

NEWSTAND *Lite*

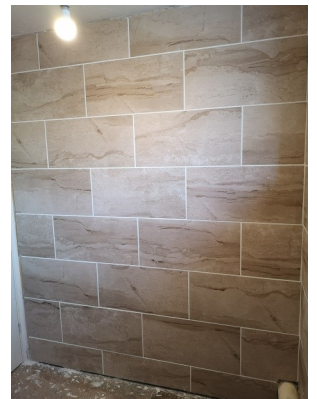


6th edition, 31 May 2020

*"When you go to church you should actively seek something.
You must not go like an empty basket, waiting passively to be filled."
Roger William Riis*

Now over 10 weeks into the restrictions on our daily lives and our ability to worship God in our regular building, some of us may well be finding our spiritual baskets a little on the empty side. Hopefully some of the content in this edition of Newstand Lite will help to refill that basket, but as the quote above indicates, we should not just accept what is given to us. Instead we should be seeking to create our own spiritual shopping list, thinking and praying about what we want from the new "normal" that we will be coming back to when we can return to St. Andrew's building. So please do check out the article and survey questions on page 5 about how we might get ready for the new "normal" to ensure everyone's voice is heard.

You may recall from the last edition of Newstand that I'm keeping myself sane (or some definition of sane!) by rebuilding our shower room. It's an interesting analogy with our recent Christian calendar in the way the project is proceeding. The condemnation of the original shower room; it's death (and destruction!); the empty tomb; signs of a resurrection (the suite contents have been delivered); a denial ("this is not the shower room until I see and touch vitreous enamel"). I'm not quite sure that I can claim to have reached the Pentecost stage in being able to declare the start of the new shower room, but two walls are tiled, the shower base is down and soon the shower cabinet, sink and toilet will be going in (with luck!). It's going to be a new "normal" for us when it is finished, and we are prepared and looking forward to its coming.



I hope and pray that we can all look forward to and be able to celebrate our faith together in a few months' time, whether in person or through other means. Till then, please enjoy this even larger edition of Newstand *Lite* and give thanks to the God given talents of all who contributed to it in any way, especially Carla for the magnificent "In the world I want to live in..." poem on the centre pages.

Stay safe everyone — God is with us.

Tim

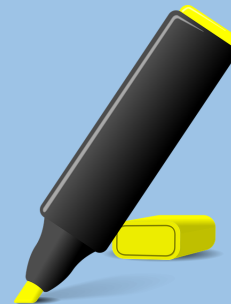
St. Andrew's United Reformed Church
Eastfield Avenue, Monkseaton, Whitley Bay, NE25 8LU

<http://standrewsmonseatonurc.org.uk>

   monkseatonurc

They're in here somewhere...

There are names of sixteen (16) books of the bible hidden in the paragraph below. A preacher found 15 books in twenty minutes; it took him 3 weeks just to find the 16th one! HAVE FUN!



I once made a remark about the hidden books of the Bible (merely by a fluke). It kept people looking so hard for facts, and for others, it was a revelation. Some were in a jam, especially since the names of the books were not capitalized. But the truth finally struck home to numbers of our readers. To others it was a job. We want it to be a most fascinating little moment for you. Yes, there will be some really easy ones to spot. Others may require judges to help find them. I will quickly admit it usually takes a minister to find one of them, and there will be loud lamentations when it is found. A little lady says she brews a cup of tea so she can concentrate better. See how well you can compete. Relax now, for there really are sixteen books of the Bible in this paragraph.

Someone had to do it!

Come on bakers and knitters — something to work out for the next church fair.



Please do send in your amusing stories, photos, poems, prayers, thank you notes, reflections, memories and anything else you think fitting to include in *Newstand Lite*. They can be emailed to standrewsnewstand@gmail.com or posted to Tim Cooke, 4, Kingfisher Way, Blyth, NE24 3QR

Minister's Musings

Dear Friends,

I recently realised that I have been harbouring the hope that when we re-open our church building, we will be able to return to the way we were together. I know that this hope is irrational, given all that we know about Covid-19. But deep in my heart that hope was alive and kicking. It was only when I read *Ready for the new "normal"* put out by the Synod Moderators that I had to confront the fact that it would not be possible. I confess to feeling teary eyed.

