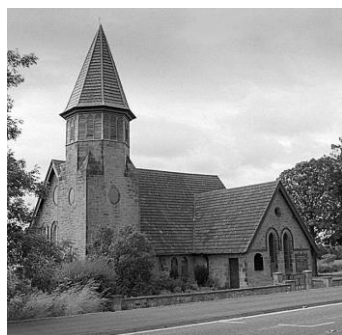


St George's, Widdrington & Great Bavington United Reformed Churches Newsletter



April 2020

Website: stgeorgesurcmorpeth.org

A letter from our Minister, Julian Sanders

Dear Friends,

At the time of writing, we are in the middle of the Coronavirus situations and most public events have been cancelled, the schools are closing and we are beginning to feel the effects of living in isolation. I find it interesting that in a society that supposedly is becoming more individualistic, when the opportunity to meet together as community is at threat, we start to recognise that we are indeed social beings.

We need each other, in all aspects of our lives, whether we like it or not, we are dependent on others. Being in community with each other is an essential part of our health and wholeness. We see this in the gospels when Jesus heals those who have been isolated from their communities. Legion, possessed by demons was driven into a solitary isolation and, as part of the healing, Jesus tells him to return to the community. When ten lepers are healed, they are told to go to the priests so that they may be accepted back into community. Living in isolation was part of their sickness. Restoration to their community was part of the healing.

As more and more of our population are facing up to the prospect of voluntarily isolating themselves, I am all too well aware that for many in our communities this is just the normal state of affairs. According to 'Statista', in the UK last year 2.3million people of retirement age live by themselves. After retirement, and the loss of daily work connections, the possibility for isolation and loneliness increases. The negative effects on health caused by isolation were not only recognised by Jesus in the gospels but also well documented by the medical profession today. 'Psychology Today' says that loneliness is just as lethal as smoking 15 cigarettes a day.

The government quite rightly hesitates to force people into isolation, knowing that in itself the effects on health may well be counterproductive. But it is quite clear that in the coming weeks, we may well face greater and greater isolation in our communities, especially of those who are the most vulnerable. There is more need than ever for us to look out for each other, and to look after each other. Keep an eye out for those you know who live alone and do what you can for them. We cannot retreat into isolation and hope this goes away, for isolation itself is a danger too.

In Philippians it says:

“Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others”

In this way we might well bring healing to those who are isolated, and they may find again the wholeness of being in community with others.

Look after yourselves, and if you feel isolated and alone, I encourage you to not hesitate in getting in contact with me, or an elder. We are in this together, and no one should feel alone.

With every blessing,

Julian

Devotions from the Elders Meeting of March 18th 2020

Loving God, we know that the weeks and months ahead will be very challenging for us all. Give us courage, compassion and resilience to cope with a situation that changes constantly and requires great vigilance. Keep us from unnecessary alarm and give us the hope that will dispel despondency.

Dear Lord, this evening we will consider how best to minister to our congregation in these testing times and we ask for your guidance. Help us to comfort those who will most keenly feel the lack of social interaction, the lonely, the sad, and the anxious - the most vulnerable.

Some of us here are amongst those advised to isolate ourselves and we too will feel rudderless without our normal activities that normally punctuate each week.

But, perhaps Lord you will lead us to see this time as an unexpected gift, giving us the opportunity to embrace a slower more thoughtful life. What better time to reassess our priorities and further our relationship with you, than during Lent.

We ask all these things in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen*

Morpeth and Mitford Churches Together Asylum Seekers Support Group

West End Refugee Service and Justice and Peace project

Both WERS and the Justice and Peace Project have needed to respond to the corona virus epidemic and have said they are going to need to cut back on the support they can offer as they have a duty of care to those who access their services, their supporters, volunteers and staff.

One significant change for supporters to be aware of is that they have both had to close their clothing stores. This means they can no longer accept donations of clothes and bedding. The garage in Morpeth where these are usually stored awaiting transportation is also full. So **please do not send any more donations of clothing and bedding until further notice.**

WERS

They are continuing to give an increased number of toiletries, sanitary products and other essential items to those in receipt of hardship payments. So they have asked for these donation to continue.

