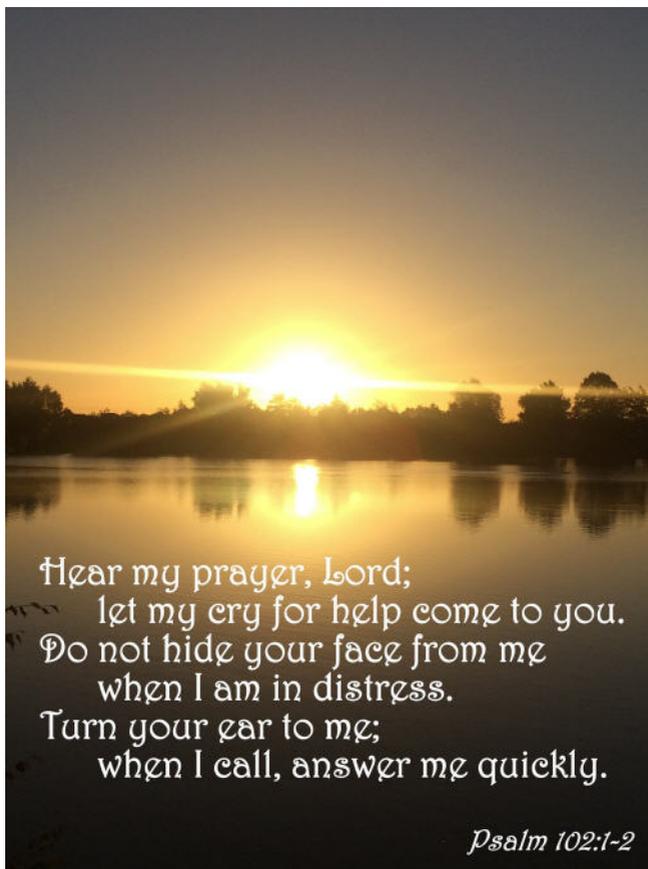


*St Mary and St Cuthbert's Church,
Chester-le-Street*

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2021 NEWSLETTER



Dear Friends

In mid-January the PCC recognized that the situation in the country and our local area is getting more and more difficult with calls from the health experts to only go out if that is absolutely essential.

We as a church have a duty of care for people, some of whom who are keen to gather, when they themselves are vulnerable. We felt that if we continued to meet physically, we could cause resentment in the wider community.

In fact, more people have been continuing since March to engage with our worship online than by physically gathering.

So (with the Bishop giving his blessing) the church building was closed for all services from **January 14 to February 15**. The only exception is that church funerals will continue.

We will review the situation in early February, to make a further decision, based on:

1. COVID rates in the local area
2. The numbers vaccinated in the region
3. Guidance from the Bishop and the Church of England
4. Changes to the government's tier designation for County Durham

Our online services on our Church Facebook page continue every Sunday at 10.00 am & 6.00 pm.

Do join us if you can as we continue to gather as God's people

Blessings



Rector's Letter

David (Rev David Tully, Rector)

NEWS

This Newsletter also contains readings and prayers for Epiphany through to Lent – see pages 5 - 7

GIFT DAY

As many of you will be aware the **Gift Day** at the end of 2020 raised the incredible and wonderful total of about £96,000. Thank you so much for all the contributions – large and small. It has meant we were able to pay all our pledged Parish Share for 2020 and our budgeted Mission and Charity giving. We also have a great start to the financial challenges of 2021.

REV DAVID'S RETIREMENT

Rev David's Retirement is approaching rapidly. His final Sunday will be **May 9**. The PCC are allowed to do some preliminary work before he leaves the parish, before a proper recruitment process after David has retired.

HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL DAY

The ministers of the town decided that it would be difficult to do any of the normal things for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity this year. Instead, they have produced together an online service for Holocaust Memorial Day. **It will go up on Wednesday January 27 at 6.30 pm** on the Chester-le-Street Churches Together Facebook page - [Churches Together in Chester-le-Street](#)

DAILY HOPE LINE

The Church Of England Daily Hope Line continues, on it you can hear hymns, reflections and prayers. Many people are finding it very helpful. Free phone: 0800 804 8044

PARISH OFFICE

The Parish Office is still functioning with Jan Rowland working from home and occasionally checking what has been posted to the Parish Centre. She can be contacted – on the phone 0191 388 3295 or jrowland@clsparish1.plus.com

CONFIRMATION

The Confirmation that was scheduled for January 3 had to be **postponed** because the Bishop of Jarrow, Sarah Clark had to self-isolate. She had been in close contact with a vicar in the diocese who had tested positive for COVID.

