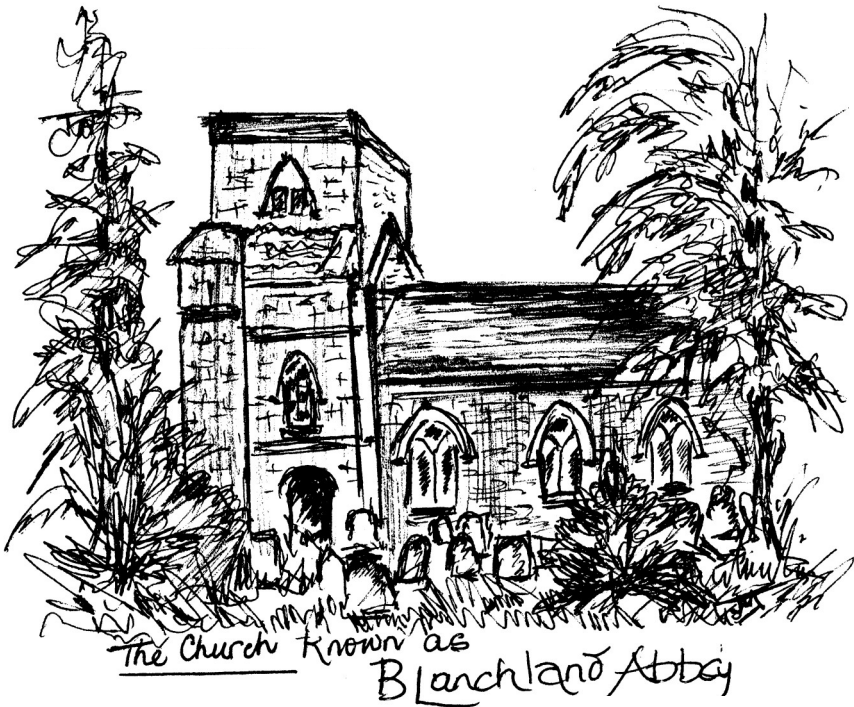


# Ponteland Methodist Church

# Cornerstone



**July/August 2020**

## REGULAR CHURCH ACTIVITIES

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

### SUNDAY

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

### MONDAY

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

### TUESDAY

- 2.30pm Women's Fellowship (fortnightly)  
6.00pm Boys' Brigade - Anchor Boys  
7.00pm Boys' Brigade - Junior/Company sections

### WEDNESDAY

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

### THURSDAY

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

### FRIDAY

- 2.15pm Carpet Bowls

### SATURDAY

- 9.30am Meanders (fortnightly, tel: 871844)  
10.00am Mini-Meanders (monthly, tel: 821845)

For details of House groups phone Chris Cogan on 0191 271 2637

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

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

## MINISTER'S LETTER

I follow a lady on Twitter called Dr Amy Kavanagh, who also happens to be visually impaired. A few days ago, she tweeted: *"I'm 31 years old and I only just found out that apparently sighted people see the rain?!?! The rain actually falling from the sky, not hitting the ground! Mind blown."*

Many people replied to that tweet, including others with their own disabilities or impairments, with one gentleman with hearing difficulties saying, *"It was only last year I discovered that people can hear the rain."*

These tweets led to many replies where people reflected on just how much they take for granted, and assume that other people experience things as they do. Others went on to express their thanks to Dr Amy for her honesty and for helping them discover a new appreciation and thankfulness for all that they could experience.

Reading through the replies really made me think about what I might take for granted. I know how easy it's been to feel low over recent weeks and months. I know there are times when I have slipped into sadness and where the glass has definitely been half-empty rather than half-full. But yet, I realise there is so much I take for granted.

I'm now sat in the garden on the hottest day of the year so far. The sun is beating down, there is a gentle breeze, there is a glass of cold water on the table beside me. I can feel the wind, taste the refreshing coolness of the water, hear birds singing, and my skin responding to the heat of the sun. I have a new appreciation for these everyday things.

What is it that we take for granted? What is it that we need to appreciate anew? Perhaps, like me, there are things from the physical world we need to rediscover. I wonder whether we also sometimes take other people for granted, and all they mean to us. And finally I wonder whether we take God's goodness, grace, and love for granted. Perhaps, like wind, water or rain, we're so familiar with the stories of Jesus that we take them for granted too.

My hope and prayer is that we can see the world around us, each other, and even God, with fresh eyes and with a renewed sense of wonder and awe. And then maybe, take the time to whisper a 'thank-you'.

God Bless

## KEEPING CONNECTED



It has recently come to light that some people are not receiving, or are not confident in accessing the emails that are sent on behalf of the church, including the link to the weekly online services. This is either due to their not being familiar with technology, or due to our not having their most up-to-date email address (despite the effort put in back in March to update and align the contact details held on behalf of church).

