



Gateway

February 2021



Bishop Mark Wroe preaching for our streamed Eucharist on the Conversion of St Paul

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

EVENING

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,

It was a delight and a privilege to have Bishop Mark, our new Bishop of Berwick, preach at our streamed service on Sunday 24th January when we celebrated the feast of the Conversion of St. Paul.

Bishop Mark subsequently joined us for our Zoom coffee session after the service and, amongst a wide variety of topics discussed, he echoed the feelings of many of us when he pointed out how eager he was to be able to be out, meeting with people and engaging in a more natural way than through streaming and Zoom meetings.

Of course we all recognise how fortunate we are to have modern methods of being in touch and the great blessings we can derive from instant communication in a way that our forebears would have thought impossible.

We are perhaps equally aware of the way in which these technological miracles can be misused.

Who would have thought that any world leader might find themselves removed from their greatest vehicle of communication because of their inability to express themselves in a temperate manner?

So, yet again, we are reminded that things which are, on face value, such a blessing can, in the wrong hands, be spoiled and abused.

In the world of communications St. Paul was, in his time, most definitely a leader in his field. Undoubtedly some of his pronouncements were controversial but, as Bishop Mark reminded us in his sermon, Paul listened for the word of God in his life.

The book of Proverbs (21: 23) reminds us: 'To watch over mouth and tongue is to keep out of trouble'.

However we find ourselves communicating, now and when this pandemic has come to an end, let us do so with mutual respect, with an ear to what

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Principal Readings for February

Sunday	Holy Communion	Evensong
7th	Proverbs 8. 1, 22-31	Genesis 2. 4b-end
2nd before Lent	Colossians 1. 15-20 John 1. 1-14	Luke 8. 22-25
14th	2 Kings 2. 1-12	1 Kings 19. 1-16
Next before Lent	2 Corinthians 4. 3-6 Mark 9. 2-9	2 Peter 1. 16-end
21st	Genesis 9. 8-17	Genesis 2. 15-17, 3.1-7
1st Sunday of Lent	1 Peter 3. 18-end Mark 1. 9-15	Romans 5. 12-19
28th	Genesis 17. 1-7, 15-16	Genesis 12. 1-9
2nd Sunday of Lent	Romans 4. 13-end Mark 8. 31-end	Hebrews 11. 1-3, 8-16

FROM THE REGISTERS

May the faithful departed rest in peace and rise in glory

Stewart Alan Colquhoun	17/12/20
Nora Willis	14/12/20
Catherine Jane (Kitty) Dixon	31/12/20
John Charles (Charlie) Turner	22/1/21

God might be saying to us and for the building up of relations and, above all, the Kingdom of God.

With every blessing,

Paul.

Reverend Canon Stephen Charles Casey

STEPHEN CHARLES CASEY, of Landisville, PA, died on Tuesday, January 19th 2021. He is survived by his wife of thirty-seven years, Rayelenn Sparks Casey, and his two daughters, Emily Clare Casey and Elizabeth Casey Stauffer.

Born in England at the end of the Second World War, he grew up in the city of Hull. The youngest of three children, he was predeceased by his sisters, Olga Margaret Engle and Christine Cunningham.

Stephen and Rayelenn met in 1982, through a fascinating and complex family connection. In a transatlantic whirlwind romance conducted before the age of email and texting they courted by letter, phone, and telegrams between the US and Britain. They were married in 1983 at the National Cathedral in Washington DC. They moved to England where their elder daughter Emily was born, living in the town of Alnwick, the seat of the Duke of Northumberland, where they were committed and active members of the parish church of St. Michael and St Paul.



With his call to the priesthood in 1985. He and Rayelenn moved to the United States. He earned a Master of Divinity from Virginia Theological Seminary in 1995 and was ordained to the priesthood at St Paul's Episcopal Church in Lock Haven, Pennsylvania in 1996, where he served for three years. He was subsequently the beloved rector of St Edward's, Lancaster, PA, for 20 years, retiring in 2018.

Forwarded by the Very Rev'd Michael Sadgrove

Thought for the Month

"Man's chief end is to glorify God and enjoy him forever"

THIS STATEMENT is contained in the Westminster Confession, the origin and significance of which is beyond this article, but I suggest that the above statement would command general Christian acceptance.

