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LINK

The magazine for the Diocese of Newcastle

Extra



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at the Cathedral

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**THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND**
DIOCESE OF NEWCASTLE

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A message from Bishop Mark



The Rt Revd Mark Wroe

'Crisis Point'

We seem to be living at some crisis point, or other, all the time these days. I've been struck how often our headlines talk about being in crisis, whether it's school buildings, the NHS, small boats, the cost of living, mental health, AI, climate or any of the other global emergencies which affect us. When I preach, I often find myself referring to these various crises, which are part of our lives.

Living with this level of crisis can be exhausting, and leaves us feeling overwhelmed. So, I was heartened the other day by a more domestic crisis. Like many of you, we narrowly divert mini-disasters at home on a daily basis, usually involving the dog, homework, sometimes both of those (yes, he is partial to it) or some timetable clash as we juggle five busy diaries! But on this occasion, the domestic crisis which gave me comfort was a wedding – that one in Cana of Galilee.

You're probably familiar with the story recorded in John 2. The happiness of the couple on their big day is threatened when the reception runs out of wine. Fortunately, Jesus is attending with his family and friends. Miraculously he transforms water into wine – and not just any wine, but the best! And not just a few bottles, but gallons! Crisis averted.

There are all sorts of insights we can draw from this domestic drama, but there are two that particularly strike me. First, that Jesus does this all 'behind the scenes' without any special effects and without anyone knowing except the servants who helped him. It reminds me that many crises are mitigated, averted or better addressed by the quiet, faithful and intentional, but sometimes life-changing work, that goes on behind the scenes.

In our ordinary lives, behind the scenes if you like, what might the presence of Jesus bless, calm or transform?

The second thing that strikes me, is that Jesus

himself is a crisis point. After the miracle, we're told, 'his disciples believed in him.' This provokes the question whether or not we will believe in him? Will we trust him when we run out? Will we look to Jesus to provide what we need? It seems to me, that many a crisis stems from what we don't have. For the church, the question remains: do we believe that Jesus' love, his death and his risen life are enough for us and for the world?

In the face of our crises, big and small, we shouldn't lose sight of that wedding guest in Cana of Galilee. 'But you have saved the best till now!' Observes the chief steward to the bridegroom commenting on the quality of the wine. Will we believe that God has indeed given us his best in Jesus Christ?

I pray we will all know more and more that Jesus is with us, his presence does make a difference and his love is enough. I can also offer some tips if the dog does eat your homework.

The Rt Revd Mark Wroe

'Copes of Many Colours' Exhibition at Newcastle Cathedral



The St Benedict Biscop cope.



At the end of a Dean's term, their cope is removed and laid down by fellow clergy.



The previous Dean, the Very Revd Geoff Miller.

In anticipation of the upcoming installation of the new Dean of Newcastle, the Revd Canon Lee Batson, an exhibition at Newcastle Cathedral is set to explore the intricate designs adorning the copes worn by its Dean and Residentiary Canons.

'Copes of Many Colours' will run from 4 October until 20 November, offering an examination of the vibrant ceremonial garments donned by priests and bishops for special occasions.

Copes, which have been in use since the 8th century, are semi-circular in shape, draping over the wearer's body, creating a cape-like appearance, with an open front secured by a hook or brooch at the chest. In the 20th century, hooded copes made a resurgence, and the copes at the Cathedral, crafted in 2014 by artists Linda Schwab and Sally Greaves-Lord based in Yorkshire, feature this unique hooded design.

These copes beautifully intertwine elements of worship and northern heritage, drawing inspiration from the stories of local saints as well as those from afar. The eye-catching shield-shaped hoods are adorned with screen-printed designs, each dedicated to a specific saint, including St Cuthbert, St Osmund, St Benedict Biscop and St Finan.

The artists explain: "Look closely and you'll see reeds and feathers and the play of sunlight on

the water; you'll see images of Tyneside's industrial and engineering past: the girders and rivets and graceful curves that make up the structures of the city's great bridges".

Notably, the Dean's hood pays tribute to St Nicholas, the patron saint of the Cathedral. It incorporates three gold circles, symbolising the three bags or gold balls that the saint, in one version of his legend, delivered down the chimney of three poor sisters – a gesture that

