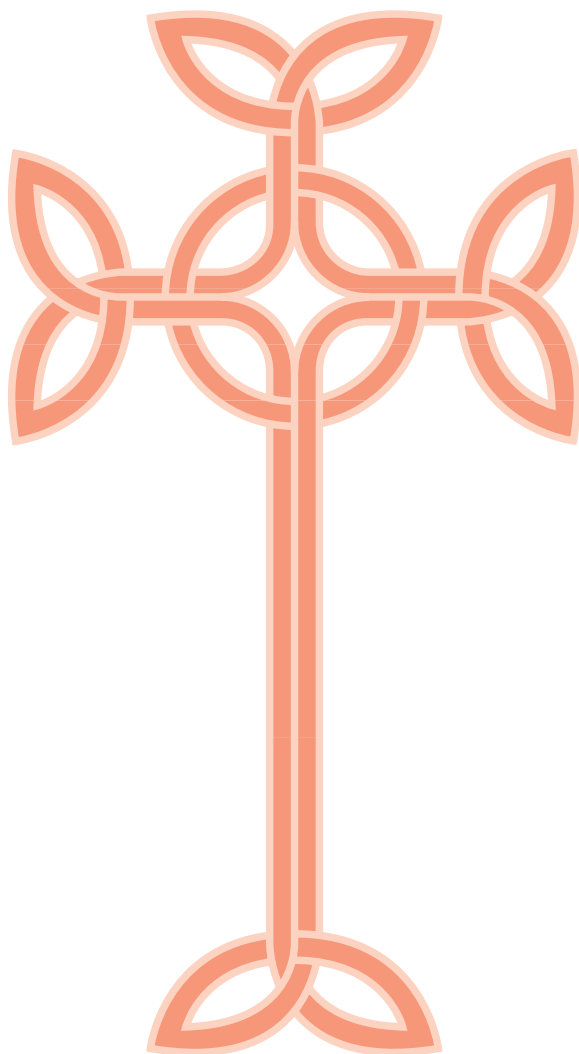


THE MONTHLY MAGAZINE
OF THE PARISH OF
HOUGHTON-LE-SPRING



St. Michael
AND ALL ANGELS

OCTOBER 2020

60P

SIGNPOST

THE PARISH CHURCH OF HOUGHTON-LE-SPRING

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Space4

76 Newbottle Street
Next to Houghton Library
Twitter @space4
Facebook houghtonspace4
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

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

Beavers, Cubs and Scouts

Contact: Steve Gibson, Tel: 07507 161366
Website: www.1sthoughtonscouts.org.uk

REGULAR SERVICES

Our pattern of Service for the coming weeks:

Sunday	10 am	Service of Holy Communion (streamed live) from St Michael's
Sunday	11am	Service of the Word via Zoom & Dial-in with Young Church
Sunday	9pm	Reflection via Facebook
Tuesday	7pm	Service of the Word with Reflection via Facebook
Thursday	10am	Service of the Word via Zoom & Dial-in

We have limited seating capacity in church and need details of people attending in advance. If you would like to be part of the congregation on future Sundays (ie. from the 16th Aug) and are able to attend then please book in for this by ringing the parish office on 0770 7043395 between 10 and 2 on a Tuesday or Thursday. We will be allocating seating on a first come first served basis. If there is no space on a particular week we will allocated seating for future weeks to people who have been unable to attend because of lack of availability. We will be live-streaming this service on Facebook to try to reach as wide a group in the community as possible. It is now strongly advised that anyone attending the service in Church should wear a face mask.

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-hls.org.uk

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

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.

You can contact us through our 'remote' church office on **0770 7043395** between 10am & 2pm on a Tuesday & Thursday or you can email us at **stmichaels.hls@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** so she can let you know how to join in.

'Dial-in' Church!

Especially for those without internet access we hold a Service of the Word via a telephone conference. The way of accessing the service is to dial **020 3481 5240**, put in the meeting code **584 584 0191** followed by the # 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 & 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