Sunday morning at church has been part of my life for the vast majority of my years. I cannot count the number of different churches I've worshipped in; there are at least twelve that have been my spiritual home in one way or another over the years (I move a lot). Yet the practice of Sunday worship is what is constant – and it has *always* included singing and fellowship, handshakes and hugs. I cannot imagine what a "new normal" will feel like or what the change will mean for people who have worshipped in the same way or same building for decades.

So I am letting myself grieve. I'm letting myself feel miserable and sad and even a little angry that things are not going to just snap back to normal. My head knows that the only way forward is to let my heart feel a little bit broken for now.

**Thanks be to God for
the steadfast love that
never lets us go and
will guide us into the
"new normal"**

I think about the disciples after the Ascension and before Pentecost. I bet they were hurt that Jesus left. I bet they wondered how on earth they were going to carry on. I bet they didn't guess that the power of the Spirit would come the way it came. There was plenty of unknowing, sadness and fear in the pre-Pentecost meeting rooms. Some of them may have been

hopeful (God bless them, the lucky ones) and eager for the "new normal". And maybe some of us are. But it may take a while for me to get there.

The elders and I have been working to understand when and how we may be able to re-open and find our way to a "new normal". In these pages you will find a survey. It is only six questions long. Please read it and answer the questions. We need

your thoughts before we can make this important decision.

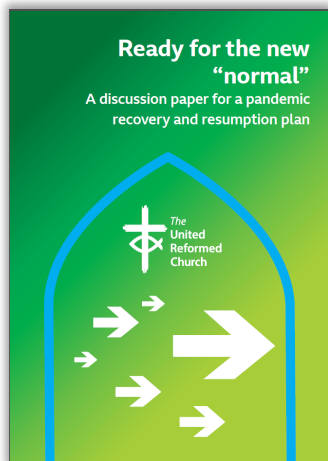
Please return the surveys to Ray or your elder (who will pass them to Ray) by Wednesday 17 June.

And if you find you feel a little teary-eyed, do not be surprised. Be kind to yourself. We are facing a big loss. The good news is that we will face it together, and we are promised that in time we will

find our way forward. Thanks be to God for the steadfast love that never lets us go and will guide us into the "new normal".

In Christian love,

Carla



Pentecost

Having been prevented from joining us at Pentecost, Peter Moth has instead submitted this reminiscence to remind you that you don't get away scot-free!

We never called it Pentecost. It was always Whit Sunday, Whit Monday, Whit Week and best of all, the Whit Week Walks, but never Pentecost:

The scholars' walk in Manchester
Is quite a pretty sight,
The boys all have their faces washed,
Their boots with blacking bright.
The girls all have their hair in curl,
Their dresses spotless white.

Eat your heart out, W Shakespeare. At Whitsuntide, the Sunday Schools, Mothers' Unions, Scouts and Cubs and Guides filled the Manchester streets and walked to witness to their faith, but mainly for fun. Church of England on the Sunday, Catholics on the Monday, all marching behind their parish banners in their frocks and hats and suits, all bought for the occasion, and vying with their neighbours to see who could put on the best show. In the front were the Scouts with their drums and bugles and their knees sticking out of shorts that looked baggy enough to carry 3 cwt of coal as well as a couple of skinny legs. They provided the music.

But chiefly it was the big family reunion of the year, and everyone turned out: Grandads and Grandmas, cousins and uncles and aunts – any female who was over 30 and not your mum or your granny was always “aunty” - and every relative, however distant, was one of “us”. It was always “Our” Albert, “Our” Elsie or “Our” Hilda. In my mother's case it was “Our Nellie”. It was a celebration of family, and for a 4 year old it was an initiation into the complex network of uncles and aunts and grandads and grandmas who were “Us”. And when the drums struck up and the bugles sounded the noise was enough to bring down the walls of Barmouth Street Baths where we'd assembled, never mind Jericho.

