

# Ponteland Methodist Church Cornerstone



**November 2022**

## **MINISTER'S LETTER**

In a few weeks it will be Remembrance Sunday. As usual we will finish our worship slightly early to enable those who wish to attend the worship at the War Memorial the time to get there. Remembrance Sunday is an important day in the calendar as so many different people and groups from within our community come together to give thanks for and remember those who sacrificed their lives, or their own wellbeing, for the freedom and salvation of others. When I try to think about the trench warfare of the first World War I realise that I cannot begin to imagine the reality of the horrors witnessed and endured; I find myself wondering how many of them went 'over the top' out of a sense of obedience, duty, or maybe even love, rather than from a desire to give their own lives. Yet I am reminded of the words of Jesus: "Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends". (John 15:13, NIV)

When I begin to think about sacrifice my mind inevitably wanders over to think about Jesus. I think about how He suffered and laid down His life for the freedom and salvation of others. I am reminded that I cannot begin to understand what He witnessed and endured, and I recall His words from Gethsemane: "Abba, Father, everything is possible for you. Take this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will." (Mark 14:35, NIV) His sacrifice was grounded in obedience and in love.

The truth is that our current lives are possible because of the sacrifice of others – from those in the trenches, to the one on the cross. And as we think about sacrifice we might also remember the smaller but no less significant sacrifices others might have made for us: parents, siblings, spouses, children, other family members, friends, strangers... whenever someone has given up something, or given something of themselves, for our benefit we see sacrifice at work; they have laid down something of their lives for us. I wonder how many sacrifices some families will make this winter to heat, feed, clothe and simply get through.

What about Church? I'm truly thankful for the time, energy and emotion that many give, often sacrificially, to the life of the

Church. As more roles need to be filled it may be that others feel the need to say to God, "Not what I will, but what you will" and take on things they'd rather not do; perhaps out of duty, but I hope out of love. "Greater love has no one than this....."  
Where have you seen people lay down something of themselves for your benefit, or in service of God? Where have you done this for others? In what ways do you 'lay down' something of your life today? Thank you for all that is done, and for your encouragement and support.

God Bless,

*Jona*



1st Ponteland Boys' Brigade & Girls' Association

# Carol Service

*'Jesus, the light of the World'*

Ponteland Methodist Church  
Tuesday 6th December 2022  
6.30 p.m.

All are welcome to join us for our  
annual Christmas Celebration



## THE PROBABLE SON

I don't know what I am going to do with Jake. He'll never settle down to learn how to manage the staff or the stock. He's no sense of responsibility, so how can he have any good influence on the staff or the stock or the arable or even the olive groves and the vineyard? And Dad just says to me *'Take him into partnership or give him a useful role in managing the estate'*. My estate now the old man has retired.

Dad is getting old, my sisters are all married off and their bride-price swallowed up in keeping the estate going. It all falls on me and he has just made an unnecessary and expensive fuss over Jake's return from God knows where! Never made a fuss of me or had a special do for me! *'You're always with me, the whole lot is yours!'* he says and spends goodness knows how much on fitting Jake out like a Lord!

Jake is much younger than me; I'd been managing things alongside Dad when Jake was in short pants. Then when Dad said he wanted to retire and leave the running of the estate to us two, what does the little brat do but suggest that Dad divides the whole lot as if he was already dead, two thirds to me and a third for him!

Well, that might have worked out if he'd been any good at the job and we had just divided notionally and kept on working together, but what does the silly boy do but put his part up for auction! Dad and I couldn't let our family inheritance be split up, so we had to raise the cash to buy him out and carry on with a mortgage to pay, while he waltzes off into the sunshine abroad, spending money like water, they say, keeping ungodly company and splashing out on loose women and paltry gewgaws.

From time to time we heard news of his exploits from travellers and then for ages heard nothing. 'Good riddance to bad rubbish,' I thought but Dad was terribly cut up and spent many a day at the gate gazing down the road as if he expected Jake along any moment.

Then last week I came back from a hard day in the vineyard to hear a cacophony of singing and dancing in the barnyard, where there should have been an orderly hum of packing up for the day.

*'What's all this?'* I asked and learnt that Dad had ordered a special feast because Jake was back. It seemed that the fatted calf





and I were the only ones to deplore the fact of my wretched young brother coming home, a broken man. He should have been put to tend the midden, not treated like royalty! I refused to join in the jambo-ree, and rightly so.

**John M Gill**



**THE  
OPEN DOOR**

This was named by the grandchildren because of the colour. It's quick to make and popular.

