

# Ponteland Methodist Church

# Cornerstone



**February 2023**

## **MINISTER'S LETTER**

Happy New Year! At what point does it become too far into the year to say that? I'm not sure. But as this is the first Cornerstone of the year it feels like an appropriate beginning: Happy New Year!

What does 2023 have in store for Ponteland Methodist Church? On the one hand we can say that we can't be sure as the future is unknown, but we face it together with God which gives us confidence and assurance. On the other hand I can report that a small team from the Church is taking part in a course run by the national church called "Transformational Leadership Learning Community (TLLC)" which we hope will translate into positive action and transformation within the Church.

This came about when I was approached by a member of the national 'growth and evangelism' team last year and asked to consider a team from our Church signing up for this year-long course. After discussion with the Church Leadership Team we decided that the existing leadership team should cease to meet for now, and that a smaller team undertake the course and regularly report back to the Church Council and wider Church. The new team (and those on the course) consists of: Ann Cooper, Chrys Hudson, Isobel and Peter Hindle, Peter and Val Michell, Steve Small and myself.

The TLLC course began over the weekend of 13-15 January when our team joined with others at a residential at Yarnfield Park in Staffordshire. Here we heard speakers, spent time together, shared honestly, began to dream about what might be possible, and ate far too much (or maybe that was just me!). Over the year we will have monthly Zoom gatherings with all the other teams where guest speakers will be invited to share their thoughts, experience and expertise on different areas of leadership and transformation. On top of this we, as a team, will have monthly Zoom meetings with our designated 'coach' who will journey with us, ask tough questions, share ideas and hopefully help us develop as a team and Church in the service of God.

Our initial focus is on Bouncy Church where the questions we're already asking include: how do we use our space bet-

ter? How can we develop the whole event? How can we develop the worship service aspect? How can we link families with what is already happening within our Church community? What else might we be able to offer to build on links with the families we are meeting? I have no doubt other areas and questions will come up as we progress on this journey. In time we hope to also begin thinking about what we might do to address loneliness within our community.

Please do pray for the team, for our Church, and most of all for God's inspiration and guidance as we look to the future for Him.

God Bless,

*Jona*

## New Church Signs



## **TRAIDCRAFT PLC GOING INTO ADMINISTRATION**

It is with tremendous sadness that we announce that Traidcraft plc is going into administration. The business has been in a weak financial position for some years and the Covid-19 pandemic presented a significant new set of challenges. Just as we were emerging from the pandemic, like many other retailers, we faced the combined effects of the war in Ukraine, rising energy prices and increased transport costs.

Sadly, despite the heroic efforts of our team at Gateshead, low consumer confidence during the critical autumn trading period led to a sales result significantly short of what was required to sustain the operation. December sales were also negatively impacted by the uncertainty created by Royal Mail strikes.

After much deliberation and following advice from external advisors, we have come to the conclusion that the only honourable course of action is to appoint administrators. Our hope is that by doing this in a timely manner, we can minimise the impact on our suppliers and creditors.

It is heartbreaking to bring the Traidcraft plc story to an end in this manner but we can at least take some consolation from the knowledge that we have been a major force for good in the ethical retail sector for over forty years. We have championed the cause of trade justice to the point where we now have better standards and procedures in place to protect the rights and dignity of growers and producers all over the world.

We would like to offer our heartfelt thanks to all those who have journeyed with us as employees, board members, shareholders and suppliers. We would particularly like to thank our loyal band of "Fairtraders", many of whom have been with us since the very beginning. The mission to combat trade injustice and poverty is far from complete.

It is important to recognise that Transform Trade (previously Traidcraft Exchange, the charity arm of Traidcraft) will continue its vital work supporting producers and fighting for trade justice and people-centred trade.

Our hope and prayer is that others will also emerge to pick up the torch that we have carried for four decades.