At time of writing, we are in what I know has been a really difficult week for many people. We've recently had the 'Rule of 6' introduced to try to curb the increasingly fast spread of Covid across the country. In North East England we have had a regional lockdown imposed as our infection rates locally have escalated. By the time our magazine is published it feels like these additional restrictions will either be nationwide or regional lockdowns so widespread they are effectively nationwide. This is, I know, presenting great challenges for individuals, businesses, schools and for us all in lots of different ways. There's also a real sense that we've moved from a phase when the pandemic was seen as an acute problem that will be fixed sometime soon to more of a chronic problem something that is going to be there for much longer and we need to learn to manage, we need to learn to co-exist with for a considerable time to come. At one level, I think the idea of our living with Covid as a chronic rather than acute state is an accurate picture. I say that not wanting to be downbeat but rather as being realistic. Importantly as we come to terms with that, we need to recognise that co-existing with Covid doesn't mean we can't be flourishing. I see examples of people and communities flourishing all the time. Often (because I spend lots of time people in the church and from our community projects) I see it through our church people and volunteers living and loving and growing and developing even in the face of great hardship. I see people flourish in so many ways often inspired by their faith. I think this is also a time when we're almost forced to come back to grassroots as to what our beliefs and our values are; I know for many people of faith, they have found great solace in that faith.

Today I'm preparing to meet with parents (on a 'zoom' call) bringing a child to baptism later this year. It will all be very different – there will only be 30 people in church (because that's the law of the land!) and I'll conduct the service in a socially distanced way – all very different but still such a special way for that child's family. As I prepare what I'll be saying to the family about faith and why that's so important at this time I imagine it will be something like – *'As Christians, we believe in God who created the universe (through something like a 'big bang') and made humans (like you & me) in his image & likeness, made us to be in relationship with God. God made the universe good but things didn't remain in that good state: it became quite a mess. God didn't leave us in that mess though - he showed his great love for us (most perfectly we believe as Christians) by coming into all the mess of the world as Jesus: to show us through his example and teaching how to live our lives even in a world that is so full of mess! He showed us in Jesus' death and beyond how his love goes on even beyond this world and will ultimately overcome all the mess of this world. Jesus wants us (you and me!) to share the message of his love with others through our words and our actions. Through his Spirit, he remains with us, to help us to do just that. And that's basically what we try and do and who we try to be as church. We want to make the messy world a better place – inspired, enabled and guided by our faith in Jesus to do that.'* When I get down to the basic parts of my faith it leaves me with quite a compelling story to tell to the family tonight and perhaps a story for us all to encourage us afresh as we take steps forward in our journeys of faith in this ever-so messy world!

With my continued prayers and good wishes.

Bible readings for October

This list of bible readings is to accompany your Daily Prayer worship
and the Sunday Eucharist

OCTOBER			
Thursday	1	LUKE 10.1-12	
Friday	2	LUKE 10.13-16	
Saturday	3	LUKE 10.17-24	
Sunday	4	MATT 21.12-16	
Monday	5	LUKE 10.25-37	
Tuesday	6	LUKE 10.38-end	
Wednesday	7	LUKE 11. 1-4	
Thursday	8	LUKE 11.5-13	
Friday	9	LUKE 11.15-26	
Saturday	10	LUKE 11.27-28	
Sunday	11	MATT 22.1-14	
Monday	12	LUKE 11.29-32	
Tuesday	13	LUKE 11.37-41	
Wednesday	14	LUKE 11.42-46	
Thursday	15	LUKE 11.47-end	
Friday	16	LUKE 12.1-7	
Saturday	17	LUKE 12.8-12	
Sunday	18	MATT 22.15-22	
Monday	19	LUKE 12.13-21	
Tuesday	20	LUKE 10.1-9	ST LUKE
Wednesday	21	LUKE 12.39-48	
Thursday	22	LUKE 12.38-53	
Friday	23	LUKE 12.54-end	
Saturday	24	LUKE 13.1-9	
Sunday	25	MATT 22.34-end	
Monday	26	LUKE 13.10-17	
Tuesday	27	LUKE 13.18-21	
Wednesday	28	JOHN.15.17-end	SIMON AND JUDE
Thursday	29	LUKE 13.31-end	
Friday	30	LUKE 9.57-end	
Saturday	31	LUKE 14.1-11	
NOVEMBER			
Sunday	1	LUKE 6.20-31	ALL SAINTS
Monday	2	JOHN 5.19-25	
Tuesday	3	LUKE 10.17-24	
Wednesday	4	LUKE 14.15-24	

The toll of lockdown on low-income families

Coronavirus has left low-income families struggling with a significant deterioration in living standards and high stress levels. So warns a new report from Child Poverty Action Group and the Church of England.

The report, *Poverty in the pandemic: The impact of coronavirus on low-income families and children*, is based on a survey of families with children who are eligible for free school meals.

It found around eight in 10 respondents reported being in a worse financial position than before the pandemic, and half were much worse off because their income had fallen while costs have risen.