**Judith**

## **Shrek Soup**

1 onion chopped  
1oz butter or tsp oil  
3 medium courgettes chopped  
300g frozen peas  
1litre vegetable stock  
10 g fresh mint or 2 tsp mint sauce  
6tblsp crème fraiche (optional)  
Salt and pepper



Melt the butter in a large pan.  
Soften the onion in the butter.  
Add the courgette and peas. Stir until the veg is coated in butter.  
Add half the stock and bring to the boil.  
Simmer until the peas are tender.  
Add the mint and crème fraiche and blend the soup.  
Use the rest of the stock to adjust the thickness of the soup to your preference.  
Season to taste.

## **SCAMMERS ARE ACTIVE**

### **- unsure if something is credible? Be careful!**

Contact via social media, no matter how credible or appearing to be someone you know may be false, even photos, and the way email addresses appear. People "steal" profiles to pretend to be the friend in need.



Text messages to mobile phones with threats of fines / promises of nice free things are almost certainly false, no matter how credible. i.e. TAKE CARE any message not from a person already in your phone, and mobile contact by companies is rare. The same is true for email - but here the danger is bigger since it can appear as if it's HMRC or your energy company contacting you.

Phone calls to home or mobile. One way is to immediately challenge what the company is, the phone number, what service they offer and say you will call back if you need anything once you check with partner (even if you don't live with someone). Definitely interrupt, and yes it is very very Christian to interrupt in this way!

### **Personal bank matters**

- Try and keep one bank account used for normal spend with modest monies in. Then the ability to top up from savings. This limits the risk if fraud does arise.

- However, to protect the savings account details, leave them at home and don't directly pay monies/ write cheques where at all possible.

- Review bank statements for unusual items.

Even if you do all the above, somehow you may still get fraud on your bank statement - for example naughty persons in shops take your card details, even ebay transactions are rumoured to somehow pass your details.

And recapping, if a phone call email ends up asking for your personal details - even just full name / address, then start questioning; if it's date of birth question more; if it's bank details and you have not initiated the call then STOP!

If in doubt do not reply to texts or emails, and hang up on cold callers!

**Steve Donald**

## **AN AUTUMN VISIT TO MINSTERACRES**

The Newcastle District Retreat took place from Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> to Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> October. Our wonderful venue was – again! - the Passionists Monastery at Minsteracres, Consett.

The theme was “Look on the Bright Side” and the leaders were Rev Jack and Georgie Macadam. Rev Jack was a chaplain to the Forces Army for 16 years and now in retirement he is still active in taking services and speaking at weekday and evening events.

This year, five of us joined the group and arrived in time to settle in and enjoy the evening meal followed by opening worship. The next day, Wednesday, our day started with morning prayers beautifully led by Rosemary Gray. Then it was breakfast followed by two sessions “Knowing God” and “Have faith in God”. The morning was followed by lunch and free time. This was spent in various ways with a choir being formed – Jack has a beautiful singing voice and was an able leader.

After lunch the day had turned into a sunny glorious Autumn afternoon and some went out exploring the lovely grounds and others sat in the sun simply enjoying the fellowship.

At 4.00pm we had another wonderful session, “Trust me I am God” – simply trusting every day. Then it was time for dinner and Presidents Evening. This proved great fun with any willing person contributing a poem or a “few words”.

Our final day again started with prayers at 8.30 and the first morning session was entitled “Look on the Bright Side Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine”. Coffee was then available followed by the final session “Preparation for Worship”. Then it was time for lunch and we walked through the grounds for a service of Holy Communion in St Elizabeth’s Church – Dedication – O thou who camest from above. A beautiful service in a very lovely old Church.

We then all enjoyed a cup of tea and made our final farewells. We had made many new friends and had renewed friendships from previous retreats and everyone participating is looking forward already to meeting for the next Retreat in Spring.

**Jean Tweedie**

## **REV NORMAN ROUTLEDGE**

Norman Thurston Routledge born in Throckley on 23 December 1932, the second child of miner Norman Routledge and his wife Gladys. Norman's future wife, Margaret Nevin (Peggy) was the sister of one of his best friends, Ron. Norman became active in the life of Newburn Methodist Church where his Christian faith was nurtured. In 1953 he took the step of entering the Methodist Ministry and attended Headingley College in Leeds obtaining his Diploma in Theology in 1956. He was ordained at the Conference in Bristol and served in the following circuits: Shildon, The Hartlepoons, Hull (East), Maryport, Houghton-le-Spring, and Morpeth.