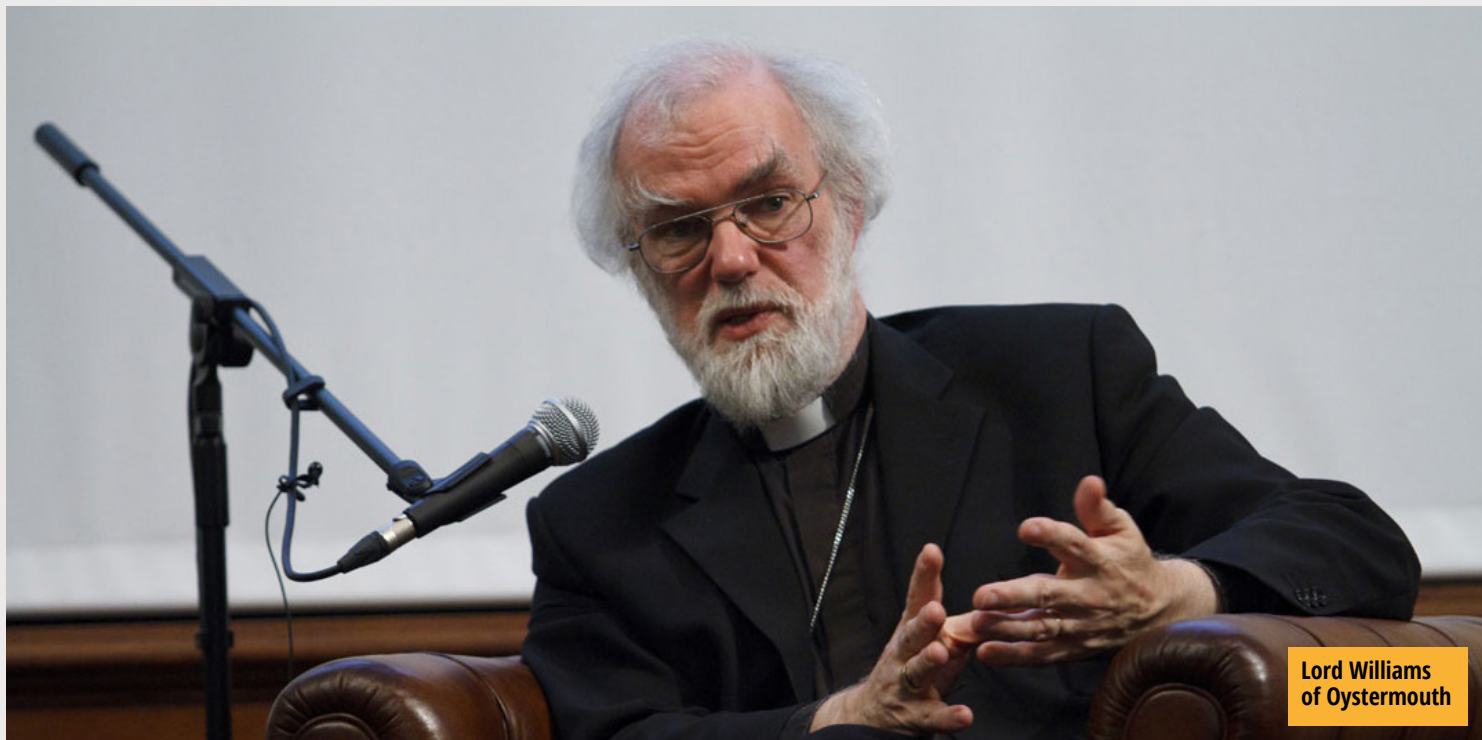
later inspired the generosity of modern-day Santa Claus. Additionally, the design features an old-fashioned rowing ship and the iconic silhouette of the Cathedral's Lantern Tower. For centuries, this remarkable structure served as a beacon of light for ships navigating the River Tyne, a fitting connection since St Nicholas is the patron saint of seafarers.

The exhibition will showcase a curated selection of the Cathedral's copes alongside exam-

ples of the artists' work-in-progress designs. It will also provide insights into the inspiration behind these colourful creations.

The new Dean will be clothed in the cope bearing this unique hood by the Residentiary Canons of the Cathedral as part of the collation, induction, and installation service on Saturday 14 October at 3pm.

Former Archbishop to visit Newcastle Diocese



Lord Williams
of Oystermouth

The former Archbishop of Canterbury will speak about *Religious Poetry Today* when he visits the Diocese next month.

Lord Williams of Oystermouth will be in Berwick-upon-Tweed to attend the Berwick Literary Festival on Saturday 14th October. He will preach at Berwick Parish Church on Sunday 15th October and will be interviewed by Bishop Stephen Platten.

The visit follows the publication of his anthology *A Century of Poetry: One Hundred Poems that Search the Heart*.

Rowan Williams is widely recognised as one of the leading theologians of our time, a substantial poet in his own right, and a man of deep and charismatic faith and spirituality.

As Archbishop from 2003 to 2012, he worked tirelessly for mutual respect and understanding between churches and church leaders beset by disagreement and threat of schism, introducing to the Anglican Communion the concept of deep listening.

His love of poetry has fed this longing, hav-

ing expressed that through poetry he made "a discovery of the holy.....which makes you silent and sometimes makes you laugh and which, above all, makes the landscape different once and for all".

Lord Williams will preach at Berwick Parish Church during the morning service at 10am on Sunday 15 October.

For further information and the full programme for the Literary Festival go to:
www.berwickliteraryfestival.com

To book tickets visit **here**.

The installation of the new Dean of Newcastle



The Revd Canon Lee Batson

The installation of the Revd Canon Lee Batson as Dean of Newcastle will take place on Saturday 14 October.

Should you wish to attend the service, which will take place at Newcastle Cathedral, there is no need to RSVP as there will be plenty of seats available. However, if you

would like to robe and process, please email: events@newcastlecathedral.org.uk by Monday 2 October.

If you are unable to attend on the day, but would like to watch a livestream of the service, please follow this link.

The transformational power of Jesus

Introducing our new Youth and Children's Enabler – Becca Cooper



I've just started my role as a Youth and Children's Enabler for an exciting new Diocesan project, focusing on youth, children's and families work across South-East Northumberland.

