



Contact Details

Vicar	Rev Allison Harding: The Vicarage, Newburn, NE15 8LQ, 0191 2290522, revallisonharding@gmail.com
Honorary Curate	Rev Margaret Ledger: 0191 2672953
Honorary Curate	Rev Malcolm Jones: 0191 2677829
Churchwardens St Michael's	Amanda Taylor: 0191 2677845 Linda Frazer: 0191 2644169
Churchwardens St Mary's	Joanne Batey: 07963 345381
Parish Safeguarding Officer	Roz Cant: 07834 553470, rozcant@yahoo.co.uk
Parish Treasurer	Celia Waugh: 0191 2643214
Magazine Editor	Helen Dawson: 07834 377927 helenrdawson@yahoo.co.uk
Magazine Advertising	Amanda Taylor: 0191 2677845
Bell Ringing St Michael's	Helen Dawson: 07834 377927
Pastoral Care Team	Mary Weatherall: 0191 2291814
Parish Hall Booking	Amanda Taylor: 0191 2677845
Parish Events Group (PEGS)	Jennie Jones: 0191 2677829
Junior Church (St Mary's)	Jennie Jones: 0191 2677829
Youth Group	Jennie Jones: 0191 2677829

PARISH WEBSITE: www.newburnparish.org



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HELP NEEDED.

**Two volunteers are needed to write/
compile/collate prayers for the
September and December magazine.**

**Please get in touch with Helen to
volunteer.**

**Prayers can be sourced from books and
websites (as long as sources are provided)
and do not have to be written from scratch.**

Letter from Rev Margaret:

Dear Readers,

The Church's year is divided into various times and seasons. It begins with Advent, a time of preparation for Christmas and also for the second coming of Christ.



This is followed by the celebration of Jesus' birth at Christmas and then Epiphany, when we remember the visit of the Wise Men and the showing of Jesus to the peoples beyond the Jewish nation. The 2nd February is Candlemas Day which commemorates the presentation of the baby Jesus in the Temple at Jerusalem. After Candlemas we turn away from those seasons which centre on Jesus' birth and we turn towards Easter as we begin counting the Sundays to Lent. This month, on March 5th we will arrive at Ash Wednesday, the beginning of the season of Lent, another time of preparation as we journey on to the great celebration of Easter.

Unlike Advent, when our time tends to be taken up with practical preparations for Christmas, Lent is a time when we can concentrate more on our spiritual lives. We sometimes think about 'giving something up' or 'doing something extra'. The 'giving something up' has its roots in fasting and is now more likely to be applied to something that is a bad habit or that isn't very good for us – such as smoking cigarettes or eating chocolate. The 'doing something extra' could be the determination to carry out some good deeds or spend extra time in some sort of spiritual exercise or study.

During my working days at BT we were allowed to listen to a personal radio as we did boring work sitting at a machine which automatically opened envelopes from which we

removed and sorted the contents. Because of interference from the electrical equipment around the office it was often difficult to get properly tuned into a station.

Sometimes all sorts of 'stuff' in our lives interferes with our relationship to God. These Lenten practices of fasting and praying are meant to be ways of getting ourselves more 'tuned in' to Him. They are an attempt to get rid of those external things that cause interference to us being in a position for perfect and clear reception between us and our Maker.

So, as we journey through Lent it will be good to consider what it is that we need to do to achieve that perfect tuning. The Church of England's theme for Lent is 'Living Hope'.

If you have access to e-mail you can receive daily reflections to your in-box. You can find the link to sign up at: Cofe.io/LivingHope – on the left hand menu list, click on Living Hope, Lent Reflections. Daily reflections offer us a quiet time to read a section of scripture, reflect and pray. As we move into the season of Lent may we find a way to tune our lives so that we can be closer to God.

Yours
Margaret

Prayer of St Richard of Chichester:

Most merciful Redeemer, Friend and Brother,
may we know you more clearly,
love you more dearly,
and follow you more nearly,
day by day.
Amen.



