

Ponteland Methodist Church



CORNERSTONE

May 2024

MINISTER'S LETTER

On 20th April Synod approved my appointment to become Chair of the Newcastle District. Although I officially take on the role from September I am already meeting with Stephen for handover matters, and will be out of the circuit for a few days in May to attend training in London. I also expect to be away for a week in July to attend Methodist Conference. Talks are ongoing about how the Church will be supported for the year until a full-time replacement can be appointed, with several different options on the table. Once we have something definite to report I will let you know what the plan is! I truly believe that God has called me to the role and, with this in mind, I do believe that God is with us whatever the next year brings. Hold fast to God and all will be well!

As news of my early departure has spread I have been truly touched by some of the lovely comments, cards, and words of encouragement that I have received; my thanks to all who have shared with me in this way.

I want to take the opportunity, in these last few minister's letters that I'll be writing, to encourage you to continue with what you are doing and in the journey that Ponteland Methodist Church is on. But my first encouragement is to repeat what I've already said, please hold fast to God! Our Church has no future if it is not rooted in and dependent on God's love, grace and guidance. Maintain your personal devotional life: pray, read the bible, listen to wiser and more experienced travellers, listen to podcasts, watch Songs of Praise, and do whatever it is that keeps you walking closely with God. Maintain your corporate life: meet for worship (regardless of style, being together is far more important than personal preference), pray together, pray for one another, meet for fellowship, listen to one another, forgive one another, and remember that God's Kingdom is far more important than the kingdom of any one person, including our own!

All of this may sound obvious, but if we neglect our walk with God we will quickly find ourselves lost or struggling. What we do as a church is very important, but it is not as important as knowing who you are in God and your walk with God; because the latter informs and shapes the former.

In the midst of travail and change St Julian of Norwich was able to say, "All shall be well, and all shall be well, and all manner of things shall be well". She could say this with calm assurance because she was rooted in God and knew, in that place, the peace, life and hope that God can bring.

God Bless,



1st Ponteland Boys' Brigade & Girls' Association

We had another great night with our Anchors tonight, as it was such a nice evening we went to the local swing park. Everyone enjoyed themselves.

Juniors had a great session, we had a games night. Working our brains and having lots of fun. We played 5 Second Rule, Jenga and Catchphrase.

Les Dodd



METHODIST WOMEN IN BRITAIN (MWIB)

As I, Rosemary Gray, become the President of the North East Branch of MWiB, in November, I am very excited to become more involved in this interesting organisation.

MWiB is a self-financing volunteer-run charity within the Methodist Church in Britain.

As Christian women we are open to working with all and welcome women of all denominations and none to participate in our activities. At many events men are also welcome to join us.

Our aims are:-

- to bring women together, encouraging one another to know Christ
- to encourage, resource and train women, equipping them to participate more fully in the church and in society
- to connect women overseas and to work in partnership to raise awareness of and act upon issues of social justice around the world.

Dates for the diary:

Saturday 2 November 2024

Induction Service at Ponteland Methodist Church at 10.30am led by our new Chair of District Rev Jona Sewell. Please put this date in your diary and come along to support me as I become the President of the North East branch of the MWiB. There will be a Faith lunch after the service. Please come and show the District what a warm welcome there is in Ponteland.

Tuesday 1 October – Thursday 3 October 2024

A retreat for all ladies in our District at Minsteracres. This is a beautiful setting where all are welcome. I will be leading the retreat on the subject of "Prayer". I encourage all ladies to come and share in the friendly and open peace and tranquillity. The food is good too. Please ask me for further details.

Rosemary Gray

BARUCH BEN ELIEZER

It's not a bad life, being a household slave; certainly not in the Abrahamic family. My Dad was senior servant to the old man, Abraham of Haran, and did very well for himself. By the time I came along Isaac was about forty and had just got married. There were no children for quite a long time and then my mistress Rebecca had the twins. I was a youth at that time, and my master said I could be body-servant to the second son, Jacob, while Shemai was given to the elder boy, Esau.

I enjoyed my job. Jacob was a sly one and a bit of a mother's boy, but generous and pretty good at managing the flocks; Esau was outgoing and hearty and soon very good with a bow or a sling, and he threw a straight spear, too. Splendid hunter, he often brought wild game into the camp. The two brothers were as different as chalk and cheese; they even chose different clothes to wear: Jacob so neat in soft cloth and Esau fancying sheepskin or leather, the proper gear for a real man, he said. Jacob really resented the way Esau had ten minutes start on him when he was born. Made a lot of difference, you see, custom gives the firstborn a double share of the inheritance and, in this family with a splendid promise from the Lord, the chief is also the family priest: leads at the sacrifices. Jacob thought that unfair because Esau didn't seem to care at all about the sacrifices and prayers and was not much of a husbandman to the flocks and herds, being away hunting so often.

