

inter  
**MISSION**

Prudhoe Methodist Church

November 2020



and to all our **key-workers!**

# Jenny writes ...

Dear Friends,

When we were all asked to stay home and stay safe back in March, I don't think any of us fully appreciated just how long this situation might go on. I'm very grateful for the care you have offered one another and for your willingness to adapt to new systems and requirements. I miss you all very much and I look forward to the day when we can connect without screens and phones again.

In a short time it will be Advent and we are more conscious than ever this year of what it means to wait expectantly. There are many things we long for at present, there are many prayers being said and Advent reminds us that God's people lived in this way for generations as they waited for the arrival of their saviour asking "When? Where? How long, O Lord?"

When their glorious future arrived, their Redeemer Saviour and king, the future was a little different from what they had expected....small helpless baby born almost unnoticed in the night. -but for those who embraced that future, those who accepted that God's plan was always the best plan, for those people, the future held hope, love, forgiveness and a new beginning for the world,

We don't know what 'The New Normal' will look like in the months ahead, but we know that God is with us, we know that through this time of illness, grief and isolation for so many, God's light and love shine unquenched and unstoppable. We know too that as we trust Christ, as we step into the future that God will redeem from this time, if we embrace it in faith as those who embraced the birth of Christ, we will know our waiting was not in vain, we will see God's will for his Kingdom unfold and we will grow and learn both as individuals and as churches ready for a new beginning with Him.

## Life under Covid-19 for a Christian NHS key worker

I've been in nursing 31 years next month, and have never experienced anything like this pandemic. Fear, horror, denial, all featured hugely throughout. Initially thinking the media was blowing things out of proportion. Even when the first cases in the UK were being treated at the RVI where I work, I felt that there was no significant danger, as they were being treated in the specialist Infectious Diseases Unit where Ebola cases had been safely treated. This picture began to change very rapidly and alarmingly. It became clear that this was a very serious situation and I was scared.

16<sup>th</sup> March, a Monday, not a particularly memorable day in so many respects, but one I shall remember forever. I went to Brownies, as usual, but never would I have imagined the email we Guiders received when we got home that night. Girl Guiding UK were from that moment on ceasing all face-to-face meetings. The following day came the announcement that churches were to close. These two announcements, along with big changes implemented at work, were real pointers for me that life was changing, and not in a good way. To not have church? To not have Brownies? Good and regular hand hygiene, and keeping one metre apart from people I could cope with, but two very important lifelines were ceasing. And again, I was afraid.

Shopping, seeing the empty shelves and the stressed looks on people's faces, I was very close to tears, not quite able to believe that there seemed a real possibility that food and basic supplies would run out. Everything was horrible

On 23<sup>rd</sup> March things got worse. Boris Johnson said, "Stay home, save lives, and protect the NHS." Stay home? For how long? As a family we were reeling from the sudden death of my Dad in December. Mam had cherished regular activities at church and Sunday services, in the three months since his death. Now not able to grieve and support each other because we didn't live together nor stay with one another because of the nature of my job and Mam being in a "vulnerable" age group. It was awful.

There was nothing in the media but dire news of the virus. One of the wards I work on was turned into a Covid ward. This was scary, and we began getting daily bulletins giving updates on new protocols and procedures. Work was a continually changing situation. One of the best pieces of advice I received from Occupational Health was to limit my engagement with any kind of media if I was struggling to cope mentally.

I'd only watch or listen to the news once a day, and would watch DVD's or comedy programmes. Mam has found Classic FM and Sky Sports of great benefit throughout these challenging times. Yet there was, and still is, tremendous fear. Will I die, will any of my family and friends die, will we get ill, and how can I cope with wards full of dying people? All these worries and many more were part of my daily (and nightly) terrors.

(continued on page 4)

There was a sense of living in the end times, especially when the streets were so silent with schools closed, and for the first time in my career, all hospital visiting was banned. There were major concerns about whether or not we had sufficient masks and hand gel. What had been simple tasks such as getting people discharged from hospital after routine surgery became twice as complex, as there was the question as to who was allowed to collect them, and what precautions did they have to take?

