

The Parish of Beltingham with Henshaw

Parish Newsletter Feb/March 2023



View from the Vicarage

The deep dark skies of winter, the slowly lengthening days of Spring, the seasons slowly turn and very soon it will be the anniversary of my arrival in Northumberland! I'm in the middle of planning the next few months services and am conscious that these are the last months where I don't know what happened last year. I've been building on the work of others as I keep asking, what did you do last year, and what do you normally do? Of course the answers to those different questions are often different because the lingering effects of Covid on our society were still with us last year – when I came, we opened up receiving Communion in bread *and* wine again, and having coffee mornings was still a novelty. But when it comes to what we normally do, the answers I get are sometimes a huge discussion as people remember different things from different eras of church life, sometimes going back decades, with half a hope that we might reinstate that way of life again – we nearly always remember the more glorious things when discussing hopes for the future.



I think it's lovely when we do remember the good things of the past. Those who suffer from depression can sometimes only remember the things that went badly or the wrongs of the past, but both good and bad combine to make the patchwork of life, and to focus on whatever is true, whatever is honourable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, is surely the way to life. If there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things, and the peace of God will come to you much more easily in the trials of today.

I'm looking ahead to Lent and Holy Week in my planning as I write, but this year also brings a coronation and I wonder what, if anything, our towns and villages will do for that and how the church can join in. And Haltwhistle may have a carnival in the summer, and if so, and I was wondering about having a church float in the procession since we're part of the fabric of what makes this area good. Plans, plans, plans. But don't forget to give thanks for the present moment.

I wish you all the best for 2023.

The Parish Newsletter

You will notice that this newsletter is for both February and March. Putting it together each month is quite a time consuming task, and so from the start of this year, it seemed a good time to decide to send it only once every two months. For those who receive it by email, I will continue to send emails if there is any important news or developments relating to our parish and our benefice. For now, though, the important thing is to note that there are two months of service times listed.

Church Contacts: Rev'd Canon Steve Wright, 01434 320215, email canonstevewright@gmail.com, Anne Galbraith Churchwarden, 01434 684302, email galbraithanne55@gmail.com or Adrian Storrie, Churchwarden 01434 344494, email adetree@btinternet.com

Bowes Lyon Trust

Small grants can be made by the Bowes Lyon Trust to people within our parish who face hardship or a sudden emergency. You can apply by calling Nigel Collingwood, the secretary to the Trust in confidence on 344119.

Church Service times for February and March 2023

Date and time	Service	Leader	Church
5 February at 10 am ***	Benefice Holy Communion	Rev'd Steve Wright and Rev'd Anne Marr, MU	All Hallows', Henshaw
12 February 11 am	Holy Communion	Rev'd Steve Wright	All Hallows', Henshaw
19 February 11 am Wed. 22 Feb 10 am***	Holy Communion Holy Communion With ashing	Rev'd Keith Teasdale Rev'd Steve Wright	All Hallows', Henshaw All Hallows' Henshaw
26 February 11 am	Holy Communion	Rev'd Steve Wright	All Hallows', Henshaw
5 March 10 am ***	Benefice Holy Communion	Rev'd Steve Wright	St Cuthbert's Greenhead
12 March 11 am	Holy Communion	Rev'd Steve Wright and the Archdeacon, Rev'd Catherine Sourbut Groves	All Hallows', Henshaw
19 March 11 am	Holy Communion	Rev'd Keith Teasdale	All Hallows', Henshaw
26 March 11 am	Holy Communion	Rev'd Keith Teasdale	St Cuthbert's Beltingham
2 April – Palm Sunday 10am***	Benefice Holy Communion	Rev'd Steve Wright	Holy Cross Haltwhistle

*** Please note that on dates marked with ***, the service is at 10 am. Please also check which church is holding the service.

Mothers' Union

There will be a **Shrove Tuesday Lunch** on 21 February at the General Havelock, 12.00 for 12.30. The cost and menu are to be confirmed, There will be a raffle. If you would like to attend, please let Anne Brunton know – 344557.

