

Gateway

June 2021



A good year for Primroses

St Michael's, Alnwick

The magazine for the people of the Church and the Town



WEEKLY WORSHIP

SUNDAYS AT ST MICHAEL'S

8.00 am

HOLY COMMUNION (said)

A quiet early morning service (CW*) with a sermon. On the third Sunday of the month we use BCP

9.30 am

THE PARISH EUCHARIST

Sung Eucharist (CW) with Junior Church for children, a robed choir and the largest congregation of the day. On the first Sunday of the month a 'First Sunday Eucharist' is especially welcoming to children.

11.15 am

LATE MORNING WORSHIP

A more flexible and varied service, which includes Holy Communion about once a month. The music includes traditional hymns as well as contemporary Christian songs. A small and welcoming congregation with some provision for children.

6.00 pm

EVENSONG

A traditional service of Evening Prayer (BCP) with sermon, choir, hymns and Anglican chant for Psalms and Canticles.

WEDNESDAYS AT ST MICHAEL'S

10.15 am

HOLY COMMUNION

A said service of Holy Communion (CW) followed by coffee and the opportunity for fellowship. Once a month we are joined by a class from St Michael's Church School and once a term the service takes place in the school.

DENWICK VILLAGE CHAPEL

A small chapel-of-ease built by the Duke of Northumberland in 1872

11.15 am on the Second Sunday of the month.

MATINS OR HOLY COMMUNION

*CW – Common Worship, BCP – Book of Common Prayer (1662)

For more information on St Michael's please visit our website at
www.alnwickanglican.com

From the Vicar

St. Michael's Vicarage
Alnwick

Dear People of Alnwick,

As I write this letter the Prime Minister has just officially informed the nation that we can proceed to the next stage on the roadmap to recovery from the Coronavirus pandemic – freeing us up to begin to put back together the pieces of our lives. This is thanks, in no small measure, to the amazing rollout of the vaccination programme and, before we do anything else, we should give profound thanks for our National Health Service – still the envy of the world.

However slowly we begin our individual routes back to a less restrictive way of being there is so much to be thankful for. We are being freed up to socialise in a limited way once again, to hug – and be hugged, perhaps even to stay with friends and family if they don't live too far away.

I am reminded of the line in the hymn “my chains fell off, my heart was free ...”

And, at the rate time seems to be flying by, it won't be too long until the next date in June and further restrictions are lifted. Further chains can fall off and, hopefully, much anxiety can be cast aside.

Being freed up to be who we are is critical to our general wellbeing – and the world is beginning to realise this. We now have Mental Health Awareness Week – a concept that was simply unheard of just a short while ago. Increasingly, people in the public eye (those who seem to have ‘everything’) are prepared to share with others that their seemingly enviable lives have often been fraught with problems and difficulties. These brave souls have released themselves from the veneer of perfection and admitted that they are scarred and vulnerable.

In his book ‘Simply Free’ Fr. Gerald O'Mahony says: “I'm free to grow because I am free to be less than perfect”.

Continued on page 5

Principal Readings for June

Sunday	Holy Communion	Evensong
6th	Genesis. 3. 8-15	Jeremiah 6. 16-21
Trinity 1	2 Corinthians 4.13-5,1 Mark 3. 20-end	Romans 9. 1-13
13th	Ezekiel 17. 22-end	Jeremiah 7. 1-16
Trinity 2	2 Corinthians 5. 6-17 Mark 4. 26-34	Romans 9. 14-26
20th	Job 38. 1-11	Jeremiah 10. 1-16
Trinity 3	2 Corinthians 6. 1-13 Mark 4. 35-41	Romans 11. 25-36
27th	Lamentations 3. 23-33	Jeremiah 11. 1-14
Trinity 4	2 Corinthians 8. 7-end Mark 5. 21-end	Romans 13. 1-10

FROM THE REGISTERS

Prayers & Blessing after a Civil Marriage –

Samuel Drew & Gabriella Rao 1.05.21.

