

The Meeting of the Waters



APRIL 2026

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A PASTORAL LETTER FOR APRIL 2026

Dear friends,

I've returned safe and sound from New Zealand, and am very grateful to everyone who worked hard to enable me to have time away from the Benefice.

On Ash Wednesday I was staying over in Abu Dhabi, visiting friends on my journey home. We went to the Abrahamic Family House (you can google it to find out a bit more), which contains a mosque, a church and a synagogue. A small group of us (three Christians, and a Jew) were guided around by a Muslim. We gradually got talking as we reflected on what we were seeing and hearing. Ash Wednesday coincided with the first day of Ramadan, and we noted the contrasts of how we keep Lent and the Ramadan fast in daylight hours. It was a fascinating couple of hours, and reminded me that our three faiths have much in common because of our shared roots.

Just over a week later, the latest round of outright hostilities began, as Israel and the United States launched an attack on Iran. I am not about to get into the political aspects, nor even the history. I am all too aware of the effects even in Northumberland, with concerns about the safety of family and friends in the region, whether they live and work there, or were coincidentally travelling through hub airports. It is a sharp lesson in how related we are, right across the world.

Then came the sad news of the death of John Stevenson, Church Warden at St Cuthbert's Bellingham for well over 20 years, as well as a stalwart of the Heritage Centre and the Freemasons. His loss is felt across our communities.

With world uncertainty and local sadness, I can do no better than return to the final public words of St David, my beloved patron saint of Wales, which I used on 1st March:

"Be joyful. Keep the faith. Do the little things."

Amidst concern, anxiety and grief, there are still things for which we give thanks, and life continues. St David's advice reminds us that even small things can offer joy and hope – a ray of sunshine, a newborn lamb, a kind word.

So hold on tight, because Easter is coming, and Jesus is alive!

Claire

SERVICES IN THE DEANERY IN APRIL 2026

1st April: Wednesday of Holy Week

- 7.00pm Compline at Chollerton
9.00pm Compline at Bellingham

2nd April: Maundy Thursday

No service in the Morning as Clergy and everyone invited to the Cathedral for Blessing of the Oils and renewal of Vows

- 7.00pm Holy Communion (Foot washing and Tenebrae) at Bellingham
7.00pm Holy Communion and Vigil at Humshaugh

3rd April: Good Friday

- 10.00am Walk of Witness at Wark
12 noon Hour at the Cross Bellingham
12-1pm Hour at the Cross Gunnerton
2.00pm Hour at the Cross Elsdon
2.00pm Hour at the Cross Wall

4th April: Easter Eve

- 10am-12 Easter Craft Fair at Falstone Village Hall
7.45pm Easter Vigil and renewal of Baptismal vows at Birtley

5th April: Easter Day

Readings: Acts 10: 34-43; Colossians 3: 1-4; John 20: 1-18 or Matthew 28: 1-10

- 6.15am Sunrise Service at Thockrington
8.30am Holy Communion (BCP) at Wark
9.00am Holy Communion at Bellingham
9.30am Holy Communion at Birtley
10.30am MURC Service at Wark
11.00am Holy Communion Otterburn (Note Change)
11.00am Holy Communion at Simonburn
11.00am Holy Communion at Heavenfield
11.00am Family Service and Easter Egg Hunt at Falstone

- 11.00am Easter Family Worship (not Communion) at Humshaugh
2.30pm Informal Easter Communion and Celebration at Thorneyburn
5.00pm Holy Communion at Corsenside (note change of location for summer)

12th April: 2nd Sunday of Easter

Readings: Acts 2; 14a, 22-32; 1 Peter 1: 3-9; John 20: 19-end

- 9.00am Holy Communion at Thockrington
9.00am Holy Communion at Thorneyburn
10.00am Service of the Word at Chollerton
11.15am Holy Communion at Elsdon (note change of time)
11.00am Holy Communion at Wall
6.00pm Holy Communion at Wark
6.00pm Evensong at Bellingham

