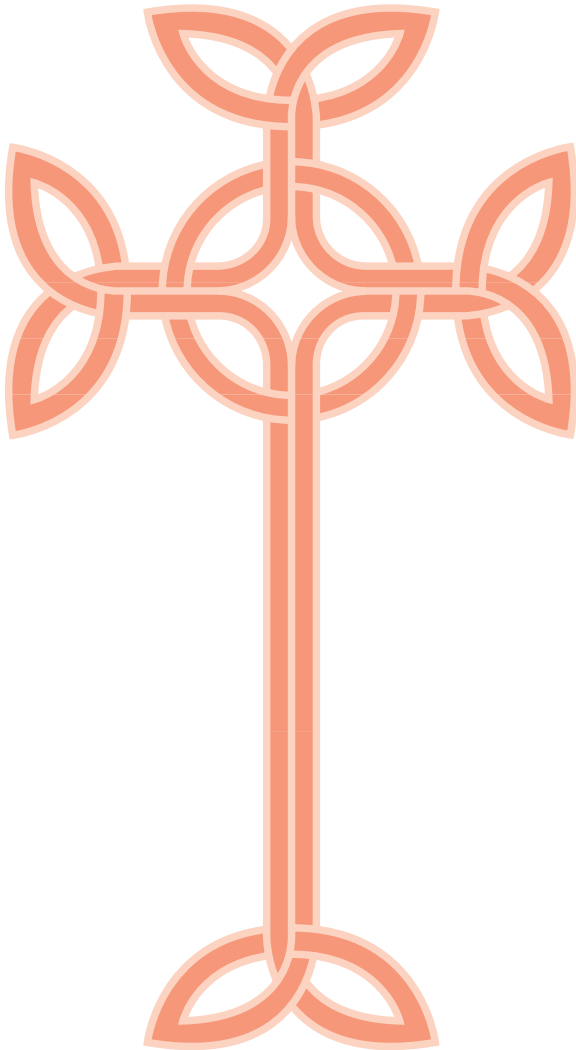


THE MONTHLY MAGAZINE  
OF THE PARISH OF  
HOUGHTON-LE-SPRING



St. Michael  
AND ALL ANGELS

JUNE 2020

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## THE PARISH CHURCH OF HOUGHTON-LE-SPRING

### MINISTRY TEAM

#### **Rector**

Rev'd John Barron,  
The Rectory, 5 Lingfield, Houghton-le-Spring,  
Tyne & Wear, DH5 5QA.  
Tel: (0191) 584 7657

We enjoy and benefit from the ministry of a number  
of retired clergy at St Michael's.

#### **Readers**

Susan Elsey (Reader)  
7, Briarfields, Hartlepool.  
Tel 07557 125274

Mrs. Ros Pickersgill (Reader)  
Tall Trees, The Grove, Houghton-le-Spring.  
Tel: (0191) 584 5642

Mrs. Anne Clappison (Reader)  
4 Dixon Road, Houghton-le-Spring.

#### **Pastoral Assistants**

Mrs. Evelyn Garbutt  
Tel: (0191) 584 1702  
email: evelyn.garbutt1@btinternet.com

Elaine Harkness  
Tel: (0191) 584 1163  
email: elaine.harkness1@btinternet.com

Mrs. Thelma Steel,  
Tel: (0191) 584 3597  
email: thelma.steel@talktalk.net

#### **Church Wardens**

Mrs. Rita Turnbull,  
76 Longacre.  
Tel: (0191) 584 1954

Mr. John Lambton  
Dunure, Linden Grove, Houghton-le-Spring,  
DH4 5DD.  
Tel: (0191) 584 1591

#### **Assistant Church Warden**

Mrs. Thelma Steel,  
Tel: (0191) 584 3597  
email: thelma.steel@talktalk.net

#### **Officers of the Parochial Church Council**

Angela Slater (Secretary)  
Tel: (0191) 584 2036

Mr. Alastair Bradley (Treasurer)  
8 Dixon Road, Houghton-le-Spring.  
Tel: (0191) 584 1455

#### **Organist & Director of Music**

Mr. George Peebles  
19 Sancroft Drive, Houghton-le-Spring.  
Tel: (0191) 584 1628  
email: georgepeebles@talktalk.net

#### **Verger**

Mr. David Turnbull,  
76 Longacre, Houghton-le-Spring.  
Tel: (0191) 584 1954

#### **Safeguarding**

Mr. Kevin Bond (Safeguarding Officer)  
Tel: 07931 937171  
email: kevin.bond1511@googlemail.com  
Mrs. Kathleen Close (DBS Officer)  
38 Bradley Avenue, Houghton-le-Spring  
Tel: (0191) 584 0353

#### **Space4**

76 Newbottle Street  
Next to Houghton Library  
Twitter @space4  
Facebook houghtonspace4  
Tel: (0191) 512 0676  
Mrs. Christine Britcliffe (Co-ordinator)  
Tel: (0191) 512 0676

#### **Church Website**

Our website contains information on most aspects  
of church life.  
[www.stmichaels-hls.org.uk](http://www.stmichaels-hls.org.uk)

#### **The Friends of Houghton Parish Church Trust**

Chairman - Mr. Alex Scullion  
Contact: Mr. George Peebles, Membership  
Secretary on (0191) 584 1628 for information and  
application forms.

#### **Toddler Group**

Contact: Sheila Partridge  
Tel: (0191) 584 7308

### UNIFORMED ORGANISATIONS

#### **Rainbows, Brownies, Guides and Rangers**

Contact: Sheila Wynne, Tel: (0191) 512 1331  
E-mail: sheila.m.wynne@gmail.com

#### **Beavers, Cubs and Scouts**

Contact: Steve Gibson, Tel: 07507 161366  
E-mail: 1sthoughton@durhamscouts.org.uk  
Website: [www.1sthoughtonscouts.org.uk](http://www.1sthoughtonscouts.org.uk)

## REGULAR SERVICES

In these unprecedented and difficult times we are doing Church a little differently while the Church buildings are closed. To keep the spirit of Gilpin's ministry based on Faith, Generosity and Service going within our community we will be live streaming our service via our Facebook page <http://www.facebook.com/stmichaelslhs> at the following times each week;

Sunday	10am	Service of Holy Communion
Sunday	11am	Young Church
Sunday	11am	Service of the Word via conference call
Tuesday	7pm	Service of the Word with Reflection

### Contact Information

Our website and facebook page contain details of how to join others online for prayer, worship, study, and community life. We will send regular updates via our church distribution list – please call us or email us if you know someone who would like to receive our email updates.

