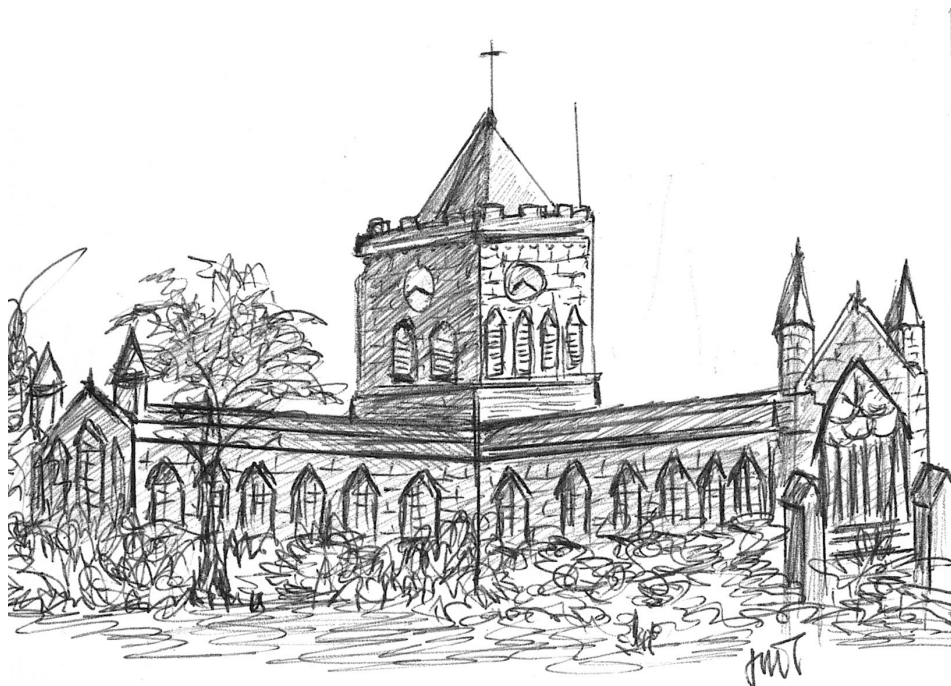


Ponteland Methodist Church

Cornerstone



Hexham Abbey
(from the Bowling Green)

November 2021

MINISTER'S LETTER

Jona's sabbatical came to an end in October and by now, he will be well back in harness and catching up with his backlog of emails and paperwork. During our working ministry, both Pat and I were given the gift of a sabbatical by the Church, and we both treasured the time to reflect and travel forward on our different spiritual journeys. There are many misconceptions about the three months ministers are gifted to step aside from their normal duties and responsibilities, but only the cynic would debase this every-seventh-year-of-service gift as a holiday! It is certainly a break, but not a time for relaxation on the beach. If used as intended, the unshackled time gives space for reflection, study and a refocusing on God. If you remember, Tim Thorpe, a previous minister at Ponteland, used his gift to go on a pilgrimage to Rome. In my sabbatical, I too went on a pilgrimage, but for a much shorter distance to St David's in Pembrokeshire. I also spent time at a monastery studying and researching pilgrimage. For hands-on reflection, I made a one person coracle in the footsteps of St Brendan. Pat in turn, used much of her time on a study of Abraham and Isaac. Pat and I together, also used some of our time to visit Jerusalem and the Holy Land. However, although these times were undeniably pleasurable, they were also challenging and affirming. We returned to ministry so much stronger in our resolve to serve God and his Church. The buzzword for many employers about their workers is 'Continuing Development', and this is equally true for those who have a vocation, be they ministers, nurses, teachers et al. Pat and I were so grateful for our sabbatical gift, as I'm sure Jona is for his. A minister's sabbatical is positively a 'Continuing Development' for the recipient, from which the church reaps a huge benefit.

However, every Christian needs a time for 'Continuing Development' of some kind to deepen their relationship with God, even if the generous gift of a three month 'time out' cannot be theirs. Just five minutes with God before starting the housework can be a 'sabbatical' moment if you make it one. Another short prayer in the supermarket queue can be a touching point to focus your mind on God. The saying of a Bible passage from the actual Bible or from memory, will allow God to speak to you. Who knows, if you add up all these 'sabbatical'

moments, you may find that you too have spent a long time reflecting, listening and drawing closer to God.