Yet for all the fear and oppression, people began to come together in ways that perhaps hadn't been thought of before. As the severity of the situation became apparent, little things lifted us and helped us get by: a neighbour offering to shop and be a "Friendly voice on a telephone". There was the "Candle in the window" initiative, and pictures of rainbows and other encouraging messages started to appear on lampposts, in windows and on street corners. I was reminded of Genesis 9v13 once again; where God talks about "putting His rainbow in the sky as a sign of His covenant". There was hope, just a sliver of it at times, but still, it was there. My daily exercise session became very important as it was a time when I could legitimately leave the house. My garden benefitted greatly. I don't think my Hoover had been used so much! People looked forward to Thursday nights when we stood outside and clapped for the carers. Who'd have thought I'd be taking part in Brownie meetings via Zoom! The wonderful people who set up telephone church and the virtual café need to realise what a boon these were. It was very important to feel connected, to have a sense of togetherness.

Easter Day was difficult, especially not being able to be with Mam, and missing Dad. Yet we as a family were grateful that we had at least had three months in which we HAD been able to meet together and share our grief. My heart and prayers go out to anyone who has suffered bereavement since 16<sup>th</sup> March. Not to be able to reach out and hug one another; even having to wear a mask, gloves and plastic apron when you are giving someone devastating news, is VERY difficult. It seems inhumane at times. I asked, and still do ask, where is God in all this. Yet I have thanked God so much for my employment, and have REALLY appreciated my place of work and my colleagues more than I have in a very long time, when I consider all those who have to self-isolate or shield and are denied face to face contact with anyone.

Factories and businesses changed not only the way they worked but their line of business. Perfume factories & breweries quickly switched to producing hand sanitiser. Hospital pharmacies started making their own disinfectants & hand gels.

Amid all of this, life goes on. Changed, but not defeated, the human race goes on, the human spirit, daunted and bruised, continues, and more importantly, even when Covid is yet again causing great suffering and angst, the Holy Spirit goes on. A verse came to my mind a couple of weeks ago which I'm thinking on each day. I'll not give you the reference, you can challenge yourselves to look it up; "Are not two sparrows sold for a penny?" God  
**4** cares for us, and holds us, so let us trust at all times in Him. Amen. *Helen Taylor*



## TIME FOR A GIGGLE (OR TWO)

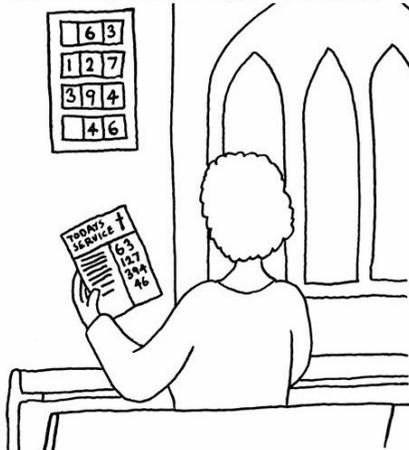
I would never have believed 12 weeks of uncut hair would weigh over a stone. But if that's what the scales say, then it must be right.

**Husband and I went grocery shopping with masks. Got home, took off mask, brought home wrong husband. Stay alert people!**

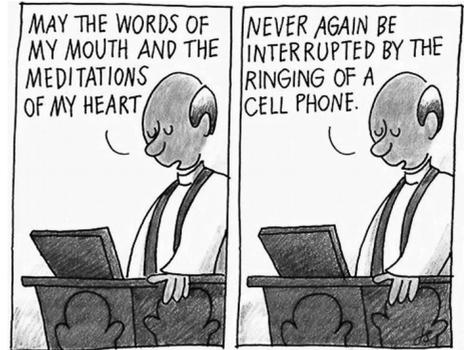
Be grateful that no matter how much chocolate you eat your earrings will still fit.



If there were cellphones at the Red Sea



SHE COULD HARDLY BELIEVE SHE HAD WON ON HER FIRST VISIT TO CHURCH



acknowledgements - Randy Glasbergen



"I don't know all Ten Commandments. The only ones I remember are 'settle down', 'act your age' and 'take that out of your mouth'."

