

# Ponteland Methodist Church

# Cornerstone



Rainbow Arch  
Lindisfarne Priory

**June 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

Under 'normal' circumstances the week in which I write this, the last of May, would have been school half-term. Helle would be taking a holiday week, I would be enjoying the 10<sup>th</sup> week of my sabbatical, and together we would have been on holiday somewhere nice, or perhaps visiting old friends. Instead we're all at home, obeying the lockdown rules, taking our exercise, social distancing when we go out, and speaking to friends and family via video-calls rather than in person. I don't share this seeking sympathy; not at all! There are people in far more difficult situations and whose lives have been far more seriously affected by Covid-19 than us. All of our lives have been disrupted in one way or another, some far more seriously than others. Recently Aidan and I went out for a good long walk. As we're now allowed to travel for exercise we drove to Dufton and walked a loop that took in High Cup Nick, which is a beautiful and almost perfectly symmetrical U-shaped valley formed by ice retreating at the end of the last ice age. As we walked up what was a long, hard and sometimes steep ascent, Aidan (who is not used to hiking) uttered the odd complaint that it was 'hard work', 'too difficult' and 'tiring'. When we finally reached High Cup Nick we sat down and all I heard Aidan say was 'Wow!' We sat in silence for a while taking in the view of the valley and the hills in the far distance; the sun was shining and all felt well with the world.

As we started our descent I asked Aidan if the difficult walk up had been worth it for the experience and the view. Without hesitation he said, 'Definitely!' and followed that up, after a few moments of thought, with 'I think the climb made me appreciate it more'.

Perhaps the current situation feels like an uphill struggle for you; I know at times I have found the lockdown difficult mentally and emotionally. I know I'm not the only one. I am reminding myself that, even when life feels like an uphill struggle, you never know when the next 'Wow' moment is going to catch you off-guard, or when you'll get a renewed appreciation of things. Perhaps you need that reminder too.

It would be easy for me to sit at home and be miserable thinking about what we're missing out on; and I've genuinely had moments when I've done that. haven't we all? But now I'm appreciating the 'Wow' moments more. The 'Wow' moments of more time with my family, of being fortunate enough to have a nice house provided and a garden to enjoy, of noticing the birds sing more (perhaps because of less traffic and airplane noise, or perhaps I'm just more attuned), of supportive and helpful colleagues, of blue sky and a warm sun, of home-cooked meals, of modern technology enabling us to keep in touch, of being part of a coordinated community response with amazing volunteers, and of a renewed sense of connection with God and the world. I'm discovering 'Wow' moments everywhere, because blessing is everywhere!

Whether life is a tiring and uphill struggle at the moment or not, I hope and pray that each of us can stop, notice and appreciate the 'Wow' moments that are a blessing from God and that are happening all around us.  
God Bless





Aidan looking down High Cup Nick



Looking back at High Cup Nick

## CHURCH NEWS

May is usually the month when we hold our General Church Meeting where we appoint Church Stewards. As this couldn't happen the members of Church Council were contacted electronically and asked to give agreement to the new appointments.

I am delighted to say that we had unanimous approval to appoint **Di Small** and **Judith Orton** as new stewards and I thank them on behalf of us all for their willingness to stand and serve. Di and Judith replace **Peter Michell** and **Brenda Rutter** who are stepping down and who I also wish to thank on your behalf. Peter and Brenda have both been an encouragement and support to me, as well as the wider church, and they've both served with humility and grace; many thanks.

Peter Michell continues as Church Treasurer and our Safeguarding Officer; the financial update on page 6 has also been shared with Church Council members in advance of publication here. It would normally be shared at our annual General Church Meeting and concerns the last Church financial year (ending August 2019) as well as something of our current situation. My thanks to Peter for his diligent and hard work in this area.

As there is no other urgent business the June Church Council has been cancelled and we hope we can meet again in October. We will be following guidance from the Methodist Church, and the government, as to how and when we may be able to proceed with our Church Council meetings in future.

Some good news is that **Fiona Thomson** has asked for a note to preach (the first step towards becoming a Local Preacher) and I am delighted to recommend her to the Local Preachers Meeting.

**Rev Jona Sewell**

### NAME THE FILM

- |                   |                       |
|-------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Frozen         | 5. Citizen Kane       |
| 2. Gravity        | 6. Gone with the Wind |
| 3. Iron Man       | 7. Carz               |
| 4. Sound of Music | 8. Star Wars          |
|                   | 9. Lego Movie         |
|                   | 10. 127 hours         |



# PONTELAND METHODIST CHURCH

*'Let the love of Jesus be known'*



## FINANCE REPORT 14<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2020

The inspected Financial Report and accounts for the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> August 2019 were presented to Church Council and approved at its meeting on 17<sup>th</sup> October 2019.

