

NEWSTAND



February 2021

Volume 87 Issue 2

There are many of you who I am sure are looking forward with anticipation to receiving your vaccination for Covid-19, or perhaps have already received your first, or even second, dose. But please don't go rushing out as soon as you have had it thinking you are immune. It takes several weeks for your body to start to build immunity and not till the second dose and a period of weeks after that is your immunity maximised. Till then, please keep in mind and actions of the tryptic of words — Hands~Face~Space — and then, hopefully, once we are through into the warmth of summer we will finally be able to come together and embrace in those long missed hugs and handshakes.

As we look forward to getting some semblance of freedom back in our lives, we also look forward to saying goodbye to winter and the arrival of spring, bringing with it the colour of the earliest flowers that we hope won't then get clobbered by a late frost or even snow. We also will be saying a very fond farewell to Carla and a warm welcome to our Interim Moderator, Andrew. I am sure we are all very grateful to them both for the fellowship and guidance they have given us, and will give us, to help us find our future purpose and a Minister to lead us in that.

In addition to looking forward, we can also look back and join in a great celebration for the church building this month as it celebrates its 80th anniversary. "The Great Day", as the Church magazine called it, was celebrated on 22nd February 1941.

"Many days stand out prominently in the history of nations and in the lives of individuals. For St. Andrew's Church at Monkseaton, Saturday, February 22nd will ever be fragrantly remembered as a red letter day in the history of the Church. A smiling sun on a pure white world heralded The Day. It was a happy and optimistic crowd of over 300 that gathered within and without the hall to take part in the epoch-making scene that followed". The new building was dedicated by the Moderator of the Northern Presbytery, Revd A.A. Smith, with the address given by Revd. A. Thomas Ogilvie, who had been the first Moderator in charge when the Church was founded in 1932 (his son, Sandy Ogilvie, is known to many of you and still active in the URC in Durham).

As we celebrate this anniversary, we look forward to being able to celebrate many more in years to come.

Stay safe everyone — God is with us.

Tim

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

<http://stAndrew'smonkseatonurc.org.uk>



monkseatonurc

Going to the Fair!

Many of us are missing the social activities that were organised in 'normal' times, especially the Church Fair which was a wonderful social event as well as a major fundraiser, not only for the church, but also for the charities we support each year.

It's a while ago now, so to refresh your memory the top three charities voted for were: Woodlawn School, Admiral Nurses and Pearey House.

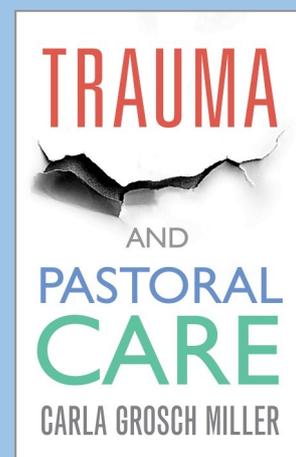
It has been suggested by some people that they would like to give some of the money that they would have normally spent at the Church Fair to the church (they do realise they will not be getting anything in return!). If you feel you would like to contribute to last year's 'Church Fair Fund', donations can be sent to Kevin, marked as such, or can be collected by getting in touch with Ann & Ray Hammond (0191 252 3319).

The Flower Team has available supplies of marmalade (orange and lemon), apple chutney and redcurrant jelly (thanks to Catriona and Barbara Watson). Contact Ann & Ray if you would like to order some and delivery can be arranged.

Ann Hammond
On behalf of the Activities Team

Carla's new book **Trauma and Pastoral Care** will be coming out in the summer. Here is a line from the acknowledgements part of the Introduction:

"Finally I want to thank St Andrew's United Reformed Church, Monkseaton, who provided the opportunity for me to put flesh on words and theories. I am grateful to have been able to seek to practise what I teach and preach with such a responsive and caring congregation."



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

Minister's Musings

It is hard for me to believe that it is time to say Goodbye. As I have said many times before and will say again, it has been a wonderful privilege to come alongside you the last eighteen months. I have loved meeting you and being a part of the life of St Andrew's. I have loved working with the Elders and the Transitional Working Group. And I have loved leading worship. When I left ministry on Easter 2016, I really thought I was done. Turns out I was wrong. And it turns out that it can be good to be wrong about things. It makes the new, surprising thing ever more delightful and appreciated.

