

Gateway

December 2021 – January 2022



St Michael's, Alnwick

The magazine for the people of the Church and the Town



WEEKLY WORSHIP

SUNDAYS AT ST. MICHAEL'S

8.30am HOLY COMMUNION (Said)

A quiet celebration of Holy Communion with a sermon. Using Common Worship except for the third Sunday of the month when the Book of Common prayer is used.

10.00am THE PARISH COMMUNION

Usually sung with hymns and a sermon and using Common Worship. The main service of the day followed by tea/coffee and the chance to meet up with others. On the first Sunday of the month the worship will be more informal, using a variety of resources and 'thinking outside the box'.

This service will be live-streamed on YouTube each week.

4.00pm 'SUNDAY PLUS'

Monthly. An informal time of worship and reflection with a particular theme each month. Usually available to watch live on Zoom.

6.00pm EVENING WORSHIP

On the first Sunday of the month a traditional Sung Evensong according to the Book of Common Prayer with sermon.

On other Sundays a variety of worship including Compline and worship in the style of the Iona Community.

WEDNESDAYS ST. MICHAEL'S

10.15am HOLY COMMUNION

A said service followed by tea/coffee and the opportunity for fellowship. Once a month, in term time, we are joined by a class from St. Michael's Church of England Primary School and once a term the service takes place in the school.

DENWICK CHAPEL

A small chapel-of-ease built by the Duke of Northumberland in 1872. Usually a service of matins or Holy Communion once a month. Following the pandemic the provision of services is under review.

From the Vicar

St Michael's Vicarage
Alnwick

Dear People of Alnwick,

Having a two-month edition of 'Gateway' for December and January means that it covers so much activity in church and in the wider world.

In the church calendar Advent, Christmas, Epiphany and the Baptism of Christ will all take place before our next edition is published.

In the secular world, commercialism (even if lots of it is 'online') will witness millions of pounds being spent, people will travel to be with family, and New Year celebrations are expected to be much greater than those of 2021 – always supposing the Covid-19 conditions allow.

As the Church marks the life-changing effects the birth of Christ had on the whole of humanity, the 'world' largely celebrates in a way that, seemingly, takes little notice of God's gift of love.

We can react in one of two ways to this fact. Either, we can moan and complain that people have 'taken the Christ out of Christmas' or, we can continue to do the same thing Christ himself embodied when he walked this earth: love with all our hearts.

It is that gift of God's great love, demonstrated most fully in the coming of Christ at Christmas, which we must allow into our hearts, lives and actions and which can continue to help others think (even if only for the most fleeting of moments) what it is that compels us to follow the baby in the manger from Bethlehem to the cross and resurrection – events which changed the world for ever.

As Jane and I prepare to leave Alnwick in the New Year my hope is that you will continue to demonstrate God's love in Christ in all the ways you have done in recent years: faithful in worship; caring for one another; supporting those in need whether locally, nationally or internationally; being accepting of others' points of view and extending welcome to all who find themselves crossing the threshold of St Michael's.

Along with a greater care for one another, it is in this latter ministry which I feel we have made real progress – and which we might dare to hope would

Continued on page 5

Principal Sunday Readings

Sunday	Holy Communion	Evensong
5th December 2nd of Advent	Malachi 3.1-4 Philippians 3.1-11 Luke 3.1-6	Isaiah 40.1-11 Luke 1.1-25
12th 3rd of Advent	Zephaniah 3.14-end Philippians 4.4-7 Luke 3.7-18	Isaiah 35 Luke 1.57-end
19th 4th of Advent	Micah 5.2-5a Hebrews 10.5-10 Luke 1.39-55	Isaiah 10.33-11.10 Matthew 1.18-end
26th Christmas 1	1 Samuel 2.18-20,26 Colossians 3.12-17 Luke 2.41-end	Isaiah 61 Galatians 3.27-4.7
2nd January Christmas 2	Jeremiah 31.7-14 Ephesians 1.3-14 John 1.10-18	1 Samuel 1.20-end 1 John 4.7-16
9th Baptism of Christ	Isaiah 43. 1-7 Acts 8.14-17 Luke 3.15-17, 21-22	Isaiah 55.1-11 Romans 6.1-11
16th Epiphany 2	Isaiah 62.1-5 1 Corinthians 12.1-11 John 2.1-11	1 Samuel 3.1-20 Ephesians 4.1-16
23rd Epiphany 3	Nehemiah 8.1-3,5-6,8-10 1 Corinthians 12.12-31a Luke 4.14-21	Numbers 9.15-end 1 Corinthians 7.17-24
30th Epiphany 4	Ezekiel 43.27-44.4 1 Corinthians 13 Luke 2.22-40	1 Chronicles 29.6-19 Acts 7.44-50

warm the heart of God as much as it warms the hearts of those who receive that welcome.

