

MAY 2024

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The magazine for the Diocese of Newcastle

Extra



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A message from Bishop Mark



The Rt Revd Mark Wroe,
Bishop of Berwick

No! Don't you dare! That was the urgent cry of a parent attempting to call their recalcitrant young child back to order on the high street. I recently observed them with huge empathy, having been a parent in the same situation many times before, watching my own calls fall on deaf ears as my wayward children did the opposite of whatever I was hoping.

The Third Sunday after Easter was Vocations Sunday. A time, I hoped, when God's call didn't fall on deaf ears. Nor I hope is God's call to us 'No! Don't you dare!' Though I wonder if it is more urgent than we sometimes might think.

It often seems to me that we can view God's call as something quiet or passive; a call we can struggle to hear or easily ignore. Yet when God stopped Abraham from sacrificing Isaac on the mountain, or woke up Samuel in the Temple, or called Mary through her sobs in the Easter Garden, I don't believe it was

quiet, passive or easily ignored.

At the heart of our Confirmation Service is this wonderful declaration spoken over every candidate. They hear their name said and then the words:

'...God has called you by name and made you his own.'

This simple but profound call is at the heart of all Christian vocation. God's call is insistent: we need to know we are deeply loved and wanted. God's call is persistent: we need to know we are rescued and completely forgiven. And God's call is urgent: we are called to his purposes for today, not tomorrow or when we feel like it.

Each of us is called. We are called first as daughters and sons of God. And then we are called in the power of the Spirit to build up Christ's Church and to witness to God's love in the world. This calling is insistent, persistent and urgent – and it is for all of us.

We are called in a wonderful variety of ways in every context and in every walk of life: teachers, builders, carers, students, cleaners, parents, rescuers, administrators, drivers, caterers, volunteers, listeners, shop assistants, office workers, and the list goes on and on – but in each one we can witness to God's love and purpose.

Of course, there are more immediately obvious ways people are called by God – and this year we wonderfully celebrate 30 years since women were first able to be ordained priests – but each of these vocations has the same insistent, persistent and urgent call at heart: *'...God has called you by name and made you his own.'*

This call is not 'No! Don't you dare!' Quite the opposite: God has called you by name and made you his own – dare to believe it. This vocation is lifelong. For everyone. Now.

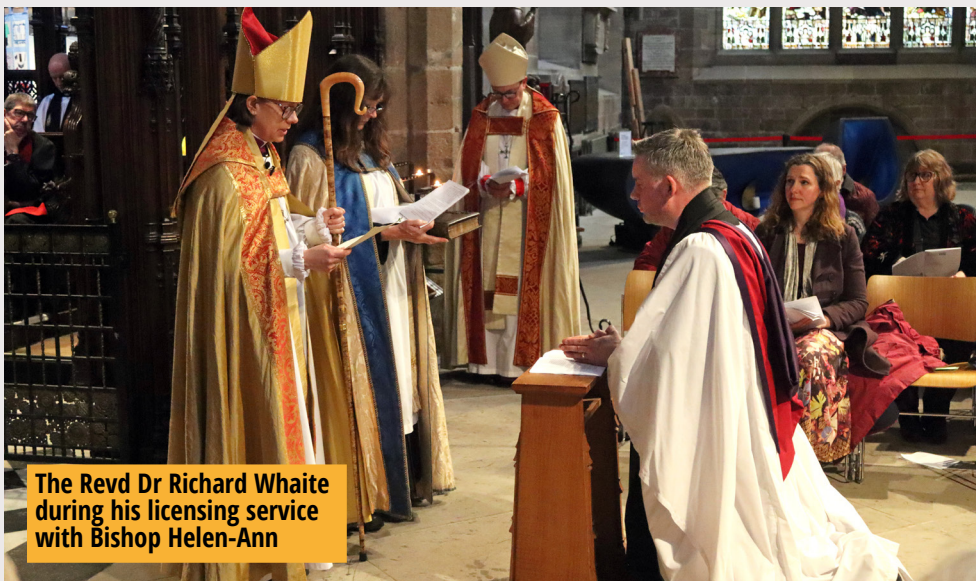
Bishop Mark

If you are interested in exploring Christian vocation further, please speak to your parish clergy in the first instance. For further advice please be in touch with our Director of Ordinands and Vocations, Stephen Tranter: ddo@newcastle.anglican.org

Richard Whaite licensed as new Director of Mission and Ministry



The Revd Dr Richard Whaite (third from right) with senior clergy during his licensing service



The Revd Dr Richard Whaite during his licensing service with Bishop Helen-Ann

Our new Director of Mission and Ministry, the Revd Dr Richard Whaite, was licensed by Bishop Helen-Ann during a service at Newcastle Cathedral on 17 March, where he was also installed as a Canon of the Cathedral.

As a member of Bishop Helen-Ann's senior leadership team, Ric now holds a lead responsibility for developing and overseeing the discipleship and ministry strategy for the Diocese, including the training and equipping of lay and ordained leaders. He will also encourage and enable mission and practical evangelism in the parishes

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and deaneries, and support them in the Diocesan vision 'Seeking, Sharing, Sending'.

Commenting on his new role, Ric said: "It is a privilege to serve alongside the people of this Diocese as we begin to explore 'Seeking, Sharing, Sending' in the context of the nearly 150 years of the faithful witness of this Diocese to God's abiding love. I hope together we find deep joy in discerning the many gifts God offers to each of us in our journeys, as well as wisdom and humility in sharing those gifts with all whom we encounter."

Bishop Helen-Ann said: "Ric brings to our Diocese a wealth of experience and wisdom from his time in Chester, as well as great enthusiasm, and I am grateful that he has chosen to join us during this exciting time for our Diocese as we seek to turn outwards in mission and become younger and more diverse. I very much look forward to working with Ric as we develop our strategies and training for mission and ministry."



Prior to joining the Diocese of Newcastle, Ric was Rector of St Mary Without-the-Walls in Chester and also served on the Diocesan Committee for Ministry in Chester (as Assistant Diocesan Director of Vocations) and on the

Diocesan Advisory Committee for the Care of Churches. During his time in Chester, Ric taught modern doctrine and historical theology in the Department of Theology and Religious Studies at the University of Chester, as well as on diocesan lay and ordained ministry training courses.