Could we therefore please ask that when you are in touch with people connected with church you ask if/how they are accessing the services and other information from us? For those who are not familiar with YouTube, we can offer the printed worship sheet delivered to their home, the service on DVD, and even had an offer of audio recordings (CD/cassette tape) being done. Obviously it is an individual's choice whether to engage with the service or not, but it would be good to know that they weren't missing out because they had fallen through our net.

If someone says they are not receiving emails from church, but would like to, please could you ask them to email Bev at [pmc.pastoral@sky.com](mailto:pmc.pastoral@sky.com) to pass on their contact details and, with permission, these will be shared with Jona and with Geoff. Please could you remind people that the weekly notice sheet and Cornerstone magazine are available on the church website and that Geoff will send out the notice sheet directly if he too has been given an up-to-date email address. Printed copies of the notices and Cornerstone are also delivered along with the worship sheets.

Thank you to all of you for everything you are doing to keep us connected and to show our love and concern for each other.

**Rev Jona Sewell & Bev**

## PRACTISING MINDFULNESS



What is “Mindfulness” I hear you ask. I think of it as “learning to smell the roses” or taking the time to stop and notice the simple things in life. When I started walking round the houses where I live I spotted only six rainbows. Now on the same walk there are 45 (I know because I counted them!). Things do catch on and this craze is a good one. The image of the rainbow helps us to see the beauty even in the hard things in life. For you cannot have a rainbow without the rain. Have you been looking for the rainbows?

I am walking much further now as I am fitter and walking every day as part of my training to get fit for the Walk along the Great Glen in September. It is 80 miles and I am expected to do it in six days. So I need to train. You could say this time of Lock-down has given me space and time in my life to walk more.

I try to notice new things and spot unexpected pleasures as I walk. “Living in the moment” is another way to think of Mindfulness. It is not worrying about tomorrow or problems of today, not dwelling on past mistakes or issues I cannot control or do anything about. It is just emptying my mind of all those things which cause worry and concern. I try to enjoy what is good about today, about now, about this moment. I listen to the birds and enjoy the peace with no aeroplanes in the sky.

God is good in Lockdown, He is my constant companion – He listens, when there is no one else to talk to. I talk to Him in my lonely times and I thank Him for the many blessings I have. When I pray He lifts my life into positive mindfulness.

Are you mindful enough in Lockdown to feel the presence of the Almighty Father?

**Rosemary Gray**

## THE BIBLE IN 50 WORDS

God made. Adam bit.  
Noah arked. Abraham split.  
Joseph ruled. Jacob fooled.  
Bush talked. Moses balked.  
Pharaoh plagued. People walked.  
Sea divided. Tablets guided.  
Promise landed.  
Saul freaked. David peeked.  
Prophets warned. Jesus born.  
God walked. Love talked.  
Anger crucified. Hope died.  
Love rose. Spirit flamed.  
Word spread. God remained.

**Rev Pat Brooks**

## ££ THANK YOU FOR YOUR GIVING ££

The Church relies on regular giving by its members and adherents. Thank you to everyone who has maintained their regular donations during recent weeks – whether by bank transfers, cheques or cash. Thank you also to those who have given authority for tax to be reclaimed on their giving. This increases the value of those gifts by 25% at no additional cost to the giver. If you are a taxpayer and you haven't already completed the simple form and would like to, then please let me know - it can easily be implemented. We are now a good way through the current Church financial year, which ends on 31<sup>st</sup> August. Despite our income being hit by the loss of room lettings, I am hopeful that we will reach the year end without having to dip unduly into our reserves. The continued giving by our Church family is why I remain confident of this. Thank you for that faithfulness.

**Peter Michell**

## BOOK REVIEW

### “GOD AND THE PANDEMIC”

by Tom Wright



N.T. Wright was Bishop of Durham from 2003 to 2010 when he retired to return to academia. Undoubtedly, he is one of the great bible scholars of our time. Using the name Tom Wright, he also writes books readable by just about anyone – e.g. his New Testament commentaries “for Everyone”. Tom Wright’s short book on the coronavirus pandemic is a must read; but be prepared to be surprised. N.T. Wright’s academic work centres on using the research tools of the historian to understand the New Testament in its first century context. This particularly includes reading the four gospels in the Jewish culture (influenced by Greece and Rome) in which Jesus lived, was crucified and rose again. He also reads the letters attributed to Paul in that context and uses them to inform further the reading of the gospels. (Remember, the letters were written *before* the gospels – Paul was already dead when the first gospel, Mark, was written.) Tom Wright uses all of N.T. Wright’s scholarship in writing the book on the pandemic following, as he tells us, filling a request for an article early in the pandemic (published March 29, 2020) from the US weekly news magazine, Time - <https://time.com/5808495/coronavirus-christianity/> . (See also a second article - <https://time.com/5837693/should-churches-reopen-thinking-about-exile/> - essentially a repeat of part of the book.) Three things (at least) may surprise you in this rich, deep, but short (88 pages) and highly readable book.