I would like to acknowledge the help of Alan Groves during the preparation of the annual accounts and the contribution of Iain Farquhar who has carried out the independent inspection.

Many thanks to them both.

A copy of the Annual Report was made available following the Church Council meeting held on 13<sup>th</sup> February 2020. Please ask me for a copy if you would like one.

The operating deficit for the main Church in the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> August 2019 was £9,166. Church Council approved the use of £4,842 from the Gifts and Legacies reserve towards the new chairs for the Church hall. In 2018 the Church set aside £15,000 to provide £5,000 per year for three years towards the cost of the Family Worker project. Accordingly, Church Council approved that £5,000 should move from the Future Projects reserve to the General reserve. Therefore, the 2018-19 year closed with a small main Church surplus of £926.

The 2019-20 finances are, of course, going to be impacted by the current pandemic. Costs are being controlled where possible. Now that the Church building is temporarily closed and groups unable to meet, the caretaker and family worker have agreed to be placed on furlough. It is right that we should continue to pay 100% salaries, but furloughing allows us to reclaim 80% via the government Job Retention Scheme.

A large proportion of our Giving income is from regular gifts and monthly bank transfers, but the loss of collection plate offerings from mid-March could have severely reduced our overall Giving income. However, there has been a very welcome response from many who have either sent special donations or have sent assurances that they are using the 'jar on the mantelpiece' method of saving their weekly collections until they can pass them on. At this stage I am confident, if this generous and thoughtful response from our congregation is maintained, that

overall Giving can still come close to last year's total. Income from room lettings is likely to be about £6,000 below budget. Our cost-saving actions may not make up for this shortfall, but I am hopeful that the 2019-20 financial year will close at the end of August without severe impact on reserves. Our ministerial team and Church leadership are working hard to maintain worship and support in conditions that are difficult for them and those they serve. It is heartening that our Church community has responded positively, including maintaining their financial support. It is likely that difficulties will still be with us into the 2020-21 Church year causing on-going income and expenditure uncertainties. Financially our objective will be to continue to fund the alternative ways of being Church in the wake of the pandemic, yet maintaining a financial position that will enable the Church to resume normal operations as soon as it can be done safely and to continue investing in our mission to "Let the Love of Jesus be Known".

**Peter Michell**



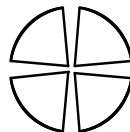
### **DO YOU REMEMBER POUNDS, SHILLINGS AND PENCE?**

*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 to Rev Pat Brooks

## TO ALL IN THE NEWCASTLE WEST CIRCUIT



Dear friends

It feels a long time since 23<sup>rd</sup> March when lockdown started. I believe that there is now a growing recognition that it will be many months before we are back to anything like pre-COVID normality. This is taking its toll on people. I know from conversations I have had that many people, if not most or even all people, are having moments of struggle. Please know that you are not alone. I also have had days that I have found very difficult. The lockdown can lead to feelings of being overwhelmed, uncertain, directionless, and lonely. Whether today is a good day or bad day for you, check in with yourself, notice how you are feeling; and please, in those times and moments of struggle, do not suffer in silence. Pick up the phone and give someone a call and please remember the clergy are more than happy to chat, myself included.

You may have seen in his recent speech that Boris Johnson tentatively suggested that July may be the time when places of worship *might* be able to begin the process of reopening. Whilst we are still awaiting government confirmation and guidance on this, as well as guidelines from the national Methodist Church, I wanted to share with you some initial thoughts on returning – whenever that might be.

It has become increasingly obvious that we will not be able to return to life as it was, even when we are allowed to reopen. Social distancing measures will probably still be in place as will, I expect, strict rules around the cleaning of property and around personal hand hygiene. This will, in all likelihood, mean we will have to set numerical limits on all activities that take place in our buildings, and that we will have to think differently about how we do things.

It is therefore very unlikely that all our churches will be able to open all at once and at the same time. It is far more likely that we will see a phased opening; dependent on availability of preachers, stewards, musicians, and each church's congregation, as well as the practical ability to put in place any necessary social distancing and hygiene measures in our buildings.

It is also highly unlikely that we will be able to go back to doing all church activities that we did before lockdown, and perhaps this is a good thing. I have had several conversations with peo-



ple who have realised they're doing too much and don't want to return to all that they did; the break has made many people take stock and reflect upon what is really important. So, what exactly is really important? I want to encourage us to see this as an opportunity to ask some big questions, to dream some dreams, and to think about what's really important right now, where God might be leading us at this time, and just what it is that we want to return to.