Educated in history and theology in London, Oxford, Manchester and the United States, Ric was previously Chaplain at University College in Durham and served in parochial ministry in the Kensington Episcopal Area of the Diocese of London. He was born and grew up in Stockport.

Dean of Newcastle, the Very Reverend Lee Batson said: "Ric is now a Canon in our Cathedral and we are very excited to welcome him to our Diocese. The Cathedral has undergone significant change with our recent multi-million-pound refurbishment and he is joining us at a really exciting time as we discern how we can be an even stronger resource to the wider diocese as it witnesses to the love of God."

Four new non-residentiary canons announced



Revd Canon Dr Sarah Hills



Revd Alison Hardy



Revd Sue McCormack



Revd Louise Taylor-Kenyon

Bishop Helen-Ann is delighted to announce four new Non-Residentiary Canons: Revd Alison Hardy; Revd Louise Taylor-Kenyon; Revd Canon Dr Sarah Hills and Revd Sue McCormack.

The four new canons will be installed on 23 June 2024 at Newcastle Cathedral during a special service, which will also celebrate the 30th anniversary of the Ordination of Women to the Priesthood in the Church of England.

Easter services in Newcastle Diocese

Numerous services and events took place across the Diocese during Lent, Holy Week and Easter.

Here's a selection of photos from Newcastle Cathedral, where clergy and lay ministers gathered on Maundy Thursday morning for Chrism Eucharist.



Pupils embark on Easter Journey during Holy Week

Pupils from a Church of England primary school have been on an interactive 'Easter Journey' during Holy Week.

The children, from Bishop's Primary in Newbiggin, attended St Andrew's and St Mark's Church to experience the story of Holy Week and the resurrection.

Headteacher Clare Marriott said the pupils enjoyed the event, which included information tents and activities to break down the historic story.

She added: "The Easter Journey gave the children an opportunity to visit St Andrew and St Mark's in Newbiggin to experience the story of Holy Week and the resurrection in a creative, immersive and accessible way.

"The facilitators and organisers were so patient and really helped the children to understand and reflect on what can, for some, be a difficult concept. We are always grateful to be invited to be part of this."



National Easter services filmed on Holy Island

The Church of England's official video services over the Easter weekend were filmed on Holy Island and were led by the Revd Canon Dr Sarah Hills.

The video services on Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, Holy Saturday and Easter Day, reached a wide audience, with some yielding over 220,000 views.

Among those who joined Sarah in the videos were Sarah Quilty and Frances Wilson, professional choir, St Martin's Voices, and the Archbishop of York, the Rt

Revd Stephen Cottrell, who appeared in the Easter Day video service.

Sarah is vicar at St Mary the Virgin Church on Holy Island, which featured in each of the video services. Other key landmarks, including Lindisfarne Priory, were also featured.

On Maundy Thursday, Sarah reflected on Jesus washing his disciples' feet and how the small, everyday actions that we take for those around us show our love and care.

On Good Friday, Sarah encouraged us to reflect on the field of Gethsemane and shared her experience of a Good Friday peace walk. A day later, the service focused on Holy Saturday as an 'in between' day - a day of sadness, waiting and anticipation.

On Easter Day, the Archbishop of York talked of how the resurrection of Jesus is the turning point in our lives.

You can watch the videos here.

Bishop Helen-Ann appointed a patron of Newcastle Foodbank



Bishop Helen-Ann during her visit to the Community Pantry in Blakelaw

Bishop Helen-Ann has accepted an invitation to become a patron of Newcastle Foodbank – describing the appointment as “a great honour indeed.”

The foodbank offers emergency food assistance to people in need across the city, as well as other essential services, and opened its Community Pantry in Blakelaw a year ago.

The Bishop, who attended the Community Pantry on Tuesday 9 April, as it marked its first anniversary, has vowed to use her position as Bishop of Newcastle and as a Lords Spiritual as a platform to raise awareness of the issues which make the foodbank such a necessity in today’s society.

“I am delighted to be made a patron of the

Newcastle Foodbank,” She said. “It was very good to mark this appointment by joining in with the first year celebrations of the food pantry at Blakelaw Community Centre.”

The pantry provides an excellent range of essentials in such a way that it enables people to choose what they would like to have – giving them dignity and agency in accessing this service. Alongside this are opportunities to access welfare and benefits advice and to catch up with the staff and volunteers who support the work of the foodbank, as well as the facilities that are offered by the Community Centre itself.

Bishop Helen-Ann added: “I hope that in my role as a patron I will be able to use this platform as Bishop of Newcastle and as a Lords Spiritual to highlight the many systemic issues of injustice that make the foodbank a

necessity of daily life for so many people. “I hope also to be able to shine a light of hope on the stories of community and kindness that I see. The foodbank itself was started by the Church and it is rightly proud of its origins, something that my invitation to become a patron connects with in a way that I find deeply inspiring. It is a great honour indeed.”

Newcastle Foodbank took to social media to express its delight that Bishop Helen-Ann had become a patron.

It shared a statement on X (formally Twitter): “We look forward to working with the Bishop to help highlight and address the issue of food poverty across our city.”

To find out more about Newcastle Foodbank, visit newcastlefoodbank.org

'A fascinating insight' – the Bishop's city centre night shift with the police

Bishop Helen-Ann has paid tribute to the work of our emergency services after gaining first-hand experience of front-line policing.

The Bishop joined officers from Northumbria Police during a busy Friday night shift in Newcastle City Centre, as they worked with other organisations to keep people safe.

"It's fair to say it was a lively night on the Toon," she said. "I heard about some of the challenges around resourcing a city centre, where over the course of the weekend on one night alone - upwards of 20,000 people might be accessing the city night life.

"I gained a fascinating insight into the realities of the night-time economy in Newcastle from the perspective of the team of police officers who are responsible for the weekend police cover for the city centre."

Bishop Helen-Ann attended two briefing sessions – for beat officers and plain clothes officers respectively - before accompanying Sergeant Paul Lewins both in the police van and on foot in the city centre. They checked in with officers at different locations along the way, as well as calling in at many of the bars and clubs which make up the city's nightlife - to liaise with door staff.