A perennial question, which believers and non-believers ponder, is "What is the meaning of life?", and further: "Why does anything exist, rather than nothing at all?"

An atheist friend of mine, with whom I used to enjoy disputation, did admit that the existence of self consciousness in homo sapiens was a cause for gratitude, but beyond that he would not go in admitting any validity in religious faith. For him, the above two questions were meaningless.

Yet the questions do not go away. And it seems to me that they are valid, and that answers in terms of religion make more sense, though not without problems, than atheistic answers.

Yet on what do we base our faith? Some Christians maintain that the answer to that is easy, and it is "The Bible". But personally, I do not think that is sufficient on its own. After all, although all Christians would agree that the Bible contains the word of God, who says that it does? To say that the Bible itself says so is to argue

in a circle and completely unsatisfactory. I find that I rapidly remember that the councils of the church authenticate the scriptures and so the Bible derives its authority, under God, from the Church. And the Church derives from Jesus Christ. And God has given us intelligence to read the scriptures with discernment, understanding, so far as we are able, that there is history, stories, doctrine and myth (the conveying of truth in pictorial language) in it. And the Church maintains itself, its worship and belief and practice, by tradition, only to be altered after careful discussion and prayer, guarding against egotism and power grabbing in ourselves and others.

I have come to the point of reminding myself that the Church and our faith depends on scripture, reason and tradition. Reason must be maintained, or our faith would be risible. In one of G. K. Chesterton's Father Brown stories he has a criminal dressed up in clerical gear maintaining that religious belief supersedes reason. Father Brown immediately understood that this was his criminal. When asked by a friend how he knew, he replied "He attacked reason – that is bad theology".

I mentioned that religious belief is not without problems, while we are on this earth and with imperfect

understanding. As a young person, it used to bother me that I believed, deeply, that Christianity was the way to go in life. Jesus Christ is the way, the truth, and the life, and “No man cometh to the father but by Me”. Yet other cultures believed, equally deeply, different things. Who is to say who is right ?

In this connection, I still think that Christian missionary endeavour, historically and now, is to be applauded, admitting that mistakes and false objectives and lack of respect can get in the way. I used to think that interfaith acts of worship were not a good idea, but have modified this view. So far as I can see the best answer is to thank God for the revelation that has been granted to me, remain firmly committed to that, and engage in prayer and respect for other people.

Another problem is, of course, that of evil and suffering. And we all know that the church itself can become corrupt, make mistakes in appointments, and be itself the cause of suffering. Yet it is a shallow idea, sometimes uttered, that “The church has caused so much suffering in the world that I’m having nothing to do with it.” I even heard of a GP who advised a patient not to be attached to a church (perhaps it was a particular local situation), as it was danger to mental health. Suffering on this earth will remain a mystery. Yet perhaps the Christian Church, in the Incarnation, has a head start among all the worlds religions in addressing

this. “He was despised, rejected, a Man of Sorrows and acquainted with grief. The Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all”.

Then there is cosmology. Billions of stars, in billions of galaxies. And us, on a tiny, fragile planet in a remote corner of it. What about the Big Bang? Restating the question above, “Why is there anything, and not just nothing?” Any belief in a creator God worth holding must have him as creator of the entire universe, impossible as it is to fully comprehend that in our earthly life. Cynics sometimes accuse us believers of anthropomorphism, making a god in the image of mankind, putting an old man with a beard up in the sky. And , to a degree, I admit the charge of anthropomorphism. Personality, love, the existence of good (and yet awhile, the existence of evil as well) are the most important things we can understand. And so we will say that God is at least personal. Doubtless He is much, much more than that, and one day we will see. Meantime, whatever else is going on or has gone on in the universe, whether or not there are any other sentient beings in it, we will be content to say “for us men and our salvation, He came down to earth from heaven”.

“Man's chief end is to glorify God, and enjoy Him for ever.”