I leave you in good stead and in good heart, pandemic aside. St Andrew's has many gifts and resources. The strength of this caring community, the commitment and service of many, and the grace of our loving God are such that I believe you can weather whatever lies ahead. Together we learned new skills in the months before the pandemic and reaped the reward of getting to know others better, learning to make the space to listen to different opinions, and appreciating that patience and tolerance help us to move ahead together. During the pandemic we continued our learning – overcoming discomfort with online meetings and worship, keeping compassionate distance with masks when we could be together, striving to keep everyone connected when not all have access to or comfort with technology. I can imagine the joy that will be when everyone is finally able to come back to church to worship together.

While it grieves me that I cannot look each one of you in the eye, shake your hand or

hug you, and tell you how much it has meant to me to get to know you, I know that I am not alone in this. I think of the many during the last ten months who were not able to hold the hands of those they love because of this rotten coronavirus. We have all suffered from the lack of contact and touch, but some much more so. It is just the way it is. So please imagine that I have taken your hand or risked a hug, and feel my deep affection and appreciation for each one of you.

In the world of transitional ministry, it is customary that when the transitional minister leaves, she really leaves. This is so that the congregation can turn its attention to the future, without thought of that minister (except, of course, hopefully to remember some skills and lessons learned). That means that I won't be returning to St Andrew's to lead worship. But while I will not be with you, you will continue to hold a special place in my heart. Just as I am convinced that you have always held a special place in God's heart. There is just too much grace that flows around and through you for that not to be true.

**The strength of
this caring
community, the
commitment and
service of many,
and the grace of
our loving God are
such that I believe
you can weather
whatever lies
ahead.**

Sunday 14 February will be my last Sunday with you. From that time the Elders will focus on the future. In the pages that follow you will be introduced to the Interim Moderator, Andrew Graydon, who will accompany St Andrew's in the vacancy period and assist you through the process of finding a new minister. It can be a lengthy process, but as we have learned, patience and listening will help you to navigate it together as you discover the future that God has for you.

God bless you, and bless you well,

In Christian love,
Carla

What if it's just Nature?

by Julie Sheldon

What if it's just Nature
Taking back control
Questioning the actions
Of every living soul

What if it's just Nature
Asking us to stop
To think about our planet
And treasure what we've got

What if it's just Nature
Slowing us right down
Time to look around us
And see what can be found

What if it's just Nature
Asking us to think
What is it that we really need?
Love, health and food and drink

What if it's just Nature
Giving us the time
To be more understanding,
Generous and kind

What if it's just Nature
Asking us to care
To think about each other
And sometimes just be there

What if it's just Nature
Sending us this pain
Time to re-evaluate
Before we're all insane

What if it's just Nature
Setting us a test
To try to save our planet
Let's do our very best!

<https://www.poetry-festival.co.uk/lockdown-poems/>

The above is one of the poems read at the last Zoom Poetry Evening. If you wish to take part in future evenings, please e-mail Carole Moore on carolemoore49@btinternet.com and she will send you the Zoom link. She will also send you a reminder on the day.

Both Margaret and Joan received a Christmas card, along with the itinerary from the Leader and Girls of the 6th Monkseaton Guides indicating what they had been engaged in doing throughout the past year. This was a very unexpected surprise and delightfully received, so we thought we would like to show how much we appreciated this by saying "Thank You" for the caring and thoughtfulness that was behind this gesture.

We look forward that hopefully we will be able to worship together again soon.
May God bless you all and keep you safe.

Joan Polkinghorn and Margaret Park

Dear friends at St Andrew's,

As I start my time as your Interim Moderator, I'd like to say how much I'm looking forward to being part of your search for a new minister. Some of you will know me better than others and I thought it would be helpful to say a little about myself. I am originally from Yorkshire but have been based in the North East for 25 years now (with a couple of expat assignments in Belgium and Germany thrown in). I work in Benton as a research scientist for Procter & Gamble, although these days nearly all my time is spent working from our home in Greenside (the one near Ryton). It's a home I share with my wife, Verity, our young son, Savile, and our cat, Tiger. In my spare time, I used to enjoy choral singing when that was possible and I've rediscovered my fondness for walking and listening to music of all kinds. I'm a keen cook and a barely competent gardener.