Firstly, the thrilling linking of bible verses and longer extracts as Tom Wright explains how the bible speaks to the current pandemic and many other moments in life, both individual and social, where lamenting is what we can and *should* do. He does the same as he shows how the New Testament points us forward to action in and beyond the pandemic. Historically, we Methodists pride ourselves on the quality of the “bible-based preaching” in our worship services. Many of us can remember the thrill of a preacher who could open to us sweeping references across Old and New Testaments as (s)he gave us a

glimpse of what the journey to Emmaus must have been like. Reading this book gave me that sense of riding a magic (better, wondrous) carpet just above the conversation.

Secondly, the liberating importance of N.T. Wright's foundational teaching that the "age to come" understood properly (that is biblically) is not some distant future when this earthly life will be replaced by a heavenly one; rather, it is here today and has been since the revolutionary moment of the resurrection. We pray, "Your kingdom come" and think future. But we also pray "Yours be the kingdom ... for ever and ever" and should realise the "ever" includes today. The "coming" is about the glorious world we could have if only we would let the kingdom flourish. Earth and heaven are already combined; angels and people can already agree (referencing Charles Wesley's Christmas hymn).

Thirdly, that accepting what is and focussing on how to overcome life's problems is a powerful aid to coping. This is not to deny grief. As Tom Wright notes, grief is part of love – we cannot grieve over something or somebody that we do not love. So, we can grieve and, in our grieving, lament. But we must also let God work through us during and after any crisis, be that crisis personal, societal, or even global – and the pandemic is all three. We are called to work together with Him so that His kingdom here on earth today can be experienced more and more fully.

**Peter Hindle**

### **THE NEXT STEPS AFTER LOCKDOWN**

The Church and Property Stewards had a Zoom meeting to discuss reopening the Church building. Initially the idea is to open for personal use of the Church. Only 22 people will be allowed in to the Church via a one way system. The intention is to open for a couple of hours three times a week. Probably one morning, one afternoon and one evening. Two people will be on duty to welcome people and explain how the system will work. There will be no access to any other part of the building including the toilets. No Hymn books or Bibles will be available. We are awaiting advice from the Methodist Church about how we should proceed. This will not start unless it is first agreed by the members of the Church Council who will be contacted in due course.

**Rev Jona Sewell**



## AILEEN'S POEM

*I am very keen on John Masefield and Malcolm Guite, and the first few words come from.. 'I must go down to the sea today...'*

I must sit down at my desk again,  
look out of the window, pick up a pen.  
Then try not to cry  
for words I need  
letters making verses  
all in hullabaloo  
would make some use of this  
ink and page, before I shrink,  
back in despair.

I need to see the sea again  
bounding waves, free,  
careless, noisy to this world  
I'll run (as best I can)  
gathering scoops to heaven  
in my hand.



**Aileen Hay**

## WORLDWIDE

Joan Varley tells me that her son, Lewis, who lives in New Zealand, reads Cornerstone online and also watches our Sunday services. That is nice to hear. I believe the services are being accessed in other parts of the world.

**Jennifer Hardy**

*(Don't forget Tatiana in Colombia! -Ed)*

## DO YOU REMEMBER POUNDS, SHILLINGS AND PENCE?

*The answers are all amounts of old money*

1. A man's name
2. An old-fashioned bicycle
3. A singer
4. A leather worker
5. A kind of pig
6. Sun, moon and pluto are ?
7. A royal head-dress
8. A reigning monarch
9. 50% of panties
10. What would be the total of all these in old money?



### Answers

Results for last months Pound, shillings and pence.

1. Bob = 1 shilling
2. penny-farthing
3. tenor = £10
4. tanner = 6d
5. guinea = £1, 1 shilling
6. three far-things = three farthings
7. crown = 5 shillings
8. sovereign = £1
9. half a nicker = 10 shillings
10. Total in old money was £12-17-8d

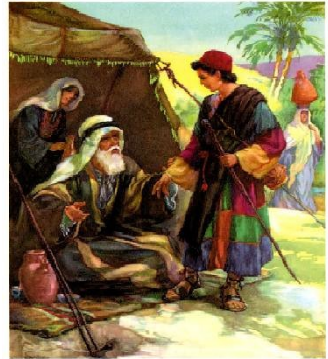
Only one person contacted me, Beryl Carss and she got them all right.

**Pat Brooks**

## **JOSEPH THROWN INTO PRISON AND LIFE AFTER GENESIS 39:16 - 41:40**

1. I am sure you will have heard the story of Joseph.

He was a very precocious young man, his father's favourite, but hated by his 10 older brothers. They did all the work of looking after their father's flocks, while Joseph swanned about doing nothing. He would also tell them about his colourful dreams, which annoyed them even more.



One day Joseph was sent to take food to his brothers who were far from home with the flocks; seeing him coming they decided to kill him, but then changed their minds as some Ishmaelites came by. Instead they sold Joseph to the Ishmaelites and he was taken down to Egypt where he became a slave.

He was bought by a good master, Potiphar, and rose to be in charge of the other slaves, but he was also handsome and caught the eye of Potiphar's wife. But Joseph refused her advances, so she raised a false charge against him, and Joseph was thrown in prison.