Confirmation by Bishop John Packer on 2nd May 2021

Rory MacDonald

Sophie Johnston

Deborah MacDonald

Francesca Inglis

Adam Johnston

As we make our way into our new unrestricted, post-pandemic life and allow our chains to fall off let's not try too hard to strive for perfection. Rather, let us aim to grow – in contentment, in faith, in hope and in love.

None of these areas of growth require perfection – simply a willingness to allow God to work in us and for us to strive to be the best we can.

In the book of the prophet Micah (Chapter 6, verse 8) we read: “And what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God.”

If we can do this and, at the same time, acknowledge that we are less than perfect we may know a freedom equal – or greater – than the falling off of chains.

With every blessing,

Paul

Confirmation



Thought for the Month

A personal reflection on a Ruby wedding

ON THE 23rd May 2021 Martin and I had been married for 40 years, our Ruby wedding. We expected to make our Silver wedding anniversary, hoped we might make our Ruby, when Martin would be 87 and myself 70, but thought we probably wouldn't make our Golden! So our Silver Wedding was a great weekend of celebrations, people travelling from all over the country to Cornwall. It included a party on the Saturday at the Eden Project in Cornwall, with 80 guests, bangers and mash supper and a Ceilidh, a blessing in church the next day on the Sunday followed by wine and cake, then a rather cold picnic lunch in the park alongside the river in our hometown Lostwithiel. An enjoyable time for us all, with many trips down memory lane. Like many others whose weddings and celebrations have been on hold, the uncertainty of Covid times will sadly mean no Ruby wedding celebrations this year.

Our marriage has made Martin and I trailblazers within the church, which has not always been comfortable, and it has made me tussle with that difficult dilemma of 'Is this what God wants or what I want?' Martin's first marriage broke down and his wife left him and their son

David, then 3. Some years later Martin and I met when he was a parish priest in the same diocese where I was a Licenced Lay Worker working as the Diocesan Youth Officer. I believed my ministry was to be as a single person and Martin was clear he would never let a woman near him again. Somehow God had other plans, and love sneaked upon us through our membership of the Diocesan Education Committee!

At this time it was beginning to be possible for a priest to marry for a second time, or to marry someone who was divorced, but there were, quite rightly, tough criteria. Martin had to get permission to marry for a second time from the Archbishop of Canterbury, and I had to get permission from my Bishop to marry a divorced person. The Archbishop returned all the papers for Martin with a 'yes' in 3 weeks, but the Bishop took 6 weeks to decide about me, as he wanted to discover if the Anglo-Catholics and Evangelicals in the Diocese would still accept me. Fortunately I was a known person not a statistic and Martin's parishioners were very supportive, the churchwardens generously saying to the Bishop that they had supported Martin and David through the crucifixion, and now wanted to support and enjoy the resurrection.

Although Martin and I loved each other we both believed our vocations were God given, and if either had received a 'No' we wouldn't have married, which people outside the church found very odd.

Then came the wedding day. At that time the Church of England did not allow a second wedding in church, but was allowing wedding blessings. However, there had just been a huge row in General Synod about marriage blessings in church being too like weddings, so the Bishop said that ours had to be a simple 'low key', family and few close friends only, no bridesmaids. For me it was important to have the blessing within a Holy Communion service, but this was not allowed. So on May 23rd 1981 we were married in the Ipswich registry office, (the registrar bemused that she had never officiated at the wedding of a Vicar before), we then went straight on to Martin's church where a friend performed the wedding blessing ceremony. We then had to have a 15 minute break. Then Martin's parishioners and all our friends were allowed to enter the church for a parish communion, led by our Archdeacon. (I think our Bishop was relieved to have to be away at a conference, so couldn't take part.) When we had the final interview with our Bishop before the wedding day, he said to me, 'When will you feel you are married?' I said that I wouldn't feel married at the

beginning of the day, but would after receiving Holy Communion, but was not sure when during that time I would be actually married!