Before this, I took part in Durham Diocese's Ministry Experience Scheme. I had already spent a number of years volunteering in youth work, and spent time as an employed youth worker in Sunderland, but wanted to broaden my horizons and explore my vocation further. As I did, it really solidified my calling to children and young people. For years, I've said that I didn't feel called to spend time within a single place, and have yearned to explore what church could be like beyond the walls of any one building, so I'm looking forward to exploring new expressions of Christian fellowship through this project.

The new project is all about creating Christian community and developing creative ways to engage with children, young people, and their families, across the following areas: Ashington; Seaton Hirst; Woodhorn and Newbiggin-by-the-Sea; and Creswell and Lynemouth.

I'm really looking forward to getting alongside the local churches in those areas, and building genuine relationships with local children and young people, learning about who they are, what their attitudes are to faith, and helping them to explore new ways of connecting with God and exploring faith. In particular, I love detached and outreach youth work because I feel it's really important to go out and meet young people where they are and in spaces where they feel they belong, getting alongside them and building relationships with them.

As for me, I live in Gateshead with my husband (who works for a church nearby) and my hyper springer spaniel, often labelled "the happiest dog in the world" by those who meet her. I moved up to the North East when my parents retired to Ashington and I began university, studying psychology and then a PGCE at Northumbria University, meaning I'm also a trained primary school teacher - so I'm excited for all the schools' work required in my new role too!

I grew up in Nottingham within a Christian family, but really found my own faith as a teenager through an amazing youth project there, so would love to give others the same opportunities to discover the transformational power of Jesus and unconditional love that he has for them.

Becca Cooper

A Midsummer Night's Dream on church's green space

A sizeable green area outside All Saints Church, Gosforth proved invaluable during Covid. Since then, it has hosted Christmas carol services and three memorable performances from The Handlebards touring drama group. Here, *Rosamund Place* and *Christine Willoughby* of All Saints explain how the church is using its outdoor space to reach out into the community and beyond.

Since the pandemic, we have been looking at ways of enhancing the use of this space, originally intended for the construction of a new vicarage. Outdoor events offer opportunities for people to pop to a local spot without needing transport, as well as being safer, particularly as we emerged from Covid restrictions. Our outdoor carol services in the cold and snow, when indoor services were still banned, will stick in our memories for a long time.

In 2021, we welcomed a visit from The Handlebards touring drama group for the first time. This troupe cycles between venues, bringing their props, costumes and sets with them and perform their own take on Shakespeare's plays. A highly entertaining and comical *Macbeth* was followed in 2022 by *Twelfth Night*, and in August this year, we played host to *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

The weather held dry and 170 visitors pic-



The Handlebards perform at All Saints, Gosforth.

nicked on the green and generally relaxed before the performance began. A makeshift curtain served as a backdrop with players exiting through and round it for quick changes. Players moved into the audience and one member was recruited to be Theseus' bride, complete with veil!

With only four cast members, character changes had to be quick, maybe a helmet with ears or a switch of jacket plus voice to signify a different person. When more were required, a dress, hat or wooden spoon had to represent a character! The event was fast-paced and hilarious! Shakespeare's language was of course abridged and adapted with some modern-day additions and asides, but the magic of his verse still shone through.

Audience data suggests that typically over 80 percent of attendees are from outside our congregation. Our visitors came from as far afield as Darlington and included families of all ages. For us, it was a pleasure to welcome so many people to our church surroundings, many of whom were not regulars at All Saints but feel some connection to us.

There was set to be a farmers' market at All Saints on 16 September.



The outdoor performances have attracted big crowds to All Saints, Gosforth.

Looking ahead to Generosity Week – 24 September to 1 October



By Dennis Fancett Giving Ministry Adviser

Generosity Week this year will be different. Firstly, whilst we recognise generosity comes in a number of forms – such as being generous with our time or by sharing skills, this year, following parish feedback we'll be focusing on financial generosity. Learning to be more generous with our money is an essential part of our discipleship as we reflect on being created in the image of a generous God.

The other big difference is that the Generous Giving Team's aim this year is to provide resources to enable each parish to nurture and promote generous lifestyles, sensitively and confidently. To this end, every parish will by now have received a 'Paths to Gener-

osity' pack, which includes a comprehensive guide to running a Giving Review, a copy of our newly developed 'Exploring Generosity' course, plus lots of other useful information.

To further support parishes, we are also running bookable 'clinics' during Generosity Week, with sessions covering Nurturing and Preaching Generosity, Running a Giving Review, Legacy Giving, Digital Giving, Parish Giving Scheme and Making the Ask.

You can choose the topics, times and location that are convenient for you and don't have to stay the whole day. Clinics are open to clergy, laity and anyone else involved in running the church, whether or not you are taking part in Diocesan Generosity Week. It's not too late to **book in** for these and the team would be delighted to see you at any of the sessions.

The Exploring Generosity course contains four modules, each with an opening prayer, a Bible passage, a film clip and some starter questions for the discussion time. The subjects are: Giving in the image of a generous God; Giving from what God's given to me; Giving to support the vision of my local parish; and Giving when times are tough. They can be downloaded **here**.