Martin Roff

Ordinary Christians (continued)

The Cathedral of a diocese is a large church where the Bishop has his throne, which is called a *cathedra*. Even so, the person in charge of the cathedral is not, strictly, the bishop, but the Dean. The Very Revd Geoff Miller is Dean of Newcastle Cathedral. The Dean has a “chapter” of canons (clergy dignitaries) to help him run the cathedral as well as a Cathedral council, which is like a parish church council.

Councils and Synods

The Church of England is governed synodically. A synod is a meeting of members – the word means “a way together” and in the church it exists at various levels. The top level is General Synod, which meets twice a year for the inside of a week. The members are elected by the dioceses to what is described as the church’s parliament.

Each diocese has a diocesan synod, made up of clergy and laity, meeting three or four times a year. Deaneries also have synods of clergy and laity elected by the parishes, and the parish has a Parochial Church Council which could, I suppose, be called a parochial synod.

In theory matters for discussion are passed up and down the synodical chain. A parish may raise something which could be discussed in Deanery Synod, Diocesan Synod and eventually in the General Synod. This is rare. More commonly General Synod raises matters which are handed down for discussion at the lower levels.

FAQs

In computer-speak, FAQs are ‘Frequently asked questions’. We all tend to come up with the same sort of hard questions, and often someone will triumphantly make a point as if no one else has ever thought of it before.

The hardest, and most common question is, “**What about suffering?** If God is all powerful, he cannot be good. If he is good he cannot be all powerful”. We should not want anyone to suffer the pains of torture, or the distress of cancer, or the death of babies, but we are largely powerless. God is all-powerful, so why does he not do something about it?

The brutal truth is that we shall never have a complete answer to this problem in this life, but there are some shafts of light we can throw upon it.

1. God has given us freedom to act as we want. We are free to hurt other people if we want to. God does not physically prevent me from driving above the speed limit, nor vandals from spoiling property, nor torturers from doing their work, nor warmongers from causing havoc. He has also given us responsibility for how we behave and will judge us accordingly.

2. The world as we know it has natural laws which if ignored will cause suffering. If we step off a cliff, gravity will cause us to fall, perhaps to our deaths. If we put our hand in a flame we shall be burnt. In the same sort of way, as we know too well, there are bacteria and viruses which cause diseases and sometimes these come from ignoring sensible rules of hygiene and behaviour.

3. Some parts of the world are subject to natural disasters: earthquakes, volcanoes, hurricanes and so on, and although it may be difficult to avoid some people having to live in such areas, it is hardly fair to blame God if there is suffering caused by insisting on building a city like San Francisco on a known fault-line. In some places the natural disaster is really due to our lack of care for the earth, as in Bangladesh, where some of the flooding is caused by deforestation of the mountain sides higher up the river.

Having said all that, there is a great deal of suffering caused by natural disasters and accidents which cannot be blamed on other humans, so it is worth noting,

4. We are all going to die eventually, and as a result someone is going to grieve or suffer emotionally.

5. Suffering has a good effect in producing the good emotions of sympathy and fortitude, and in inspiring a desire to help.

6. Finally, it almost seems as if God is not ultimately so interested in how long we survive in this life, being more concerned with how we shall get on in the life to come.

The crucifixion of Jesus was an example of great physical suffering and the answer to the question, *Where was God at that time?* is, *on the cross*. We believe that he is with us in our suffering, going through it too. God knows, and God cares.

A second FAQ is about Science and Religion – **Has Science disproved religion?**

Related to this is the whole question of truth. The astronomer Galileo found that day and night were caused by the rotation of the earth, and not as was thought then, by the sun going round the earth. On the contrary, the earth goes round the sun once a year. He was required by the Church to deny his own findings because the received wisdom of the Church, based on the current understanding of the Bible, was that the earth was fixed and everything else moved about it. Rumour says that Galileo was forced to say he was wrong, but muttered under his breath, “but it *does* move all the same”.

In more recent times, when Darwin’s conclusions about evolution were first discussed a Bishop’s wife is alleged to have said that even if it was true she hoped the congregation would not hear about it. Even today there is a resistance in some quarters to some types of scientific theories because they seem to upset the applecart of faith. So it cannot be too highly stressed that the Christian faith is based on truth, not fable. We believe what we understand to be true, and if it turns out that something is proved not to be true we are ready to change our beliefs accordingly. After all, this is what scientists do. It is usually easier to prove something to be untrue than to prove a truth, so the scientific method is to start with a theory and try to disprove it. If it cannot be disproved it is taken as true, unless and until someone comes along and does show that it is wrong. Then the theory has to be revised.

