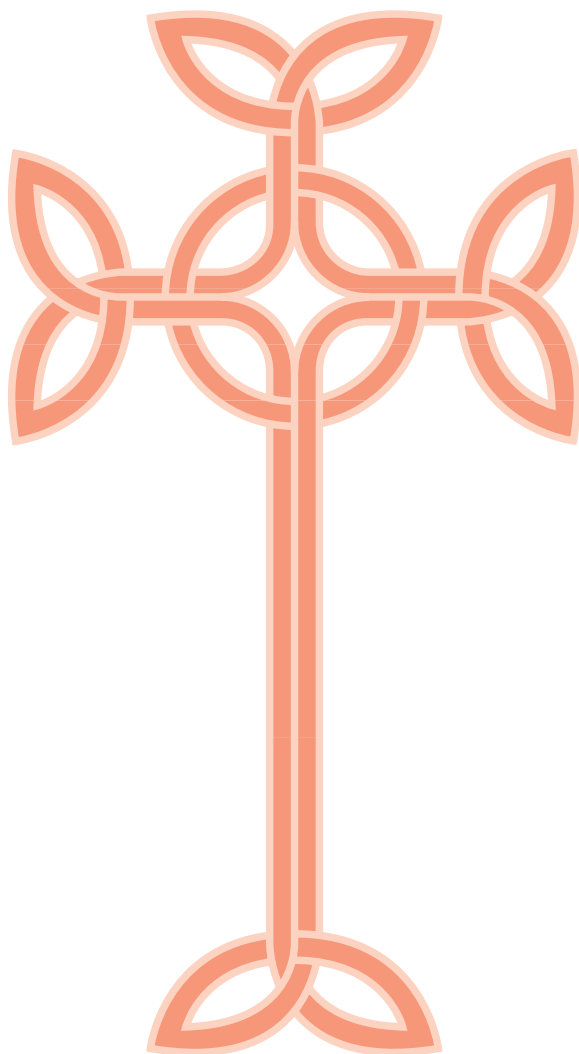


THE MONTHLY MAGAZINE
OF THE PARISH OF
HOUGHTON-LE-SPRING



St. Michael
AND ALL ANGELS

MAY 2020

60P

SIGNPOST

THE PARISH CHURCH OF HOUGHTON-LE-SPRING

MINISTRY TEAM

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

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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

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

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

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. 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.

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.

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 so she can let you know how to join in.

'Dial-in' Church! is for those who don't have internet access to be able to participate in some shared worship via a telephone conference. People can dial in at any time from 10:55 for the service to begin at 11am. To access the service, simply dial the number 0330 606 0403 into your phone, put in the access code 380931 followed by the # key.

There will be a prompt that asks you for your name as you join (don't be thrown by that!). The cost of the phone call is that of a local call from your phone provider, if you have an inclusive deal it may even be for free!

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.

Rector's Letter

I write this to offer continued encouragement and reassurance of prayer at this very difficult time. While our church buildings remain closed at present, our worship and our prayer and our care and service for the community continues in new and different ways.

When church closures were announced, our Archbishops encouraged us to consider how we could be a 'different sort of church, less characterised by Sunday attendance but that is rooted in prayer and service to others'. I am incredibly grateful to our people (and to God!) for how we have responded at St Michael's to the challenges facing us. We are continuing our worship and prayer through facebook, Dial-in church and supporting prayer and worship at home.



We have used technology to continue our study groups and our weekly 'Young Church' (see their 'Easter Egg Parade' on the back page!). We are seeking to care for our community through telephone contact, facebook, through the production of this magazine and through funeral ministry & bereavement care. We're continuing to operate our foodbank – which has (sadly but inevitably) grown significantly and moved to larger premises in the Kepier Hall. These are just some of the ways that we're trying to be church in and for the community in these unprecedented times. We do

all of this having to manage our finances (which I'm sure people can imagine are under great pressure because of lost income from collections, weddings, funerals, fundraising).

In what we are doing in church at the moment, I can't help but be drawn to the idea that we do this very much in continuity with our past at St Michael's. In Gilpin's time he famously fed the poor, cared for the vulnerable, helped educate, took the gospel to different places. Almost as a development of his legacy we're providing a foodbank, reaching out through phone and online, leading WhatsApp courses, leading worship in new strange places – through facebook and telephone conferences!!