One day Esau actually bargained away the bigger share of the livestock he often ignored, because Jacob gave him a good meal after hunting expedition. I said Jacob was a sly one and the better stock-farmer! The mother, Rebecca, agreed that he ought to be the one who inherited God's special promises, because Esau had married out and just didn't bother with God or any spiritual thing. It did not surprise me when old Isaac was near the end of his life, those two, Rebecca and Jacob, somehow managed to wangle the special blessing that conferred the family promise onto the second son and not the other. So much for a ten minute start to life! My master always was a bit of a twister!

Genesis ch. 27

John Gill

THE DONKEY THE WHIPPET AND THE GIANT LEEK

The Care and Share team would like to thank everyone for their great support of the above performance.

It was an amazing show that seemed to be enjoyed by everyone. Of course the little Whippet was one of the highlights.

Graeme and Valerie have expressed their pleasure at having performed before such a warm and positively responsive audience.

The performance was a sell-out of all 160 tickets and this raised £1600 in total. The production team agreed to donate 30% of ticket sales to the Care and Share team so we have received £460. The production team also kindly paid for piano tuning. It was great to see the Church so full.

Thanks again.

Alison Bates

COFFEE SHOP STROLLERS 2024

| Date | Venue | Leader |
|-------------|---------------|---------------|
| 11 May | Morpeth | Ann C. |
| 15 June | Hauxley | Matthew |
| 13 July | North Shields | Ann C. |
| 10 August | Kirkharle | Margaret W. |
| 7 September | Ovingham | Chris |
| 5 October | Newbiggin | Jennifer |
| 16 November | Jesmond Dene | Rosemary |

If any leader finds that they are not available on the date, please speak to Jennifer or Matthew. Meet 10am in Church car park.

Jennifer Hardy

STROLLING IN SALTWELL

On Saturday 13 April a party of over a dozen set off on a bright dry morning to visit this wonderful park, which is in total 55 acres of open spaces. It is magnificently laid out and beautifully main-



tained. There's a boating lake, a pets' corner, children's playground and tennis courts.

The magnificent Saltwell Towers is a truly spectacular building with an excellent café and plenty of

outdoor picnic seats to enable visitors to eat outdoors in suitable weather. At one time it was a very popular venue for weddings but Covid put a stop back in 2020 and these events now no longer take place.

The park opened to the public in 1876 and in 2005 it received a stunning makeover supported by Heritage Lottery Funds. Our visit coincided with the beautiful time in spring when trees and shrubs were bursting into leaf. One of the main joys as we were exploring the park was the fact that the cherry trees were in full bloom. A long avenue with these glorious trees either side made for the most enchanting walk and fortunately the wind was light so the blossom wasn't being turned into confetti.

Back in 1808 William Wailes, a local stained-glass manufacturer, lived in the Towers until his death in 1881. He had actually designed the building and built it but in 1875 he gifted the entire estate to the Gateshead Council. What a magnificent gift to the city of Gateshead. It appears to be much appreciated and much used as it was really busy with families, so children and doggies were having a lovely day and so were we!!



Jean Tweedie

ANNUAL MEANDERERS WEEKEND AWAY COBER HALL, CLOUGHTON, SCARBOROUGH

Having returned from another memorable group weekend away I enclose memories of the many happy times that we have shared – some of us for nearly 40 years! Cober Hill, an elegant beautifully-appointed mansion, was originally owned by the Rowntree family. The drive there over the moors was spectacular. On arrival we made the most of warm sunshine on the terrace – an unexpected bonus for the start of our break! Saturday's forecast was mixed. We set off suitably clad to enjoy the various options that were available. Despite an occasional heavy shower the trip to Helmsley and Pickering, the town visit to Scarborough and the x3 different-length cliff walks heading north from the town back to Cober Hill, were enjoyed by all. Our two evenings together were spent reminiscing on our many happy shared times over the years, and reminding ourselves not only of dear friends that are no longer meandering with us, but of just how much of God's beauty that we had enjoyed as we had meandered together. These were reinforced with a rolling photo show. We also had fun doing quizzes and enjoying shared music choices.

For our act of worship we used Juliet Wrigglesworth's Youtube service, themed Lost Sheep. This was prepared during lockdown. Tim Woolley provided the music. We were reminded of just how key these were to all of us during lockdown.