Nearly nine in 10 respondents reported spending substantially more than before on food, electricity, and other essentials – usually because they have been at home much more. Many families also said that the cost of food had gone up significantly during the early part of lockdown.

The Bishop of Durham, Paul Butler, who speaks for the Church of England on matters relating to children and families, said: “In these unprecedented times, we all need to ask ourselves urgently how we can help our neighbour. It is also imperative that the Government does all that it can to protect families and children.”

Alison Garnham, Chief Executive of Child Poverty Action Group, said: “Low-income parents have been living under a cloud of anxiety in lockdown – trying to find money for family basics as their costs have been rising. That’s taken a very heavy toll.”

Church of England and RSCM await next steps on singing safety

The Church of England and Royal School of Church Music (RSCM) have been awaiting updated guidance on singing in places of worship after findings of a Government-backed study were published.

The research project, known as ‘PERFORM’, recently published its findings on measuring aerosol production from humans. It measured singing, speaking and breathing in a zero-background environment.

Researchers reported a steep rise in aerosol mass with increase in the loudness of the singing and speaking, rising by as much as a factor of 20-30. However, it was also found that singing does not produce substantially more aerosol than speaking at a similar volume.

The RSCM’s Director, Hugh Morris said: “We welcome this news. Singing is of such importance in worship, and this is a really encouraging step towards its safe resumption.

“It is of course vital that all choirs and singing groups follow the relevant government advice, and so we look forward to receiving the latest guidance in this important area.”

The Church of England and RSCM both regularly update their advice following the publication of Government guidance.

Don’t ‘go it alone’

If you are helping others at this time, remember to still leave space and time for yourself. Going the extra mile for other people all the time will only ensure one thing; your collapse. Work in teams. Even the Good Samaritan did not attempt to help the injured man all on his own; he brought in the innkeeper. By sharing the problem, they solved it!

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Mobile: 07791 223 910 email: **klgrob7@aol.co.uk**
Club: 0191 584 1460

Churches enjoy Zooming

Most churches who used digital channels during lockdown, in order to keep in touch with their congregations, found that their favourite platform was Zoom.

A recent survey by Ecclesiastical found that Zoom was used by 78 per cent; Skype by

12 per cent, and other platforms, including WhatsApp, by eight per cent.

Nearly one third of churches who used digital channels have also reported an increased attendance at their virtual services.

That has led to some 38 per cent of churches saying that they would continue to use digital channels, even now that churches are physically open again.

Moral questions from the pandemic

You may have missed it at the time. The movie 'Contagion' didn't make much of an impact when it was released for public viewing in 2011. Perhaps it was thought to be unrealistic. It was about a highly contagious, unknown virus, transmitted by an infected bat to a pig in a Chinese marketplace. From there it spread like wildfire round the world.

It was fiction then of course, but not so far-fetched as to be distant from reality, as we now know. Deadly viruses, and the plagues they cause, have been part of world history since time began. In the early days, when travel between continents was infrequent, their spread was slower and usually confined to local regions.

The way the film's imaginary plot develops bears an uncanny resemblance to what we have experienced this year. Panic buying empties supermarkets, whole populations adopt social distancing, scientists work flat out to identify the virus and then search for a means to combat it. Meanwhile, millions are infected, and quarantines are imposed.

The story progresses far beyond the reality which is familiar to us. The irresponsible use of social media and false rumours of a cure lead to the looting of pharmacies. Emergency food supplies are ransacked, law and order break down. Troops police the streets. Then there's a breakthrough: a vaccine is discovered. But that raises a new moral problem: who will get it first and what would be a fair distribution system?

The movie is still available via Netflix, or you can buy a DVD online. Despite the inevitable carnage of the pandemic and the suffering it portrays, it contrives to have a relatively happy ending.

In real life, we haven't got that far yet. But, please God, we will. After all, most deadly diseases are now under control and both vaccination and immunisation are part and parcel of everyday life; old 'uns take it for granted that their GP will summon them for an anti-flu jab each winter.

But we may face an ethical dilemma when it comes to a vaccine for Covid-19. If there's an initial shortage, who should get it first? Should money come into it? Are Christian principles applicable?

Remembering Elizabeth Fry, prison reformer

The prison reformer and philanthropist Elizabeth Fry died 175 years ago, on 12th October 1845. She was widely admired during her lifetime and after, and was depicted on the British £5 note between 2001 and 2016.

She was born into the family of a wealthy Quaker banker, John Gurney, in Norwich in 1770. She rededicated her life to Christ at the age of 18 and devoted herself to helping the downtrodden. This she continued to do after her marriage to London merchant Joseph Fry, and while giving birth to 11 children.