Before starting his first appointment Norman married Peggy at Newburn Chapel on 18 August 1956. They had three sons: Paul, Martin and Michael. He sat down in 1995 moving back to Throckley for a happy retirement, during which he continued to be an active preacher. Norman cared lovingly for Peggy during her final few years with dementia, until she died in 2019. Norman recognised the value of education and encouraged his sons to attend university, he himself studied for a Bachelor of Divinity through London University. His preaching was founded on a good understanding of the scriptures, the life and times of Jesus and the early church, and of Judaism. He continued to study into his retirement. His pastoral work was also of great importance, making every effort to visit the sick in hospital as well as supporting church members in their daily lives.

Norman had a lifelong interest in football as a player in his younger days and as a supporter of Newcastle United. He read widely, enjoyed music of various genres and was a fan of Bob Dylan. He was proud of his roots and studied local history as well as the lives of John and Charles Wesley. Norman had a full and broadly happy life which has left a deep impression on many others who have remarked on what a lovely man he was. Norman died on 27 May 2022 in the ninetieth year of his age and the in the sixty-sixth year of his presbyteral ministry.

**Jona**

# The Last Taboo? Talking about dying



Join Emma and James to gain confidence in talking about death and dying. Increase your awareness on these subjects and be better prepared for conversations in your community.

Themes covered include:

- Why some people don't talk about dying and why they should.
- How we find meaning, purpose and values and how they matter at the end of life
- Listening & communication
- What we could do differently when we talk about dying

**Where?** Ponteland Methodist Church NE20 9BE

**When?** Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> January 2023

**What time?** 10am to 1pm

**Bring your lunch and stay and chat together**

**Who's it for?** Anyone who wants to be able to talk more openly about dying, death and a meaningful end to life.

**How to book your place – email**

ballantynej@methodistchurch.org.uk or

register here

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/456949216407>

  
The **Methodist** Church  
Learning Network  
North East

Ponteland Methodist Church, Bell Villas  
Ponteland, NE20 9BE









## CHURCH COUNCIL UPDATE

In October our latest Church council meeting was held.  
The key things to share are:

### Appointments

Treasurer – Peter Michell was reappointed.

Pastoral Secretary – Bev Blackley was reappointed.

Church Council Secretary – Vacant – we need someone to fill this role.

Thanks were given to Peter and Bev.

### Leadership Team items

Bouncy Church – the first two have gone well. We will trial at least six Bouncy Church events before making any bigger decision about its future. A review is held after each Bouncy Church.

Welcome – we are looking at ways to make the building more welcoming in terms of wall decorations and signage. An event will be held in February/March for all to think about how we, as a people, can help people feel more welcome; door stewards will especially be encouraged to attend.

Loneliness – conversations have been held with Mayor Christine Greenwell, Rev Paul Allinson, Churches Together, and a local GP to see if there's any possibility of a co-ordinated approach. There are no proposals so far. Discussions and thoughts are ongoing.

Warm Spaces – Open Door will be registered as a 'Warm Space' where people can attend for warmth and company. This will be on a national register, on local council material and also advertised at the Memorial Hall.

TLLC - Transformational Leadership Learning Community. After an invitation from a Connexional (national church) officer a small group will participate in this year-long course.

### Stewards

Four of the current team of six are due to finish in the summer. Replacements are needed which may mean that people who have fulfilled this role before may need to consider taking it on again.

### Pastoral Committee

Our current membership is 114, and there are six people being approached and asked to consider becoming members.

The event on Death and Dying led by Dr Kathryn Mannix was well attended and received. Discussions are ongoing as to what might follow.

### Care & Share

Thanks were given to all who'd planned, organised and attended the Spring Plant Sale and the Platinum Jubilee Party.

Future planned events are the Kathy Anderson concert (19/11), and the Christmas Fayre (3/12).

Planning is starting for a Coronation event.

### Brigades

The Boys' Brigade with Girls' Association is slowly attracting some new members, including some girls!

### Finance

The Church ran at a small deficit of £650 in the last church year, however this was helped by Covid grants and legacies. Income from giving and rentals is down on pre-covid levels. At the moment we have the reserves to absorb any losses but this clearly isn't sustainable long term. Peter will produce a more detailed financial summary in due course.

### Property

Many small repairs and annual checks have taken place – ask Andy, Geoff or Bryan for more info.

New boards with Church Service times will be bought and placed on either side of Church.