Financial donations can also be made. On line donations can be made via Virgin Money Giving which go directly to fund WERS project costs. Donations via Just Giving go directly into the WERS Hardship Fund. These donations can be gift aided. The simplest way to access them is via the WERS website, www.wers.org.uk.

Justice and Peace Refugee Project

The Justice and Peace Project has reported that they have noticed for some time that meat was the least popular item in their food bags so they trialed substituting chick peas for the meat. This has proved very popular, so they have asked that when making food donations tinned chick peas should be given in place of meat. Donations of tinned tomatoes, baked beans, plain rice, sugar, tinned fish, tea bags and biscuits are also still requested. If you cannot get these they will also like donations of coffee, salt, cooking oil, pasta, toothpaste and soap.

They say food and finance is desperately needed. Financial donations can be made by cheque to DH&N Destitute Asylum Fund. The address is Refugee Project, 2 Summerhill Grove, Newcastle NE4 6EE. Bank transfers can be made also to HSBC Sort code: 40-34-18 Account number 52854058.

Please, as you are able, remember to support the work of these two Projects whether by donations of money, food or toiletries.

Thank you for your continued support for the above work.

Margaret Brock (margaretdbrock@aol.com)

I have received an update from Margaret, below:

'It is with great sadness that following on from the message given to us by our prime minister tonight, we have been left with no alternative but to close the Justice and Peace Refugee project. This is not forever, just for the short period of time while we work to get rid of this awful virus. The project will not be open for donations to be dropped off until further notice.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for all of your continued help and support.

Without you all, this project, these vulnerable people, would not of been helped. You are all amazing!!!

In case I have missed someone off the email, please forward this email on.

I will be in touch very soon to update you when I know more.

Keep in touch, stay safe and take care,

Regards, Helen' **Helen Woodland. Project Worker, Justice & Peace Refugee Project, Diocese of Hexham & Newcastle**

Christian Aid

Usually at this time of year I would be looking for volunteers for the house to house Christian Aid Collection in May. Envelopes etc have been printed and have already arrived, but due to the corona virus epidemic there will not be the usual Christian Aid collection. The plant and book sales in the Market Square will also not take place.

Christian Aid is still working on what they can do and how they can ensure that monies continue to be raised to support some of the most vulnerable people in the world. As further information is available it will be shared.

Anyone who wishes to support Christian Aid can do so by going to the website www.christianaid.org.uk. Envelopes will also be available for anyone who would wish to have one nearer the time.

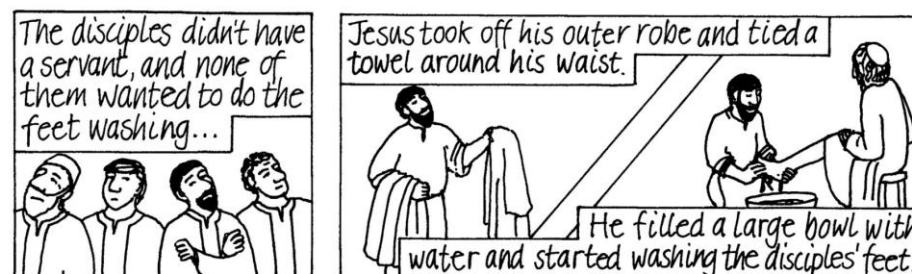
Thank you, **Margaret Brock**

Bible Bite

A short story from the Bible

It can be read in the Bible in
Luke 22:24, John 13:3-17

Jesus and his disciples were celebrating the Passover with the special meal. The disciples were bickering again.