In his letter to the Roman's Paul writes to a church that lived in challenging times the following words: *"I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord."*

I share this as a message of hope for this time – not in a naïve 'everything is okay' way – we know well and we are alongside people who are facing huge pressures, perhaps personal, perhaps relational, financial or losing loved ones and bereaving their loss in the most unnatural way. We do this as God's church in this time and place knowing that whatever our circumstances we are loved deeply by God and inspired by our faith we seek to share that message of love through our words and our actions at this and at all times.

With my continued prayers and very best wishes.



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

Bells Fish Shops

36 Sunderland Road, Gilesgate,
Durham, DH1 2LG

0191 386 0302

11 Market Place, Durham, DH1 3NE

0191 384 8974

Unit 1, Finchale Road, Framwellgate
Moor, Durham, DH1 5RW

0191 370 9999

www.bellsfishshop.co.uk

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Teal Farm Village, Washington,
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0191 417 8687

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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: klgrab7@aol.co.uk
Club: 0191 584 1460

Two Castles Housing Association



Two Castles Housing Association provides
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Tel: 0191 261 4774

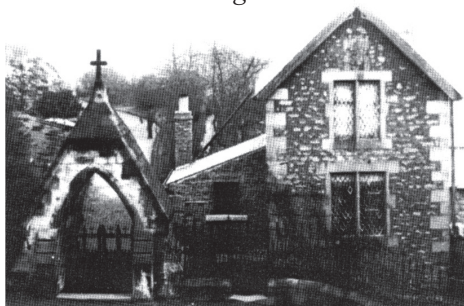
Fax: 0191 261 9692

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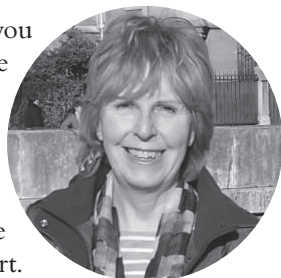


www.theoldcem.co.uk

BEREAVEMENT and HOPE

This global pandemic has touched all of us in ways we could not have imagined and none more so than those who have lost loved ones.

Being bereaved at any time is devastating, but to lose someone you love in these fearful and uncertain times is mind blowing to say the least. So what can we do to help? Obviously we can't visit people but we can let them know we are there for them. Regular phone calls to keep in touch and to listen and talk is extremely important. Despite the fact there is nothing you can do to improve their situation, being there is crucial for the bereaved. Knowing that there is someone who cares at the other end of the phone is a real comfort.



Being isolated due to Covid 19 means no visitors, no crying together, no hugs - but what it does mean is that you are physically alone.

It must be horrific, and to make it even worse is the knowledge that you don't know when this isolation will end. As I was writing this, these words of comfort came to mind.

"All shall be well, and all shall be well and all manner of thing shall be well" - Julian of Norwich (1342 - 1416) from 'Revelations of Divine Love' - from a woman who lived a life of total prayer and devotion.

We are able to demonstrate Christian love to all who are grieving even if they don't share our beliefs. Leaving meals on the doorstep or doing shopping for the bereaved is another way of helping - another way to show you care.

Technology is also a blessing (something I never thought I would say!) - Facetime, What's App, Zoom and the like can all be helpful. All these are the next best thing to being physically present for someone. We need to rethink bereavement.

Funerals are also difficult at this time, so one thing to focus on is a memorial service in the future. Something to look forward to - a celebration of the deceased's life. Planning this together is another way of talking and thinking about the person, evoking happy memories and happier times, again bringing a modicum of comfort.

When I was a young child one of my favourite books was 'Pandora's Box'. Most people will be familiar with the story, but for those who aren't, in a nutshell it's about an inquisitive girl who opens a chest that was forbidden to her. She unleashes all manner of horrible things to the world, like illness, disease and death and just as she is about to slam the chest closed, a little voice pleads with her to let it out. This voice was the voice of HOPE - the only good thing to come out of the box. So when we are feeling anxious or afraid let us all cling on to hope during this pandemic and seek to support and reach out to the bereaved with prayer, communication and kindness.

And above all, let us never forget that nothing can separate us from the love of Christ.

Anne Clappison

Thank you Thank you Thank you

*to everyone who has already signed with the Parish Giving Scheme.
Your continued support is benefiting the running of this Church and
the local community.*

We can't do it without you.

Currently we are in very strange times and our Church building is closed in line with Government and Church guidance. This however has resulted in a reduction in our income, that is the monies required to maintain our beautiful building and to sustain our valuable work at the heart of the Community of Houghton-le-Spring and surrounding areas

The Parish Giving Scheme was set up through Durham Diocese to help us best manage regular donations on which we can also receive Gift Aid where appropriate.

There is a new procedure in place during the Coronavirus pandemic, as they are currently not accepting paper documents.