Sunday Service Information

9.30am St Michael's

11am St Mary's

6pm (4th Sunday) St Mary's

Thursday 10am The Vicarage

Morning Prayer Service

*The following information can be
applied every month:*

1st Sunday: Communion

2nd Sunday: All Age Family Communion

3rd Sunday: Communion

4th Sunday: Morning Praise (am) & Contemporary
Worship (pm)

5th Sunday: JOINT SERVICE 10am

Bearing fruit takes time

The nine fruits of the Spirit are Love, Joy, Peace, Patience, Kindness, Goodness, Faithfulness, Gentleness and Self-Control. We don't strive for the fruits of the Spirit, rather we plant ourselves in good soil, allow ourselves to be fed by the Holy Spirit, keep taking in nourishment, turn to face the light of Christ and these fruits will develop and grow in our lives.

Can you tell whether a tree is an apple tree or a pear tree? Not easily when they are in blossom, but very easily when they bear fruit. Bearing fruit takes time and a lot of planting, preparation, nurture and growth.

March is the time of year when gardeners begin to plant seeds ready for summer, but patience is needed – the seeds will take a while to germinate, and the gardener needs to write the names of seeds on labels and not forget which are fruit, flowers and vegetables. The seeds need to be in the dark, or the light, or the warmth or the cool, depending at what stage of life they are at.

So too, is God with us. God writes our names on His heart; God knows what fruit we can bring forth. God nurtures us and gives us light to grow. But first, we need to be planted and that can be scary.

Maybe you are feeling in a cold dark place this March, maybe it feels as if you've been buried, maybe you've got a weight above you and you can't see the way out. Just think that maybe you've been buried because you've been planted.

With patience there will be warmth and light, be like a seed, trust God, and begin to grow out of the darkness towards God's marvellous light. We won't see fruit immediately; we have to be nourished and mature and ripen. Patience will be given to us, fruit of the seed of the Holy Spirit.

Eco Top Tips!

March – Going shopping

- Make a list before you go food shopping to help avoid over impulse buying and buying food you will end up throwing away.
- Reduce your impact on the environment by buying second hand when you can. Ebay and charity shops are good sources of reused items.
- When you need to buy a large item research it carefully. Think about how long it could last, how much it costs to run, what it is made of, where it is made, can it be recycled at the end of its life. Better quality items often last longer and so cost you less over time.
- Tempted to buy in impulse when you are shopping? Get in the habit of coming back the next day or week when you have thought through if you really need to buy it.





Image taken from: <https://simplygreenrebekah.com/>

March	
3	World Wildlife Day
5	Ash Wednesday
18	Global Recycling Day
21 Mar - 6 Apr	Great British Spring Clean
21	International Day of Forests
22	World Water Day
22	Earth Hour
25-26	Church of England DEO Conference

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A Lent Reflection

Somebody asked a Christian friend why he was eating doughnuts, when he had given them up for Lent! He answered, *'At the bakers I told God, that if He wanted me to buy doughnuts, He should provide a parking space in front. On the eighth time around, there it was!'* Rather than seeing Lent simply as a time to give things up, let's use it intentionally for self-examination, reading Scripture, penitence, fasting and prayer.

At Jesus' baptism, God's voice says, *'You are My Son, whom I love; with You I am well pleased.'* (Luke 3:22). The Holy Spirit then leads Jesus into the wilderness, where we find Him coming to terms with who He is. Satan's temptations challenge Jesus in key three areas of His identity: His divine sonship, political power and Messianic role (Luke 4: 1-13). It is as though Jesus was looking into the mirror at Himself to discern what kind of Saviour He should be.

For us, Lent is an opportunity to hold up a mirror to ourselves and ask the question, *'who am I?'* It's a season of honest encounter with who we are, what we've done, and how we should live. What will we see when we hold up the mirror to ourselves? Keeping Lent, the 40 days running up to Easter, could mean taking time to read Scripture, studying a Christian book or spending five minutes each day in silence! We might fast by missing one or two meals, refraining from TV, alcohol, social media, or scrolling on our phones. All of these can help us to give more attention to God in our lives.

Whatever we do, Lent is a season for self-reflection, as we put ourselves in a position to receive afresh the forgiveness and healing that God offers.

