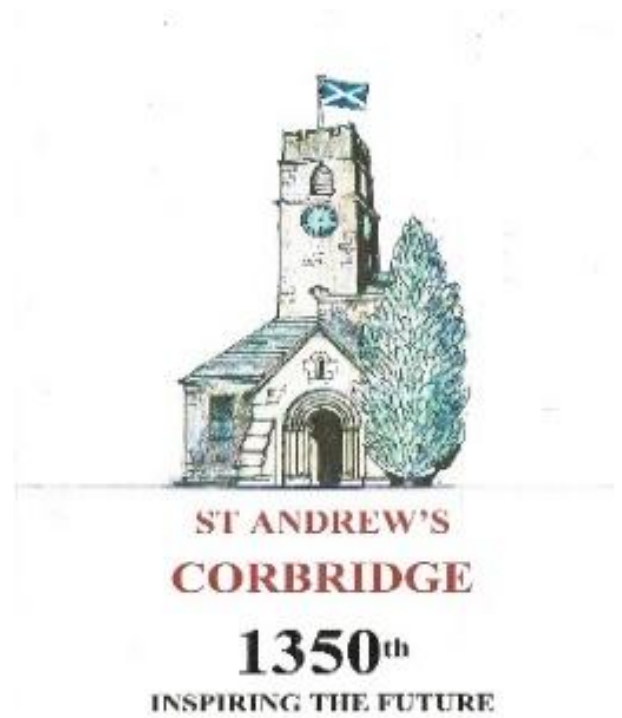


**The Parish of St. Andrew's Corbridge with St. Oswald, Halton  
and Newton Hall**



# **ANNUAL REPORT**

## **for year ending**

### **31<sup>st</sup> March 2025**

#### **Incumbent**

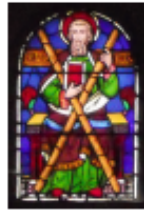
Canon Dr David J Kennedy

#### **Bank**

Lloyds Bank, Priestpopple, Hexham. NE46 1PA

Barclays Bank, Priestpopple, Hexham. NE46 1PA

# Welcome



Look for this window high on the west wall of our tower. St Andrew was the first disciple chosen by Jesus, and brother to Peter.

As a community of Christians here in Corbridge, we are the latest in a centuries-old thread of belief and worship. As you visit St Andrew's, we invite you to explore with us...

## FAITH

We have faith in a God of truth and beauty. God longs for us to know how deep his love is for every one of us.

## LIFE

Jesus promises us life in all its fullness. On the cross he took on himself our wrong-doing so we can receive God's forgiveness. He rose again so we can share his life, through the Holy Spirit.



Look for the cross on the wall behind our altar. It shows the risen Christ, as King of creation.

## PURPOSE

As Christians we are people of hope. We believe God has a good purpose for each of us and for all his creation.

## COMMUNITY

We are people learning how to follow Jesus. Our life together is built round worship and prayer, friendship and acceptance.

Would you like to know more about our Faith, Life, Purpose and Community? Please take one of our leaflets. Look for this heart symbol around the church for opportunities to read and reflect or pray while you visit.



## ANNUAL REPORTS

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## **Minutes of the Annual Meeting of Parishioners and Annual Parochial Church Meeting held in St Andrew's Church, Corbridge on Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> May 2024 at 11.10am**

### **Present:**

Canon David Kennedy (Chair), Rev'd Sam Lochhead, Rev'd Linda Hunter, Rev'd Claire Robson and 38 laity.

### **MEETING OF PARISHIONERS**

This meeting was for the election of Churchwardens, for which anyone voting must be either resident in the parish or on the electoral register. There were two nominations:

- David McEwan, proposed by Bob Eldridge, seconded by Pauline Bennett.
- Peter Cook, proposed by Colin Williams, seconded by Nicki Swart.

Both were elected unanimously. David Kennedy thanked Jean Wilks as retiring churchwarden, and David McEwan who was continuing in post, and he welcomed Peter Cook and thanked him for all he will bring to the role.

### **ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING**

#### **1. Apologies:**

Ian Graves, Sue Graves, Janet Kennedy, Carol Moffatt, Sally Moffatt, Mandy Norton, Louise Stubbs.

#### **2. Minutes of meeting held on Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> May 2022**

Acceptance was proposed by Nicki Swart, seconded by Jo Eldridge, and agreed unanimously. There were no matters arising. David said Carol Moffatt was retiring as Minutes Secretary, and he thanked her for 7 years of service in this role.

#### **3. Financial Statement**

Cliff Wright spoke to the report and accounts. He said the overall balance stood at £36,500 higher than last year, mainly due to a generous capital donation of £25,000 towards the planned Lady Chapel project, and also due to a surplus of £12,000 of income over expenditure. Although it was encouraging to end the year in credit, we must be mindful of continuing increases in our operational costs, especially administration (due to the appointment of our Parish Administrator), rising energy costs, and increases to the Parish Share. He thanked all who support him in his role as Treasurer, and Mike Collins who examines the accounts.

David thanked Cliff for all his work in managing our finances. He also thanked all those who give financial support to the church, through donations and by supporting fundraising initiatives.

Acceptance of the accounts was proposed by Liz Collins, seconded by Gail Williams and agreed unanimously.

#### **4. Electoral Roll**

David thanked Maureen Davison for maintaining the electoral roll which now stands at 174. During the year, 6 new names have been added and 4 have been discontinued. Acceptance of the electoral roll was proposed by Linda Hunter, seconded by Warwick Milne, and agreed unanimously.

#### **5. Annual reports.**

David said the full annual report was available in print and on the website. He thanked Linda and Hilary Hunter for compiling it, and all who had contributed reports; they show how much is being done in all the various church groups and activities, and the time and commitment this involves. In particular, the report shows how well we are recovering from the pandemic, in that we appear to have returned to pre-Covid activity levels. This was a good year, from which we can now move on to our 1,350<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations.

Bob Eldridge suggested the church should explore new ways of generating a substantial income stream; David said any ideas and expertise in this area would be very welcome.

David took the opportunity to thank everyone who contributes to all aspects of worship and activity in the parish, including formal worship and services, pastoral work, music, church council and committees, informal groups, maintenance of buildings and fabric, safety and safeguarding, and finance and administration; also those who engage with the wider community, e.g. by working with schools, the community hub, Tea & Chat, website, social media and publicity.