19th April: 3rd Sunday of Easter

Readings: Acts 2:14a, 36-41; 1 Peter 1: 17-23; Luke 24: 13-35

- 9.00am Holy Communion at Gunnerton
10.00am Service of the Word at Birtley
10.00am Service of the Word at Bellingham
10.30am MURC at Wark
11.00am Holy Communion at Falstone
11.00am Holy Communion at Humshaugh
11.00am Service of the Word at Otterburn
11.30am Service of the Word at Bingfield
3.00pm Holy Communion at Horsley
6.00pm Evensong at Simonburn

26th April: 4th Sunday of Easter

Readings: Acts 2: 42-end; 1 Peter 2; 19-end; John 10:1-10

- 9.30am Deanery Zoom

(cont'd on next page)

11.00am	Holy Communion at Bellingham BCP	11.00am	Service of the Word at Wall
11.00am	Holy Communion at Chollerton	3.00pm	Holy Communion at Byrness
11.15am	Service of the Word at Elsdon (note change of time)	6.00pm	Evensong at Humshaugh
		6.00pm	Service of the Word at Wark
		6.00pm	Parish Worship at Thorneyburn

NOTICEBOARD



FALSTONE COFFEE MORNINGS:

Thank you to everyone who made soup, baked puddings, served, came along and donated to the coffee morning and the 'soup and pud' lunch today at Falstone. Forty-eight people attended/or were served in their homes and in total, we raised an amazing £608 in aid of the Great North Air Ambulance Service. Thanks must also go to the Karbon Homes Winter Wellbeing Fund, which has provided us with grants for the hall hire, as well as

the purchase of ingredients and refreshments for the event.

It is with great sadness that we heard about the loss of three of our friends, and our heartfelt condolences go to their families and other friends.

We were very sorry to hear that our dear friend Margaret Pigg had died suddenly, the day after the February coffee morning. Margaret always brought her lovely smiling and cheerful face and fun to the coffee mornings, and as she left, she always used to say: "I love coming here". Margaret, we loved you bringing your sunshine to our coffee mornings and coach trips too, we will miss you!

Our second loss is John Stephenson. We will very much miss John on our coach trips – a lovely man who will be sadly missed by all for his kindness and cheerful wit. We would like to send our sincere and heartfelt condolences to Pat and to friends and family.

We will also miss our dear neighbour Elizabeth Robson who, with her husband Gordon, enjoyed as many coffee mornings (especially the cakes!) as she was able to get along to.

We are thankful to God for the friendship and love of Margaret, John and Elizabeth in our lives.

February's coffee morning was in aid of Papyrus (Prevention of young suicide) and we must give a huge Thank You to everyone who came along and supported the February coffee morning. Papyrus is a charity that clearly means a lot to many people and we



raised an amazing £284.00. We received this thank-you message from Papyrus: *"We're incredibly grateful for the amazing £284 you raised through your Coffee Morning. Your hard work and dedication put into your fundraising for this event has made a meaningful impact, and we are so thankful. Last year, HOPELINE247 received more than 100 interactions every day from young people living with thoughts of suicide and those concerned about a young person's safety. Your generosity makes these vital interactions possible with our trained advisors - keeping young people safe and saving young lives."*

If you are not aware of the charity, you may wish to have the following information: You can contact HOPELINE247 if you are having thoughts of suicide, or are concerned for a young person who might be. HOPELINE247 offers confidential support and practical advice. The numbers to contact them on are as follows: Telephone 0800 068 4141, Text: 88247 and/or email: pat@papyrus-uk.org

On Wednesday 18th March, we held a combined Coffee Morning and Soup and Pud lunch event in aid of Great North Air Ambulance Service

Upcoming coffee mornings over the next few months will be: **21st April (in aid of Age Concern); 19th May; 16th June; 21st July.** Sessions run from 10.30am-11.45am at Falstone Village Hall

COACH TRIP TO POOLEY BRIDGE/ULLSWATER

On Tuesday 2nd June 2026, we are delighted to invite you to our next coach trip to Pooley Bridge (Ullswater), with a comfort break at Houghton Hall Garden Centre on the way

Pooley Bridge is a picturesque Lake District village at the northern tip of Ullswater. It has several cafés and pubs – pretty much all of which have lovely lakeside views. Ullswater steamers run scenic boat trips around the lake (10 minute walk to pier).