*Find us online at:*

website:

[www.stmichaels-lhs.org.uk](http://www.stmichaels-lhs.org.uk)

facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/stmichaelslhs>

You can contact us through our 'remote' church office on 0770 7043395 between 10am and 2pm on a Tuesday and Thursday or you can email us at [stmichaels.lhs@gmail.com](mailto:stmichaels.lhs@gmail.com). Please let us know if you would like us to be in touch with you by telephone. For urgent issues contact Rev'd John Barron on 0191 584 7657.

If you'd like your child to be a part of Young Church 'closed' zoom meeting contact Clare our Young Church leader at [stmichaels.youngchurch@btinternet.com](mailto:stmichaels.youngchurch@btinternet.com) so she can let you know how to join in.

### 'Dial-in' Church!

Especially for people without internet access we hold a Service of the Word via a telephone conference. The way of accessing the service is to dial **0203 481 5240**, put in the meeting id **584 584 0191** followed by # and if prompted for a further id just enter #. (The cost is that of a standard call from your phone provider).

### Space4

Our Space4 Community Project continues their services 'remotely' through their Facebook page; <https://www.facebook.com/HoughtonSpace4/> with lots going on throughout the week and at these set times:

Monday	2-3pm	Women's Group
Tuesday	11-12noon	'Crafty Chat'
Wednesday	12:30-1:30pm	Parents Group 'Kiddy Chat'
Thursday	11-12noon	Men's Hour
Friday	2-3pm	'Eat your Cake and Chat'
Saturday	3-4pm	'Saturday Chat'

Our Foodbank is continuing on a Tuesday and Friday, supporting people who are socially isolated as well as those struggling with food poverty. Please message the Space4 Facebook page if you need a food parcel.

## ABOUT SIGNPOST

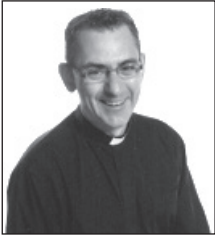
Sign-Post is the magazine of the Parish Church of St. Michael & All Angels Houghton-le-Spring. In addition to providing information about the life of the church, it also aims to reflect the interests of the broader community and to provide a source of local news and a forum in which matters of common concern can be raised. The Editors welcome comments and suggestions, and invite contributions. Items to be included in Sign-Post should be submitted to the Editors by 10th of the month (end of 1st week of the month for memorials) to ensure inclusion in the next issue. It should be noted, however, that the Editors cannot guarantee to publish material and wish to point out that items included do not necessarily reflect their views nor those of the Parochial Church Council. Editors: Malcolm Foster, Tel: (0191) 584 2486. Distribution: Joan Bond, Tel: (0191) 584 1031.

Circulation: 300 copies per month.

# Rector's Letter

Over these last weeks of the pandemic I've been incredibly thankful to the people of our church (and thankful to God!) for the many ways that we have continued to be church without physically being able to meet together in our buildings. Although we've been physically separated, there has been a great deal of 'being together in the Spirit'.

Recently, I was struck by the analogy of geese to help think about this (yes that's right geese!). You might know that when geese migrate, they fly in a V-formation called a skein (pronounced 'scane'). Studies have revealed some amazing things about why they fly in this way. The skein improves their energy efficiency – each bird flies slightly higher above the bird in front reducing wind resistance. In addition, the down flap of the bird in front pushes the air behind it upwards which assists the birds behind. All of this rather incredibly increases their range by over 70%!



Geese are very cooperative - birds flying at the front of the formation tire more quickly so they take turns to do this. Geese are also very loyal: pairs stay together for life, they protect and support each other whenever danger is around. If a goose starts to go down from the skein, if the goose is sick or wounded, two geese will drop out of formation and descend to follow the hurt goose down. They will stay with the sick goose until it dies or gets better and is able to fly then they catch up together. Geese honk at each other – I love this fact about them. When they're flying – they honk very loudly to encourage each other to keep up their speed and altitude. This honking also helps the geese keep a sense of direction and co-ordinate position changes.

Geese have something inbuilt to help them recognise that they are better together not separate. I think we too recognise this about ourselves that we are made to be in relationship with others. Moreover, I think I have seen something of that togetherness remaining in us and I'm inclined to name that at the Spirit of God still being present in us despite being physically separated.

I notice, the Spirit at work in the church in so many ways: in the ways we cooperate in our own version of a skein, flying through uncharted skies but cooperating in new and different ways as we journey on. I see the Spirit in the acts and words of love when one of our skein has become sick or is struggling and in need. I see the Spirit in the messages of encouragement we give each other – the equivalent to honking that we do to each other. I see all of this and want to encourage us in this. (Take that as a honk from me!)

As we start to contemplate some sort of phased lifting of being separated from each other I suspect this all might take a lot longer than any of us would like and that a time of extended transition may prove difficult for us. Inevitably, we will need to draw on the same Spirit in the days ahead: as encourager, perhaps as comforter, certainly as guide as we seek to discern how we should be church in future in this transition time and beyond.

With my continued prayers and very best wishes.

# Thoughts of our Past

As I write this, we are in week 6 of the lockdown and it seems ages since I had physical fellowship with my friends in St Michael's. I miss the people, but I also miss the building, the smell, the atmosphere, the feeling of being at home and rhythm of the church year. However, I am reminded that the building we know and love has experienced much darker days than those we currently face.

We're all familiar with the history of the current building and how the previous one was burned down by the Scots in 1319 who were feeling sure of themselves having won a decisive victory at Bannockburn less than 4 years earlier. This raid not only destroyed the Saxon/Norman building but killed a parishioner who jumped from the tower to escape the flames. Although not recorded, it is a safe bet that the forerunner of the rectory opposite would have suffered the same fate as well. This burning of the church came on top of the great famine that devastated Europe between 1315 & 1317 and from which the largely agrarian society didn't fully recover until 1322.

Subsequently it was 1340 before the local economy had sufficiently recovered for St Michael's to be rebuilt in stone more or less in the form that we see it today, although with a lower tower and stubby steeple. Doubtless the good folk of Houghton would have been thinking the worst was behind them when worrying rumours of a strange plague down south began to be heard, having arrived from central China and brought by both traders and Mongol invaders. The Black Death arrived in southern England in June 1348 and by mid-1349 had reached Durham. The fatalities are still being debated, but the latest general estimates are between 40 – 60 percent of the population of the country. In 1300 the population of England, Wales and Scotland

had been estimated at 3.4 million, a 50% mortality would give a figure of 1.7 million people dying over 3 years, give or take a few months. This puts the deaths from our current pandemic in some sort of context.