#### **6. Elections.**

(i) Deanery Synod. Current representatives were Janet Kennedy and Alice Stephenson.

There was still one vacancy, for which there were no nominations.

(ii) Parochial Church Council (PCC). Three members had completed their 3-year term of office: Val Barnes, Jo Eldridge and Edward Pybus. David thanked them all for their contribution and hard work. There were 3 new nominations:

- Edward Pybus (standing again to represent Halton), proposed by Cliff Wright, seconded by Jean Wilks;
- Alistair Lishman, proposed by Jean Wilks, seconded by Pauline Bennett;
- Karen Harkness, proposed by Jean Wilks, seconded by Pauline Bennett.

All were elected unanimously. This left two further vacancies, one for a 3-year term and one for a 2-year term, for which there were no further nominations. There was also a vacancy for Minutes Secretary.

**7. Appointment of Independent Examiner:**

Mike Collins said he was happy to remain as independent examiner. His reappointment was proposed by Jean Wilks, seconded by Bob Eldridge and agreed unanimously.

**8. Any Other Business.**

Jean Wilks thanked David for his inspirational leadership, and Janet for giving of her time so generously to support him.

There being no further business, the meeting closed in prayer.



I am delighted to present my seventh Annual Report on the life of St Andrew's and Halton. We are in the midst of our 1350<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration, with a diverse and creative programme of services, events and exhibitions over the summer and autumn. We look forward to welcoming many hundreds of people through our doors.

The 1350 celebratory year began with a memorable introductory weekend last October, marking St Wilfrid's Day. The Saturday included guided tours, and then the formal opening with my talk on St Wilfrid our Founder, the cutting of the cake with bubbles, afternoon tea and then a special Evening Prayer recalling Wilfrid's monastery. On Sunday, Bishop Helen-Anne joined us for a special Service of Thanksgiving, adorned by splendid music from our augmented choir (including Hubert Parry's *I was glad* and Ernest Bullock's *Give us the faith to rise within the veil*) and a memorable rendition of *Ten Thousand Reasons* by our splendid Corbridge CE First School choir. This was followed by a congregational lunch. In preparation, we worked hard on new signage for St Andrew's with a new welcome banner, interpretation stands, and leaflets setting out our Church values: Faith, Life, Purpose and Community, and a new prayer pilgrimage leaflet. A series of monthly displays has shed a light on various aspects of Church and Village life. The Christmas Tree Festival was given a 1350 twist with 135 trees, and the singing of 135 different carols. We reflected on 1350 Christmases at our Carol Services. In 2025, a new team of Church Guides has been trained, and we have begun our series of evening talks on aspects of the history of Church and Village. Lent, Holy Week and Easter included special sermon series and addresses at Compline, and our monthly *River* Gatherings have focussed on biblical Saints. Before us are the Art Exhibition of works by Helen Alice Johnson *Our Beautiful World*, the art installation *Caporetto*, a sculpted Installation of bells by Keith Roberts to compliment our War Memorial and the 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of VE Day, the June Flower Festival, a series of musical events, and the Heritage Week in September *Telling the Story of Corbridge*. Our year will conclude with a special weekend of events in October, when Bishop Mark will be with us. I am grateful for the hard work and commitment of so many, from both Church and community, in making this programme possible.

## **Worship**

Worship continues to be at the heart of everything we do. The new Sunday afternoon 4pm pattern, begun in 2024, is now well-established with monthly Messy Church and our *River* gatherings, and Simply Worship (a simple Service of the Word with expository preaching on the Bible) on other Sundays. It has been great to see members of the Church developing their gifts in leading, music-making, and exploring faith, particularly at *River*. We now have a great music group at River, led by Paul Morris. Our Sunday morning pattern of services continues with a twice monthly 8am Prayer Book Communion, the 10am Parish Communion with organ and choir, and our monthly service at Halton. The Wednesday midweek Communion continues to be well supported. We work hard to ensure that our standards of presentation, preaching and intercessory prayer are high. Our Church

Choir, one of the few remaining SATB choirs in Northumberland, shows tremendous commitment and we are blessed by our Director of Music and two organists in keeping musical standards as high as we can. It is clear to me from Scripture that the early Church from its earliest days met to break bread on the Lord's Day and this has continued in the largest Christian communions down the centuries. At the Eucharist, we first break open God's word, we bring to him the whole world, our nation and local community in engaged intercessory prayer, and then bring all of this into union with Christ's one, perfect Sacrifice on the Cross for the salvation of the world. This keeps thanksgiving, the Cross and the sacramental Presence of the risen Lord at the very heart and centre of our Church life. But I am delighted that we now have very different styles of worship at St Andrew's, both more formal and more informal.

During the past year, we have been delighted to welcome our outgoing CMS mission partners Phil and Sylvie Good who have now retired and their successors Andrew and Lisa Peart, who are serving with CMS in Santa Cruz in Bolivia. Both visits were memorable in reminding us of the world Church to which we belong.

We have continued to hold two services of Prayer and the Laying on of hands and anointing for healing, and to celebrate the richness of the liturgical year with imagination through word and symbol. The two major festivals continue to be well-supported. For Christmas 2024, approximate attendances were as follows:

|                                   | Adults | Children |
|-----------------------------------|--------|----------|
| Carols for all in the churchyard  | 371    | 30       |
| Middle School Carols (2 services) | 290    | 340      |
| First School Carols               | 150    | 130      |
| Crib Service                      | 130    | 120      |
| Festival of Carols & Lessons      | 470    | 30       |
| Midnight Mass                     | 60     |          |
| 8.00 Christmas Day                | 17     |          |
| Christmas Day at Halton           | 43     | 10       |
| Christmas Day Family Communion    | 73     | 12       |
| Total                             | 1604   | 672      |

The combined total of worshippers for Easter Day at St Andrew's and Halton was 215.