Whilst Generosity Week is of course an ideal time for churches to hold a Giving Review or run the 'Exploring Generosity' course, these resources can actually be used at any time of the year, to suit the parish calendar so it's not too late to be looking at these and planning when and how your parish could use them.

So, let's honour God as we explore generosity together as a diocese, and take steps to ensure our shared mission and ministry is well resourced.

All change at the Cathedral as the Very Revd Dr Jane Hedges says goodbye



The Very Revd Dr Jane Hedges and the Revd Canon Lee Batson.

By the time you read this, I will have had my final service as Interim Dean of Newcastle. I want to express my gratitude for the time we've shared during my tenure. My nine months here have been nothing short of joyful; both my husband and I have been warmly embraced by this wonderful community and we intend to continue worshipping here for many years to come.

The next Dean, the Revd Canon Lee Batson, will be installed on Saturday 14 October, joining at a very exciting time for the Cathedral following its successful National Lottery Heritage Fund project, Common Ground in Sacred Space. The building has been imaginatively and beautifully re-ordered so that it now offers a flexible space in which to deliver worship as well as countless social, cultural and educational events, reaching out to people of all ages and from diverse backgrounds.

My final service coincided with the start of



**NEWCASTLE
CATHEDRAL**

View from the Lantern

Generosity Week (24 September – 1 October), when we, along with dioceses across the Church of England, are invited to celebrate God's generosity and consider our gratitude-driven response. Our giving extends beyond these seven days, and I would like to encourage you – if you are able – to please consider contributing to the Cathedral and wider Diocese's ongoing mission all year round.

In common with other cathedrals, parish churches, and people from all walks of life, finances are incredibly stretched for the Cathedral, more so than they have been for a very long time. Daily expenses such as heating bills pose a continual challenge, as we

strive to maintain a welcoming sanctuary for spiritual connection. As custodians of the Cathedral's legacy, we are in a unique position to nurture its growth for future generations.

The Parish Giving Scheme is the simplest way of regular giving, and you can find out more via the Cathedral website [here](#). If you're not able to give financially, remember there are other modes of generosity, such as volunteering or leaving a legacy. It is not the monetary amount that holds significance, but rather the personal meaning it holds for you, and every amount is sincerely valued.

As I complete my time as Interim Dean, I encourage you to remember the Cathedral is here to support the whole diocese and is here for you and everybody to enjoy. I hope you can attend Lee's service of installation and walk alongside him and the rest of the Cathedral team as we all work together to proclaim God's love to those around us.

Authorised Lay Training courses



The Pastoral Care group members who have completed their training - based at St James', Benwell, pictured with Nic Denver (front left).

By Nic Denyer, Lay Ministry Development Officer

All of us have been given gifts and talents by God. It's my job to support all lay people to identify and become more confident in using these gifts, whether it's when we are at work or with family and friends, in church or out in our wider church community.

Building on the Authorised Lay Ministry courses last year, I'm pleased to be able to offer four different strands of training this year, in Community Engagement, Mission Encourager, Pastoral Care and Leading Worship.

Anna Chaplaincy training is also taking place in Killingworth, starting in October. All of these courses are welcoming, inclusive and affirming, and are open to everyone. For more information please send me an email: n.denyer@newcastle.anglican.org

Lay Ministries Celebration Service

All are welcome to come and worship together at our Lay Ministries Celebration Service, on Sunday 24 September at 1pm with Bishop Helen-Ann. There will be refreshments and a chance to catch up with friends across the Diocese following the service. For more information, please email: n.denyer@newcastle.anglican.org

Future of Church Safeguarding Programme

The Future of Church Safeguarding Programme has been set up to recommend a model for fully independent safeguarding within the Church of England.

While the Programme has been commissioned by the Church of England, the Programme operates entirely independently from the Church. It is led by **Professor Alexis Jay OBE**, who previously chaired

the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA).

As part of the Programme they want to hear from anyone with experience of church safeguarding processes within the last five years, including:

- victims and survivors of abuse, or their parents/carers;
- members of the clergy;

- church staff and volunteers;
- members of congregations; and,
- members of the public.

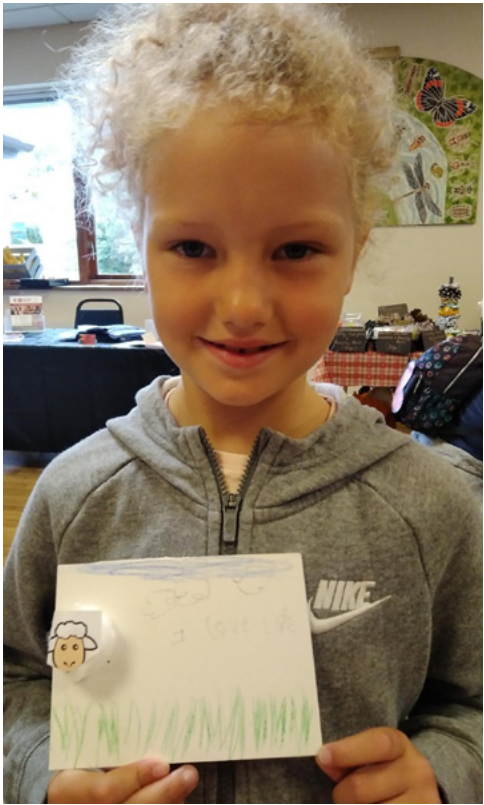
You can share your views in an in-person interview in Newcastle on 4-5 October or by an online survey.

