</sup> )
Monday 8 <sup>th</sup> May	Ponteland Methodist Church
Monday 12 <sup>th</sup> June	St Matthew's
Monday 10 <sup>th</sup> July	St Mary's
August	No meeting
Monday 11 <sup>th</sup> September	Ponteland Methodist Church
Monday 9 <sup>th</sup> October	St Matthew's
Monday 13 <sup>th</sup> November	St Mary's
Monday 11 <sup>th</sup> December	Ponteland Methodist Church

Meetings consist of a brief introduction and prayers from the different churches. Usually no more than 30 minutes.

**Contact** John Doherty 01661 821013





Join us for

# CORONATION BIG LUNCH

**Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> May**

**12.15pm**

**Ponteland Methodist Church**



To celebrate the Coronation of King Charles III, Care and Share are inviting everyone to a Coronation Big Lunch.

This is a non-chargeable event and if you would like a ticket, they will be available from any member of Care and Share during the month of April.

**Alison, Angela, Pauline, Brenda, Syd**



**The youngest and oldest members of the Church.**

## GARDENING FOR APRIL

We are having all the seasons rolled into one in March (writing 22<sup>nd</sup>). Everywhere is now wet enough, we have had enough frost for all the plants that need vernalisation and this week it has become warmer, so much so that the grass needs cutting. In 2022 we cut ours for the first time on 20<sup>th</sup> March. We have just had a new, lighter-weight, cable-free lithium battery lawn-mower delivered amid a downpour yesterday. We have charged the battery and hope Margaret can get moving with it later this week. I will report back on its use in due course.



I promised I would report the Which? Results on compost for patio pots. The trials took place in 2022 and involved growing “Charlotte” potatoes and “Horizon Neon Rose” pelargoniums. Which? only tested peat-free composts apart from Moorland Gold Multipurpose Compost which contains 33% peat which is not harvested but is filtered from lakes and dams that collect rain water

washed off peat highlands. Which? lists six best buys which, in my view, are all expensive. They range from 62p per litre for Moorland Gold down to 22p per litre for Melcourt Sylvagrow Multipurpose. Some have limited availability with only Melcourt available at Garden Centres. Seventeen composts were tested.

Which? recommended to avoid buying Levington Peat-Free Multipurpose compost with added John Innes as it had low fertilizer levels, was a poor performer but cheaper at 16p per litre. I do not buy compost for all the planters we have. Compost is recycled, with some of last year's tomato-growing compost incorporated and materials from the outdoor compost heap. I add Growmore (7:7:7), Fish Blood and Bone and controlled release feed (normally Miraclegro) proportionately to what is to be grown and the size of the container. I also treat many of the planters with a high potash (normally Tomerite) liquid feed during the growing season. It is not possible to give a prescription for each but with more vigorous plants it is good to remember that their only source of plant food is base dressing plus the added feed.

We have not started any activities on the vegetable plots but are still eating leeks and savoy cabbage with purple sprouting broccoli just ready for picking today. Mange-tout peas and broad beans are ready for potting on. Sweet peas need pricking out as



well as tomatoes. The few roses we have need pruning but I have been waiting to see if we are likely to have more frost, as with removing the 2022 blooms on the hydrangeas.



I think if you turn over the odd large leaf on the soil you may find the first of the slugs and snails that are there to pester us (by eating our young plants) through the summer. Which? although still promoting treatment with nematodes have been testing organic slug and snail controls to find the most effective ways to

stop these pests. They tested for ease of use, how long before slugs started on the untreated plants and longevity of the treatment. They have come up with three “best buys”. They are Stan Brouard Slugs-A-Gogo as an effective deterrent (£16.95 for 1.2kg bag from Sarah Raven), easy to use Westland Growing Success Organic Slug Stop Barrier Pellets (£9.25 for 2.25 kg bag at B & Q) and Kills Slugs and Snails is Westland Growing Success Slug Killer Advance priced at £8 for a 575g pack at Marshalls. Search for these products at Garden Centres.