Canon Paul Hardingham

Prayers for March

1

Faith

May my child walk in faith, being sure of what he hopes for and certain of what he does not see. (Hebrews 11:1)

2

Hope

Lord, You are the God of hope and will fill my child with all joy and peace as she trusts in You. (Romans 15:13)

3

Love for the Bible

May my child store up Your Word in his heart so that he might not sin against You. Blessed are those who hear the Word of God and keep it! (Ps. 119:11, Luke 11:28)

4

Joy

I pray that my child will rejoice in You. May she sing because of the work of Your hands. (Psalm 92:4)

6

Wisdom

When my child lacks wisdom, help her understand that she should ask You for wisdom. You are generous and enjoy giving it! (James 1:5)

9

Humility

May my child learn to do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but to consider others as more important than himself. (Philippians 2:3)

10

Compassion

May my child be kind and compassionate to others, forgiving others, just as You forgave her in Christ Jesus. (Ephesians 4:32)

11

Generosity

Instruct my child to be generous because those who are generous to others will themselves be refreshed. (Proverbs 11:25)

15

Purity

Guard my child's eyes and ears from things that are not Your best for his life. May he cling to what is good and hate evil. (Romans 12:9)

16

Friendships

May my child find friends who are wise, for whoever spends time with wise people will become wise. (Proverbs 13:20)

17

Courage

May my child be strong and courageous. May she not be afraid - believing that you are with her wherever she goes. (Joshua 1:9)

18

Confidence

May my child remember that You began a good work in her and will finish it until Jesus comes again! (Philippians 1:6)

22

Contentment

I pray that my child may understand that You alone satisfy the thirsty and fill the hungry with good things. (Psalm 107:9)

23

Righteousness

May my child learn to seek Your kingdom and Your righteousness first. Then he will have everything he needs. (Matthew 6:33)

24

God's Grace

Thank You that Your grace is enough for my child. Help my child know that when she is weak, she is strong in Your power. (2 Cor. 12:9)

25

Self-Control

May my child resist the devil and stand firm. (1 Peter 5:9)

29

Servant's Heart

For the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve. May my child find joy in doing the same! (Mark 10:45)

30

Thoughts

May my child learn to think about only what is true, noble, right, pure, lovely, and excellent! (Philippians 4:8)

31

Trust

May my child grow to trust You with all of her heart and not lean on her own understanding. (Proverbs 3:5)

3

If you would like to join the Annual Magazine Prayer Rota, or even

by Helen Dawson

	5 Patience May my child never become tired in doing good for he will receive a harvest of eternal life at the right time. (Galatians 6:9)	6 Thankfulness Let my child give thanks in all circumstances for this is Your will for her in Christ Jesus. (1 Thessalonians 5:18)	7 Health May my child enjoy good health in his body, but most important, health in his soul. (3 John 1:2)
	12 Peace Thank You, Lord, that You are able to keep my child in perfect peace as he focuses his thoughts on You and trusts You with his heart. (Isaiah 26:3)	13 God's Protection I praise You for You are faithful. You will give my child strength and protect her from the evil one. (2 Thessalonians 3:3)	14 Prayerfulness May my child learn to pray in the Spirit at all times with all kinds of prayers and requests, praying for the Lord's people. (Ephesians 6:18)
	19 Faithfulness Help my child hold firmly to the hope we profess, trusting that You will do what You have promised. (Hebrews 10:23)	20 Responsibility In all the work that my child does, may she do the best she can. May she work for You and not for men. (Colossians 3:23)	21 Salvation May my child know that Jesus is the Way, the Truth, and the Life and that no one can come to You except through Him. (John 14:6)
	26 Praise Help me to model for my child how to praise You at all times. May Your praise ever be on our lips! (Psalm 34:1)	27 Obedience to God May my child desire Your ways above the world's ways. Teach her to joyfully say "Your will be done." (Psalm 40:8)	28 Love May my child love You with all of his heart, soul, mind, and strength. May he love others, too. (Matthew 22:36-40)

1 DAYS of PRAYER

When just do a one off prayer, please get in touch with Helen Dawson.