I've been part of the URC since childhood and am an elder of St James's URC in the city centre. I'm also a nationally accredited lay preacher and most of you will have first encountered me in the pulpit of one of the churches in the region. During their last vacancy, I was Interim Moderator of St Columba's North Shields which means that I'm familiar with the process of calling a minister as it's defined in the URC these days. At present, though, I'm not very familiar with St Andrew's and getting to know you better will be my first enjoyable task.

Much of the early work will need to be done remotely, but I'm hopeful that before too long, opportunities to gather will begin to emerge. That will be a welcome day for many and will make our work easier and easier. I'll say more in a future Newstand about what needs to happen in the coming weeks but in the meantime, I send greetings, and hope you are all safe and supported in these most unusual of times.

Yours in Christ,
Andrew

Worship Group – Midweek Service

A reminder that our midweek service of readings and prayers continues to take place (currently via Zoom) on Wednesdays at 10.00 am. The service lasts for 10 – 15 minutes and is followed by around 45 minutes of coffee time and chat, again via Zoom.

If you would like to join us, here are the access details:

Meeting ID : 861 2820 0363

Passcode: InTheFoyer

or use this link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86128200363?pwd=bkdXcTNYeJJVZUtOb0RVVIZyaVJQdz09>

Carole Mallett

Barbara's Cards

If you are finding it difficult to get greetings cards at the moment I will be glad to help out.

I make cards for all occasions, personalised to your own requirements and all the profits go to St. Andrew's Church. Just give me a call on the number below and we can discuss your needs, then I will deliver them to your letterbox.

Barbara Watson 0191 2894464

I WANT TO ASK GOD WHY HE
ALLOWS POVERTY, FAMINE
AND INJUSTICE WHEN HE
COULD DO SOMETHING
ABOUT IT. BUT I'M AFRAID
HE MIGHT ASK ME THE SAME
QUESTION!

URC History Society

If you are interested in the story of English-speaking Congregationalists, English Presbyterians, and Churches of Christ all over the UK, you may wish to consider joining The URC History Society.

For only £20 a year you get two copies of a top grade journal, invitations to events, and a vote at their AGM. They are also happy to accept local churches, as well as individuals, as members.

For further details, visit: <http://www.urchistory.org.uk/>
or email: michael.hopkins@mansfield.oxon.org
or write to: Michael Hopkins, 23, Hilary Road, Farnham, Surrey, GU9 8QX

I would like to express my appreciation to St Andrew's Church in particular the Worship group and all the ladies who regularly used to visit Eothen to do flower arranging. My mother, Joyce Cook, was one of the residents who greatly benefitted from outings to the church and the flower arranging at Eothen. I know how much joy these activities gave her and all who took part. Sadly mum died on 30th December at Eothen but I have some lovely treasured memories and photographs of mum with her friends and flowers.

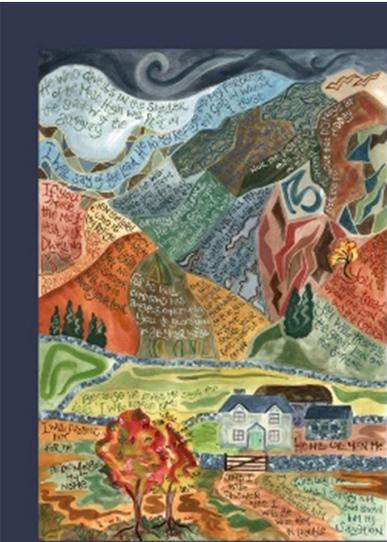
With many thanks to you all

Barbara (Joyce's daughter)

Prayers at 10

Here in the company of our Lord, we can let all our concerns go, because we are completely safe, the presence of the Lord, the one who loves and protects you, is with you.

The Prayers are drawn from Psalm 91



Psalm 91
NANCY DUNN

The Lord covers us with His feathers; we find shelter under His wings.

Loving God, open our hearts to understand the wonder of Your love for us.

The Lord is a strong rock and provides a firm footing so that our feet do not slip.