I feel I would be remiss if I didn't remind us that the 'Church' is not the building, nor is it what we do on a Sunday morning or through the week; rather, the Church is the people, it is You and I. In this sense the Church has not closed. The role of the Church, first and foremost, is to proclaim Christ and witness to his Kingdom in word and deed. I am so thankful that, even under lockdown, we have found some creative ways of doing this. From our online services, which are reaching a bigger audience than would normally gather, to collective prayer, acts of service, and telephone ministry – I have seen that God is at work and is doing new things!

We are now in the season of Pentecost which is about God's coming in great power, bringing transformation, and setting a new direction to the disciples and the world. It's about how God can do great things with every-day people who are listening, open and willing to take risks for Him. I truly believe God can use this time to do transformed, new and even great things in and through us, as He did the first disciples. Dare we let Him? Can this be our Pentecost?

If, then, we can't do everything when we return, either because of COVID-19 restrictions or the resource of people, what should we do? Dare we ask some of these really big questions together? How can we put living with and for God at the centre of all things, closely followed by living with and for others? What do we carry forward that is Godly, about the past and present? What unfruitful things were encumbering, what ungodly things were entangling, and how do we leave them behind? What have we learned during lockdown that we want to build on and take forward? And what kind of church does the Holy Spirit want to empower for our future? The 'five practices' that we have been looking at together in recent years may help give insight and focus our thinking. You might want to make notes while you reflect

on these questions.

I ask these questions without agenda and I hope with an objective, loving spirit in my heart. Yet, I recognise that when I look at the church (both nationally and locally), I see an organisation that is tired and dying, and that scares me; but we're not called to be an organisation (the organisation is meant to be a means to help move towards the goal) but a movement of Spiritfilled people! So I'm asking myself, and each of us, whether we can see this time as an opportunity to refocus on that which is really important and which glorifies God?

I offer no answers. I have no answers, not yet. However, I want to stimulate imagination, thought and prayer, and get each of us thinking and praying about what the future might look like - both in terms of what we do practically due to COVID-19 restrictions and also in terms of our focus and priorities: for God's Kingdom and glory.

If you have any comments, thoughts or ideas that you would like to feed back then we would love to hear from you – pass them on to your minister, a Circuit Steward (Mel Brown, Alison Boyson, Nigel Bates), or via Hazel our Circuit Administrator. May God bless you all. Be assured of my encouragement, support and prayers.



On behalf of the Circuit Leadership Team

### **WARNING – SCAMS**

The police are warning that the number of scams, particularly involving more vulnerable groups, is running at a very high level. We have received a couple of calls with what appeared to be a valid number, labelled Internet Information on our caller box. On each occasion the caller stated that our internet was to be cut off for 24 hours, because of illegal activity on our line. It is very important to not press a link from these calls, and to immediately replace the handset to avoid the scammers gaining access to your system. No internet supplier cuts off supply without first notifying the user by post.

These calls caused some amusement in our house. Our skill level on IT is such that any sophisticated activities are beyond our pay grade! If in doubt err on the side of caution – put the phone down and report it to your internet provider.

**David & Chris Cogan**



## BOYS' BRIGADE



1st Ponteland Boys' Brigade are still not meeting during this period of lockdown, and it is looking like we will not do so until

September; however, we are continuing to find ways to engage with our young people.

The BB provide weekly activity sheets based around the activities we normally do at Boys' Brigade. They are set out in the relevant age groups, and the latest batch include activities such as bird spotting and making Playdough models for the Anchors. The Juniors can invent a game, create a twig raft or make some ice lollies, while the older boys can organise an outdoor cinema for their family, cook some pizza twists or learn how to use a compass. These activity sheets are not just designed for the BB - anyone can access them and there are loads of fun activities for all ages. You can find them at [boys-brigade.org.uk/bbathome/activity-packs](https://boys-brigade.org.uk/bbathome/activity-packs).

There have been a number of National competitions for the boys to enter, such as BB's GotTalent, for the boys to demonstrate their skills. There was also an Art Competition and the Great BB Bake Off, which one of our boys entered - a fantastic BB-inspired cake, I'm sure you'll agree.



Another way of staying in touch is through our FaceBook page. You can find this by searching for '1st Ponteland Boys' Brigade' on Facebook. Please have a look, like us and follow us on our journey.

We send all our love to the whole Church family and we look forward to when we can meet again and join up with all our friends. Take care, stay safe and see you all soon.

**Les Dodd**

## **REBEKAH'S REPORT**

We've just had a wonderful time with a young man, Philip, a refugee from Jerusalem. He lodged with us for some time while he looked after the welfare of some poor folk, many of them widows, who had fled from persecution in Judea and had found refuge with us here in Sychar. They had been followers of the Prophet Jesus and were getting out of the way of the agents of the Jewish Council to avoid imprisonment and stoning. It is so dangerous there now since Jesus was handed over to the Romans and killed so cruelly, a dreadful crime towards such a good man.