22 February, in the church room at Henshaw, "A Banker's Reminiscences", Nigel Collingwood

18 March, Bardon Mill Village Hall, **Make a Mothers Day Coffee Morning**. Stalls will include home produce, books, and bric a brac. There will be a raffle and refreshments. Entry £1.50. This is a new venue for this event and MU are hoping for your support. Proceeds are in aid of literacy and numeracy projects.

22 March, **Lady Day Holy Communion and Members meeting**, Rev'd Dr John Harrison

The Diocesan Council will take place at Kingston Park in March, on a date still to be announced.

Lent Course

Our Vicar is running a Lent Course based around the film *Chocolat* (based on Joanne Harris's book but don't read the book for the Lent course as it's different from the film!).] It will be held in the Church Room at All Hallows', on Tuesdays commencing 21 February, from 4.30 pm to 6 pm. Please let Carol know if you wish to come, 344398.

Holy Week – Walk with Jesus through the week

Planning for our Holy Week services is taking shape. The theme will be walk with Jesus through the week, starting with our **Benefice Communion on Palm Sunday, 2 April at 10 am at Holy Cross**, then services at 7 pm in Greenhead on Monday, Henshaw on Tuesday, Beltingham on Wednesday, Haltwhistle on Thursday, and at 2 pm in Henshaw on Friday, and culminating in **Easter Day**, Sunday 9 April. Keep an eye on the weekly pew sheet for news of timing and the nature of each of the services. All are welcome.

News from our PCC meeting

The PCC met on January 24. Discussions centred on the planning for the Lent Course and our services in Holy Week. There was also a discussion about the arrangements for the Annual Parochial Church meeting, at which various reports and the accounts for the past year will be produced, and officers for the year elected. Anne Galbraith is retiring as church warden, and John Galbraith is retiring as Gift Aid Recorder.

The PCC has also decided to purchase a Digital Hymnal, to provide a better range of hymns when no organist is available. It is hoped that this will be delivered around Easter time. We also discussed the position relating to the newsletter. It had been hoped to combine our newsletter with that of Haltwhistle and Greenhead, in order to have a "benefice" voice, but changes relating to the production of Outlook need to be in before any final decision is taken. Meanwhile the PCC agreed that our parish newsletter will be distributed every two months. There was some good news on the energy front, in terms of grants available to assist with current very high energy costs. However, the real issue in Henshaw is the age of the boiler. The recent cold spell proved that it was struggling to heat the church effectively. The PCC decided to investigate costs of replacement. On safeguarding, there were no incidents to report.

Bardon Mill Parish Council

The next meeting of Bardon Mill Parish Council is on Tuesday 14 February. Council Meetings are held in All Hallows churchroom. Members of the public are welcome to attend.

Haltwhistle Walking Festival – 22 April to 1 May

Whatever your level of fitness or interests, there are **27 different walks** on offer so there is sure to be something for everyone. The showpiece one day walk will be to visit **Cauldron Spout**. You will need a head for heights and nimble feet but this spectacular day out is one not to be missed. The long distance 5 day walk takes in **St Oswald's Way**. Follow in the footsteps of a 7th century King of Northumbria who was closely connected to the monks of Lindisfarne, and enjoy the differing landscapes of Northumberland. Specialist walks this year cover everything from rocks to Romans, ballads to birds! Check out their website to find out everything that's on offer and how to book. www.haltwhistlewalkingfestival.org – or you can follow them on Facebook.