## People

In June we bade farewell to the Revd Sam Lohead as he left us to become Priest-in-Charge of Seaton Hirst in Ashington. We continue to remember Sam with great affection. In September, the Revd Barbara McNamara celebrated the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of her ordination as priest (and indeed the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of ordination of the first women priests) where the preacher was the Revd Dr Gill Alexander. To have four women priests (Barbara, Linda, Claire and Gill) leading worship that day was poignant. Jennifer Wright has continued her role as Pastoral Assistant, and Diane Wylie has contributed to our preaching and teaching ministry. Hilary Hunter sadly resigned as Parish Administrator because of other work commitments, but we were delighted to welcome Frances Stride



as her successor in August. Frances is now well-established in the Parish Office and her cheerful presence is greatly appreciated. Charlotte Alexander continues as our excellent Church and Cottage Cleaner. We were saddened by the death of a number of worshipping members of our Church community over the recent year, notably Daphne Anderson, Elizabeth Wood, Margaret Doubleday, Maureen Price, Evelyn Charlton and Gail Williams. May they rest in peace and rise in glory.

### **Mission and Ministry**

There are many aspects to our Mission and Ministry as illustrated by the Annual Report document. In addition, we have continued our periodic *Exploring the Bible* group studies, studying the Second Coming of Jesus in the Gospels and Paul in the late autumn and Temple theology during Lent. Throughout Lent and Holy Week, at our special evening services, we were enriched by reflections on the temptations and Passion of Jesus by the priest and poet Malcolm Guite from his book *Sounding the Seasons*. We continue our Schools' ministry in all the Schools in the Parish, bringing us into contact with hundreds of local children.

I would like to high-light our ministry through the occasional offices. We are fortunate that many people still value greatly the ministry of the Church around birth, marriage, sickness and death. We take great care in ensuring that we are offering the highest standards of pastoral care for these important occasions. So, for those requesting baptism, we do a home visit and then invite parents (and godparents where practical) to come to Church so that we can talk through the baptism service and explain its meaning and symbolism. We give three sessions of Wedding Preparation to our wedding couples, in addition to a rehearsal, and they all comment how very valuable those sessions are in preparing them both for the wedding day but also for the serious and life-long commitment that marriage entails. Our funeral services are carefully planned with the family of the bereaved, with many returning to Church for the annual All-Souls' memorial service. The Garden of Remembrance continues to be well used as a final resting place and ministry to the dying has been a particular focus of Linda's ministry over the last year. Accompanying people at the end of life is a huge privilege. In all of these meetings and services and in our preaching we aim to give sensitive and pastoral witness to the faith that the Church proclaims. They are genuinely missional occasions.

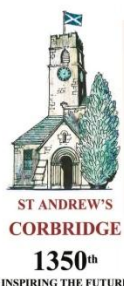
### **The Wider Deanery**

I have now served as Area Dean for six years, but I have agreed with the Bishop that I will lay this aspect of my ministry down on 31 October. It has been a privilege to serve the Deanery but it is a large and sometimes time-consuming ministry. Linda will also pass on the baton as Deanery Secretary. Linda very kindly offered to be Acting Deanery Secretary when the last Secretary relocated to Scotland in 2019. And she has continued in this 'acting' capacity ever since! But Linda has done a magnificent job and has been a first-class support to the Deanery as a whole and to my role as Area Dean. We have also passed on the baton of pastoral care for Slaley and Healey to the Vicar of Riding Mill, but Linda and I continue to look after Whittonstall. Whittonstall has festival services only (for both School and Parish) but a very engaged if small PCC who are looking, along with the wider Whittonstall Community group, to develop the Church building both as a place of worship but developing the nave as a Village Hall. To achieve this will require a major renovation.

## Conclusion

So, in this very special year, I hope you can sense in this whole Annual Report the energy that continues to drive forward the work of this Parish. We are fortunate to have a happy and co-operative culture in the life of our Church, to which so many people contribute in so many ways. We still face big challenges, especially in attracting younger people, children, teenagers and younger adults into our regular Church life. We seek to minister with integrity, care and I hope Christ-likeness in a very difficult context, not least through the sins of the Church which have brought so much negative publicity over the last year. I can simply say that I am proud of our Safeguarding Team, the PCC, and especially Linda's role in ensuring our compliance and the very highest Safeguarding standards for this Parish. We will continue to do everything we can to show the love and care of Christ and beauty of faith to this community. Please pray that our work will continue to bear fruit and bring glory to the great God we serve.

Alleluia! Christ is risen.



This is an exciting time for our church and village as we approach the year of celebrations to mark the 1350th anniversary of the Foundation of St Andrew's in Corbridge by St Wilfrid in around 674-5. Our year long celebration will run from October 2024 to October 2025. While most of the special events and activities will be held in 2025, we will begin this month (October) with our opening weekend and highlights such as the Christmas Tree Festival from November 29 to December 3.

Many of our regular events will also have a 1350 twist. We would like to invite the whole community to share in this remarkable anniversary. We begin on St Wilfrid's Day, Saturday October 12, with our opening weekend:

### Saturday October 12th:

During the morning the church will be open from 9:30am with displays and guided tours at 10am, 11am and Noon. The formal opening will be from 3pm in church:

- 3pm: Welcome and introduction to 1350
- 3:15pm: Talk by the Vicar, Canon David Kennedy: 'God's Rotweiler, St Wilfrid, Bishop and Bruiser!'
- 3:50pm: The cutting of the 1350 cake
- 4pm: Afternoon tea, bubbles and cake
- 4:35pm: Short act of worship recalling St Wilfrid's Monastery
- 5pm: Close

### Sunday October 13th:

- 8am: Holy Communion
- 10:30am: 1350th Festival Opening Celebration with the Bishop of Newcastle, Dr Helen-Ann Hartley, and music from our augmented choir and the choir of Corbridge CE First School
- 11:40am: Drinks reception
- 12:10pm: Light lunch

If you would like to attend on Saturday or Sunday and are not part of our regular mailing list, contact Frances our Parish Administrator on [admin@corbridgechurch.org.uk](mailto:admin@corbridgechurch.org.uk) or [admin@corbridgechurch.org.uk](mailto:admin@corbridgechurch.org.uk). Invitations and flyers may be found at the back of church or downloaded from the website [www.corbridgechurch.org.uk](http://www.corbridgechurch.org.uk). A brochure with full details of all we are planning will be distributed to every home in the Parish early this month (October).