I was the first diocesan worker to become pregnant, so the male Diocesan Secretary sent a problematic very pregnant me to a packed Job Centre to stand in line, in my own lunchtime, to get the relevant leaflets to tell the Diocese how to manage maternity leave and pay. (You have to laugh!) I was not able to go for selection for ordination for many years because an ordinand couldn't be married to a divorced person, even though my husband was a functioning parish priest; I was the first woman priest in our diocese married to a priest, who was employed in her own right full-time, as the diocese had initially assumed I would be an unpaid curate. However, looking back, these things happened in God's right time, often slower than our own. Back then married clergy with clergy spouses were seen as a problem, but Martin and I were asked to form the first diocesan group for such couples to work through the nitty-gritty of the practicalities and to support each other as we moved into new territory, our reflections informing National and Diocesan policies.

Like most marriages ours is not perfect, but as Martin would say of many things, 'It doesn't have to be perfect, just good enough'. We are both very different strongly

independent characters (on Myers-Briggs personality profile I am ENTJ and Martin is INFP) and we have had our ups and downs over the years. Being a step-mother was not easy, (especially as I had all of the theory but none of the practice), but I came to love David in a deep way I never expected. We were very fortunate that David wanted to belong to what he called a 'real' family, so the birth of Rebecca and Andrew was a great gift to us all.

As I write this I am aware that some people are single who would have loved to be married and this can leave a deep aching hole within; other marriages have broken down bringing enormous grief and pain to spouses and children; others are captive in unhappy or abusive

marriages; others mourn the loss of husband or wife, sometimes from a young age; some Christians have to navigate marriage with a non-Christian partner: so I count myself blessed to be married to Martin, even though we still drive each other potty at times! The rock undergirding our marriage is our Christian faith and values, and I am sure I share with many of you the discovery that marriage also involves commitment, unconditional love, sacrifice, vulnerability, woundedness, acceptance, forgiveness, apartness as well as togetherness and laughter—when we are often the joke. I am a great believer in marriage. Let those of us married rejoice and be glad as we will have been on the 23rd.

Natasha Schemanoff

Looking Back

AS I write, I'm taking advantage of a relaxation of the rules here in Scotland, and sitting in the communal back garden of some flats in Edinburgh, along with five friends, most of whom I haven't seen in person in many months. The sun is shining, the barbecue is blazing, and we're all happy to be with one another, and happy at the reopening of hospitality outdoors on the 26th April, and the prospect of indoors on the 17th May, which is also when we expect my University will allow students to gather, socially distanced,

indoors. This plague year has been a strange and difficult one, and no doubt there are yet more twists and turns and unexpected unpleasantnesses yet to come, but for now, there is fun, friendship, and (slightly burnt) food, and life is better than it has been for a long while.

Here in Edinburgh, we're a little bit behind you, of course, and by the time this magazine is published, these first moments of reawakening will be in the past for both you and me. We are not yet "back to normal", but even when we are, we will spend

many years reflecting on the pandemic, on what we have gained, and all we have lost, on what has aided our personal growth, and what has inhibited human flourishing. We truly make sense of our present only when it has become our past, filtered through thought and prayer and the hindsight that is only possible in retrospect, and only then can we understand what we lived through in all its fullness.

The process of retrospection about the pandemic has barely begun, but we are part of another retrospective, a process of reflection on the life, death, and resurrection of Christ which has been going on for over two millennia. It can be easy for us to forget the weight of over two thousand years of thought, and of all the efforts to understand what happened in Jerusalem, so many years ago. Part of that process has always involved inviting us to think ourselves into the Gospel story, to place ourselves alongside Christ's first disciples, to try to inhabit the fear, joy, and utter confusion of those strangest of strange times, and to forget for a while the theological understanding which makes sense of the Gospel narrative, and just to experience, and to feel it.