The Lord pulls us out of deep water; He rescues us.

We need only stretch out our hands and the Lord is there to hold us up.

Loving Lord, we thank You for Your constant loving-kindness and faithful care of us.

AMEN

Prayer of Confession

Gracious God, these times we are going through are hard; we miss our families and friends, we miss coming together to share worship.

Gracious God, help us to lean on You, to feel Your comfort and protection, to lean on You when we feel vulnerable and isolated.

Help us to remember You are our refuge and fortress.

You are always there for us and we can be there for others to share Your love and protection.

We ask that we might never forget we are Your people at all times.

We offer these prayers in the name of Your Son Jesus Christ.

AMEN

And let us say the prayer that Jesus taught his disciples:

Our Father which art in heaven hallowed be thy name...For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory for ever and ever.

AMEN

Prayers of Intercession

Knowing that God protects and holds each of us in love let us pray for those in our communities, country and around the world who are in danger at this time:

Loving God, we pray for the young and vulnerable who are sleeping rough in our communities and cities around the world.

Loving God, we pray for all children whose mental, physical and emotional health is endangered by abuse or neglect.

Lord, may they feel Your protection and love through those who work to support them.

Loving God, we pray for those across the world who face fear, war and terror, drought and famine that are part of their everyday life.

Lord, may they feel Your protection and love through those who work to support them.

Loving God, we pray for ourselves; for the determination to walk in Your shadow; to feel Your love and protection that we might share with others in their great need: for the vulnerable, sick, confused and for those who are bereaved.

Lord, we offer these prayers in the name of Your Son, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

AMEN

Blessing

God of love, carry us with You in these difficult times.

Sustain us, and guide us that we may love and protect others as You love and protect us.

AMEN

Submitted by the Hope 4 Team

Bringing the 'Light of the World' into the dark days of winter

The Christian festival of Candlemas, which is celebrated annually on 2nd February, marks the 'Presentation of Christ in the Temple' (Luke 2:22-40), which is the official name for this feast day. Candlemas is celebrated by Christians throughout the world. Ten years ago, when in Madeira, I witnessed an amazing celebration when hundreds of local people, carrying lighted candles, took to the streets and processed into a cathedral. There were so many people that most of them had to stand outside and listen to the service on loudspeakers.



The name 'Candlemas' evolved from a tradition that churches, while celebrating the time that the child Jesus was presented in the temple, used the occasion to bless the candles they had bought for the coming year. Candles, of course, were the usual source of light in dark church buildings before the electric light became available in the early 1900's. In my parish church, St Andrew's Sonning, a single electric light bulb was installed in October 1934 to supplement the candles that had always been used. It was the first light bulb in the village. The vicar, writing in our parish magazine, said: 'At Evensong, when the congregation was even larger than usual, the church looked extraordinarily beautiful ... and the combination of the electric light and the candles throughout the church being markedly effective.'

Candles, of course, were not only the main source of light – oil lamps being another source – in churches but also in people's homes and workplaces. Most villages, and certainly most towns and cities, had their candlestick maker, hence the nursery rhyme, 'Rub a dub dub, three men in a tub, the butcher, the baker and the candlestick maker'. Candles, or rather the light they provided, were an essential commodity. It is estimated that in the UK we spend £1.9 billion on candles every year!

Despite a modern day LED lighting system that welcomes visitors to my church today, candles are still used for all services. Before Covid, our Sacristan bought over 650 candles every year to replenish over 100+ candlesticks and chandeliers. The oldest chandelier still in use dates from 1675.

Like some other churches, Candlemas has also become the time to celebrate Christingle. The weeks immediately before and after Christmas are extremely busy with carol services for three local schools, and all the other Christmas celebrations so that holding Christingle at Candlemas on the first Sunday of February has become a very popular family occasion amidst the winter gloom. There can be no doubt that the humble candle is the perfect symbol for Jesus as the light that shines into the darkest parts of our world.