Sychar is Samaritan and we live under the shadow of Mount Gerizim where you can still see the ruins of our Temple which the Maccabees destroyed centuries ago. You might think it strange that a Jewish man should come and lodge with such as us. Jews hate us as a mixed race, some Moabite, some from who knows where in the Babylonian empire, some descended from the poor in the land, harking back to the ancient Kingdom of Israel. But Sychar is different now, ever since the Prophet Jesus came and asked me for a drink from my jug of water at Jacob's Well. He stayed in our village, breaking bread with us, teaching and healing and giving us a vision of the Lord God of Abraham and Jacob, a bigger picture of a kingdom of grace, of love, of fellowship with the Lord God himself. He was here a couple of days, but his message left us a different people. That was a few years ago but we remember.

Philip called himself a Deacon of Christ and brought us thrilling news of the Prophet. Jesus had been raised from the dead three days after his murder and had been seen by ever so many of his people, eating and drinking with them before he had been raised up to Heaven, where he was King, one with God Himself! I remembered my talk with Jesus at the Well and was amazed but somehow found it fitting that the wonderful prophet who had humbled himself to talk about holy things to a woman like me, should prove to be divine. Yes, indeed we should worship in spirit and in truth, for we have seen for ourselves the spirit of healing and wholeness in this Galilean man of God.

Philip has sent back to Judea to ask if a couple of the leaders of the Way, men from Jesus's support group, The Twelve, should

come and tell us more and lead us to share in the fellowship of the spirit of Christ the King. What is this Spirit? Perhaps we will find out soon. If this Deacon Philip is anything to go by, we need the Spirit and need it wholeheartedly.

**John M Gill**

## **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**

## **BOLAM LAKE - PRESENT AND PAST**

We moved here in 1981 with our children aged 10, 9 and 6. On our first Sunday morning we attended the URC on Darras Hall. The Minister, David Hannen, knowing we were complete strangers to the area said 'Now what are you good folk going to do this afternoon? I suggest you visit Bolam Lake.' We managed to find it and enjoyed walking round it, but Bob and I thought our energetic children needed to walk further. Without saying anything we carried on walking a second time round. It was a while before they realised what we were doing...'I've seen that tree before...!' Since then we've walked round the Lake hundreds of times in all seasons, picnicked and played ball games in the meadow, enjoyed the café and ice cream van. With Mini-Meaders we have walked other beautiful nearby paths ending at the Lake. Many of you will also cherish Easter Sunday sunrise service in that beautiful and special place.

The first day lockdown was amended and we were told we could drive and meet one person, I met Hayley at Bolam with Ned aged 4 - what a joy to walk round our beloved Lake again, under shady trees, bluebells enchanting, swans serene in reed beds, water lilies peeping. In the last two weeks I've been half a dozen times and it's been mercifully quiet and gloriously healing. I meet Tess with Buddy the dog and we walk round twice sitting 2m apart on logs or the carved sofa - the benches are not 2m long! They have made it one way which is a good idea as the paths are narrow in some places especially on the wooden walkway over the swamp. Matthew is living with me and working from my house in lockdown. After he finished work last night we took a picnic to Bolam and saw seven tiny adorable cygnets, purple and pink rhododendrons, amazing reflections in the water – see pics. I had forgotten the Lake's history, so I looked it up.







The Lake was created in 1819 when Prince George was Regent as his father, George III was unable to rule, and it was a year since the Battle of Waterloo. Napoleon was in captivity (but not for long) and it was decided to stand down the survivors of the conflict and re-

duce the man-power in the Navy and Army. Huge numbers of men, many disabled by the war, were sent home - including men from Bolam. Naval personnel often had a craft, but the Army were mostly unskilled. There were no pensions (or welfare state), so many faced destitution. Like many other benevolent landowners, Lord Decies (John Beresford), living at Bolam Hall, was moved to try and help these men. He had planned to create a pleasure ground on his estate, and contracted the architect John Dobson to help him. The result was the digging out and lining of the area known as Bolam Bog. The local work force was well paid by the standards of the time, one shilling a day. This project helped many families suffering from the war and poor harvests.