Approximate timings: Leave Falstone (Black Cock car park) at 9am; Pick up at Tasset (Lane Head bus stop) at 9.05am; Pick up at Bellingham (outside Cheviot Pub) at 9.15am and final pick up Wark (from the bus stop opposite West Acres) at 9.25am

The first stop will be for coffee at Houghton Hall Garden Centre at 10.30am-11.15am (approx.), then on to Pooley Bridge (arrive approx. 12noon).

The bus will leave Pooley Bridge at around 4.30pm and will return to Falstone (dropping people off on the way) around 6.30pm

The coach trip is supported by a grant from the Ray Wind Funds CIC Small Donations Fund. The Fund has been established by energy company Vattenfall for the benefit of the communities hosting the Ray Windfarm. We are therefore able to offer places at **£5 per person**. For more information and to book your place (maximum 33 seats available), please contact Marie Ness (Tel : 01434 240679).

Kirkharle Summer Concerts

Celidh Mac Trio - 21st May 7.30pm
 Clara Hyder - 28th May 1.2pm
 Neil Sutcliffe & Roo Geddes - 11th June 1.2pm
 Da Vinci String Quartet - 2nd July 1.2pm
 Ian Sankey & Anna Michels - 9th July 1.2pm
 Adam Wood & Calla Bouch 30th July 1.2pm

St. Wilfrid's Church
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Tickets £15 plus booking fee.
 Season ticket available offering one concert free if you buy all six.
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 Tickets can be booked online via Eventbrite links on the Kirkharle website:
 Kirkharlecourtyard.co.uk/events or directly via the QR code.
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A CLIMATE CHANGE POEM (THE SEASONS)

The First Snowfall

The snow falls down in ornamental recession
 It is but like the ebb and flow of the tide
 It falls softly, slowly, silently without sound
 Giving bulk to the sea and streams around.

Surely, magic is upon this land
 A glowing beauty – a Heavenly hand.
 The fields shine brightly in the snow
 Footprints are buried on the shore
 Until, by breach of Nature's law,
 They cover the ground, just as before.

The snow that comes on year by year,
 Children's delight – Old Men's fear.
 The beauty that covers this majestic land,
 We thank you for your spiritual hand.

by Diana S (following a Scripture lesson)

GNAAS COLLECTION - 18TH APRIL 2026

Congratulations! Wednesday's Spring collection in Redesdale, the North Tyne and Kirkwhelpington, held in aid of the Great North Air Ambulance Service (the Service), was a tremendous success.

The collection (managed by the charity 'Clothes Aid' on behalf of the Service, raised a remarkable £3,651. The figure comprised £3,314 for clothing, bric-a-brac, other household items and bicycles, £100 for household linen, and £237 for books and media. Additionally, the coffee morning and soup-and-pud lunch, held at Falstone during the collection, raised a breathtaking £608 for the Service. A grand total of £4,269!

Six Clothes Aid vans were available across your communities on collection day. It was a true joy to welcome Laurie Hollande, the founder and Chief Executive of Clothes Aid, during the collection at Otterburn Memorial Hall. Laurie entered fully into the spirit of the day, meeting and greeting the steady flow of people arriving with donations, carrying their donations to the van and chatting lightheartedly with all concerned.

Special thanks are due to you all for your hard work and support on the day. Your continued commitment to the collection is sincerely appreciated. Marie Ness, and the team at Falstone Memorial Hall, also deserves a special mention for again choosing to support the Service with the proceeds from its March coffee morning and lunch. The event served 48 people, either at the Hall or in their homes, and was made possible with the support of Karbon Homes Winter Well-being Fund which provides grants covering the cost of hiring the hall and purchasing ingredients and refreshments.

The next collection (the Autumn collection) will take place on Wednesday, 16th September. As usual, collection times and other information will be circulated nearer the time.

With many thanks and all best wishes, from Emma Anderson

THE REDESDALE SOCIETY: SPECIAL GENERAL MEETING

The Redesdale Society held a Special General Meeting (SGM) of its members on Friday 13th March, to discuss the succession future of the Society. This was necessitated by the inability over two years, including at the Annual General Meeting in February 2026, to fill key vacancies on the committee. After a long discussion, those members present, together with their Patron Lord Redesdale, came to the reluctant decision that the Redesdale Society should now be wound up. This is a sad conclusion for a Society which has been over 56 years in existence, but an all too common one for volunteer-run societies in recent years.