### Red Food Sheds

Mayor Christine Greenwell asked whether, subject to council agreement, a 'red food shed' could be placed in the Church carpark. Her idea is that a small sheds would be placed in a few places around Ponteland where people could leave food for others or take food should they be struggling. These would be 2m x 1m and locked overnight. The Church would not be responsible for the contents or upkeep of the shed. The Church council agreed to the Mayor's request.

### Foodbank

Demand at the foodbank is rising. People are encouraged to bring donations or give directly to support those most in need.

### Dates for the diary

- 13 Nov – Remembrance Sunday
- 19 Nov, 7pm – Kathy Anderson and the Adventurers concert
- 3 Dec, 10am – Church Fayre hosted by Care & Share and BB/GA
- 4 Dec – Toy Service as part of Bouncy Church
- 1 Jan 2023 – New Year's Day worship led by Rev Tim Woolley
- 8 Jan – Bouncy Church
- 22 Jan – Covenant Service
- 11 June – Party in the Park

### Christmas Services

- Thursday 22 Dec, 7pm – Carol Service, with refreshments served from 6:15
- Christmas Eve, 3pm & 5pm – Carols and Crib services at St Mary's (shared worship)
- Christmas Eve, 7pm – Carols and Readings at St Mary's (shared worship)
- Christmas Day, 10am – Christmas Celebration

If you would like the minutes and reports from the Church council or have any questions then get in touch with me.

**Jona**



## **GARDENING FOR NOVEMBER, 2022**

I dislike November the most of the four months that I think of as winter. It might have something to do with the clocks changing and the dark nights but I think of it as a dull, dreary month. This year after the high temperatures and the droughty weather much is looking good in the garden and our summer flowers in containers continue to look good when we looked at them this



morning and decided not to change anything for the next few days. The begonias will require lifting cutting back to 2-3 inch stems and dry out on the benches of the greenhouse and more tender species such as perennial agapanthus will need to be moved indoors. We are still picking tomatoes, now only from two very vigorous plants I grew from cuttings (the first side shoot rooted in water), whilst the rest have just been picked and

haulms cleared for disposal, not composted. The grass has grown since the rain began to penetrate the ground, we are not sure if another cut will be necessary. Mr Trugreen has decided not to scarify until the spring as recovery from the action is not so likely to be as good as it would have been from an early September treatment. Our grass has mainly all recovered from the dead/brown appearance.

For the spring most of the new bulbs have been planted but the begonias in troughs have yet to be replaced by the pansies that are now in full flower. It is not too late to plant daffodils, particularly the later flowering types. November/early December is good for planting tulips. You can plant them earlier in the garden if the ground has never grown tulips before. There are viruses in the soil and in recycled compost that are more active when the soil temperature is above 10 degrees. These can result in distorted leaves and flowers even from new bulbs. The growing mediums in all planters have been recycled so many times that it is impossible to keep track of what has had tulips growing in so we don't grow tulips any more except for the odd straggler in the borders. I grew wallflowers from seed sown at the end of May – they came into full flower in early October in plant pots. I would normally plant out some wallflowers in the front border now or slightly earlier but there was no point as the

wallflowers I grew from seed are intended for spring flowering. I was able to buy bare-rooted plants from a garden centre.

We rely on new growth, some perennials and some shrubs for some colour in the spring. We have a forsythia, lilac (a beautiful dwarf in a pot as well) and viburnum which is already in flower and will carry on through the winter. Now is a good time to make hardwood cuttings either in a nursery bed or in pots (tall ones for taller growing). You can choose buddleia, coloured leaved elders, coloured stemmed dogwoods, willows, forsythia, philadelphus, flowering and fruiting currants,



gooseberries, roses etc. For a few years I grew a lot of box plants from cuttings. The taller growing you need 12 – 15 inches of firm new growth, cutting off the top at a slope and the bottom straight across. Remove all the bottom leaves so that you can insert about two thirds into a V shaped trench with coarse sand or grit in the bottom or into a tall pot with a gritty mixture weed-free growing medium (I used to use peat) and coarse sand. Firm in and water and do not disturb for a year. New growth will appear in the spring.

For the house the first plantings of paperwhite daffodils are now 2 – 3 inches up with a second planting to go in anytime (grown in the porch). Three large amaryllis have been planted in individual pots – different colours flower different times – use a gritty compost with no more than an inch space around the bulb with it only inserted half way (shoulders showing) and keep in the warm. For years I have bought cyclamen from the Christmas Fayre and kept them growing (resting in the summer). Out of three I had last spring one survived and divided itself into three bulbs. These are now coming into flower on the kitchen window,

Finally a word from Alan Titchmarsh: “If every single person grew a flower or two on doorstep, balcony, garden or estate imagine the difference we would make” (Gardeners World November 2022).