30 years after Dobson completed the Lake he found the landscape in 'a most neglected state'. He encouraged local men to restore it. In 1902 the Decies family sold the estate to Frank Buddle Atkinson, a colourful character. He stocked the Lake with trout and the plantations with game for sport. During the war the Land Army Timber Corps worked at Bolam. They were paid 12s a week to cut timber. It was dirty work but only one scoop of water daily was allowed for washing. At Bolam lakeside the felling was done by 20 girls and 100 PoWs. After the war, although the Lake was quite neglected, cars and charabancs drove to this beauty spot from Newcastle. In 1970, after years of constant trespass, the Trustees of Bolam Estate sold the Lake and adjoining woodland to Northumberland CC. Bolam Lake Country Park opened to visitors in 1972 to provide a space for 'passive recreational activities with the existing rural charac-



ter and attractiveness of the Lake and its surroundings remaining unspoilt'. Lord Decies and his wife came over from Ireland, where they live, for the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Lake organised by Friends of Bolam Lake, who have done so much to maintain and improve it. A lovely new bird hide is in place but out of use be-

cause of the Corona virus situation. Toilets are still shut too, so those of weak bladder only have time for a short visit there from Ponteland. But it's well worth it.

**Ann Cooper**

### **MEMORIAL HALL CAR PARK**

We are hoping to install the pricing regime later in June - awaiting information from the contractor.

The charging regime is as follows

The car park tariff is

First 15 minutes free

1 hour 20p

2 hours 40p

3 hours 70p

4 hours £1.00

5 hours £1.50

6 hours £3.00

7 hours £4.00

8 hours £5.00

9 hours £6.00

10 hours up to 24 hours £10.00

The best way to pay is to register at [www.parkgood2go.com](http://www.parkgood2go.com) you can then come and go and will receive a monthly statement but will have to set up a direct debit system.

**Robin Ramsay**

## ONE OF MY LOCKDOWN COMPANIONS, MAYA ANGELOU



I've enjoyed a lot of different authors during lockdown. For my lockdown birthday my dear friends, Chris and Dave, gave me a book of poems by the black American writer, Dr Maya Angelou. Maya Angelou (1928-2014) rose from poverty, violence and racism to become a renowned author, poet, playwright and civil rights activist. She wrote and performed a poem for President Clinton on his inauguration.

She was given the Presidential Medal of Freedom by President Obama and was honoured by seventy universities throughout the world.

I first came across her writing in 1971, soon after the birth of my first baby. In those days pregnancy meant enforced resignation from your job: no wonder I became a feminist! In pregnancy I moved from London where I had loads of friends to Reading where I knew nobody. So for a while it felt like lockdown to me. But I decided to start up a book group in my house with a crèche in the dining room, and Maya Angelou became one of my heroes.

She was a positive 'overcomer of obstacles', a Christian, wise, thought provoking.

If you Google 'Youtube Maya Angelou' you can watch her life-enhancing speeches, talks, performances, sermons - a beautiful, charismatic lady full of fun and charm. I recommend any of her books, but also her Youtube performance of ***Still I rise*** which is sassy, sexy, funny, profound. Also on Youtube she talks about the bible and her quote by heart of 1 Corinthians Ch13 is the best I've ever heard. One of her poems in my new book says-

***I want to thank you, Lord***

***For life and all that's in it.***

***Thank you for the day***

***And for the hour and for the minute.***

I have tried to make that my philosophy in lockdown and I thank God for good writers, wonderful companions.

**Ann Cooper**

## ELIJAH AND LOCKDOWN?

### 1 Kings 19: 1-9

Elijah, one of God's prophets, wanted to serve God but he had upset Queen Jezebel, a mighty power in the land, so instead he was fleeing for his life. He ran and ran and then collapsed in a heap and asked God to take his life. But God had better things for this man to do, so he sent an angel to give Elijah food and water. Feeling refreshed Elijah continued walking for many days to Mount Horeb, God's holy mountain and went into a cave to sleep.

Next day God's voice came to him asking "What are you doing here, Elijah?"

Has God ever asked you that question?

If so, I wonder where he put the emphasis?

Was it -

"**WHAT** are you doing here?"

Or "What **ARE** you doing here?"

Or "What are **YOU** doing here?"

Or "What are you **DOING** here?"

Even "What are you doing **HERE**?"

During this time of lockdown I have heard this question addressed to me several times, maybe you have too. If so, what has been your response? What are we doing to pass on the faith that we all have within us? Or are you just trying to get through it all as best you can?

Maybe we can use lockdown in a positive way. As we are emailing, phoning, texting, or writing to friends and family far and wide, can we bring faith into our queries as to how they are coping? Maybe ask them where they are at, what positive things they have done, and what they plan to do in the future, but add in how God and faith are holding us.

**Rev Pat Brooks**

## THE VIRUS AND THE VIKINGS



Many of us with the luxury of time, are turning to alternative hobbies and interests. I was tidying out two portfolios of artwork and came across the cover for the “Summer Edition 1975” of our Cornerstone magazine. As it depicted the Rainbow Arch at Lindisfarne I had kept the original drawing and I decided to draw it again as perhaps it will be some time before we actually make a visit there, so here is the next best thing!!