(In passing, the Scots, who were still licking their wounds from their defeat at Neville's Cross in 1346, saw the disarray the English were in saying: 'it had befallen them through the revenging hand of God'. They called it 'the foul death of England'. The Scots planned to take advantage of the situation by invading England believing God would not allow Godfearing Scots to be infected, shortly after crossing the border they realised their mistake and took the plague back to their homes in Scotland hurrying along the spread. No social distancing taking place there. Regrettably, we have seen echoes of this belief in other countries in more recent days).

The Black Death petered out over the next few years although there was a second spike in 1361-2 with a much-reduced mortality rate of 20% (little comfort if you or yours were one of those affected). The society that emerged from the Black Death was much changed from that that went into it, Houghton would no doubt be the same. However, the parish of Houghton-le-Spring not only survived, it grew and developed, as did the population and the church. Through civil war, more raids by the pestilential Scots, 2 world wars and more recent devastations our country and congregation have ridden out the storm and will continue to do so in the years to come. When we're looking around at the immediate perspective, things look grim, think back to our ancestors in 1349 and what they saw about them, and realise we have nothing to complain about.

*David Fulton*

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## HOUGHTON RUGBY CLUB

Function room available for Christenings and  
other functions Catering available if required

Contact **Kaye Louise Robson** (after 6.00pm)  
Mobile: 07791 223 910 email: klgrob7@aol.co.uk  
Club: 0191 584 1460

## Two Castles Housing Association



Two Castles Housing Association provides affordable homes for people over the age of 55. We have a range of sheltered accommodation across the North East including Ryhope, Shiney Row, Hetton-le-Hole, Houghton-le-Spring and Sunderland offering a safe and secure environment to live whilst maintaining their independence. Our schemes offer:

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Fax: 0191 261 9692  
Email: [mailbox@twocastles.org.uk](mailto:mailbox@twocastles.org.uk)  
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# The Joy of Colour

There was once an ugly, colourless, concrete multi-storey car park in Gateshead - it blotted the landscape for years. Eventually it was razed to the ground (intentionally) to make way for a large Tesco store in 2010. It's claim to fame (the car park, not Tesco) was the location for the 1971 film "Get Carter" starring Michael Caine.

Not a lot of people know that. But then again, you probably do!

What you don't know is that I am one of 4% of the population who have the gift of **synaesthesia**.

"What's that?" - I hear you say. Well for me it is 'thinking in colours'. Every name has a colour. So long as I know the person's name, I know what colour they are. Some are not happy with their colour, but it's not something I can change.

Occasionally some have no colour and people really don't like that! Days of the week and months of the year I see in colour also. Even cities, towns and countries have a colour for me and these remain constant.

When I was small, my parents found my thinking in colour fascinating, so everyone who visited the house had to be told their colour. Some would think that I'd forget their colour the next time I saw them - but I never did.

Recently when visiting friends' house for a meal, I met their neighbours who were also invited, and was duly introduced to them. Now I'm terrible for remembering people's names, so after half an hour or so I'd already forgotten theirs. Unfortunately the host told them about my synaesthesia and asked me to tell them their colours. Naturally I couldn't, so I had to make excuses, saying I would tell them later. They couldn't understand this and kept asking me most of the evening. You can imagine how uncomfortable I felt, and for once I wished that I didn't have this gift.

At this time of lockdown the colours of the rainbow displayed in the windows of many houses is a real sign of hope. When God sent his rainbow over Noah's Ark this was his way of telling him that he always keeps his promise. And so when we look at these pictures of rainbows we too should remember that God keeps his promise to us.

Rainbows are a symbol of hope in many cultures. They appear as perfect arcs, often during a rainstorm when the sun shines on water droplets shattering its white light into an array of brilliant colours.

So I pray that God shines his bright light onto all of us and restores our world to its former glorious colour.

*Anne Clappison*





# CELTIC PRAYER

Last month I wrote about the 'Examen' a technique of prayerful reflection on the events of the day in order to detect God's presence and to discern his direction for us. Today I offer a few Celtic prayers.

We can take some time to sit quietly, light a candle and pray, letting God know about those things that are on our hearts and minds. When we do that, we make that connection with God that nourishes and sustains us.

*Light a candle*

## **Candle Prayer**

I light a light

In the name of the God who creates life,  
 In the name of the saviour who loves life  
 In the name of the spirit who is the fire of life

## **A time of silence and centering**

Find a way into silence which allows you to deepen an awareness of the divine and to find the inward source of strength. Hold yourself and others in the Light, knowing that all are cherished by God.

## **Opening Prayer**

Come, Lord, come to us.  
 Enter our darkness with your light,  
 Fill our emptiness with your presence,  
 Come refresh, restore, renew us.  
 In our sadness, come as joy,  
 In our troubles, come as peace,  
 In our fearfulness, come as hope,  
 In our darkness, come as light,  
 In our frailty, come as strength,  
 In our loneliness come as love,  
 Come, refresh, restore, renew us.

*(David Adam)*



**Circle me prayers**

Circle me O God  
Keep hope within  
Despair without

Circle me O God  
Keep peace within  
Keep turmoil out.

Circle me O God  
Keep calm within  
Keep storms without.

Circle me O God  
Keep strength within  
Keep weakness out

Circle O God,  
My family and friends  
Keep wholeness within,  
keep sickness out;  
Keep hope within,  
keep despair out;  
Keep peace within,  
keep turmoil out;  
Keep light within,  
keep darkness out.

The Mighty Three  
My protection be  
Encircling me.  
You are around  
My life, my home  
Encircling me  
O Sacred Three.

*Silence*

May God, bless me  
In my sleep with rest  
In my dreams with vision  
In my waking with a calm mind  
In my soul with the friendship of the  
Holy Spirit  
This night and every night.