We will be revisiting the feelings which lockdown and the pandemic aroused in us for years to come, making sense in what we lived through, and finding Christ in what

we lived through. We will hear how the mixture of emotions we experienced during lockdown mirrors the confusion of feelings experienced by the earliest disciples of Christ, and it's good that we do so, as part of that process of coming to understand our experience. At this time, though, and while those emotions are still fresh, I'd urge us all to try to cement them in our memories, and guard against them being sanitised. In that process of retrospection, it is particularly easy for us to wash away or dilute negative feelings – frustration with authority, irritation with those around us, anger, fear, despair – to take the sting out of those feelings from a mistaken sense of piety. Just as we remember Peter's fear and betrayal, and Thomas' doubt, we should also remember the less palatable parts of our reaction to the pandemic. Doing so will help us make sense of what we have lived through – and give us a stronger connection to what Christ's first disciples experienced, too. So as we enjoy newly-regained freedoms, and as I drink wine in my friend's back garden, let us recall that it is in holding the good and the bad of our experience together that we come to understand it, and in which we come closest to the bewildering combination of emotions experienced during the Passion, and after the first Easter.

Emma Mavin

ST MICHAEL'S C E PRIMARY SCHOOL

Phoenix class are studying the London Eye Mystery. Last week we were looking at the use of idioms. We thought about their literal meaning as well as the meaning of the actual idiom. After finding idioms in the text, we created our own conversations between two of the characters in the book which had to include idioms. Finally we acted out our new scenarios. It was such good fun!

Also...in computing

We had Ms Whitelock from the High School in our computing lesson on Wednesday to see the amazing work we have been doing programming Crumbles. She was very impressed, particularly with our resilience and perseverance when problem solving.

We also had great fun playing connect four in our Spanish lesson.

This week at forest school we have been playing our memory game hug a tree, we have been learning how to find out the age of a tree and how to workout how tall a tree is. We have also been making butterflies out of recycled water bottles, they turned out amazing!

As part of the North East Festival of languages we have been promoting the use of spanish in PE with El Calvo.

The children said...

" It was very fun hearing all of the moves in Spanish, i really enjoyed it."

"I loved the Plank the best, it was very hard to work out what the moves were in Spanish, so it was good he was also showing us what to do."



" It made you think as it was tricky to know what he was telling you to do, it made me want to learn more Spanish."

" I enjoyed it, and understood some of it, which i was happy about."

" it was very good, was very challenging, made me want to learn Spanish as it was very interesting."

We want to say a huge thank you to Alistair Turner Funeral Directors, George White and the Alnwick Round Table for their very generous donations towards the school library, we cannot wait to start reading our fantastic new books.



Jessica Taylor

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

A series on the Commandments, but in the reverse order.

THE EIGHTH COMMANDMENT

“Thou shalt not steal”

WHEN I came to think about the eighth Commandment, I found it more difficult than I had expected to say why we should not steal

Think of three cases. First, imagine someone comes into my house, picks up my laptop computer and walks out with it with the intention of keeping it. That’s obviously wrong. I paid good money for that laptop. It is mine.

Now suppose that builders come and build a tall building in front of my house so that I can no longer see the view. They have stolen my nice view. I am very upset and protest.

The builder replies, “Oh, but it wasn’t your view. You may have lost it, but you cannot say you owned it, so we haven’t stolen it”.

The third case is a bit sillier. Suppose I won’t let you in to my house because you will steal my fresh air. “If you want to come in and breathe my air you will have to pay, or else bring your own air supply in. I’m not having you stealing my air.”

Now why is my first case, having my laptop stolen, a sensible example? Why is the second case, having my view taken away, at least a reasonable example, even if I have no legal protection. And why is my third case, about the fresh air, a daft example?

Simply because it makes sense to talk about possessing a laptop, and a certain amount of sense to say I possess a nice view. But it doesn’t make sense to say I possess so many cubic feet of fresh air in my house.

In other words, the crime of stealing can only be committed against someone who owns the thing. I don’t own the view, and I certainly don’t own the air. Do I own the laptop?

Yes, I do. Because that is how society is organised. But not all societies are organised like this.