If you wish to **join** the Parish Giving Scheme please ring Tel: **0333 002 1271**, and one of the administrators will take you through the sign-up process. They will need the following information, so please have it to hand.

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

If you wish to make any changes to your existing donation, please ring **0333 002 1260** or email **info@parishgiving.org.uk**.

Anyone can do it!

Thank you for reading this. Much appreciated.

Alastair Bradley, Church Treasurer

USEFUL TO KNOW ABOUT...

FOOD DELIVERY AND COLLECTION SERVICES

Here are some of the local businesses offering meals / food delivery or collection services in our area.

Other retail outlets may be available things change all the time and some are only available on certain days, so it is best to check with them directly. Some are posting what they are doing on Facebook or on their website

Meals Delivery and Collection

The Mill, Houghton, 0191 584 3211

The Copt Hill, Houghton, 07417 576326

The Little Peppercorn Tea Rooms, Hetton, 0191 520 8695

The Stackyard, West Herrington, 0191 512 4901

Vermillion Indian Restaurant, Houghton

Fresh Food

Homer Hill Farm, Rainton Gate, 0191 584 1941, collection and delivery

Apple Orchard fruit and veg in Houghton, 0191 584 9288

Thirlaway Butchers, Houghton

Dicksons Butchers, Houghton

McMurter's Butchers, Hetton, 0191 526 1661

Eggs on Legs, Houghton

Garden Centre Supplies

Leamside Nursery Garden Centre, delivery

East Durham Garden Centre, South Hetton, delivery

Horns Garden Centre, Shotton, delivery or collection

B&Q, order and collect from the car park

FUNERALS

A simple reflection at home on the day of a funeral you can't attend

It's so difficult when you can't go to a funeral, whether for family, friend or neighbour. Many are facing this in the current crisis, so this short reflection has been specially written by a vicar for you to do at home, alone or with those who share your home. You might ask others to take part at the same time from their home.

When this time of social distancing is over, there may well be an opportunity to meet together at a special time of remembering and thankfulness. Your memories now can be part of that experience when the time comes.



Neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Romans 8.38-39

Before you find a place to sit quietly, you might like to find a photograph of the person who has died, write down some special memories, or play a special piece of music that connects you with the person you are remembering today. Think about those who are at the funeral and pray for them.

[Where it says 'N' in a prayer, just say the name of your person].

You might like to light a candle. Then pray:

Be with us, loving God.

Hear our prayers and comfort us in our loss, and help us to trust in your Son Jesus, whom you raised from the dead.

Strengthen our faith and renew our hope that N and all those we love will share in his resurrection.

Amen.

Read Psalm 23

- 1 The Lord is my shepherd;
therefore can I lack nothing.
- 2 He makes me lie down in green pastures
and leads me beside still waters.

- 3 He shall refresh my soul
and guide me in the paths of righteousness
for his name's sake.
- 4 Though I walk through the valley of the
shadow of death,
I will fear no evil;
for you are with me;
your rod and your staff, they comfort me.
- 5 You spread a table before me
in the presence of those who trouble me;
you have anointed my head with oil
and my cup shall be full.
- 6 Surely goodness and loving mercy shall
follow me
all the days of my life,
and I will dwell in the house of the Lord
for ever.



Reflect on your memories.

- What stands out in your memory about N?
- What will you always remember about them?
- What things did you learn through their life and death, including about God?

Now give thanks to God for their life and ask for strength for yourself and those who grieve.

Dear God,
thank you for N,
and for all that *he/she* meant to me and to others.

I so wanted to say goodbye.
Help me to know you are there,
holding all my hopes,
holding all those I love, especially N,
and holding me this day too.
Be close to us all this day with your peace
and hope.
Amen.

Heavenly Father,
you have not made us for darkness and death,
but for life with you for ever.
Without you we have nothing to hope for;
with you we have nothing to fear.
Speak to us now your words of eternal life.
Lift us to the light and peace of your presence,
and set the glory of your love before us today:
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Now say 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.

(or)

Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come;
thy will be done;
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation;
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
the power and the glory,
for ever and ever.
Amen.

Now pray this prayer, which is used at the end of the funeral service to say goodbye.

God our creator and redeemer,
by your power Christ conquered death
and entered into glory.
Confident of his victory
and claiming his promises,
we entrust N to your mercy
in the name of Jesus our Lord,
who died and is alive
and reigns with you,
now and for ever.
Amen.

To finish you might like to light a candle online at www.churchofengland.org/funeral-candle

Help and support are available for you during this time, and in the future.