Crossword for April

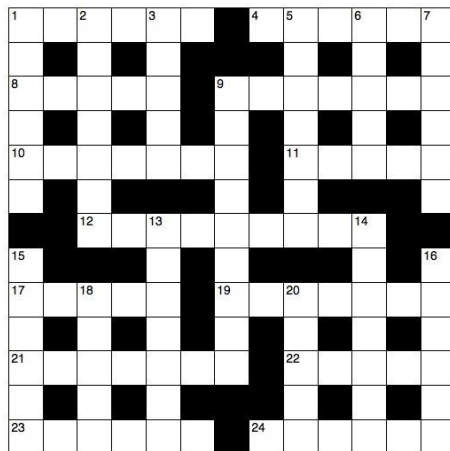
Across: 1 Relating to the whole universe (6) 4 The disciple who made the remark in 8 Across (John 20:24) (6) 8 'Unless I see the nail marks — — hands, I will not believe it' (John 20:25) (2,3) 9 He urged King Jehoiakim not to burn the scroll containing Jeremiah's message (Jeremiah 36:25) (7) 10 Baptist minister and controversial founder of America's Moral Majority, Jerry — (7)

11 'Look, here is — . Why shouldn't I be baptized?' (Acts 8:36) (5) 12 Repossessed (Genesis 14:16) (9) 17 Port from which Paul sailed on his last journey to Rome (Acts 27:3-4) (5) 19 'Moses was not aware that his face was — because he had spoken with the Lord' (Exodus 34:29) (7) 21 Roonwit, C.S. Lewis's half-man, half-horse (7) 22 Grill (Luke 24:42) (5) 23 'The lot fell to Matthias; so he was added to the — apostles' (Acts 1:26) (6) 24 'I was sick and you looked after me, I was in — and you came to visit me' (Matthew 25:36) (6).

Down: 1 Coastal rockfaces (Psalm 141:6) (6) 2 Academic (1 Corinthians 1:20) (7) 3 Publish (Daniel 6:26) (5) 5 For example, the Crusades (4,3) 6 11 Across is certainly this (5) 7 He reps (anag.) (6) 9 Liberator (Psalm 18:2) (9) 13 Man who asked the question in 11 Across was in charge of all her treasury (Acts 8:27) (7) 14 They must be 'worthy of respect, sincere, not indulging in much wine' (1 Timothy 3:8) (7) 15 The human mind or soul (6) 16 'O Lord, while precious children starve, the tools of war increase; their bread is — ' (Graham Kendrick) (6) 18 'We played the flute for you, and you did not — ' (Matthew 11:17) (5) 20 Bared (anag.) (5). *Solution on page 10*

Passionflower...

Why is the passionflower called the passionflower? This beautiful climbing plant that grows in many of our gardens, was discovered in South America by Spanish missionaries centuries ago. Drawings were sent back to Europe and in 1609 an Italian priest interpreted the flower to represent the crucifixion, otherwise known as the Passion. The five petals and five sepals represent the 10 disciples who remained steadfast (Judas and Peter both abandoned Jesus). The corona is the crown of thorns. The stigma is the cross or nails, and the five stamens are the number of wounds Jesus received.



Lunchtime Concerts

Wednesdays from 12.30 – 1.30pm

WINTER-SPRING SERIES

The April & May lunchtime concerts have been cancelled but hope that they can be staged later in the year. We hope that in September the concert with the Da Vinci Quartet will be able to go ahead.

Buy or Borrow Book & Jigsaw Library

Again, our grateful thanks to all those who continued to bring **paperback** books and jigsaws enabling us to refresh the shelves and update the library. There has been a big demand for this service in the last couple of months. Many thanks for the huge influx of jigsaws during the past month.

The library has continued to be a steady regular income for the Church so many thanks to those who have borrowed or bought. During the first 10- weeks of 2020 the library has raised £120 for the Church Funds. We hope to restart the library as soon as church activities recommence.

PLANT SALE Saturday 23rd May

The St George's Annual Plant Sale will soon be upon us again. Whilst we may not be able to hold this event in the usual way plants are currently being grown by Members and we hope to find some way to enable Members and Friends to purchase these and raise some monies for Church Funds.

Many Thanks **Gillian - Church Social Secretary**

The big surprise lurking in your Granny's chicken soup

Granny always knew her chicken soup was good for you when you were poorly, but she did not realise quite *how* good. Now research has found that the traditional hot broths used in many cultures to battle flu and fevers pack a bigger punch than even the cooks realised. A range of soups, ranging from vegetable to beef and chicken, were discovered to have the power to interrupt the life cycle of *Plasmodium falciparum*, which causes 99 per cent of deaths from malaria. Some of them were actually as effective as a leading antimalarial drug, dihydroartemisinin, in fighting malaria. No one particular ingredient was found to be common to the broths, but there certainly seems to be "evidence that they contain antibiotic properties", according to one doctor. The study was carried out at the Imperial College London and Great Ormond Street Hospital.