### Christmas Tree Festival 2024

This year we aim to make our Christmas Tree Festival even bigger and better than usual by showcasing 135 trees. We hope that families might like to enter a family tree - they don't need to be huge trees. In fact if we have small ones they can go on the ledges and fit into

spaces. Can you imagine how wonderful our beautiful church will look? Watch out for application forms which will be available very soon. In addition we would like to sing 135 Christmas Carols during the Festival...you might like to participate.

### Exhibitions

There will be a series of exhibitions on St Andrew's and Corbridge in the church during the autumn and throughout 2025. This will culminate in a Heritage Week in September 2025 when we will be inviting shops, organisations and groups to put up a display representing their heritage. More about that soon!

### Do you enjoy singing?

We are inviting any members of the community who would like to join with our church choir on Sunday 13th October. We will be singing the iconic 'I Was Glad by Hubert Parry and Give Me The Faith To Rise Within The Veil by Ernest Bullock, as well as some plainsong recalling the monastery St Wilfrid founded. Please contact our Director of Music Colin Williams on [colin.williams46@outlook.com](mailto:colin.williams46@outlook.com) for further details. Also see the poster on Pg 8.

### 1350 Flower Festival - June 19th to 22nd 2025

A Flower Festival depicting 1350 years of St Andrew's and the village will showcase the skills of flower arrangers in the area. Would you like to be involved? Would you or your business be willing to sponsor a flower arrangement telling the story of St Andrew's and Corbridge? Please contact the Parish Office for further details.

### A Flower Cascade

As part of our Flower Festival we plan to have a cascade of crafted flowers draped down over the roof of the church porch. If you would like to make some flowers please do collect a pattern from church or download from the website - what a magnificent sight it will be to see hundreds of flowers cascading over the roof.

### Interpreting St Andrew's

Throughout the year we will have special signage and information telling the story of St Andrew's, interpreting our magnificent building and shining a light on the community who worship there. There will be a special Prayer Pilgrimage booklet that can be used to walk around the church. As well as information on our history, stained glass and Josephine Butler, the 19th century social reformer who was baptised and married at St Andrew's and whose parents are buried in the churchyard. The former Dean of Durham, the Very Revd Michael Sadgrove, has written a lecture on our founder, St Wilfrid, copies of which are available in church.

### The St Andrew's 1350 Prayer

God of the ages,  
we praise you for your faithfulness to us over 1350 years here in Corbridge.  
As we rejoice in our foundation by St Wilfrid,  
and are inspired by your holy apostle St Andrew,  
make us as a city set on a hill,  
whose light cannot be hidden,  
the light of your glory  
in the face of Jesus Christ our Saviour. Amen

# PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL REPORT

## MEMBERSHIP 2024-2025

Members of the PCC are either ex officio, elected by the Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM) in accordance with Church Representation Rules, or co-opted by the PCC. During the year the following served as members of the PCC:

### Ex officio:

Vicar: Canon David J Kennedy

Assistant Curate: The Rev'd Linda E Hunter

Churchwardens Peter Cook David McEwan

John Clark Karen Harkness Jen Lansberry

Alistair Lishman Max Philbrick Edward Pybus

Nahidah Remy John Wilson

### Elected as Church Warden

Peter Cook

### Elected at APCM, as representatives on the Deanery Synod

Janet Kennedy and Alice Stephenson

### Co-opted

Cliff Wright - Treasurer

Jo Eldridge Minute Secretary

## STANDING COMMITTEE

It is a requirement by law that a Standing Committee is appointed. It sets the agenda for the PCC meeting and deals with business in between meetings.

**Members:** Vicar, Assistant Curate, Churchwardens, Treasurer.

## WELCOMES AND FAREWELLS

3 new members were welcomed to the PCC. Jen Lansberry, Alistair Lishman, Karen Harkness and Edward Pybus (standing again to represent Halton),. We thank them all for joining us and for all that they have brought to the PCC.

Jean Wilks retired as churchwarden. We thank her for all that she brought to the role. We welcomed Peter Cook as the new churchwarden.

## **REVIEW OF THE YEAR**

7 meetings of the PCC and 7 of the Standing Committee were held during the last year, following the APCM on 5<sup>th</sup> May 2024. PCC has been busy throughout the year with a range of topics discussed. More detail may be found elsewhere in this report, and in the Minute File available on request or on the website.

## **TOPICS COVERED**

Regular business: Maintenance, Finance, and Safeguarding,

Reports from sub committees of PCC: Eco group, Take 5, Musical events, 1350

Report from Halton and the Deanery Synod

All of the above have reported elsewhere in this report.

### **We have also discussed:**

- Mission statement: part of each PCC meeting is used to review a specific section of our mission statement. This year we discussed our core values in preparation for the new signage.
- Worship and Liturgy, in particular Advent and Christmas, and Holy Week and Easter booklets
- Ongoing support for parishes in Slaley, Healey and Whittonstall
- Appointment of Parish Administrator.
- Corbridge Community Partnership and Community Hub: joint working and development.
- Plans for St Andrew's 1350th anniversary celebrations: a sub-committee continues to plan a range of exciting events and projects.
- The creation of a Memorial Garden, followed by the formal closure of the graveyard at St. James, Newton.
- Pastoral Visiting.
- Capital projects, especially refurbishment of the Cottage, and a proposed enhancement of the Lady Chapel.
- New on-line church diary

## **ELECTORAL ROLL**

**Maureen Davison**

The year began with 174 names on the Electoral Roll. During the year two names were added and six names have been removed. The total stands at 170.

This coming year there will be a completely new Electoral Roll. Everyone who wishes to be on the Roll will have to complete and sign a new form.

# CHURCHWARDENS' REPORT & FABRIC, GOODS

## AND ORNAMENTS OF THE CHURCH

David McEwan and Peter Cook

Both Churchwardens are members of the PCC, Standing Committee and Maintenance Committee, so we contribute to all decision-making about the maintenance and upkeep of our churches. Maintaining the Church buildings is the most onerous of our roles and involving principally major projects and routine maintenance, some of which can be undertaken ourselves.

The fabric of both our churches is in serviceable condition, and all goods and ornaments are as required for worship and events to take place in St. Andrew's and St. Oswald's.