Go to www.churchofengland.org/life-events/funerals for details of how to contact your local church, find help in your bereavement and remembering.



Word from The Lemon Grove

“As I write highly civilised human beings are flying overhead trying to kill me”.

Those are the famous opening words of George Orwell’s essay ‘The Lion and The Unicorn’, written of course during the Blitz, the bombing of London during World War II.

As I write, we face another existential crisis, this time under attack by an invisible enemy. As Orwell said later in his essay “Anyone who can read a map knows that we are in deadly danger.”

So far, the Sovereign Base Areas have avoided mass infections, with 9 reported cases across the two areas, most being servicemen who have recently been in the UK. In the Republic of Cyprus (population 800,000) there have been 455 cases, with 14 deaths, the relatively low numbers due to the severe lockdown which is almost universally observed. When I drive to court, or to the supermarket, it is rare for me to see another car on the road. And the lockdown continues to be observed by criminals; so far I have had 1 new custody case since the lockdown began.

As anyone who has family can tell, the painful aspect of the Covid19 emergency is the separation from sons and daughters, parents, grandchildren. For us as Christians there is pain too in the closure of churches and the loss of corporate worship, felt particularly at Easter, when the absence of communion and the sharing of the Easter greeting “He is risen indeed” leaves us bereft.

But there are positives coming out of the crisis. Just as in 1940, communities are coming together, and there is the possibility of greater global solidarity, as we learn that we all in it together in what is now a very small world. And just as she did in 1940, the Queen reassures us, telling us that we will meet again. And even if we were not together for Easter, we know the truth of the Easter message – that our God radiates unfathomable love as, stretching out His arms on the Cross, He shares our vulnerability and the brokenness of the world. And if we can accept that, we can have hope.

“Then sounds the voice of One who like the heart of man

Was once a child who among beasts has lain

‘Still do I love, still shed my innocent light, my Blood, for thee.”

(Edith Sitwell ‘Still falls the Rain’)

Roger Elsey

Bible readings for May

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

MAY			
Friday	1	JOHN 1.43-end	Philip and James, Apostles
Saturday	2	LUKE 2.21-40	
Sunday	3	JOHN 10.1-10	
Monday	4	LUKE 2. 41-end	
Tuesday	5	LUKE 3. 1-14	
Wednesday	6	LUKE 3. 15-22	
Thursday	7	LUKE 4. 1-13	
Friday	8	LUKE 4. 14-30	
Saturday	9	LUKE 4. 31-37	
Sunday	10	JOHN 14.1-14	
Monday	11	LUKE 4. 38-end	
Tuesday	12	JOHN 14.1-14	
Wednesday	13	LUKE 5.12-26	
Thursday	14	MATTHEW 7. 15-27	Mathias, Apostle
Friday	15	LUKE 6. 1-11	
Saturday	16	LUKE 6. 12-26	
Sunday	17	JOHN 14. 15-21	
Monday	18	LUKE 6. 27-38	
Tuesday	19	JOHN 14.15-26	
Wednesday	20	LUKE 7. 1-10	
Thursday	21	LUKE 24. 44-end	ASCENSION DAY
Friday	22	LUKE 7. 11-17	
Saturday	23	LUKE 7.18-25	
Sunday	24	JOHN 17.1-11	
Monday	25	LUKE 7. 36-end	Ven Bede
Tuesday	26	JOHN 17.1-11	
Wednesday	27	LUKE 8. 16-25	
Thursday	28	LUKE 8. 26-39	
Friday	29	LUKE 8. 40-end	
Saturday	30	LUKE 9. 1-17	
Sunday	31	JOHN 20. 19-23	PENTECOST
JUNE			
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	

HOLY WEEK 2020



This year Holy Week has been so different to what any of us have experienced in our lifetime because of the pandemic which has forced church buildings to be closed. This has meant that churches have had to re-imagine ways of 'being' church. During Holy week John devised some on-line services with each member of the ministry team giving a reflection on the Gospel of the day. Here is a summary of each day.

On **Monday Sue Elsey** gave her reflection on the **Gospel John 12. 1-11** about Mary anointing Jesus' feet. Sue started her reflection about how the current restrictions leave many who live on their own vulnerable and maybe fearful and how the story of Mary is a story of love, hope and beauty. Sue reminds us that Mary's outpouring of love was the last kind act done for Jesus and was in stark contrast to what was to come – his abandonment and betrayal. Sue left us to think about Mary's act of kindness and how we might find ways in these unusual times to pour out our love for Jesus.