Pat and I have found it a privilege to help at Ponteland during Jona's sabbatical, but we are quite happy to hand the reins back to him, knowing he has returned stronger and closer to his and our God.

With every blessing,

Pat and Robin Brooks

I'M BACK

Hello! Just a quick note from me to say that I am now back at work and am hugely thankful to Pat and Robin for their pastoral and preaching cover and support. I've enjoyed a fruitful sabbatical during which I have been on retreat, read a lot, hiked a bit, recharged the batteries, and (most importantly) connected more deeply with God. I didn't have a particular theme for my sabbatical but my reading has covered the life of Thomas Merton and his transformational book 'New Seeds of Contemplation', the writings and 'showings' of St Julian of Norwich, and self-care, as well as a few other inter-related topics. Sabbaticals are such a gift and I am pleased to belong to a denomination that makes them compulsory for clergy as a time for self-care and renewal in the midst of ministry, that's certainly how I've found this one. As Robin suggests, it will take me a week or two to get fully caught up with the back-log of things but please don't think that means you can't get in touch! If you are happy to receive me then I am now happy to offer home visits again. I am fully vaccinated, am home testing twice a week, and am happy to wear a mask for your reassurance; please do get in touch if you'd like to see me! God Bless,

Jona

WELCOME TO PONTELAND METHODIST CHURCH

If you are new to worshipping with us....welcome! We're glad to have you as part of our family and would really like to get to know you more. If you would like to find out about the fellowship and social activities connected to PMC, or if you would just like to be on our mailing list to receive regular information, then please give your details to one of the stewards on duty on a Sunday. Alternatively, please contact Jona directly at revjsewell@gmail.com or on 01661 822057. **Bev, Pastoral Secretary**



BOYS' BRIGADE AND CARE AND SHARE CHRISTMAS FAYRE

Saturday 27 November from 10 am

We gratefully request donations for the following stalls :

Cakes, Books, unused unwanted gifts, crafts, prizes for children's tombola, and adult and children raffle prizes.

All non-perishable items are requested by 31 October, cakes can be accepted on 26 or 27 November.

Donations can be accepted by Pauline Groves, Alison Bates, Angela Lisle, Syd Cowan, Brenda Rutter and Les Dodd.

All adult raffle prizes should be handed to Margaret Cowan.

Thanks in anticipation of your generosity.

Alison Bates

VOLUNTEERS

Research shows that the fact we volunteer and help others makes us happier! If you choose Boys' Brigade as the place to volunteer, that will make us very happy!

Helping out in a BB group with children and young people can make all the difference to their lives – meaning happier young people, happier communities and a society that values the contribution that we can all make; young, old or in-between. We call our volunteers “leaders” because they guide a course for children and young people.

There are lots of different ways that you can help. We work with boys from all backgrounds and of all faiths, and with those with no faith. Most of our volunteers come along for a couple of hours a week in the evening and get involved with one or more of our four age sections: Anchors, Juniors, Company and Seniors.

We need volunteers to help children with activities, games, sport, arts and crafts, hobbies, music etc. Whatever you can help with is greatly valued. We also want volunteers who will be able to relate to young people and over time, become adults they can trust and talk to.

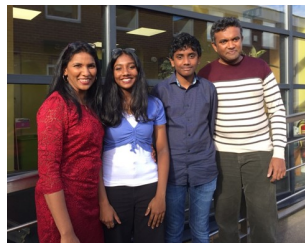
If you would like to volunteer with the BB, please get in touch, we would love to talk to you, and discuss what options are available. You can contact **Leslie Dodd** at 1ponteland@boys-brigade.org.uk .



PRODUCTION TEAM AWARD

The final piece of equipment that the production team needed to aid their efforts in creating the Youtube online services. Rev Tim Woolley and Steve Small were presented with their clapper board at the Ponteland Church Council meeting.

HOW TIME FLIES!



Those of us at church on the morning of 24th October were delighted to welcome back the Moses family who worshipped regularly with us some years ago. Sam continues in his busy role as a virologist/infection doctor at East Kent Hospitals, Monica is a secondary school teacher, Ruth (now 15) has aspirations to study

criminal law/psychology and Matthew (13) has a keen interest in astronomy.....how time has flown since Matthew was pushing toy cars around the floor during services and we marvelled each Sunday at Ruth's pretty party dresses!

Monica shared news of the Mensah family who also used to worship here. Henrietta and the children are now settled in the USA.