## **The Three Trees - as told by Allan Waters\***



Once there were three trees on a hill in the woods. They were discussing their hopes and dreams when the first tree said, "Someday I hope to be a treasure chest. I could be filled with gold, silver and precious gems. I could be decorated with intricate carving and everyone would see the beauty."

The second tree said, "Someday I will be a mighty ship. I will take kings and queens across the waters to sail to the corners of the world. Everyone will feel safe in me because of the strength of my hull."

The third tree said, "I want to grow to be the tallest and straightest tree in the forest. People will see me on top of the hill and look up to my branches, and think of the heavens and God and how close to them I am reaching. I will be the greatest tree of all time and people will always remember me."

After a few years of praying that their dreams would come true, a group of woodsmen came upon the trees.

When one came to the first tree he said, "This looks like a strong tree, I think I should be able to sell the wood to a carpenter." And he began cutting it down. The tree was happy, because he knew that the carpenter would make him into a treasure chest.

At the second tree the woodsman said, "This looks like a strong tree, I should be able to sell it to the shipyard." The second tree was happy because he knew that he was on his way to becoming a mighty ship.

When the woodsmen came upon the third tree, the tree was frightened because he knew that if he was cut down his dreams would not come true.

One of the woodsmen said, "I don't need anything special from my tree, so I'll take this one," and he cut it down.

When the first tree arrived at the carpenters he was made into a feed box for the animals. He was then placed in a barn and filled with hay. This was not at all what he had prayed for.

The second tree was cut and made into a small fishing boat. His dreams of being a mighty ship and carrying kings had come to an end. The third tree was cut into large pieces and left alone in the dark.

The years went by, and the trees forgot about their dreams. Then one day, a man and a woman came to the barn. She gave birth and they placed the baby in the hay in the feed box that was made from the first tree. The man wished that he could have made a crib for the baby, but this manger would have to do.

The tree could feel the importance of this event and knew that it had held the greatest treasure of all time.

Years later, a group of men got into the fishing boat made from the second tree. One of them was tired and went to sleep. While they were out on the water, a great storm arose and the tree didn't think it was strong enough to keep the men safe. The men woke the man who was asleep, and he stood up and said, "Peace," and the storm stopped.

At this time the tree knew that it had carried the King of Kings in its boat.

Finally, someone came and got the third tree. It was carried through the streets as the people mocked the man who was carrying it. When they came to a stop, the man was nailed to the tree and raised in the air to die at the top of the hill. When Sunday came and Jesus had arisen the tree came to realise that it was strong enough to stand at the top of the hill and be as close to God as was possible, because Jesus had been crucified on it and had been raised from the dead to set us free. This tree would always be remembered for pointing others to the way of God.

The moral of this story is that when things do not seem to be going our way, we should always know God has a plan for us if we place our trust in him.

He will give us great gifts. Each of the trees got what they wanted, but not in the way they had imagined. We do not always know what God's plans are for us. We just know that His ways are not our ways, but His ways are always best.

# Talking Collections and Charity

As we plan and prepare to meet again as a church with short regular weekly services in our building starting in November, I believe now is the time to mention our collective giving.

Over the last 7 months lockdown has prevented us meeting as a church and has meant new ways of worshipping with varying degrees of technology. Thankfully during lockdown most members have still continued to get their regular giving and collections to me via the bank, sending batches of weekly collection envelopes, and cheques to offset the £25,000 we have paid in bills since lockdown.

A few members have been unable to get their collections to me and of course with not meeting we have not benefited from any cash collections in the plate at all. Although our collections have risen slightly over the last year unfortunately, they do not now cover our circuit assessment or other regular payments. If you feel you can help in any way please do so.

More importantly as a church our charity giving stopped in March although as individuals many of us have continued to help our personal favourites. Here are a further 4 charities requiring help now: At this time of harvest, you may like to support either the Methodist Relief and Disasters Fund (MRDF) or our local West Northumberland foodbank.

We have been approached by Stocksfield Methodist Church to help raise money for Tafi Atome New Town in the Volta region of Ghana. This township of around 1500 has no taps or toilets. All water for washing, cooking and irrigation has to be carried on head from a contaminated source 20 minutes away. They wish to construct toilet blocks and taps.