**The Maintenance Committee.** The committee meets regularly and reports to PCC. Members are Jon Williams, Jane Darbyshire-Walker, Peter Cook, Canon David Kennedy, Rev'd Linda Hunter, and both churchwardens. Jane takes the minutes of the meeting and Jon is the committee's designated Eco-Champion, ensuring that environmental concerns are taken on board in all discussion and decision-making.

**Quinquennial Inspections and recommendations.** Inspections of both churches, and of the cottage, are all up to date and the maintenance committee are busy working through and prioritising the recommendations given

### Maintenance and works undertaken

- **Statutory Requirements.** During the year we have had inspections of the fire extinguishers, boilers, alarm system, and ladders. Electrical PAT testing was done in November 2024.
- **Clock.** The clock's annual inspection was done in October 2024. We are grateful to Mike Collins who checks, monitors and adjusts the clock when required. Fortunately, it no longer needs winding three times a week, thanks to the automated winding installed in 2021.
- **Roof.** Maintaining a watertight roof, as with all historic buildings, is an ongoing process. There have been some leaks in the north transept and the vicar's vestry; repairs are in hand. A survey of the church roof has been undertaken and we are now looking at some repairs to both the North and South side of the church roof.
- **Vestry roof.** We have a large project underway to replace the vestry roof. This has been an ongoing problem for many years and a solution has now been found. This work will take place Autumn or Spring of next year.
- **Church lighting.** The requirements to change to LED lighting is proving difficult as our dimming system is old and is not able to deal with LED bulbs satisfactorily. More work will be required on the system in the future,

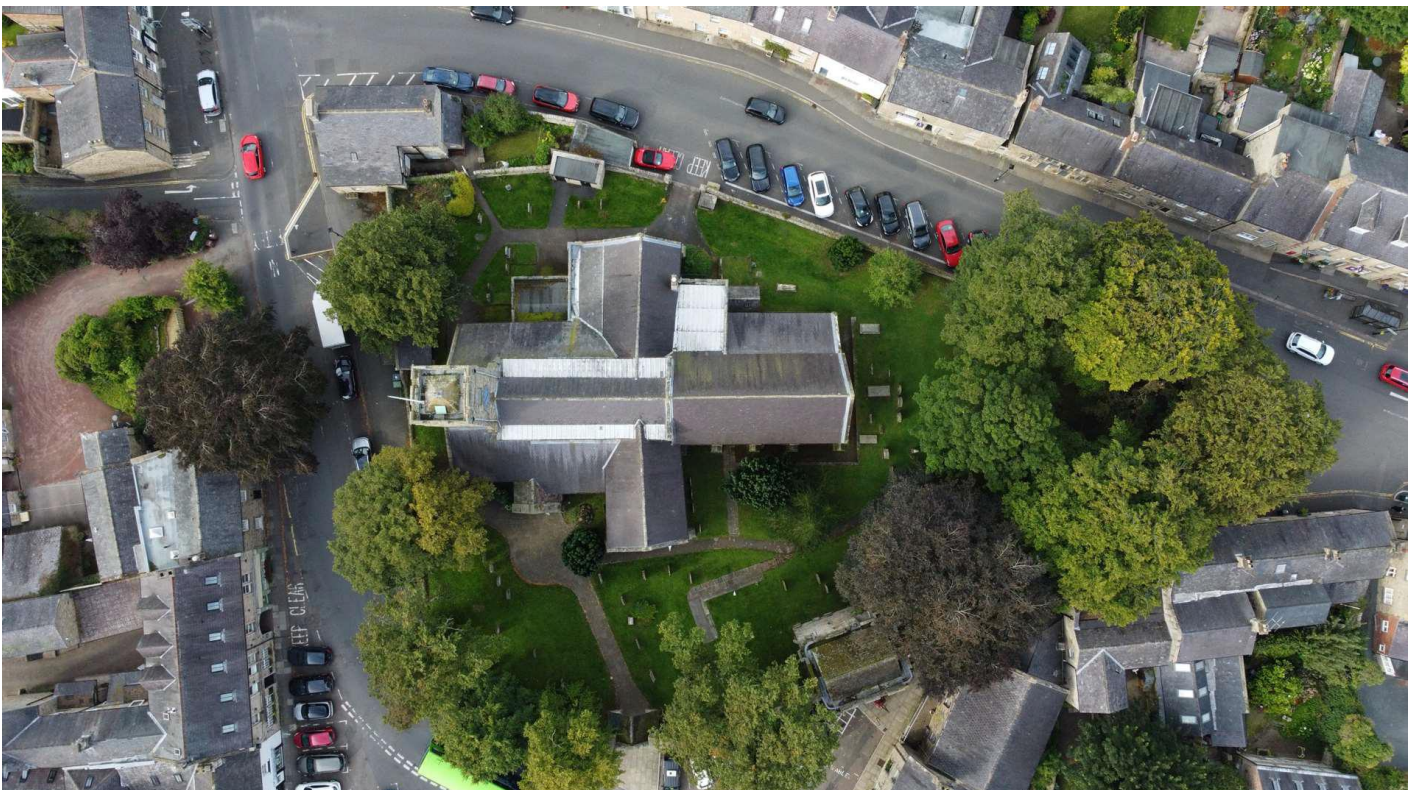
- **Cottage.** During 2024, a significant amount of our time was directed towards the reconfiguration of the cottage kitchen. The project ran from May to September and involved among other things addressing the serious damp problem which had historically plagued the kitchen. The net result we think is a much improved and more functional space which has held up well to the periodic challenges of Church catering.
- **Churchyard and garden.** We have a good working relationship with the Parish Council, which has responsibility for the churchyard, including grass cutting and safety of footpaths and trees. In April 2025, a volunteer working party was organised to do our regular spring tidy-up. Thank you to all who came on the day and who work in the churchyard at other times throughout the year.
- **Tuning.** The organ is tuned 3 times a year. The church piano is tuned at least twice a year, often arranged and funded by musicians hiring the church for performances. The cottage piano is tuned once a year.
- **Architects** The appointment of Neil Turner of Howard Litchfield as architectural advisor to the PCC has also been a significant step forward. We have consulted Mr Turner on two significant projects which are underway, specifically, addressing the damp issue in the ground floor cottage meeting room and the repair of the vestry roof. The vestry roof repair is a complicated process which will require Diocesan consent during 2025.
- **1350th anniversary project.** Mr Turner is also providing professional advice to the PCC as we further develop and scope out the feasibility of the Lady Chapel project. Work is progressing on this proposed project to enhance St Andrew's Lady Chapel, as part of our 1350<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations.
- **Newton churchyard.** A faculty has been granted to convert a section of the churchyard into a memorial garden for interment of ashes. We are now in the process of closing the churchyard (which now has no vacant burial plots) meaning that its maintenance will become the responsibility of the local authority.
- **Utilities: contract renewals.** The cottage gas contract was renewed in May 2024 and St Andrew's in March 2025 (for 2 years)
- **Health & Safety.** Review of our fire safety risk assessments is ongoing. Event risk assessments are carried out for all new events.
- **Security Review.** We regularly monitor our security arrangements. A new cottage door meant that the number of keys for the cottage was greatly reduced on the advice of the insurance company. If you have any church key and are no longer in the role for which it was issued, please return it to the Parish Administrator.