So we are not to be defensive about details of our faith. That is not to say that we have to accept uncritically all provisional scientific theories, but we must be open to the truth.

Nevertheless there are some things where scientific enquiry is unlikely to make much progress. Miracles are by definition occurrences which are out of the normal course of events and therefore cannot be checked by scientific experimentation. To say that Jesus could not have risen from death because it is not possible to repeat it in a laboratory is to miss the point of what a miracle is. And so far at least, it is not possible to explain where everything came from in the first place: before the ‘big bang’.

We have to be careful of adopting a ‘God of the gaps’ standpoint where we accept the whittling away of parts of the story, leaving God as the answer to those parts which science has not yet explained. The only intellectually creditable procedure is to accept and welcome all advances in knowledge remembering the astronomer Kepler who said that in making his discoveries

he was ‘thinking God’s thoughts after him’.

A third is, **Is everything fixed in advance?** - the question of free will. It is usually put like this. If there is a supreme being who knows everything, then he knows what I am going to do tomorrow. So if God knows what I am going to do before I’ve done it, that must mean that I cannot change it, so how can I be said to have free will?

This is an example of taking something to its illogical conclusion. God may indeed know what we are going to do, but that does not mean that God is causing it to happen. We still cause it to happen, when it happens, and our free will is not compromised by this. St Augustine said, “Now against the sacrilegious and impious darings of reason, we assert both that God knows all things before they come to pass and that we do by our free will whatsoever we know and feel to be done by us only because we will it.”

The fourth I want to mention is, **How can God deal with so many prayers all at once?** This includes the worry some people have that they shouldn’t burden God with their own petty problems when He has so many much more important things to concern Himself with.

Now if you write to the Prime Minister with some problem, he will very likely get some minion to reply. We all understand that Prime Ministers are far too busy with really important things to get involved with our problems. Yet occasionally someone in that sort of position actually receives a reply from the Prime Minister who does take their problem seriously and is prepared to give it his attention. When this happens we feel it is a sign of greatness as well as kindness.

God is not only great in kindly intention, but also infinite in power. So he is able to give attention to our little problems, and to deal with a large number of simultaneous prayers. If he were not able to do so, that would be saying that he is limited, and by definition, God is not limited in any way, being all-powerful. He is also humble, and content to put up with people like me and you. He is not like some proud despotic tyrant who has no time for anyone who cannot benefit him. He knows, he cares, and he can.

End

Colin Perkins

ST MICHAEL'S C E PRIMARY SCHOOL

Our School is operating under the current conditions and the Head Teacher had to tell parents and carers:

We have been keeping in touch with national developments as well as local Covid related isolations and infections. Sadly I have to inform you that we cannot open school fully as planned and will be offering online learning for all children other than vulnerable children and children of critical workers (who will receive a follow-up letter). If you do not receive a follow-up letter from us and believe you meet the criteria please get in touch.

Conversations have continued all weekend with the Diocese and the Local Authority and an emergency panel of governors. We understand the difficulties this poses for many and can only apologise. The decision has not been taken lightly and we will of course continue to make every effort to provide a quality online learning experience for our children. At the present time our remote learning will be through Google Classroom for Years 1- 6. Children in Early Years will have tasks set by email in the first instance. Staff will keep in regular contact with your child.

As with the previous lockdown we would like to support the learning of all of our children and to this end we will be able to loan out laptops from school. If you believe you would benefit from a school laptop for the next two weeks please ring school.