After almost ten years as your Vicar it will not surprise you that I want to include some words from a hymn! As Christmas draws near we will inevitably sing ‘O come to my heart Lord Jesus, there is room in my heart for thee.’ From serving you over the last decade I also know that there is more than enough room in your hearts for the love of God to be active in all that you might be called to do in the months and years ahead.

With every blessing,

Paul

From the Registers

Baptisms

24.10.21	Leona Wass-Towler
31.10.21	Henry Thomas Charles Warburton

Funerals

20.10.21	Dorothy Hannah Thompson
2 .11.21	Victor George Robinson

Climate Change

THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL Panel on Climate Change Report, October 2018, made it plain that we must cut our carbon emissions in the next ten years to stay below 1.5 degrees centigrade global warming and so prevent devastating climate destruction.

While this is sobering news there is something we can all do, the average UK citizen currently generates an average of 12 tonnes of carbon emissions per year. If everybody reading this shaves off 1 tonne per year and encourages their family and friends to do the same we are well on the way to halving our emissions in the next ten years.....

Lets begin this Christmastide

Contributed by Annette Playle

Thought for the Month

“**M**MORALITY” BY Jonathan Sacks was recently read by members of St Michael's Book Group and I think that perhaps some of its insights, and thoughts that were engendered, might be of interest to a wider church membership and, hopefully, wider still.

Questions immediately arise as to where notions of right and wrong derive from in the individual mind and in wider society. A superficial and simplistic answer might be “Oh, it's just what your parents and schoolteachers and perhaps church teaching instil into you”. That immediately begs the question as to where they get it from and just pushes the matter further back.

It appears that all societies have a moral code, backed up by law to a greater or less extent, though differing slightly in different societies, as to how we should behave towards each other. The Golden Rule “Do as you would be done by” springs to mind.

I think that in essence the answers to the above question fall into two broad areas: Either the existence of a moral sense is an evolutionary development and its justification is no more than “It's just what most people think”, or morality and ethics have a universal and timeless quality, which implies a religious background. I recall that it was fashionable at one time to put forward the notion of “Situation Ethics”, where you do not lay down hard and fast rules, but do what seems right, or least bad, in particular situations. Again, this just pushes back the question “where do we get our ideas from?”

Matters of expediency and conscience arise. On expediency, often people seem to behave as if the guiding principle is “disregard any ethical or legal requirement if it seems you can get away with it.” Evidence is the large prison population, or to quote simple everyday examples, the apparent willingness of many motorists to wilfully, rather than inadvertently, flout speed limits, and the perceived widespread need for cctv cameras. Some would say that with the decline of religious belief and attendance at worship, lawlessness increases. Religious adherents would agree that none of us manage to keep the commandments very well, certainly the first one “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and mind and soul and strength”. Put simply, we are all sinners, and every Christian act of worship includes a confession.

On conscience, the question of “ought-ness” is prevalent in society, even if people may choose to disregard it. The legal system has, necessarily, the

idea of retribution, but not revenge, as a major component. Those who commit horrendous crimes deserve, we think, to be locked up, and this view is universally held. How dare we lock them up, as deterrent to others or to protect society or to reform them unless they deserve it.

My view is that notions of right and wrong and ought-ness are revealed to mankind by Almighty God and are universal in nature. However, revelation is continuous and progressive and understandings may vary. After all, laws are changed as understanding develops. As Christians, we believe that the supreme revelation of God to us is in Jesus Christ, but supplementary insights are granted to us as well.

In the words of one of the collects ; Almighty God, grant that we may both perceive and know what things we ought to do, and also may have grace and power faithfully to fulfil the same, through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Martin Roff

Anagrams of Seasonal Plants

THINCHAY	SLOTEMITE
LYLOH	YIV
MASTRISCH OSER	SUCCOR
MANCYCLE	WONSPROD
EFRITTER-	NEWRIT SAPIENS
SILLYAMAR	TOTIEPAINS

Answers on Page 17

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

A SERIES on the Commandments but in the reverse order.