It's great to know that Sam, Monica, Ruth and Matthew still feel such a connection to PMC that they chose to visit us on one of their few excursions back to the North East and it was also good to see the warmth of the welcome extended to them by members of the congregation.

Bev

DR LUKE'S STORY



Those two years were a great trial to our leader. The rest of us continued our work with the Christians of Syria and Paul kept in touch with the churches as well as he could, sending Timothy and some of the others to visit where they could, but there was a good deal of political trouble in the area at the time, Jew versus Syrian, and travel was limited. It didn't help that Felix, having previously promoted a man called Jonathan to the High Priesthood, tired of him and had him assassinated! Agrippa, too, was always interfering with the Jewish hierarchy and nominated half a dozen High Priests in so many years.

I practised healing where I was able to, and met a centurion called Cornelius who had been converted by Peter. I also took the opportunity to visit up and down the coast and inland to the Galilee area, finding older folk, both men and women, who had witnessed the ministry of the Lord and even some whom He had healed. I was collecting material for books I had in mind to write when I could, and even used our restriction to draft something out on parchments. New believers will need to have more than a few collections of the sayings of Jesus now we can see that the Lord may not return as soon as we had expected. Generations yet unborn must hear the Good News and be born again into Christ.

Eventually Felix was recalled to Rome and Porcius Festus was appointed to be Procurator. We thought Paul might have been released before Felix went, but Drusilla must have resented the frequent discussions between Paul and her husband and I think that is why there was no release.

The new Governor didn't waste a lot of time on the matter. He had three days in Jerusalem during which the Jewish leaders still persisted in their pursuit of Paul, renewed their demand that he should be sent to them for trial (and murdered on the way!). Festus would have none of that. He was ten days or so down

there and then came back to Caesarea, accompanied by the accusers and their lawyers. Next day he set up the court and had Centurion Julius parade Paul before it.

As soon as Paul appeared the Jews crowded round him shouting and shoving; Julius and his men forced them back and I heard him mutter "Bloody foreigners! No respect!" and thought his indignation and swearing forgivable! He was becoming quite protective of his prisoner, good man.

Called to reply to his accusers, our Paul was adamant. "I have not offended Jewish Law, Temple sacredness, nor Caesar and Roman Law" he declared. I could see that Festus, newly appointed, was torn between his duty and a desire not to get off on the wrong foot as procurator by offending the Jewish party. "Will you go to Jerusalem and be tried by me there?" he asked Paul. Paul drew himself up, looked the Governor in the eye, and declared: "This is your court and Caesar's tribunal! Don't fob me off with a coney-rabbit court in Jerusalem. I have not done the Jews any wrong. If I'm to be tried for my life, I stand before Roman law alone. No-one has a right to surrender a Roman citizen to a Jewish court; there is nothing in their accusation. I appeal to Caesar!" At this there was a murmur round the place. The matter had gone up a step indeed. Festus himself was stirred and turned to his legal team for advice; they conferred together and then the Governor turned to Paul and declared: "You have appealed to Caesar, to Caesar you shall go!" Paul was on his way to Rome at last.

Acts ch.24;25

John Gill

WANTED

Wanted for clients at the Hub Drop at West Road Baptist Church, for Asylum Seekers and Refugees –

A mother has asked for a cot, and one of our young men is requesting a TV set. If anyone has either item that they are happy to donate please contact me.

Kitchen items are also in demand.

We are unable to collect clothing and shoes at the moment because of Covid restrictions.

Many thanks in advance.

Tel: **Chris Cogan** on 0191 271 2637.



RADIO TYNESIDE HISTORY

It was back in early 1950 that six Newcastle United fans were sitting in a pub when they came up with an idea of broadcasting match commentaries to the Royal Victoria Infirmary which was conveniently situated just around the corner from St.

James' Park.

An approach to the club resulted in a 'yes' and the first match was broadcast live in 1951 when Newcastle took on Wolverhampton Wanderers and beat them 3-1. Today, those commentaries are still broadcast now to three hospitals in Newcastle and Gateshead. Over the years, the station expanded and in the 60s obtained a small room above the old Rediffusion shop in the centre of the city where a weekly request show borrowed records for the requests from Jeavons record store.

In 1970 they moved into the old workhouse in the Newcastle General Hospital. Sizewise this was like a palace compared to the room they had but it did need a lot of work doing to it before it could be used for broadcasting programmes.