In the days of the early church in Jerusalem we read that they pooled all their possessions and had all things in common. In such circumstances each person presumably took what he needed and there was no theft. Because there was no property.

And I suppose that the Communist ethic, taken to its logical conclusion would be similar: To each according to his need: from each according to his ability.

The trouble is, to have a community where everything is held in common requires some governing influence to make sure that the strong do not get the benefit of everything at the expense of the weak. This influence may be mutual love and concern, as in the early church, or it may be the police, but human nature being what it is, there must be some pressure to behave properly. Certainly the experiment in communal living in the early church of Jerusalem didn't work very well and was soon abandoned.

The Children of Israel in the desert had to have this law to protect the weak against the strong. Unfortunately, as the law of property has developed, it has usually been used by the strong against the weak. Many of the laws to protect property are for the benefit of the 'haves' against the 'have-nots'. It is equally against the law to steal the beggar's rags and the rich woman's mink coat. But effectively the law protects the wealthy from the poor.

Some of the worst features of the law of property have now been reformed. At one time a starving man who stole bread was liable to the death penalty. This situation has been improved in two ways: by reducing the severity of the penalty and by reducing the causes of starvation.

Some of the most unjust laws were in connection with poaching. A

land-owner is presumed to own all the animals and birds on his land and the fish in his rivers and anyone else who catches them is guilty of stealing. But the hungry poacher reasons that God put the animals there and therefore they are there for the taking. But again, in days gone by, the poacher was liable to pay with his life for his rabbit.

The majority of thefts though are not caused by desperate need. Most thefts arise from sheer greed and envy and the dream of easy riches, like the Great Train Robbery, as it was called.

In Ephesians chapter 4 we read, "Let the thief no longer steal, but rather let him labour, doing honest work with his hands, so that he may be able to give to those in need".

From this verse come three facts.

First, the obvious one, that stealing is wrong. It is wrong from God's point of view because God gives us our possessions. Everything that we have comes from God and it is not right to add to our possessions by theft. Furthermore, crimes against our neighbour are always regarded as sin against God. Our duty is to our neighbour, as well as to God.

This may seem obvious, but to those not brought up on the Bible, it is not obvious at all. Members of other religions, particularly in the East, do not necessarily see a duty to their neighbours. They do not see

any connection between their religious duty and their behaviour to other people. They make a false division between the sacred and the secular. The professional thief, converted to Christ has to change his ways.

Secondly, we learn the absolute desirability of honest work. The normal way of life, under God's plan is for each man to have work by which to gain his bread, and bread for his family of dependants. In another place Paul writes, "If a man will not work, let him not eat", but that is hardly a text for times of high unemployment. We know that enforced idleness and unemployment is bad for a man. The natural way of life is to work and to be prevented from doing so is to be denied self-fulfilment.

So Trades Unions and politicians are quite right to go on about the evils of unemployment. It is very desirable that everyone who is physically able to do it, should have work to do, And society is guilty if we are prepared to tolerate a high unemployment rate. The furlough scheme during the pandemic is an attempt to help with this.

Thirdly, we learn from this verse that part of the reason for working is to be able to give to those in need. There will always be some who cannot earn money, through inevitable unemployment, or through sickness, or through disability, and

there will always be some who are in need for other reasons – bad luck, stupidity or hard times. It is the privilege of those who are able to earn well to help to support those who are in need, and of course this is done on our behalf by the state through allowances and pensions.

So, praise God, in our country at least, there is no need for anyone to steal because he is starving. There is no need for the poor to steal bread in our country. But people do starve, elsewhere. And those who steal to preserve their lives are a reproach to all the others who ought to have cared for them.

Absolute honesty is a rarity these days. There is so much accepted fiddling with taxes, expenses, and what are called 'perks'. There is stealing employers' time by not using the time we are paid for in the right way. There is petty stealing of things from work – trifles like envelopes and pencils from the office. Travellers who claim expenses for mythical journeys. When I was in business it was accepted practice to bring back 200 cigarettes as 'expenses' when you had been abroad for the firm.