I will also resume collections for WaterAid as soon as possible. To support any of the above charities please pass any donations to me either directly or through the bank using the codes; CHURCH, MRDF, FOOD, TAFI or WATER. Please make cheques payable to Prudhoe Methodist Church I will pass any donations to the relevant charities.

Peter Chapman E: [peter@thischurch.com](mailto:peter@thischurch.com) T: 01661 833265

## LOOKING BACK - EASTER 2020

What a strange Easter it was this year – no family get togethers, except electronically , no church services except via the web where there was a choice between formal and informal, 45 minutes or a concise 10 minutes!

It set me thinking about Easters past; as a child often caravanning in The Lake District, sometimes in the snow, but invariably each year attending services at the two churches we attended over the years except for the Easters we spent with my parents in Scotland, then it was Dunkeld Cathedral. And of course singing Easter cantatas with the church choirs.

One particular Easter came to mind, 2003. We were in Australia visiting our daughter and, as she had told me of spectacular sunrises, I decided to get up early on Sunday morning and go to see the sun rise over the Pacific Ocean. A short walk took me to Manley beach at 6.00am; a few surfers were already there but looking East across the ocean dark clouds stretched across the horizon and, although the sky was becoming brighter, no sign of the sun. Should I stay or go back to bed? I stayed and I had time to think of the other Son that rose that first Easter morning; time to think and talk to God about the young people in our Youth Group at that time, some of whom would have been going to Spring Harvest, and what influence that might have on them; time also to think of the church family back in Prudhoe who would be celebrating Easter some 13 hours later. As I stood there the sky was getting brighter, the clouds began to break just where the sun was breaking the horizon. I had seen the sunrise and experienced again the Son rise!

And our walk with God can sometimes be like that; like the sun behind the clouds we know it is there and we know God is there but now and again He reveals himself to us in stunning, wonderful and sometimes dramatic ways – a boost to our faith usually at times when we really need it; His eye diffuses a quickening ray and fills our dark places with light.

I don't suppose anyone noticed the sunlight reflecting off me that Easter morning, but we are all called to let God's love reflect from us like a light to others wherever we are, at work, in the community in which we live or on a bigger stage, wherever He calls and equips to do something for Him, something Jesus would do.

Postscript: when I returned home it was encouraging to learn that a number of our young people had been challenged at Spring Harvest to respond to, or at least think seriously about, God.

Neville Fairbairn

(Neville originally submitted this for our May edition)

THE THREE GRACES

FAITH is a Gift which is with you each day  
A gift so strong nothing takes it away  
A feeling akin to the beat of your heart  
Without it your everyday life couldn't start  
What a wonderful feeling – a wonderful glow  
To have such a friend with you wherever you go

And then there is HOPE – that's a wonderful gift  
It comes to your aid when your heart needs a lift  
And it's something to share with the people you meet  
On the highway of life – those you meet on the street  
Without it then life is so dark and so dim  
For surely the light of hope comes from within

The true meaning of CHARITY is simple and true  
It's what the rest of mankind really means to you  
It's the pain that you feel when a foreign land  
Cries for the charity of a helping hand  
So counting these blessings you are not alone  
For, after all, charity begins at home

Of all the three Graces they say Faith is the best  
but to possess all three –  
then you are truly blessed.

Anne Harrison,  
nēe Glendingning. - Sent by Margaret G

**How great thou art**

It was bright and sunny this afternoon (21<sup>st</sup> Oct) as I was driving home on the A695 between Riding Mill and Stocksfield.

I had been thinking about the pandemic and how it had affected the health and wealth of people we know.

But then I noticed the vivid colours of the trees along the roadside. Pat told me she had heard it was the best autumn show we had for many years. Iridescent hues of ruby, scarlet, amber, gold and purple.

It was as if God was just reminding me that true wealth is not about money. I could not buy the splendour of autumn in Northumberland.