If you'd like to participate find out how on the **Future of Church Safeguarding Programme website**.

Rising Sun Festival brings neighbours together



Children had fun being creative at the event.



Churches in Newcastle Diocese have joined together for a special festival, which saw children and families engage in fun and creative activities.

A group of churches in Tyne and Wear, collectively known as the Rising Sun Neighbours, put on the Rising Sun Festival on 16 August.

It was a wonderful day with lots of energy and engagement with local families and youngsters. About 800 people enjoyed the day, which included a scarecrow trail, as well as crafts, conversation and invitations to church from teams at St Mark's, Shiremoor; St John's, Killingworth; and Church of the Good Shepherd, Battle Hill. The churches made scarecrows for the trail, as did the 8th Tynemouth Scout Group.

The Revd Julie Mooney, from Church of the Good Shepherd said: "It's a real privilege and blessing to share in community events and to

reach out to our communities in mission. One of our crafts was to create sheep prayers and it was heart-warming to see the children's response and to read their prayers."

The crafts included handwritten messages which included: Be thankful for what you have; God protect my family; and Dear God, thank you for your kindness and peace in our world.

The event, which followed the success of the 'Love is in the Air' event in 2022, was also enhanced by the Friendly Fred Potts scarecrow (pictured), made by Jan Casson, from the Church of the Good Shepherd.

Rising Sun Neighbours were planning meditation prayer services in the park in September, led by the Revd Dr Rae Caro, the Revd Dr Sarah Moon, and Julie. They hoped to continue the good work of engaging with local families and those from the newly built estates in the area.



The Friendly Fred Potts scarecrow.



Annual flower festival celebrates 100 years of Disney

Celebrating 100 years of Disney was the theme for the annual flower festival held by St Bartholomew's Church in Newbiggin by the Sea over the August Bank Holiday weekend.

The Revd Anthony O'Grady said the event had been a resounding success. He added: "This year we were delighted to celebrate '100 years of Disney'. It was a joy to see so many people visit the displays and see tributes to some of our all-time favourite films including 'The Lion King' and 'Up'!

As always, much work went into the displays and this year we even had a few new flower arrangers on board. The Disney theme was a huge hit, especially with children. Once again, St Bartholomew's Church has put on an almighty display and impressed the many visitors who passed through our doors."



'The Lion King' was a popular recreation at the flower show.

The Semi-Retirement of Pirate Dog

A couple of years ago, I wrote about the way that the gift of a soft toy dog dressed as a pirate set off ripples of piratey play that spread infectiously everywhere my daughter took him. I asked the question, "How can we approach the Kingdom of God so that people are drawn to it as we go, in a similar fashion?"

I loved the way that Anwen loved Pirate Dog and enjoyed finding ways to involve him in play. I think part of me would have loved to play at being pirates for the rest of our lives but, like Jackie outgrew Puff the Magic Dragon, Anwen has outgrown Pirate Dog and moved onto other things - her new obsession is Pokémon and she takes a yellow soft toy Pikachu everywhere we'll let her. There's

LIKE A METAPHOR

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



still plenty of chances for me to join in with the play but it's more complicated and there are rules and background details that I need to be aware of to engage with things on a meaningful level. I have no natural interest in Poké-this-or-that but, if it's going to be worth both our whiles, I have to pay attention and let some of it filter in. I love my daughter, and because Pokémon is important to her, it becomes important to me as we go along.

I've been a Christian most of my life, and I like to think that my faith has grown and developed as life has gone on. I know that, whilst Jesus has remained the same for all that time, my understanding of him is different now to the understanding I had as a young child, and the relationship is more nuanced, complicated and has different emphasis - there are things I need to pay attention to and let filter in if it's going to be worth both our whiles; I have to learn and appreciate the things that are important to Jesus and let them become important to me. I know that "Wide, Wide as the Ocean" is still true but so is "When I Survey" and so is "Blessed be Your Name" and so on and so on.

It's still fun to swashbuckle with Pirate Dog from time to time but, whilst the Poké-way is more demanding in all sort of ways, it's ultimately much more worthwhile.

Church at the heart of enthralling culture festival



St Andrew's Church was at the heart of the Heddton Culture Festival.

By David Blackett

Heddton-on-the-Wall Culture Festival took place over three days in early September. The festival built on the success of last year's Hadrian 1900 celebrations and the desire to continue to showcase the culture of Heddton. The theme of legacy, education and fun proved so successful that it had to form the basis of the event.

There were workshops for music, poetry, literature, crafts and kites.

The festival commenced on Friday 1 September with the unveiling of the Hadrian's Head Mosaic, prior to its installation in Hadrian's Wall Path. The mosaic was a legacy item from Hadrian 1900 and was designed as a tactile art installation. There were also concerts at two pubs in the village.

On the Saturday, St Andrew's church became the focal point with The Makers' Market, around which the workshops were being held. They included ukulele, hand bell ringing,

watercolour art, mask making, kite making, busking and poems.