Wordsearch for April

Even as Jesus ate that last Passover meal with His disciples, He warned them He was about to be betrayed. He took the bread, blessed it, broke it and gave it to them; He took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them to drink. The Old Covenant, based on Law, was ticking away its final hours; the New Covenant, based on Christ's body and His blood, was about to be ushered in. Jesus prayed in Gethesame that this fearful cup might be removed from Him, but even more, that God's will might be done. And it was. From Easter onwards we can only approach God through His Son, Jesus Christ, not on our own merit.

Jesus Ate Last Passover Meal
Disciples Warned Betrayed
Bread Blessed

Wine Thanks Drink Covenant
Law Old New Body Blood
Gethsemane

Cup Removed Will Easter
Approach God

Solution on page 10

B	S	E	S	O	G	W	Y	E	G	S	H
N	O	E	H	E	E	E	L	P	T	U	E
P	D	R	D	N	T	H	A	N	K	S	M
B	R	E	A	I	H	S	A	O	L	E	B
O	H	T	V	W	S	N	A	A	A	J	W
D	C	S	T	O	E	C	E	L	D	C	A
Y	A	A	V	V	M	V	I	E	U	K	R
B	O	E	O	A	A	E	S	P	N	U	N
I	R	C	R	V	N	S	R	I	L	B	E
A	P	G	D	B	E	T	R	A	Y	E	D
D	P	W	I	L	L	D	W	T	O	O	S
M	A	B	B	L	O	O	D	E	G	S	A

Jesus loves me, this I know, though my hair is white as snow
Though my sight is growing dim, Still He bids me trust in him
Though my steps are oh, so slow, with my hand in His I'll go
On through life, let come what may, He'll be there to lead the way.
When the nights are dark and long, in my heart He puts a song,
Telling me in words so clear, 'Have no fear, for I am near.'
When my work on earth is done, and life's victories have been won
He will take me home above, then I'll understand His love.

Submitted by a church member.

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Higher power...A Sunday school teacher said to her children, "We have been learning how powerful kings and queens were in Bible times. But there is a higher power. Can anybody tell me what it is?" One child blurted out, "Aces!"

The Lord is my Shepherd...A Sunday school teacher decided to have her young class memorise one of the most quoted passages in the Bible, Psalm 23. She gave the youngsters a month to learn the Psalm, but little Charles did not find it easy to memorise much of anything. On the day that the children were scheduled to recite Psalm 23 in front of the congregation, Charles stepped up to the microphone and began proudly, "The Lord is my Shepherd...." He knew that much, but the rest of the Psalm suddenly deserted him. So he concluded bravely: "... and that's all I need to know

Notice Board Bloomers... Next Sunday Mrs Brown will sing a solo at the morning service before the vicar preaches on the subject of 'Terrible experiences and how to survive them'."

Solution on page 10

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7							
		9		3	1	2	
8				9	1		3
	2	5				7	1
4			2	7			8
	3	6	8			9	
							2
			5	6			

Solutions:

Crossword: ACROSS: 1, Cosmic. 4, Thomas. 8, In his. 9, Delaiah. 10, Falwell. 11, Water. 12, Recovered. 17, Sidon. 19, Radiant. 21, Centaur. 22, Broil. 23, Eleven. 24, Prison. **DOWN:** 1, Cliffs. 2, Scholar. 3, Issue. 5, Holy war. 6, Moist. 7, Sphere. 9, Deliverer. 13, Candace. 14, Deacons. 15, Psyche. 16, Stolen. 18, Dance. 20, Debar.