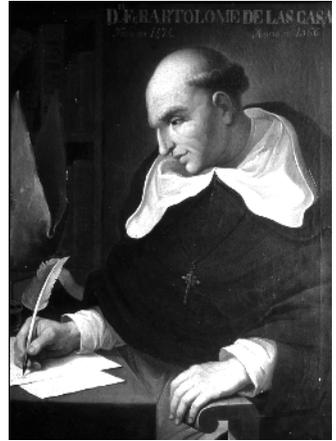


Mission

ALL CHRISTIANS are evangelists; called to share the good news of Christ with the people we meet, in different ways and in different places. For most of us, that means the people whom we meet day by day, at work and elsewhere, in the areas where we live. Some are called to travel to distant lands to preach the Gospel, though over the centuries there have been markedly different ways of doing so. In this edition of Gateway, I'd like to tell you about two very different figures: Bartolomé de las Casas, who participated in the Christian settlement of the New World, and fought for the rights of native peoples and for peaceful evangelisation there, and Matteo Ricci, missionary to China, who evangelised by combining Christian faith with Chinese culture.

Bartolomé de las Casas

Bartolomé de las Casas was born in 1484, and as a boy saw Christopher Columbus' triumphal procession through the streets of Seville, on his return from the Indies. Las Casas travelled there himself in 1502, settling in Hispaniola, where he held tracts of land which were worked by the forced labour of Indians. As a slave owner, Las Casas was refused absolution by Dominican friars in 1510, but, in the course of preparing to preach in 1514 (he had been ordained in 1506/7), his reading and reflection led him to conclude that "everything done to the Indians in these Indies was unjust and tyrannical".



Following his change of heart, Bartolomé de las Casas became a tireless campaigner for the rights of Indian peoples. He travelled to Spain in 1515 to put his case to Ferdinand I (d. 1516) and then to the country's regents, returning to the Indies with three Hieronymite monks who took over as commissioners, while Las Casas was given the title "Protector of the Indians". His relationship with Spanish settlers was poor, preventing any significant change being made, and Las Casas had to take refuge in a Dominican monastery during this period, joining the Order himself shortly afterwards. By 1539 he was back in Spain, this time to see the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V, and was able to persuade him to pass the 'New Laws' which, among other things, forbade the enslavement of any more Indians, although this proved difficult to enforce, and they were partially repealed in 1545.

Las Casas was made Bishop of Chiapas in 1544, where he refused absolution to slave owners, even on their deathbeds, which was not popular with settlers or other clergy, and there were riots against him. He left his diocese in the hands of a vicar in 1546, returning to Spain in an attempt to save his reforms. There, he took part in the Valladolid Debate (1550-51) against Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda, who argued that native peoples “are as inferior to Spaniards as children to adults, women to men, cruel and inhuman persons to the extremely meek, or the exceedingly intemperate to the continent and moderate – in a word as monkeys to men,” stating that they were incapable of ruling themselves, requiring the Spanish to ‘pacify’ them in order that they could then become Christians, and that the Spanish had a sacred task to protect Indians from themselves. Las Casas, in contrast, argued against slavery and wars of conquest, and in favour of peaceful evangelism, describing Indians as “gentle sheep”, and “unspoiled, and vivacious intellect, very capable, and receptive to every good doctrine; most prompt to accept our Holy Catholic Faith, to be endowed with virtuous customs.”

The Debate was inconclusive, and Las Casas resigned his bishopric, living thereafter in lodgings in the Dominican college at Valladolid. He continued to advocate for Indians at court, and died in 1566. Bartolomé de las Casas was named Servant of God (the first step of the process of canonisation) by the Catholic Church in 2002, and is commemorated in the Church of England on 20th July.

Bartolomé de las Casas used writing as part of his campaigning work, and his most notable works are *A Short Account of the Destruction of the Indies* and the *History of the Indies*. Both of these extensively document horrific abuses perpetrated on Indians by conquistadors and settlers, arguing that Indians were both civilised and reasonable, and should neither be enslaved nor converted by force. His works were and are much criticised, as he seems to have exaggerated the level of destruction and death in order to prove his point, and, at one point of his life, repeatedly suggested African slaves should replace Indian ones. His work was also seized upon by Protestant (and especially English) writers to argue that the Spanish are naturally cruel and greedy, forming the ‘Black Legend’ which still affects writing on the country today.