There were talks by children's author Lorna Windham from her book 'Once upon a time in Northumberland', and by local historian Don Miller with 'Insights into Heddton Street Names', the Archaeology Roadshow 'Have a go with English Heritage' at Hadrian's Wall, and Prelude in Concert, at the Knott Hall.

Art and poems from the children of St Andrew's school were displayed around the village.

On the Sunday, St Andrew's hosted the entertaining and poignant family history of the Amos Brothers and Hymns and Pims, the history of the Tyne local to Heddton and a choir recital by the Admorum Singers. Later, at Selman Park, there were kites, ice cream and burgers - what a finale!

This all running alongside the village show with flowers, vegetables, crafts and a band. It made for a fun and enjoyable weekend all round.

Holy Land Pilgrimage

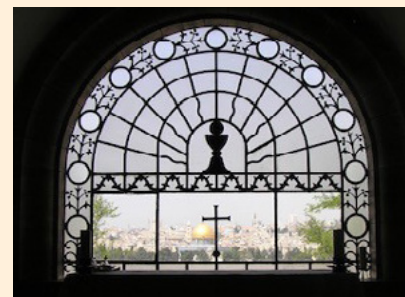
7 - 14 October 2024

You are invited to join the Very Revd Jane Hedges and the Rt Revd Graham James as they follow in the footsteps of Jesus through the region of Galilee and then to Bethlehem and Jerusalem.

As well as worshipping at all the major sites, they will meet with local Christians and visit students at Bethlehem University, gaining a deeper understanding of the people and land where Jesus ministered.

The cost of the pilgrimage is £1,880 per person, which covers all travel and half board accommodation in very comfortable hotels.

For more information about the itinerary and for a booking form please contact Jane Hedges at: jhedges55@icloud.com



Calling all parishes

Do you have links with your local school? Or would you like to build a deeper relationship?

The Children and Youth Team would like to invite you to celebrate the Year 4 and 6 students who will be moving on to their next school.

What do you need to do? Ask your local school whether they are coming to one of the sessions at Newcastle Cathedral next June.

If they are, put the date in your diary and come along with them - it's that simple! If you would like more information, email Tara Russell t.russell@newcastle.anglican.org

Summer holiday clubs

From your children, youth and families team



Youth Adviser, Susan White lifts the lid on a remarkable summer of fun-filled activities, where God's light and love was spread far and wide.

What a summer it's been! The Children, Young People and Families team were privileged to visit and be part of some of these great initiatives.

In Prudhoe, there is a wonderful ecumenical holiday club for around 100 young people a day, organised by volunteers from the town's churches. The children enjoyed various activities, crafts and challenges. The team are a talented bunch and provided a fun sketch every day with songs that fitted the message, using the Scripture Union holiday resource. It was lovely to see the young people engage with the stories and really understand how God can



The summer provided opportunities to engage in outdoor activities.

be a part of everyday life.

In Alnwick, they were hosting their annual sports holiday club. The day I visited the theme was overcoming challenges. It was great to see some of the young people from the local youth clubs involved in leadership and sharing some of their own personal journeys with Christ. I came away feeling inspired by the team of volunteers and their encouragement for each other and the young people attending. This club was for tweens and teens and it was joyful to see them all have fun with the games and activities, while listening to the heartfelt shar-

ing of the message.

I have worked alongside ReNEw for a number of years, so I was delighted that I could still be a part of it this year. It was great to see young people from across both Newcastle and Durham dioceses come along to the residential holidays.

The camps are enjoyed by young people aged 8-18. We run different dates and programmes for various age groups and have also introduced a family camp, which was a huge success this year. These involve everything from having a banquet to paddle-boarding and attending the Edinburgh Fringe for under-18s, to a treasure hunt, zipwire and beach walks.

It's a great way to spend time with the young people while sharing who God is along the way. They get immersed in a routine of biblical sharing, engaging in new experiences, creative expressions of prayer and a whole lot of fun.

We are so very grateful for all the commitment, time and energy people are putting into running holiday programs. Please do let us know what you've got happening or if you would like some ideas on how to get started. Email Susan at: s.white@newcastle.anglican.org



Gathering around a camp fire.

Summer fun at St. Gabriel's



There was no shortage of fun-filled activities, as well as delicious food for those who took part.

By Jeni Skinner, Parish Administrator at St Gabriel's Heaton

Every Thursday during the school summer holidays, members of St. Gabriel's Heaton welcomed families for a morning of fun and games followed by lunch - all provided free thanks to our incredibly generous congregation and a grant from the Diocese.

Families were greeted with drinks and biscuits, entertained by our resident puppets, Bert and Lucy, then set off to take part in games, a treasure hunt and obstacle course in the garden. There were various craft activities, cutting and pasting, and the colouring and decorating of biscuits with the theme for the week, which ranged from oceans, forests and the Arctic, to the garden.

Everyone then congregated in the hall for

lunch. Fish finger sandwiches were very popular as were the 320 chicken nuggets donated by McDonalds at Byker - all accompanied by veg sticks, a lovely fruit platter and homemade cupcakes feeding up to 100 adults and children each week.

What a fantastic success it has been! We are so blessed to have such a wonderful team of helpers willing to give so freely of their time and talents for this community outreach.



Annual outing is just the tonic for social interaction



Those who attended the trip enjoyed fish and chips.