**Board of Directors  
Traidcraft plc  
January 2023**

## OVER 40 YEARS OF TRADE JUSTICE

Where were you in 1979? I was still at school, just beginning to have my social conscience awakened. That was the year Margaret Thatcher came to power. It was also the year Richard Adams founded Traidcraft in Newcastle. A Christian response to poverty and unjust trade practices, its first catalogue was hand-drawn, featuring a small selection of jute products from Bangladesh. Soon tea, coffee, and a wide range of other food, clothes and accessories, paper and crafts were introduced. The UK Fairtrade movement, as we know it, would not exist without Traidcraft. In the 1990s Traidcraft helped found the Fairtrade Foundation which led to the Fairtrade Mark, so instantly and widely recognisable today. They campaigned to get Fairtrade goods into supermarkets and to were a victim of their own success when retailers realised the potential of the humble Geobar, and produced their own versions instead. Whilst Traidcraft plc will cease to exist and the Traidcraft brand could disappear completely, **Fairtrade doesn't!** We face a challenge in identifying alternative ethical suppliers, but this and ongoing support for the Fairtrade movement is essential if we want to maintain our Fairtrade Church status. **Transform Trade**, the campaigning charity, continues and needs both our financial support and our commitment to promoting their aims, eg the ongoing campaign to establish a watchdog to ensure standards in the fashion supply chain.

A lot of things have been said in the media and in private about the decision for Traidcraft to go into administration. These are some of my favourites. I share them with thanks for all your support, buying from stalls and ordering Christmas cards and I ask you to take to heart the final quote and continue with me along the Fairtrade journey.

*"Let's face it Traidcraft was always a crazy idea! Let's thank God it has done so much to change the face of trade over the past 40 years....it was as crazy as Jesus was."*

*"Without Traidcraft we wouldn't have fairly traded tea, coffee etc in Sainsbury's, Tesco etc..the big boys listened to the message."*

**"Preaching the Gospel of Fairtrade continues."**

**Bev**

PS Fairtrade Fortnight 2023 runs from 27<sup>th</sup> February until 12<sup>th</sup> March....details of events will be in the weekly notice sheet.



If you like smoked fish this is a really tasty soup that makes a substantial meal.

**Judith**

## **Torte Noel**

450g smoked haddock  
225g potatoes, peeled and diced  
2 medium onions, peeled and sliced  
50g butter  
2 tblsp flour  
175g carrot, peeled and coarsely grated  
150ml single cream  
Salt and pepper



Simmer the fish in 1.1lt (2 pints) water for 10 mins, until tender.  
Drain, reserving the liquid.  
Flake the fish coarsely, discarding the skin and any bones.  
Sauté the onion in the butter until soft.  
Stir in the flour.  
Gradually add the fish stock and bring to the boil, stirring.  
Add the potatoes and carrot and simmer for 10 mins until the vegetables are tender.  
Add the cream and fish and heat to a serving temperature.  
Season to taste.

## THE DISTURBING SHEPHERD

I met him for the first time a couple of years before the earthquake, that was the one that blocked the Jassul wadi, up near Hazor, Naphthali territory. His Judean accent betrayed him, he was not from these parts. Amos, he called himself and said he was employed as a shepherd and pruned fruit trees as a side-line, but declared himself an unofficial prophet of the Lord God. A rough personality, and overtly political. Israel is prosperous and pleased with itself, its wealth and general luxury. Peace and a tight hand on government and justice suits them fine. "*Never had it so good*" comes to mind, despite the obvious fact that the poor or sick are certainly not in a good place, what with corrupt traders and oppressive employers, biassed and corrupt law courts, an equally uncaring priesthood and no holds barred for the powerful.

Amos was biting in his description of an uncaring ruling class and their financial and sexual exploitation of the vulnerable. You needed a good bribe to be protected or successful in the Law Courts. "They have sold the upright for silver and the poor for a pair of sandals" was a typical denunciation from Amos. The trading classes didn't escape his biting words: false weighing machines and measuring baskets, poor quality grain sold as first-class, it was all crushing the needy, silencing the oppressed.

And this travelling prophet didn't stick at identifying a corrupt and oppressive society, he exposed the hollowness of their claims for Godliness. Yes, the sacrifices were made, the festivals held sumptuously, but where was justice and brotherly love?

Then came the divine message: all this injustice and inequality would be answered in a Day of Judgement. The Assyrian would invade the land and all the fine dwellings be destroyed, the people exiled. The Good Life would be no more.

My! Hasn't that all got up the noses of the well-to-do! Unrepentant, the authorities have sent Amos packing back to Judea. The comfortable dislike disturbance, even in the name of the Lord. We in the Northern Kingdom await developments. Meanwhile there are other prophets about, we are hearing of a man called Hosea.

**John M Gill**

## **BOUNCY CHURCH SIX MONTHS ON.....**

Six months ago we embarked on an adventure. It involved us all: commitment to a trial project and adjustment to the time and length of our Sunday morning worship.