There are many other routine tasks which we attend to facilitate the smooth running of the church and to assist the ministry team in their work. These include liaising with local tradesmen involved in electrical work, joinery, painting, boiler maintenance, gutters and drains, roof repairs and more.

We would like to mention Sue Graves for all her efforts to co-ordinate the team of welcomers for the Sunday 10.00am service and for the installation of the many banners that feature on the frame outside the Church throughout the year. There are also many others involved in a variety of rotas that operate through the year to whom we also wish to express our thanks for their invaluable support. We are always looking for more volunteers to take on a range of tasks or responsibilities; if you could offer some help, please speak to the churchwardens.

Finally on behalf of the congregation, we wish to express our gratitude to the ministry team, for their considerable pastoral activity in the Church and in the village and for their many unheralded acts of kindness and care towards those in need.



Comments written in the Visitors Book at Halton, more than 60 this year, tell the story. Visitors are attracted from far and wide, from all over the country and indeed the world. Finding the church open, they feel welcomed and warm to their surroundings. Looking both inside and outside the church building, they give expression to the beauty of the place and its peacefulness. A place at once of inspiration and consolation. A place of spirituality.

Over this past year there has continued to be a celebration of Holy Communion on the first Sunday of each month and on Christmas Day (and it would be Easter Day too but Easter has not fallen during this calendar year). Canon David Kennedy, the Rev'd Linda Hunter, the Rev'd Phil Smith and Canon Michael Thompson and, until he moved to Ashington, the Rev'd Sam Lohead have all conducted services and preached. Regular attendance is 12-15 and there were 53 at Christmas including 10 children. The St Andrew's choir sang Choral Evensong in June to coincide with the garden opening at Halton Castle and Evening Prayer was said in July. And there were two weddings.

In April, a significant programme of small works was completed at Halton in response to the issues raised in the most recent Quinquennial Report

Halton is supported by a dedicated congregation. All contribute to its continuity. In particular, we are truly grateful to the clergy who give their valuable time to minister to us; the team who provide the flowers produce magnificent displays not just for services but all the time, the church being permanently open; the Blckett family generously carry out essential work in the general maintenance of the church building and the graveyard; and behind the scenes the church wardens ensure our proper governance. Most sincerely we thank all of them and all other contributors.





# SAFEGUARDING

[www.churchofengland.org/more/safeguarding](http://www.churchofengland.org/more/safeguarding) for further information



**Parish Safeguarding Officer: Mandy Norton**

**Tel: 07831 136505**

**Safer Recruitment Officer: Richard Adams**

**Tel: 01434 634869**

**Asst PSO (Admin): Linda E Hunter**

**Tel: 01434 633742**

*'The Church of England is committed to the safeguarding, care and nurture of everyone within the church community so that all can flourish in faith and know the love of God.'* Here in St. Andrew's and Halton we need to remember that we are all responsible for keeping each other safe. Mandy is always available to listen if you have any safeguarding concerns. She can also point you in right direction if you need any information or further support. Richard looks after the recruitment paperwork in particular the Volunteer forms and on-line DBS checks, new and renewals.

Over the last year we have continued using the **National Church Dashboard** and the **Safeguarding Hub** in order to keep up to date with all that we need to do to ensure that our churches are safe places.

**Dashboard:** We have consistently been at level 3 (highest level!) Safer recruitment is really important as we ensure that we recruit to roles safely and those who work with children or vulnerable adults have all the appropriate checks. All those involved in roles which require Safeguarding training have participated in the appropriate course for their role - Basic Awareness, Foundation or Leadership. In addition, some people have received training in Domestic Violence Awareness and Safer Recruiting. Basic Awareness training is completed on line and anyone who wants to know more about Safeguarding can go on the Church of England website and register to complete this training.

**Safeguarding Hub:** We are able to keep track of all the training required for specific roles and DBS renewal date. In addition, we are reminded when renewals are required.

Safeguarding is on the agenda of every PCC meeting and all PCC members are kept up to date with current information. All policies and procedures are revised, renewed and approved annually at the November PCC meeting. Copies of our booklet are available at the back of church, please do take a copy.

Remember if you have any concerns please speak to Mandy or one of the clergy, or Jill Thirlaway -

**Email: [j.thirlaway@newcastle.anglican.org](mailto:j.thirlaway@newcastle.anglican.org) Mobile: 07738415238**

## CELEBRATING 1350 YEARS OF FAITH, HERITAGE AND COMMUNITY

**Rev'd Linda Hunter**

Although David has acknowledged the 1350 anniversary in his report, it felt only right to give this milestone the dedicated attention it deserves in our Annual Report.

The year began with great enthusiasm as we launched our commemorative events during the Opening Weekend. David's inspiring talk on St. Wilfrid provided historical insight into our spiritual heritage. Afternoon tea was enjoyed by all, with a delightful cake made by Elaine Bolam and a celebratory glass of bubbly marking the occasion. The day closed with a reflective and beautifully observed Evening Prayer, evoking the monastic tradition of Wilfrid's time. On the Sunday, we were honoured to welcome Bishop Helen-Ann, who led a special Service of Thanksgiving. This was followed by a 'lunch in a box,' allowing the congregation to share fellowship over a meal.