3	5	2	1	6	4	8	7	9
7	8	1	9	5	2	4	3	6
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8	6	7	4	9	1	2	5	3
9	2	5	6	3	8	7	1	4
4	1	3	2	7	5	6	9	8
5	3	6	8	2	7	9	4	1
1	7	8	3	4	9	5	6	2
2	9	4	5	1	6	3	8	7

B	S	E	S	O	G	W	Y	E	G	S	H
N	O	E	H	E	E	L	P	T	U	E	
P	D	R	D	N	T	H	A	N	K	S	M
B	R	E	A	I	H	S	A	O	L	E	B
O	H	T	V	W	S	N	A	A	A	J	W
D	C	S	T	O	E	C	E	L	D	C	A
Y	A	A	V	V	M	V	I	E	U	K	R
B	O	E	O	A	A	E	S	P	N	U	N
I	R	C	R	V	N	S	R	I	L	B	E
A	P	G	D	B	E	T	R	A	Y	E	D
D	P	W	I	L	L	D	W	T	O	O	S
M	A	B	B	L	O	O	D	E	G	S	A

5th April – Palm Sunday.

10th April – Good Friday

23rd April – St George's Day

9th April - Maundy Thursday

12th April – Easter Day

Family...

A mother and son were washing dishes while the father and daughter were watching TV in the family room. Suddenly, there was an almighty crash of breaking dishes, then complete silence. The girl looked at her dad and said, "It was Mum." "How do you know?" asked her father in amazement. "She didn't say anything."

From church notice-sheets:

This being Easter Sunday, we will ask Mrs Brown, our children's minister, to come forward and lay an egg on the altar.

Baptisms: after Easter, the North and South ends of the church will be utilised.

Children will be baptised at both ends.

Coming up: Theological Open House. We discuss thought-provoking topics.

Your opinions are hardly welcome.

WIDDRINGTON UNITED REFORMED CHURCH

PRAYING TOGETHER

During April please pray for:

People in war zones

Victims of natural disasters

Those suffering religious persecution (of any faith)

The refugee families being settled in the county, and those who help them

The work of relief agencies

Those suffering from Covid19 throughout the world

Our farmers and shepherds during the last of the lambing

Anyone who is recently bereaved

Your neighbours

"Prayer, the Churches banquet, Angels age,

God's breath in man, returning to his birth,

The soul in paradise, heart in pilgrimage,

The Christian plummet, sounding heav'n and earth" (George Herbert)

Seven days without prayer makes one weak

CHURCH NEWS

The church will be open each Sunday between 11.00 and 12.00 should anybody wish for a time of quiet reflection'

I'd like to invite everybody to contribute information that they think might be of interest. Just give me the details **in writing** either on a piece of paper or by email to elliemist@gmail.com and I'll do the rest. (I'd still welcome articles though). The **Copy Date** for each magazine is the Sunday prior to the 20th of the month before the next issue. If you miss the deadline your contribution may have to be held over to the next issue. December/January and June/July are usually double issues

Flowers: If we are able to recommence worship in May flowers will be arranged by Kathleen.

Easy Fund Raising (Easy?) Do you shop online? Perhaps you are considering doing this during the current emergency? Now's your chance to get busy with Easy Fund Raising! The chances are that your vendor will be part of Easy Fund Raising. Amazon and John Lewis are, for instance. Also most of the big supermarkets who do home delivery offer a donation, at least for first time shoppers. I've identified Morrisons, Asda, Sainsbury's, Tesco and Iceland - something for everybody. (Some of our EF members only shop with retailers who are in the scheme!) This means that if you register for Easy Fund Raising at easyfundraising.org.uk and select Widdrington United Reformed Church as your Good Cause 1 or 2 % of the purchase price of your item will come to us at no extra cost to yourself. Please talk to Fiona about it soon. We have raised over £245 so far with just eight members. As they say, every little helps.

Social: I gather that the bowling trip to Concordia was much enjoyed. Sadly, however, Fliss Tunnard's talk on her Holy Land visit has had to be postponed. We'll let you know when it's been rescheduled.

Things move with bewildering rapidity. At the elders meeting on Monday we thought we might be able to continue with our social programme but sadly all events at least for April are cancelled. We'll let you know about May events later on.