**Amen**

*Candle out*

**FROM THE REGISTERS**

**Funerals**

19 Mar	Albert Bolam Houghton-le-Spring	Aged 74
23 Mar	John Mawston Shiney Row, Houghton-le-Spring	Aged 92
20 April	Joan Stabler Houghton-le-Spring	Aged 73
20 April	David Lambert Houghton-le-Spring	Aged 86
29 April	Hilda Taylor Houghton-le-Spring	Aged 90
12 May	Elaine Rippon Houghton-le-Spring	Aged 76
14 May	Sheila Quigley Houghton-le-Spring	Aged 72
15 May	Frank Brown Houghton-Le-Spring	Aged 82
26 May	Malcolm James Craig Houghton-le-Spring	Aged 74

~~~~~  
**DONATIONS  
TO GENERAL FUNDS**  
~~~~~

Treasured memories of Dawn  
Beattie, beloved Daughter, Sister,  
Aunty, Godmother, Cousin and dear  
friend. Forever in our hearts.  
~~~~~

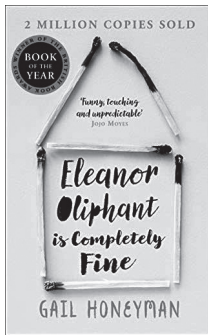
# Bible readings for June

This list of bible readings is to accompany your Daily Prayer worship, the Sunday Eucharist and Tuesday evening Service of the Word.

| <b>JUNE</b>   |           |                        |                            |
|---------------|-----------|------------------------|----------------------------|
| Monday        | 1         | LUKE 1.39-49           | Visit of Mary to Elizabeth |
| Tuesday       | 2         | JOHN 20.19-23          |                            |
| Wednesday     | 3         | LUKE 9.37-50           |                            |
| Thursday      | 4         | LUKE 9. 51-end         |                            |
| Friday        | 5         | LUKE 10.1-16           |                            |
| Saturday      | 6         | MARK 12. 38-end        |                            |
| <b>Sunday</b> | <b>7</b>  | <b>MATT 28.16-end</b>  | <b>Trinity Sunday</b>      |
| Monday        | 8         | MATT 5.1-12            |                            |
| Tuesday       | 9         | MATT 28.16-end         |                            |
| Wednesday     | 10        | MATT 5. 17-19          |                            |
| Thursday      | 11        | JOHN 6.51-58           | Corpus Christi             |
| Friday        | 12        | JOHN 15 12-17          | St Barnabas                |
| Saturday      | 13        | MATT 5. 33-37          |                            |
| <b>Sunday</b> | <b>14</b> | <b>MATT 9. 35-10.8</b> |                            |
| Monday        | 15        | MATT 5.38-42           |                            |
| Tuesday       | 16        | MATT 9. 35-10.8        |                            |
| Wednesday     | 17        | MATT 6.1-6. 16-18      |                            |
| Thursday      | 18        | MATT 6.7-15            |                            |
| Friday        | 19        | MATT 6.19-23           |                            |
| Saturday      | 20        | MATT 6.24-end          |                            |
| <b>Sunday</b> | <b>21</b> | <b>MATT 10.24-39</b>   |                            |
| Monday        | 22        | MATT 7.1-5             |                            |
| Tuesday       | 23        | MATT 10.24-39          |                            |
| Wednesday     | 24        | LUKE 1. 57-66.80       | Birth John the Baptist     |
| Thursday      | 25        | MATT 7. 21-end         |                            |
| Friday        | 26        | MATT 8. 1-4            |                            |
| Saturday      | 27        | MATT 8.5-17            |                            |
| <b>Sunday</b> | <b>28</b> | <b>MATT 10. 40-end</b> |                            |
| Monday        | 29        | ACTS 12.1-11           | Peter & Paul               |
| Tuesday       | 30        | MATT 10. 40-end        |                            |
| <b>JULY</b>   |           |                        |                            |
| Wednesday     | 1         | MATT 8. 28-end         |                            |
| Thursday      | 2         | MATT 9.1-8             |                            |
| Friday        | 3         | JOHN 20.24-29          | Thomas                     |
| Saturday      | 4         | MATT 9.14-17           |                            |

## An Invitation to..... **JOIN OUR BOOK CLUB**

In our Lent groups we enjoyed reading *The Shack*, those who joined 'The Shack WhatsApp group' on their mobiles gave very thoughtful and enlightening contributions to the discussions that followed during lockdown. Lent has now long ended but lockdown for many of us continues and churches remain closed. The Shack WhatsApp group became a very closely connected group with a great respect for each other's insights. It would be nice to continue the fellowship we began by reading another novel and we extend an invitation to all readers to join



us. The book I have chosen is 2017's Book of the Year which came highly recommended entitled 'Eleanor Oliphant is Completely Fine' ... but of course she isn't.

The book narrates the life of someone who has experienced a tragic early life which is only gleaned gradually as the book progresses, leaving her a misfit in society. Eleanor narrates her story and opinions in a humorous and appealing way which captivates the reader to want to know more. The book will alternately make you laugh and weep, it is an enjoyable light read which casts many observations on the shallowness of popular culture and what life is like when you are 'different'.

The book is available to buy on Amazon @£4.99 or for just 99p on Kindle.

I will run the book club aspect in a variety of formats:

For those with internet access we can hold a weekly Zoom meeting, I will need your email address for this to happen.

Alternatively, you can dial in to the same Zoom group by phone: dial the number 0203 481 5240, put in the meeting id 584 584 0191 followed by # if prompted for a further id just enter # (The cost is that of a standard call from your provider).

For those with a smartphone we will open a WhatsApp group where members can post their comments and read and react to comments of others. The beauty of this is you can take time to think.

For everyone who is interested in the book but may not wish to join in with the technology I will include the questions in the July Signpost.

Please let me know if you wish to join us, and your preferred means of participation, by sending your email or mobile number to me on 07757 927048 or [marglee372@outlook.com](mailto:marglee372@outlook.com)

Looking forward to hearing from you and exploring this very entertaining novel which has serious implications for us all. In the meantime, simply order the book and enjoy the read.

*Margaret Lee*

# A SPECIAL PLACE

## *2008 Finds Under The Floor*

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In writing this the Church is in lockdown so I am unable to enter the building. I am unable to take any photographs or check the official documents so I apologise for any errors which may occur.

During the reordering in 2008 we needed to dig down approximately 2 metres and because of this the archaeologists were on site to inspect and log any finds, in addition to check on any human remains we may find. We knew there were around 1,000 burials under the Church floor. If a body or skeleton is complete (articulate) it cannot be moved without Home Office approval. If the bones are spread around (disarticulate) then they can be moved.

What did we do: One of the discoveries we found was a tunnel about a metre square carved from behind one of the large columns holding up the tower and under where the Statue of the Risen Christ is mounted. A 'secret tunnel' – wow – well not really as it was used some 200 years ago as underfloor heating. A fire was lit in the boiler house (which is outside the Vestry door and down the steps), the hot air was channelled up the tunnel and this heated the underside of the wooden floor. This system was stopped when a number of Churches burnt down and then the hot water systems were adopted. The entrance to the boiler house was already bricked up so the loose bones were interred in the tunnel. There was a small service held led by Reverend Derek Newton which included the archaeologists, myself, Jean Henderson and a few Church members being present and the remains were treated with the utmost reverence and dignity.