Our purpose? That families would be drawn to the love of Christ, that they would feel comfortable and welcomed in our Church, that it was possible to enjoy fun, worship and friendship together.

The first Sunday of each month was scheduled for Bouncy Church, named because we were to include a bouncy castle with breakfast, worship and crafts: crafts linked to the worship theme for that day.

And so we began on September 4<sup>th</sup>. Five families came which included nine children. A little disappointing, perhaps, but we reminded ourselves that the school term hadn't started, that many families were returning from holidays and that, after all, this was a new venture.

We had no need to be disappointed. As each month has passed it has been wonderful that more and more families have engaged with Bouncy Church and at the same time, lovely to have the support of Church members joining us for breakfast and worship.

### ***'This is what we need church to be for us'***

have been the oft-heard words from families at the end of each worship service (which every child and parent has attended every month).

February 5<sup>th</sup> will be our sixth Bouncy Church. A face painter will be with us to enhance our theme of the morning, 'Colours of Day'. Do join us, please!

It is with prayer, vision, action, wisdom, love and discernment, that we can take this venture into the future. May we be equipped to do so, so that these young families can discover the enrichment of God's presence in their lives.

**Isobel Hindle**



BOUCY



CHURCH



# CHURCHES TOGETHER IN PONTELAND

## Monthly Prayers 2023

### Always at 12.00

|                                   |   |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| Monday 9 <sup>th</sup> January    | St Mary's   |
| Monday 13 <sup>th</sup> February  | Ponteland Methodist Church                            |
| Monday 13 <sup>th</sup> March     | St Matthew's  |
| 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 mins.

**Contact** John Doherty 01661 821013

## PITLOCHRY POEMS



### **Perth Sculpture Park**

What a picture, what a photograph!  
Standing in the frame, yet open  
to the sky. Where does it end?  
Firmly rooted in green grass, the stone  
edges appear so solid and straight.

All around clouds digress and speak  
of life's far away firmament. Two  
straight towers puncture empty space  
as I wonder at the art of life, where man  
begins and heaven reaches down.

Nowhere is a picture so infinite, from  
solid beginnings. Surely there is room  
in this life of art, for more surprises.  
So open your life, open your mind to  
whatever lies beyond the here and now.



### **Where the Salmon Leap**

I wonder at its size, this feat  
of engineering, to dam the river flow.  
Where the mighty powers of nature  
harness tremendous energy for our  
domestic use.

The lake nestles in the folds  
of brooding hills. Generating hydraulic  
hope in this uncertain world  
of dwindling fuel. Yet, the salmon still  
leap to spawn new life.

Special care and attention to detail puts  
nature in harmony with this industrial giant.  
Everybody gains from this wonderful  
natural world. Surely such projects  
give assurance for the future.

## **Crashing Cascades**

There is peace in this raging torrent,  
the noise of water tumbling over  
rugged rocks, will swell the soul.  
A wooded valley is filled with a different sound.

No arguments or chattering conversation,  
simply gushing water, rushing across  
massive boulders, seeking revenge upon Nature's downpour in  
far away hills, gathering momentum in this narrowing gorge.

As we walk by its side, we know a different  
kind of solace, taking us away from our disagreements. There  
is peace in the soul, broken and battered into an inner calm,  
strengthening our resolve to begin again.

**Rosemary Gray**

## **A VISIT TO PITLOCHRY**

A group of us enjoyed our visit to Perthshire at the end of November. Amazingly we experienced bright weather and very kind temperatures. We returned home in time to miss the very severe frosts and ice which followed in December.

Our itinerary included a visit to the Highland Safari Park, Dunkeld and Aberfeldy. Also we went to Loch Tummel to enjoy the Queen's View—simply breath-taking.

Our next holiday is to return by popular demand to Grange-over-Sands in February. We shall again stay at the Cumberland Grand which is always so comfortable and we enjoy complimentary items such as soup and sandwich lunches and some drinks.

We still have some spaces free - would you like to join us? Dates are February 20th to 24th. This is a five-day holiday with four nights dinner, bed and breakfast. Outings are included. The cost is £320 per person sharing or £380 per person single. You will be most welcome to join this friendly group. So please just give me a ring on 822474!