The money was good too! Aunties always coughed up a sixpence or a shilling, and sometimes a previously unknown Godmother slipped you a half-crown. What riches!

But no-one mentioned Pentecost; not even the vicar. It was Whit, and we were walking.

Four years later the young buglers were picking their way through the bombed-out streets of the same Manchester to enlist and follow a different bugle-call. Some of them would never return to walk again.



Whit Walks 1938

“There is an Indian proverb that says everyone is a house with four rooms, a physical, a mental, an emotional and a spiritual. Most of us tend to live in one room most of the time but unless we go into every room every day, even if only to keep it aired, we are not a complete person.”

Rumer Godden

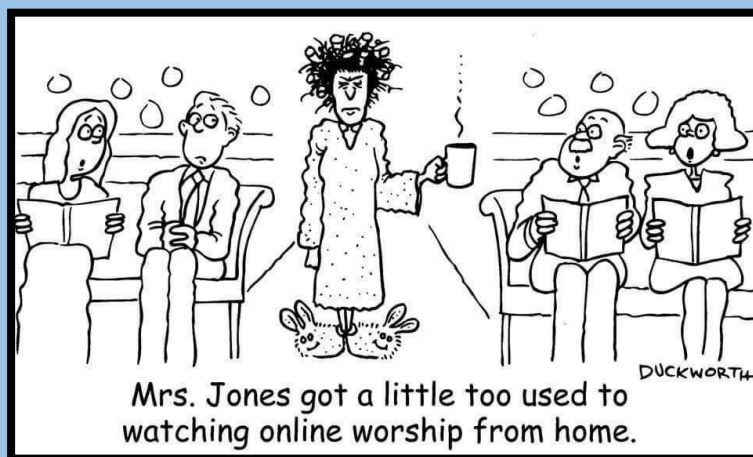
Ready for the new “Normal”

The Reopening of St Andrew’s

We are in consultation about when and how we will resume public worship. To help us make the decision, we want to know what you think. Our primary concern is to keep people as safe and healthy as possible, so when we resume public worship it will incorporate the latest scientific advice (e.g. cleaning, social distancing). We are also keen to stay connected with those who may not be able to return for some time yet because of shielding or other health concerns.

Please share your answers to this survey **by Wednesday 17th June** if possible by phoning your elder, post them to Ray Hammond, 3 Cauldwell Close Whitley Bay NE25 8LP or email to annray@talktalk.net.

Please note that when we return, it will not be a “back to normal” situation. The choice of seating will be significantly limited. And we may not be able safely to sing or serve coffee for some time. We will all have to exercise our adaptability muscles and find a “new normal”. It may take a while. Fortunately we know that we are resilient at heart and want to do what’s right for everyone.



Survey questions:

1. Are you shielding or self-isolating?
2. Do you have a sense of when (what month) it might be safe for you to attend worship? We are considering the possibility of a September re-opening. We realise that circumstances could arise that would change our thinking about the opening date.
3. If St Andrew’s were to resume public worship in the next few months, would you plan to attend?
4. If you do not plan to attend St Andrew’s when it resumes public worship, are you happy for others to attend?
5. If St Andrew’s were to resume public worship and you chose not to attend for health reasons, would you like to receive the order of service and sermon by email, post, CD or DVD?
6. If St Andrew’s were to resume public worship and if it were possible to live stream the service, would you like to join the worship from your home in that way?

Ray

In the world I want to live...

A world of care and kindness, with loneliness no more,
and hands raise up in greeting and stretch to open doors.
The bonds between us grow strong; a smile, a wave, a call
and all we've learned in lockdown will help in the long haul.

No virus keeps us distant or fearful of all touch;
We greet our friends and families with hugs, kisses and such.
We move about so freely, inviting friends to dine.
We cuddle our grandchildren. Oh that will be so fine!

In the world I want to live in, our bounties are all shared,
and there is no more poverty, no want, no hunger bared.
For hardship has become hope, each stranger now a friend.
Oh how I want to live there, with love that knows no end.

