



CROSSWAYS

A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER FOR ST PAUL'S AND WHITWORTH

From Dust to Discipleship

By Revd Lee Earl

AS I write this Lenten article, I'm very aware of the imagery of Ash Wednesday. And in many ways, the imposition of ashes feels like the right place to start, because the tracing of ash upon our foreheads can be a centring sign as we set out on our pilgrimage toward the cross.

In scripture, ash often appears as a sign of lament and repentance, as God's people turn their hearts back to him. Yet ash, like dust, also reminds us of the transient nature of human life and of our mortality — something that comes into sharp focus when we hear those familiar words at a funeral committal: "ashes to ashes, dust to dust." Such words gently, but firmly remind us of the finitude

of our lives compared with the One who holds all life together.

And yet, within this sign of ash and dust there is also a hidden beauty and dignity to behold.

In the creation story we are told that humanity was formed from the dust of the ground, and yet God stooped to breathe his own breath into that dust, fashioning a living being. The very substance that speaks of our frailty is also the place where divine life first met us — created to live in relationship with God and to reflect his love in the world.

But as the biblical story unfolds, this vision can seem fleeting. Like dust — or ash — carried on the wind, it is often obscured by the consequences of human choices and the quiet rebel-



Photo: Unsplash

lions of the human heart, as a world too easily forgets the breath from which it came.

Even so, at the heart of Ash Wednesday is the sign of the cross. And no other symbol speaks more clearly of the astonishing truth that even when humanity forgot the source of its life and being, God did not forget us.

For in Jesus, God did not merely breathe life into the dust from a distance, but stepped into the ash and dust of human experience, embracing our pain, and sorrow, and carrying them all the way to the cross for our redemption and healing.

There is a worth and dignity hidden in the dust

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PARISH

CHURCH

SERVICES

ST PAUL'S CHURCH

Sundays: 10.30am Holy Communion ('All Together' non-communion on first Sunday)
(*live-streamed at www.facebook.com/stpaulsspennymoor*)

Wednesdays: 9.30am Holy Communion **Fridays: 10am** Play Church (term-time only)

WHITWORTH CHURCH

Sundays: 9am Holy Communion

CLERGY

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CURATE

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Wayne Rhodes: 01388 816643
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From Dust to Discipleship

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of Ash Wednesday that we must not overlook this Lent — a dignity that can rightly lead us to our knees in repentance, worship, and adoration.

And yet this is only the beginning of the journey. For Lent invites us not only to remember who we are, but to follow more closely the one who made us.

There is an old rabbinic saying: “May you be covered in the dust of your rabbi,” suggesting that a true disciple walks so closely behind their teacher that the dust of the road clings to them. In the same way, this season calls us to renew our commitment to follow Christ more closely — not just down any road, but the road to Calvary, where the Son of God poured out his life to set us free.

Put another way, Lent is not only a path toward

truth but a journey of transformation, where Christ invites us day by day to allow his self-giving love to reshape our desires, our priorities, and our lives.

In Jesus’ own words: “If anyone wishes to follow me, he must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me.”

To follow Christ, then, is not simply to assent to who he is or what he has done, but to allow his work to change us — to walk so closely with him that the dust of his feet clings to our hearts.

So as we continue our pilgrimage toward the cross and the hope of Easter morning, may we remember both our fragility and our dignity, and thus behold anew the glory of Christ’s love — a love that leads us, this Lent and always, from dust to discipleship.

Amen.

HOLY WEEK AND EASTER

**St Paul's Spennymoor
Whitworth Church**

Palm Sunday - 29th March

9am - Whitworth : Holy Communion
10:30am - St Paul's : Holy Communion*

Monday 30th March

7pm - Whitworth : Meditation

Tuesday 31st March

7pm - St Paul's : Meditation

Wednesday 1st April

9:30am - St Paul's : Holy Communion
7pm - Whitworth : Meditation

Maundy Thursday - 2nd April*

7:30pm - St Paul's : Holy Communion

Good Friday - 3rd April*

2pm - St Paul's : Contemplation at the cross

Easter Day - 5th April

6am - Whitworth : Sunrise vigil service
9am - Whitworth : Easter Holy Communion
10:30am - St Paul's : Easter Holy Communion*

*Services marked with an asterisk will also be live-streamed
facebook.com/stpaulsspennymoor*



Farewell service for Bishop Sarah Clark

FOLLOWING the recent announcement that the Bishop of Jarrow is to become the next Bishop of Ely, a farewell service will take place on Saturday 21st March at 4pm at Durham Cathedral. All are welcome as we give thanks to Bishop Sarah for her ministry over the past few years and prayer for her as she prepares to move to Ely.

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Archdeacon of Auckland to be next Bishop of Durham

DOWNING STREET has announced that His Majesty the King has approved the appointment of the Venerable Rick Simpson, currently Archdeacon of Auckland, as the next Bishop of Durham. Rick will succeed the Rt Paul Butler who retired from the role in February 2024.