Highlights Rural Touring Scheme

Sunday 26 February 7.30p.m. at Bardon Mill Village Hall ; Elysium Theatre in "The Island". Robben Island, South Africa 1973 The top security prison where Nelson Mandela was held. 'A rich, boisterous, funny, moving piece of theatre. It's a hymn to the human spirit and a cry for freedom everywhere. Tickets £10 from ticketsource.co.uk or Tel. 01434 344424

Volunteering

Northumberland County Council have a volunteer Network Coordination Team, run by Sarah Long. You can log on to their website [Volunteering for Northumberland](#). A current vacancy is for the Northumberland Log Bank who are looking for volunteers to collect, prepare and deliver logs. You can get more information from Catherine Thick, katethick@hotmail.com 07900 963234 <https://www.breamishvalley.com/northumberland-log-bank/>

More news on walking - Time to get walking again!

With Spring on its way we start to think about getting out to walk in the beautiful English Countryside again, but where to find new and interesting walks? Walking in Northumberland has loads of walks to download and print, free, it also has books of walks, details of all the walking groups in the county and much more. Whether you want to walk on your own or with a group all the information is there in one place. John Harris (who maintains the website) said 'There is so much walking information on the web but it is difficult to find. Walking in Northumberland (part of the Walking in England website) has brought it together in one place so whether you are walking from home, or away on holiday, you will be able to find a walk suitable for you'. With walks from half a mile to twelve miles plus long, and a note of suitability for pushchairs and wheelchairs, everyone can find a walk to enjoy. So home or away, check out the websites and get walking!

John Harris, <https://www.walkinginengland.co.uk/northumberland> or john@walkinginengland.co.uk

Pancakes

How do you like your pancakes – sweet or savoury, lemon and sugar or ham and cheese? And why do we have pancakes on Shrove Tuesday – this year on 21 February? Pancakes are associated with the day preceding Lent, because they are a way to use up rich foods such as eggs, milk, and sugar, before the fasting season of the 40 days of Lent which emphasizes eating simpler food. Shrove Tuesday traditionally began at 11:00am with the ringing of a church bell and in many places there will be pancake races.

In other countries, the date is also celebrated as Mardi Gras (which means Fat Tuesday), or Carnival (the word is derived from the Latin meaning the putting away of meat) or Masquerade (the form which the celebration takes in Venice). There are particular celebrations in Scarborough where they close the foreshore to all traffic, closing schools early, and inviting everyone to skip. Traditionally, long ropes were used from the nearby harbour. The town crier rings the pancake bell to start the fun.

In London, there is a Parliamentary Pancake Race with teams from the Houses of Commons and Lords battling for the title of Parliamentary Pancake Race Champions. The fun relay race is to raise funds for charity. A key part of the fun, of course, is tossing the pancakes to turn them over. With supervision, children love to "have a go", although they are often less keen to clear up the resulting mess!

300th Anniversary of death of Sir Christopher Wren

This year marks the 300th anniversary of the death of Sir Christopher Wren, renowned for his work as the architect of many great churches and buildings, probably the best known is St Paul's Cathedral. Wren lived to be 90, and could be described as a polymath. He had developed interests in astronomy, anatomy, mathematics, philosophy, classics and later in design and architecture. He was a founder member and subsequently President of the Royal Society and he also found time to be elected four times to Parliament as an MP. In 1669 he became the King's Surveyor of Works, and in that role, following the Great Fire of London, he played a considerable role in the general process of rebuilding the city, including the rebuilding of 51 churches. Although he is probably best remembered as an architect, he remained committed to science. For example, Monument, the great column in London built to commemorate the Great Fire, has a subterranean laboratory and one of the towers of St Paul's was used as a telescope during construction. Wren was an important figure at a key point in English history, living through civil wars and through the reign of six monarchs. Although he was married twice, both of his wives died young, as did two of his four children. He is buried in the crypt at St Paul's, where a memorial stone reads: "Here in its foundations lies the architect of this church and city, Christopher Wren, who lived beyond ninety years, not for his own profit but for the public good. Reader, if you seek his monument – look around you."