The Bishop also encountered the work of Street Pastors in Newcastle – a band of church members who take to the city's streets as trained volunteers. They provide a listening ear and practical help, supporting people who find themselves vulnerable or marginalised.

She added: "It was excellent also to hear how important initiatives like the Street Pastors are to the police and how working in partnership with the Street Pastors, every effort is made to care for the most vulnerable people in particular."

After the experience, Bishop Helen-Ann had



Bishop Helen-Ann said her night shift with the police was a valuable experience

a special message for the police and other emergency services.

"I was immensely grateful to Paul and his team for making me feel so welcome," she added. "And most importantly, for looking after me and seeing me safely home in the early hours of Saturday morning.

"A huge thank you to all our emergency ser-

vices, to the Street Pastors and all other organisations, for all they do to keep people safe."

The Bishop was offered an opportunity to join the police night shift after meeting Sgt Lewins at Newcastle Cathedral's carol service last Christmas. She said the valuable experience would assist her role as Bishop and also as a member of the House of Lords.

Digital rollout... One year on



Generous Giving Team – Leanne Conway-Wilcox, Dennis Fancett and Joanne Christie

By Leanne Conway-Wilcox Generous Giving Advisor

It's been a little over a year since the Generous Giving team supported a transformative digital rollout across the Diocese. This ambitious project saw 29 parishes equipped with contactless donation devices funded by The Archbishops' Council and so far, has enabled over £30,000 in donations to be made via a contactless method.

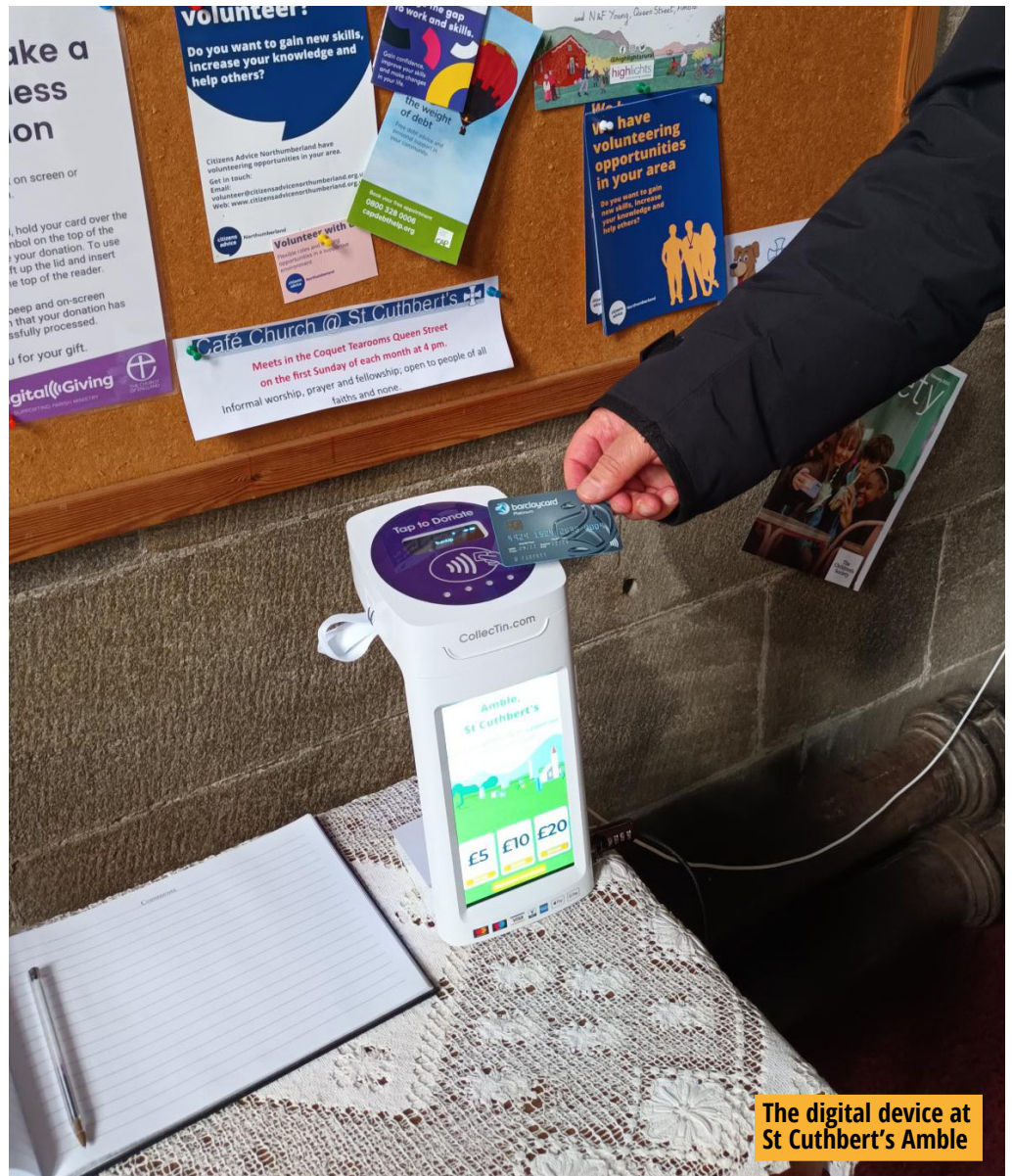
As we know, cash as the main method of donating has been on the decline, especially since the pandemic. So, a proactive approach underscored the commitment of the Diocese and parishes to embracing modern technology and ensuring sustainability in an evolving digital landscape.

Tessa, the treasurer at St Cuthbert's Haydon Bridge emphasised that these devices "are great as part of a suite of different ways to make giving easier. Some people still work in cash, others like QR codes."

The rollout has allowed us to enable parishes to adapt to the changing preferences of not just parishioners, but also those who are attending particular life events.

David, a churchwarden from St Cuthbert's Blyth shared this feedback – "We have found the contactless box very useful for baptisms and weddings. It was particularly good at Christmas when we had our big Christmas Tree Festival. All in all, we are very happy with the system."

This sentiment highlights the versatility and effectiveness of the contactless donation



The digital device at St Cuthbert's Amble

equipment, which has proven invaluable during various church events and celebrations.

