



THE PARISH OF BELTINGHAM WITH HENSHAW

Parish Newsletter October 2021

News about the Vacancy

It was disappointing to learn from the Archdeacon that at the closing date for applications – September 7 – none had been received, despite two potential candidates showing strong interest in the vacancy, but not taking that forward due to personal circumstances in each case. The Archdeacon has been determined that the vacancy should be readvertised as quickly as possible, and she did ask the parishes if we were prepared to pay for an advertisement in the Church Times. Previously, the vacancy had only been advertised on the Diocesan website. The three parishes agreed to this funding, but in the meantime, Bishop Christine has indicated that she will find the funds for the advert from other budgets, which is welcome news, and an indication of how keenly the Diocese are to support this appointment. In consequence, the advert will appear on 8 and 15 October, with a new closing date for applications – 5 November with a likely interview date of 30 November.

In the meantime, things have not moved as swiftly on the legal processes of winding up our existing benefice, and in order therefore to comply with the “niceties” of church rules, the advert will appear with what might seem an odd description of what is being sought for Beltingham with Henshaw. However, we are assured by the Archdeacon that this is simply the formula that is appropriate until we leave our current benefice and form part of the new benefice which is planned. The advert is reproduced below for your information.

The Bishop of Newcastle wishes to appoint a Full time Priest to be Priest in Charge to the Parishes of Haltwhistle and Greenhead and Assistant Curate to the Parish of Beltingham with Henshaw

Hexham Deanery lies at the centre of Britain. It is also at the centre of a very exciting development in the life of its parishes. We are seeing significant growth in numbers called to licensed lay ministry, increased desire for collaboration between parishes and between laity and clergy, and a growing desire to release the power of God's love into our communities, transforming our churches and communities for the benefit of all of God's people. We seek a priest who will lead the three parishes into one united Benefice, exercising oversight ministry.

The Parishes of Haltwhistle, Greenhead and Beltingham with Henshaw lie at the far Western edge of the beautiful county of Northumberland. These are dynamic, lively, diverse and active communities who long to grow spiritually and missionally. A team of wardens and other lay leaders are already working enthusiastically together and look forward to working alongside the new priest, open to new ideas and challenge.

We are looking for a priest who has well-developed leadership abilities together with strong collaborative skills to help develop vocation, discipleship and ministry across the parishes and to also collaborate with colleagues in the parishes along the full length of Hadrian's Wall as well as ecumenical partners. Our new priest will have a robust vision for ministry in small towns and villages and will long to enable both lay and ordained to fulfil their potential to engage in God's mission locally. This is an excellent opportunity for anyone with a love of community who is looking to extend and develop their leadership in a broader context that is both challenging and exciting.

Services for October

**3 October Morning Prayer, Harvest, Anne Galbraith
and Carol Adams**

10 October Eucharist with Rev'd Chris Simmons

17 October Eucharist with Rev'd Jan Van Den Berg

**24 October Eucharist with Rev'd Gill Alexander
Associate Priest**

**31 October Morning Prayer, All Saints and All Souls,
Anne Galbraith and Carol Adams**

Harvest – as usual, donations of food and toiletries brought to church for our Harvest Service on 3 October will be distributed to the People's Kitchen and the West End Food Bank. People's Kitchen do NOT require breakfast cereal, pasta or baked beans, but other items will be gratefully received.

News from the PCC

At our first face to face meeting on 21 September since the beginning of the pandemic, the following items were discussed and decided:

1. We will keep our services at 10.30 am during the Vacancy.
2. We will continue to encourage the use of masks, and will continue with singing.
3. We will consider re-opening St Cuthbert's, Beltingham for occasional services in the New Year.
4. We will revalidate our list of readers and intercessors, to enjoy a wider range of readers.
5. We will keep open the question of when to begin serving coffee again.
6. We will shortly begin approaching visiting clergy to arrange cover from the New Year to Easter.
We will go ahead with the creation of a wild flower meadow in part of the cemetery at Beltingham.

From the Registers:

Saturday 25 September - Wedding of Owen Lazzari and Clare Jenkins at St Cuthbert's, Beltingham

Keith Brunton - Twenty Years ago - 9/11

Twenty years ago- September 11th 2001- We are concluding a three week visit to my relatives in America with a holiday in Yarmouth Cape Cod, New England. We go to the Post Office for stamps and postcards and find that everyone in the queue is watching a large TV screen showing an airliner crashing into a skyscraper. “Not the most appropriate time or place to be showing a disaster movie”, I say to Anne. “That’s no movie” says a lady in the line, “It’s real, a terrorist attack on New York”

In shock and disbelief we go home to watch the dreadful scenes on the television for the rest of the day. Feeling the need for prayer and intercessions, next day we make our way to a nearby church and join in a service. The seats are laid out in a circle and the congregation has been invited to stand and say something if they are moved to do so. Without the approval of The Queen, Parliament or Tony Blair, we pledge solidarity and support from Great Britain in the war against terrorism. No, just joking. I should not joke about such a tragic and sensitive matter. There is a sense in the people that Justice must be served- they must not get away with it. But who are THEY, are there more attacks to come and where is the President?