Joseph was then literally in 'lockdown'. He would have had a lot of time to think back over his past life.

Think back over your life. What has mattered to you at this time of 'lockdown'?

What, if anything, has changed in the way you view life or your circumstances?

Maybe think back to your life as a child.

What were you like as a child? Did you have a secure, happy childhood?

Did you have brothers and sisters to play with, friends you met at school or who were living in your street?

Were there times when you were unhappy because you felt left out of things, or maybe you fell out with friends and had to start again?

Write down your best and worst memories.

2. For Joseph prison life was no doubt very bad, but in ch 39:21 we read that the Warden noticed Joseph and put him in charge of other prisoners. So he was given responsibility and began to get to know everyone else. This meant he learnt about their problems and their previous lives. In Genesis 40 two important prisoners are put under Joseph's care. They had been in the service of the Pharaoh but had fallen on hard times. Both men had dreams which Joseph was able to interpret, one outcome was good the other bad.

What gifts do you have?

Have they been noticed by others and well used in your life?

Or have they been overlooked and you feel resentful?

Think back to your younger adult life. Did you have a good job and enjoyed the experience day by day?

Did you change jobs? Within the same company or by moving elsewhere?

Write down what all these years gave to you and how you grew as a person.

Or did you feel overlooked and that you could have achieved more? Do you still bear resentments?

3. In Chapter 41 Pharaoh had a dream and eventually he was told about Joseph and his skill of interpreting dreams. This led to Joseph being taken from the prison to meet the great man, and eventually led to Joseph becoming in charge of food for the whole of Egypt.

Where are you at in your life now?

Are you able to look back at things that have happened with contentment or are you full of regrets?

What do you wish you could revisit and do again?

Are you able to let the past go or do things still aggravate you?

Can "lockdown" be an opportunity for you to give thanks for all that you have achieved, or are still achieving?

What will be your plans of what to do in the future?

Who do you still need to get in touch with?

**Rev Pat Brooks**

## **CERTAINTY**

We can be certain of this fact - we live  
and we will die. But what we do  
in between is up to us, or is it?  
How do we live this life to the full?

Some of us may pray for more life,  
really pray to a God who keeps us safe,  
but only He knows whether it's our time  
to live or die, no one else can know.

I thank God for our NHS and pray  
for those workers taking risks every day  
to save us from our fears and failures  
but everybody will succumb at some time.

I hold tightly on to the cross in my pocket  
and fear dissolves. I emerge  
more confident and self-assured  
thinking what would Jesus do.

He knew God has a plan for this life.  
He lived to spread good news to the poor,  
to proclaim freedom for us all, so let's live  
in His promises, let's love and hold on.

Blessed with this time, let's enjoy life  
to the full, dig deep into your soul and pray  
that you can make a difference, spread  
a little kindness to people along the way.

**Rosemary Gray**

## MEETING JESUS NEAR THE EQUATOR - FEB 2019



John is my only sibling, a year younger. 47 years ago he became a Muslim so he could marry a Malay Muslim and live in Malaysia. He has two sons and three grandchildren.

John's marriage ended in divorce but he re-married: again to a Malay Muslim. My relationship with John wasn't good—I struggled to forgive him for things he did to my

parents. Years ago we'd visited Malaysia four times and John has been here several times, but things just weren't right between us. And last year I felt God telling me I had to visit John. My prayer was to speak only words of love. John and I talked—a lot. We spent time with his wife, his ex-wife and their extended families, and I began to love them all deeply.

When I went to a Methodist service I was the only European and they gave me a round of applause. I cried in the first hymn, that old favourite: 'I stand amazed in the presence of Jesus the Nazarene... How marvellous ! How wonderful! Is my Saviour's love for me!' I cried again when the minister preached on Joseph forgiving his brothers. He said 'When people upset us, we start to look down on them, we are the guilty ones. We have no control of the actions of others, but total control over our own actions – we must forgive before turning to God'. I wept with thankfulness and joy that God had guided me to Malaysia and to that moment. We shared Communion and I cried again, conscious of the Holy Spirit wrapped all round our world. Afterwards my Muslim sister-in-law wanted to know what happened in church and I shared with her the God of love and forgiveness. Half-way round the world, in that beautiful, hot, humid, mountainous country, green with forest and paddy fields, idyllic beaches, flowers and fruits, skyscrapers and mosques, I met with Jesus as I forgave and was forgiven.

**Ann Cooper**

## DECOLONISING NIGERIA

On 20<sup>th</sup> November 1951 the mailboat from Liverpool entered Lagos harbour carrying many professionals recruited to join the Colonial Service to prepare the country for self-government. On 20<sup>th</sup> November 1851, a party from HMS Bloodhound entered the harbour to conclude a treaty with Kosoko, King of Lagos, for the abolition of the slave trade. High-mindedness in the 1850s brought British power to Lagos; high-mindedness a century later was hard at work handing power back to that place and to whole of Nigeria.