On **Tuesday Ann Clappison** gave her reflection on the **Gospel John 12. 20-36** where the scene is set for the final battle between God's kingdom and the powers of evil. Ann talked about how Jesus lived a humble life and always looked past 'the sin' to the real person and during his ministry called people to love and serve. Ann gave an example how in worrying times people may be fearful of being confined and how in confinement we begin to appreciate all the things we love most where some of our basic human needs such as human relationships, touch, talking have been taken away leaving some feeling isolated and alone. Ann asked us to try as we travel through Holy week to be more aware of what Christ suffered and try and think of neighbours who may be alone and reach out in love and service like Jesus.

On **Wednesday Ros Pickersgill** gave her reflection on the **Gospel John 13. 21-32** on Judas betrayal. Ros started by saying how we belong to many groups and meet people in many different ways. She asked us to think of a time we have been shocked by the actions of someone we know, trust and love. She talked about how the disciples must have been shocked by Judas'

action of betrayal. She said it may make us think that if Judas one of Jesus' closest trusted friends can embrace evil doing the wrong thing for what he thought was the right reason then any of us can follow the wrong path. She suggests there are all sorts of ways, we, like Judas can betray Jesus. She then read a poem which I suggest if you can get hold of a copy do read it. It's called **Ballad of the Judas tree by Ruth Etchells**. The poem ends with Jesus forgiving Judas and Ros ends by saying that if it's a shock to us that one who betrayed Jesus is forgiven – perhaps it's an even greater shock – but a good one – as to who Jesus can forgive.

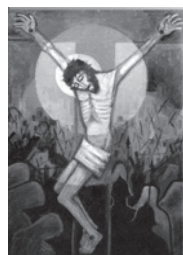
On **Maundy Thursday Revd Judith Howes** gave her reflection on the Gospel **John 13. 1-7 + 31b-35** on the washing of the disciple's feet. I talked about how the pandemic has led to fear and that amidst it all we need to hear words of hope. I talked about how on Maundy Thursday Jesus gathered together with his disciples and asked them to do two things in his memory – celebrate the Eucharist and serve one another.

He gave a new commandment to love one another and I talked about his 'hands on' illustration by washing his disciple's feet which was a lesson in selfless love. I then gave an illustration of nurses in the NHS carrying out selfless work with patients dying of Covid 19. I ended by saying we are called as Christians to love one another as he has loved us and if we 'wash each other's feet' we move from being spectators of Jesus' life to being participants.

On **Good Friday Revd Margaret Lee** gave her reflection on the Gospel **John 19. 1-25**. Margaret asked us to think only of the crucifixion and the events which led to it, blotting out any knowledge and understanding of the resurrection. She asked why did it have to happen? Was it because Jesus had to die for our sins, to pay the price, as our hymns tell us, or was it because Jesus overturned all the social and religious norms of the day by bringing all people into God's kingdom. Jesus' teaching and actions had the potential of becoming a threat to those in power. The question arises therefore:

Did Jesus die for the sins of the world, or

Did Jesus die because of the sins of the world



NEW WAYS OF BEING ST MICHAELS & ALL ANGELS CHURCH

I expect we are all feeling the same just now; impatient at being restricted in what we can do, missing physical contact with our families and with our friends and this is especially so for those of you who live on your own. A very significant part of all our lives is being part of St Michael's church sharing our lives in the love and worship of God, so not being able to attend church for the foreseeable future is another massive miss in our lives. But church is more than attending services in a building, church is who we are and what we do, it is the channel through which we live out our faith. Rector John and the ministry team at St Michaels have been developing new ways of being church in this Coronavirus time through which we are still able to come together to worship and to care for each other.

In this copy of Signpost you will find a further list of daily readings to accompany the Service of the Word and Daily Prayer services we included with last months magazine.

You can access Sunday worship at 10am or later on facebook by searching **stmichaelsHLS** and going onto posts or videos. If this is not possible for you, you can use the dial in option at **11 am on Sunday** morning, simply dial: **0330 606 0403**. An American voice will ask you for an access code which is **380931** # and then will ask your name. You will then be through and will be able to hear Rector John and others as they too join. Dial in from 10.55am in order to begin at 11 am. Have your Signpost by you and you will be able to follow the Service of the Word with John. This is charged as a local call. Also on Facebook you can follow the Tuesday evening service at 7pm.

If you have youngsters in your family who might wish to explore Young Church, this is possible by contacting our Young Church leader, Clare at stmichaels.youngchurch@btinternet.com and she will explain how to join in with her at 11 am Sunday. Take a look on Facebook at the amazing paste eggs our children created for Easter.