She was a minister of the Society of Friends from 1811 and travelled in England and Europe inspecting prisons and writing reports that were highly influential, transforming gaols from “pits of indecency and brutality” to more orderly places with a new interest in reform. She was admired by both Queen Victoria and Florence Nightingale.

Early on she made frequent visits to Newgate Prison in London, suggesting radical improvements that were adopted both there and in other prisons. She read the Bible to inmates and gave Bibles away, combining social work with proclamation of the Gospel in a way that inspired future generations. Her insights also led to the Prison Reform Act of 1823.

When Oxford accepted women

A century ago, on 7th October 1920, Oxford University allowed women to become full members and study for full degrees for the first time, and the first 100 women were admitted.

Women had been attending lectures, taking examinations and gaining honours since the 1870s. Four women’s colleges were established in those years – but no woman had been allowed to graduate and receive a degree although between 1904 and 1907 the so-called “steamboat ladies” travelled to the more liberal University of Dublin to graduate.

The 1920 decision was retrospective, and so at the first ceremony at which women were able to graduate more than 40 women did so. The first was Annie Rogers, who had achieved first class honours in Latin and Greek in 1877, and first class honours in Ancient History in 1879. She graduated on 26th October 1920.

Despite this leap forward, a quota limiting the number of female Oxford students to fewer than a quarter of the men was not removed until 1957, when the Warden of Wadham College, Sir Maurice Bowra, described it as “foolish and finicky” and declared that women were a “civilising influence”.

Cambridge University did not give women equal status until 1947.

Saint for October

6TH OCT: WILLIAM TYNDALE, BIBLE TRANSLATOR AND REFORMATION MARTYR

This month is the 501th anniversary of the beginning of the Reformation, and so a good time to pay tribute to an outstanding English scholar, translator and martyr of the Reformation.

William Tyndale (c. 1494 – 6th October 1536) was born near Gloucester, and studied at Oxford and Cambridge. He could speak seven languages, and was proficient in ancient Hebrew and Greek. As a priest, his abilities would have taken him a long way, but by 1523 Tyndale's only desire was to translate the Bible, so that English men and women could read it for themselves. It became his life's passion.

For Tyndale had rediscovered a vital doctrine that the Church had been ignoring: that of justification by faith. He had found it when reading Erasmus's Greek edition of the New Testament. In fact, his life's work was well summed up in some words of his mentor, Erasmus: "Christ desires His mysteries to be published abroad as widely as possible. I would that [the Gospels and the epistles of Paul] were translated into all languages, of all Christian people, and that they might be read and known."

Tyndale's translation was the first Bible to be published in English, the first to draw directly from Hebrew and Greek texts, and the first English translation to take advantage of the printing press.

It was to cost him his life. For Tyndale's work was seen as a direct challenge to the power of both the Roman Catholic Church and the laws of England in maintaining the Church's position.

When the authorities had tried to stop his translation, Tyndale fled to Hamburg, Wittenberg, Cologne, and finally to the Lutheran city of Worms. It was there, in 1525, his New Testament emerged. It was quickly smuggled into England, and King Henry VIII, Cardinal Wolsey, and others, were furious.

Tyndale moved on to Antwerp, where for nine more years he continued his work. Then in May 1535 he was betrayed, arrested, and jailed in a castle near Brussels. Tied to the stake for strangulation and burning, his dying prayer was that the King of England's eyes would be opened. Sure enough, two years later King Henry authorised the Great Bible for the Church of England, which relied largely on Tyndale's work.

Not only that, but in 1611, the 54 scholars who produced the King James Bible drew very heavily from Tyndale. Even today we honour him: in 2002, Tyndale was placed at number 26 in the BBC's poll of 100 Greatest Britons.



Prayer for October

Heavenly Father,
We bring to you all those struggling
with their mental health just now.

We pray:

For everyone who is smiling, when
inside they're in pain.

For everyone who is saying they're
fine, when inside they feel drained and
empty.

For everyone struggling with fear and
worry as the easing of the lockdown
brings new anxieties.

Be with them in their suffering, as so
much of their world has been stripped
back and emptied.

When loved family and friends have
been taken by illness,

Or made distant by lockdown.

Pour your healing balm into their pain
and sadness.

May you walk with them besides still
waters

May you speak to them in a still small
voice.

May you heal them, and fill them, and
bless them with your abundant love and
fullness of life.

And may they know that they are loved
by you for the beautiful unique person
that they are, created in the image of
their heavenly creator and loving Lord.