These pieces of kit have allowed churches to fundraise hundreds of pounds at events to support the mission and ministry, complementing other ways to give. And these success stories have also inspired other parishes to invest in their own devices and get started with cashless giving.

The digital rollout has been about more than just providing equipment, it has seen churches empowered to make use of these other digital giving tools and routes.

Several parishes have gone further, creating

online giving campaigns and QR codes to enable generosity from parishioners and visitors. Now people can access online giving via their phones by scanning QR codes when visiting churches and are even able to donate while using carparks such as the one at St John's, Otterburn. It is accessible anywhere a link is shared.

With thousands of pounds in donations given online, it's exciting to see how new ways of supporting ministry and projects in churches are being used.

Of course, this is only the beginning and the team is ready and waiting to support those interested in investing in contactless or making the most of digital giving.

Churches collaborate for NCD Youth event

Young people joined together for a time of worship, prayer and pizza as part of an exciting new initiative. A total of 17 teenagers from four churches in Newcastle Central Deanery (NCD) gathered at St John the Evangelist at Kingston Park, for the first installment of NCD Youth.

Held at St John's, the event was put together by a group of clergy and laity from the deanery. It was part of a collaborative project in NCD to share resources between churches, and was in-line with the diocesan commitment to growing younger and more diverse.

"This was a brilliant time of worship and prayer," said Joel Barwick, Youth Minister at St Thomas'. "It was a joy to work together to see young people meet with God and other Christians their age in the Diocese."

"There was a time of worship and we had



prayer stations where everyone could engage with God. It was brilliant and we'll definitely be doing another event like this soon."

NCD Youth involved youngsters from St Thomas and St Luke's Newcastle, as well as those from St Mary's Fawdon and St Aidan's Brunton Park.

Joel said the collaboration between the churches is key to NCD's joint mission to disciple young people.

He added: "We invited the youngsters via Deanery Synod and while they are from churches with different styles of worship, they were unified in praying together and in their love for Jesus."

By Tara Russell, Children and Youth Team Leader

In March, Youthscape, the national Christian youth work charity, published an amazing piece of research titled 'Translating God'. If you have a spare three hours, I would heartily recommend you reading it for yourself! I certainly learned lots. However, if you don't have that time, let me give you the highlights that I think parishes can use to strengthen our connections with the young people in our communities.

There has been a 40 percent drop in the number of 10-15-year-olds who identify as Christian from 2009 – 2021. Of these, very few consider themselves to be part of a church. However, belief in a higher power still persists among many young people. They grapple with questions about suffering, death, illness, environment. And when asked how they would describe God, they said 'powerful, kind, loving, caring and good! What an opportunity for the church to engage with young people on the questions they are asking and to reinforce their notion of who God is!

From your children, youth and families team



Unfortunately, the research has shown that when they occasionally encounter churches through school visits and formal events, they don't find it particularly engaging. **We can fix that!** We can learn to be more creative in the way we engage with young people and show that church, and faith are life enhancing, positive things to have in our lives.

Fewer young people attended youth groups or clubs frequently in 2021 than in 2010. We know that statutory youth provision has been hit hard by local authority cuts, so there are less clubs to

attend. However, churches have been historically brilliant at creating safe spaces for young people to socialise and learn new skills. We know that working with teenagers is a bit scarier for our volunteers than working with children, but there's so much we can do that is simple and effective in creating safe, welcoming spaces for young people. Can we open our building once a week and provide tea, toast and a place where teenagers can chat, maybe with some board games to help us connect? We can start building relationships, and show that church is relevant and part of the community.

Our diocesan Children and Youth Team would love to support you in trying to reach out to the young people in your community. We have access to ideas, research and resources which will help you.

Find Translating God [here](#).

Children and Youth Team Leader, Tara Russell: t.russell@newcastle.anglican.org

Youth Adviser, Sue White: s.white@newcastle.anglican.org

Maundy Money – recipients in Newcastle Diocese



Gwyn McKenzie and Canon Roger Windass

There were two recipients from Newcastle Diocese as Queen Camilla handed out Maundy Money at Worcester Cathedral.

Gwyn McKenzie OBE and Canon Roger Windass both attended the prestigious ceremony on Maundy Thursday (28th March), where they received special purses of coins.

The annual tradition of presenting alms on Maundy Thursday goes back to at least the 4th Century. This year, the Queen distributed the Maundy Money on behalf of King Charles III, who has restricted his duties while he undergoes treatment for cancer.

A select band of 75 men and 75 women (signifying the King's age this year) were chosen to receive the ceremonial coins on Maundy Thursday. The gift is presented in recognition of their exemplary Christian service to church and community over many years.

Gwyn and Roger were nominated for their services in Newcastle Diocese.

For Gwyn, the news came just months after she was made a Member of the Order of the British Empire (MBE) in the King's New Year Honour's List for services to young people and the community.

The award of Maundy Money reflects her passion for social justice, support for church charities and commitment to her local church as a Licensed Lay Reader. Gwyn also represents Corbridge Deanery at Synod and is a member of the Deanery Development Group.

"It is a privilege and an honour," said Gwyn, a PCC member at St James' Church in Riding Mill. "It's nice when somebody recognises what you do and goes to the trouble of putting you forward for things. For someone to think it's worthy of note is quite humbling."

For the past six years, Gwyn has been a volunteer trustee of Walking With, the North Tyneside based charitable organisation, which supports

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asylum seekers and refugees.

She is also a trustee of Transforming Communities Together: Tyne to Tweed (formerly Together Newcastle), which offers church-based community development at grassroots level, working in the most deprived communities across the Diocese.

Over the years, Gwyn has also served the Scout Association in a number of key roles both regionally and nationally.

Roger has served the Diocese of Newcastle for many years through Deanery and Diocesan Synods, and also as Chair of the Houses and Glebe Committee. St Mary's, Monkseaton has been Roger's local church since his Sunday school days in 1956.

"It was exciting to receive the letter from



Buckingham Palace," said Roger. "I am really thrilled about it and of course it is a huge privilege."

A chartered surveyor by profession, Roger

has chaired the Houses and Glebe Committee for 17 years, becoming a member of Synod in the process. He's carried out numerous roles at St Mary's over the years, and is currently chair of its Buildings and Resources Group.