*Written by Bob Peters, editor of "The Parish Magazine",
church magazine for St. Andrew's, Sonning, Berkshire
(former PM, Theresa May's home church)*

Transitional Working Group

Final Report – January 2021

We have now held the final meeting of the Transitional Working Group (TWG) with Carla, as she completes her Transitional Ministry and leaves us in February. We have all enjoyed the experience and are most grateful to her, for her excellent leadership, inspiration and the many skills she has taught us. They will stay with us and hopefully we can play a part at St Andrew's in the future. It has been a privilege to be part of this group and we thank Carla for all the hard work, preparing a useful and meaningful agenda for every meeting and compiling our Final Report to the Congregation, December 2020, which was printed in the January 2021 edition of Newstand.

Church Lunches

The church lunch meetings prior to lockdown were very successful and could be a good model to adopt in the future, where the TWG would be willing to support in a similar role.

The Impact of the Coronavirus Pandemic

We expressed sadness that we, together with the Congregation, had achieved so much before lockdown, but were unable to complete the process, due to the Coronavirus pandemic. However, what we have learnt should stay with us and with the support of the congregation, which was apparent in the responses to our letter (printed in the November 2020 edition of Newstand), we are confident that it will work again in the future.

Six Aims that Drive and Shape our Work

We discussed the Six Aims which we created at the beginning of our work. We

thought that they summarised **who we are and what we strive for, as a Church**. We agreed that we need to revisit them and the 2020 Hopes and perhaps revise them. This will be a task for the congregation to discuss at a future church meeting.

These are the Six Aims that Drive and Shape our Work:

- We are aiming to build **cohesion and a common aim** so that we can walk forward together
- We aim to be pastorally sensitive and to foster **care and connection** amongst the whole congregation
- We aim to **maximise participation** - everyone matters!
- We aim to include an element of **spiritual nurture** in whatever we do
- We aim for **healing** where there has been hurt and reconciliation if relationships have been fractured
- We aim to foster **honesty and learn from the past**

People who wish to join St Andrew's Church

We highlighted the need to remember how hard it is for newcomers wishing to join our church. We need to focus on making them feel welcome and including them wherever possible, so that we can get to know them and they can get to know us.

Keeping Everyone Connected

We are concerned about keeping everyone connected to St Andrew's.

(Continued on page 10)

There are people who do not have computers, so therefore cannot use Zoom or YouTube, which allow people access to the weekly Sunday Church Service and the Wednesday Midweek Act of Worship followed by coffee time. The other option might be to look at the possibility of the Sunday Service being reached on the telephone. Thank you to everyone in our Church who has helped to make our

journey successful. We look forward to working with you again in the future, if we are called on by a future Minister and the Elders.

We are: Sue Ames, Robin Christopher, Catriona Fenwick, Chris Hales, Hazel Hall, Ray Hammond, Jenny Hooper, Una Ketteridge, Rhoda Lee, Alison Mood, Celia Purves, Eddie Thompson, John Thorpe, Joan Yarrow

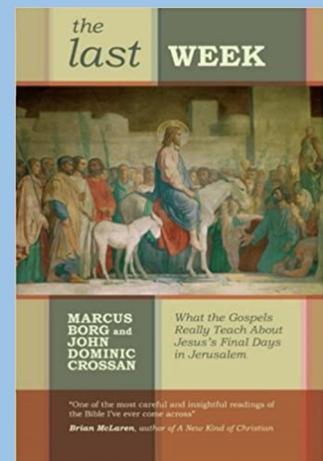
St Andrew's Bible Study Book Group – Lent 2021

In the autumn St Andrew's Bible Study Group met on Zoom every Tuesday for an hour, first of all to study the Book of Psalms and then, in the run up to Christmas, to discuss a book by Marcus Borg and Dominic Crossan entitled 'The First Christmas: What the Gospels Really Teach About Jesus's Birth'. About 17 of us very much enjoyed our weekly fellowship, and discussing the interesting and often challenging ideas put forward by Borg and Crossan about the meaning behind the Christmas stories in Matthew and Luke.

The group has decided to continue and to study another book by Borg and Crossan 'The Last Week', looking at Jesus's final days in Jerusalem, as written about in Mark's Gospel.