A skeleton of a priest was found buried under the floor in what is now called the Children's chapel/Meeting Room. We know it was a priest as he was buried with his head facing east as normal people were buried with their feet facing east. It was said it was so they could walk to Jerusalem to be judged on Judgement Day. There were also vaults discovered in the Gilpin Transept and in front of the server.

This is what was found: We knew the Church was partly Norman (approximately 900 years old) but the remains of a large Anglo-Saxon Church was found. The doorway has been preserved under a glass panel in the floor. Next to the sound/computer desk, under the floor, a floor stone can be removed to uncover

the foundations of the Saxon Church. Alongside of this are the foundations of one corner of the Norman Tower which stretched to near the Font area. There is a written story of a man John Sayers who flew??? off the tower while watching for the Scots. A Scottish force led by the Black Douglas, if you are English, or Sir James the Good if you are from Scotland (so the winners will write history). In 1319 AD they destroyed the tower and most of the Church. Also possibly in the 1200s by King David, there were signs of burning found near the Saxon doorway. It is said they were on their way to Hartlepool as the land around Old Hartlepool was owned by Robert the Bruce.

An unusual shaped stone was found under the floor which we discovered is a Saxon doorpost holder and it can now be seen in our Heritage Centre.

What next: The very large foundation stones for the pillars holding up the Bell Tower were examined and 'lewis holes' were found cut into them. These were used by the Romans to lift heavy stones. This knowledge was lost when the Romans left Britain.

The Archaeologists believe the foundations are Roman. To add to this, behind the east end of the Church is a Roman sarcophagus and because of the size the stone could not have been moved far. So there was a large Roman building here, could it have been a Temple?

Large boulders were found under the floor called Whinston's and these are not local. They are usually found near the Roman Wall. It is thought that they may have been brought down by the last Ice Age and local people collected them and brought them to the St. Michael's area in Neolithic times. It might not seem noticeable now but the Church was built on high ground as the area around was marshland because of the springs.

So here we have our much altered and ancient Church, part Norman, 900 years old, and then Anglo Saxon Church, say 1,400 years old. Then possibly a Roman Temple 2,000 years ago. Then an early settlement, maybe worship site, 4/5/6,000 years ago.

Do you think as I do that this is a very special place with stones steeped in prayer. People could have been praying here when Moses led the Israelites out of Egypt. God's Temple in Houghton?

## **DAVID TURNBULL**

Archaeologists – Peter Ryder  
Richard Carlton Associates



# Money matters!

Currently our Church buildings are closed in line with Government guidelines and although we're physically not able to come together within our buildings we are seeking to remain very much here for members of our Church congregations and the wider community.

As you might imagine, the closure of our building means that many of our usual sources of income have disappeared. These include our church collections (money and envelopes we usually put on the collection plate); fees and collections from weddings, baptisms and funerals; as well as the fundraising we do that involves our coming together. At the same time as this, most of our financial commitments have not gone away.

If there's some good news in all of this, it is that because of all of our hard work last year in 'closing the gap' we were in a much better position to 'weather the storm' at the beginning of this year. In addition, we've been working hard to manage the situation, reducing costs (this includes staff agreeing not to take their fees), deferring payments when we can, applying for grants and introducing new ways of giving to church (our 'on-line collection'). The longer the situation goes on the more difficult it is to manage church finances and currently it looks like a phased transition to returning to church is going to take a lot longer than any of us want.

We wanted to make sure people were aware of the situation with money. Knowing this, I wanted to ask people to consider their own level of giving at this time – I ask this question very gently, knowing that we had a lot of focus on finance last year and knowing that for some people the crisis has put great financial pressure on them and for some such a request will not be possible to respond to.

In addition to this, could I ask that you consider the way that you give to church. It may be at this time that you are able to move to the Parish Giving Scheme – this would help us greatly to manage our money. You can do this very easily by contacting the Parish Giving Scheme Team on **Tel: 0333 002 1271**, and one of their administrators will take you through the sign-up process.

They will ask you for the following information:

- Your personal bank account details
- The name of Parish: **HLS St Michael & All Angels, Houghton-le-Spring - Durham**
- The Parish Giving Scheme code for the Parish – **130613099**.

You can also ring the scheme to make changes to your existing donation (which you can change every month if it's a temporary change you want to make). To do this you can ring them on **Tel: 0333 002 1260** or email [info@parishgiving.org.uk](mailto:info@parishgiving.org.uk).

Alternatively if you would prefer to pay through a Standing Order or other ways of making donations to church then please contact our Church PCC Treasurer – **Alastair Bradley** on **Tel: 0191 584 1455** or email: [HoughtonTreasurer@aol.com](mailto:HoughtonTreasurer@aol.com).

Please could I ask you consider your response to this request prayerfully.



# A SERVICE OF THE WORD

## for all God's People

Gathering (wherever we are) to worship God

### *Greeting*

Let us worship God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

**Amen.**

This is the day that the Lord has made.

**We will rejoice and be glad in it.**

### *Opening Prayer*

**Lord, direct our thoughts, and teach us to pray.**

**Lift up our hearts to worship you in spirit and in truth,  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.**

**Amen.**

### *Saying sorry to God*

God our Father,  
we come to you in sorrow for our sins.

For turning away from you,  
and ignoring your will for our lives;

Father, forgive us:

**save us and help us.**

For behaving just as we wish,  
without thinking of you;

Father, forgive us:

**save us and help us.**

For failing you by what we do  
and think and say;

Father, forgive us:

**save us and help us.**

For letting ourselves be drawn away from you  
by temptations in the world about us;  
Father, forgive us:  
**save us and help us.**

For living as if we were ashamed to belong to your Son;  
Father, forgive us:  
**save us and help us.**

*We receive God's forgiveness.*

May the God of love and power  
forgive *us* and free *us* from our sins,  
heal and strengthen *us* by his Spirit,  
and raise *us* to new life in Christ our Lord.  
**Amen.**

*Praise*

Blessed is the Lord  
**for he has heard the voice of our prayer;**  
therefore shall our hearts dance for joy  
**and in our song we will praise our God.**

*The Collect may be said or a time of quiet prayer kept*

*After which we say:*  