THE SECOND COMMANDMENT

You shall not make any graven image— to worship it.

The Second Commandment deals with the Manner of our worship. How we must worship God.

It says, “Thou shalt not make to thyself any graven image, nor the likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or in the earth beneath or in the water under the earth. Thou shalt not bow down to them nor worship them”.

Now it is all too possible to be wrong in the way we worship.

In the days when the Commandments were given the usual way to worship God was to make an idol. If you were poor you made your idol out of wood or out of a piece of stone roughly shaped. If you were well off you got a gold-smith or a silversmith to make it for you. And you put your idol in your temple, or in your home. If you were simple, you thought your idol really was your god, with power to make the crops grow or power to make you lucky in love. If you were a bit more sophisticated you perhaps realised that the idol was only stone or wood or metal and only represented your god. Perhaps you sacrificed to your idol

by pouring out wine on the ground, or by burning meat or incense in front of it. Or even by human sacrifice.

In the story of Elijah and the prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel we read how the prophets of Baal “cried aloud, and danced around their altar, and cut themselves with swords and lances until the blood gushed out, and as midday passed they raved on until the time of the evening sacrifice, but there was no voice: no one answered, no one heeded”.

But we don't go in for idols. We don't have statues of God, or even statues of Jesus or the saints in our church. We only have one crucifix in our church (by the pulpit to remind us that we preach Christ crucified). We do have pictures of Jesus in the East Window and elsewhere and several crosses, but we don't worship them, or treat them as idols.

Some people have lucky charms on bracelets, or lucky Cornish Piskies or other things which are supposed to bring them luck. These are silly but I don't suppose anyone worships them,

No: the worship we offer to God must not be limited by any idea of God as he might be represented by statues or pictures. This Commandment is really to stop us

limiting our idea of God. Because the essential things about God cannot possibly be pictured. You cannot make a statue of love, or mercy, or compassion. And if you could, it would fail to show God's majesty and awesomeness and wrath against sin. A picture of God as Creator and King of the universe would fail to show him as Father and lover and Saviour.

Jesus gave us the answer when he said, "God is Spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth". He is spirit, not matter. He is active energy, active will, active mind; but free from the limitations of time and space. We cannot describe him in a picture or a statue, and if we try we only end up with something unhelpful so that some people picture God as an old man with a long white beard seated on a cloud. And even our much better idea of the appearance of Jesus is not very helpful, because it tells only of Jesus the Man, and not the Son of God.

Our worship of God must be in spirit, and in truth.

IN SPIRIT means two things. First it means that we must worship God with our spirits – the highest part of our natures. We may obey our taskmasters with our bodies, or our teachers with our minds, but we worship God with our spirits, which includes the whole of us; body and mind as well. You can see the

distinction, I think, if you think about unwilling service. People may go about their jobs unwillingly because they don't enjoy them and may even resist them. They may use their minds grudgingly over something with which they disagree. But when we do some thing with our spirits we do it willingly, we do it well, and we do it meaningfully. And that is how we are to worship God. Not just by our bodily actions, our reluctant presence at church. And not just with our minds, reading the prayers and hymns no doubt beautifully, but only as an intellectual or aesthetic exercise. We are to worship with our spirits, to give our full attention to God.

And here we all are equal, because although we have differing capabilities of body and mind, we all have, or can have, a well-furnished spirit. Some of us are stronger physically than others, some of us are more beautiful physically, some of us are more clever mentally than others. But we can all be spiritual giants.

We need no physical or mental ability to be able to worship God.

So that is the first meaning of worshipping God in spirit: worshipping him with our full capabilities.

The second meaning of worshipping in spirit has to do with the spirit of the law, not the letter of

the law. We are not to worship God just according to a set of rules.

In Jesus' earthly lifetime, the Pharisees did just that, They reduced worship of God to a complicated set of rules. Do all these things and God will accept you, they thought. But if we try to worship God by rule we shall be terribly frustrated.

You may make it a rule to come to church twice a Sunday, to pray every morning and evening at home, to read the bible, to give regular alms of your money, and so on. But there are times when you cannot do these things, or you miss out and you feel guilty. Or you multiply your rules in the hope that God will be especially pleased with you. Or you get discouraged and give up entirely. What an awful state to get into, if we think that worshipping God consists of lots of rules.

No; we are to worship in spirit, not by lots of legalistic rules. Not strict observance of a code, but by expressing a self-dedication to God which fills life, not restricts life. It means we come to church because we want to, not because we have to. It means we do good to people because we love them, not because we have a rule about doing good.