The Christian standard is clear: absolute honesty in all we do, but not cold legalism: we also must have compassion for the 'have-nots' of the world and make sure that they have no need to steal to survive.

Colin Perkins

Watching again

HELLO TO some returning friends, and 'welcome' to the new ones!

In these days of lockdown, I have chosen to watch the world from my car – what a pleasure it has been.

I have found out so much, and had hours of gentle fun watching and learning.

Did you know that there is a division of labour among male/female starlings? I found out because I didn't pick up all the bits of dried straw and grass from my gravel; a week or so ago I saw a starling looking a bit like Groucho Marx with a beak full of bits of straw/hay. Now, yesterday, I saw another with white feathers and bits of moss.

It seems that the fellas act like scaffolders and brickies to build the framework. Then along come the lasses and do the fancy lining etc. Fascinating. By the way, the way to tell the difference is that, although both have yellow beaks in the breeding season, the base of each is – blue for a male and pink for a female.

I've welcomed back the hen blackie who wears a silver bracelet – I reckon this is her 4th year. Now, if I don't provide enough food, she jumps up and down on my car's wing mirror! One day recently I was

parked by the roadside and a male blackbird sat with his legs tucked under him – bathing in the sun



I am going to have to get a bigger bath for the birds – just now it is a 2" deep roasting dish, but it needs refilling at least three times daily. The best is watching some sparrows, who just sit on the edge and get a shower bath from whoever is splashing water everywhere!

At dusk, my beech hedge is a picture with lots of little sparrow heads peeping out – magic, soon to be hidden as the beech leaves come out. I get regular visits from a couple of jackdaws, but didn't know until recently that they like people, and will establish eye contact!

Best, and most recent, arrival is at least one hedgehog. I saw him/her a couple of nights ago at dusk.

I created a house for them with a big upside-down plastic plantpot, filled with meadow hay and with a small opening. It is near the hedge, partly hidden and weighted down with a bit of tarp and a stone to cover the drainage hole.

Welcome to my garden world, little ones – you have given me more joy than anyone could ever know.

J.M.S-S

A BLESSING

Whilst sorting through some old papers recently I came across these words which were given to me many years ago by a very prayerful lady who was a member of the congregation when I was Vicar of Shiremoor. I am so glad to have come across them once again. P.M.S.

“May God bless you with a restless discomfort about easy answers, half-truths, and superficial relationships,
so that you may seek truth boldly and love deep within your heart.

May God bless you with holy anger at injustice, oppression and exploitation of people,
so that you may tirelessly work for justice, freedom and peace among all people.

May God bless you with the gift of tears to shed with those who suffer from pain, rejection, starvation, or the loss of all that they cherish,
so that you may reach out your hand to comfort them
and transform their pain to joy.

And may God bless you with enough foolishness to believe that you really CAN make a difference in this world, so that you are able to do what others claim cannot be done.

Amen.”

TIME FOR A MOVE

WE SEND our very best wishes to the Rundell family following the announcement made in church on Sunday 9th May that Gerard has been appointed Priest in Charge (to become Team Rector) of the parish of Christ the King in Newcastle.

The team parish is made up of St. Aidan's, Brunton Park (where Gerard will be the Incumbent), St. Columba's Seaton Burn, St. Matthew's, Dinnington, St. Cuthbert's Brunswick and 'The Church in the Park', a church plant based in the Great Park.

There are no details about moving times as yet but we expect that Gerard, Karen, Theo and Phoebe will leave Alnwick towards the end of the summer and take up his new post in early autumn.

There will be opportunities to say goodbye before that happens but, in the meantime, please keep all involved in your prayers.

P.M.S.