On Sunday we awoke to a deluge. It was decided not to attempt our final walk, but after a group photo opportunity to head for home. Many of us made a day of it, stopping en route to enjoy more time together. A big thank you must go to Matt Cooper, who has worked tirelessly to make our time away so enjoyable.



Chris Cogan

BASSENFELL APRIL 2024

Bassenfell Manor is a wonderful Christian Centre overlooking Lake Bassenthwaite in the Lake District. A group of Christians have been going to this Centre for a three-day retreat from the Newcastle West Circuit for many years now. This year there were 29 people who set off on Friday 5 April including children. Our speaker was Estwar Sanichar, a Local Preacher from the Newcastle West Circuit, who led three sessions on the subject of “Resurrection Appearances”. He was both inspirational and fun, engaging and thought-provoking.

On the Friday evening we learnt about “Faith and Doubt” using scripture from John 20:19-29. On Saturday evening Estwar talked about “Failure and Success” based on John 21:1-14 and on Sunday morning our worship service was about “Food and Love” based on John 21:9-17.

Eating together was a wonderful way to enjoy each other’s company. Colmore Catering did us proud, providing some lovely meals. Everybody took turns at breakfast time with serving and washing up. Lunch was packed into rucksacks and enjoyed out in the beautiful Lake district with some people walking, others strolling and generally relaxing in the countryside.

Chatting and sharing stories in the informal atmosphere of the coffee bar was all about friendship and fellowship. If anyone is interested in coming for the first time next year I can certainly recommend it and there are many people who would say it is a relaxing, fun weekend with good teaching and fellowship.

Rosemary Gray



WOMEN TOGETHER

Women Together having Spring Lunch at Mason's Arms in Dinnington.



**SPRING PROGRAMME
2.00pm AT CHURCH**

May 9 – AGM – Rev Jona Sewell

June 13 – Summer outing to Bellingham

ALL LADIES ARE WELCOME





PONTELAND PARTY IN THE PARK

**SUNDAY 9TH JUNE 2024
FROM 1PM**

Entertainment for all the family
Admission only £1
Under 5's Free



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LINES IN THE SAND

Washed away by the tortuous tides of life,
surely there was a significant line drawn
between us, a certain connection became
severed forever, lost in the mists of time.

I feel sadness we can no longer reach out
to meet like old times, and talk in confidence.
Now there's an empty space in my life
and that rolling beach feels very cold.

Do you remember how much we shared?
Those special confidences that real friends
know and give to each other with a reason
to grow in relationship and understanding.

But now, all those memories have faded,
dropped into that background of life, when
we were innocent and free from the adult
world of complications and worry.

But I am forever thankful for those lines
we drew together in the sand of childhood,
as well as the new opportunities to grow
in strength without you and move on.

There is a new tide on every beach
wherever life takes us and so my old friend
I hope that you have found happiness in
the fresh waves which relentlessly wash in.

Rosemary Gray

“UNITY IS STRENGTH, SEPARATION IS WEAKNESS”



Lucy Wanjiru Gatungu knows precisely what can be achieved with few resources and a powerful force of will. She supports her two children by growing tea on just half an acre of land in Kenya. Lucy is exactly the sort of person that the world of trade would usually exploit – her profits stripped back so that someone else grows richer. But as part of the Nyeri Tea Growers’ Association, she has strength.

“As an Association, we have one voice... the Association is fighting for our rights. There’s a Swahili proverb that says unity is strength, separation is weakness.”

With support from Transform Trade, the tea farmers of Nyeri recently took the Kenyan Tea Authority to court aiming to secure a minimum price for their green leaves and fight unfair price fixing.

“I have realised that as a collective, we have the power to push for better terms - KTDA (The Kenyan Tea Authority) will listen to us because we have one voice.”

It was a lengthy and complicated process... but in the end they won. They secured a promise of a 25% increase in the price of green leaf tea – not just for their group but for every smallholder farmer in Kenya.

The court ruling is just the start for the tea farmers of Nyeri – there’s a long road ahead to see it implemented, and many more changes to fight for, from regular fixed tea collection times to prevent waste, to equal gender representation on the board. Joseph Mwangi Thuku has been growing tea for more than 30 years – and can attest that the court case has given growers not only more money, but more power:

“We can now easily interact with KTDA management and directors - we could not even get close to them. That regime was deadly - there is nothing much that we could do.”

Joseph put it simply – “The farmer has a voice.”

The achievements of the Nyeri Tea Growers’ Association are truly remarkable – they have proven that it is possible to challenge an exploitative trade system, and to win. But their story is about far more than tea...