Founded in West Woodburn in 1970, the Redesdale Society was one of the oldest local history societies in Northumberland and well-respected in Redesdale, North



Tynedale and beyond. Speakers regarded it as an honour to be invited to speak at its meetings. During its lifetime it has certainly lived up to the aims cited in its Constitution: *“To foster, collect, record and preserve information and artefacts relating to Redesdale past and present, for the benefit of future generations, and to enjoy so doing”*

The photograph, from 1983, shows the Society's Founder Members' committee,

some of whom held executive posts. Norman Dobson and Ian Roberts were long-serving chairmen, Ronnie Charlton was the first secretary and Revd John Naylor (then vicar of Chollerton) was the first honorary archivist. In its 56 year life, the Society held over 550 meetings on the second Friday of each month (except July, August and January)

Situated in an incredibly historical and environmentally exceptional Border county, the proximity of Hadrian's Wall, Vindolanda and Magna, Habitancum, Bremenium, Northumberland National Park, Kielder Water, the peatlands and forestries and with Dark Skies above, possibilities for the Society's talks knew few bounds. Themes ranged over the important local history of the area, the reivers and their families, droving in the Borders, the Redesdale/Mitford family, famous estate agents of yesteryear, Hadrian's Wall, numerous archaeological digs in the area, coal and lead mining, the Kielder camps, Northumberland place-names, bastles and fortified farmsteads, mediaeval churches, the Border County railway, Northumbrian music, musicians, folklore and song, famous sons and daughters of Northumberland, flora and fauna, environmental and agricultural topics and many more. We even drew on speakers from over the Border, hosting talks about the Great Tapestry of Scotland (housed in Galashiels), the Jacobite Risings and Mary Queen of Scots.

Many speakers were hosted, wined and dined, both famous and infamous: Stan Beckensall, Lindsay Allason-Jones, Clive Waddington, Nick Lewis, Richard Carlton, Stan Owen, Steve Gibbon, Alistair Anderson, John Grundy, Marta Alberti, Peter Ryder, Paul Frodsham, Tony Barrow, Maksymilian Loth-Hill and many more. “Home-grown” speakers included Norman Dobson, Ron Holden, Ian Roberts, Beryl Charlton, Máire West, Emma Anderson, Mike Gibson, Jonathan West and Bill Burlton. We apologise to readers and former speakers not included as there were far too many to make the list here exhaustive!

Members and visitors also found the social aspects of the Redesdale Society very congenial. Summer outings were made both locally and further afield: walks

around Redesdale, visits to bastles in the National Park, Otterburn Ranges, a visit to Elsdon Tower, churchyard and mote, a visit to Dilston physic garden, a wildlife foray in Rupert's Wood and trips to Hesleyside, Jarrow, Bede's World, Souter Lighthouse, the Ruthwell Cross and Gilsland to name just a few.

Each Society meeting ended with refreshments and an opportunity to socialise with friends old and new, from the local area and further afield. In the early 2000s, the Society's Christmas party, with Jonathan's infamous mulled wine, took the place of the more formal dinner ("The Gathering") usually held at the former Percy Arms. These meetings will be much missed and highlight the need for such social outlets in future, where locals and incomers can socialise and learn more about this wonderful area.

In addition to the talks and social side of the Society, it was active in preserving or restoring local artefacts in the field, such as the erection of the Rob of Risingham stone carving at West Woodburn. The Roman milestone beside the A68, also at West Woodburn, was re-erected twice (probably, cattle using it as a scratching post were responsible!) Society members took part in Ian Roberts' re-enactment of the Battle of Otterburn in 1988 (copies of the booklet still available on e-Bay). Members also helped record the gravestones in Elsdon churchyard which contributed to the present panel record in the church porch.

The committee jointly produced "*A Visitor's Guide to Redesdale*" in 1999, a booklet giving a brief history of Redesdale which was supplied to local hostelrys and shops. Facilities mentioned are now out-of-date but an update is being produced this year which will be gifted to the Heritage Centre at Bellingham for its website.