An article in the Methodist periodical "Youth" the previous year commented on the challenges facing the overseas churches in the heady atmosphere of post-war change and suggested that committed Christian men and women who were keen to see a moral and spiritual foundation in newly awakened societies were needed overseas, and not necessarily as traditional missionaries. Nancy and I were courting and together decided to take up that challenge. The Public Works Department was busy on buildings to meet the proposals for Federal and Regional Governments. There were ongoing foundation investigations for important Lagos buildings for me to do and checks for structural designs, design work for Kano Airport and bridges in all the Regions, as well as the production of a handbook of double-track bridge designs to replace the numerous single-width bridges throughout Nigeria. My pride and joy was the design of the nine-span Oni River Bridge on the Lagos-Benin Route, which was designed and overseen from a first site inspection in a dug-



out canoe until construction was put in the hand of the contractors.

It was necessary to improve the whole trunk road network of the country, and as a start, every mile of Trunk Road in Western Region was traversed, assessing its state of maintenance, serviceability and safety, others followed by the same process in the other regions. Each of these were to be improved for the sake of national development; at that time the majority of the network was laterite surfaced. Ghana, we knew, had used cocoa revenue to tar its roads, and had found that roads that had kept together when unsurfaced, fell apart when sealed, for the subsurface sucked up water and softened. It was necessary to provide better foundations and drainage ditches and to control moisture conditions when sealed and thus prevented from drying naturally.

As soon as she arrived in Lagos Nancy was implored to join the staffs of Kings College, Methodist Girls' High School or Methodist Boys' High School, for she was a Latin specialist and in those days School Certificate Latin was a requirement for entry into any Arts, Medical or Legal degree. At some financial cost she opted for the latter, as first female and the only European on the staff. We cooperated out of hours in leading a Dramatic Society there, forming friendships with Yoruba lads of promise. Bearing in mind our resolve to help personally the people of the land, we deliberately avoided joining any exclusive club but were active in mixed groups like the Musical Society (alternating serious oratorios with Gilbert and Sullivan productions), the Veracity Cricket team, and the local Methodist Church (where I studied with several Yoruba friends under Rev Bolaji Idowu, later to be Professor of Theology and then head of the Nigerian Methodist Church, to qualify as a local preacher). We both taught in Tinubu Sunday School.

On our second tour Nancy continued her valuable work until Harry was born, while her husband was busy with many works on Iddo Island and in the extensive suburbs of Lagos and its port area, raising of the only causeway linking the islands of what was then the capital city with the mainland, and producing buildings for government and Army.

Our third tour was in the Southern Cameroons under UN Trusteeship, where we found a totally different sort of worship and



service with the local Baptists and Roo was born in a little one-doctor rural hospital. Beside the daily task of running the Department in a province the size of Wales, the off-duty joy was leading an adult Sunday study for a hundred men before the worship hour.

There followed more courses in Britain and then the setting up of a Materials Branch with a main Laboratory in Lagos and satellite labs on every major road construction contract. The British were determined that all the major roads and airfields in the country would be brought up to a really serviceable all-weather standard before we left. Millions of pounds of Overseas Aid money were spent on this vast infrastructure project. Nancy brought up the family, Richard being added to it.

Our last tour covered the Independence of the Federation and a year beyond it, during which the Materials Branch went to a Nigerian engineer while I was busy with Docks and Harbour works, including the new Nigeria Naval Base at Apapa, Federal water supply staff control, the expansion of the Lagos Water Supply, oversight of Lagos Works Organisation's management, and a seat on the Lagos Executive Development Board, developing large areas of housing throughout the area. This part of the work was all in the interests of forward planning and ongoing works to serve an Independent nation. It was very moving to sit behind the Federal Minister as he put before the House of Representatives a Bill to finance the doubling of the volume of purified water for the Capital city. Britain was not going to scuttle out without leaving a viable public service.

During the postwar period, bright Nigerian young people had been sponsored to take up degree posts in Britain or the USA. Their return meant that more and more of them were taking up posts in the Senior Service. By the time of our great effort at road reconstruction many of the supervisory posts on contracts throughout the Federation were held by nationals. Some three years before Independence, each of the senior engineers was instructed to select from our Nigerian colleagues an understudy. For two years these excellent men worked alongside expatriates and took more and more responsibility. By Independence Day in 1960 this cohort were ready to be promoted to each senior post as the expatriate retired or was posted to a senior role. It was good to learn years later from a Nigerian Bishop that my own

understudy, Ifeani Osili, had become the head of Department. A delegation of specialist engineers from each region were actually in Kenya on Nigerian Independence Day. Our group of five from the new Federation included an Igbo, (Ifeani Osili), and a Yoruba, (Taiwo Fadahunsi), the only Africans at the meeting and an example to the white representatives from all the other African colonies of Portugal, France, South Africa and Britain. Nancy and three children had been staying with friends at Ibadan University during this celebratory time; Katherine was born in a free Nigeria. We had worked hard and delivered a new nation.