The Falstone Coffee Morning Group enjoyed its inaugural summer outing at Bamburgh and Seahouses.

Marie Ness, of St Peter's Falstone, organised the trip. Here she describes a memorable day for the group, which helps to overcome isolation in its rural community.

A lively, excited and jovial group of 18 jolly day-trippers (aged six to 80-plus) set off with picnics, umbrellas and luggage for all eventualities in hand. The adventure took us to Bamburgh, via pick-ups in Tarsart and Bellingham. We were treated to a running commentary of sites and places of current and historical interest by our resident 'fount of all knowledge' Auntie Sheila, all the way between Falstone and Rothbury. Driver, Andrew expertly

negotiated the narrow, winding and tree-lined roads through the Coquet Valley and onto Alnwick, where we were treated to an unexpected and wonderful view of Alnwick Castle.

The clouds parted and the sun beckoned us towards Bamburgh Castle and beach. Some of us went on a tour of the castle, others to the Grace Darling museum and St Aidan's Church and Crypt. Some brave souls even headed to the beach for a bracing paddle or a walk in the sand dunes. After two-and-a-half hours we reassembled for the short ride to Seahouses, where many of us enjoyed an afternoon tea party of fish and chips! Others explored the shops and harbour.

Chatter on the bus back was joyful as we all shared our stories of our day at the seaside and snoozed our way back home.

We had a really fun day and are already planning our next trip to Carlisle before the end of the year.

The group meets on the third Tuesday of every month in Falstone Village Hall and is run by volunteers from St Peter's, Falstone and St. Aidan's, Thorneyburn. Earlier in the year, the group was awarded a grant by Partners in Community Action (PICA). The purpose of the grant was to help overcome rural isolation and encourage social interaction in rural communities. The PICA grant helps support the cost of the hire of the village hall and refreshments for coffee mornings. It has also been used to fund the hire of the Hall for Falstone Toddlers - a group of children and parents/carers who meet every Friday morning.

Wellbeing



By Patty Everitt,
Counselling
Advisor

Building new muscles



When we lived within easy striking distance of the Lakes, we walked fairly frequently.

For me the walking often felt like hard work even though I knew I was quite fit enough.

I spent a lot of time watching where I was putting my feet and completely missing the view. At the end of the walk, I felt I had achieved something through dogged endurance. I'd rather have felt satisfaction at achieving the challenge of walking through that beautiful landscape and spending time with my husband!

Later, I learned that I had been relying on muscles I had developed for other sports – sports that required short bursts of speed and power. They were strong, well-developed muscles, but not the best for longer distance hill walking.

With the help of a physio, I strengthened muscles I had neglected. Over time and with practice, I noticed I was engaging a range of different muscle groups and, lo!, I was enjoying the experience of uphill walking.

The challenge of the walk did not change. What changed was how I walked and that changed my entire experience. I looked up often to enjoy the view, and I was definitely a more pleasant walking companion!

And so it goes with our automatic responses.

Thoughts appear without challenge; we carry out actions without thinking; our emotions rise-up unbidden. All familiar and well-developed responses, but not necessarily the best we could offer in every situation.

Building-up different muscles takes practice. Thinking, acting and feeling differently takes practice. BUT remember what they say! If you do what you've always done, you will get what you've always got!

So, what can you do to start to build-up different muscles? How can you develop and draw on some of the other resources you already have and respond differently: more kindly, more assertively or more patiently? To respond in the way that you really want to?

Victor Frankl wrote: "Between stimulus and response there is a space. In that space is our power to choose our response. In our response lies our growth and our freedom."

So, my invitation to you is to notice that space between stimulus and response and to take the opportunity to intentionally make a choice about what you do, feel or think next. It takes practice but, as Victor Frankl says, the prize is growth and freedom.

Come and join the celebration!

By Helen Cunningham,
Church Engagement Officer, Christian Aid

Christmas Regional
Gathering: Saturday 18
November, 10.30am-
1pm, Waddington
Street URC, Durham,
DH1 4BG. Sign up **here**.



We are very excited that for the first time since Spring 2020, the Christian Aid family from across the North East and Cumbria will gather face-to-face. Come and join us in person as we prepare for Advent and Christmas 2023 at the above date, time and venue.

As we look to celebrate the coming of the Light of the World, join us as we shine a spotlight on the lives of women in Bangladesh. It's their time to shine. This is your chance to meet and share with others from across our region; be encouraged and inspired; and find out more about the work of Christian Aid and our global neighbours this Christmas time.

Come ready to share your own story of hope for Christmas 2023 and tell us if you're planning an event for Christian Aid. Wear a Christmas jumper if you like, and settle in for a morning of warmth and inspiration. Bring a friend, or even hire a minibus and make it a church outing.

Seasonal refreshments will be provided and we'll finish in time for you to find some lunch or go Christmas shopping in Durham!



Members of change agent Kakoli Khatun's group spend time together after finishing their handicraft work. The young women share a strong bond as they are trying to change their lives through economic development.

Picture: Fabeha Monir/Christian Aid

Families flock to service

Jill Swaile, Churchwarden and Authorised Lay Minister at St Peter's Falstone, Bellingham Deanery, reports on how Molly, Dolly and Polly inspired a family service based on 'The Good Shepherd'.