Later we make our way through the sand dunes to a beautiful beach and find a solitary artist painting, trying to capture the late afternoon sun on the breaking waves. We talk of yesterday’s disaster and why we are here. “I’ve been painting this scene for 40 years, and never got it right, but it brings me peace”, he says. But 20 more years have passed, and we still don’t have peace or know who we can blame.

And on a lighter note from Keith:

I belong to English Heritage and of course the National Trust,
And I’m glad the landed gentry can earn an honest crust
By allowing us – the Public – to trample through their gaff
And enjoy our tea and carrot cake in the orangery caff.
We wander through the galleries of duchesses and peers
With those funny talking guide books clasped firmly to our ears,
And as we view the porcelain, the silver and the glass
I wonder how the family got their hands on so much brass.
Still, labour, I suppose, was cheap in 1763
And Capability Brown didn’t charge VAT.
Yes, I do enjoy the ambience, the quality and tone
And that sense of gracious living we can’t quite achieve at home,
But there’s one annoying feature that makes me want to shout,
If you don’t go through the gift shop, *they’ll never let you out!!*

Benjamin’s sermon from service at St Cuthbert’s, Beltingham

Journeys by the Wall - a sermon for the Feast of the Translation of Cuthbert

Behind the garden of our new home in Carlisle stands the smart Georgian Parish Church of St Cuthbert’s Carlisle. In many ways it is larger, and dare I say it, more up market counterpart to its name’s sake in Haydon Bridge. With box pews, a gallery, and pulpit that can roll into a central position, it has the same feel of a preaching house which was the original intention for many of these Georgian buildings.

But this quite ‘modern’ style belies its ancient origins which are hidden in plain sight. Unlike the Cathedral which sits on the other side of our house, St Cuthbert’s is not orientated east-west as we would expect a Church to be. Rather it stands alongside Blackfriars street which is itself an extension of Botchergate and the A6. This road follows the line of the ancient Roman road which ran to the entrance to the Roman Fort which stood roughly where Carlisle Castle now stands.

This orientation reminds us of the ancient lineage of St Cuthbert’s in Carlisle which, unlike many of the venerable Churches of St Cuthbert gets its title not from the fact that Cuthbert’s community and his relics rested there, but that Cuthbert himself visited and preached there. In both Bede’s *Ecclesiastical History* and his *Life of Cuthbert* we hear how, in 685 Cuthbert came to Carlisle to ordain deacons. He did that in a church which has been originally a house running alongside the Roman street plan of Carlisle.

It was at that Church, on the site of the present St Cuthbert’s, that Bede tells us Cuthbert met with the Royal Abbess Aelfflaed as news of the unexpected death of her father King Ecgrith in battle, nephew of St Oswald and king of Northumbria, was heard. According to Bede, Cuthbert’s meeting with Aelfflaed in Carlisle fulfils an earlier prophesy by Cuthbert to Aelfflaed that Ecgrith would die in battle, and that when that occurred Aelfflaed should call for her holy and learned Uncle Aldfrith from Iona to take the throne of Northumbria.

This Aldfrith duly did, reigning for twenty years, cementing with it the Christian culture and life which had begun with the victories of Oswald and missions of Aiden a generation earlier. His reign ushering in, through his support of Bede and the learning at Wearmouth-Jarrow and Lindisfarne, Northumbria’s Golden Age.

In Bede’s narrative placing of this summit in Carlisle is no accident. Firstly Bede is reminding us of how intertwined the life of Cuthbert was with political life of his time. We remember with gratitude today Cuthbert’s influence as a man of prayer and holiness. But we also remember Cuthbert’s role as a counsellor to kings and princes, guiding their actions through the certainties of his faith.

Secondly Bede is reminding us of the interconnected geography that tied the early mediaeval world together. By the time of Cuthbert and Bede the line of the wall which Carlisle and these parishes stand alongside had long ceased to be the barrier and boundary that its Roman builders had intended it to be.

Instead the wall and the land which it covered was at the heart of a nexus of journeys of faith and culture and power which flowed from Ireland and Iona to Lindisfarne and Bamburgh and back again. To hear the news of Ecgrith’s death in Carlisle and, we imagine, for Aelfflaed to send for Aldfrith from Carlisle reminds us that Carlisle stood at the centre of the east-west information super-highway that Hadrian’s Wall had become by the end of seventh century.

As a history lesson this is all very well and good, but you might wonder why this is important to us as we gather to mark this Feast of the Translation of Cuthbert. Well, this story is important because it asks us to rethink our own preconceptions of our geography, and through that rethink how and where we find God in the supposed certainties of the world around us.