For almost a decade, he served as a member of the Lord Chancellor's Advisory Committee, which has a key role in the selection of magistrates. Roger has been a member of Whitley Bay Rotary Club since 1986, twice serving as president. He is a trustee of the Wellesley Trust, which provides grants to people and organisations for educational purposes, as well as for the relief of hardship among young people in the North East.

As she presented the Maundy Money, the Queen was accompanied by the Lord High Almoner - the Bishop of Worcester, the Rt Revd John Inge. He previously served in Newcastle Diocese as the vicar of St Luke's, Wallsend, from 1990 to 1996.

Revd Dr Richard Briggs – new Principal appointed at Lindisfarne College of Theology

The Revd Dr Richard Briggs has been appointed as Principal of Lindisfarne College of Theology (LCT).

He will take up his post on 1 September 2024, replacing the Revd Dr David Bryan, who earlier announced that he will retire in the summer.

Richard has been training ordained and lay ministers in the North East for over 20 years, teaching the Old Testament, and for the past three years being an Associate Tutor at the college. He has a wide range of church leadership and missional experience across different traditions.

He was ordained in the Church of England in 2015 and served his

curacy in a cluster of former mining communities to the east of Durham City. Most recently he has been Prior of the Community of St Cuthbert at St Nicholas' Church in Durham, where he was also acting vicar for a year. He is the author of many accessible publications and also of several major books on biblical interpretation and Old Testament studies, including 'The Lord is My Shepherd: Psalm 23 for the Life of the Church' (Baker Academic, 2021), and is currently writing a book on the theology of the Psalms.

Richard is an honorary research fellow in Old Testament at both the Department of Theology and Religion in Durham University and at Cranmer Hall, St John's College. He is married to Melody and they have three adult children.

Richard said: "I am very excited to take up this new position as Principal of LCT. It has been a wonderful privilege to be part of teaching at LCT over the past three years. I have been deeply impressed by the College's passion and enthusiasm under David Bryan's leadership, and

by the way that they send out excited students who are keen to serve in our beloved North East. There are plenty of challenges in the world of theological and ministerial formation at present, but I look forward to tackling them with a supportive team and in close collaboration with our dioceses."

The Revd Dr David Bryan said: "I am full of joy with the news that Richard will be succeeding me as Principal of Lindisfarne College of Theology. Richard is a first-class biblical scholar who has extensive publications in his special field. In addition, Richard is a wonderful pastor and priest. He will bring to the College a depth of knowledge of our region, enhanced by his recent experience of ministry in Durham at St Nics, and more widely in the parishes of Gilesgate, Sherburn and Shadforth. Our prayers are with him and Melody as they look ahead to working together in training ministers in the North East."

Read the full story [here](#).



Vital work with life-changing results



Cheryl with her daughter Beatrix

St Hilda's Trust supports charities and organisations which work with disadvantaged children and young people within the boundaries of Newcastle Diocese (Northumberland, North Tyneside and Newcastle).

Set up in December 1988, from the proceeds of the sale of St Hilda's Approved School and Community Home, the trust offers grants for charitable purposes, although the organisations don't have to be registered charities. Particular consideration is given to projects where there is a church involvement or interest.

One organisation which has benefited from this is the Rainbow Trust children's charity, which supports families who are caring for a seriously ill child, providing practical and emotional support tailored to each family's individual needs.

A Rainbow Trust representative said: "We are so grateful to St Hilda's Trust for their continued support of our work caring for seriously ill children and their families across Newcastle. Their donations have helped to fund our team of dedicated family support workers who are there for families from diagnosis, through treatment and beyond."

Case study

Beatrix was only 15 months old when she was admitted to hospital with heart failure in May 2022. She lived as a long-term patient in the Freeman Hospital on their specific cardiac unit, being kept alive by a Berlin Heart (essentially an artificial heart) until she underwent a heart transplant in the summer of 2023.

Bea's mum, Cheryl, and older sister Eliza caught Covid just before she was admitted. One of their symptoms was being off their food, so when Bea

also stopped eating, they just assumed it was Covid. It was only when she also stopped drinking that they called 111 and from there everything happened really quickly.

Bea's dad Terry recalled the moment their life took a tragic turn:

"She was rushed to the Freeman Hospital and Bea was in heart failure," he explained. "They said it was highly unlikely she'll survive the night unless she had surgery to connect her to a Berlin Heart, and Bea would be on that machine until she received a heart transplant. She was lying in the bed with pipes coming out of her abdomen and running to a huge machine at the end of the bed which was now her heart. It was horrific, but she still had a chance and was willing to fight"

A hospital social worker at Newcastle's Freeman

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Beatrix with her dad Terry

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Hospital referred Bea's family to the Rainbow Trust and family support worker, Monica, started working with the family in Spring 2022.

In the summer of 2023, at just two years old, Bea underwent a heart transplant.

"One day the call came, we took her up to the theatre, she knew what was happening, we'd explained to her that she was getting a new heart. I think she was in theatre for about ten hours. From there it was recovery, learning to walk again, lots and lots of monitoring, but within four weeks of surgery, we walked out of that hospital with Bea to come home. We could not have gone through that time in hospital, and even now out of hospital, without Monica and without the support of Rainbow Trust.

"Ever since Bea was diagnosed, we wanted to give Eliza as normal life as possible, away from the drama and the trauma of living in hospital. We couldn't have done that without Monica. Monica would take Eliza out for the afternoon and having the experience that she has of dealing with sick children and families in hospital she was the best person to be able to talk to about that.




"We are just one of the families that Rainbow Trust helps look after, they have brought so much to us, to our family and to other children like Bea and to parents like us. We couldn't have coped without the support of Rainbow Trust!"

For more information click [here](#) and [here](#).



Beatrix


PLANNING ALREADY FOR SUMMER 24?

St. Hilda's Trust would like to consider the funding of activities organised by churches or schools in the diocese for summer 2024.


To apply for a summer 2024 grant, please do send applications to Kyrinn Whittaker, k.whittaker@newcastle.anglican.org, Secretary to the Trust.