Fund-raising took place and money was raised to convert the building and within six months the request programme moved to the General. At the same time the service was connected to the wards in the General and also to Hunters Moor and Sandringham hospitals.

A couple of years later the service was connected to hospitals 'over the water' in Gateshead - the Queen Elizabeth, Dunston Hill, Bensham General and Whickham Cottage.

Over the years these hospitals have closed and moved into an extended Queen Elizabeth. Likewise, Sandringham Hospital in Newcastle closed when the Freeman Hospital was built.

In 1973 under new management Radio Tyneside started recruiting volunteers that allowed the station to increase its broadcasting hours. By 1975 it was on air seven days a week every evening and all day at weekends.

As the years went by the volunteers worked hard to raise money and by the time of the station's 30th birthday in 1981 had raised sufficient money to refurbish its studios with state-of-the-art equipment.

Over the next 10 years Radio Tyneside went from strength to strength increasing the number of volunteers and the hours of broadcasting.

It was in 1990 that the station decided to raise £35,000 to completely gut, rebuild and refurbish its building which would include two studios. Permission was granted by the hospital authority to go ahead with the plans. At the outset the volunteers were not too confident that this money could be raised but by the end of the year the station was 75% of the way there. It was decided to go ahead with the plans and they were helped on their way by a kind offer from a local building company to do the structural work at a reduced cost.

More money was raised as the work progressed and although not all of the £35,000 was raised the station managed to achieve what they wanted and studios were ready by September 1991, allowing time to redecorate and train the staff in time for the 40th birthday celebrations in October. The official opening of the refurbished studio centre was performed by Simon Bates in February 1992.

The next big event in the history of Radio Tyneside came in early 1997 when the station was invited by the Radio Authority (now OFCOM) to run an experiment of broadcasting hospital radio to the patients and staff via an AM transmitter.

The experiment got up and running in the November and it was also the start of 24-hour broadcasting by the organisation and was made possible by purchasing a smart piece of computer technology called Myriad from a company called Broadcast Radio.

Again, an expensive period for the station, having to buy the transmission equipment and again local businesses, the WRVS and the League of Friends in the Hospitals helped them pay for it all.

The investment paid off when the Radio Authority announced the experiment had been a success and offered Radio Tyneside a five-year licence to continue the AM broadcasts. This type of transmission was welcomed by both the patients and staff.

In October 2001 the station celebrated a milestone - 50 years of broadcasting! It arranged a weekend of special live programmes followed by a birthday party to which many of the people who have been associated with Radio Tyneside were invited. There

was even a taxi painted with our logo which could be seen driving around Newcastle.

The biggest change to affect Radio Tyneside took place in May 2009.

Since 1970 they had broadcast from the General Hospital but had known for a while that they were going to have to move because of the redevelopment of the hospital site.

In the March of 2009 they were offered a building situated near the rear of the RVI. A great deal of work was needed to convert the rooms into studios. Thanks to some hard work by the staff they raised money for the move and with some financial help from the Trust the building was converted and the move took place.

The move also let the station expand their service. At the time they were only heard on the wards: now having new equipment, they decided to start broadcasting via the internet and found that a number of patients were listening after they went home. It also gave them the opportunity to promote an amount of health-related information to a wider audience.

Radio Tyneside have covered many events over the years but their biggest happens every September when they cover the start of the Great North Run, which happens right outside of their studios. A special studio is built each year out in the street and the coverage has been carried by other hospital radio stations plus local community stations. To be able to produce these types of outside broadcasts was only due to a National Lottery Grant which allowed them to purchase an £8000 unit which sends our signals back to the studios via Wi-Fi or 4G technology which allows them to attend many other events in the community.

Their Great North coverage has won the station many awards in the annual National Hospital Radio Awards. In 2018 they walked away with four awards.

Also that year they applied to OFCOM for Community Radio licence to broadcast on FM across Newcastle and Gateshead promoting health and well being. This application was successful and in July 2018 they started broadcasting on 93.6FM.

Later that year they were told that they had been granted the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service – which is the equivalent of an MBE.

At midday on Thursday 5th July, the day of the NHS 70th birthday, Alan Dedicoat (the voice of the balls) launched their FM frequency which was attended by a number of guests from the Hospital Trusts and friends of the station.

In the October of 1998, The Earl of Wessex, Prince Edward, visited their studios and presented the station with their Queen's Award for Voluntary Service.