Smile



THIS YEAR Christian Aid week, as last year, was unusual. There was much that could not be done. However, there was also much that could be done and we did it. The plant stall, held on a horrible wet windy day in the marketplace,

made an amazing £530. It was manned by volunteers from all churches and filled with a huge variety of plants grown by many different hands, as well as some kindly donated by Dobbies Garden Centre. It was a resounding success. The zoom quiz, a fun, light-hearted hour or so added to the swell of money as generous donations were added to the JustGiving page. Add to this, individuals donating at church services and the result, at the time of writing, is £1,970. This will bring change and hope to many people.

Working with the effects of climate change is now a day to day challenge for millions of our fellow human beings, it is here, now, and it is all too real. For them, it is not a case of 'shall I take the car or use public transport' or 'which is the most eco-friendly fridge to buy', it is a case of 'when I walk to where the water is, will there be any today?' This May we have helped to change that for some people. There will be water where there wasn't any before, there will be green shoots popping up through earth where they might not have been otherwise.

Thank you very much everyone.

There is still time to give to the JustGiving page if you would like to:

www.justgiving.com/fundraising/christianaidweek-stmichaelschurch-alnwick

Alternatively you can donate by going to www.christianaid.org.uk and clicking on 'Donate' or by ringing: 02075232493

Sue Wiltshire

ST MICHAEL'S PRAYER CHAIN

If you have any requests for particular prayer our prayer chain would love to hear them. Contact Paul, Gerard, Veronica or Annette to start them praying!

Walking the Alnwick Ring at Rogationtide

SATURDAY 8TH May was wet – very wet! But nevertheless, 16 hardy souls gathered in St Michael's churchyard for the Rogationtide walk round the outskirts of Alnwick. A prayer and two rousing verses of a Rogationtide hymn raised our spirits before setting off down Canongate and up towards Abbeylands. We were out to enjoy communing with nature and also the opportunity to chat as we walked – in a socially distanced way. After so many months meeting only on zoom or across the pews in church, it was wonderful to be able to engage face to face, or at least side by side.

The route was planned to offer varying distances, and thus it worked out. Some had to leave us at the Lion Bridge while others crossed the Pastures and then headed for home. . The main group headed up the Demesnes to emerge onto the road at Denwick while a couple stuck to the river path, re-joining us at Peter's Mill. Thankfully most of us had fairly waterproof clothing, since the weather deteriorated quite fast once the rain set in.

I remember the then Archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams, stating very categorically that walking in the rain was good for the soul. And I think he's right – somehow another dimension in our connection with nature comes into play. But perhaps you can have too much of a good thing! We had come to a common mind that this was not a day for lingering and we'd enjoy the rest of the route better on another occasion. And so, after singing another couple of verses of our hymn, and somewhat bedraggled, but pleased that we had been out, we headed for home.

The rescheduled time a week later proved to be a very different experience. We had a beautiful dry, and even sunny, day. Five of us, plus two dogs, set out from St Michael's, this time in the opposite direction, up Ratten Row and up past the Shepherd's Rest. Lambs, bluebells, primroses, and trees in various stages of leaf - all the signs of spring to feed our senses.

The Cornhill railway path offers wonderful vistas over local farm lands. Perhaps it will someday be offered as a recognised walking and cycling route? We passed the new housing at Willowburn Park, now a sizeable estate, and three of us then headed out to the final section, past Lionheart and onto the Alnwick-Almouth railway path.

Apart from a few people near the golf course, and shoppers around Willowburn, we met very few other walkers except near the Stepping Stones across the Aln near Bilton Mill. Blessed with a sunny spell for our lunch stop by the river, we soon found ourselves emerging onto the Alnmouth Road at Alndyke, and completed our 'Ring' as we passed the entrance to the new development at Peter's Mill which we had reached the previous week.

Thank you to all who joined in, and to those who supported us from home. I think we all felt blessed by the surroundings in which we live. Might there be some interest in some further opportunities for walking together?

Bless the Lord all you works of the Lord

Sing his praise and exalt him for ever.