The Society's last meeting was a sad occasion for everyone for so many reasons. The decision to wind up was not taken lightly. In a last vote, members decided to support the Redesdale Archaeology Group, whose activities tie in closely with the aims of the Society, by contributing generously towards a final lecture and public event to be held in the autumn after this year's planned excavation at High Rochester. The former executive committee will now ensure that the agreed winding up actions are carried out effectively in accordance with the Society's Constitution and the wishes of those members present at the Special General Meeting.

Finally, the Society would also like to express thanks for all the support it has received from external bodies, including the various newsletter outlets that have generously given us coverage over the years. With Best Wishes from David Baines

NEWS FROM BELLINGHAM



WORLD DAY OF PRAYER 2026: KELEYA! (*Praise Him!*)

The World Day of Prayer (WDP) is a women-led, global, ecumenical movement. This year's WDP was on Friday 6th March. The theme was "I will give you rest, come" (Matthew 11 28-30). The service had been prepared by an ecumenical group of Christian women from Nigeria. This year the WDP service in Bellingham was hosted at St.

Oswald's, Bellingham. Thank you Fr. Jim for hosting us!

It is always a special service knowing we are joining a great wave of prayer which encircles the globe. WDP services begin in Samoa in the central South Pacific Ocean and continue in 146 countries across the globe, ending in American Samoa, this year all praying with and for the people of Nigeria. It is also a special service coming together as an ecumenical congregation with readers and participants from churches across the North Tyne. Special thanks go to those who read during the service, provided the music, served tea and baked treats and came along, The photo shows readers, musicians and leaders that came together to bring the service provided by the Christian women of Nigeria alive – Ingrid, Charlotte, Diana, Ava, Gillian, Margaret, Marie, Cath, Barbara, Fr.Jim, Roberta, Ann and Maureen thank you!

In this service, our Nigerian sisters called us to come closer to God and find rest in him. The service shared the stories of four Nigerian women to inspire us to work towards a world without injustice, insecurity, marginalisation and religious persecution, poverty and despair. As we trust in God, our Burden Bearer, the words, prayers and music of the service encouraged us to become one body in Christ, receiving and bringing His rest to the world. Many of us remarked how relevant, thoughtful and inspiring the service was especially in the context of the challenges facing us in the world today.

The closing prayers of the service included the following words as we were called to action:

"Let us affirm our commitment to be Christ's hands and feet in a world longing for hope and rest... We go in faith, hope and love, to be your light in the world. Amen"

With thanks for your support,

Cath Brennand, Roberta Ritson, Margaret Mjaland and Marie Ness

NEWS FROM BYRNESS

Rev. Emma Duff filled in for Claire at the end of February for our usual Holy Communion Service which was a lively service. Thank you so much Emma.

World Day of Prayer on 6th March at Otterburn, St. Peter's Catholic Church was a lovely, well-attended, ecumenical night. Just a quick note of thanks to all the readers, Caroline, Maire, Moira, Margie, Pat, Helen and Janice. Also thanks to Pete and Pat for the catering and to Trace from Byrness for the fab Nigerian waxed fabric. £106.53 collected for WDP.

After my treatment at the Freeman I called over to St. Francis of Assisi, High Heaton which is just behind Maggie's Centre at the Freeman. An amazing lively church with a vibrant community. I met the Vicar, Rev. Robert Lawrance who reminded me that his Curate brought a party from their Church up to St. Francis at Byrness during Elaine Ryder's term, where they tied in a walk with a visit to us. After chatting we thought it would be a good idea if they could bring another group up to us, and we would organise lunch for them at the Village Hall. We will stay in touch with Dorothy one of their Church Wardens to organise a reciprocal trip to High Heaton. Two Churches dedicated to the same Saint, and oddly High Heaton was built in 1953 the same year as Byrness Village.

It was motivating to see in the Church Hall their activities and the work they do for Eco-Church. Mind I won't moan about the windows at St. Francis Byrness for a while, as High Heaton's have just been completed at a cost of £52,000.