Court cases will not be the right solution for every case of unfair prices, unsafe working conditions or abuse of power – but the example set by the Nyeri tea growers is inspiring. It shows that a small amount of support to the right group can have a transformative effect.

This is so important because the future of the fair trade movement can’t just be about things sold here in the UK.

To reach everyone, it has to be as much about smallholders selling their crops for fair prices at local markets, and tea collectives fighting back against price fixing from middlemen, as it is about international supply chains.

Your support can help Transform Trade work with more inspirational collectives and businesses standing up against an unjust system. They are committing to invest in at least 1000 producer businesses and collectives by 2030 - to increase their positive impact in the world.

For more information on the work of Transform Trade or to donate to their 1000 Businesses appeal, please go to:

www.transform-trade.org

Bev





THE OPEN DOOR

We may have grumbled about all the rain but it has produced a good crop of rhubarb. This tasty cake can be enjoyed with a cup of tea or as pudding with custard.

Judith

Rhubarb and Ginger Upside Down Cake

Rhubarb and Ginger

500g rhubarb chopped into 1 inch pieces.
4 balls of stem ginger in syrup, finely chopped
150g soft brown sugar.

Cake

225g butter, softened
150g caster sugar
75g soft brown sugar
4 eggs
1tsp vanilla extract
225g SR flour
1 tsp baking powder



Preheat the oven to 190°C/180° fan.

Grease and line 10 inch cake tin.

Toss the brown sugar, rhubarb and stem ginger together in a bowl. Spread on a baking tray and roast for 10 mins.

Cream together the butter and two sugars until pale and fluffy.

Beat in the eggs and vanilla essence.

Fold in the flour and baking powder.

Arrange the roasted rhubarb in the bottom of the tin, put the ginger pieces over the rhubarb. Keep the juices.

Spoon the batter over the rhubarb. Bake for 30-40 mins until a skewer comes out clean.

Turn the cake out upside down onto a cooling rack and drizzle the juices over the rhubarb.

GARDENING FOR MAY 2024

For a change the sun is shining but rain is forecast (writing Friday 26th April). It is so difficult to avoid writing about rain when England has endured a record amount of rainfall in the 18 months to March, the highest level for any 18 month period since comparable data began in 1836 – total of 66.76 inches beating the month before of 66.14. If we are going to have a climate change with more rainfall in the winter and less in the summer there is a need to manage the rainwater to benefit our gardens and keep them thriving. I understand that RHS Chelsea Flower Show (19 – 25 May with broadcasts on BBC 1 and 2) will have this as a key feature. With the heavy rainfall we get depletion of soil nutrients particularly if there is run-off and then there is the problem of water retention. Free-draining soil on a level site is part of the answer. For a sloping site the creation of a pond for the water to run into may help. This can be a major job as some depth is necessary. A pond needs a liner with one edge sunk into the soil so that the water will run in. Then there may be an outfall for surplus water with a drain to where? I shall not be having a pond.



An alternative is to create raised beds either with wooden borders or grass paths as I have tried to operate in recent years. If you watch *Gardeners' World* you will see that the raised beds displayed have wooden borders about 8 – 10 inches high with walkways in between, often covered in wood chip; to be successful you may have to

import soil or lower the pathways. On clay soil the pathways will require some form of drainage – maybe just by aeration. When we came here I had eight tonnes of coarse sand delivered - it was incorporated mainly in the vegetable area. It has helped to improve the texture of the soil. Around the garden less hard surfaces will allow rain to drain naturally but on a slope it tends to follow the contour. It is always recommended that we collect all the rain water we can in water butts or troughs so that it can be used with a watering can when our plants are short of water.

Watering in the morning is suggested so that plants are not waterlogged at night. Plants in planters need water regularly when we have no rain but not excessively till the water drains out at the bottom taking the nutrients with it. Although vegetable gardens and borders should be treated with nutrients (and organic matter if it is available) before planting, feeding of all plants will show benefits. Which? has been testing plant feeds and has drawn up a list of “Best Buys”. Although Miracle–Gro heads the list Westland and Phostrogen are cheaper per application. Always water before feeding if watering is necessary, as watering after feeding will just flush the feed through the growing medium.

Sunlight in May is as strong as any month, due to more cloudy summers so shade your greenhouse to make it less prone to temperature swings which stress plants. You can buy shade paint to brush on where the most direct sun hits. I just leave up some of the bubble wrap used for installation in the winter. Putting loose covering on the outside just blows when it is windy. A sheet of newspaper over new transplants may be all that is needed for a couple of days until they root into their new surroundings.