**John M Gill**

### **LIMERICKS**

*Try a few yourself – not too rude mind! I've done some bible stories.....*

They all needed something to eat  
Since standing so long on their feet  
They hoped for some cakes  
And meat on their plates  
But shared bread and fish was their treat.

A woman was searching her house -  
It wasn't to chase out a mouse.  
She'd lost her treasure,  
A coin of measure  
A gift from her long-suffering spouse.

There was a small boat on the lake  
Night rowing was no piece of cake  
The wind caused such fear  
But Jesus came near  
His walk on the water no fake.

The ten lepers stood in his way.  
At the end of a tiring day.  
He wanted a rest  
In some cosy nest  
But he healed them without any pay.

**Ann Cooper**

## **EVERY CLOUD HAS A SILVER LINING**

At 8pm on a Thursday we all emerge to clap,  
give thanks for our medical services, but also  
meet our neighbours who suddenly appear.

These are dark times indeed as grey clouds  
of Coronavirus cover our world in fear and  
spread uncertainty at the fragility of life itself.

Amongst all this distress, pain and suffering,  
we marvel at the care and attention given  
by doctors, nurses and caring workers.

Some people we have never met before,  
living near but far away from each other,  
at a distance, now we can greet and share.

On my daily walk, limited to round the block,  
I see things I had not noticed before, suddenly  
we have more time to talk, and make new friends.

Locked down we find ourselves grounded but  
not in despair, for all around us we can see  
folks caring enough to help others in need.

I see no planes, very few cars or buses, but  
instead I hear birds, smell fresh air and rely  
on shanks's pony for healthy exercise.

We cannot meet in pubs or clubs, not even  
restaurants or cafes. But we seek solace in  
our environment and chat across the fence.

Maybe in the future we'll look back and say  
in 2020 the world changed, for the better -  
we learned to care for more important things.

Already our values are changing, we focus  
on essentials that really matter to people -  
the natural world, our health, our families.

So we must look for blessings in dark times,  
phone friends and loved ones, continue to talk  
to the folk next door, thank our carers, and rejoice!

**Rosemary Gray**



## REUBEN TELLS TALES

Old Reuben was talking to the youngsters gathered round his stool on the cool verandah of his house in a village not far from Baghdad; they often came to sit at his feet in the late afternoon after they had finished their school day. His tales of long ago, of the start of everything, of Adam and Eve, Cain and Abel, Noah and the great flood, captivated them.

Young Enoch had been talking to his friends in the village, some of them local lads and some from foreign families, victims of the expanded Babylonian Empire and its

policy of exile and resettlement for the defeated. "They have all sorts of different tales of how the world was made," he said.

Reuben remembered the old prohibition about being separate from other nations and their gods and gently suggested that the boys should keep apart from all other nations.

Enoch was growing up and getting rebellious. "My Dad says the prophet Jeremiah has written to us in exile that we should settle into houses and businesses and seek the welfare of all the people wherever they have been taken to."

Reuben thought about this. Was he too old-fashioned, prejudiced against all foreigners and especially the proud Empire that had taken over so many lands and exiled so many peoples?

Yet they were people of God's creation, too and Abraham had been told that all nations would be blessed through his descendants. Could it be that even in exile, Israel had a mission of blessing? This was the native country of Nahor and Terah, and of Abraham himself, had the Lord God no word of promise for all the descendants of Noah?

"Be careful about what you learn from foreigners," he advised the lads sitting around him. "They all have tales about how things were made, but their gods are not like the Holy One of Israel. Their gods are wicked and unpredictable and play with the lives of men and women as if they were of no account, they don't care a bit about them. There is no order or rightness in the things these folk say about their gods. The Lord God has taught us to see how He loves the people He has made and

guided them through patriarchs and judges, prophets, priests and kings. What went on before them, we just have the stories our forefathers told to each other over the camp fires. Now we have Moses and the prophets to tell us how to live under God's good rule.

"All people have tales of the start of things, but we have learnt differently. Their stories also tell of happenings long ago, floods and disasters, but we have learned and you have been taught that the Lord God is a loving creator who really speaks to those who obey Him and guides them the right way. We learn from Him about right and wrong, crime and punishment, national conduct that God has praised or condemned, about covenants made for our blessing."

"My Dad says we are living here because we had wicked kings and false prophets and God is punishing us for all that," said Dan.

"It looks like that," Reuben replied. "I am sure that God will restore us again in His good time. While we are here we must learn wisdom so that when we get back to our own country we are ready to change everything for the better. 'Righteousness exalts a nation', remember. Now let me sit and rest in the evening sunshine and you go away and play."

**John M Gill**



### **HEIDI'S FRIEND SUSIE**

Many of you know that Heidi lost her best friend Susie, the pink rabbit, in early March one Sunday morning. The last time she remembered having her was at church. Despite many searches Susie never appeared and we were lucky to have her cousin Belle Bunny come to stay during lockdown. Well this week Susie has

come back. It turns out she was self isolating in a cupboard! We have one happy girl. Thank you to everyone who helped on the wild goose (or rabbit) chase!