Please do not send any later than Friday 31st May for activities between start of July to end of September.



THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND
DIOCESE OF NEWCASTLE

APPLY NOW
<https://bit.ly/ApplyStHildas>



Seeking.
Sharing.
Sending.

Living the Lantern



By Vanessa Ward,
Volunteer Coordinator



Volunteer Steven, right, speaks to a member of the public

For centuries, Newcastle Cathedral's Lantern Tower guided travellers along the River Tyne. Today, the Cathedral serves as a beacon of support for those navigating challenging circumstances in life.

Radical Welcome, one of the Cathedral's core values, is an extremely important part of who we are and what we do. Volunteers play a crucial role in delivering this. They are part of the lifeblood of the Cathedral community and without them we simply could not operate in the same way.

I joined the Cathedral team as Volunteer Coordinator in October last year. I derive a real joy from working alongside the volunteers, developing relationships and taking immense pleasure in how much they love the Cathedral and what it stands for.

All new volunteers undergo training, and 'Radical Welcome training' is a central part of this, which they really engage with.

From tour guiding, assisting with educational visits, to arranging flowers, acting as servers, and helping in the retail area to providing support at events and playing a part in Cathedral governance, the role of a volunteer is varied and utilises many skillsets.

We have extremely knowledgeable tour guides who undertake extensive research about the Cathedral's history. They are part of the treasure trove of individuals who so generously give time to us. Volunteers also provide support for the choristers and the musical tradition of the Cathedral, very much linked into safeguarding and our absolute commitment to being a safe space.

We value our volunteers – we recognise their gift of time to us. In turn we provide comprehensive training, complimentary access to

events, talks, concerts and opportunities for volunteers to meet and socialise with each other.

The other exciting aspect of volunteering is that new roles can be created. We are currently looking to develop gardener or grounds-person roles to help us maintain the perimeter of the Cathedral.

We have another new strand of volunteers called Cathedral Befrienders. They engage with and offer a supportive presence to individuals from the street life community who use the Cathedral on a daily basis. This a true example of radical welcome in action.

If you are interested in volunteering at the Cathedral, or to find out more about any of these roles, please contact vanessa.ward@newcastlecathedral.co.uk or visit our website: newcastlecathedral.org.uk/volunteer

Invitation to write songs of hope and inclusion

This month marks the launch of the 'Stories of Sanctuary' song-writing group at Newcastle Cathedral. Everyone can join these fun and free sessions, held every Tuesday at 6:30pm, beginning on 7 May. Especially welcome are those seeking sanctuary or who consider the Cathedral, the region, or the Diocese, for any reason, as a place of sanctuary.

These workshops are the latest initiative by Citizen Songwriters, whose 'Stories of Sanctuary' journey began in Durham in 2018. Bringing together diverse residents of the city, the project weaved together ancient stories of seeking sanctuary with accounts of Syrian refugees recently settled in towns across County Durham.

The music from the project has toured across the UK including Leicester, Sheffield, Southampton and the Houses of Parliament, while new song-writing groups have been set up in Ashington and Sunderland. Each set of songs brings forth new narratives, shaped by the location and experiences of the group.

The Cathedral's involvement in the project follows a concert in November last year, which featured members of the Durham and Sunderland groups. Led by Citizen Songwriters' leader Sam Slatcher, sessions will also involve singer-songwriter Sean Cooney from band The Young'uns who recently collaborated with members of the Cathedral's Recovery Church group, to write a song highlighting stigma surrounding addiction.



The 'Stories of Sanctuary' concert in November last year, featuring members of the Durham and Sunderland groups

The workshops will run for six weeks, with the final session taking place on Tuesday 11 June. The songs will later be showcased on Thursday 18 July in a summer concert at the Cathedral, providing an opportunity for songwriters to showcase their talents.

Newcastle Cathedral's Revd Peter Dobson said: "November's concert was a tremendous success, not only raising funds but also raising awareness, which has been instrumental in the establishment of the Cathedral's own 'Stories of Sanctuary' project.

"As a Cathedral that seeks to be a place of Radical Welcome, a safe and a brave space for people facing a range of different challenges

day in and day out, this project is so exciting. We hope the workshops will gather a wide range of people to help us, and others, better understand the importance of sanctuary in its many different forms.

"There's no obligation to attend all of the sessions - you can come to all six or join at a later point."

'Stories of Sanctuary' is led by Citizen Songwriters and made possible with the generous support of The Arts Society Tyneside. If you are interested in joining the group at Newcastle Cathedral, please email Sam Slatcher at info@citizensongwriters.org.

Eclectic Newcastle

Eclectic Newcastle is a social group made up of Christians from a number of churches and denominations on Tyneside.

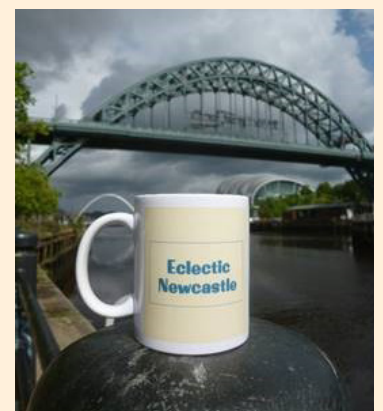
The group meet once a month in a local hotel lounge for coffee and a chat. Eclectic members

enjoy visiting restaurants, trips to the cinema or theatre and some like country walks.

Members don't spend each evening in deep theological debate and not all of our members attend church. If you like meeting

new folk, Eclectic would be pleased to hear from you. Send an email to elclecticnewcastle@gmail.com

Please note Eclectic Newcastle is an external social group and this listing does not imply Diocesan endorsement.



Food is at the heart (and the belly) of every culture. It is something we all have in common. We need it to live but how else does it affect our lives? Our emotions? Our bodies? And what happens if you don't get it?

Youth theatre production shines light on food poverty

Newcastle Cathedral, in its commitment to shedding light on the challenges faced by those in its local community, will welcome theatre production 'Fed Up!' on Thursday 23 May at 7:30pm.

This powerful play by Live Youth Theatre explores food poverty and its impact on children and young people in the North East.

Using research, testimony, and their own words, a talented group of young people have crafted this thought-provoking show. The 45-minute performance will be held in the Cathedral nave, a departure from the group's usual venue at Live Theatre on Newcastle Quayside.