Radio Tyneside continues to broadcast to the patients on the wards of the hospitals in Newcastle and Gateshead and also on their 93.6FM frequency to listeners across the area, broadcasting a cross-section of programmes as well as promoting health and well-being with the help of both Newcastle and Gateshead Councils along with many local charities.

Apart from their FM frequency the station can also be heard online, on the Tune In and Radio Players apps and also via smart speakers.

Dave Nicholson MBE



Geoff in 2017 accepting an award on behalf of the station at the National Hospital Radio Awards.



GEOFF LISLE

Geoff joined Radio Tyneside in September 1983 as a general presenter. His knowledge of the music of the 60s, 70s and 80s is fantastic as he, I believe, used to do discos.

At the time he was working for Dan Air at Newcastle Airport. Throughout his time with the station he has presented a range of programmes and is now part of the Management of the station - a Trustee.

These days he continues to present shows across the week and he also is responsible for setting up all the music and programming on our computer system, so that all the team know what they should be playing in their programmes.

As you will gather he is a valued member of the organisation.

Dave Nicholson MBE



**THE
OPEN DOOR**

**We will be serving soup
from November 1st
Monday 1.00-4.00pm**

Hearty Lentil soup

1 tbsp olive oil
2 onions, diced
2 leeks, sliced
4 carrots, diced
4 sticks celery, diced
4 tbsps Soy sauce
500g green lentils
5 small potatoes, diced
2x400g tins tomatoes
1.5 litres vegetable stock
1 bunch basil, shredded



Heat the oil and cook the onions, leeks, carrots and celery until the onions are transparent.

Add the soy sauce and cook for a further 2 mins.

Stir in the lentils and potatoes.

Add the stock and tomatoes and bring to the boil.

Simmer until the lentils are soft, about an hour.

Add the basil and season to taste.

ON ANGEL WINGS AT HEXHAM ABBEY

At the beginning of Spring this year, an installation space was offered in Hexham Abbey, to the community to devote thoughts and prayers for those affected by Covid19.

Originally angels were the subject of choice, each one dedicated to a loved one. In April 2021 the preparations began, resulting in thousands of angels being prepared ready for display in a 1300-year-old building. These paper angels ranged



from two inches diameter to eight inches and also a few stars were made to enhance the display. To make the actual display consultation was made with Ripon Cathedral who had some specialist experience, also architects, conservation

installationists and various specialist rigging teams.

The installation took six days to curate. Each angel had to have a hole punched in it and then threaded on to a suspension net. Another team caught fallen angels and replaced them on the suspended net.

In all over 4500 angels made by local schools, volunteers, abbey staff and members of the public were created and each bore a message of loving memory or thanks. The messages were all very confidential as they were too high to read.

The response from all the contributors was so great that “overflow” angels were placed along windowsills and ledges. Also a separate free-standing Rainbow had been created from coloured paper. Made from origami angels it was extremely powerful and spoke of the support the community gave to the deeply respectful installation.

The display was in the roof space of the choir and was in four groups. Soft coloured lights were played over it ranging from pink to turquoise and music was in the background.

In 671AD St Etheldreda gave the land of Hexhamshire to St



Wilfrid on which he founded a monastery. How amazing to consider all the decades which have rolled by and in today's modern world we are all standing on the same ground facing this horrendous pandemic which hasn't quite run its course yet. However we are uplifted by such joyous creations as the Angel Wings Exhibition.

Jean Tweedie

WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP

16th Nov- Speaker Mrs Val Michell - details to follow

30th Nov- Advent Service led by our minister Rev Jona Sewell

14th Dec- Christmas Meeting. Carols with Mrs Kathy Anderson

Looking forward to seeing you all!!

Joyce Davis

GARDENING FOR NOVEMBER 2021

“In sunshine and in shade” - this is the time of year when a lovely sunny day will get you out into the garden but the pleasure is always to work in the sun and so planning the day is all-important now that the clocks have been put back and it is darker earlier in the afternoon after the sun has set.

October has allowed us to get a lot of tidying up done. The grass is still growing after having had moisture onto the warm soil. The leaves are falling so the lawnmower is some help in collecting them with cutter raised. Some of the begonias have been lifted and replaced by hyacinths in the large planters and pansies in the troughs – all our pansies are the same colour this year. The wallflowers have replaced the cosmos at the front while argyranthemums and begonias are still flowering. The new dwarf clematis I bought in the spring have wonderful new flush of flowers and a winter-flowering variety is just starting to flower.