That is the second meaning of worshipping in spirit: the opposite of worshipping by lots of rules.

And our worship must be in truth.

This also means two things.

First it means in sincerity. It means we worship truthfully, without hypocrisy or self-deception. We do not try to pretend to other people that we are better than we are and we do not try to pretend to ourselves that we are better than we are. It means being truthful with God. If we feel disappointed, or angry we are not afraid to tell God so. If we have doubts we are not afraid to have them and to ask God to give us assurance. If we are not in love and charity with all men, we do not pretend that there is nothing wrong. If we have offended someone, we apologise, but if we feel someone has offended us, we forgive him. And we allow God to change us as he reveals his will to us. We are truthful and sincere in our worship, knowing that however we may fool other people, we cannot fool God.

And the second meaning of worshipping God in truth means according to the truth about God. We worship the real God, not the false God that we erect instead.

There are many people who say they believe in God, yet the God they believe in is not very much like the God we find in the bible.

Their god only asks people to be decent law-abiding citizens, not doing any harm to anyone. Our God requires us to be perfect. Their god turns a blind eye to little sins, but our God is implacably opposed to any

sin. Their god came to earth to live a good life and to show ordinary people that god loves them. Our God came to earth to die because of our sin. Their god is a friendly Father Christmas who nevertheless sometimes blunders and allows innocent people to suffer. Our God is Saviour and King and Sovereign of the Universe.

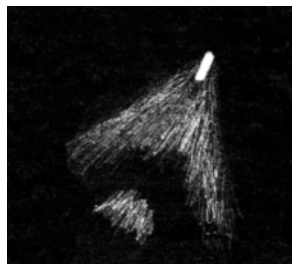
And when we worship God we must worship him in truth – as he is. Not as our inadequate picture of him may tell us.

“You must not make idols for your worship” says the second commandment. “God is spirit,” says Jesus, “and those who worship him must worship in spirit and in truth.”

Colin Perkins

A Mysterious Light

Last month I reported on a very strange apparition I witnessed one evening in September. Well it seems it was something to do with the launch of a Landsat satellite from the Kennedy Space Centre in Florida some two hours earlier. From what I can glean, I was seeing a discharge of vapour from the upper stage of the launch vehicle which had condensed to form droplets which presumably were being illuminated by sunlight. Landsat satellites are launched into low altitude orbits orientated north south. This enables them to map the whole of the Earth's surface as the Earth rotates below them. This would be consistent with what I saw. Far from floating somewhere just above Alnwick as I imagined it was actually in orbit high above the Earth's atmosphere. And its steady northward motion would be just what would be expected. Low Earth orbits have a period of roughly 90 minutes so this thing had already gone around the Earth once already. It is still not clear to me what the more solid light at the top was. I do not think it was the launch vehicle itself as it would have been too far to be resolved. Even the International Space Station looks just like a point of light, all-be-it a very bright one.



Stanley Trafford

Safeguarding

Hello!

I am Patty Everitt the Parish Safeguarding Officer (PSO) stepping into the shoes of the multi-talented Alan Craig.

The purpose of safeguarding

The purpose of safeguarding is to help churches create a safe place for everyone whether we meet them in church buildings or outside; to keep the vulnerable safe. It is worth remembering that we all, at one time or another, may be vulnerable perhaps through illness, bereavement or difficult circumstances.

When we pay attention to what we say, and how we act toward others, we can create a safe place where everyone can feel: they belong rather than being marginalised; confident to contribute, not fearful of being exploited; respected not manipulated. Safeguarding is one important element of achieving this safe place.

The role of Parish Safeguarding Officer (PSO)

The PSO helps the church know how to act in ways that promote safety for all. This means making sure that we have safeguarding policies and procedures and



monitoring how we use and act on them.

Part of the role is encouraging volunteers to undertake safeguarding training and I will be arranging some training. I know you will be excited about this!

If you are a volunteer, you have probably already completed a “self-disclosure” form or even a DBS check.

The PSO receives and logs suspicions or allegations of abuse or safeguarding issues. Those of you who are or have been teachers, health workers or Youth workers will be very familiar with this process.

The PSO also reports annually on safeguarding matters to the PCC so that the church leadership knows what is happening and what to do next.

Getting up to speed as PSO

The Diocese provides some very good training for church leaders including Parish Safeguarding Officers and volunteers. Let me know if you are interested.