The Very Revd Lee Batson, Dean of Newcastle, said: "We are delighted to be hosting a performance of Fed Up! and to have the opportunity to give a platform to young people in our city to help us see the challenges of living with food poverty in a new way. We hope this will be the first of many collaborations with Live Theatre".

Paul James, Senior Creative Associate for Children and Young People at Live Theatre, said: "Fed Up! started as a 10-minute piece in 2019

live
theatre

when the world was a very different place: pre-Covid, pre-cost of living crisis and pre-spiralling inflation. This new updated and extended version uses the words of the young cast to highlight the devastating affect that food poverty is having on families, children and young people in our region and beyond. The piece pokes fun at politicians and their failure to come up with a solution to the problem."

Fed Up! is suitable for audiences aged 10 and above with tickets available on a 'Give as You

Feel' basis, with a £10 suggested donation. Bookings can be made via the Cathedral's TicketSource page: ticketsource.co.uk/newcastle-cathedral.

Further events coming up at the Cathedral include 'The Wizarding Organ – The Music of Harry Potter' on Monday 27 May, and Chapterhouse Theatre's production of William Shakespeare's 'A Midsummer Night's Dream' on Tuesday 23 July.

To find out more about Live Youth Theatre, the largest youth theatre in the North East, go to: live.org.uk.



Fed Up!'s debut performance at live theatre



Fed Up! promotional image



The Cathedral's nave – where Fed Up! will perform on 23 May

Organist's 1,000-mile cycle will support ambitious church refurbishment plan

An organist at a North Tyneside church will begin a unique bike ride this week to raise vital funds for an ambitious fundraising project.

Starting on Thursday (25 April), Nigel Brown, who plays the historic Postill organ at St John's Church, Killingworth, will cycle 1,000 miles across the UK, visiting nine other churches where Postill organs are present.

It's part of a huge fundraising campaign to raise £600,000 which would re-model the North side of the church - and also help to restore the organ, constructed by the prolific organ builder Robert Postill in the 19th century, back to its former glory.

An experienced organist who enjoys cycling, Nigel has named himself the 'Pedal Powered Pilgrim' ahead of the adventure, which will include several missions over the coming months.

For first leg of his journey, from Thursday to Sunday, Nigel will set-off from his home in Morpeth and head north into Scotland, cycling to Dunbar, over the Forth Bridge and across Fife to Dundee.

From there, he will head to Arbroath, attending mass at St Thomas The Martyr Catholic Church, before reaching Aberdeen on Sunday.

Later instalments will see him travel through the North of England and the Midlands, heading south to the chapel at Blenheim Palace in Oxfordshire.

"It is a real privilege to play the Postill organ at St John's," said Nigel. "As an organist and as a cyclist I just had this idea of cycling to other churches where they are present. I see it as a fate accompli and I hope it raises awareness of these historic organs as well as supporting the fundraising campaign."

A clinical scientist by profession, Nigel has



Nigel Brown pictured with the Revd Sarah Moon

played at St John's for over two years and has previously done so elsewhere in Newcastle Diocese, at St Cuthbert's, Bedlington; as well as further afield, at Lumley Castle in Durham, on the Wirral in Merseyside, and in London.

His fitness and training programme has included cycling to work from Morpeth to Ashington.

The Revd Sarah Moon, Priest in Charge of Killingworth Parish, said the church hopes to secure two two-thirds of the £600,000 fundraising total through grants, but the congregation is aiming to raise the other £200,000 through various activities, including Nigel's cycle.

There will also be a music event, a recycled fashion show and a series of running initiatives. A team from St John's will take on the Edinburgh Marathon in May, while Sarah is preparing for the Great North Run in September.

St John's Church (which opened in 1869) was built long before Killingworth town existed, while it is believed the original construction

project in the 1860s ran out of money before it could be properly completed.

It means the North side of the church which faces the town is an uninspiring wall. But plans - drawn up by architects Ainsworth Spark Associates - aim to open it up with a new entrance there with step-free access, as well as toilets, a serving area, much-needed storage space and an eco-friendly heating system. It is also hoped that the organ will finally get the grand positioning it deserves - raised to mezzanine level.

"This is an ambitious project," said Sarah, "but we want to set our church up for the next 155 years. The church will still be eastward facing but we also want to be visible from Killingworth town as well as Killingworth Village."

To support Nigel's mission in aid of the church and organ refurbishments, visit [here](#).

There is also a separate fund for the organ restoration fund [here](#).

See the architects' drawings [here](#).

Environment



By The Revd Tim Mayfield, Bishop's
Advisor on the Environment



Here I am (pictured), standing in an arable field in my parish. As you can see, there is no chance yet of sowing the wheat that would normally be grown here.

"This is one of the worst fields around here," the local farmer explained. "But I'm the lucky one. I've managed to get corn sown in three quarters of my land. I've got eight or nine neighbouring farms, and I'm the only one with corn in the ground. I've got other enterprises going, like a livery yard. But if you're just relying on the corn it's not looking good."

A warming atmosphere is able to store more moisture. On Tuesday 9 April, we learned that March 2024 was the world's warmest March on record. Coincidentally, the same day saw 40 millimetres of rainfall into the

field pictured. The local farmer explained that 10 mils would knock a farmer back. The recent heavy rainfall has "knocked him back another week," he said. "It started raining in March of last year. It hasn't stopped since!"

And this has real impacts for our farmers. "It's going to take a few years to correct itself," my contact told me: "Late sowing means a late harvest, and if we're not careful that'll see us bumping into October or even November."

If we were tempted to think that the climate emergency is a future reality, we should think again. The climate emergency is a present reality, here and now. I'm vicar of Earsdon and Backworth, just outside Whitley Bay. I've seen standing water in the fields every single day since well before Christmas.

Thankfully, some are waking up to the urgency of the problem. Recently a group of older Swiss women won the first ever climate case victory in the European Court of Human Rights. The women said that their age and gender made them particularly vulnerable to the effects of heatwaves linked to climate change. The court said Switzerland's efforts to meet its emission reduction targets had been woefully inadequate. It's the first time the powerful court has ruled on global warming.