In the world I want to live in every person is God-giv'n -
a unique wondrous creation, first crafted in God's heav'n.
We are curious and accepting, quick to welcome, slow to judge.
Race, colour, creed don't matter; opinions don't begrudge.

The vulnerable are cherished, *disabled's* not a word.
The name of all "beloved". All hope is undeterred.
Possibility is endless; each person is a gift.
No one is e'er neglected; a helping hand is swift.

The pay of those who keep us well, and fed and clothed and cared for
reflects the loving care they give; they really do deserve more.
The endless hours of labour, and work and toil and sweat,
must be well rewarded, for we are in their debt.

The world I want to live in is made for peace, not war.
One's home is safe and secure, and violence is no more.
And fear has done a runner, danger has left the land.
The wounds of war have healed up, the broken now can stand.

When tears fall in the land I love, they're met with tender care,
and belly laughs and giggles are the kinds of things we share.
We hum along with birdsong, and stop to catch our breath,
delight in God's creation, and new life out of death.

The oceans roll in waves of blue, the seagulls swoop in joy.
Clear streams run through pastures green, nature her songs employ.
No turtles choke on plastic, no fish from mercury die.
Fresh breezes caress softly, no poison in the sky.

We think before we act: how will grandchildren live?
The seventh generation will have much to forgive
if we do not count the cost of greedy, selfish ways.
The world I want to live in wants to last for endless days.

Imaginations run wild, creative juices flow.
Instead of bleak conformity, children truly will grow
and sing the songs of their own souls, a tune we love to hear,
one we ne'er grow tired of, and God bends down an ear.

With leaders of integrity, the truth will have its way.
And people live in harmony, grateful for the new day.
Respect, connection, hand in hand, we live the way we're meant.
All voices heard, all cherished, under God's enormous tent.

Rainbows pierce right through the clouds, the earth in balance sings.
Neighbourliness rules the day, the night its peace will bring.
Hope lights our lives and brightens the dullest, darkest days,
and hearts sing hallelujah, the soul lifts up in praise.

And church, well church, has leaked out, its walls no more confine,
the hope, love, joy and peace that God gives as a lifeline.
The Word so full of meaning, its mysteries to unfold;
the love of God in Jesus, the story that is told.

Fruits of the Spirit flourish, music's beauty fills the land.
Songs old and new will nourish a love so very grand
that it is too big to capture, too immense to understand.
Faith, hope and trust our bywords; compassion is our brand.

This world I want to live in, this hope our hearts behold
is nearer than we think it is, if we dare to be so bold.
It's called the reign of heav'n on earth, a place where none are lost
and we can live there right now if we're willing to pay the cost.

For love is hard and love is strong and love will costly be.
It asks so very much of us; Christ showed us on the tree.
And yet it is the only way: our truth, our life, our best.
The love of God poured in our hearts makes possible the rest.

This Pentecost we dream of the world as it should be.
And cast our fate with Jesus, who came to set us free
from fear and short-sightedness, he lifts our heads to see
the beautiful possibilities of what our world can be.

We'll join with all our neighbours, with strangers and with friends,
to fashion a new world where love truly never ends.
We'll lift our voice in praises; we'll raise our hands in prayer.
We'll offer our thanksgiving; our joy will fill the air.

God's commonwealth our vision; Christ's passion is our way.
Together we will welcome the brand new day.

Revd Dr Carla Grosch-Miller

Contributors

Joy Abbott, Susan Anderson, Sue Ames, Joan Blanchfield, Joy Campbell, Susan Clark, Tim, Lucy and Sophie Cooke, Julie Edwardson, Catriona Fenwick, Rita Grimshaw, David Grosch-Miller, Kath and Chris Hales, Hazel Hall, Paul Hartley, Gillian Heads, Jenny Hooper, Bill Hopper, Una Ketteridge, Rhoda Lee, Carole Mallett, Iain Ord, Dorothy Postle, Celia Purves, Ann Sinclair, Ann and Derek Stemberge, Valerie Taylor, Rachel Ward and Margaret Varley, Pat Wardle, Barbara Watson, Maurice Wilson-Voke and Joan Yarrow