**Kathryn Rutter**

## A VISIT TO BLANCHLAND

So many of us are feeling the miss of a summer holiday and the travel agents are forecasting that with public travel by rail, air etc no longer an option many will be considering a UK or "stay at home" holiday. This part of the country is amazingly interesting for places to visit and so last month Lindisfarne featured and this time the highlight is Blanchland. This tiny isolated village is situated in the upper reaches of the Derwent valley in Northumberland. It is thought that Blanchland, which means White land, was named after the white habits of the Premonstratensian monks who settled here in the 12<sup>th</sup> century.

In 1115 a selfish priest travelling through Germany was thrown from his horse and when he recovered he heard a voice telling him to mend his ways and do good. So he founded an Abbey in Premontre in the 12<sup>th</sup> century. The Premonstratensian monks became travelling preachers and parish priests. They founded new Abbeys throughout Europe and came to England in 1143 and soon after came to Blanchland.

King Henry 1 gave land to the Bolbec family and they in turn in 1165 gave some of this land to 12 monks of the Order of Premontre for an Abbey. In 1214 more land was given to the Abbey which was then called Blanchland.

In 1327 Edward III and his army visited the Abbey to try and stop Scottish raiders who had destroyed much of the Abbey and its estates earlier that year. The king gave generously to repair the damage. During Henry VIII's reign he closed most of the Abbeys and seized their lands and the Abbey passed to the Radcliffes and then the Forsters who used the Abbot's lodging as a manor house. In 1699 Dorothy Forster married Lord Crewe the



Bishop of Durham. He bought all the Blanchland Estate and left it to trustees who later rebuilt the village and the Abbey's church. The present church was built in 1752 using several parts of the original Abbey.

The Lord Crewe Arms Hotel is actually the original Abbot's Lodge. At the rear of the hotel is a lawn which was originally the Abbey's cloister where the monks took their exercise. The hotel has a really huge fireplace and high up inside the chimney is a priest hiding hole.

So the pretty ancient village has the most amazing history of decades of Christian endeavours and makes a lovely day out. The church is still called the Abbey and the entire village exudes the atmosphere of "somewhere special".

**Jean Tweedie**

## VILLAGE NEWS

### Memorial Hall

The car parking system is now in action. People wishing to use the car park should register at [www.parkgood2go.com](http://www.parkgood2go.com).

### Ponteland Schools and Leisure development update

This news came too late for the July issue of Pont News, but as predicted the new schools development won't open on time in September. It has been rescheduled for after the autumn half term, with the old leisure centre demolition and new car park and sport pitches ready by May next year. The delays are linked to Covid-19/lockdown. Find out more on Northumberland County Council website.

**Jennifer Hardy**

Reg: Charity No. 522125



PONTELAND MEMORIAL HALL

#### Car Park Fees

Very shortly parking fees will apply in the Memorial Hall Car Park.

Payment will be by registering online at  
[www.parkgood2go.com](http://www.parkgood2go.com)

or by mobile phone and payment card.  
You can save time by downloading an app from:  
[www.paybyphone.com](http://www.paybyphone.com)

For security reasons there won't be facilities to pay by cash.

Charging is being introduced to fund ongoing maintenance of the car park.

### Tariffs

#### 15 minutes free stay

Up to 1 hour	£0.20
Up to 2 hours	£0.40
Up to 3 hours	£0.70
Up to 4 hours	£1.00
Up to 5 hours	£1.50
Up to 6 hours	£3.00
Up to 7 hours	£4.00
Up to 8 hours	£5.00
Up to 9 hours	£6.00
Up to 24 hours	£10.00

**Parking tariffs apply 24 hours  
a day, 7 days a week**



## THE OPEN DOOR

The currants are ripening in this glorious summer sunshine. Now that we can meet family and friends in the garden this is a delicious cake recipe to have with your cup of tea.

**Judith**

### **Blackcurrant Drizzle Cake**

6oz butter  
2 eggs  
6oz caster sugar  
9oz SR flour  
2tsp vanilla essence  
6oz blackcurrants  
(reserve a third for the topping)

*For the topping*  
5 oz granulated sugar  
2 tbsp lemon juice



Preheat the oven to 180°C/160°C fan.

Line a 2lb loaf tin.

Beat the eggs, butter, sugar, flour and vanilla together until pale and creamy.

Spread a third of the batter into the prepared tin. Sprinkle with a third of the blackcurrants. Dot another third of the batter and spread carefully. Sprinkle another third of the blackcurrants. Finally spread the remaining batter.

Reserve the left-over currants for the topping.

Bake for 50 to 60 mins until a skewer comes out clean.

Place the remaining currants in a bowl with the granulated sugar and lemon juice. Stir the ingredients together with a fork, lightly mashing the currants.

Make holes in the top of the cake with a skewer and spoon the fruit mixture over the top. Allow to cool in the tin.



