



THE PARISH OF BELTINGHAM WITH HENSHAW

Parish Newsletter December 2021/January 2022

Vacancy

We were fortunate to receive two applications for our Vacancy by the cut off date of 5 November. A shortlisting meeting, chaired by Bishop Mark and attended by the Archdeacon, the Deanery Lay Chair, the Area Dean and wardens from each of the parishes decided to call both candidates for interview on 30 November. On Monday 29 November, both candidates were given guided visits to all three parishes, taking in the schools, all the churches, and other notable amenities in each location. The Monday will culminate with an informal tea in Holy Cross Church, Haltwhistle at 4.30 pm to 5.30 pm to allow a wider cross section from each parish to meet the candidates.

PCC

At our November PCC meeting, we reviewed patterns of worship and in particular, issues stemming from Covid precautions. We will maintain a service time of 10.30 am, and continue to wear masks where possible. The Presiding Vicar will continue to dispense the Eucharist in one kind only, bringing it to the congregation in their seats. We do not plan to resume serving coffee in the short term. These issues will be reconsidered at our January meeting.

Advent Evening Prayer

We will be holding a short service of Evening Prayer in All Hallows', Henshaw on Tuesday evenings during Advent, commencing on Tuesday 30 November at 3.30 pm. We will be following themes set out by the Archbishop of Canterbury for this time, Listening, Watching, Waiting, Welcoming.

Progress re wild flower meadow

On 5 November, a group of 12 people gathered in the cemetery in Beltingham to start the work associated with creating a wild flower meadow in the lower area. We were organised by Libby Scott, who had acquired plants and seeds to get this started. We were fortunate that it was a reasonable day, not too cold or wet, and the work progressed cheerfully. The canes have been left in place so that visitors are aware that something is happening in the cemetery. That part will no longer be mowed monthly, but at the end of the year, will have to be cut and then raked off. We are hoping that this will improve our environmental profile, and also save us some money on regular mowing.

A Christmas Concert

The Border Concert Band are giving a concert in Holy Cross Church, Haltwhistle, on December 16 at 7 pm. Tickets £8, including refreshments. Pay at the door. Rev Keith Teasdale will have tickets available at the service on 5 December.

Shepherds Dene

A very successful retreat day of prayer and reflection was organised on Armistice Day by Yvonne Hewitt at Shepherds Dene, led by Michael Sadgrove and Gill Alexander. The peaceful surroundings gave the opportunity to quietly remember all those who have lost their lives in conflicts, to reflect on events of the last two years and to gain inspiration from each other and hope for the future.

Services for December

Date	President	Church
Dec 5	Eucharist – Rev Keith Teasdale	All Hallows
Dec 12	Eucharist – Rev Michael Jackson	All Hallows
Dec 19	Celebration of the Christmas Story with Carols and Readings	All Hallows
Dec 25 Christmas Day	Eucharist with Rev Gill Alexander	All Hallows
Dec 26	Morning Prayer with Reflection	All Hallows

During Advent ,on Tuesdays at 3.30 pm in All Hallows’ Henshaw, on November 30 and December 7, 14 and 21, there will be a service of Evening Prayer with readings.

There will also be a Midnight Mass at 11.30pm on Christmas Eve in St Cuthbert’s Haydon Bridge with Rev Gill Alexander

Services for January

Date	President	Church
Jan 2	Morning Prayer with Reflection	All Hallows
Jan 9	Eucharist Rev Keith Teasdale	All Hallows
Jan 16	Eucharist Archdeacon, Rev Catherine Sourbut Groves	All Hallows
Jan 23	Rev Gill Alexander	All Hallows
Jan 30	Rev Keith Teasdale	All Hallows
Feb 6	Rev Jan Vandenberg	All Hallows

Mothers' Union - 16 Days of Activism

Mothers' Union is addressing Violence against women. One in three women are victims of violence or abuse. 16 Days of Activism is an annual United Nations campaign, this year from 25th November until 10th December. Mothers' Union nationally and locally is joining with thousands of other organisations to encourage more people to stand up and stop all forms of violence to women.

From addressing immediate need to effecting long-term change, MU is making a difference in communities around the world: raising awareness, bringing hope and offering practical support.



Our local branch of Mothers' Union supports Northumberland Domestic Abuse Services through 608030 in Hexham. We give Christmas gifts and Shopping vouchers for the use of the clients and have responded to other requests for practical help. The Diocesan Mothers' Union arrange caravan holidays and Away days which have been greatly appreciated by families both locally and throughout Northumberland.

At their last monthly meeting MU members remembered victims of Domestic Violence and lit a candle display to remember the 1 in 3 women who are victims of violence or abuse. This display was in the Church Porch on Sunday 28th November at the beginning of the 16 Days of Activism, when we will be thinking of the 108 victims from this country, who lost their lives as a result of Domestic Violence in 2020 alone.