DR PAUL VINCENT

At the PCC meeting on December 1, we unanimously backed Dr Paul Vincent being able **to lead funerals** in our parish. Over the last 18 months he has received training for this. He will be eased into this ministry over the coming months with the assistance of the parish clergy.

WORD for TODAY Bible Reading notes

There are copies available covering February, March and April. Contact Jan in the Parish Office to request a copy.

The poem below was shared by Mike Heaps with his home group.

He discovered just after his brother Dave's death last year that he wrote poetry and we all found this poem Dave wrote both helpful and moving.

DON'T COUNT THE SHEEP

When you are restless and cannot sleep
Just talk to the Shepherd, don't count the sheep.
For the Shepherd will come in those long night hours
And release your mind from disturbing powers

When the path of life has been rough and steep
Just talk to the Shepherd, don't count the sheep.
He invites you freely your mind to unclutter
So talk to Him plainly, don't stammer and stutter.

If circumstances have cut you way deep
Just talk to the Shepherd, don't count the sheep.
For He has walked life's pathway before you,
And knows what is best to uplift and restore you.

So when you are restless and cannot sleep
Just talk to the Shepherd, don't count the sheep

Dave Heaps

FROM THE REGISTERS

Funerals

December

- 4 Marie Holmes (89)
- 7 Greta Alexander (89)
- 9 Olive Hardy Davison (81)
- 11 George Todd (79)
- 15 David John Harran (66)
Terence (Terry) Renshaw (77)
- 16 Angela Pratt Hall (82)
- 18 Frederick Maule (89)
- 22 Sheila Horniman (84)
Keith Nicholson (86)
- 29 Shirley Mason (85)

January

- 4 Kathleen Wilson (70)
- 11 Norman Elliott (86)
Jean Shotton (87)
- 12 Esme Maule (86)
- 14 Elizabeth Geraldine Robinson (56)
- 15 Alan Wakefield (86)
- 19 Roland Dean (90)

QUIET CORNER

As someone who loves the great outdoors, you would think that I would take notice of and regulate my outdoor activities by the 4 seasons of the year - Spring, Summer, Autumn and Winter.

However, as I have got older, this is no longer the case. It is not that age has compressed the seasons, simply that I have re-defined them. I was never the one to let bad weather or otherwise stop me from daily activities throughout the year. Having lived in Scotland for over 30 years, I believe in their old saying" there is no such thing as bad weather, just inappropriate clothing". Even the time of day or night has never entered much into my thinking when planning activities. I've been known to cut the lawns in the dark hours by moving quickly between the house security lights to keep them on to see where I was going.

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Nowadays, for me there are just 2 seasons - Christmas and Easter. When you think about it, they are a symbolic day and night of just one day.

I have always been a Christmas person from my boyhood upward, enjoying the fun and excitement of all that goes into the preparation for “the big day” as the media like to call it. Even now in advancing years, that excitement is still with me, now more centred around the second coming of Jesus. Easter has always been a very special time for obvious spiritual reasons and has nothing to do with my liking for chocolate Easter Eggs and their contents, or so I tell myself.

So now at mid-point between my two seasons of Christmas and Easter, wondering what may lie ahead in the coming weeks. Covid “lock down” will play it's part for sure, but I'm pretty good at coping with such events. This, and so-called bad weather, will give me plenty of time to catch up on an ever increasing pile of reading.

Gardening, daily exercise walks and hopefully some fishing will figure prominently from time to time and more importantly, Bible study preparation for preaching. Most of all, I really want to spend more time in a reassessing the way I think and reflect.

My Bible reading this morning took me into St. Paul's letter to the church in Corinth (I Corinthians 2) dealing with his proclaiming of “*Christ crucified*” (v 1-5) and “*the true wisdom of God*” (v 6-16). The very last sentence hit me like a sledgehammer “***But we have the mind of Christ***”.

These few words seem to answer how I should re-assess the way I think and reflect. To think and reflect on **everything** with the “**mind of Christ**” is awe-inspiring. Just imagine how wonderfully different our lives, families, communities and Church would be, **if we thought of everything with the mind of Christ.**

John Hopper
(Lay Reader)

*Newsletter produced by Rev David Tully,
Rector of St Mary and St Cuthbert, Chester-le-Street.
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The following pages contain prayer resources from Epiphany
through to Lent.

JOURNEYING THROUGH EPIPHANY TO LENT TOGETHER

We felt that it would be helpful for some people at this time to have some prayer resources.

Wherever we are we can journey together in fellowship day by day. The prayers and the readings that follow are a means of us all sharing the journey through this time, with one another and with God.