How the poem was made

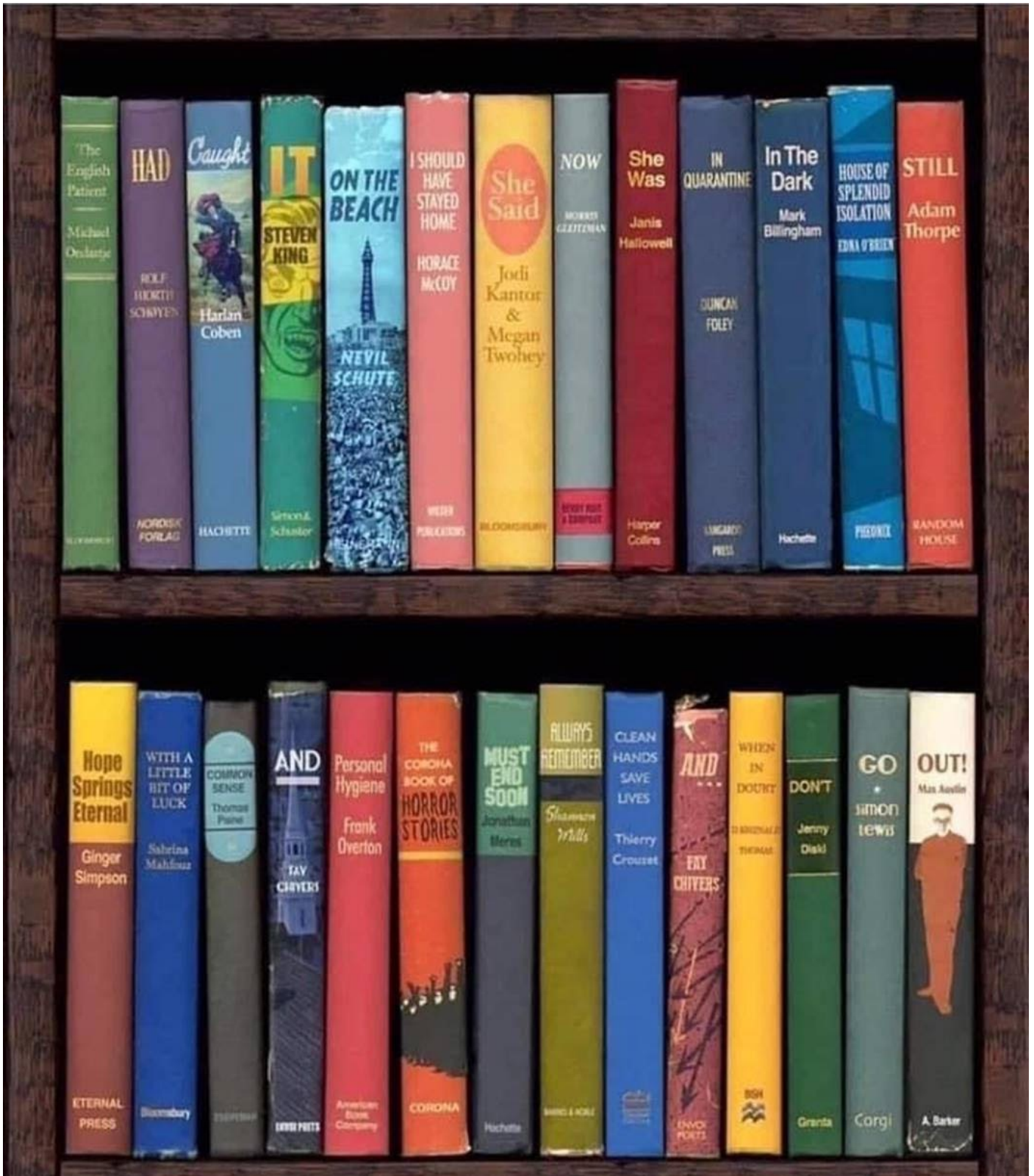
Thank you to everyone who sent me a line or more responding to the statement *In the world I want to live in*. I read and inwardly digested all the comments, noted common themes (there were a lot of them) and lovely turns of phrase, and then started writing. I don't normally write in rhyme so I apologise to those of you more accomplished in that form for the amateurish outcome. Hopefully each contributor will recognise their ideas and maybe even their turn of phrase. The only contribution I didn't know what to do with was Bill Hopper's perfectly formed poem, which reflects how much many of us would like to get back to church:

In the world I want to live in...