I recently attended a White Ribbon Service in Hexham Abbey, to remember these victims. The Archbishop of York addressed the congregation and spoke powerfully about how he felt embarrassed, as a man, to have to talk about violence against women, which is perpetrated in the vast majority of cases by men. He spoke of how Jesus set the example in his treatment of women, going against the ideas and practices of his day.

Sheila Walker

Cafe Scientifique

Here is a change to the planned programme and we are now hosting David Hirst of Tynemouth Fine Art with Picture Perfect. A light-hearted look into the science behind the conservation or restoration of art works. Why do it and how is it done? Illustrated with examples - good and bad - this talk will change your view of art works. You are welcome to bring a piece of art for David to look at.

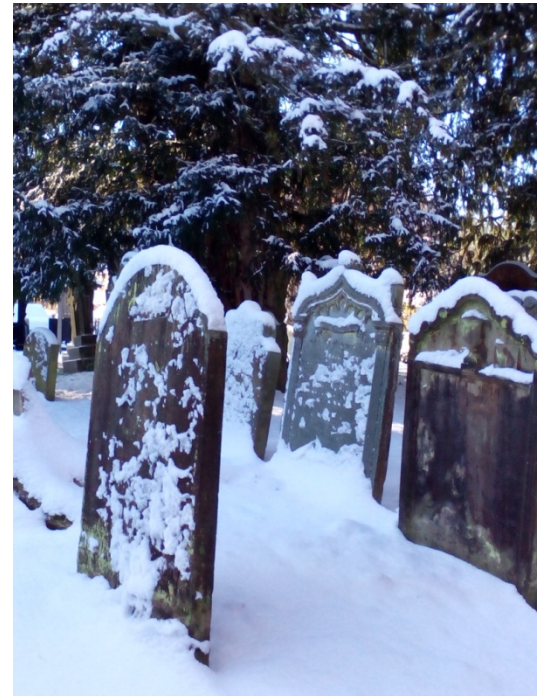
Tuesday 7 December 7 – 9 pm Tickets £5 in advance via [ticketsource](https://www.ticketsource.co.uk/bardon-mill-henshaw...)

<https://www.ticketsource.co.uk/bardon-mill-henshaw...>

or at Bardon Mill Village shop £7 on the door. Tickets include refreshments. Doors open 6.45pm

Beltingham – A poem by Bryan Stevens

This place has won the hearts of generations
Down endless untold corridors of years
Resting quiet above the tinkling, winding burn,
Beckoning alike the faithful and the casual
To pray, or just to marvel at the iron bound churchyard yews,
Old, some say, when John was on the throne.
Summer suns make vivid the figures of the saints.
Enhance the marble tablets on the walls
Before the leafy golden autumn showers,
While twilight days grow shorter, till at last
Snow settles silent on the churchyard graves,
Yet soon enough snowdrops hail the epiphany of Spring,
Nautre breaks gently through, as Nature always will,
Embraced by all who love a setting such as this.



On being poorly during Covid – by Fred Brook

On the 1st of February 2021 I could not get out of bed. This was nothing to do with being lazy, or having a hangover. It was all to do with an excruciating pain in my back. When I tried to raise my torso I screamed. This woke my wife who asked what on earth was the matter. “I can’t get up” I gasped. She got up, put on her dressing gown and came round to my side of the bed. She told me to put my feet on to the floor and lift myself up. I tried, and screamed. She asked that I give her my hands and she would pull me upright. Crazy advice. More screams. She went downstairs to phone our GP, who promised to phone in an hour’s time (no home visits during Covid). Whilst all that was taking place I thought that I could drag myself across to the edge of the bed and slowly lower myself off and onto the carpet. Stupid plan. I fell. I screamed. I hurt. A lot. To cut a long story short with help and wise wifely advice I slithered to the top of the stairs and after turning over I bounced, on my backside, down each step and got on the sofa in the front room. The phone call from our GP came eventually. He asked, “on a scale of nought to ten how would you describe the pain?” “Twelve and a half I” I replied. And so began 10 days of hospitalisation.

I was in the “Old Men’s Ward”. It was meant to have six patients in it, but with social distancing there were only four of us, one in each corner. So, no chatting to the bloke in the next bed. My cot was placed bottom left. Martin was opposite me. He was 90 and came in during the night, groaning a great deal and saying he wanted to die. He did not. I assured him he would not die and in the end buzzed the duty nurse who came and gave him something to help him go to sleep. He seemed fine next morning. In the bottom right bed space was a younger chap. I think his name was Bree. He was mobile and wandered around the ward wearing a tracksuit. He was a frequent visitor to my bed space, wanting to talk to me about his legal problems involving a house which he and his sister had inherited. I made suitable sounds of sympathy and he eventually went away. But he was a regular visitor thereafter. Norman, in the top right bed just wanted to go home.