The spiritual focus of the season of the Church year shapes the readings and liturgical prayers that guide our journey through it. We are amid the liturgical season of 'Epiphany' ('manifestation'). It is a season when we engage afresh with the revelation, realisation, and recognition of who Jesus was, who Jesus is. A reminder to seek, find and recognise God revealed with and within us day by day.

We then pass through two weeks of what the Church names 'Ordinary time' before arriving at Ash Wednesday and beginning our journey through the season of 'Lent' towards the celebration of Easter. A journey from the vulnerable babe in the animal feeding trough to the nails of the cross, the empty tomb and beyond.

The seasons of the church year flow together, only making sense and revealing their true meaning in their totality. In that totality 'Ordinary time' is extraordinary, as 'Ordinary time', is extraordinary, as every day is lived in the light of whole story of who God is, what God has done, is doing and will do, and what that means for us.

The Bible readings

The Bible readings listed for each week will be used in our Sunday services at 10.00 am.

The optional Psalm for that day is also listed. Each of the other readings relate to what is revealed in the gospel reading.

The readings for the feast of the Conversion of St. Paul are also included. Are also included.

You might choose to read one a day, all of them at once or to journey with one through the week.

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The Prayers

There is a prayer for each week. They are known as the 'Collect'. They gather our intentions within the theme for that time of worship within that season. They maintain a pattern that precedes the translations from Latin provided by Archbishop Cranmer in our first Book of Common Prayer (1549).

They will be prayed together in each of our services, and those of the Anglican church each Sunday and in Morning and Evening prayer each day in the week that follows.

The prayers can be read or spoken and reflected upon at any time. The prayers could be used daily Sunday to Saturday.

18-25 JANUARY - WEEK OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY

Lord, you invite us to share together in your love.

You call on us to see the beauty of each other's expression of the faith, and to see the unity beyond the differences that can make us afraid.

Fill our hearts with the love of you and make us new again. Open our eyes

afresh to our part in your love for the world that as one body we may sing your praise, serve the needy and seek the lost. Amen



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SUNDAY 24 JANUARY - 3rd SUNDAY OF EPIPHANY

Genesis 14.17-20

Psalm 128

Revelation 19.6-10

John 2.1-11

- Jesus changes water into wine at the wedding at Cana

Cana

Collect

Almighty God,
whose Son revealed in signs and miracles
the wonder of your saving presence:
renew your people with your heavenly grace,
and in all our weakness
sustain us by your mighty power;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.



MONDAY 25th JANUARY - CONVERSION OF ST. PAUL - THE APOSTLE TO THE GENTILES

Jeremiah 1.4–10

Psalm 67

Acts 9.1–22.

Matthew 19.27–end

Collect

Almighty God,
who caused the light of the gospel
to shine throughout the world
through the preaching of your servant Saint Paul:
grant that we who celebrate his wonderful conversion
may follow him in bearing witness to your truth;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.



SUNDAY 31st JANUARY – PRESENTATION OF CHRIST IN THE TEMPLE

The season of Epiphany draws to a close as who Jesus is and what Jesus will do is recognised by Simeon and Anna as he is presented by his parents, in accordance with the Law, to God at the Temple. 'The Glory of God's people Israel' and the 'Light to the Gentiles (non-Jews)'. The suffering that God with us was destined for is pointed towards.



Malachi 3.1-5

Psalm 24. [1-6] 7-end

Hebrews 2.14-end

Luke 2.22-40

– Jesus is presented before the Lord in the Temple and the Holy Spirit speaks through Simeon and Anna.

Collect

Almighty and ever-living God,
clothed in majesty,
whose beloved Son was this day presented in the Temple,
in substance of our flesh:
grant that we may be presented to you
with pure and clean hearts,
by your Son Jesus Christ our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

SUNDAY 7th FEBRUARY - 2nd SUNDAY BEFORE LENT

Proverbs 8.1, 22-31

Psalm 104.26-end

Colossians 1.15-20

John 1.1-14

– ‘In the beginning was the Word...All things came into existence through him...And the Word became flesh and lived among us’.



Collect

Almighty God,
you have created the heavens and the earth
and made us in your own image:
teach us to discern your hand in all your works
and your likeness in all your children;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
who with you and the Holy Spirit reigns supreme over all things,
now and for ever.

SUNDAY 14th FEBRUARY - SUNDAY BEFORE LENT

2 Kings 2.1-12

Psalm 50.1-6

2 Corinthians 4.3-6

Mark 9.2-9

- The transfiguration of Jesus, ‘This is my son, the one I love. Listen to him!’



The Transfiguration by William Hole

Collect

Almighty Father,
whose Son was revealed in majesty
before he suffered death upon the cross:
give us grace to perceive his glory,
that we may be strengthened to suffer with him
and be changed into his likeness, from glory to glory;
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.