As we will lose our Easter Coffee Morning (and possibly the Spring Bank Holiday one too) look out for Coffee Morning signs on Saturdays later in the year. We'll keep you posted.

We had scheduled a church meeting for Thursday 30th April. This is likely also to be postponed. We'll let you know about a future date. Meanwhile, anyone who presents a report to this meeting (which is the AGM) might as well get it written (note to self).

Sunday worship is suspended until further notice. If you are not already a subscriber to the URC Daily Devotions, you might like to sign up and take advantage of the Sunday Service which is being relayed to subscribers. Go to devotions.urc.org.uk

Regular events:

1st Tuesday: Coffee Club usually meets on the 1st Tuesday in the month.

However, I'm afraid this will need to be suspended at least for April and probably May, maybe beyond.

1st Wednesday: Prayer Group: it is suggested that prayer group members should set aside time for prayer at 7.30pm on the first Wednesday of each month while this emergency continues. Pray for elderly members of our congregation as well as the global situation, and your own concerns.

Facebook: If you are on Facebook, have you checked out our Facebook page yet? Search for Widdrington United Reformed Church. Please like us and let me know if you think I've missed anything that should be on. The page now has over 100 (106 actually) likes, with another 6 people 'following'!

Please note: Sean, our sheep, has his own Facebook page! Search for 'Sean'.

Sean now has 17 page 'likes' but he wants some more, so please tell your friends about him! He's going to be lonely for the next few weeks.

The website is at: www.widdringtonurc.org.uk

I'd appreciate some help to improve it, as it's very wordy at the moment, partly because I'm happiest with words. I'm still looking for volunteers to be additional site editors. Someone with hardware the can post pictures would be good!

Churches Together in Widdrington and Ulgham

The Lent Course has been cancelled.

We hoped to run the Big Brekkie for Christian Aid again, on Saturday May 9th from 9 to 11am. However, this may have to be cancelled: we'll confirm this nearer the time.

FEM

Great Bavington United Reformed Church

Services at Great Bavington URC are cancelled until further notice. Meanwhile, our minister Julian Sanders will be posting devotional material and information on the church's Facebook

page: www.facebook.com/GreatBavingtonURC.

The URC will be offering live worship every Sunday at 10.00 am in both audio and written formats. More details

here: <https://devotions.urc.org.uk/devotions/2020/03/17/sunday-worship-during-the-pandemic/>

St James the Least of All

On how to run your notice board...

My dear Nephew Darren

Your decision to place a notice board outside your church seems a good one – and its design in blue plastic with luminous red detachable letters seems entirely in keeping with the aesthetics of your building. Make sure that it is lockable, however, as an innocent notice saying ‘all are welcome’ may be modified by a devotee of anagrams to say something far less polite by the following day. We recently replaced ours, which had disappeared shortly before last bonfire night. That the Scouts’ bonfire had a board which closely resembled our old one in its centre was, I am sure, a complete coincidence. The Venture Scouts’ collective smirk during the following week’s Parade Service did give one pause for thought, and the Cubs’ collapse into helpless laughter at the chorus ‘So light up the fire and let the flames burn’ only increased suspicion.

On reflection, you may not have been wise to use your notice board to tell everyone your holiday dates. Certainly, various local burglars were tripping over each other inside the vicarage while you were away. However, the note the last one left you, saying that next time he broke in, he would bring *you* something, since you had so little left, was quite touching.

Inevitably, now that your church has a notice board, there will be open warfare over who is allowed to display notices on it. Will the Slimmers Club be seen as biblical? Why is the Ladies Guild notice twice as large as all the others? And do remember that while everyone will want space to display their notices, no one will ever remove them once the event is over. Plaintive announcements of Christmas parties in April or of Summer Fetes in November only serve to take people down memory lane.

Here’s the best way to manage a notice board: create that panacea for all problems: a sub-committee. These poor people only ever exist in order to get the clergy out of tight corners and to make sure that matters are discussed at such inordinate length that every issue eventually dies a natural death. And if even that fails, you could have a quiet word with our Scouts before next year’s bonfire night.

Your loving uncle, Eustace