In the Name of the Father, the Son and
the Holy Spirit,

Amen

FROM THE REGISTERS

Funerals

25 Sept Margaret Robinson
Houghton-le-Spring

Aged 91

Remembering the Hatfield rail crash

The Hatfield rail crash took place 20 years ago, on 17th October 2000. Four people were killed and more than 70 injured when a high-speed passenger train derailed because of a cracked rail.

The crash was caused by metal fatigue and exposed major problems within Railtrack, the infrastructure company responsible for track maintenance, resulting in their eventual demise. Reports said there was a lack of communication and expertise in essential areas from both Railtrack and contractors Balfour Beatty.

The problem was known about before the accident, and replacement rails had been ordered but never delivered. Because Railtrack did not know how many other rails might be affected nationwide, it imposed over 1800 emergency speed restrictions which disrupted the national network for more than a year while tracks were replaced.

A memorial service was held for the victims on the tenth anniversary of the crash at St Etheldreda's Church, Hatfield, conducted by the Rector of Hatfield, the Revd Richard Pyke, who had looked after casualties and the bereaved at the time of the crash.

In 2004, the widow of one of the victims was awarded £1 million damages in the High Court. Families of the other three fatal casualties received out-of-court damages.

Liberation theology

Liberation theology is a movement in Christian theology, specifically within the Roman Catholic Church, developed to address the problems of poverty and social injustice as well as spiritual matters. Liberation theologians believe that God speaks particularly through the poor and that the bible can be only understood when seen from the perspective of the poor.

Throughout the 19th Century the Church aligned itself to the Peninsulares and the Creoles, immigrants from Spain and Portugal and Spanish people born in the New World respectively. These constituted the powerful and wealthy. By the early 20th. Century rather than just encouraging individual charity the Church started to acknowledge the need for wealth distribution and social justice. Pope Leo XIII wrote the *Rerum Novarum* subtitled "On the Conditions of Labor". This articulated the Roman Catholic Church's response to the social conflict that had led to the rise of socialism as an ideology.

By the early 20th. Century the Roman Catholic Church, rather than just encourage individual charity, started to acknowledge the need for wealth distribution and social justice. Throughout this time period Latin America experienced growing urbanisation and industrialisation through nationalisation in the hope of creating economic independence. This led to increasing pressure for political and social reform. The Church had a choice, either re-evaluate its practise or fall behind. In Peru, the Catholic Action movement introduced a more militant Catholicism bringing together social activists who would who would later work to create liberation theology. There was a growing desire to break the allegiance the

Church and the rich recognising the possibility of a crucial role in the world of the oppressed. Within the Catholic Action movement, Gustavo Gutierrez, a Peruvian priest ordained in 1959, was the most famous person who became known as the founder of liberation theology.

Liberation theology looks to understand Christianity through the salvific process of liberation. That is, having the intent to save or redeem, from the latin *salvificus*, to save from *salvus*, saved from sins. People are encouraged to become active agents of their own destiny and in, effect, to liberate themselves from the confines of injustice. There were three levels of freedom or liberation. At the first level the poor were to liberate themselves from economic exploitation. Overcoming poverty became a fundamental tenant of liberation theology. The second level was liberation from fatalism, the recognition of free will. Lastly, at the theological level, liberation from sin would result in ultimate liberation and communion with God. Rather than just focussing on the afterlife, liberation theology encouraged the pursuit of a satisfactory life on earth.

As followers of liberation theology grew the Vatican felt threatened by the movements connection to radical groups and leftist tendencies. The Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith was very critical questioning the biblical usage and its emphasis on notions of class struggle. Cardinal Ratzinger, later to become Pope, was also critical.

However, rather than the feared deviation from their Christian faith, the empowerment of the poor and inclusion of a popular sentiment created a more tangible way for the oppressed to access and interact with their Christianity. Though the opposition feared this empowerment, liberation theology undoubtedly educated and enhanced the lives of the poor by providing the outlets and tools to actually address their own situation.

David Hann

Understanding the Bible

As we acknowledge Bible Sunday this month, it's a good opportunity to ask the question: why should I read the Bible?

The Bible is the world's best-selling book of all time. However, it isn't one book, but a library of 66 books, composed by some 44 writers over a period of 1500 years in a range of literature including history, poetry, prophecy, letters and apocalyptic (end times). Despite having a number of different writers, the Bible claims one author: God himself!