There is also a wealth of information to help Parishes on the Newcastle Diocese website, <https://www.newcastle.anglican.org/safeguarding/>.

Fortunately for me there are some excellent documents to help me get into the role of PSO (sounds a bit like “method acting”, doesn’t

it?): The Parish Audit Checklist and the Model Parish Safeguarding Checklist.

In Conclusion

Safeguarding is about a way of being that is safe for all. Our Parish safeguarding policies, procedures and training are there to make sure we protect the vulnerable whatever their age or circumstances.

If you would like to learn more about parish safeguarding or would be interested in attending any of the training I will be offering, then please do let me know!

Patti Everitt



The Winter Market was held in Church for the first time, and made £2,455.76 for Church funds. Many thanks to all who contributed.

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

I HAVE BEEN working my way through the Ten Commandments in the reverse order and as this edition of Gateway covers two months I can finish with the First Commandment: **“I am the Lord your God; you shall have no other gods but me.”**

This commandment could be subtitled: PUTTING GOD FIRST, and Jesus called it the greatest Commandment.

How do we know God’s holy will and commandments? We know them from his Word to us, the bible, in which the law is set out. Some of the details of the law are no longer relevant.

The ceremonial laws are gone; we are not Jews. But the moral law remains because it states certain unalterable facets of God’s nature which affect the relationship of God with us.

The Ten Commandments set out clearly and concisely God’s moral law. The first five deal with our duty to God and the last five deal with our duty to our neighbour.

The First commandment tells us the Object of our worship, reminds us of the Alternatives of our worship, and leads us to the Obedience of our worship.

First, the Object of our worship.

And the Object of our worship is of course God. This may seem to be obvious. We are here to worship God. Members of the congregation are called “worshippers”. But what does Worship mean? It means, to ascribe worth. Worship is our attitude to what we value most highly. This commandment teaches us that we must get our sense of values right. The right object of our worship is God. Because God is who he is.

He is the Creator of all things. The one who made the universe, creating the stars and the planets and the plants and the animals and the people. He is the One who keeps it all in existence.

When we get a glimpse of the glory of God, like Isaiah we can only fall to our knees and worship him. And when we add to our understanding of the majesty and power of God, our knowledge of him as our Redeemer, Lover, Friend and companion, as revealed in Jesus, then our fearful worship is transformed by a growing love and the wonder that the Creator of the universe is our Father too.

God is the one of greatest worth – he is of infinite worth, and if we do not worship him we are not only breaking the commandment: we are being ignorantly short-sighted.

Secondly, the Alternatives of our worship.

“You shall have no other gods but me”. No other gods – does this mean that there *are* other gods?

Well, of course, we are monotheists. We believe that there is only one God. The ancient peoples believed in a whole pantheon of gods: a god for harvest and a god for war. A god for fertility and a god for art. We know the names of some of these - Baal, Marduck, Dagon, in the bible; Aton and Osiris in Egypt, Venus, Zeus, Jupiter, Diana, Apollo in Rome and Greece. Are these real?

No, of course they are not real. They have no existence outside the minds of their deluded worshippers but they do have power. They have the power that people give them.

Suppose you are superstitious and believe that it is unlucky to walk under a ladder. If you should do so by accident you might be worried all day. You might even be so worried that you became ill. The superstition would have had the power you gave it. Compare the cult of Voodoo. A Haitian native who believes that the witch-doctor has put a spell on him will very likely be ill or die. Because the spell is given power by the native’s belief. This is why I am so much against horoscopes, fortune telling and so on. Because people will give such things power by their credence, and they become false

gods to them, but false gods with power.

But the false gods of today in this country are more subtle than crude superstition. What do you put most value in? What is worth most to you Your health? Very important. Your security? Your status? Your skill? Your family? Your beauty? Your house and garden? Your hobby?

I expect we have all met people who live for horse riding, or fishing, or music, or tennis, or mountaineering. Or there may be things which we are not so passionate about. Today there is a lot of apathy. Many people are not very keen on anything, so that there may be no grand passion for anything: just a dull apathetic reliance on TV or drink, or on doing nothing with the time and abilities they have. Or they may make their mark on society by giving vent to their frustrations by smashing things up or terrorising supporters of the wrong football team. And is not the simple laziness of staying in bed too long responsible for many people being unable to pray, or to attend church?