Bartolomé de las Casas may have exaggerated somewhat to prove his point, but the questions he raised about human rights, religious freedom, and the rights of conquered peoples are still very relevant today. We are rather less likely to face being missionaries riding in on the coat-tails of an invading

army, but there are still situations today where missionaries hold greater power – and money – than those they evangelise, and there are still debates to be had about how to ensure truly free conversions under those circumstances. Perhaps most relevant to us today is to examine the attitude of the Spanish towards the native peoples: it was partly because they were not Christian that they were seen as childlike, lacking in reason, and altogether less competent. When we encounter those who are not like us, in culture or in faith, people with whom we would like to share the Gospel: do we always see them as our equals, or is there an element of condescension in the way that we approach them? Questions of equality are still very much important today.

Matteo Ricci

While Bartolomé de las Casas was dealing with the problem of the treatment of native peoples and how to evangelise a conquered nation, others were grappling with how to spread the Gospel in sovereign lands which were not Christian. One of those figures was Matteo Ricci, missionary to China.

Matteo Ricci was born in Italy in 1552, and studied mathematics, astronomy, and cosmology alongside theology when he joined the Society of Jesus in 1571. In keeping with the Jesuit focus on evangelism, Ricci volunteered for missionary service in the East, and was sent to Goa in 1578, and then to Macau in 1582, as preparation for working in China. He became convinced that the way to win China for Christ was to convert the intellectual elite, and he spent the next few years studying both Mandarin and Chinese culture in order to be accepted in Chinese scholarly society.

Ricci moved to China in 1584, living in Zhaoqing and Shaoguan, as well as travelling around China before being invited, in 1601, to



become an adviser to the Wanli Emperor in Beijing. This last appointment was thanks to Ricci's knowledge of science, and it was his knowledge of astronomy and cartography in particular, which helped him gain an audience with people of influence. Ricci drew the first European-style map in Chinese, placing the country in a global perspective, and created Chinese-Portuguese dictionaries as well as producing religious writings. He dressed, as was accepted as a Chinese scholar, using the name Li Madou, and his approach to evangelism was to use small-group discussions to preach the Gospel, rather than engaging in public preaching. Matteo Ricci died suddenly, in 1610. Hundreds of mandarins joined with Christians to pay their respects to him, and by special permission of the Emperor, he was buried in Beijing itself, rather than in Macau with other foreigners.

Matteo Ricci gained a deep understanding of Chinese language and culture, and of Confucianism. He became convinced that 'original' Confucianism was a perfect introduction and basis for a knowledge of Christianity. In his most important work, the Christian apologetic *Tianzhu shiyi* (On the True Meaning of the Lord of Heaven), first published in 1603, he argued that belief in a transcendent Lord of Heaven (*Tiānzhu*) was part of 'original' Confucianism, and that this Lord of Heaven and the God of the Bible were one and the same. He viewed Confucian customs such as ancestor veneration as secular rites compatible with Christianity, and Jesuits made many converts, and secured official toleration of Christianity, but his approach was controversial in Europe. In the early 18th century the Catholic Church forbade ancestor veneration and other Confucian customs, and in response, Christian missionaries were expelled from China, and Christianity outlawed. The Church's decree was relaxed in 1939, and the cause for Matteo Ricci's canonisation is in process.

Matteo Ricci's work in China brings up important questions about which parts of our faith are unchangeable parts of being a Christian, and which are a just a reflection of our culture. Missionaries have often been accused of exporting European culture to foreign nations, and calling it Christianity, while those who accommodate local cultures have been accused of syncretism and watering down the Gospel. Few of us may become missionaries in foreign lands, but all of us engage with different cultures and subcultures within our own nation, so questions about what is truly integral and unchangeable in our own faith, and what can and should be adapted to meet the needs of the people we meet, remain vital questions for us today.

Emma Mavin

Christmas came early for two churches

Diocese of Newcastle - first published on 15 December 2020

TWO MUCH-LOVED churches in our diocese are to share in a £483,000 funding payout from the National Churches Trust.

St Michael's Church, Alnwick and St Luke's Church, Newcastle have been awarded £10,000 and £15,000 respectively from the NCT Cornerstone Grant.

At St Michael's the grant will help fund tower repairs for the Grade I building making the church watertight and preserving its historic fabric.

The church has been a place of worship for over 1,000 years, and was largely built in 1464 during the reign of Henry VI, incorporating fragments of an earlier Norman chapel, and restored in 1862-3. It is perpendicular in style and a rare example of church building in Northumberland at a time when conditions allowed little church building in the county.