I hope you will all have received phone calls from our team of 'telephoners' who are regularly contacting everyone who is on our electoral role and beyond. We began with those who we have always visited or who live alone, but soon extended it for everyone we could think of. Using the same list of contacts, and there are over 160 of you, we assembled a monthly prayer list which means that everyone is individually prayed for at least once per month. There are five names/families allocated for each day. If you have not had a call from us and wish to be included then please contact me either by email marglee372@outlook.com or phone 07757 927048.

I know many of you have your own circle of church friends and are in regular contact with each other which is marvellous and must be a great support for you. So please keep in touch, keep loving, keep praying and above all, stay safe.

A prayer from Iona: *May kindly Columba guide you*
 To be an isle in the sea
 To be a hill on the shore
 To be a star in the night
 To be a staff for the weak
 Amen

Margaret

FRIENDS OF HOUGHTON PARISH CHURCH TRUST

ANNUAL REPORT 2020

CORONAVIRUS

It is with great regret that the Trustees have had to cancel the Friends Annual Musical Weekend in May which was going to be 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 be 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.

STAY SAFE – STAY AT HOME

If anyone would like to join the Friends, please contact George Peebles, our membership secretary on (0191) 584 1628.

Space4 Food Cupboard News

During this time of lockdown and shut down for the physical building part of Space4 we have been busier than ever in certain areas. What was our food cupboard has now become more of a food bank with the help and support of money and food donations from our Church and local community. As a project we were already well known to Sunderland City Council and have been a key player in their strategy to get food out to the most vulnerable at this most challenging of times. Along with the pre-existing issues for families on low incomes, innumerable others have joined their ranks as incomes disappear and then you add to that those who are self-isolating! The council now has some measures in place to help with shopping for those who are self-isolating.

In order to maintain a sound social distancing policy we have moved operations to the Kepier Hall and, on the whole, take orders for food parcels via our Facebook pages – this is



monitored and collated by one of our volunteers Jade. The food parcels are then put together by Christine and family before they are collected from just outside the building by our small team of drivers for doorstep (no contact) delivery. This takes place on Tuesday and Friday between 10am and 12 Noon and, when necessary, we can still serve the needs of those who might not have internet access that arrive needing a parcel. Working from the Kepier also allows us to respond to emergency food parcels for families referred to us by ShARP (Shiney Advice and Resource Centre) local Councillors and social services.

Along with generous community donations we have also been successful in bids for grants in

response to the crisis from Greggs, Tescos and B&M Stores along with forging new links with the Morrison's Community Champion at Chester le Street and Lambton House Care Home.

All in all, during these exceedingly challenging and frightening times lots of good people, as individuals and large organisations, have come together to make something happen that has a positive impact on the vulnerable in our community. Huge thanks to all concerned – I think these quotes from recipients says it all along with the photos of donations from B&M, meatballs from the City Council and a boot full of food from Morrison's at Chester-le-Street!

"Thank you very very much, you have no idea how much this means, it's like winning the lottery!"

"Just got my food parcel thank you so much, you are doing an amazing job and it makes such a difference to my family."

"Omg thank u all so very much for everything u have sent I'm absolutely over the moon. Xx"

Christine Britcliffe

Ducklings Dogs and Shepherds!

With everyone experiencing the lockdown, you may have thought that Space4 had stopped. While we may not be able to meet under the library, we just moved online instead. We have a very active Facebook page with informative and entertaining posts, ideas and stuff to do. We have had lots of things for the kids to do while the schools have been closed.

We have kept our Daily groups going with an opportunity for chat on Facebook or privately via messenger. On Monday's we have a Women's group, Tuesday is the Craft group, Wednesday is Parents chat, Thursday's is Men's group, Friday is the Have your cake and chat group with it all rounded off by the Saturday group. Running daily through each day we have quizzes, Doodle says, 30 day song challenge, Ken the Shepherd says, (a throwback to Christmas when one of our regulars Ken dressed as a Shepherd to join in with the nativity – Ken has made films to show us how to wash our hands correctly and encourage us to stay at home) live views of the Kipper ducklings and so much more.



The emphasis has been on keeping people connected and keeping their spirits up so we have used lots of gentle humour and tried to include a wide number of volunteers and service users. To finish each day we have a poem and some reflective thoughts with contributions from Christine, Colin, Rev John and a different guest each Friday. Coming up on the 24th and 25th May we have the Space4 Facebook Page Festival.