Next year, as many of you might know, is the 1900th anniversary of the beginning of Hadrian’s Wall in 122AD. Next year we will be inundated with opportunities to visit well-loved sites, to see Roman soldiers on manoeuvre, and to recognise the extraordinary political, cultural, and social legacy of Hadrian’s Wall. But as we do so I can guarantee one thing. All the maps we will see, all the images we will share will place the wall and its line on a North-South axis.

That is after all how we instinctively see it. But more than this, this instinct runs deep into our imaginations. The historian Peter Davidson argues that we all carry our own idea of north within

us. If, he suggests, we say we will leave for the south tonight, we conjure up images of travelling for pleasure and places of leisured exile. But if we say “we leave for the north tonight” we immediately think of “a harder place, a place of dearth: uplands, adverse weather, remoteness from cities”. If spoken in a thriller, this portentous phrase “we leave for the north tonight” would lead to, he says, a “fiction of action, of travel, of pursuit over wild country”.

We can, I hope, all imagine our own way into not only the practical, but also the imaginative patterns this north-south thinking draws us into. Our lives and how we orient them are so often suffused with this north-south thinking, suffused, if you will, with an implicit “Boreamentalism”, that we don’t even notice. But as we journey through life we recognise that the journeys and orientations that we find ourselves taking are not always what we expect them to be.

Our Psalm this evening, Psalm 121, is my favourite psalm. The imagery of lifting our eyes to the hills is, like so much of our perception of the world, suffused with this north-south thinking. When we close our eyes and think of the hills we lift our eyes to I would wager most of us imagine we are looking north.

For scholars this is known as a psalm of ascent. Written and first prayed in the imaginative world of the worship of ancient Israel where the eyes of the faithful would be lifted to the Temple in Jerusalem and temple mount on which it sat. But as this wonderful psalm has become internalised into the life of our prayer and worship, over countless generations, it has become de-coupled from this singular meaning.

As we pray this Psalm we are reminded of God’s presence with us in all the faltering steps that we take through life. That God will not “*suffer our foot to stumble*”. That God will guide and watch over us as we wake and sleep, that God will watch our going out and coming in.

What this psalm reminds us is that God is with us wherever and however we move through life. We might live fixated on the journeys north and south and how things ought to fit together, but we discover that life is not like that, but in that seeming uncertainty God – the maker of heaven and earth – remains close to us, guiding us through the unexpected and uncertain journeys of life.

As we continue to read Bede’s history we find again and again how God guided and travelled with his people – as he midwifed the Golden Age of Northumbria not as we might expect from the civilised south to the wasted north, but flowing with Aldfrith west to east, through Carlisle and these Parishes by the Wall from Iona to Bamburgh.

As we celebrate the Feast of the translation of Cuthbert we remember that God remained with and guided the uncertain journeys of the Community of Cuthbert as they moved through these northern lands, from Lindisfarne, through Haydon and Beltingham and Carlisle and beyond. Not in the way and manner they might have thought or expected, but guiding their every step, nonetheless.

And as I return to this Church today I cannot but reflect on the journey we have taken. Not one we planned or expected, but one which we pray God is guiding us through. So, whatever the future may hold for us, and for these Parishes by the Wall, we might know that although the journey may not be as we expect it, or imagine it to be, God will watch over our:

going out and our coming in, from this time forth and for evermore.

Summer time ends on weekend of 30/31 October

Church Flowers

We hope you have been enjoying the lovely flower arrangements in church, done by Pauline with silk flowers. We would now like to provide a supply of silk flowers for Beltingham, to avoid having to move flower arrangements between the two churches. If you would like to contribute to this fund, please give donations to Pauline Storey. Thank you.



Can you sing?

Holy Cross Church in Haltwhistle are forming a Benefice choir led by Janet Lord. They have members from both Greenhead and Holy Cross and have extended an invitation to any of our church members who would like to join them. If you are interested, please speak to Anne Galbraith.

Co-op soft plastic recycling

From the Co-op's website: "Great news! You can now recycle soft plastics like crisp packets and bread bags at a Co-op near you. It doesn't matter where you bought them. Just pop your soft plastics into our recycling units and we'll do the rest. It means we can all do our bit for the environment." And the store in Haltwhistle is one of the 1,500 shops participating in this scheme.



Church Fundraising

Philippa Collingwood has been developing her home-made cards for all occasions in aid of the church, and is happy to accept commissions. Personalised birthday cards for milestone birthdays are popular, as are the Labradors, new sheep and new 'lockdown' range. She has an upcoming stall at Haltwhistle's Masonic Hall on Saturday November 6th, between 10am and 4pm, but can be contacted anytime on 01434 344119.

Contact information

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Cafe Scientifique restarts

Tuesday 5 October 7 – 9 pm in Bardon Mill Village Hall.

Tickets £5 in advance online or from Bardon Mill Village Shop, or £7 on the door (including refreshments). Booking in advance is advised as numbers are limited and you may be turned away.

Please wear a mask and do not attend if you are unwell.

The next date for the Cafe is Tuesday 7th December – The Science of Happiness with John Lamont.