Ann Sinclair and I will lead the group. The first session will take place by Zoom on Tuesday February 9th from 10.30 -11.30 a.m. and will run for 8 weeks, each session based around a chapter of the book. Everyone is most welcome to join the study group. If you would like to join us please send Ann and Alison a reply by email so that we can send you relevant information, including the Zoom link, nearer the time. You should also send for a copy of the book and start reading ahead. (From Amazon it is £6.99 on Kindle or £9.99 in paperback.) If you need help to use Zoom, please just ask. Some of the people in the group were new users and soon got the hang of it. We do hope that you will be able to join us.

Ann Sinclair - eansinclair@fiscali.co.uk Alison Mood – alison.mood@talktalk.net



To my fellow pilgrims at St Andrew's! It has been a privilege to spend time with you as Carla has served as your Transitional Minister. As you enter into the next stage of the journey I send my thanks for your welcome and my hopes for the future. May God continue to bless you as you have blessed me and many others.

David Grosch-Miller

Church Calendar for February

Sunday services are via Zoom and YouTube. Mid-week services by Zoom only.

Wednesday	3	Midweek Act of Worship, followed by coffee time (all via Zoom)	10.00 am
Friday	5	Executive Team Meeting (via Zoom)	10.00 am
Sunday	7	Morning Worship: Revd Dr Carla Grosch-Miller (via YouTube and Zoom)	11.00 am
Tuesday	9	Finance Team Meeting (via Zoom)	10.00 am
		Bible Study (via Zoom)	10.30 am
Wednesday	10	Midweek Act of Worship, followed by coffee time (all via Zoom)	10.00 am
Thursday	11	Elders' Meeting (via Zoom)	7.00 pm
Sunday	14	Morning Worship: Revd Dr Carla Grosch-Miller (via YouTube and Zoom)	11.00 am
Monday	15	Activities Team Meeting (via Zoom)	2.00 pm
Tuesday	16	Bible Study (via Zoom)	10.30 am
Wednesday	17	Midweek Act of Worship, followed by coffee time (all via Zoom)	10.00 am
Sunday	21	Morning Worship: Revd Philip Gray (via YouTube and Zoom)	11.00 am
Tuesday	23	Bible Study (via Zoom)	10.30 am
Wednesday	24	Midweek Act of Worship, followed by coffee time (all via Zoom)	10.00 am
		Poetry Evening (via Zoom)	6.30 pm
Sunday	28	Morning Worship: Dr Ann Sinclair (via YouTube and Zoom)	11.00 am

From our Book of Remembrance

Please remember in your prayers this month those who have gone before us.

Peter Mallett
 Sylvia Sadler Laws
 Leslie C. Heighton
 Fred Philipson Dodsworth
 Beatrice Mary Dodsworth
 Kenneth Roy Dodsworth
 Margaret McDonald Waugh
 Elsie Isobel Russell
 William Mackay Adamson
 George Duncan Winton
 Norma Ridley
 Helen Doo



February Newstand published Sunday 28th February.

**Submissions by post to Tim Cooke, 4, Kingfisher Way, Blyth, NE24 3QR,
 or email to stAndrew'snewstand@gmail.com no later than 22nd February**

Prayers, thoughts and poems for this moment



The Prayer of St Brendan the Navigator

*St Brendan 'the Navigator' was a seafaring Irish monk who founded a large monastery around 577 CE at Clonfert, a small village in east County Galway. This prayer is attributed to him. This version is from Anna M. Townsend's book *Destination Transformation: A forty-day journey to change the world* (CreateSpace, 2015).*

A Prayer for the Journey

Lord, I will trust You.
Help me to journey beyond the familiar and into
the unknown.
Give me faith to leave the old ways and break
fresh ground with You.

Christ of the mysteries,
Can I trust You to be stronger than each storm in
me?
Do I still yearn for Your glory to lighten me?

I will show others the care You have given me.
I will determine amidst all uncertainty always to
trust.
I choose to live beyond regret, and let You
recreate my life.

I believe You will make a way for me and provide
for me, if only I trust You and obey.
I will trust in the darkness and know that my times
are still in Your hand.
I will believe You for my future, chapter by chapter,
until the story is written.

Focus my mind and my heart upon You, my
attention always on You without alteration.
Strengthen me in Your blessing and appoint me to
the task.
Teach me to live with eternity in view.
Tune my spirit to the music of heaven.
Feed me, and, somehow, make my obedience
count for You.

Amen.