Love to all, from Barb

NEWS FROM CORSENSIDE

On 15th February, I was invited by Jill Swaile to attend the Falstone communion service, led by the Venerable Catherine Sourbut Groves, the Archdeacon of Lindisfarne. It was lovely to meet Emily and Megan, Jill's young relations, and to share the peace with them both. Emily and Jill gave two excellent readings, and we were given insight into the events surrounding the Transfiguration. Prior to this, I had assumed that Peter had died when he was still young, but Archdeacon Catherine said he survived till old age, which is when he eventually wrote about Christ's Crucifixion. This made the impact of Christ's Resurrection more meaningful for me, as it meant that Peter was writing as an eye-witness to the earlier Transfiguration.

On 1st March, Claire (our gifted Preacher) came back from New Zealand, and we were treated to an excellent sermon. She has been concentrating on the importance of the Ten Commandments with all of her parishioners. Despite all the excellent mnemonics, I still find, after the first two Commandments (to worship the

one true God and to eschew all false idols), that the rest of the Commandments are difficult to remember in the order written on Moses' tablets!

On March 2nd, Ken Prudhoe led a lovely service at Elsdon, which was followed (at Byrness) by the chance to meet our Cathedral's Chaplain, who had discussed the Commandments with Claire prior to the 3pm service. I'm ashamed to say I still found the exact sequence tricky!

The Coffee and Tea events at Corsenside Village Hall are ticking along nicely and the sessions follow the Soup and Sandwich lunchtime sessions, which start at 12.30pm. The 'Cuppa and a Chat' sessions end at 3.30pm.

On 3rd March, there was a lovely Lenten lunch at the MURC in Bellingham. It was a combined church event, hosted by Roberta (MURC) and Sarah Lunn (C of E) with help from Claire. It was lovely to take part and to meet so many new people. Chris (Methodist) had made some lovely Pax (peace) biscuits, and encouraged us all to take some home with us for friends, neighbours and families. Regardless of denomination, we all want peace in our lives at this time of such worldwide tension.

On Sunday 8th March, Claire Maxim led a fascinating Communion Service at St John's, Otterburn. Since it was Lent, she started testing us on the correct order of the Commandments. Happily, we are all improving! The church is under financial pressure, so we were asked to economise on heating. During the sermon, Claire presented a comprehensive reason for the Jewish leaders looking down on the Samaritans generally and especially gave details about the Samaritan woman at the well. It is also one of the rare and unusual occasions in the Bible that Jesus actually said out loud that he was the Christ and also told her: "I am the Living Water". Jesus' actions were remarkable, too, for the very fact that a Jew to ask a Samaritan for water – an indication that all people are equal in his eyes and he is prepared to forgive us all.

During the service, we also learnt that hymns containing the words "Alleluia" or "Hallelujah" should not be sung until the end of Lent and the date of Christ's Resurrection. Claire's sermons are always informative and inspiring – so why not come along to one of the churches she covers, and hear her preach.

Finally, on Sunday 15th March (Mothering Sunday) at St John's, Otterburn, Michael Nixon conducted a reflective and, at times, sombre service. He talked about how Food Banks are doing a vital job of helping feed increasing numbers of Mothers and children. It is a desperately sad situation when the only thing standing between families being potentially forced to steal food from other sources, are the volunteers at Food Banks and the kindness of the people who donate to them (whether by practical donations or monetary donations). The sermon gave us all pause for thought. Thank you, Moira, for the plants and flowers.

With Best Wishes to you all, from Diana.

NEWS FROM ELSDON



The big book sale on Saturday 7th March was a great event, with hundreds of good books appearing out of nowhere and amazing cakes to scoff. We were blessed by a lovely, sunny day and a continuous flow of people. In total, EPIC raised £497 for St. Cuthbert's Church. Many thanks to all who donated their books, time and energy.

A second fundraiser of the year is being held at 7pm on Friday 24th April, in Elsdon village hall. EPIC are

organising a fun Race Night with all proceeds to St. Cuthbert's Church. This is a community charity event with virtual horse racing - the close as we can get to Royal Ascot in a village hall! It's an opportunity to meet up with others and will be fun, possibly even an exciting flutter, and will definitely help raise money to help keep the church open. Do come along and support it.