There are plenty of things which come between us and God, and each of these is condemned as a false god. Anything however desirable in itself, is bad if it comes between us and God and stops us worshipping the one true God – the one real object of our worship.

What is the most important thing in your life?

Finally, the Obedience of our worship.

How can we possibly keep this commandment? How can we put God first in every department of our lives? For everyone except Jesus it is impossible. But there are ways we can receive help to be obedient. God has given us these ways and they are sometimes called Means of Grace.

The Means of Grace are channels of communication between God and us which allow his power to reach us.

No one can afford to neglect any of them, since they are gifts of God.

The first is prayer. It may seem unlikely, when we think of God as Creator and King of the Universe, that he would be willing to listen to our feeble words, but God is our Father too, and wishes us to approach him as a child to his father. Don't neglect this tremendous privilege.

It doesn't matter very much how we pray, so long as we do. It doesn't matter much what we say, so long as we say something. We learn through prayer as a child learns through talking to his father and mother. Soon what we say begins to make more sense, but if we never start, we never learn to talk to God. Pray without ceasing. Don't cease without praying!

The second is bible-reading. We have this great advantage over people of earlier days – we can read. Bibles are cheap and plentiful. You can read the Word of God in the time-honoured prose of the Authorised Version, or in one of the many new translations. The bible is God's word to you and me and we are mad if we neglect to read it.

The third is public worship. i.e. coming to church. At church we learn to worship God. You can do this in your garden at home or anywhere, but at church everything should be designed to help: the building itself, the ornaments, the singing, the prayers, the readings, the sermon, all should combine to make an act of worship. Concentrate on God and you will get all the rest. Concentrate only on, say, the singing, and you will miss God. We are here to worship God. Think about him and praise him in your heart.

The fourth means of grace is the Holy Communion. This is a special form of worship which becomes more important to us as the years go by.

If you are not a communicant, you are missing a great deal which God is waiting to give you.

The fifth is called Fellowship.

This is really friendship, or you could say that fellowship is a meeting with friends where God is the host.

A meeting with friends is a social gathering, but when everyone knows God is present and acknowledges him, it becomes a fellowship. We find fellowship in church, in the smaller meetings, like MU and so on, and in smaller groups of Christians. In fellowship we encourage one another, share things together,

indeed, we share Christ together. Don't neglect the gift of Fellowship.

And so we resolve to put God first in everything. If we do, everything else falls into place. But if we don't, then even the good things of life fail to satisfy.

Colin Perkins

Answers to Anagrams of Seasonal Plants

Winter Pansies	Poinsettia				
Amaryllis	Mistletoe	Ivy	Crocus	Snowdrop	
Hyacinth	Holly	Christmas Rose	Cyclamen	Fir Tree	

St Michael's Churchyard Project

To become more welcoming for wildlife and people.

The first stage was to make our churchyard safer by protecting the drop behind the church on the north side. This drop is several metres deep, and was guarded only by a small wall, low enough in places for an unwary person to step over. No more!

We were delighted to welcome a group of 10 young volunteers, with their leaders, from Community@NE66. They spent a morning during Half Term. planting a double row of about 100 hedge saplings – hawthorn, dogwood and holly - above the drop. This should provide a pleasant barrier to keep visitors safe, and be welcoming to wildlife as well.

By the time you read this the volunteers should, weather permitting, have been back to plant several hundred wildflower bulbs. These will provide a colourful display of snowdrops, wild daffodils, aconites and English bluebells in the flat area above the slope. In time these should provide food for birds and insects, and contribute to the diversity of wildlife in our area.

Thanks to everyone who contributed towards the cost, and by lending tools.

Watch this space for future plans.

For more information please contact Sue Allen (details on page 23).

A funny sort of wish list!

I have never bothered with what I have heard called a wish list – maybe I have been too blessed to ever need one of these, but recently my life (like that of many) has changed a bit.

Mostly, my list contains little things and maybe I am just forgetting that I am not a spring chicken any more!

Here goes then.

I can still go to the beach, but now cannot walk barefoot on the sand or plodge.

Why not?

Have to wear support knee-socks all day every day.

Good for my circulation, they tell me

BUT

Bad for my spiritual and mental well-being!

I still have a piano, having played since the mid 1940s when I was taught to read music. With the passage of time, however, my eyesight is now somewhat diminished so I can't read the music anymore.

BUT

Still – I can sing and listen to music so not all bad then.