Gilly Maude

Who's Who

VICAR

The Rev'd Canon Paul Scott 01665 603078
St Michael's Vicarage, Howling Lane,
Alnwick, NE66 1DH
E-mail: paulscott1957@btintemet.com

CURATE

The Rev'd Gerard Rundell 07394792277
10 Allerburn Lea, Alnwick, NE66 2NJ
E-mail: rev.g.rundell@gmail.com

The Vicar's day off is Friday and Gerard's day off is Monday. They would be glad to be spared all but the most urgent matters on these days.

CLERGY WITH PERMISSION TO OFFICIATE

The Rev'd Canon Sue Allen 01665 605361
The Rev'd Gilly Maude 01665 603460
The Rev'd Colin Perkins 01665 510445
The Rev'd Martin Roff 01665 602207
The Rev'd Natasha Schemanoff 01665 603815
The Rev'd Jane Scott 01665 603078
The Rev'd Martin Turner 01665 603815
The Rev'd Canon Dennis Winter 01665 602658

READERS

John Cooke 01665 830419
Annette Playle 01665 606902

READER EMERITUS

Bill Callaghan 01665 602348

BAPTISMS and WEDDINGS

Currently not available
until further notice

CHURCHWARDENS

Anne Blades 01665 602020
Pat Taylor 01665 603811

CHURCHWARDEN EMERITUS

Albert Brown 01665 602700

ASSISTANT CHURCHWARDEN

Pat Tweed 01665 479280

PCC TREASURER

Richard Dale 01665 606804

PCC SECRETARY

Rosie Buxton 01665 604830

ELECTORAL ROLL OFFICER

Susan Trafford 01665 606180

ORGANIST AND CHOIRMASTER

Vacant

THE PARISH OFFICE 01665 602797

The Office is not currently staffed and so urgent calls should be addressed to the Vicarage. E-mail
stmichaelandstpaul@btconnect.com

MOTHERS' UNION

Meets in church at 2 00 pm on the second Wednesday of each month from March to December (in normal times).

Branch Leader

Val Hawker 01665 602348
(Mobile) 07732431056

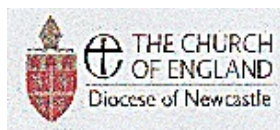
COMMUNION

for the SICK and HOUSEBOUND
can be arranged by contacting The Vicar
01665 603078 or
Pat Taylor 01665 603811

For more information on St Michael's Church,
please visit our website at www.alnwickanglican.com

To hire the PARISH HALL

Phone Mariana on 07424 272903 or E-mail bookstmichael@gmail.com



Staying connected during this pandemic

At the Cathedral

<https://www.newcastle.anglican.org/coronavirus/live.streaming>

Newcastle Cathedral ministry team

<https://www.facebook.com/NewcastleCathedral>. Facebook live stream of morning prayer led from home by one of the ministry team daily Monday to Friday at 8.30 am <https://tinyurl.com/NclCathedral>

Subscribe to their channel on YouTube for notifications of the Daily Reflections (also Monday to Friday).

At St Michael's Alnwick

The Church is now open for private prayer from 9 am to 4 pm. Entry through the Duke's Door.

On Sundays at 10am, we are able to worship in person in church. On Wednesdays there is a celebration of the Eucharist at 10.15 am.

Do join us if you feel comfortable, as we once again gather together in the flesh! The services will of course still be live-streamed for all those joining us from home.

Following the Sunday service, at 10:45am, we will enjoy a virtual get together over coffee, via Zoom. If you would like to join us for this, please email Andrew Duff on duffandrew@btinternet.com for the meeting ID, password, or for any questions about using Zoom.

In addition to this, we also have some groups meeting for fellowship and to pray Compline together on weekday evenings via Zoom – if you would like to know more about these or join in, please contact our Curate, the Rev'd Gerard Rundell (rev.g.rundell@gmail.com).

Copies of **The Gateway** can be obtained from St Michael's Church or ordered for delivery in this version or **large print**

Phone The Parish Office 602797 leave a message or E-mail stmichaelandstpaul@btconnect.com

The views expressed by contributors are not necessarily those of the Church of England nor of the editorial committee

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