A two day festival of creativity and talent with songs and poems which Jorgie has done an amazing job of organising. On the Space4 Facebook page we have reached over 30,000 people, had over 15,000 engagements with the page and 101 people like the page taking us to over 2,300 page followers! We are also keeping in touch with those who don't have internet access with weekly phone catch ups.

Colin Nicholl

David Lambert

Although we are comparative newcomers to this area I have been deeply moved by the many kind supportive messages we have received since David died.

Prayers for us have supported us a great deal during a time which is never easy. Many

thanks. Four of us attended David's funeral and Rector John gave David a wonderful 'send off' into the next stage of his life, we were so thankful for this. In the fullness of time we hope to share a thanksgiving service with those of you who are able to join us.

Ruby Lambert

DAVID, REST IN PEACE AND RISE IN GLORY

COMMUNICATING IN A LOCKDOWN

or BY HOOK OR BY UKE

I think we're probably all finding communication a bit of a problem at the moment. We can't congregate, socialise or visit in our usual ways. For many whose loved ones are in care homes, the phone may be the only available avenue. With residents often confined to their own rooms, it can be challenging to find ways of providing a bit of light relief.

I thought I'd share with you what I've been doing to punctuate what can be very long days for my mother with the help of the phone, poetry - from Tennyson to Spike Milligan, two hymn books, a collection of songs set to ukulele chords and a musical instrument in whose company I am, let us say, a work in progress!

In my head the words of this ditty are set to the tune of an old song called "Ukulele Lady". If you're too young to remember the original or the 1960s remake, it's on YouTube. The song has two verses before the chorus; mine has only one.



*I like to play the ukulele
Though I'm not an expert on the strings!
Playing on my ukulele
Is just one of several things...*

*That I can do
When I phone through.
And poems are another thing -
And hymns on Sundays too.*

*I rely on my ukulele
Though I think I irritate the birds!
The four strings of that ukulele
Can say more than hundreds of words.*

*And so my...
Strings I shall ply-
And I know why;
Things that you do to show your love
Can get you by.*

*You may not play the ukulele
But you will have your special unique ways
Of communicating daily;
You'll be surprised the spirits you'll raise!*

Love finds its way through barriers. Our love for others, and God's love for us.
(Paul's letter to the Romans, Chapter 8, verses 38 & 39).

Ros Pickersgill

The Daily Examen

The 'Examen' is an ancient practice in the Church that can help us see God's hand at work in our lives. More than 400 years ago St. Ignatius Loyola introduced this practice to the Jesuit order and it's a habit that Jesuits, and many other Christians, practice to this day.

The Examen is 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. We live in anxious times at the moment and away from our friends and some apart from family. With the lock down seeming to go on for quite some time it is good to have some routine in our lives and ending the day using this version of St. Ignatius's prayer, may be a good discipline to use.



Judith Howes

The Daily Examen

1. **Become aware of God's presence.** Look back on the events of the day in the company of the Holy Spirit. The day may seem confusing to you—a blur, a jumble, a muddle. Ask God to bring clarity and understanding.
2. **Review the day with gratitude.** It may be hard for some especially if you live alone but gratitude is the foundation of our relationship with God. However small there will be some moments of joy and delight in your day to thank God for – a phone call from a family member, a photo of a grandchild on the internet or even as nature seems closer with less pollution from traffic around we may hear the birds singing outside. Pay attention to small things—the food you ate, the sights you see- even from the comfort of your home - and other seemingly small pleasures. God is in the details.
3. **Pay attention to your emotions.** One of St. Ignatius's great insights was that we detect the presence of the Spirit of God in the movements of our emotions. Reflect on the feelings you experienced during the day. I guess for many of us at this time near the top of the list may be Boredom? Even Anger? Compassion? Resentment? Elation? What is God saying through these feelings? God will most likely show you some ways that you fell short. Make note of what they are. But also look deeply for other implications. Does a feeling of frustration perhaps mean that God wants you consider a new direction maybe in this time of isolation you are you concerned about a friend? Perhaps you should reach out by phoning or writing to him/her in some way.
4. **Choose one feature of the day and pray from it.** Ask the Holy Spirit to direct you to something during the day that God thinks is particularly important. It may involve a feeling—positive or negative. It may be a vivid moment of pleasure or peace. Or it may be something that seems rather insignificant. Look at it. Talk to God about it. Allow the prayer to arise spontaneously from your heart—whether intercession, praise, repentance, or gratitude.
5. **Look toward tomorrow.** Ask God to give you light for tomorrow's challenges. At this time when a lot of days run into each other it may be something small that surface as you think about the next day. Are you doubtful? Cheerful? Apprehensive? Allow these feelings to turn into prayer. Seek God's guidance. Ask him for help and understanding. Pray for hope.