**Jean Tweedie**

## **TYNEDALE HOSPICE**

Tynedale Hospice at Home is celebrating 30 years of care with several fundraising events. On 22<sup>nd</sup> February, at the Beaumont Hotel in Hexham, there is a three-course lunch and a talk on bird ringing. On 4<sup>th</sup> March a Retro Disco will be held at Corbridge Parish Hall. In May there's a firewalk challenge and in June the chance to join the Great North Swim in Windermere or a 26 mile walk along our beautiful Northumberland coast..... something for everyone?? If they are all a bit too adventurous, how about organising a coffee morning or sponsoring someone brave enough to tackle one of these events? Any takers for the Retro disco?.....I have the outfit and could be persuaded to dust off the platform shoes for such a good cause.....For more details of all the events please see the poster on the board in the hall or ring 01434 606444.

**Bev**

## **THE BRIDGE**

I came across this poem on one of those in-between days, after the turkey had been eaten and the wrapping paper tidied away, but before the New Year dawned. Not only did it fit the mood at the end of an old year, but it's also good advice for how to live every day.

**Bev**

### **The Bridge**

The bridge between past and present,  
fleeing,  
easily overlooked,  
or wasted  
as we linger in the past  
or anticipate the future.  
Now,  
bridging memories and dreams.  
Just BE  
NOW.  
Before it is too late.

*(From Glimpses of God by retired Methodist minister,  
Ros Murphy)*



# Bereavement Café

Merton Hall, Ponteland, NE20 9PX

1st and 3rd Wednesday of each month



Come and join us in a safe and welcoming space to talk freely (or just listen) to others who have experienced the death of a loved one.

For more information:



ring: 01434 600384

Charity Number: 1034170, Company Number: 02870776,

## **GARDENING FOR FEBRUARY 2023**

We look forward to a “Happy Gardening Year 2023”. It seems to have been widely proclaimed that 2022 was the warmest year since record-keeping began. Although rainfall levels were low the amounts of precipitation on many days in the drier months were so small the rain never really wet the soil. After a very mild winter last year we have already had lower temperatures over longer periods. We may get more frost (and snow!!) but there are predictions that temperatures may be even higher than in 2022. Total rainfall (including melted snow) recorded at home was 5.22 inches lower than the average 33.45 inches (over 25 years). Surprisingly January was the driest month with only 1.14 inches of rain. The other drier months were April (1.24 inches), June (1.36 inches), March (1.42 inches) and August (1.61 inches). The wettest month was November (4.40 inches) with September (4.00 inches), December (3.09 inches) and October (2.93 inches) next. February (2.32 inches) and max (2.87 inches) were the only others above 2 inches. This was a slightly different pattern to 2021 when January (5.77 inches) and December (4.11 inches) were the wettest months. All our gardens should be starting the growing season at full field capacity.

The frosts will have tested the hardiness of all the perennials we grow out of doors. We have a few casualties but I never destroy until I am sure, April even May, that plants are not going to grow again – quite a wait but it may be worth it.

Margaret has just been around the garden collecting leaves. We had strong winds which detached those late in dropping last autumn. It is good to clear the leaves from the borders where new growth will appear and from off the grass as well. It will soon (end of February early March) be time to apply some phosphate and potash to all the perennials (including short life shrubs) in the garden. I use farm fertilizer and apply to all the shrubs that are in planters as well. I add nitrogenous fertilizer later in the spring but would normally put the first dressing on rhubarb, soft fruit (I have no strawberries) and around the apple tree end of February. We are told that peat-based composts will be banned from sale to gardeners from next year. So on that basis Which? have only tested (apart from one) peat-free products for seed sowing and plant raising. New companies are now producing some of the “best buy” products and are marketing them direct. Their trials