## GARDENING FOR JULY 2020

I am writing on a very hot day. The weather changed before the June issue of Cornerstone reached the streets and is expected to change at the end of this week. We have had a total of 67mm (2.64 in) of rain in June over many days with very limited deep penetration. May was the sunniest month since records began.



The warmest June day was in 1976 (35.6C) when we were living near Aberyswyth. Scientists claim that in warmer climates there is a rise in invasive plants. One article claims four important ones. Tree of heaven (*ailanthus altissima*) can grow up to 50ft in 25 years. Conservationists have called it “the tree of hell” and want it banned. Ragweed came from North America in the 1960s and its pollen causes sneezing and aggravates

eczema. Chocolate vine (*Akebia quinata*) creates a thick ground cover and chokes other plants. Floating pennywort – banned since 2014, the American plant can choke waterways.

Enjoying your garden? Many people have expressed their satisfaction with their gardening this year as they have had much more time in it. Will continue(?) now that the restrictions of lockdown have been eased. Plants, grass and weeds grow and will not always look at their best if they are not continually looked after. We were complimented about the quality of our front lawn last weekend by a Green Thumb user. Margaret cuts the grass and Trugreen does the treatment. With the very dry weather in May we never lowered the cutting height to a normal summer level. The grass was treated in the dry weather and watered in. The following week it rained and it was cut a week later with the grass composted in a Mantis rotary composter. The last two cuts have produced the most grass we have ever had from the lawns. Grass around the fruit bushes is cut with a hand mower without a box so never needs any fertilizer.

With the aid of much water our vegetable area is being quite productive. Mange-tout peas for over a month, cabbage, cauliflower, calabreeze, lettuce soon we hope we will be able to dig potatoes – a pleasure reserved for the first Sunday in July. Carol Klein records digging the first of their potatoes for Sunday dinner: she says “it was never a tradition in our house – we don’t eat meat, so no Sunday roasts!” We do eat meat and love new potatoes with our Sunday roast.

The pansies have all been replaced by begonias, some now in flower. The tubers from previous years have been slow to grow and are not in flower yet. The sweet peas have suffered from the hot weather at planting when I had difficulty getting them established. The first flower initials have died but they are now three feet tall and the latest crop of flower initials look more promising and should flower in the next couple of weeks. The *Argyranthemums* are doing very well as usual. I nursed five pots of *Alstroemeria* through the winter in the greenhouse. They have now flowered profusely and need deadheading to induce



more flowers. *Agapanthus* seems to have become one of the more popular perennials in recent years. Ours are the evergreen type which we grow in planters. We keep them under the bench in the greenhouse during the winter – the flowers are showing strongly. Which? Gardening are reporting on dwarf *agapanthus* – they list 26 varieties, many very pretty blue ones. Now Hayloft are advertising a variety called “Black Magic”. The deciduous *agapanthus* are more hardy than the evergreen but need to be protected in the winter with a covering of compost or similar. Evergreen ones need to be kept frost-free. Which? Says, “Check each year if your potted plant needs to be moved to a larger pot”. It is a myth that *agapanthus* like to be “rootbound” - I always thought this myth was true!! We will pot ours on next year – it is too late now. My thoughts about perennial plants are that with nurseries being in lockdown it is likely that they will have a surplus and will be selling at reduced prices – I don’t know: I haven’t been out!! It might be an opportunity to select some hardy perennial plants that, grown on, may provide an enhancement to your garden next year. *Agapanthus* may be in surplus but how about *euphorbia*, ferns for shady or even damp spots, perennial wallflowers to save growing/planting this biennial each year – we do it as we grow *cosmos* in place of the wallflowers as a view from the lounge window.

You may consider some new shrubs – our azaleas (in pots) flowered so well this year I have potted them into larger pots (in ericaceous compost), and hydrangeas – as many different varieties perhaps bought for inflorescence colour – remember to be blue the growing medium must be acid but white will grow in most conditions. Good gardening in July and August.

## FAMILY NEWS

We keep **Lorna Patterson, Douglas Hogg, Steve Small, David MacDonald, Marjorie Scarlett, Noreen Green, John Turner** and **Nancy Blaylock** in our prayers.

Happy special birthday to **Ann Scott**.

Happy birthday to **Jenny Lewis**.

Kathleen and Iain Farquhar are proud to announce that their grand daughter **Emma** has passed her examinations with distinction at Edinburgh Veterinary College. She will now have the title Dr Emma Farquhar BVM&S MRCVS.

**Guy and Flora Opperman** have sadly announced that their twin boys died soon after their birth. Our thoughts and prayers are with them.



Congratulations to **Margit and Albert Peterson** on their 60th Wedding Anniversary.

## Preachers July/August

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

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 857574**



## 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

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## Ponteland Methodist Church

*'Let the love of Jesus be known'*



# Welcome!

Welcome to the website for Ponteland Methodist Church.

Rev. Iona 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 September edition of Cornerstone should be with the editor by **Friday 28th August 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.*