St Michael and All Angels, Houghton-le-Spring

Did you know that...

It is possible that there was an ancient megalithic monument - perhaps a stone circle - on the site where our Church now stands... During a 1999 excavation in the churchyard, a line of 'erratic boulders' of whinstone (probably from the Hadrian's Wall area) was found. The presence of the boulders suggested a prehistoric use of the site. Several more of the boulders were found inside the church during the 2008 refurbishment.

Archaeologists also think that there may have been some sort of Roman temple on the site of the Church... They think this because some of the stones unearthed during excavation have features that are very characteristic of Roman work. Those features are 'Lewis Holes'; and a finish that is technically described as 'rock-faced and margined'. There is also a stone sarcophagus which is Roman in form, in the grounds of the Church.

Our Church is dedicated to St Michael, the Archangel. This dedication is often associated with churches that are either built on a hilltop, or have a spire, or are on older pagan sites.

It is probable that the first St Michael's was a Saxon Church, with a tall and narrow nave - like St Peter's in Monkwearmouth - and probably a smaller and narrower chancel. It would have been a very simple building, with small windows set high in the wall.

The earliest specific reference to Houghton in history seems to be to a priest, Renaldus, who served in the Church in the early 12th century. One part of the present Church survives from this time: the western part of the north wall of the chancel, which contains a doorway and a window.

In 1319 the nave and west tower of the Church were burned down by Scots raiders when they sacked Houghton. Archaeologists unearthed evidence of scorched stones.

Without doubt, St. Michael's most famous Rector was Bernard Gilpin, known as the Apostle of the North. Did you know that Bernard Gilpin used to roast an ox every week to feed the poor in the grounds of the old Rectory. It was not until 1967 that the Rotary Club of Houghton revived the ox roasting tradition which takes place on the Monday of the Feast week in October each year.

When Bernard Gilpin served as Rector (1558-1583) Houghton-le-Spring was one of the largest parishes in England, covering twenty-four square miles and over 16 villages.

Did you know that St. Michael and All Angels is the only Church in England to have had two Rectors who went on to become Archbishops of Canterbury - William Sancroft (1677) and Thomas Secker (1758).

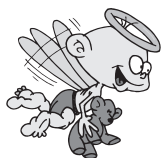
St Michael's used to have a spire which sat on top of a low tower. The old spire was demolished in 1824, and the upper section of the tower - which survives to this day - was built soon after.

An underfloor heating system was installed in the Church in the 19th century. The Church is now on its third underfloor heating system!

The Church Organ was built in Durham by the world famous Harrison and Harrison organ builders in 1932. Many renowned organists have played the organ in our Church and have admired its magnificence.

After the 2008 Re-ordering the Church acquired a sculpture of The Risen Christ. The body is made from one tree trunk and beautifully carved by the renowned sculptor, Fenwick Lawson. It is housed in the Gilpin Transept (near Gilpin's tomb). It is held in position by a metal rod penetrating into the very thick wall into the Vestry. Visitors to the Church marvel at the size and features of The Risen Christ. Many parishioners get great comfort from its presence.

This article draws on Dr Peter Ryder's fascinating work 'A window into the past' and David Turnbull's 'Brief History' of St Michael and All Angels, Houghton-le-Spring.



Michael's Angels

1 Kings 17

Breakfast with the Birds

Elijah told wicked King Ahab that there would be no rain in Israel for several years. Then Elijah went into hiding to save his life. Write the letter that comes two letters before the letter given to discover the strange menu God provided for Elijah while he was in hiding. Then read 1 Kings 17:6 to check your work.



V J G T C X G P U

D T Q W I J V J K O

D T G C F C P F O G C V

K P V J G O Q T P K P I

C P F D T G C F C P F O G C V

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C P F J G F T C P M

H T Q O V J G D T Q Q M



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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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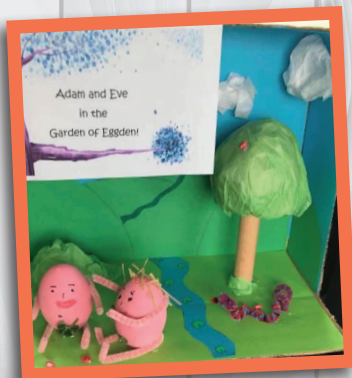
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ST MICHAELS & ALL ANGELS EASTER EGG PARADE