As we mark 1350 years of Christian worship in Corbridge, heritage has become a central theme of our year. We have already hosted three of six planned heritage talks, which have been both informative and well-attended:

- David Waugh, local historian
- Frances McIntosh, English Heritage Curator for Hadrian's Wall and the North East
- Dr. David Petts, Associate Professor of Archaeology, Durham University

These talks have enriched our understanding of the region's religious and cultural legacy.

Our monthly themed displays continue to draw in a wide audience, from local residents to tourists exploring the area. Each display offers a fresh perspective on an aspect of our shared history:

- **November** Remembrance
- **January** Shops of Corbridge
- **February** Choir and Organ
- **April** Vicars of Corbridge
- **May** Josephine Butler

Our July display will feature weddings so if you were married in St. Andrew's and have a photograph we would love to borrow it. These exhibitions have not only educated but also inspired conversations and personal reflections among our visitors. Thank you to Simon Hunter and Steve Betts, from Corbridge Heritage Centre, who have put these displays together.

Our 2024 Tree Festival was truly the best ever. In celebration of the 1350th anniversary, we featured 135 beautifully decorated trees, each one a reflection of the creativity and commitment of those who took part. Everyone went the extra mile, making it an unforgettable visual experience.

Adding to the atmosphere, singers sang 135 different carols throughout the festival — an extraordinary musical achievement that brought joy and a festive spirit to all who attended.

Music has played a central role in our celebrations this year. We've hosted a wide **range of concerts** in church, our Spring Music organ recitals have also continued to inspire us.

The building is a living place of Christian worship and service today. The interpretation boards and the Spiritual prayer guide have been a real success – if you haven't looked at them, please do take the time to do so.

To mark this very special year, we are delighted to offer limited-edition 1350 merchandise. This includes a beautiful mug and a Christmas tree bauble, both featuring a unique design created especially for us by local artist Alex Clark. These items can be purchased during the forthcoming Flower Festival, or ordered in advance and collected from the church office. We are incredibly grateful to Alex for generously contributing her artwork to help us commemorate this historic milestone.

The next few months promise to be just as busy, with a variety of exhibitions, concerts, activities and a magnificent Flower Festival planned that continue to celebrate our heritage and engage with our community.



## **MISSION AND MINISTRY**

### **MESSY CHURCH**

**Louise Stubbs**

Messy Church is now in its fifteenth year and once again we are celebrating this annual achievement. The Messy Church banner remains in a prominent position in the Church grounds and is a timely reminder for our regular, and any visiting families. It is very well publicised. Flyers are distributed in school, displayed on the Church noticeboard, the website and the Church Facebook page. The flyers are designed and produced by Max Philbrick. Our team would welcome anyone who may be interested, to come along and join in with the endless fun we aim to provide, as well as the opportunity to share the Christian Gospel.

Our team have regular planning /review meetings which are essential, as we are constantly considering ways to improve the Messy Church format. The ministry team continue to be fully involved in Messy Church. Revd. Linda Hunter leads the team and we are grateful for her support and encouragement.

The Messy Church format has seen some changes. From June 2024 the timing of Messy Church changed from 3-4 pm to 4-5pm. Currently, this has not made a significant difference to attendance which continues to vary, with, at times, numbers being very low. A new name was considered but it was decided to retain 'Messy Church'.

The afternoon commences with a video or short talk which is used to introduce the story/theme for the day. Max Philbrick is relied upon to deliver the technology using the laptop and screen. A member of the team tells the story. Alternatively a game is played (related to the theme) where we can encourage everyone to participate. Several table top activities, planned and resourced by the team are also provided. The team have a wealth of resources to use, which are stored in the Church cottage. Families have freedom of choice for the activities and any items made go home!. The afternoon concludes with a recap of the story, songs and prayers. We then come together for a much-anticipated tea! We are grateful to Janet Morrison for her continued enthusiasm and baking skills. The teas are thoroughly enjoyed by everyone (especially the sausage rolls!).

The themes we have addressed in this period have included;

Good Friday-Easter Journey, The Lost Son who came back home, Pentecost, From Saul to Paul, Daniel and the lions, The Olympics, Creation-God makes things, Moses, David the shepherd boy, The Wise Men, Feeding of the 5,000, Storm on the lake.

All the team would like to thank Charlotte Paton who joined us in 2023. Charlotte was an enthusiastic and valued member of our team. We send our best wishes for her forthcoming marriage and move to Scotland.

As always our thoughts and prayers remain with all our Messy Church Families, the team and everyone who contributes in any way.

The Take 5 Committee is chaired by Malcolm Warin and the members are: Monica Philbrick, Jennifer Wright, Fiona Warin, David Kennedy, Richard Adams and Max Philbrick.

We meet regularly to discuss updates and issues surrounding the individuals and organisations we support, and related concerns re how best to share the money allocated.

We have continued to support A Rocha, GAP, The Byker Project (MINE), The Pearts working in Bolivia with CMS and Getachew and Getashign Yohannes who work with Ethiopia Wycliffe Bible Translators.

During the year we have discussed a rebranding of Take 5 and are due to relaunch as ConneXions in the Autumn. We have identified our aims and objectives. Next year we will seek to push forward in communicating our work more effectively to the St Andrew's congregation.

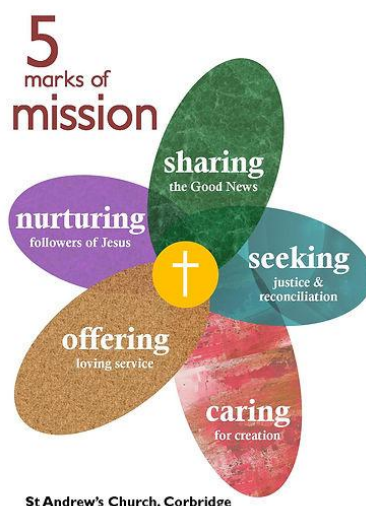
### Distribution of funds for 2024

These are Take 5's proposals for giving for 2024:

|                     |             |
|---------------------|-------------|
| Arocha              | £580        |
| Getachew and Pearts | £2,360 each |
| GAP                 | £1,360      |
| MINE                | £1,040      |

Slight increase for GAP to help with heating bills, and for funding people involved in mission i.e. Getachew & Pearts.