show that two of the best buy composts for sowing seeds are Fertile Fibre Original Seed Compost and Fertile Fibre Multipurpose compost. They are available from “fertilefibre.com - £22.00 for a 60 litre bag (37p per litre) with free delivery. Moorland Gold Seed and Cutting Compost is a little cheaper, contains 33% peat and costs £12.99 for a 40 litre bag (32p per litre) and free delivery from “allgrowsupplies.co.uk”. All contain coir, some vermiculite and loam. The best rated compost for raising plants is Homebase Peat-Free Multi-Purpose compost costing £6.75 for a 50m litre bag (14p per litre) and available, obviously, from now producing some of the “best buy” products and are marketing them direct. Their trials show that two of the best buy composts for sowing seeds are Fertile Fibre Original Seed Compost and Fertile Fibre Multipurpose compost. Both are available from “fertilefibre.com - £22.00 for a 60 litre bag (37p per litre) with free delivery. Moorland Gold Seed and Cutting Compost is a little cheaper, contains 33% peat and costs £12.99 for a 40 litre bag (32p per litre) and free delivery from “allgrowsupplies.co.uk”. All contain coir, some vermiculite and loam. The best rated compost for raising plants is Homebase Peat-Free Multi-Purpose compost costing £6.75 for a 50 litre bag and available, obviously, from Homebase. This is followed by Melcourt Sylvagrow Multipurpose, Thompson and Morgan incredpeat-free and You Garden Multipurpose Compost. Only Melcourt is available from garden centres. Many garden centres will have a variety of peat-free and declared peat content composts available. Last year Cowells were selling John Innes composts (seed sowing, No 1, No 2 and No 3) and I expect this will be the same this year. The nutrient contents increase with numbers. The importance of buying compost in bags is that it is sterile – it is only the gardener that contaminates! Which? also looked at the benefits of a liquid feeding of germinated plants and concluded that once a week feeding at the recommended rate (they used MiracleGro) gave the best results. They did test adding controlled-release feed into the compost, that already contains a base feed - it gave the same benefits in growth (and is less of a chore!). The controlled-release feed slowly releases its nutrients as the plants grow. No doubt everyone is itching to get outside. Don't rush, the soil is very cold.

Good gardening in 2023.

**Syd Cowan**

## **VILLAGE NEWS**

### **Ponteland Rugby and Football Club**

These clubs are still hoping to continue to plan for a new clubhouse on land near the Leisure Centre. One of the problems is that to use the proposed land, 12 trees would have to be felled.

### **Former Lloyds Bank**

The planned café is now open.

### **Rialto's Restaurant**

Rialto's has revised its proposal for a market square following many objections to its first bid. There is a move away from the use of shipping containers to a more permanent structure. The height will be reduced. If approved the new development would incorporate a food and drive servery, florist, bakery, coffee stall and three food stands. There would be 21 on-site parking spaces. To view more details see the Council planning portal ref 22/04515/FUL .

**Jennifer Hardy**

## **WOMEN TOGETHER**

Our next meeting is on **Thurs 9th February** at. 2pm. **Dr. John and Ann Brown** will give a presentation on '**Working as a Doctor & Nurse in Zambia**'.

## **MEN'S FORUM**

Our next meeting is on **Thurs 9th February at 7.30pm** in the Stobart Room. **Rev Tim Woolley** is our guest speaker with the subject '**Technology to keep us moving**'

## **FAMILY NEWS**

We send our sympathy and prayers to Ann Scott and her sons on the sudden death of Alf. He had celebrated his 90th birthday on 18th January with his family. He passed away, at home, a week later.

Please pray for Mike Fleet.

### **THANK YOU!**

A very sincere thank-you to all the lovely Church family for their flowers, cards, telephone calls, good wishes and gentle hugs which I have received since my open-heart surgery almost three weeks ago. Having amazed not just myself but others with how well I am doing, I am now going to stay with my lovely daughter Toria and her husband in Somerset for three weeks, after she has looked after me up here since I came home; and my grateful thanks to Chris Cogan for taking care of me while Toria had last weekend off!

**Viv Whyte**

Happy birthday Viv!



Which is the correct speed limit?  
Where is it in Darras hall?

### Preachers February

5th 9.00am Bouncy Church  
6.30pm Coulthard  
12th 10.00am Sewell  
6.30pm Brooks  
19th 10.00am Gray  
6.30pm Sewell (S)  
26th 10.00am Sewell (S)  
6.30pm Albans

### Women Together

9 Feb – Dr John & Ann Brown –  
Working as a doctor & nurse in  
Zambia

23 Feb – Quiz Afternoon

### Men's Forum

9 Feb – Rev Tim Woolley -  
Technology is keeping us  
moving

WORLD DAY OF PRAYER 2023

# FRIDAY 3 MARCH

A SERVICE FOR EVERYONE!

I have heard  
about your faith



## World Day of Prayer Service

**St. Mary's C. of E. Church, Ponteland**

**at 2.15pm      Everyone Most Welcome**

**Tea in the Church Hall afterwards**

### From The Editors

*Don't forget that copy for the March edition of Cornerstone should be with the editor by **Friday 24th February 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.*