Good gardening in November.

**Syd Cowan**

## **I AM GRATEFUL FOR.....**

***This poem was read to us by one of our ministers eight years ago. How much it applies to us today!***

I am grateful for.....

I am grateful for the taxes I pay because it means I am employed.

I am grateful for the clothes that fit a little too tight because it means I have enough to eat.

I am grateful for my shadow who watches me work because it means I am out in the sunshine.

I am grateful for a garden that needs mowing, windows that need cleaning and gutters that need fixing because it means I have a home.

I am grateful for the parking spot I find at the far end of the parking lot because it means I am capable of walking.

I am grateful for my heating bill because it means I am warm.

I am grateful for all the complaints I hear about the government because it means we have freedom of speech.

I am grateful for the person who stands behind me in church who sings off key because it means I can hear.

I am grateful for the weariness and aching muscles at the end of the day because it means I have been productive.

I am grateful for the alarm that goes off in the early morning hours because it means that I am alive.

**Isobel Hindle**

## VILLAGE NEWS

### **Change of use from Day Nursery to Veterinary Practice**

A planning application has been made to change the former Day Nursery at 47 Bell Villas into a Veterinary Practice. See [publicaccess.northumberland.gov.uk](http://publicaccess.northumberland.gov.uk) . Comments due by 2<sup>nd</sup> November.

### **Ponteland Rugby Club and Ponteland Football Club -Plans for clubhouse**

To enable the plans for this to go ahead on Callerton Lane, it would have been necessary to fell 15 trees. The application has been refused.

### **Barclays Bank**

Barclays Bank has begun to provide a mobile bank van at the Memorial Hall on a Thursday. However on a recent Thursday this banking provision was provided in a room in the Memorial Hall.

### **Cycle routes**

New cycle routes are to be established in Ponteland, Ashington and Blyth. The Callerton cycle route aims to connect Ponteland to the Newcastle city boundary line and allow access to Callerton Metro Station.

### **Former Lloyds Bank**

This building is being changed into a Kumon Education Centre. The planning application includes the provision of a small coffee shop where parents could wait for their children. It now seems that this coffee shop will be open to anyone.

### **Anti-social behaviour**

Ponteland council teams up with police to stop anti-social behaviour.

**Jennifer Hardy**



**TRAIDCRAFT**

### **TRAIDCRAFT**

The Traidcraft order has been placed. I'll contact purchasers once the goods are received and confirm payments due.

Many thanks for your support.

**Bev**

## FAMILY NEWS

Congratulations to **Pat MacDonald** on the recent celebration of a special birthday.

We wish **Alan Groves** a smooth recovery after his recent accident.

Please pray for those awaiting both surgery, and hospital interventions - **Viv Whyte, Ann Cooper** and **Ann** and **Alf Scott** and others.

Several Church friends, who are now housebound, or are being cared for, need to be remembered.

**Val Draper** is progressing after her first eye procedure and awaiting further surgery to complete her treatment this month.

**Rosie Brown** needs special prayers, following further surgery.

We send love and prayers to **Tatiana** in her new job, teaching elementary school pupils in America.

### NOW

Live now.

Wonder at ordinary grass sparkling diamonds in the sunshine.

Relish late Autumn warmth.  
Concentrate on fluting bird song.  
Inhale life-giving freshness after rain.

Lay aside regrets or successes of yesterday.  
Abandon to the future the demands of tomorrow.  
Focus on this God-given moment.

Live now.

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



## Preachers November

- 6<sup>th</sup> 9.00am Bouncy Church  
6.30pm Sewell (S)  
13<sup>th</sup> 10.00am Sewell (S)  
6.30pm Forrester  
20<sup>th</sup> 10.00am Sewell  
6.30pm Lanyon  
27<sup>th</sup> 10.00am Small  
6.30pm Woolley

## Women Together

**10 Nov** – Quiz

**24 Nov** – Film Afternoon

## Men's Forum

**10 Nov** "Andrew Gonnet will talk about several different ways of saving energy in our homes, share cost savings from a computer simulation of the North East housing stock and ask what options people feel might be suitable for improving their homes."



## From The Editors

*Don't forget that copy for the December/January edition of Cornerstone should be with the editor by **Friday 25th November 2022**. 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.*