I love my garden very much, including its non-human inhabitants. I like to try to grow all sorts of thing but now I wish I could control them better. One day in the summer, a little lad was walking past and I heard him say 'Dad, that garden looks like a jungle'. Being how I am, I just had to tell him that I was glad, because that was how it was supposed to look!

Ah, well – as folks who walk past will know, there are blessings aplenty in the undergrowth: the shy, the timid and the unusual all find shelter and sustenance.

My wish here is that I can keep them safe and healthy, and not worry too much about the weeds.

Oh, by the way – if you are a hedgehog and reading this, please DON'T drag your dish into your den – leave it just outside the doorway so I can refill it.

Are you familiar with Lady Jane's song in the G & S opera 'Patience'? If not, have a listen sometime – the words may apply to many of us, and certainly to me.

One line says 'little will be left of me, in the coming by and by'
another says 'there will be too much of me in the coming by and by'
Both of these are in my 'wish list'. I have to learn to accept the inevitable

BUT

Try to change what I can, and like the old words say
Have the wisdom to know the difference

Joan Dunn

Christmas Greetings

with all Good Wishes for Christmas and the New Year from the

Editorial Team and

Paul and Jane Scott

Colin and Pennie Perkins,

Stanley and Susan Trafford

Richard and Frances Allsop

Alan and Marjorie Craig

David Archer

and our Wardens, Pat Taylor and Anne Blades
who wish to thank everyone for their co-operation



Christians Together Coffee Mornings

at

St. James's Church Centre

Pottergate, Alnwick, NE66 1JW

We warmly welcome you to join us for coffee, a chat and
'Thought for the day' between 10.00 and 11.30am
on the following dates

6th December

7th February

1st March

9th May

10th January 2022

21st February

4th April

23rd May

24th January

7th March

25th April

Children Welcome

Climate change and Earth

I'VE BEEN thinking recently about climate changes and wondering what we can do that we don't already.

For many years, since the 1970s, I have tried to live in a way that was friendly to the environment by using low-energy (or no energy) means to light and heat my home. I, like many, was probably unaware of how badly we would all be affected by our lifestyles altering world ecosystems. Now it is almost too late – but we all have to try. I wonder whether there is though, something that may help – not just me, but others too. I've found some prayer/songs that might make us more aware.

One is an extract from an old booklet I have by John Oxenham. In it, he talks about the Sacrament of fire: The English is a bit old-fashioned, but some of these thoughts still seem appropriate – perhaps we should consider more carefully before we use earth's resources.

Kneel always when you light a fire! Kneel reverently, and thankful be for God's unfailing charity.

And on the ascending flame inspire a little prayer, that shall upbear the incense of your thankfulness for this sweet grace of

warmth and light! For here again is sacrifice for your delight.

Within the wood that lived a joyous life through sunny days and rainy days and winter storms and strife;

Within the peat that drank the moorland sweet of bracken, whin and sweet bell-heather, and all the joy of gold gorse-feather, flaming Like love in wintriest weather, while snug below, in sun and snow, peat heard the beating of the padding feet of foal and dam, and ewe and lamb, and the stamp of old bell-wether

Within the coal where forests be entombed. Oak, elm and chestnut, beech and red pine-bole, -

God shrined His sunshine and enwombed for you these stores of light and heat, your life-joys to complete.

These all have died that you might live; yours now the high prerogative to loose their long captivities – to give them new sweet span of life and fresh activities.

It ends by saying, again

Kneel always when you light a fire; kneel reverently, and grateful be to God for his unfailing charity!

Old words, I know but still – do we really consider the implications of keeping warm and cozy?

Another, more recent prayer/poem was written by Sister Miriam Therese Winter.

I found it in a book called 'A Time to Pray.

It was written as a poem but I've taken out some of the line breaks, so it reads more like a piece of prose

Creator of Earth and of all earth's children, Creator of soil and sea and sky and the tapestries of stars.

We turn to you for guidance as we look on our mutilated planet, and pray it is not too late for us to rescue our wounded world.

We have been so careless. We have failed to nurture the fragile life you entrusted to our keeping.

We beg you for forgiveness and we ask you to begin again.

*Be with us in our commitment to earth Let all the world say. **Amen***

Joan Dunn

Smile

THE BIG ISSUE was born out of a desire to do something positive in response to the growing number of men and women sleeping rough on the streets in London in the early nineties. It has since grown to be the world's most widely circulated street newspaper, selling across four continents. By giving those individuals who find themselves on the wrong side of social injustice, an opportunity to earn a legitimate wage, it can and does, time and again open the door to a different life and one which vendors might otherwise have had no access to. (Unexpected illness leading to job loss, broken relationships or the need to escape an abusive situation are some of the circumstances which may lead to a person becoming homeless).