With the ground still warm and not waterlogged it is still time to plant some bulbs outdoors. To attract bumble-bees and other pollinators you might consider some new crocus, fritillarias, grape hyacinths, bluebells, camassias and alliums. We might be used to *Fritillaria meleagris* in many colours. The crown imperial

(*F.imperialis*) grows to 90 cm (3 ft). The large bulbs have a hole through the middle and should be planted 20 cm (8 in) deep with the hole vertical. The stem normally needs support. There are a number of other species often only available from specialist bulb suppliers such as Avon Bulbs, De Jaeger, Kivock Garden, R V Roger to name a few. If you were to choose bluebells (famed for carpets of blue flowers in wild flower meadows and ancient woodlands) ensure that you buy *Hyacinthoides* (*Scilla* when I went to school) *non-scripta*. Avoid *H.hispanica* (Spanish) which hybridises with our native species. Grape hyacinths (*Muscari armaniacum*) are easy to grow and will multiply through bulbs and seeds if left undisturbed. There are many species of *Alliums* - I have had variable success when growing them in planters – even not leafing at all! Camassias are handsome plants with tall spikes and look good naturalised in a meadow area. For indoors the most popular bulbs are hyacinths and *Amaryllis* (*Hippeastrum*). We have given up on indoor hyacinths as in

warmth they flop! In the cool you won't see them or benefit from the aroma. Large Amaryllis bulbs are expensive but they will give two or three stems in the first year. Kept on they will flower again but they do need a cool period to initiate new flowers. We had 2019/20 bulbs flowering again in summer 2021 after being under the bench in the greenhouse.



If you are still considering planting a tree to celebrate the Platinum Jubilee here are more ideas. This is the time of year when bare-rooted trees (and wallflowers – very cheap) become available. They have been field grown, then lifted, wrapped in hessian and available for purchase at much lower prices than pot-grown trees. Also you

ensure that you are buying British and not importing diseases on trees from overseas. Firstly, I will mention a crabapple (our tree is laden with fruit this year all available to the birds) which you are only likely to obtain growing in a pot. It is Malus “Evereste” which will only grow up to 2m if you obtain one growing on a M27 rootstock (most fruit trees are grafted onto specific rootstocks). This has white flowers in the spring followed by red fruits. It can be grown in a large container and hence moved about in the garden always keeping it in the sun and well watered. I will mention two more flower/fruit trees that you might like. Amelachier lamackii – the june berry, grows to 5m, has coppery foliage, white flowers in the spring followed by berries and beautiful autumn coloured foliage. Abutus unedo “Atlantic” grows to 4m. Has evergreen leaves, lily-of-the-valley type flowers and unusual red and yellow fruits.

One tree disease that is spreading is ash dieback, Hymenocyphus fraxineus. Often it may be only affecting one branch on the limb of a tree. The Forestry Commission advises leaving affected trees alone unless they pose an immediate risk to passers-by. They may grow again and heal themselves. The ear-shaped, winged seeds of the ash are dispersed by wind and easily establish in the ground, stone walls and other convenient crannies. If you find one or more in your garden it could be planted in a suitable location to continue the species - they can live happily to 200 years old.

Good gardening and planting in November.

Syd Cowan

RTU AND COVID

Dear All, many of you have been wonderful supporters of Reaching the Unreached over recent years and must be wondering how it has survived during the Covid crisis.

You may remember that in May 2020, its CEO, Father Antony, was due to visit us. We were looking forward to meeting him and enjoying an Indian meal at PMC (supplied by Saathi's Restaurant in Hexham). Sadly, Covid dictated its cancellation. At that time, RTU's state, Tamil Nadu, had become the worst pandemic-hit state in India. In efforts to control spread of the virus, government legislation decreed that those children cared for by RTU who had any relatives, had to return to them. This put them in a very vulnerable situation. They had been brought into RTU's care for protection from abuse and poverty but now they had to return to that environment: the cramped, barely basic conditions living with an aunt or uncle; living with one sick, angry grandparent: living with a resentful stepparent who didn't want them.....