What's the Big Idea? An Introduction to the Books of the Old Testament: Job

'Why does God allow suffering?' This is a frequently asked question of Christians, because we believe in a God who is both good and powerful and it is explored in the book of Job. This book is part of the wisdom literature, along with Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Solomon.

Job was both wealthy and righteous, yet he experienced catastrophic suffering, losing all his wealth, children and health. This is portrayed as a result of Satan's challenge to God, testing whether Job's devotion to God was dependent on his circumstances or not.

The main body of the book (3:1-42:6) consists of dialogues between Job, his friends (Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar) and God. Job and his friends assume that God is almighty and just, and that no human being is wholly innocent. In the three cycles of speeches they wrestle with the reasons for Job's suffering, remembering his morally upright character.

Finally, all are silenced by God, as He speaks Himself (chs 38-42). He points out that Job knows very little about the universe when he reflects on God's power. Job confesses his lack of understanding and weakness, but then goes on to confess his confidence and trust in God. This puts suffering in a right perspective. Job is not condemned, and the book ends with the restoration of his family and possessions.

The importance of this book is that it realistically addresses the painful questions of life, without offering simplistic answers. It focuses on *how* we should respond to suffering, rather than on *why* God allows suffering: '*Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked I shall depart. The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away; may the name of the LORD be praised.*' (1:21)

Canon Paul Hardingham

Open The Book celebrates 25 years of Bible storytelling



Do you remember hearing your first Bible story? Most of us would have been children at the time.

If you had the privilege of hearing them often, those stories would now be a part of you, giving you hope in dark times, and a way to understand the world around you, and a sure sense that the God of the Bible exists. All in all, Bible stories are important to know.

This year Bible Society's Open the Book turns 25. It has seen remarkable progress in getting Bible stories 'out there', to young children right across the world. Open the Book brings the Bible to life through its creative and interactive storytelling approach.

From England to Kyrgyzstan, storytelling teams visit schools and present a ten to fifteen-minute scripted Bible story, designed to be interactive.

Over many years, hundreds of volunteers and creative storytelling teams have shared the ageless stories in thousands of primary schools. They have created lasting memories, sparked the imagination, given hope, taught important lessons, connected generations and touched the hearts of countless young people and their teachers.

Fiona, a member of the Open the Book staff team at Bible Society, says:

"With 95 per cent of children no longer in church, who else will tell them these powerful, life changing stories and take the word into our neighbourhoods?"

If you're interested in joining our parish Open the Book team, who go into Newburn and Throckley primary schools, please get in touch with Jennie Jones.

Bethany - Welcome



BETHANY

We meet on the third Wednesday of the month in St Mary's, Throckley at 1pm.

We will be observing some restrictions owing to the continuing Covid situation. As previously we will have a time of worship, an activity or quiz and there will be a cuppa with light refreshments.

ALL ARE WELCOME - we look forward to seeing friends old and new.

There is no charge - voluntary donations to cover expenses can be given.

Please contact Margaret Ledger on 0191 2672953 for more info if required



Noah's Ark Playgroup

Wednesday 10-11.30am
(school term time only)

Newburn Parish Hall

£1.50 per family,
Refreshments provided



Should the Churches agree on a common date for Easter?

That is the question for the leaders of the Roman Catholic and the Eastern Orthodox Churches, as this year (2025) marks the 1700th anniversary of the First Ecumenical Council of Nicaea.

Patriarch Bartholomew of Constantinople believes that 2025 is a 'golden opportunity' for Catholic and Orthodox believers to finally agree on a joint date for Easter, because this year also brings a 'fortunate alignment' of the Easter dates of both churches.

"It is indeed regrettable that 1700 years later, we are still debating this issue," he says.

Any agreement would only pertain to the date of Easter's celebration. It would not involve any joint liturgical practices. Those would require ecclesial communion between the churches, something which does not yet exist.

In 2016 the Archbishop of Canterbury held talks with Coptic Pope Tawadros II in Cairo, when he hoped that a unified date for Easter might be achieved within ten years. He commented that, for the C of E, either the second or third Sunday in April would be acceptable.

This year, Easter is on 20th April. Look out for our Easter week service details in the April magazine.



THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND

Please come to our:

ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING

23rd March 2025
During the 10am service
at St Mary's



Reflecting Faith: The Meaning of Baptism

Last month we considered the overall 'look' of a church building and how that often reflects the way faith is celebrated inside.

One of the clearest visual symbols inside a church building relates to where the font, used for baptism, is placed.

We often think of Baptism as being uniquely Christian, but this is not the case. Most established religions have some form of rite to welcome a new person – regardless of their age – into their fellowship.

If you think of Jesus being baptised in the river Jordan by John, it is clear that this was something within the Jewish practice happening before 'Christianity' came into being.

When Paul writes to the Corinthians in his first letter, he compares the Christian rite with baptism 'into Moses in the sea'. This comes from him being a Hillelite rabbi who argued that as 'the Jews passed from slavery in Egypt through the Red Sea into Canaan, so the Gentile passed from heathenism through baptism into the "promised land" '.

Baptism was intended as a symbolic action of outward cleansing, meaning change, from not being part of the 'group' to being welcomed into it. It was accepted that the person's inside did not change! There was and still remains nothing magical about that (unfortunately).

In the Book of Acts there is an instance where one person chose to follow Christ, and the whole family was baptised.

The Early Church took baptism very seriously, and new believers had to spend a good length of time preparing for it. As the years passed, the babies of Christian believers came to be baptised shortly after birth.

Revd Dr Jo White

Poet's Corner

Desert Difficulties

Luke 4:1-12, John 16:33

Life is difficult, sometimes.
No matter how faithful,
no matter how trusting,
no matter how hard we try,
life is difficult, sometimes.

Jesus understands.
He walked in the desert,
day after day after day.
Faithful and trusting, yes,
but hungry and weakened and vulnerable
and tempted.

Even for Jesus
life was difficult,
especially for Jesus,
knowing the end from the beginning.
But He overcame the desert.
He overcame death.

The world is full of trouble,
but He overcame the world.
Take heart!
Jesus can help.

By Daphne Kitching

Editor: Nigel Beeton writes: Eighty years ago the war was, thankfully, entering its final stages. As Allied troops advanced across Europe the Nazi war machine was losing the territory and resources with which to fight. On 29th March the very last V1 'doodlebug' flying bomb was launched before its launch ramp was captured, and, again thankfully, it crashed harmlessly into a field near Woolmer Green in Hertfordshire.

The Last Bomb

09:00 29th March 1945 Woolmer Green, Hertfordshire:

They heard it rattle, and they heard it stop.
They ran for cover, and they heard it drop.
A mighty bang – but far away
They watched the smoke cloud drift away.
“No-one hurt!” The news went round,
“Within a field it hit the ground!”
There was joy that day in Woolmer Green
But no-one knew just what they’d seen!
The bomb that fell that fell upon that day
The last that ever came our way!
The launching sites were overrun
The German bombs no more could come.
For five and sixty months they fell
Causing death and living hell
Forty thousand folk – now dead
Our whole nation lived in dread.
For our lost people still we grieve
We wonder what their loss achieved?
The old and children don’t fight wars;
Their deaths advanced no evil cause.
And yet, right to the present day
In wars they’re fighting far away
Upon the young, the old, the ill
The futile bombs are falling still.

By Nigel Beeton

“Be joyful, keep the faith, do the little things”

He said “Be joyful, keep the faith
And do the little things”
Words spoken by a Celtic Saint
To common folk and kings.

The joy of the Lord is our strength
And faith in the goodness of God,
He has a path for us to walk
One He’s already trod.

All that He plans for us to do
May seem of little worth,
But they’re the very things He’ll use
To bring His love to earth.

By Megan Carter



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Rev Allison Harding (Vicar)

Please contact Allison to arrange Baptism, Confirmation or Marriage. If you know of people who are ill or are in hospital please let us know.

The deadline for any inclusions for the magazine is

Two Sundays before the last Sunday of the month

Please either email or hand to Helen Dawson.
helenrdawson@yahoo.co.uk

If you have any questions or opinions about the magazine content and style, or would like to write an article please get in touch.

All feedback welcome.

If you know of anyone who would like to receive a magazine (only £5.00 per annum) please get in touch and we will add their name to the distribution list.