Considered to be one of Northumberland's architectural gems, the church is included in Simon Jenkin's 'England's Thousand Best Churches' as one of the top 100 churches of England.

Revd Canon Paul Scott, Vicar of St Michael's, said: "This Cornerstone Grant from the National Churches Trust is a huge boost to our fundraising efforts to ensure that St Michael's can continue to be kept in good order for the people of Alnwick now and in years to come.

"The last major repairs to the tower roof were carried out 256 years ago in 1764 so we're used to good workmanship in this part of Northumberland! Now, with the generous help of the National Churches Trust, we hope to leave a similar legacy in the care and maintenance of this ancient much-loved place of worship."



A total of 56 churches and chapels in England, Wales and Northern Ireland will benefit from the latest grants from the National Churches Trust, the charity supporting church buildings of all Christian denominations across the UK.

Bishop of Berwick

MARK WROE, formerly Archdeacon of Northumberland, was consecrated as the Suffragan Bishop of Berwick in the Diocese of Newcastle at York Minster on Tuesday 5 January 2021, the Eve of the Feast of the Epiphany.

The Archbishop of York, The Most Reverend Stephen Cottrell, presided and preached at the service, assisted by the Bishop of Newcastle, the Right Revd Christine Hardman and the Bishop of Chester, the Right Revd Mark Tanner (former Bishop of Berwick).

Archbishop Stephen said: “I am delighted that Her Majesty The Queen has accepted the nomination of the Venerable Mark Wroe as the next Suffragan Bishop of Berwick. Mark has a heart for the people of God in the North East. His compassion, dedication and energy will inspire others in growing church and in building hope. I pray he will continue to be a blessing to the Diocese of Newcastle in his new role”.

Commenting on his consecration, Mark said: “It’s an extraordinary privilege to become the Bishop of Berwick and humbling to be consecrated at York Minster on the eve of Epiphany. I am very much looking forward to serving God



alongside Bishop Christine in a diocese I know and love.

“These continue to be challenging times, with so many people concerned for loved ones and livelihoods, yet the Church has such deep hope and joy in Jesus Christ to offer everyone. I look forward to working with all those in our communities who seek to work together for a more compassionate society, sharing our hope and faith in Christ with humility, wisdom and courage.”

We were thrilled to learn that Bishop Mark would be the preacher at our streamed service on 24th January - one of his very first public engagements following his consecration.

Holy Days in February

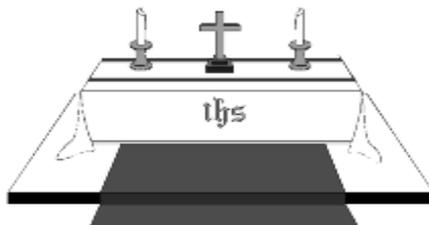
THERE ARE two Red-letter days this February. The first is always on the 2nd, The Presentation of Christ in the Temple, or The Purification of Saint Mary the Virgin, commonly known as Candlemas, .

This recalls the occasion when Joseph and Mary brought the infant Christ into the Temple forty days after his birth in order that the requirement of the law be followed, and sacrifice offered. The story in Luke 2 tells how Simeon came into the Temple and saw the baby and it was revealed to him that this was the Christ for whom he had been waiting. Simeon then pronounced the words which we know as the Nunc Dimittis: “Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace...”.

Ash Wednesday this year is on 17th: the first day of Lent, forty days before Easter, omitting Sundays. In normal times services on Ash Wednesday would offer the imposition of ashes as a sign of penitence, traditionally following confession and absolution – shriving – the previous day, Shrove Tuesday, although that is now Mardi Gras – “Fat Tuesday” – when all the luxury foods were eaten up, now remembered in pancake parties.

I have written before of Janani Luwum, Archbishop of Uganda, martyred in Uganda in 1977 under the orders of President Idi Amin. In Uganda since 2015 the 17th February is a public holiday: Janani Luwum Day.

Colin Perkins



Smile

AS WE have recently celebrated The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity it seemed like a good idea to find out how our friends from other churches in the town, as well as our own, have been managing to keep smiling.