This year is the 50th anniversary of the Northern Cross pilgrimage. In Holy week every year, walkers carry a wooden cross from Carlisle to Lindisfarne, breaking their epic 6-day walk by staying overnight in village halls. This year, they arrive in Elsdon on Tuesday 31st March. If you see this magazine in time to cheer them on their way, do come to Corsenside village hall at lunchtime on 31st March, or Elsdon village hall either the evening of 31st or breakfast time on Wednesday 1st April. Even better, join them for the crossing of the sands to Holy Island on Good Friday 3rd April. Details at www.northerncross.co.uk.

With all Best Wishes from Helen Howie

NEWS FROM FALSTONE



Spring is here...with lighter mornings and the sun setting later in the day. This season is such a treat for our sense of sight, it is such an optimistic season and everywhere we look, nature is waking up. A dose of fresh air can really do wonders, it can help us feel calm, refreshed and relaxed. Even on a rainy spring day putting on wellies and a raincoat and walking in puddles can remind us of the joy in the simplest of activities.

As part of the Diocese of Newcastle's 'Year of Sharing', they have launched a new pilgrimage route, *St Aidan's Way* walking from the 'first cathedral' on Holy Island, to the 'new cathedral' in Newcastle. St Aidan was the founder of the monastery on Lindisfarne in AD 635. The walk is going to take place in stages over the next 8 months, more information can be found at the following link [St Aidan's Way - Newcastle Diocese](#)



I took part in the first stage of the pilgrimage which was from Holy Island (Lindisfarne) to Belford on Saturday the 7th of March it was 21km (13ish miles in old money 12). The weather, after weeks of rain and cloudy, dull skies) was truly spectacular. It was cold, but the sun shone the whole day (see photo). I walked with 40 other pilgrims (plus 2 dogs called Benson and Lola) we started on the Island at 9am, walked over the sands, some folk even walked in bare foot (I WAS NOT one of them!) when we got to the mainland Bishop Helen-Ann presided over an outdoor Eucharist Service.

During the service two noisy eider ducks flew overhead and made their presence known which I thought was a poignant moment. These particular ducks are associated with St Cuthbert, who was the Bishop of Lindisfarne, and locally, they are known as *Cuddy Ducks* after him.

It was a beautiful day of fellowship, prayer and meaningful conversation with the other pilgrims, I am looking forward to taking part in more of the stages.



Rev Claire presided over the St Peter's Mothering Sunday Eucharist Service, Neave aged 10 read poems and prayers. The percussion instruments we used in force (any excuse I say to play the triangle) for the final hymn which was "You shall go out with joy". Falstone toddlers made a beautiful banner with a poem written on it called *Dear Mummy*. Everyone in the congregation received a bunch of daffodils and we enjoyed refreshments and simnel cake after the service – a BIG



thank you to The Maureen (aka my mother with the new knee!!) for making the cake, a star baker for sure. Daffodils were also left outside of Falstone Tearoom for mothers and care givers to take away; I received some lovely comments from folk about this gesture from St Peter's.

It is with great sadness that we have heard of the passing of three wonderful local people recently, namely Marg Pigg and John Stevenson from St Cuthbert's Bellingham and a lovely local lady, Elizabeth Robson.

Elizabeth was an active member of the URC in Falstone but always supported services at St Peter's as part of *Churches Together* before the URC closed. Elizabeth was the cook at Messy Church, which was held at the URC for many years, she made some fabulous meals for us all to share, I particularly liked her chocolate crispy cakes. She was buried in Falstone Cemetery on the 19th of March with a service of thanksgiving at St Peter's afterwards, donations were collected for Dementia UK. Our thoughts and prayers go out to the families of Marg, John and Elizabeth, may they all rest in peace and rise in glory with the saints.

Best wishes Jill Swaile

Churchwarden and ALM. Tel 0191 2820140 Email alanswaile@aol.com

NEWS FROM OTTERBURN

St John's Church Otterburn will be holding a coffee morning on 9th May at 10.30am as a fundraiser for our Church. Everyone is welcome to come along.

Our Bingo evening raised funds of over £500 to help in paying for our church heating, lighting, insurance, etc. Thank you to everyone who attended, donated gifts and assisted in making our Bingo evening a lovely social event.