I have enjoyed drawing it and thinking how Christians came all the way from Iona more than 1300 years ago and built the monastery – a place of prayer and service. Later the Vikings came and destroyed it. The monastery was rebuilt and again invaders destroyed it. Courageous and persistent Christians again rebuilt it, strong in faith.

Later still, warriors came and built a castle high on the rocks and they too plundered the monastery for its stone. However the Church was spared.

The castle was built in the 11<sup>th</sup> century as security against the Scots. And here they stand today, monastery and Church and Castle. Not too much of the monastery remains but the beautiful rainbow arch survives and the peaceful and restful atmosphere of the precinct is still palpable.

The castle high on its hill, so strong and formidable, looks down on the vulnerable Church below. The castle represents power and in times of invasion, the drawbridge would be drawn up to keep people out. The Church down below is powerless, open to attack but also open to all and a symbol of everything that endures.

Amazingly I have managed to only mention one word starting with V and I’m so happy that the five-letter one also starting with V has escaped my pen.

**Jean Tweedie**

*(Oh no it hasn’t—what about the title?! Ed)*

**I LIFT UP MY EYES  
(LOCKDOWN PSALM BASED ON PSALM 121 )**

I lift up my eyes from this lockdown  
Outside, I cover my face  
My friends become danger  
I become threat  
Inside, these walls close in  
This safety and this cage  
Inside, we're too close  
And, a little distant  
Inside, I'm alone, I'm scared  
Outside, I step aside from you  
Hold my breath as you pass.

I lift up my eyes from this lockdown  
I thought plagues were the tantrums  
Of a petulant god we no longer believe in  
So why can't I see my parents,  
Can't hold my grandchildren,  
Except on this screen  
That frees me as it captures me?

I lift up my eyes,  
They are wet from my tears  
Why wouldn't I break down?  
We had our differences but, what I said,  
It came out wrong, I have these regrets  
My days slip through these dried-out fingers  
Raw from washing, wet from tears  
I lift up my eyes from this lockdown  
From where will my help come?

I don't know if I believe in you  
You don't make it easy,  
I don't have the strength to carry much belief  
Is there someone who believes in me,  
Who might carry me, hold me  
Might be present in ways I never knew,  
Might be looking toward me,  
As I lift up these eyes,



With Faith, with Hope, with Love,  
Is that too much to ask?  
Is that a prayer?

My help comes in a window box  
The shy defiance of a yellow daffodil  
On a street, the mauve wisteria, showing off  
The discreet conversation of the trees  
- what must they say about us -  
The dance of every season, the dawn, the dusk  
How they carry us.

My help comes hidden inside PPE,  
From those who heal, protect,  
Deliver food, run errands, who call me,  
On the phone, across a street,  
Can you believe this? How's your day?  
My help comes from those who sit and listen  
When I no longer make sense  
Who wash me clean, and break a broken blessing over me  
Who walk beside us when we die  
They neither slumber nor sleep  
No wonder they look exhausted  
How they carry us.

My help comes when I notice those who love me  
I hold them tenderly, in all this silence,  
The being held, the holding, the weighted joy  
That cradles all the sorrow, all the loss  
All this love in all this life  
How they carry us.

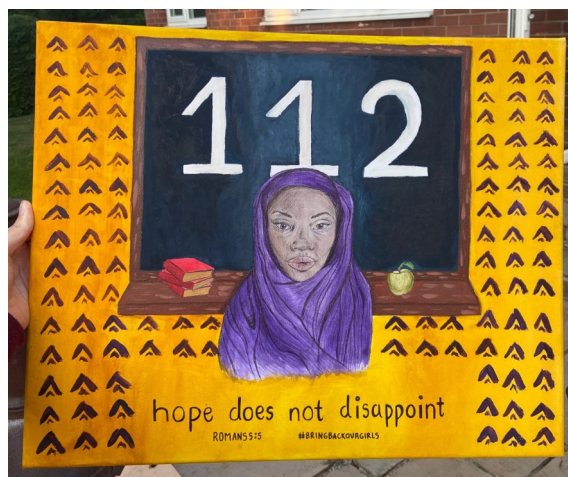
I hold them all, they hold me  
Wherever I go, they go with me  
At my going out and my coming in  
My end and my beginning  
From this time forth, for evermore  
Even when I cannot catch another breath  
Still they breathe my life that I  
May breathe easy again.

I lift up my eyes and find my help comes  
From knowing Love is present  
Against the odds, and carries us  
I lift up my eyes and see  
That Love will keep our lives  
From this time forth, for evermore.