RTU, however, kept its own contact with those families. Staff paid regular visits to assess conditions and check the children's mental and physical health. There was no work available for those adults villagers who had previously survived on daily wages, and poverty prevailed. The toughest issue was getting a full square meal each day so RTU provided emergency dry rations and financial help. By December, the Charity had distributed to 6,364 families: families of children whose child had to go back to them and also to the destitute and sick in four neighbouring villages.

Back on RTU's premises, 50/60 children who had nowhere to go, house mothers and some teaching staff remained. Twenty-six staff and nine children tested positive with Covid but all were asymptomatic. The children's education continued whilst those sent 'home' were given learning kits in an effort to maintain their level of schooling.

Christmas was celebrated in its usual joyous fashion though with its Covid precautions: dance and choir performances, themed lighting, special food, a spirit of giving and caring, a Christmas service but, of course, with far fewer children.

The months that followed were tainted with sadness when one of the older boys died from a swimming accident. There were

happy moments too with good results for the year 12 students, news of the successes of several older students who had gone on to higher education and at last, permission to restart RTU's mobile health clinic.

Today RTU is celebrating permission for the children to return on November 1st and the reopening of its primary and secondary schools – next Monday as I write this! It will be a delightful and emotional reunion.

It has been a hard road for RTU but one taken with the love, care and tenacity that the Charity has always provided. It has done an amazing work in very difficult circumstances and will continue to do that, providing so much for the children and reaching out with medical, house building and the provision of employment to the wider community. Hopefully we will be able to support it again at another barbecue next summer!

Isobel Hindle



NEWS OF SHADE AND NORTHERN KENYA

Dear friends, greetings from Kenya. It's been a while. We have felt somewhat cut off here, not having been able to come to the UK or have family members visit us for the last two years. At least now Kenya is off the red list so travel to and from the UK is possible again, which is great.

While there has been rain in some parts of the country, Northern Kenya, including Samburu, is experiencing drought on top of the destructive effects of locust swarms that swept through many counties. Pasture, livelihoods and food security have been severely affected. The many crises have kept Mark very busy! The pandemic has prevented or delayed carrying out some of SHADE's plans. However, we do now hope to start construction of the Steve Gray Meeting House soon. Loonjorin community has marked out the site where they want the building to be located and we are in the process of getting quotations from contractors.

There does seem to be a slow getting-back-to-normal living worldwide and I'm sure we are all praying that this continues without more setbacks. Whoever thought we would be just praying for normal! It's easy to take normal for granted!

Wishing you all well and thanking you for your prayers and support.

Alison Lesingiran

HOPE IN ISRAEL PALESTINE



On Friday 22nd October, we hosted a talk by Rev John Howard to help launch his recently published book.

John, a former minister in Ponteland, has a lifelong interest in how non-violent actions can bring about political change. He has served as a Human Rights observer with the World Council of Churches' Ecumenical Accompani-

ment Programme in Palestine Israel and also as a Mission Partner for the Methodist Church in Jerusalem. Living in Bethlehem, he saw how difficult life is in the West Bank.

John shared with us information about how we've got to the current situation in Israel Palestine, particularly the role of the British government in making promises about land in the Middle East to both Arabs (Sykes-Picot Agreement, 1916) and to Jews (Balfour Declaration, 1917). He also explained how current British and US interests help to perpetuate difficulties, especially with huge American financial support for the Israeli army, resulting in, per capita of the population, one of the most well-equipped military countries in the world.

John told us stories of people caught up in the current situation and there are many more within the book itself. This helped to illustrate that whatever the political disagreements, it is individuals and families, just trying to live day by day, who are most affected.

A number of issues were identified which are barriers to peace: Palestinian refugees and the unfulfilled right to return, communities kept apart and the consequent fear of each other, the relationship between religion and state (exacerbated by the 2018 Nation State Law), lack of leadership in the Palestinian community, the future of Jerusalem, unequal access to water, the role of Christian Zionism, and the question of whether the current situation constitutes "apartheid".

Despite such complicated issues, John drew on his experience

of individuals and agencies in Israel, Gaza and the West Bank to assert that there are still reasons for hope. There are many people who want peace and who are promoting dialogue and encounters between communities. John argued for the international community to act as an honest broker for peace, ruling out the US and Britain as impartial arbitrators. He recommended each problem area is dealt with separately, e.g. resolving the issue of water resources separately from that of the status of Jerusalem. Whilst John has concluded that the “Two State Solution” is no longer possible (in part due to the “facts on the

ground” of Israeli settlements being established throughout the West Bank) he is hopeful that a resolution can be found if people, **all** the people, are given a say in seeking a solution which benefits them, not foreign powers, and which recognises equal human rights for all.