This is the basis of the unity of its message and authoritative claim to be the primary way by which God speaks to us: 'All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work' (2 Timothy 3:16). The Bible is inspired ('the word of God in the words of men') and presents itself as a manual for life, equipping us to live for God in every aspect of our lives. We also have the promise of the Holy Spirit to guide us in applying the words to our lives: 'the Spirit will guide you into all truth' (John 16:13).

However, the Bible could also be described as a love letter from God, as He uses it to deepen our relationship with him. As Jesus said: 'You diligently study the Scriptures because you think that by them you possess eternal life. These are the Scriptures that testify about me' (John 5:39,40). Christians follow a person not a book, and the Scriptures are intended to help us to know Jesus better.

At her coronation the Queen was given a Bible with the words 'the most precious thing this world affords'. Does this reflect our own attitude to the Bible?

Sunderland *Echoes*

Snippets from the Sunderland Echo which you may have missed.

A further 33 people tested positive for coronavirus after Sunderland charity football match

It brought the total number of cases linked to the event at Burnside Working Men's Club to 61.

A further 33 people had tested positive for coronavirus after attending a charity football match on the border of Sunderland and County Durham.

The latest figures bring the total number of cases linked to the event at Burnside Working Men's Club, in Fence Houses, to 61.

Anyone who attended the event on Sunday 30 August had been asked to self-isolate until midnight on September 13 that was 14 days from the date of the event.

It came as NHS figures showed in England, Sunderland had the second highest coronavirus infection rate.

The city had 209 confirmed coronavirus cases in the seven days leading up to September 7 - a rate of 75.3 cases per 100,000 population.

Durham County Council and Sunderland City Council worked closely with Public Health England to manage the public health response.

Amanda Healy, director of public health at Durham County Council, said: "We were aware that a large number of people are believed to have attended the event so we always expected the number of cases to rise.

"We would like to thank everyone who has responded so far to our call to self-isolate if they were present at the club on 30 August and to those who have sought a test when appropriate. 08.09.2020.

Burnside football match branded 'catalyst' for Sunderland spike - and helped lead to North East lockdown-style restrictions

The charity football match was the 'catalyst' for a surge in coronavirus infections in Sunderland, a health chief has said.

Gillian Gibson, director of public health at , said: "We were seeing increases in the number of confirmed cases of Covid-19 in Sunderland particularly in the Houghton area so it's incredibly important that people continue to follow public health guidance.

"In order to prevent the spread and protect ourselves and our communities, when we're outside of the home we all need to behave as if everyone we meet is infected.

“That means staying two metres apart, washing your hands for 20 seconds and doing this often, covering your face in enclosed spaces, and staying at home if you have been identified as a contact of a case, have had symptoms or are waiting for Covid test results.”

Contact tracing continued to be carried out with anyone believed to have had close contact with someone who has tested. Anyone who attended the event and has since had a test which has come back negative should also self-isolate until midnight on September 13 as it can take up to 14 days for symptoms to appear.

And now, with new restrictions in force in the North East to try and halt further transmissions, health chiefs believe the Burnside have sparked a rise in cases across Wearside and the wider North East.

Kath Bailey, a public health specialist at Sunderland City Council, said: “Sunderland saw a rapid increase in COVID-19 cases since the end of August.

“The event at Burnside on August 30 acted as the catalyst for the increase, with initially a large outbreak associated with that particular event and then secondary spread across the city.”

She added: “While initially the cases arose predominantly in younger people and the Houghton and Fence Houses area, we have now seen cases in all age groups and all parts of the city.

“The virus is spreading within households and via community transmission and we saw cases, clusters and outbreaks in schools, workplaces and other venues.”

Ms Bailey spoke at Thursday afternoon’s meeting of the city council’s Health and Wellbeing Board, which was held by videolink and broadcast via YouTube.

Since August 31 there have been at least 530 new confirmed cases of the virus in the city.

Earlier that week, the leaders of seven North East local authorities requested the government impose tougher restrictions on the region in an attempt to staunch a rising infection rate.

New measures imposed from September 18 include:

- A ban on socialising with people outside your immediate household or support bubble
- Secondary school pupils to wear face coverings in school communal areas
- A 10pm curfew for licensed premises

Ms Bailey added: “We saw a significant rise in cases associated with licensed premises across the city and NHS partners tell us the number of cases in hospitals is rising, indicating the virus is starting to affect the more vulnerable members of our society.”

A SPECIAL PLACE 5

Gilpin and the Knights

The first thing you see in the Gilpin Transept is the large statue of the Risen Christ. It was installed the year before the re-ordering of 2008. It is on permanent loan from the sculptor, Fenwick Lawson. The body of the statue is carved from a single beech tree of about 200 years old, this tree was from a forest in Northumberland and was chosen because of the twist in its trunk which was caused over the years by the prevailing winds in Northumberland. The arms are from a separate younger tree.