Back in Backworth, the farmer with the flooded field spoke of "keeping optimistic." Let's take a leaf out of his book and turbocharge our efforts to make the Diocese of Newcastle Net Zero by 2030.

Celebrations as pre-school is rated 'outstanding' by Ofsted



Staff and children from Chollerton Pre-school celebrate their outstanding Ofsted rating

A pre-school has received the highest possible rating of 'outstanding' by education watchdog Ofsted. Chollerton Pre-school is located within Chollerton Church of England Primary at Barrasford, near Hexham, offering childcare for children aged 2-4.

It has been rated as 'outstanding' in all four categories – quality of education, behaviour and attitudes, personal development, and leadership and management.

Becky Gibson, pre-school manager at Chollerton said: "Following our recent Ofsted inspection we are delighted to receive Outstanding in every area.

"As a team we work hard and we are happy this has been reflected in the report. We are so lucky to have very supportive parents and children who enjoy coming to pre-school with a smile on their face. It makes it a joy to come to work and see what adventures the children

are going to take us on that day."

Ofsted inspectors concluded that highly-skilled staff create an exceptional nurturing and caring environment for children and their families.

The Ofsted report said interactions between staff and children are superb, with children showing deep levels of engagement in exciting adventures created by staff. It added that parents are involved in all aspects of care and learning, while children are developing well and show respect for each other.

The report added: "There is a highly ambitious, broad and structured curriculum in place that helps to build children's knowledge in all areas of learning. Staff use accurate assessments to review planned activities and to support children to develop excellent skills, ready for school.

"This includes excellent partnership working with the onsite school. Staff swiftly identify

any gaps in children's learning and put excellent support strategies in place. This includes superb support for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities."

One parent commented: "I can confidently say that it's nothing short of amazing. From the moment we enrolled our little one, we were welcomed into a warm, nurturing environment where every child is valued and encouraged to thrive.

"The staff members are dedicated professionals who truly care about the well-being and development of each child. The activities are thoughtfully designed to stimulate young minds and foster creativity, curiosity, and a love for learning. Plus, the outside facilities are incredible for providing a safe and stimulating space for our children to explore and grow. I'm incredibly grateful for the positive impact Chollerton Pre-School has had on my child's early years, and I wholeheartedly recommend it to any parent seeking an exceptional early education experience for their little one."

LIKE A METAPHOR

Tim Hardy, formerly of the Religious Resources Centre, works from the home he shares with Ros, Anwen and Twinkle.

**Running out of eggs**

This evening, after a week back at school, Anwen gently nestled her penultimate 'big Easter egg' on a concave chopping board and walloped it with a camping mallet, watching in delight as it collapsed within its shiny foil wrapping. It was spectacular to behold and I think a new tradition may have been born - so long as she doesn't try it with a Creme Egg. The fragments she generously handed my way tasted as delicious as any egg-chocolate I've had this year.

My family were surprised there were any Easter eggs left in the house - the more usual Hardy family practice with Easter eggs is to polish them off before the end of the bank holiday.

During Eastertide, the church I attend keeps the celebration alive, for a full seven weeks, with the Paschal candle standing tall at the front, interesting seasonal hymns and more alleluias than you can shake a stick at. It's good to be told in an ongoing, sustained fashion that God cares for us enough to come and set things right by living with us, dying for us, and then living again when everything the powers of darkness threw at him didn't stick.

It's good to be reminded of the triumph of life over death as day-to-day living returns to its normal routine after the bank and school holidays mixed things up for a bit, especially since that very routine, and the pressures of day-to-day life can, like the sower's weeds that grew up, blind us to the truth that we celebrated a couple of weeks ago - it's easy to start thinking that work and school runs and food shops and washing up are all there is to life.

I think that Anwen has the right idea - keeping the celebration going as long as she can, and finding new ways of doing things to keep them interesting, when the rest of us have long since run out of eggs and forgotten that Easter ever happened. I may have exhausted my own chocolate stash but I'm hoping that I can learn from her example and find ways to maintain a focus on the important truths of the season.

Christian Aid Week 2024 – May 12-18

Aline Nibogora poses with her three sons (from left to right) Vyukesenge Aubi, Fisto Niyoyandemye and Irumva Devis

Picture: Armstrong Too/Christian Aid

By Helen Cunningham

Every Christian Aid Week, churches throughout the Newcastle Diocese join people across Britain and Ireland to raise funds, act and pray for their global neighbours in a celebration of hope for a fairer world.

This year's appeal runs from 12-18 May and focuses on the organisation's work in Burundi, one of the most densely populated and poorest countries in Africa. Heavily reliant on agriculture, it's also one of the least prepared to combat the effects of climate change, including droughts, floods and landslides. The global cost of living crisis has intensified the challenges: more than 70 per cent of the population live in poverty and more than half of children are chronically malnourished.

Christian Aid has been working in Burundi since 1995 when it first offered humanitarian assistance to people surviving the civil conflict. Now, alongside local partners, the organisation helps establish Village Savings and Loans Associations (VSLAs). These community-led groups mean people can save and borrow money, making small businesses possible, offering reliable and diverse incomes so families can eat regularly, get medicine when they need it, and build safer homes.

Thirty-five-year-old Aline Nibogora is the

chairperson of a VSLA which supports some 25 families in a remote village, in Makamba Province. Aline escaped an abusive marriage only to find herself on the streets begging for a place to stay.

Her life changed when she went to a three-day, Christian Aid-funded community workshop. With a small start-up loan, Aline began trading avocados and peanuts locally. She's now a grocery wholesaler and living on her own plot of land where she's building a home for her family. In the next five years she hopes to expand, so one day she can buy a mill. This will provide a source of income without the need to transport heavy goods over long distances.

This Christian Aid Week, supporters are once more stepping up, knowing that every prayer, every gift, every action helps transform lives.

There are **seven days and so many ways** to make a difference – whether that's church services, special collections, Christian Aid Big Brekkies, or even a Bible readathon. For those who like a physical challenge there's a new option for 2024 with the chance to take part in 70k in May. You can cover the distance in any way you like, take part by yourself or with a group, and share your progress on a dedicated Facebook page. For more information visit the Christian Aid Week website **here**.