We were woken by the lights being turned on. It was very dark outside at 55 degrees North. Our nursing assistants entered, bringing our ablutions equipment, a basin of soapy warm water and a cloth. My nurse, Anne from Wallsend, told me to wash hands and face and under arms and then turn on my side so she could “wash your bum”. At a month from my 85th birthday I duly complied. What else could I do? Medications followed, and then breakfast which we had selected the night before. I had porridge, which Anne spoon fed to me. I vowed that hereafter I would feed myself. The final ritual was to urinate. Anne offered me a cardboard bottle, which I accepted, and then failed to connect to it and thus wet the bed. Anne told me not to worry and helped by another nurse rolled me to and fro across the bed as they stripped the wet sheets, and me of my wet nightdress., replacing them and me of dry items. I vowed that hereafter I would make it to the toilet to do the necessary. I slept a lot that day. It took another two days to fulfil that vow.

A couple of days later the ward manager handed me a mobile phone. It was my wife, and it was good to hear her Northumbrian voice. All three of our children had hurried to Tynedale to ensure Mum was OK, and that reassured me a lot. Two of them had now returned to their homes in Berkshire and Oxfordshire. Our younger son Andrew, the middle one, who lives in Amble on the Northumberland coast, had stayed on at our place sleeping in the guest room. He told me that a neighbour who was a consultant at the Freeman would drop off a parcel for me. It came the next day. I expected some clothes, but it was a very heavy book, President Obama’s “A Promised Land”. I could barely lift it. My own promised land came into sight a couple of days later when two spectacularly beautiful ladies announced that they were my physiotherapists. Over the next few days they would exercise and test me perform the tasks that would demonstrate that I was fit to be discharged. At first it involved using a walking frame to move about the ward. I progressed to using two walking sticks, then one to parade up and down the long and empty corridors of the Freeman. The final challenge was the stairs. I did it, several times, but my, did it hurt! I was decreed ready to go home.

It took another day to get the transport arrangements sorted. At first I was to be taken in an ambulance, but these vehicles were needed for more urgent duties, so it was arranged for son Andrew to transport me. He was not allowed to come to the ward because of Covid and so I was pushed in a wheelchair by one of the porters to the hospital’s exit. It was nice to be clapped along the corridors by hospital staff, me in my pyjamas and dressing gown and clutching a bag containing Obama’s “Promised Land”. Andrew was waiting at the Exit and took over wheelchair duties.” Hold on Fred” he yelled, and pushed me out of the exit and through a snowdrift to his car. My, was it cold.

Does Crime Pay? A Poem from Keith Brunton

There was a boy whose name was Paul, you wouldn’t care for him at all.

He swore at teachers, made a noise and bullied other girls and boys.

And as he progressed through the school, ignoring every single rule,

He reached at last his teenage years. His parents were reduced to tears,

expecting in the course of time their son would lead a life of crime.

It only took a year or two for their prediction to come true.

He led a gang of vicious thugs who traded in illicit drugs.

Progressing then to robbing banks and other kinds of merry pranks.

Pride always comes before a fall, the law at last caught up with Paul.

The judge, a Mr Justice Percy, was not renowned for showing mercy.

Ignoring the defendant's tears, he sent him down for fifteen years.

Leaving this unhappy male banged up inside the country jail.

But never one to miss a trick, our Paul decided pretty quick

To make some prudent preparation to get a bit more education.

By scheming and with bribery he found work in the library

So when at last he walked out free he'd got a second class degree.

So did crime pay? It wasn't clear what was to be his new career.

Selling time shares? Dodgy cars? Running chains of topless bars?

At last he said "I've found my mission. I think I'll be a politician".

A message from Rev Jeremy Thompson, Vicar of St John Lee

The following message was circulated by Rev Jeremy Thompson on his pew sheet on Remembrance Sunday, reminding his parishioners of the journey towards reconfiguration of our local Benefices.

Parishes by the Wall - an update.

[A recap of the background.](#)

More than a decade ago Hexham Deanery was told that it would have to reduce its number of full-time stipendiary clergy from 8 to 6. This was part of the Diocese attempts to keep the cost of running the Diocese at a reasonable level whilst still ensuring that the Mission and Ministry of the church could go ahead. The then Area Dean and Deanery Development Group began a process of devising a Deanery Plan that would achieve this goal. For a number of reasons that plan was never implemented. However, the requirement to cut stipendiary posts remained. Three years ago, Central Church authorities indicated that they were going to have to change the way they had been supporting Dioceses financially and that by 2023 all Dioceses in England would need to be financially self-sufficient. They determined that to do so Newcastle Diocese would have to reduce our full-time stipendiary clergy from 102 to 80 posts. Again Hexham Deanery was reminded of the requirement to cut from 8 to 6.