*Thanks to Rev'd Capt Katie Watson at Newcastle upon Tyne Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust for talking to me about the life of hospital chaplains and asking if I could write something.*

**Rev Martin Wroe**  
**Medium Help Centre at [help.medium.com](http://help.medium.com)**

## **GIRLS' BRIGADE**



As part of my Queen's Award project I decided to carry out an art piece on a subject area that came to my interest a few years ago. On the 14th April 2014, 276 girls were kidnapped from their secondary school in the town of Chibok, Nigeria, by the Boko Haram. This matter hit very close to home as a number of these girls were members of Girls' Brigade. As of now, there are 112

girls still missing. Even though it's been six years since their initial capture my aim for my project was to bring light to the fact that not all the girls have returned and we mustn't stop the fight until every single one of them is set free. My project emphasises the number of girls still missing (112), the nature of the kidnapping being in a place where the girls were rightfully educated (a school); the symbols surrounding the piece represent a crowd of girls still waiting to be free, and a bible quote from Romans 5:5 "hope does not disappoint". With the Lord's faith and strength we must continue to pray for the girls' return.

**Hannah Kirtley**



## THE OPEN DOOR

Val has been making these biscuits for her grandchildren and they have requested repeat orders. Val informs me that her family prefer a plain icing topping to the ginger topping included in the recipe.

**Judith**

### **Ginger crunch slice**

100g caster sugar  
125g butter, at room temperature  
300g plain flour  
1 tsp baking powder  
1 tsp ground ginger

#### **Ginger topping**

150g butter  
300g sifted icing sugar  
4 tbsp golden syrup  
6 tsp ground ginger



Preheat the oven to 180°C/160 fan.  
Grease a small square tin, approx. 7".  
Cream butter and sugar.  
Add flour, baking powder and ground ginger.  
Combine the mixture. Hands are the best tool for this.  
Press firmly into the tin.  
Bake for 25 mins until beginning to brown slightly.

Place all the topping ingredients into a saucepan and bring to the boil while stirring. Pour over the biscuit base.  
When cool cut into small slices.

## **VILLAGE NEWS**

### **Memorial Hall**

In the April edition of Pont News & Views it was stated that parking charges were to be introduced at the Memorial Hall from 1<sup>st</sup> May. Some of you may know if this has happened yet!

### **Ponteland Schools and Leisure Callerton Lane**

This project has been progressing well as some work has been continuing. No doubt there will be an update in the June Pont News & Views. Once completed the development will include a 1,600 place secondary school, a 420 place primary school, a 52 place nursery, a leisure pool, a library and a café.

### **Memorial Hall**

Ponteland Memorial Hall trustees are asking for donations, as hire income has temporarily ceased during the current situation. They are aware they are not alone with this problem, of course. See page 16 for proposed Car Park charges.

### **Essential Road Improvements**

Work is restarting on a number of roadworks schemes in and around Ponteland as part of a £28m county-wide investment over the next year.

The works will include resurfacing, surface dressing and micro-surfacing the county's 3,000 miles of highway and pavements. The surface dressing programme is carried out on more rural roads and the micro-surfacing in more residential locations - giving a smoother and hard-wearing top surface. In both cases road patching is now commencing in readiness for the main treatment programmes which will start in the next few weeks.

The locations include:

- Darras Road, Darras Hall (June 10-13)
- Eastern Way, Darras Hall (June 14)
- C347 Limestone Lane, Ponteland
- B6342 Matfen village north
- C224/C211 Kirkheaton to B6309 junction
- C343 Stamfordham to Fenwick
- B6524 Gubean to Whalton

**Jennifer Hardy**

## GARDENING FOR JUNE 2020

April has been the driest and warmest April since records began. I think May may be the same for some parts of the country. I have recorded 21.5 mm (0.85in) in small amounts at 30 Callerton Court. It has made little difference to the dry soil conditions. In the vegetable garden I have managed to establish most of the plants put in from pots. My technique is to make a suitably-sized hole, drop in a little stimulant (fertilizer either Gromore or poultry manure pellets), fill the hole with water, dragging some fine soil from the sides of the hole, then plant and water in. So far we have been eating hearted lettuce (Margaret doesn't like just a few leaves) but cabbage and mange-tout should soon be ready. We had a scare with the potatoes in early May. I was watching the local forecast for night temperature forecast by the hour and one night it was worse than forecast. I was out in the garden at 5 am watering. With a little singeing the potatoes have survived and are looking very well. But, and it is a big BUT, everything



that is in soil cultivated this spring and all planters need regular watering. Time of day doesn't seem to matter much but DO NOT water begonias when the sun is shining as they will burn and stay disfigured for the whole of the summer.