A Big Issue seller receives training and an identification badge, they must sign a code of conduct and are then allocated a particular pitch from where to sell their magazines. A vendor will pay £1.50 for each magazine and sell it on for £3. (The Big Issue website reminds us that the seller is 'working not begging therefore it is vitally important that buyers take their copy of the magazine when they pay for it'). On the back page of each issue someone who has been working for a while, will tell a little of his or her story, their interests and hopes for the future. Clive has been selling the Big Issue in Plymouth for 14 years. This year, at the age of 58 he passed his GCSEs and hopes eventually to go to university to study creative arts. He says 'I can't

believe I've done it. It is such a massive step for me. Normally, my life gets better in little stages and little steps at a time. But this is a massive leap for me, I feel like I've been to Eton or something. I never expected to do it'.

Their daily relationship with the public is so important to the vendors, the short chats, enquiries after their health or changing circumstances. This all stopped for a while last year when the pandemic struck but now thankfully they are able to return to their jobs. Pamela Clark sells her magazine in Brighton. On learning that she was able to go back to work she said 'So many people have asked me when I am coming back to work, you wouldn't believe it. I got all tingly when I was told! I can't wait to see everyone...'.

As so often happens when good things take root, other positives follow. In 1995 The Big Issue Foundation was established, a registered charity which aims to tackle the type of problems which lead to homelessness in the first place. By working individually with vendors, The Big Issue's front line workers, known as Service Brokers, identify an individual's needs and are able to put them in touch with the services and experts who can help them. Supports falls into nine different categories including housing, finance, health, well-being and education. In addition, a vendor Support Fund is available to help those working towards a particular aspiration which may require financing. The vendor saves and contributes to the cost. An item saved for may be as small as a fare for public transport to attend a housing appointment or as challenging as saving £200 for a set of tools to start work as a plumber.

It hardly needs to be said that the last 18 months must have been particularly difficult for Big Issue sellers but the generosity of those who financially support the Foundation (including famous names such as Ian McKellen, Sanjeev Bhaskar, Chris Packham and Joe Wicks) has meant that many who would otherwise have faced destitution have been able to wait with hope and finally get back to work.

And there is more!! In the midst of such a frightening and difficult time for everyone, in October '20 'The Big Exchange' was launched'. Co-founded by The Big Issue and 13 asset management partners its mission is to 'build a new financial system in the UK', to bring about a greater understanding of the power that money has to create a fairer world and to meet some of the huge challenges of the current age. Good news indeed.

(For more information, please go to www.bigissue.com and <https://bigexchange>)

Sue Wiltshire

Who's Who

VICAR

The Rev'd Canon Paul Scott 01665 603078

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*The Vicar's day off is Friday and he would
be glad to be spared all but the most
urgent matters on that day.*

CLERGY WITH PERMISSION TO OFFICIATE

The Rev'd Canon Sue Allen 01665 605361

The Rev'd Canon Dr Philip Bourne
01665 574008

The Rev'd Robert Chavner 01665 574008

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
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The Rev'd Jane Scott 01665 603078

The Rev'd Martin Turner 01665 603815

The Rev'd Canon Dennis Winter
01665 602658

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Annette Playle 01665 606902

READER EMERITUS

Bill Callaghan 01665 602348

BAPTISMS and WEDDINGS

Please apply to the Vicar

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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

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Patty Everitt 07768 869 551

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COMMUNION

for the SICK and HOUSEBOUND

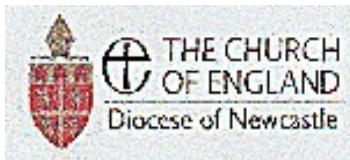
can be arranged by contacting The Vicar

01665 603078 or

Pat Taylor 01665 603811

To hire the PARISH HALL

Phone Mariana on 07562 418837 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 8.30 am, 10 am and 6 pm, we are able to worship in person in church. The 10 am Eucharist will still be live-streamed for all those joining us from home. 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!

Copies of **The Gateway** can be obtained from St Michael's Church or ordered for delivery in **small** 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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For more information on St Michael's Church
please visit our website at www.alnwickanglican.com