Family services are always enjoyable at St Peter's, Falstone. I love the noise and bustle of the children in church, who feel comfortable to interact and explore church during the service.

The family service at the beginning of September was all about the meaning of 'The Good Shepherd'. St Peter's has a stunning stained-glass window depicting Jesus as The Good Shepherd.

Mike Wilkinson, a retired Methodist minister, and I prepared the service together. St Peter's was absolutely full of sheep - pictures of sheep, wooden sheep and cuddly toy sheep (in the pews, in the pulpit, by the hymn books and on the font).

However, thanks to the Swan family farmers (especially Emma aged 3 and Dylan aged 9 months) we had three real-life sheep in the churchyard - Molly, Dolly and Polly!

Molly, Dolly and Polly are pet Valais Blacknose



The sheep were popular with children and adults at the service.

sheep, originating from Switzerland. They were watched over by Peg the trusty sheepdog. The children (and adults) loved seeing the 'girls' who were well behaved.

Ashley Swan told us all about the importance of being a shepherd in the 21st century and Mike explained about what it was like shepherding in Jesus' time. We sang lots of sheep-themed songs and learned a new song called 'Baa Baa... He's The Good Shepherd', where we all had to do our best sheep impersonations! We even

sang 'While Shepherds Watched their Flocks by Night' - a special request from the Swan family.

The children were interactive during the service. They rang the bell, read prayers, played percussion instruments and coloured in prayer sheep to make a poster for St Peter's. It was a thoroughly intergenerational service of fun and thanksgiving. The two visitors we had expressed that they had enjoyed a thoroughly great experience and welcome at St Peter's - albeit noisy!



The Swan family of farmers brought sheep Molly, Dolly and Polly to a family service at St Peter's Falstone.



Peg, the trusty sheepdog, had a key role to play.



Luke Jerram and Museum of the Moon

International moon exhibition to go on display at Hexham Abbey

Historic Hexham Abbey is to become the latest venue to host a large-scale inflatable installation of the moon.

Luke Jerram's renowned artwork Museum of the Moon has wowed visitors to exhibitions near and far, notably attracting 95,000 people to Durham Cathedral's nave when it was displayed there in 2021.

Now the installation is heading for Newcastle Diocese, with an exhibition scheduled to open at Hexham Abbey, located in the heart of the glorious Tyne Valley, over six weeks from 29 September to 11 November.

Measuring six metres in diameter, the moon features 120dpi detailed NASA imagery of the lunar surface. At an approximate scale of 1:600,000, each centimetre of the internally lit spherical sculpture represents 6km of the moon's surface. The installation is a fusion of lunar imagery, moonlight and surround sound composition created by BAFTA and Novello award winning composer Dan Jones.

Each venue to host the exhibition programmes puts on its own series of lunar-inspired events beneath the moon – and Hexham Abbey is no exception with a full programme of activities planned throughout the six weeks.

These include Prism, a Pink Floyd tribute act,

which will celebrate the 50th anniversary of the iconic 1973 album The Dark Side of the Moon. Other music concerts will take place, as well as photography, moongazing evenings with local expert Wil Cheung, and a gala dinner.

The Rector of Hexham, the Revd David Glover said: "We are really excited to be hosting the Museum of the Moon. We hope it will open the Abbey to lots of new visitors and that they will find it awe inspiring and memorable."

Hexham Town Council is hugely supportive of the installation coming to Hexham and has generously contributed a grant of £5,000 towards the project.

Luke Jerram was inspired to create the artwork after noticing a huge tidal variation as he cycled over the Avon Cut while living in Bristol. His moon research also led to another artwork, Tide. Luke was made a Fellow of the Royal Astronomical Society in 2019.

As well as Durham Cathedral, the moon exhibition has visited other venues in the UK, including Leicester Cathedral, as well as embarking on international visits to the likes of Dubai, Belgium and India, Italy and France.

For a full programme of events during the Hexham Abbey exhibition, and more information, visit [here](#).

Video outlines vision as church declares 'everyone is welcome to join the family'

A church in Newcastle has released an exciting new video which outlines its vision for the future.

In the video, representatives from St Thomas' Newcastle invited everyone to join them in their vision to follow Jesus, build community and love the city.

Lee Kirkby, associate minister at St Thomas' described Newcastle as dynamic, vibrant, growing and bursting with potential. He added: "We want to follow God's call to play our part in seeing the city and the region come to life in Jesus name."

Ben Doolan, church leader, talks about how the region has witnessed some significant moves of God and how the church is determined to build on the great work carried out by generations of church planters, evangelists, missionaries and interceptors.

He added: "We are called to play our part in seeing more churches planted and revitalised so many people may come to know Jesus. For this community and this region we know that the best is yet to come."

The video has been published on YouTube and social media with the following statement: "We have a vision to follow Jesus, build community and love Newcastle, so that we may see God's kingdom come in the North East as in heaven. As the Resource Church for the Diocese of Newcastle, we're called to resource mission and ministry in this region by planting and revitalising churches across the North East. We'd love for you to join us on our unfolding adventure. Whoever you are, whatever your story, there's a place for you here. Come and join the family!"

Learn more [here](#).
Watch the video [here](#).