On a clear night before I go to bed, dressed in my pj's and clutching my hot water bottle, I step outside, look up and take in the beauty of the night sky. Breathtakingly magical, it never ceases to thrill my soul and make me sing with joy.

Marion Giles, Alnwick Baptist Church

Watching the birds on the feeders from the dining room window. We have a small flock of collared doves and one of them is boss in the pecking order! The wonderful sunrises and sunsets we have had over the past few weeks, gives you a boost and a smile.

Martin and Kay Downey, St. Michael's Church

I very much enjoy Facetime calls from our four granddaughters. After a quick word with Mums and Dads, they take their phone or iPad well away from parents and we have some quality time. We still play some of the games we would play with the younger ones if we were actually with them, including Hide-and-Seek (yes, it is possible). With our older two, again we spend time with them 'in' their bedrooms or even watching and chatting as they carry out their chores. Very special

Jean Barr, St James' United Reform Church

I have been reading letters written to me over 50 years ago from the man who was to become my husband. They bring back very many happy memories of those days and of the years that followed. As Peter is no longer with me they confirm for me everything that we meant to each other.

June Etterly, St Paul's Catholic Church

The thing which is giving me great pleasure at the moment is knitting for my 3 year old grandson, Iva. Many lovely jumpers, all with different characters or scenes on the front have been sent through the post, a pirate and a penguin, among others, and I am just finishing a snowman. We haven't been able to actually see him for 18 months but knowing he loves the jumpers gives me great joy.

Hilary Atkin, St Michael's Church

One delight of our week is a zoom meeting Bob and I have on a Saturday at 7.30am with our 5 grandsons, all under 5 and from 3 different families. Sometimes we are only just awake and have to rush to comb our hair and put on dressing gowns but it is such a joy to see their smiles as they show us toys and ask questions you cannot refuse, such as 'Grandma, have you got a story? Please!'

Mary Bain, Welcome Network, Shilbottle

I am enjoying having extra time with my family as our boys are home from university at the moment

Alison Anderson, Salvation Army

Exchanging Christmas gifts with our daughter and family, who we have not seen for many months, in the car park of Washington services on a cold December day. Although a short encounter, to see them face to face rather than on a screen made us so happy and brought on a smile.

John and Anne Cooke, St Michael's

What makes me smile is the sound of the sea, the crashing of the waves, which always reminds me of the awesome power of God.

Kim Hurst, Methodist church

Compiled by Sue Wiltshire

PARISH HALL DRAW

Drawn on 22nd November the winners were

1st	(£20)	Anne Harrison
2nd	(£10)	John Onions
3rd	(£5)	Anne Blades

Drawn on 20th December:

1st	(£20)	Enid Brown
2nd	(£10)	Lynne Moir
3rd	(£5)	Gillian Maude

The World our Village

IF WE could shrink the earth's population to a village of precisely 100 people, with all the existing human ratios staying the same it would look like this:

There would be 57 Asians, 21 Europeans, 14 from the Western Hemisphere (North and South) and 8 Africans.

70 would be non-white: 30 white

70 would be non-Christians, 30 Christians

50% of the world's entire wealth would be in the hands of 6 people, all living in the USA.

70 would be unable to read.

50 would suffer from malnutrition.

80 would live in sub-standard housing.

Only one would have a university education.

These figures come from some years ago, and there has been some improvement to most of these data since then. We could add that two people would have Covid 19.

What comes out for me from this is how fortunate I am to live where I do, to have the education I have had and the circumstances of my life, compared with the majority of people who live on God's earth. And it reminds me of the words of Jesus that "from them to whom much is given, much will be required".

How say you?



Colin Perkins

Who's Who

VICAR

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

CURATE

The Rev'd Gerard Rundell 07394792277
10 Allerbum Lea, Alnwick, NE66 2NJ
Email: 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 Email 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

Sadly in response to the current Coronavirus situation until further notice there is no access to the building.

At **10.00 am on Sundays**, there will be a Service of Holy Communion, which will be streamed at 10.00 am, or can be watched later, as online worship which is available on the website, and on our YouTube channel.

Following the service, at approximately **11:15 am**, we 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 email
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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