**Amen.**

Hearing and responding to the Word of God

*Reading(s)*

*After which we may say:*  
This is the Word of the Lord.  
**Thanks be to God.**

*A time of reflection is kept or a short talk given.*

*A hymn may be sung or music played.*

*Affirmation of Faith*



With Christians across the nations and down the centuries,  
We declare our common faith in God.

**We believe in God the Father,  
from whom every family in heaven and earth is named.**

**We believe in God the Son,  
who lives in our hearts through faith, and fills us with his love.**

**We believe in God the Holy Spirit,  
who strengthens us with power from on high.**

**We believe in one God; Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.**

### *Prayers of Intercession*

*The prayers include one of these responses*

|                         |      |                                |
|-------------------------|------|--------------------------------|
| Lord, in your mercy     | (or) | Lord, hear your people         |
| <b>hear our prayer.</b> |      | <b>and answer our prayers.</b> |

*The prayers may end with*

**Merciful Father, accept these prayers, for the sake of your Son,  
our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.**

### *The Lord's Prayer*

**Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your name,  
your kingdom come,  
your will be done, on earth as in heaven.  
Give us today our daily bread.  
Forgive us our sins,  
as we forgive those who sin against us.  
Lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from evil.  
For the kingdom, the power,  
and the glory are yours  
now and for ever.  
Amen.**

# Ending

## *The Peace*

*Words of introduction to the Peace may be said, followed by:*

The peace of the Lord be always with you,  
**And also with you.**

*Notices may be given, a hymn may be sung or music played.*

## *Prayers of Blessing*

*This prayer may be said or a blessing given:*

**Blessing, honour and glory be yours,  
here and everywhere,  
now and for ever.  
Amen.**

Let us bless the Lord:  
**Thanks be to God.  
Amen.**



## Space4 Festival 24-25th May

Over the bank holiday weekend our Space4 Facebook page hosted a two-day festival of creativity and talent.

We were well entertained with a wide variety of acts from live singing, aikido demonstrations, make up demonstrations, juggling, poetry, beautiful music played on the piano and the flute and artwork; all hosted by our resident celebrity Ken the Shepherd.



There was an amazing variety of musical styles and we got to enjoy song choices from all eras and genres and it was great to experience some real up and coming talent – remember you saw them on Space4 Live first! It was also a real pleasure to see many familiar faces from our own community and some blasts from the past – Rev Bryony did a juggling demonstration.



There were also some lovely slideshows reminding us just how much fun we have when we are together and how much support this amazing project gives to everyone involved.

As well as having great fun, an important part of the festival was to raise funds for our Space4 project and its support of the wider community through our on-line projects and foodbank helping folks who are struggling with food poverty and well-being during this time of isolation.



A huge well done and thank you to Jorgie Carmichael for organising the event and putting everything together and to everyone who shared their talents with us.

It's not too late to view any of the acts because they are still there on the Space4 Facebook page so you can enjoy your own festival whenever you want to.

**Christine Britcliffe**

## *In praise of* **BRIAN RUTHERFORD**

Those who have had a connection with the Kepier Hall or the bellringers will have known Brian well Brian was the life blood of the Kepier and the bellringers for, well ‘forever’ I was told, certainly going back to the 1960’s. In the notes that follow I have been dependant on information from others, so my apologies in advance if I have failed to mention you or a relative, or if some of the details are incorrect.

To begin with Brian was the lead bellringer or Captain of the Bell Tower for many years, he taught all our team, including Elaine and Bill Harkness, Evelyn Garbutt, Pat Waites, and many of the children in church at that time. Sadly as the years progressed the number of bellringers diminished, the children grew up, went off to university and the world. In its heyday, Brian did everything in the tower, looking after maintenance of the bells and the tower, decoration, water proofing and keeping the clock right before Sunderland Council took over responsibility.

During the curacy of Rev’d Michael Jackson, Brian took up the role of running a woodwork workshop in the Kepier, in an area adjacent to the Goodman room which is now in use by Innovations. Michael had the offer of some redundant woodworking machinery from a local college and so the project began. Brian had been made redundant too by the NCB and so had time on his hands. With the chance of the machinery and a supply of wood in the form of palettes from Nissan, Brian offered a skills workshop for people with disability, it was a form of occupational therapy. Some who came had physical disability, others, learning difficulties and some with mental health issues. In the workshop they created garden furniture, bird tables and planters, there may possibly one in your garden. In addition, the workshop produced dolls houses and amazing rocking horses, one of which is still in use in Toddlers. Incredibly the workshop ran every day, so without knowing it, Brian had created the first example of social enterprise in Houghton-le-Spring. The products were sold and the income used for tools and other costs, Brian’s work was 100% voluntary. The Kepier also benefited by having an on the spot handy man, Brian was always seeing to repairs within the building or with Toddler equipment.

Over time, everyone got a bit older, there were fewer clients, Brian was looking towards retirement, new health and safety regulations caused difficulties and the workshop came to its conclusion, the machinery going to a similar project in Hetton.

In his personal life Brian was a single man, his passion was bowling, and in playing for Durham County he enjoyed many trips around England playing with the team. In church, Brian mainly attended Evensong. Brian was always easy going, getting on with all. Sadly Brian died shortly after Easter this year, his funeral will have been small in line with current regulations, so let us take this opportunity to say a big thank you to Brian for all that he did for St Michael’s bells, for his work at the Kepier and the lives he transformed in Houghton-le-Spring.

*Margaret Lee*

# *Introducing our New Curate*

My name is John and I am going to be the next curate at St. Michael and All Angels. I will hopefully move into the area sometime in June and begin work on the 5th July. It probably won't be a surprise that things are going to be a bit different because of coronavirus. So unlike previous curates I won't be ordained immediately, but will come as a licenced lay minister, which is similar to being a lay reader. But that will not make that much of a difference, I can still start work in July and start getting to know you all.

I have spent most of the past three years training for ministry at Westcott House in Cambridge. This involved lots of study as well as being part of different communities to learn more practical skills. Lots of days there are diverse. In the space of an hour you can go from waking thirty people up at a night shelter to leading a service in one of the wealthiest colleges in the world. So one of the real joys in Cambridge has been the variety people, but you never get to know them for that long. I am looking forward to being part of your community for three to four years.