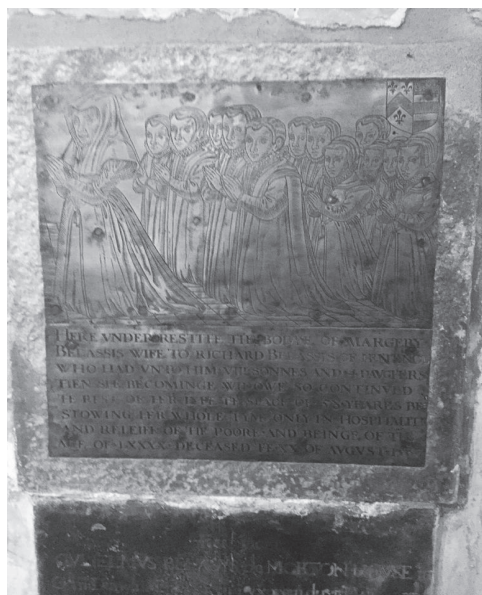
Fenwick Lawson is a world renowned artist. His work can be seen around the north east and he is responsible for the bronze artwork on show in Durham of monks carrying Cuthbert's body called the Piatra. Also inside Durham Cathedral at the east end behind St Cuthbert's Chapel are a number of sculptures by Fenwick. On Holy Island [Lindisfarne] and in St Paul's in Jarrow are further statues of Cuthbert by Fenwick.

How the statue came to Houghton is a story in itself. Like Cuthbert himself it toured the north. The Risen Christ was originally commissioned for where the organ is played from in Hexham Abbey, Unfortunately the woman who commissioned it died just as it was completed and the Abbey authorities decided not to move the organ, so the sculpture didn't have a home. It has since been shown in Durham Cathedral at least twice and was at Brinkburn Abbey for a number of years, eventually being offered to St Michaels.

The Gilpin Tomb dominates this transept giving it its name. The question everyone asks is "is he inside?". Well, no one can say with any certainty. There is an argument that it was once in the Chancel, if so where would it stand, as it is very large? I have a theory that as in many churches a person of high regard – a Saint in other words – would be honoured by being buried near or under the High Altar. So is Gilpin buried in the floor under the current High Altar, this is only simple basic wooden legs with a table top, only looking impressive when covered with a fine altar cloth. Was this where the stone tomb of Gilpin

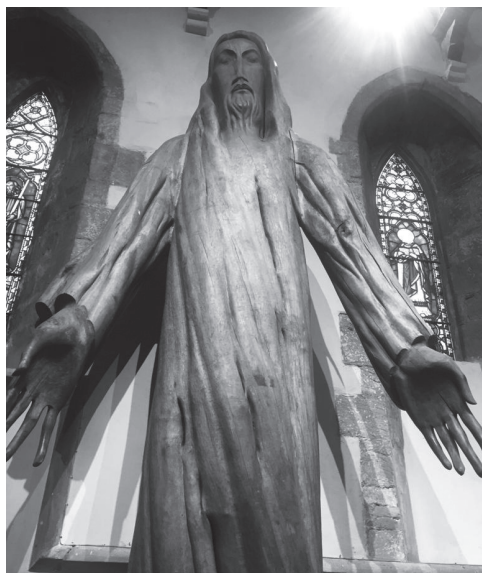
stood? It could have been used as an altar, so was Gilpin inside or under? This is pure speculation on my behalf.

On the east wall behind the Gilpin tomb there is a brass plaque showing Margery Bellassis with her eight sons and four daughters dressed in Elizabethan clothing. She is said to have been a friend of Bernard Gilpin and lived at Morton House which can be found today on a lane running from the War Memorial at Fence Houses to the Chilton Country Pub/Hotel. She died in her nineties. A plaque near Margery Bellassis is in Latin and is dedicated to William Belasys of Morton House who died 1611. His wife, Margaret, had six sons and five daughters. This connects nicely with one of the two



knight's effigies in this transept, the first one is believed to be Roland Bellassis of Morton whom the plaque says was knighted by King Henry the Third at the Battle of Lewis.

The Battle of Lewis was fought at Lewis in Sussex on the 14th May 1264, known as the second Baron's war. King Henry was defeated by Simon De Montford. Roland must have been an ancestor of Margery Bellassis who was alive 300 years later and William 400 years later and all lived at Morton House.