I would sit in church before the service
in quiet contemplation
I would read the order of worship
with genuine anticipation
I would then drift into a happy world
of hazy meditation
But jolt back to reality
with the Elder's annunciation!!!

Carla

Some people have too much time on their hands, when they arrange their books like this!



Personally, I've found our house has got less organised, but that may just be me

Tuesday Prayers—at 9:30

Let us come together and pray

Opening Prayer

God says:

I will pour my Spirit on all people.
Come, Holy Spirit, gentle as a dove,
burning as fire,
powerful as the wind.
Come Holy Spirit Come.

Prayer of Confession

God, your love is unconditional.
Your gifts are offered with measureless generosity.
Your peace is all-encompassing.
Forgive us for the times when we have put conditions on our willingness to care, when we have kept what you have given us to ourselves and not shared with others.
Forgive us, restore us, renew us by your Spirit of life. **AMEN**

In an Affirmation for Pentecost

We believe in a loving God,
whose Word sustains our lives
and the work of our hands in the world.
God is life.

We believe in God's Son among us,
sowing the seed of life's renewal.
He lived among the poor
to show the meaning of love.
Jesus Christ is Lord

We believe in the Holy Spirit of life,
making us one with God,
renewing our strength with Her own.
The Spirit is love. **AMEN**

Let us say together the Prayer Jesus taught us:

Our Father who art in heaven...for thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory for ever and ever. **AMEN**

Prayers of Intercession

Loving God,
We ask for the gift of your Holy Spirit.
Help us to know your Spirit's presence wherever we pray.

We ask for the energy and vision of your Spirit for those who are tiring in the battle against injustice and oppression; for those exhausted by the struggle with poverty and hunger. Help them to know your Spirit's presence wherever we pray.

We ask for the hope and comfort of your Spirit for those whose lives are overshadowed by illness or pain; for those whose lives are darkened by sorrow or bereavement. Help them to know your Spirit's presence wherever we pray.

We ask for the peace and joy of your Spirit for those living in the shadows of war and violence; for those eaten up by guilt, anxiety and loneliness. Help them to know your Spirit's presence wherever we pray.

We ask for the guidance and strength of your Spirit for medical researchers working towards vaccines to combat this global pandemic; for those in governments guiding policies and making national decisions. Help them to know your Spirit's presence wherever we pray.

We ask for the love and courage of your Spirit for those reaching out to comfort the distressed; for those reaching out to Christians who feel lost. Help them to know your Spirit's presence wherever we pray.

Loving God,

We ask for the assurance of your Spirit in our relationships;
in our work and service;
in our time in prayer;
in our times of joy and pain.

In Jesus' name: **AMEN**

Blessing

Send your Spirit among us, and breathe your peace upon us. **AMEN**

*Some prayers from John Harvey & David Hamflett
...Fire & Bread... amended*

Submitted by the Hope 4 Team



John & I together with the rest of our family would like to thank you all for your cards, flowers and sympathy following the death of my mother, Sylvia Parr.

Mum had been ill for a long time but fought it with tenacity. Once the cancer took over it was mercifully quick and she died peacefully in her sleep. She did suffer from lack of contact with her loved ones during lockdown, but my sister and I were able to spend her last two days by her bedside. We pay tribute to the staff at Eastbourne House for the exemplary care they gave her during her residency there.

The funeral at Tynemouth crematorium was very quiet with only six family members to pay our last respects. Our thanks go to Carla for giving her a lovely send off.