Once more the Area Dean and the Deanery Development Group set to to devise a plan that would achieve that goal and ensure that we maintained a Christian presence in every community. It was at this time that the notion of "The Parishes by The Wall" was born. The Deanery Plan divided our deanery into four parts. The Alston Moor group of parishes and the Allendale with Whitfield and Ninebanks group were felt to be too geographically isolated to be divided up in any other way than they are now. So they would remain as they are with 1 full-time stipendiary priest each. Hexham Abbey would lose one of their full-time stipendiary clergy and would look, in due course, to develop links with Whitley Chapel and Hexhamshire. Which left the churches along the A69 corridor from Greenhead in the west to Stagshaw in the East. The A69 link meant that travel between churches would be possible and so it was envisioned that these parishes would form a Mission and Ministry Team sharing two full-time stipendiary priests between them. "Parishes by the A69 corridor" was felt to be a bit prosaic so the more pleasing term of "Parishes by the Wall" was coined. The deanery plan was not hatched in the glorious isolation of the Area Deans ivory tower. At every stage, the Archdeacon (Peter Robinson), the parish clergy, churchwardens, Deanery Synod members and the general populace of our congregations have been asked for views and opinions. All of which were taken into account as the plan grew and developed. Once it was agreed that all who wished to had had their say, and that the plan fairly represented the

views of the churches, and that it would be both workable and acceptable to us all, it was presented to Bishop Christine and the Bishop's Council for approval. This given the plan has become the blueprint for future deployment in Hexham Deanery.

Where are we up to now?

Just before Covid struck David Ratcliff convened a meeting of all the churchwardens from the Parishes By The Wall (PBTW) to discuss the future of the Mission and Ministry Team idea and how best to take it forward. Not all churchwardens were present but all parishes were represented. It was felt that in order for the laity to speak freely the clergy should not be present. The reports are that this was a very positive meeting, with a lot of helpful discussions. The result of this meeting was that yes, PBTW would forge ahead seeking to do together those things that we could do better together, whilst at the same time ensuring the distinctive character of each church was valued and maintained. It was suggested at that meeting that in order to make this a workable proposition PBTW should be divided into two administrative units PBTW West consisting of Haltwhistle, Greenhead, Beltingham and Henshaw. And PBTW East consisting of Haydon Bridge, Warden and Newbrough, and St. John Lee. The actual reordering of these parishes would not happen until either Haydon Bridge with Beltingham and Henshaw or St. John Lee with Warden and Newbrough became vacant. Benjamin Carters move to Carlisle Cathedral has set this reordering in motion. The post for Vicar of Haltwhistle with Greenhead has been advertised as Vicar of Haltwhistle and Greenhead and Priest in Charge of Beltingham and Henshaw. (we are hoping to announce good news in this area very shortly) So PBTW West is going to happen quite soon.

After a lot of discussions with the Archdeacon and others, it is felt that the time is not yet right to make PBTW East happen. It will happen as the agreed plan sets out but a little more time is needed to let the dust settle from Benjamins time in Haydon Bridge (the reason why all churches have interregna) and for some work to be done to help these four parishes begin to find a way of working together for the long term.

As I say this union will happen. I have talked with the Archdeacon and we have agreed that we don't think it would be fair on either SJL and WN or Haydon Bridge for me to be made Priest in Church of Haydon Bridge at this time. I have also indicated that my intention is to retire when I am 65 in just over two years time. (Those of you who were at my installation back in 2008 will recall that I rang the bell 15 times. Traditionally an indication of how many years a Vicar is committing to stay in the parish. 2008 + 15 = 2023) This is of course not set in stone and may have to change. But I want to let you all know that that is my plan. It seems to me that your new incumbent will have much more chance of success if they are starting, in effect, with a clean sheet.

How will the new PBTW East function? I don't know. All that is to be worked out. What I do know is that there are three equal partners in this conversation and that we have some time to work together to work out, under the Holy Spirit, our way forward. I also know that there are so many possibilities that PBTW West offers. Dynamic children's and youth work, pastoral care teams, small group work for education and nurture, Open the Book in all our schools. Things we've struggled in these last years to do on our own might just become lively possibilities as a team of parishes sharing in God's mission and ministry.

Bishop Christine has described this as a kairos moment. Yeah, I didn't know what that meant either! I think describing it as a popcorn moment might be a bit more accessible. We've all watched those inert grains of corn sitting forlornly in the pan suddenly burst into life and start popping and crackling when the heat gets turned up. Well isn't the Holy Spirit often described as being like a fire? (Tongues as of flames leapt from the heads of the Apostles and so a Bishop's Mitre is supposed to resemble a young of flame).

See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland. Says the Lord.

Isaiah 43.19

Thank you, Jeremy, for permission to include this message in our Parish Newsletter