April is the month when many get concerned that there is so much to do but if some items planned are delayed by the weather or ground conditions it is marvellous how “mother nature” will catch up. For those only wanting to grow a few vegetables garden centres now sell a wide variety of plant plugs, and growing plants such as tomatoes, cucumbers, courgettes, melons etc. I do not advise buying plugs of root vegetables other than very small beetroot. I start beetroot in plug trays and plant out in May when hopefully the risk of frost has gone as frost will cause beetroot to bolt. Warmth in the soil is often more important than earliness of planting for both vegetables and flowers, particularly new plants and half-hardy annuals which you may grow to give summer colour.

The Church Plant Sale (organised by Care and Share) will be held on Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> May at 10.00am in the hall. This will give those who can, extra time to pot up surplus plants for the sale – please bring them in on a Friday afternoon. Time to enjoy more of your outdoor room.

**Syd Cowan**

## VILLAGE NEWS

### **Rialto's Restaurant**

Rialto's have made revised proposals for the outdoor expansion but again met with many objections.

### **Proposed Campsite, Land South East of Furze Hill, Ponteland**

A planning application has been made for five caravans, pods and tented camping and up to three Shepherd Huts, ref 23/00929/MISC. This is on the left on road into Medburn from the Stamfordham Road at Millgate House.

### **Litter Picking in Ponteland**

Jane Hodson-Hamilton of Ponteland has been awarded a Community Champion Award for the regular litter picking. Thanks to her, but what a pity she feels the need to do this.

**Jennifer Hardy**



## FAMILY NEWS

**Thelma Ord** was very touched to receive her Mother's Day gift and Easter greeting from our Church. She really appreciates the regular contact she still has with her Ponteland Church friends, now that she is unable to attend services here. She particularly wished to be remembered to both Barbara Bradley and Joan Harrison.

Unfortunately another bout of Covid is affecting our local care and sheltered facilities. Please check before visiting. If this isn't possible a phone contact would be very meaningful. This is a hard lonely time for both the residents and staff in the affected establishments.

Best wishes to **Nancy Blaylock**, who has just celebrated her birthday.

On 14 March **Lily Josofia Courtney Mogensen** was born in Nairobi, Kenya, to Crystal (nee Courtney) and Niels and sister for Christian. They will be back in Ponteland at the end of May for holidays.

**Pat Milburn** wishes to thank everyone who sent flowers and cards in memory of Maurice.

## LAST TABOO

You may remember Chris' write-up in Cornerstone about The Last Taboo workshop that took place at PMC at the end of January. There is a leaflet available from the course, with helpful questions and resources. The course was highly recommended by those who attended. It will be running again on 29<sup>th</sup> April in Darlington. If you would like to attend, please use this booking link: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/551493260187>

**Bev**

### Preachers April

2nd 10.00am Hindle (BC)  
6.30am Coulthard  
9th 10.00am Sewell (S)  
6.30pm Sewell (S)  
16th 10.00am Gray  
6.30pm Forrester  
23rd 10.00am Sanichar  
6.30pm Sewell  
30th 10.00am Sewell  
6.30pm Barrick

### Women Together

Tuesday 4th Apr—Holy Week  
Holy Communion—Rev Jona Sewell

20th Apr Golf Club Spring Lunch

### Men's Forum

13th Apr - Lord John Stevens,  
former Police Commissioner  
'A Lifetime of Policing'

## EASTER SERVICES APRIL



**Thursday 6th** 7pm - Maundy Thursday  
Upper Room Communion

**Friday 7th** 10am - Good Friday Service  
followed by the Raising of the Cross on the  
village green and refreshments back at our  
Church.

**Sunday 9th** 10am and 6.30pm - Easter  
Services, both with Communion

**All Services led by Rev Jona Sewell**

### From The Editors

*Don't forget that copy for the April edition of Cornerstone should be with the editor by **Friday 21st April 2023**. 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.*