At the moment I am weathering lockdown with my parents in Rotherham and getting things ready for moving up to the North East. There are lots of things to do here because I have still got work connected with my studies to do. I'm also organising moving vans at the moment so it's a very exciting time. I look forward to seeing what church and community life looks like in Houghton over the next few years.

***John D'Silva***





# THE GREEN TO COME

Spring is my favourite season. It's still in full swing as I write, with its changeable weather, may blossom and brilliant light through the leaves. May has for a long time been my favourite month, but it has a rival now - February. In February I'm caught by surprise all over again as the first signs of the still-distant spring appear. There's a song I love by The

Strawbs - there's a blast from the past! - called "A Glimpse of Heaven" which describes the countryside at that time of the year. It contains the lines:

"The trees were bare but spring was near,  
To summon up its endless strings  
Of green magic handkerchiefs".

I think you can tell that the writer loves the scene not just for how it looks but for how it makes him feel. For me it's the catkins. They fill me with hope. They remind me of what is to come. They remind me of other things I love, other things that share their colour, like the frogs we saw in Hetton Bogs one day as they came out of hibernation.

Many of us may be feeling isolated, anxious or sad just now. Many of us may have pain, difficult situations or the brain chemistry that can often make it hard to be hopeful.

I wrote these few lines in gratitude for the gift of hope, that I believe is a gift of God, calling us to look forward.

## CATKINS

They are here.  
Startling not so much in frosty light  
As against the dull grey.  
Colour of leaf buds, of caterpillars  
And the bellies of frogs  
Rising from deep winter sleep.  
They are here again.  
Calling me on darkest days  
To believe in the green to come.

*Ros Pickersgill*

**FRIENDS OF HOUGHTON PARISH CHURCH TRUST  
MESSAGE FROM THE TRUSTEES**

# **ANNUAL REPORT 2020 CORONAVIRUS**

It was with great regret that the Trustees had to cancel the Friends Annual Musical Weekend in May which would have been a feast of amazing talents from new and well loved performers. We are very aware of this dreadful pandemic affecting all our lives, therefore you will not have been surprised by this decision.

It is our intention to postpone the delivery of the already prepared Annual Report until such time as it is deemed safe to do so. The Trustees are hoping that all our loyal subscribers to the Friends will continue to support the great work that has been achieved through the Trust.

As many of you know, the Friends Trust is committed to opening the Church daily throughout the summer months. To this end a new notice board has been ordered to advertise the Church opening times. This would have been ready for the beginning of the season, but has had to be postponed until Church reopens.

In the meantime, all the Trustees wish you a safe passage through these life changing times. Just a kind reminder that if you pay your membership by cash or cheque, that subscriptions are due each year around Easter time. It's not too late if it has slipped your mind!

To help keep our costs down to a minimum we do not send reminders out each year owing to the cost of postage. It would, therefore, be helpful if your membership could be paid by Standing Order. Please contact the Secretary for further details.

**Membership Secretary**

Mr G Peebles  
19 Sancroft Drive  
Houghton-le-Spring  
Tyne & Wear  
DH5 8NE

# Be Prepared!

It is well known that once born, there are only two certainties in life.....death and taxes. Currently we are living in times more resembling a horror movie than reality, each day the number of newly reported deaths relating to the coronavirus is published. Each day the number new cases is also published and we all wonder when it is going to end, or even *will* it ever end. As the totals continue to climb we all know of someone who has been affected by the virus, and sadly we remember the loss of Rev'd David Lambert, known and loved by many of us.

We live in a death shy society, The truth is we are all going to die, but for many years the western world has been somewhat reticent when it comes to talking about death, dying and funerals. By contrast we spend endless hours planning our other rites of passage. Wedding planning might take place over years so everything will be perfect on the day, yet when it comes to our own departing..... too late.... nothing was ever talked about let alone written down. When I make funeral visits I always recommend to families that they

should all plan their own funeral, otherwise they get what they're given.... and they may not like it!



A few years ago we ran GRAVETALK sessions, which some of you attended, approaching with apprehension and leaving with satisfaction and a degree of enjoyment. The time for planning your own departure in life has never been more 'right' than now, living in the age of

coronavirus we need to face up to our own mortality and prepare our farewell in life to reflect our own wishes, personality and beliefs. In the words of Dylan Thomas, '*do not go gentle into that good night*'.

Here are a few sample questions from the Gravetalk session, they are intended to be conversation starters.

What was the best funeral you have been to? What made it the best?

What does it mean to have a good death?

Where is your Will?

What life experience have you valued most?

What would you like your lasting legacy to be?

What life experience have you valued most?

Do you wish to be cremated or buried?

How would you like to be remembered?

What music do you wish to be included at your funeral ?



You may like to complete this sheet then keep it somewhere safe for when the day eventually comes, perhaps with your Will. Your family will be very pleased you did.

## This is What I Wish for my Funeral

Fill in the blanks, cross out the alternative, tick or circle your choice.



I wish to be buried/cremated at .....  
cemetery /crematorium.

I wish for my funeral service to take place in.....

I would like ..... to lead the service (if you have a preference).

Is there a charity you wish to support from donations made? .....

When you arrive, is there any piece of music you wish to have played?

..... or would you prefer music played from the organ?

At a church funeral we normally sing 2 hymns, which ones do you want for the occasion?

.....

At a Christian funeral there is always a reading from the Bible. Popular choices are:

John 14.v1-6                      1 Corinthians 13.                      Eccesiastes 3.  
Revelation 21. 1-7              Isaiah 43. 1-5a

or any other favourite passage.....

You will know there is always a eulogy or tribute which tells your unique story. Take time to think about the events in your life you would like to have mentioned, what did you enjoy most, what made you *you*. Write some notes on a separate piece of paper and save it together with this.

When you leave church, is there a special piece of music you would like to have played? Alternatively, you might wish for organ music with the words of the Nunc Dimittis said over the music (Now Lord, you let your servant go in peace....) This makes for a very powerful sending out.



Margaret Lee



# Life through shutdown

I don't know what you as individuals or couples or families think about the lockdown over the past couple of months. Maybe it's been a good time for you to take stock of your life and relax or maybe lockdown is your worst nightmare. But wouldn't it be good not only to survive this time but to redeem it and see it as a gift from a generous heavenly Father to his children. There are several ways of doing this.