In May daffodils, tulips and hyacinths need deadheading. I lift hyacinths now and dry them out under the bench in the greenhouse, clean them and put them away until autumn. The frost has not passed yet (26th am was frosty) so do not plant out any tender plants such as dahlias, begonias and bedding plants. If you do and frost is forecast, cover with fleece. This applies to runner and French beans as well – sown indoors in the next two weeks should provide strong plants for planting out in early June. There is still time

to sow annuals indoors or outdoors at the end of the month. Although a lot of the commonly used herbs can be grown from seeds and either planted out in large planters or in a herb border there is an alternative. Supermarkets sell most of them for immediate use. If not cut back too hard the pots can be tipped out and divided and planted up. No surplus seed to store and be done throughout the season.

Good gardening in May.

Syd Cowan

VILLAGE NEWS

Athol House, Callerton Lane, Ponteland, Newcastle upon Tyne
Summary - updated April 2024

The building, Athol House, is a residential building comprising 33 flats. Property prices in Athol House have seen an average increase of 0.9% in the last 12 months with rental prices increasing 3.3% during the same period.

The most common type of property in Athol House is a mid-century flat built between 1976 and 1982. Until its closure for redevelopment, Athol House had not seen any properties sell since at least 1995.

Property prices range from £120,115 for a leasehold flat with one bedroom split across 308 square feet of gross internal area and having no outside space, to £147,229 for a leasehold flat with two bedrooms split across 455 square feet of gross internal area and having no outside space.

The average £/sq ft for properties in Athol House is £382/sq ft.

The average property price is £124,263.

Rental prices range from £656 to £808 per month. Properties achieve a rental yield of between 6.5% and 6.6%.

This information came from BrickandLogic website. There is no way of verifying it!

<https://www.brickandlogic.co.uk/place/building/athol-house-callerton-lane-ponteland-newcastle-upon-tyne-ne20>

Jennifer Hardy

MEN'S FORUM – THURSDAY 9 MAY AT 7.30PM **PRISON MINISTRY**

The theme of this month's Forum is "Prison Ministry" and the speaker is Steve Philipson. For many years Steve has been going into prisons with the charity Junction 42 doing practical work, including helping inmates to avoid reoffending when released. Unfortunately about half do reoffend and are back in prison not being able to cope with life outside. As a Christian Steve would like the title of his talk to be 'Whom should I send? The calling to ministry'. Steve will tell us what he does and why.

Alan Groves

FAMILY NEWS

Joan Harrison would like to thank all visitors to Grange Lea, all the residents do appreciate your company and chat. God Bless everyone.

New Lord Lieutenant for Northumberland



Dr Caroline Pryer has now been appointed as His Majesty's Lord-Lieutenant for Northumberland when the Duchess of Northumberland steps down on 1st May 2024.

Dr Pryer has made significant contributions to local life and has deep roots within the community. She has been a Deputy Lieutenant since 2010 and Vice Lord Lieutenant for the county since 2021.

She supports and celebrates many good causes; she joined the Armed Forces charity SSAFA Northumberland as a caseworker in 1994; assumed the role of training officer for a few years and then Branch Secretary. She has also been chairman of Berwick RNLi twice and a local magistrate. Caroline became a headteacher in Northumberland in 2003, more recently at Ponteland Community Primary School.

Dr Pryer lives in Ponteland with her husband, David and has two adult sons.

Pizza Friday

**17th May
5-7.30pm**



**Preachers
May**

5th 9.30am Small (BC)
6.30pm Sewell (S)
12th 10.00am Sewell (S)
6.30pm Barrick
19th 10.00am Small
6.30pm Sewell
26th 10.00am Small
6.30pm Coulthard

Dates in May

9th 2pm Women Together
9th 7.30pm Men's Forum
11th 10am Coffee Strollers
23rd 2pm Women Together



PONTELAND METHODIST CHURCH



COME AND JOIN US FOR OUR

ANNUAL SPRING PLANT SALE

SATURDAY 4TH MAY 10AM-2PM



LOTS OF BEDDING AND HOUSE PLANTS
LIGHT REFRESHMENTS

FREE EVENT - ALL PROCEEDS TO CARE N SHARE



From The Editors

*Don't forget that copy for the June edition of Cornerstone should be with the editor by **Friday 24th May 2024**. The editor's email is andrew73anderson@gmail.com. The editorial committee is Andy Anderson, Jennifer Hardy, Jona Sewell and Viv Whyte.*