Services at St John's are held on the 1st and 3rd weeks of each month at 11am and our Easter Sunday Service will be on Sunday 5th April. Do feel free to come along and join in - even if you just like singing hymns! You will be very welcome and tea, coffee and biscuits are provided after each service.

Otterburn's World Day of Prayer was held on 6th March in St Peters Church,

Otterburn and highlighted the women of Nigeria. It was a lovely service which was well attended.

Please do come along to St John's Church Otterburn where a warm welcome awaits.

With Best Wishes from Moira (Authorised Lay Minister)

NEWS FROM THORNEYBURN

News from St. Aidan's: We had a good Dementia Awareness session at Taret Village Hall on Wed 4th March. This was a friendly, informal session helping us all to make our environment Dementia Friendly and as supportive as possible. There was lots of positive and useful info, and I have a checklist and resources for anyone who has a venue, as well as booklets and other info for everyone affected by dementia.

I have also been working towards having a series of informal sessions, called 'Techie Teas!' - with the aim of helping us all to understand and get more out of our Phones, iPads, computers, laptops – and being able to confidently book appointments online, etc., etc. This is important, as more and more things will be done this way - whether we like it or not - and people who cannot use online get more and more excluded as local services close (e.g. banks)!



The first session was held in Taret Village Hall (see picture) at the coffee morning on Thursday 5th March. The feedback seemed positive, so they are coming back to the next Coffee Morning, which is on Thursday 2nd April from 10.30am

- 12: noon. I have also spoken to Julian at the Holly Bush, who is happy to host one there for those who would like to learn while having a pint rather than a coffee. This is likely to be a Mondays from 4pm - 6pm, but the date is yet to be confirmed. I will let you know when it is organised.

The wonderful Altar Frontal made by the schoolchildren and community is now ready to go to the church and its dedication is planned for Tuesday 24th March at

10am. The children and embroiderers who have been involved in its creation will be coming to see it, and you are all welcome too. It will be ready for Easter for all to see.

Some more good news: The Church and Community Partnership have successfully set up the Community Transport scheme to help those people who cannot get to GP appointments or community events such as coffee mornings and church, etc. If you would like to use the service, all you need to do is contact Caroline Waitt (01434 240210 caroline.waitt@btinternet.com) or Marie Ness (01434 240679 mariewestb@googlemail.com) - ideally a few days in advance of the date you need to travel. We will then match you to one of our volunteer drivers to help you get to where you need to be! The scheme has been fantastic so far, and has been well used by our older members of the community, who are themselves continuing to care for their older relatives and who are having trouble getting them to important appointments. There is no standard charge, but donations are encouraged to help the scheme carry on growing so we can help more people who need lifts.

I have been sorting out the rota of people who look after the church and help prepare the church for services by cleaning, doing the flowers etc and we have a few slots left - so if you want to get involved and have time, I'd love you to get in touch. You don't have to be a regular churchgoer. We will also be having a churchyard clear up soon too now the weather is warmer.

We are having an Easter Communion and Picnic on Easter Sunday 5th April at 2.30pm, so do come and join us. As usual we will have a little reward for anyone who wants to make an Easter Garden (last year's Easter Gardens are shown in the picture) - just bring your gardens up to the service or anytime the week before Easter and leave in the porch and collect your treat!



If you are away over Easter our next Communion will be Sunday 12th April at 9am, and our Evening Service of the Word is on Sunday 26th April at 6pm

Caroline Waitt caroline.waitt@btinternet.com 01434 240210 (Churchwarden)

A BRIEF WORD FROM THE EDITOR

This month's cover photo was provided by Jill Swaile, and shows some of the pilgrims crossing from Holy Island to the mainland (see News from Falstone for further information).

If you have anything you would like to see included in the magazine (articles, cartoons, news, photos, events, birthdays, etc.), please feel free to email it to: sarahMOTW@btinternet.com

The copy deadline for next month's issue, is
MONDAY 13TH APRIL 2026

Please note that any views, thoughts or opinions expressed within this magazine are those of the authors/contributors and do not officially represent those of the wider church or of any other group or individual.

NEW SUBSCRIPTIONS TO THE MEETING OF THE WATERS

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Please note: Friday is my day off and I will respond to any queries when I return to work

Area Dean

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