Learning from babies — extracts from a reflection from Anne Galbraith

In the period after the birth of baby Jesus, the days must have been action packed for Mary and Joseph - coping with a new baby and learning to look after him, loads of visitors, not very comfortable accommodation – however, there was one thing they didn't have to worry about and that was choosing a name for the baby because Matthew tells us about the angel appearing to Joseph and telling him that Mary would bear a son and he should be called Jesus. The shepherds had come and gone, and then there is the arrival of the Three Wise Men – marked in our church calendar as Epiphany. This is a special time in the Christmas story. It is the time when we celebrate how a star led the wise men to visit baby Jesus.

Of course, however busy these early days were for Mary and Joseph, we know that soon after the visit of the Magi, an angel appeared to Joseph in a dream, telling him to flee to Egypt with Mary and the baby Jesus, to escape the prospect of Jesus being killed by King Herod. And how wise they were to flee – this theme of the massacre of the innocents has been depicted by many famous painters, including Breughal and Rubens. You may also be familiar with the poem by Charles Causley called *Innocent's Song*, where some of the verses say something about the threat from Herod.

Who's that knocking on the window/ who's that standing at the door/, what are all those presents/ lying on the kitchen floor?/ Who is the smiling stranger/ with hair as white as gin/, what is he doing with the children/ and who could have let him in?/ Why has he rubies on his fingers/, A cold, cold crown on his head/, why, when he caws his carol/ does the salty snow run red?/ Watch where he comes walking,/ out of the Christmas flame,/ dancing, double talking,/ Herod is his name.

It's easy to see why Mary and Joseph would want to escape from Herod, but their journey to Egypt is likely to have been a very uncomfortable journey, taking probably a couple of weeks – hardly the best start for a new mother and a tiny baby, and parents trying to get to grips with how to care for the baby. But we shouldn't forget that besides learning to care for the baby, they would also be learning from the baby, and one of the first things they would learn would be about being flexible. For any of us who have been involved in bringing up children, we may recall our attitude to parenting before our own children came along. I won't give them sweets or fizzy drinks, I won't let them watch television, and so on – that's until your baby arrives, when in exhaustion and/or desperation, your good resolutions go out of the window. So possibly it's best never to say never.

The behaviour of babies can also teach us some important lessons in life skills. They are often totally committed to a task, usually one you would prefer them not to do, like banging the wooden spoon on the pan, and will show extraordinary perseverance in doing it. We can learn to show the same commitment and perseverance in all that we take on. Every day in the life of a baby is an opportunity to learn something new, clapping, waving, standing, crawling and so on. We can do the same – we are never too old to learn, although I sometimes think that is not true in relation to the wizardry of new technology. Or wrestling with how to put up or collapse a modern buggy. Of course, as babies learn to walk, inevitably they keep falling over – but they pick themselves up and start all over again – and that teaches them resilience. There's a lesson there for us too – if we get knocked back in something we want to achieve, we should try again.

Babies also teach us to multitask better than anything else. We now have a mini dictator living with us, and this forces us to balance and prioritize life's everyday responsibilities in a new way. And when we are really frazzled, one glorious smile from baby will generally soothe away our stress – so there's another lesson worth remembering. Of course, things may go the other way – babies seem to know that when all else fails, turn on the waterworks – we probably don't want to adopt that course of action too often. A baby in the house, especially a crying one, is a good example of minority rule.

Once a baby comes into anyone's life, they will soon realise that the only constant is change. We all become creatures of habit, but every day with a new baby is different. So if we have become too set in our ways, a new baby will soon shake us out of that. It's worth remembering that people who say they sleep like a baby usually don't have one.

So, let's remind ourselves about Mary and Joseph, learning to look after their new baby, in less than ideal circumstances. I remember when my son and daughter started to have their own children, when they came to stay, it was like a military exercise with all the kit they brought with them – none of which Mary and Joseph would have had. But one lesson that Mary and Joseph would surely learn is that babies teach us about the depth of the love we can feel as parents, which is everlasting, and the love we can receive from our baby. For such joy, we are truly thankful.