In the greenhouses everything is growing well. I managed to get tomato compost by ordering on line from Cowells, and had it delivered just before garden centres were allowed to open again. The tomatoes have up to three trusses of flowers with the lowest one beginning to set fruit. There are cucumber initials with flowers on the two plants I have grown. It is all change of season for flowering plants. The daffodils and tulips have been moved (thanks to Margaret for all that) and we are now planting begonias to replace pansies which died off last week. The hostas and lilies are coming out as well as the regular Argyranthemums just planted into larger pots from the frame this week. Margaret has power-hosed the back patio, the drive and the front patio so everything in planters is looking very well.

June should be the month that after planting any summer bedding, staking and tying in taller perennials, feeding (particularly important after the wet, nutrient-leaching winter) with a high potash (tomato feed or similar) and pruning as necessary, you can sit down outdoors on a warm evening with something in a glass

that gives you pleasure. It may have all changed by the time you read this but mid-summer is 21<sup>st</sup> June (traditional date) and it is “all downhill” after that as the day length begins to shorten. The first warning is to avoid injury damage from the giant hogweed (*Heracleum mantegazzianum*). It came from the Caucasus and was introduced in Britain in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. It is often found along waterways and can grow to five metres but it is also appearing in streets and gardens. Burns caused by the plant are very painful and can leave scars. Experts say that if it gets into the eyes it can cause blindness. It is feared that children may mistake it for cow parsley or the harmless common hogweed and use its hollow stems as telescopes and pea shooters. Maps show it is pretty widespread now. A horticulturalist from Howdon (on the Tyne) ended up in hospital after he went to look at a “pretty plant” that his wife had seen in undergrowth. If in doubt do not go near it. Protective clothing is required to destroy it on a dull, cloudy day as its sap is activated by sunlight.



Although this might not be the most suitable time to write about lawn mowers as lawns go brown through lack of rain and water, it also might be opportune as well. Most of us will mow our lawns with a rotary (or drum to get a better finish) petrol-driven mower, collect the grass and remove it, replenishing the nutrients taken away with fertilizer. I may have told you that “Mr TruGreen” now comes to us six times a year, not always to topdress. Mulching mowers prove an environmentally sound method of lawn management (like the council cutting the verges) returning the clippings to the turf and hence also the nutrients. Using a mulching mower may not always give the best finish, often requiring cutting the grass more frequently but it saves collecting the clippings and feeding. Andy will be pleased that although there was expensive initial outlay on a robotic mower it gives a brilliant lawn finish with almost no effort. “Which?” trials recommend the robotic mower as giving the best quality lawn over the season. To give the grass a boost one application of a weed/feed/moss kill fertilizer would be worthwhile.

Enjoy your gardening and your garden in June. While the warm dry weather continues WATER, WATER, WATER, particularly in the borders and on any vegetable-growing area.



## FAMILY NEWS

I understand that **Nancy Blaylock's** Ronnie broke his leg last week. At the moment he is still in hospital recovering from corrective surgery.

**Joan Harrison** has just become a Great-Grandmother for the 4th time! "My Granddaughter Joanne and her husband Steven Little have become parents to Isla. All are doing well."

We keep **Linda Wilkinson, Lorna Patterson, Douglas Hogg, Steve Small, Marjorie Scarlett** and **David MacDonald** in our prayers. It is good that David is back home after a spell in hospital.

Congratulation to **Margaret and Colin Wells** on their Golden Wedding anniversary.

Happy special birthday to **Joyce Davis**.

As some people will be able to resume a degree of more "normal" life soon we think of those who have to remain at home until the end of June.

One of the benefits of the current situation has been making contact with "old friends". You will be interested to hear of three contacts I have had. Joyce Graves in Doncaster has her son and a daughter-in-law living near, and a good neighbour taking care of her. Pearl Stears in North Yorkshire is able to get out to do her own shopping. Pearl's children live in other parts of Britain. Pearl lives in a cul-de-sac and she enjoyed the street party (keeping distances) on VE day. Kay Thorpe in Glasgow is shopping for herself and Tim, a neighbour, and their daughter who is in isolation due to asthma. Their daughter, son-in-law and grandchildren will be moving later this year. Their daughter has a new job as Associate Theatre Director at Dundee Rep. Tim and Kay may also move there later. All three ladies send their good wishes to everyone at the Church.

**Jennifer Hardy**

I do **Magnum therapy** with Rose as she has no freezer - ie walk along with two Magnums which we enjoy 2m apart in garden!

**Ann Cooper**

## Preachers June

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

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

Over 700 people are watching the services!

## HELP IS AVAILABLE

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

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

**Tel: 07771 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/>

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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 July edition of Cornerstone should be with the editor by **Friday 26th June 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.*