## **Delight in God's grace and be gracious**

We are saved by grace (Ephesians 2:8) and by grace we grow in godliness (Ephesians 2:10). As you struggle during lockdown, keep coming back to these gospel truths.

**Take one day at a time as** Matthew 6:34 says 'Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.' So focus on the present. Don't get caught up in negative thought cycles and 'what ifs'. Give thanks for the many blessings that you have received today.

## **Set time for different things during each day**

'There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens.' (Ecclesiastes 3:1) In lockdown, every day seems to merge into one. It is easy to lose track of time and for weekdays and weekends to feel the same. Build structure as much as you can into your days and weeks. To thrive in lockdown is to set up a spiritually, mentally and physically sustainable life. The further into this we go, the more distant and intangible the end feels.

From what I read on social media and see on television it is clear over these lockdown week's people are finding a number of ways to survive. Many have turned to baking and comfort-eating to distract them from the uncertainty of these times, while others, are watching Netflix or reading more novels or chatting to friends on WhatsApp. Some talented people have been sewing uniform bags and masks for care staff in local hospitals and Nursing Homes. Musical people have been singing in choirs – each

from their own home and then put together by some clever person and they sing as a choir. Even our own church choir are doing this in a small way with the help of talented Nikki who puts it all together.

Others - like myself – may have taken up a new hobby or possibly continued one they never had time for before we were forced to be at home.



I thought I would tell you what I have been doing with some of my time. In September last year I started Saxophone lessons.

It's too long a story to tell you how I came to have a saxophone but it is something I've always wanted to play but my stumbling block is that I don't read music! So alongside learning which finger to press which button – let alone get some sound out when I do that – I also have had to learn how to read the notes, which note goes with which button and what the value of each note is! Phew! Hard for an old brain like mine!

But I have continued having lessons over FaceTime with a very patient but excellent tutor. With all this time on my hands I have had no excuse not to practice – although my neighbours may not be so enthusiastic when they hear scales and long notes coming through the window and then one line of a tune played over and over again! My older neighbour when I apologized said "Oh! No I don't mind, I love music" (not quite what I call it!) She's very kind. I am progressing and beginning to play some simple tunes quite well now.

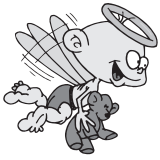
Another hobby I have just taken up is cycling!

I feel I need more exercise. I do walk my 10 year old Labrador Cassie every day but now she's older she's getting slower. I have got a bike with a battery to help with the hills!.



As I write I have only had it a few days and I'm going a little further each day as I get the legs used to using different muscles! I'm enjoying it although ache a little in places I didn't know I had!

I wonder what hobbies anyone else has taken up? It would good to know how people are using this enforced 'spare' time.



# Michael's Angels

1 Kings 17

## Help from a Migh

In 1 Kings 17:1-6, God helped Elijah when he hid from the king. Cross out all the Cs, Gs, Ks, Os, and Qs in the stream. Then rearrange the remaining letters to find three things God provided for Elijah.

The stream contains the following letters for the word search:

Row 1: E G K C K O  
 Row 2: E O G T Q  
 Row 3: Q K Q O T  
 Row 4: K G K C  
 Row 5: K O A  
 Row 6: Q C G K  
 Row 7: Q O K G  
 Row 8: G Q Q A G C G O Q D  
 Row 9: O G C O K Q K E R G O  
 Row 10: O K O B Q K O  
 Row 11: K O Q G A C  
 Row 12: C Q K E M  
 Row 13: K R C G O

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
 2. \_\_\_\_\_  
 3. \_\_\_\_\_

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## Orchard at the heart of the community

# MEMORIALS

We hope this system will help us to meet requests for memorials more efficiently. Should you wish for a loved one to be remembered on their anniversary in the weekly prayers read during the Sunday services, please complete the slip opposite.

Cut out the slip and place it in the intercessions box at least one week prior to the Sunday for remembrance. If you are unable to get to church, please post the slip to the Church Administrator: Mrs Philippa Elsey, Parish Church of St Michael and All Angels, The Broadway, Houghton-le-Spring.

## MEMORIAL REQUEST

Name of person to be remembered:

.....

Request made by:

.....

.....

.....

Date for memorial:

Sunday, .....

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Rotary provides valuable opportunities for individuals to network, make connections and build relationships - while having fun and giving something back to the community.

*If you'd like to find out more about us, call Ashley Burland on 0191 528 0747*

## Rotary



Club of Houghton-le-Spring

## PLEASE PROMOTE THIS IN YOUR COMMUNITIES

The Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, has launched a free national phone line as a simple new way to bring worship and prayer into people's homes while church buildings are closed because of the coronavirus.

Daily Hope, which is available from today, offers music, prayers and reflections as well as full worship services from the Church of England at the end of a telephone line.

The line – which is available 24 hours a day on **0800 804 8044** – has been set up particularly with those unable to join online church services during the period of restrictions in mind.

The service is supported by the Church of England nationally as well as through the Connections group based at Holy Trinity Claygate in Surrey and the Christian charity Faith in Later Life.

Although thousands of churches across the country are now running services and prayer groups online while public worship remains suspended, many people – especially older people – do not have access to the internet.

The line also recognises the impact of social distancing restrictions and self-isolation measures on those suffering from loneliness.

Statistics from Age UK suggest that 49% of older people believe the TV or a pet to be their daily source of comfort and interaction. While many organisations are encouraging people to use better use of technology, ONS figures also state that 2.5 million people aged 75 and above have never used the internet.



A free phone line of hymns,  
reflections and prayers

## Dealing with **Loneliness** and **Isolation**: FIVE TOP TIPS



**1. Pray – light a candle, if safe, and pray for hope, faith and strength to keep loving and caring for each other during this time of struggle.**



**2. Talk about how you feel.**

This may be difficult if you are self-isolating, but use the phone, internet and social media. If you need to contact a counsellor, this can be arranged by your GP, local agencies or privately. Samaritans are there 24 hours a day, every day, and it's free to call them on 116 123.



**3. Focus on the things that you can change, not on the things you can't.**



**4. Look after yourself – physically, emotionally, spiritually.**

Plan things that you enjoy at regular intervals during the day – a TV programme, a phone call, a book, a favourite dish, a game.



**5. Look after others – even if only in small ways, but do what you can:**

a smile, a kind word, writing a letter or an email.