Angela Cook

A lesson and a couple of laughs

Do you sometimes get pestered by unwanted telephone calls from people who want to either sell you something or get you to take part in a survey? If you see a number on your phone you don't recognise, try answering the phone with, "Hello, thanks for ringing. You're on the air now!" Most of them will hang up.

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A man running a little behind schedule arrived at a church film club evening and, in the semi darkness, he managed to find a seat. As his eyes adjusted to the darkness, he was surprised to see a dog sitting beside its master in the row ahead, intently watching the film. It even seemed to be enjoying the film, wagging its tail in the happy bits, drooping its ears at the sad bits, and hiding its eyes with its paws at the scary bits. At the end the man approached the dog's owner, "Wow, I'm amazed at how your dog really seemed to enjoy the film" The owner replied, "Yes, I can't believe it myself, because he hated the book."

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Two friends were discussing the vicar's sermon on tithing. "Times are difficult," said one, "but it seems an important subject and I suppose we should follow what he said." His friend commented, "I wonder, though, how far you can take this tithing business. For instance, in this time of shortages, if I managed to buy thirty toilet rolls, would I be expected to give three to the church?"

An act of worship for Pentecost

Carla and the Cooke family have been at it again, this time to produce a short act of worship for Pentecost, 31 May 2020. It includes Carla reading "In the world I want to live in...", an adaptation of Acts 2 "Pentecost comes every year", read by the whole Cooke family and the Virtual Church Choir, of which Lucy is a core member, singing a beautiful rendition of Graham Kendrick's "Beauty for Brokenness".



You can watch the recording via the church website by going to <https://standrewsmonkseatonurc.org.uk> and clicking on the link under the "Minister's Reflection" heading, or going to "Minister's Musings" under the "Church Life" menu at the top of the page and locating the reflection titled "2020 May 31 Pentecost Sunday! In the world I want to live in..." (if you are viewing this copy of Newstand Lite on your computer, tablet or phone, you can click the link to go directly to the page).

If you can't access the Internet then we can provide the recording as a DVD. Please ring and leave a message with Tim and Lucy on 01670 354834, or contact your Elder to request a copy via them, and we will post one out to you.

The Virtual Church Choir

For those who enjoy the singing of the Virtual Church Choir, you can access more of their performances here: <https://tinyurl.com/VirtualChurchChoir>.

Double-click on the folder of the recording you want to listen to and then double-click on the recording file to play it.

You can find out more about the Virtual Church Choir on the Cathedral website here:

<https://newcastlecathedral.org.uk/virtual-church-choir/>

Newcastle Cathedral have their virtual services on YouTube at 10am each Sunday and they can be watched afterwards here: <https://tinyurl.com/NclCathedral>. They also have prayers at 8:30 each day that are "streamed" from their Facebook page here: <https://www.facebook.com/NewcastleCathedral/>



If you've not found all those books, maybe this list will help:

Mark, Luke, Kings, Acts, Revelation, James, Ruth, Numbers, Job, Amos, Esther, Judges, Titus, Lamentations, Hebrews, Peter

Prayers and thoughts for this moment

God of love and light,
In this time of fear, give us your peace.
In this time of isolation, give us your presence.
In this time of sickness, give us your healing.
In this time of uncertainty, give us your wisdom.
In this time of darkness, shine your light upon us all.
In Jesus' name, Amen

From Tear Fund

Behold, Lord, an empty vessel that needs to be filled. My Lord, fill it.

I am weak in the faith; strengthen me.

I am cold in love; warm me and make me fervent, that my love may go out to my neighbour.

I do not have a strong and firm faith; at times I doubt and am unable to trust you altogether. Oh Lord, help me. Strengthen my faith and trust in you. In you I have sealed the treasure of all I have.

I am poor; you are rich and came to be merciful to the poor.

I am a sinner; you are upright.

Wash me, there is an abundance of sin; in you is the fullness of righteousness.

Therefore, I will remain with you, from whom I can receive, but to whom I may not give.

Amen

Martin Luther