Reacting to his appointment, Archdeacon Rick said: "I am humbled and delighted to have been called to be the Bishop of this diocese, which I love. My deepest hope is to be able to walk alongside and encourage our local Christian communities as they seek to both show God's love in action and help people to come to life-changing faith in Christ – and through this see our churches grow. It is also an honour to be tasked with representing the needs and voices of people in this region in the national church and the House of Lords."

The Archbishop of York, Stephen Cottrell said: "Archdeacon Rick has served the Diocese of Durham with dedication

over many years. He has a wealth of experience in supporting and enabling parish ministry. His deep local knowledge of the Diocese will be an asset in his new role as Bishop of Durham. Please join me in praying for Rick and for the Diocese as he begins a new chapter of ministry, inspiring all to grow in mission, leadership, church life, and in engaging younger generations."

Rick has served in the Diocese of Durham since 2006 when he came to be Priest in Charge of St Brandon's, Brancepeth, helping the church to thrive and develop its mission and the Initial Ministerial Education (IME, Phase 2) Officer for both Newcastle and Durham, supporting curates and training incumbents. He became Archdeacon of Auckland in February 2018. He was a member of the Wilkinson-Jay Response Group, advising on the development of Church of England safeguarding. He served previously in the Diocese of Newcastle where, as vicar of Holy



The Venerable Rick Simpson

Photo: Durham Diocese

Trinity Jesmond, he saw the church grow strongly in number and discipleship over ten years.

The Dean of Durham, Dr Philip Plyming, said: "I am delighted that Rick has been called to be the next Bishop of Durham. He is well known and widely respected across the Diocese and his blend of missional energy and wise leadership, both rooted in a deep sense of trust in God, are what we have been praying for in our next Bishop. At the Cathedral we look forward very much to working with him and seeing God continuing to be at work in this generation."

Rick enjoys the outdoors, especially wildlife photography, playing guitar, sport, films and novels. He is married to Rachel, and they have ten godchildren.

The consecration of Rick as Bishop of Durham will take place at York Minster on Thursday 30th April and an installation service at Durham Cathedral will happen in early summer.

Following the Rt Revd Sarah Clark's appointment as Bishop of Ely, the Rt Revd Frank White, who is well known as an assistant bishop in our diocese, has agreed to become Acting Bishop of Durham during the transitional period.

Please hold Rick, Sarah and Frank in your prayers as they each prepare to take on new responsibilities, here in the Durham diocese and as Sarah prepares to move to Ely.

Report compiled from a Durham Diocesan press release.

<p>CLEMS SPENNYMOOR</p> <p>16 Clyde Tce Spennymoor 815451</p>	<p>ADVERTISE IN THIS SPACE FOR JUST £10 PER YEAR!</p> <p>Email us at: office@stpaulsspennymoor.co.uk</p>	<p>Derek Taylor and Son Est. 1972 Corgi Reg. Gas Services</p> <p>Tel. 814982</p>	<p>Wedding/Family Celebrations at the Town Hall in Spennymoor "for Ramside quality at Town Hall prices"</p> <p>01388 815276</p> <p>www.parishes.durham.gov.uk/spennymoor enquiries@spennymoortowncouncil.gov.uk</p>
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FOR YOUR PRAYERS

For diplomatic efforts to bring about peace in the Middle East.

For Ven Rick Simpson on his appointment as Bishop of Durham.

For our journey through Lent, as a time of reflection as we journey to the cross on Good Friday.

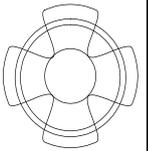


PRAYER FOR MARCH

Holy God, our lives are laid open before you: rescue us from the chaos of sin and through the death of your Son bring us healing and make us whole in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Source: The Church of England

Parish Registers



HOLY BAPTISM

St Paul's
15th February Arwen Anderson

CHRISTIAN FUNERALS

St Paul's
2nd February John Mayhew
18th February Linda Ellis

NEWS IN BRIEF

THE March meeting of the Mothers' Union takes place on Monday 9th March, 2pm in church, and the speaker will be a representative from Age Concern.

Members are invited to attend the Lady Day service to be held in St Andrew's Church on Tuesday 24th March at 7pm which will be followed by refreshments.

Also, congratulations to one of our members, Margaret Campbell and her husband Watson as on the 27th February they celebrated their platinum wedding anniversary - 70 years married - a remarkable achievement!

THE Spennymoor Foodbank volunteers would like to thank all those who contribute items to the collection bins in church, and also the response to the request for carrier bags which has been great. The carriers are required all the time, so please keep donating them!

THANK you to Verna McEneny who sent in this photograph of beautiful snowdrops carpeting the Whitworth Church drive.



VETERANS, military personnel and cadets recently attended a service at St Paul's to mark the 35th anniversary of the end of the Gulf War. The service remembered those who lost their lives in the conflict and heard from a veteran who gave a personal testimony.



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