John’s presentation was followed by the opportunity to ask questions. This revealed a divergence in views about the cause of the situation and the current circumstances, as well as the deep emotions attached to those views. However, it also resulted in the opportunity to show that dialogue can bring people together; they can agree to disagree on some things, but also acknowledge their shared concerns and common humanityespecially over a cup of coffee.

Hope in Israel Palestine - Stories of Hope; Prospects for Peace (ISBN 978-1-9989908-5-6) is available on Kindle (£7.22) or in print (£12 including P&P) directly by email from John:

john_d_howard@hotmail.com



Bev

FAMILY NEWS

Joan Harrison is happy to announce the birth of her seventh Great Grandchild - a big brother Ted, weighing in at 9lb 4oz, for Poppy and Tilly. Everyone very happy and well.

Best wishes from all in Ponteland to **Doug Hogg**, who has recently celebrated his 93rd birthday.

Bethany (nee Crosse), granddaughter of David and Chris Cogan, has just graduated in Avionics at RAF Cosford, winning the award as top student in her flight.

Please remember **Mike Fleet, Pauline Groves, Kathleen Farquhar** and other Church friends, who are currently actively receiving NHS care.

We think of those who have suffered recent bereavement. Many of us have very fond memories of **Jenny Lewis**, who died recently in Grange Lea.

Please remember everyone who has supported us through Jona's sabbatical. Special prayers need to go to **Pat and Robin Brooks**, who has supported us so well.

LILLIAN SMITH

Lillian passed away at RedBrick Nursing Home on Saturday 30th October after being poorly for the last year. Following a number of stays in both the RVI and Hexham Hospitals, she finally accepted she needed full-time nursing care and entered Redbrick in June.

She has been a member of the Church as long as she has lived in Ponteland and loved to join in its activities. Her Bible was always with her.

There will be a service for Lillian at the Church on Wednesday 17th November at 11.00 followed by her interment at the Woodland section of Prestwick Cemetery at 12.00pm.

Lillian's nephew **Michael** can be contacted by Email at Mikewade60@btinternet.com or at Mr & Mrs Wade, 12 Towers Close, Bedlington, NE22 5ER.

VILLAGE NEWS

Merton Hall

Merton Hall is aiming to reopen on a limited scale. A few societies will be using the main hall in the building. Coffee and tea will be served again but only on Fridays from 9.30am – 11.30am. this will start from 5th November up to 17th December.

Former Richard Coates Primary School Thornhill Road

Northumberland CC has begun a consultation, proposing that this empty building should become a special needs school. Children currently attending a special school in Seghill could transfer to Ponteland. The Ponteland School premises are larger, so would be able to meet the increasing demand.

Full Fibre Broadband, Darras Hall

Following a three year campaign by the Darras Hall Community Fibre Scheme broadband will be installed by Facto Fund who design, build, maintain and supply full-fibre networks to rural communities.

Lloyds Bank

It has been announced that our Lloyds bank will close on 8th February 2022. We are told that the nearest Lloyds bank then will be at Newburn and Gosforth. The cashpoint machine will also close. We are told that we can use our Post Office to withdraw cash and make deposits into our Lloyds bank accounts.

Rialtos Restaurant

Rialtos has been given permission to provide a new outdoor area. Alcohol sales in the outside area must stop at 11pm on Fridays and Saturdays and 10.30pm the rest of the week. Hot food service must cease at 11.30pm

Police House—Restaurant

A request has been submitted to turn the old Police House into a restaurant.

Jennifer Hardy

Preachers November

7th 10.00am Sewell
6.30pm Sewell
14th 10.00am Sewell
6.30pm Orrock
21st 10.00am Small
6.30pm Sewell (S)
28th 10.00am Sewell (S)
6.30pm Woolley

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

Tel: 07771 857574



BOYS' BRIGADE AND CARE AND SHARE



Saturday 27 November from 10 am

From The Editors

*Don't forget that copy for the December/January edition of Cornerstone should be with the editor by **Friday 26th November 2021**. The editor's email address is andrew73anderson@gmail.com. The editorial committee is Andy Anderson, Jennifer Hardy, Jona Sewell and Viv Whyte.*