"My Lord my God, when I in awesome wonder ..." -PB

**Church on Zoom!**

Fellowship & prayer  
Sundays at 3:30pm

Bible Study Group  
Tuesdays 7:30 pm

Contact Jenny  
prydejennym@gmail.com

Sun 2:15pm  
Wed 10:00 am  
meet by phone  
(see back cover  
for details)



**FROM OUR FOREIGN AFFAIRS CORRESPONDENT  
DATELINE : MELBOURNE Wed 21 Oct 2020**

Greetings from Melbourne! (Derbyshire..not Australia!)  
Katie and I are now settling in our new home, and in these strange times trying to reconnect with the folk we served when I was the Supt. Minister.

I can't recommend moving house during a pandemic, but we had a coaster mat with the words of Jeremiah Ch29v11. We prayed those words regularly throughout the ups and downs of house sale and purchase. ... and despite some obstacles we did it.

Perhaps you, like many others, are struggling in these uncertain times. I suggest you look up Jer29:11 and pray it, and perhaps get a friend to pray it with you.

We continue to remember you.  
Blessings, Rob

***(The Lord says) ..."I alone know the plans I have for you, plans to bring you prosperity and not disaster, plans to bring about the future you hope for." - Jer 29:11***



Melbourne, Derbyshire, England

**OUR (inter) MISSION STATEMENT**

- [1] To inform our local community, and ourselves, of what happens within the walls of PMC (as a building)
  - [2] To inform the same parties of our organised outreach work beyond those walls (eg Open-the-Book)
  - [3] To inform about individual work and witness by our members working with the Holy Spirit
  - [4] To outreach our fellowship to those unable or (perhaps) unwilling to worship with us.
  - [5] To spread the Good News using a fresh theme each month.
  - [6] Making disciples.
- Rev Rob Hawkins**

**PUBLICATION.** We aim to distribute new issues by the first Sunday of the month. Please send articles no later than the 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of the previous month to:  
**[intermission@uwclub.net](mailto:intermission@uwclub.net)**  
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[www.prudhoemc.org](http://www.prudhoemc.org)

# WHAT'S ON AT PMC?

With the encouragement of Rev Rob Hawkins and the technological expertise of Pete Barrett Prudhoe Virtual Café (PVC) phone-in each Wednesday at 10am became a 'new normal' weekly event at a time when 'new normal' was to become a much used phrase and technology came to the fore as lockdown was enforced.

The first PVC was held on 23 April with 13 folks joining in. Amongst those at PVC were some from Stocksfield, a lady from Wooler, someone from another circuit (whom Pete helped to set up their own phone in service). We were all given the opportunity to share something or someone close to our hearts during this difficult time.

For a bit of light-heartedness we allocated those present to 'tables' and hostesses invited those on their table to share with everyone the topic of the moment. We discussed favourite meals; hymns/songs; stories/meanings about our Christian names; where we were born and at our first PVC something about the mugs/cups we were drinking from. There were some fascinating stories and everyone entered into the spirit of the occasion.

During those early meetings we were introduced to Pete's friend, Fixit, whose main job was to make us laugh. He succeeded in doing this brilliantly and the escapism we all embraced has helped to make Wednesday mornings so much more bearable during these strange times.

*Fixit's parents were  
two knitting needles!*



As the weeks passed the number regularly joining PVC rose to 15. Everyone had a good laugh with quizzes, some weeks faith was shared, prayers were offered and poignant stories were related. - Anne C

If you would like to join us at PVC at 10am on Wednesday mornings:

**Call 0333 0110 946 and wait for theWhyPay announcement, then 4424 1866# followed by 1984# (those two numbers end with #)**

**JOIN PRUDHOE AND STOCKSFIELD METHODIST CHURCH ON SUNDAY AFTERNOONS AT 2:15 FOR WORSHIP BY TELEPHONE ...**

**Call 0333 0110 946 and wait for theWhyPay announcement, then 4424 1866# followed by 1984# (those two numbers end with #)**

**SEE PAGE 10 FOR OUR VIDEO MEETING TIMES**

**prudhoemc.org / intermission**

**Email: intermission@uwclub.net**

**Facebook: Prudhoe Methodist Church Friends**