The other knight, the plaque says, is Sir John le Spring. He was the knight of the Manor, a Sir John, and he took his name from the springs around Houghton. He was murdered in the Manor House in 1333.

During the 2008 re-ordering we had a visit from an American gentleman and his daughter who lived in Tulsa. His name was Bob Spring and he was a professor of music at Pheonix University, Arizona, USA. He had traced his descendants to Ashbourne then back to Houghton. They are members of the Episcapalian Church which is the Anglican Church in America. Again I say "how strange the world turns".

The new War Memorial bench in the Broadway, funded entirely by public donations and royalties from book sales by Houghton Heritage Society.

We hope the bench will be used and respected by all members of the community. It is a bench and is there to be sat on, so please feel free to rest your feet and take in the goings on of the Broadway.

If you are a parent of a child who hangs around the Broadway, use this as an opportunity to talk about our war dead who gave their lives so we could live ours. We are confident that the young people of Houghton are respectful and not all are the villains they are often painted as on social media.

Thank you to everyone who donated and helped to make this impromptu project come to fruition. We also appreciate the positive comments of encouragement as if we listened to the pessimistic nay sayers Houghton would be a poorer place for it.

Thank you.



Houghton Feast 2020

A view from the steering committee. At our virtual meeting back in April, it was obvious that large gatherings would not take place due to the risk of spreading the Covid virus. At that time the decisions were taken to cancel all the main events that have become synonymous with the Feast over the past years.

As a committee we have kept the momentum of the vibrant Feast going over the past years and this year there will be virtual events happening at various times. Obviously the Civic Service is going ahead with dignitaries lined up to read in Church and our church choir have been rehearsing their contribution.

The Feast lights are well on their way to being set up and a virtual Switch-on will take place on the Friday night. New lights are being ordered for next year from monies saved from Council spending. The Houghton Feast Trust have produced their usual free brochure, watch out for it in shops and libraries.

Alastair Bradley,
Houghton Church Representative

Israel's exile and our uncertainty

There is a tension in the air. Regardless of where you sit politically, there is uneasiness of who we are as a society. Take the current pandemic as an example. We were the first country to industrialise and remain one of the richest countries. So we should have had the resources to deal with the pandemic effectively. We also pride ourselves on our health system. So we should have been able to distribute these resources to all who needed them. Yet despite this history, we have been one of the worst affected countries per capita in the world. This pandemic has challenged what we tell ourselves about who we are. It, and many other events recently, has caused uncertainty about our identity.

For most people, it is not obvious what we say to this uncertainty. But as Christians we should look towards Scripture as a resource. I think there are some fruitful

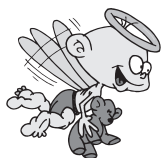


parallels between our own time and the Old Testament. Between the eighth and sixth centuries before Christ, the Kingdoms of Israel and Judah fell to foreign powers. Their destruction ended the long term national independence of the Jewish people, with a brief exception, until the twentieth century. This raised a profound question for God's people. Without a land of their own, without a temple, without a king, who were they? Much of the Old Testament is addressing this uncertainty, which I think has a lot to say to our own time.

To explore how the Old Testament responded to national uncertainty we will be starting a bible study group in November. We will mainly be reading some of the prophets and what they preached to see what they can say to us today. But reading the prophets without knowing their context can make them difficult. So we will also read some of the history in 2 Kings to understand the situation that the prophets were working in. It doesn't matter whether you are familiar with this already or this is completely new to you, I hope the group will be accessible and useful.

We will meet on zoom so that people can access either online or by the phone. More details will follow in the coming weeks. If you have any questions please contact John D'Silva.

John, the curate



Michael's Angels

1 Kings 22

Telling the Truth

King Jehoshaphat and King Ahab asked 400 prophets whether or not they should go to battle against the army of Aram. Only God's prophet Micaiah told the truth. Using the code, write what Micaiah told the kings. Then read 1 Kings 22:1-28 to know the whole story.



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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:

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Request made by:

.....

.....

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Date for memorial:

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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



Lockdown Bunnies

Hope you are all well and keeping safe in these challenging times.

I just wanted to share with you what has kept me busy over the past months. I've been knitting these bunnies and selling them for £10 each. Friends have named them lockdown bunnies which seems appropriate. All money raised goes to much needed Church funds.



I have a variety of boy and girl bunnies in different colours available if anyone is interested. They make great gifts for babies and children of all ages and will help raise more funds.

Contact Sheila Gamble if you would like to purchase one.

Tel: 0191 584 1677