Slight increase for GAP to help with heating bills, and for funding people involved in mission i.e. Getachew & Pearts.



At the heart of our life together as the body of Christ is the call to love one another, bear each other's burdens, and extend the compassion of Jesus to those in need. Supporting one another—both within the church family and in the wider community—is not simply something we do; it is a reflection of our identity as followers of Christ.

Our Pastoral Lead Team—Jennifer Wright, Mandy Norton, Mike Bewick, and myself—meets to prayerfully discern how we can further develop and extend the care we offer. We are committed to ensuring that support is readily available for anyone who asks.

One new initiative currently being developed is a six-week bereavement support course, led by Mandy, a trained counsellor. This course is designed to offer compassionate care and space for healing, no matter where someone finds themselves on the journey of grief. Mike will be assisting Mandy in this ministry. If you—or someone you know—might benefit from this support, please do not hesitate to contact Mandy at 07831 136505.

In addition, we are exploring opportunities for Dementia Awareness Training, seeking to equip us to respond more effectively to those living with dementia and their families.

### **Pastoral Visitors Ministry**

We have a dedicated team of pastoral visitors who have been safely recruited and trained to offer regular or occasional visits. This ministry is a tangible expression of Christ's love, bringing encouragement, prayer, and presence to those who may feel isolated or in need of connection. If you or someone you know would appreciate a visit, please contact Linda to arrange this. Likewise, if you feel a call to be part of this ministry and become a pastoral visitor, we would love to hear from you.

### **RESIDENTIAL HOMES**

We have 3 teams of people who lead monthly worship in the Residential Homes.

**Abbeyfield House: Diane Wylie and Maurice Holmes.** Maurice Holmes and I visit Abbeyfield on the first Wednesday of the month to give a short Service of the Word. We begin and end with a hymn. These are ones which match the theme and Bible reading and are chosen as known to the residents. Maurice gives a short talk based on the reading. We have a conversation time afterwards which the residents enjoy and contribute. This is special and valuable to them.

**Burn Brae Lodge: Jennifer Wright and Monica Philbrick.** A small team continue to hold a simple service at Burn Brae Lodge care home every month. We take inspiration from Caroline George's book called "Living Liturgies" and continue to use an interactive format which involves the residents as much as possible. At Christmas several members from St Andrew's came with us to help retell



the Christmas story and also to boost the singing. In addition to the monthly service at Easter we offered Holy Communion to those residents who wanted it.

**Charlotte Straker House: Bob and Jo Eldridge.** We attend Charlotte Straker Care Home once a month on the first Monday in the month. We begin with some Christian music and a welcome as the people arrive. Service sheets and hymn sheets are handed out, we begin with a well-known hymn followed by a scripture reading and a short talk covering a topical theme for that day. We try to encourage participation and also giving opportunity for sharing of past memories and experiences. Prayers are included within the service sheet followed by a final hymn. Jo follows on from the service with a time of communion for those who choose to stay. We find we generally have around 9 people attending regularly. Jo will also take communion to those who prefer to stay in their rooms or are unable to physically come to the service.

Mike Bewick and Alice Stephenson step in to help when needed.

## HOME COMMUNION

A team of people: Jennifer Wright, Liz Buckley, Mike Bewick, Jo Eldridge, and Diane Wylie are authorised to take Communion to people in their own homes, this is a great support to David and Linda who are also part of this team. We have currently 6 people on our list receiving home communion but we could easily visit more housebound people if they would like to receive communion in their own home.



## TEA AND CHAT

**Mike Bewick**

Tea and Chat has been running at The Community Hub for just over 2 years. The numbers have continued grow with regularly at least 35 people coming along at any one time, (we have on occasions had 42 people) to enjoy fellowship with both friends old and new. This happens twice a month on the 2nd and 4th Wednesday. We also have visitors from the various care homes, with Burn Brae Lodge expressing interest to bring people down. This initiative started by Linda is a great success in bringing people together people, those of different faiths and none. A huge Thank You to

Ann Duncan who cooks all the cakes, organises the other volunteers in the kitchen and serving customers. Thanks to those who help Alice, Ellie, Janice, Mike, Daphne, Margaret, Dorothy and those who help on an ad hoc basis. Linda, Alice and Mike offer lifts to those less able to come on their own. Looking forward to serving more people in 2025. Do come along and visit us in the Community Hub.

## ECO CHURCH

**Richard Adams**

Although the temperature of the planet continues to increase towards an unsustainable level the environmental actions at St. Andrew's reduced in temperature compared with 2024. However, opportunities exist and these will be the focus of efforts in the coming year by the Eco church group\*. We are conscious that God formed the earth in beauty and breathed life into all that is and it is our responsibility to cherish this, live sustainably, act with compassion and justice and honour the earth as the common home of humanity.

**C of E Net Zero by 2030:** This target requires us to minimise our use of fossil fuels (in our case mainly gas) and switch to a supplier of electricity from renewable sources. We will need to offset most of the carbon produced by our energy use through an effective carbon sequestration project and a report has been prepared to this effect.

**Eco Church Award:** We have achieved the bronze award and are close to achieving silver but need to make further progress, particularly with land and buildings. Nearly 3,000 Church of England congregations participate in this programme creating a stimulating and imaginative range of initiative which we can benefit from.

**Wildlife Survey:** The Northumberland Wildlife Trust produced for us a detailed, 21page survey of the churchyard. Apart from confirming our place as the dead centre of the village it outlined a number of recommendations for action.

**\*Congregational engagement:** The Eco Church group would like to welcome new members so if you have an interest in environmental issues or would like to learn more please get in touch with me at [razdax@outlook.com](mailto:razdax@outlook.com) – I can also send you a copy of the churchyard survey.



Your church caring for God's Earth



## **BOOK CLUB**

**Jennifer Wright**

This small group meet most weeks. We have just completed reading “Lighting the Beacons” by The Rt Revd Dr Jill Duff, Bishop of Lancaster. We also use a book by Angela Ashwin called “A Book of a Thousand Prayers.” This book has some beautiful written prayers for all occasions. We also continued to study some of the of the Old Testament prophets.

## **HOME GROUP**

**Anne King-Lewis, Max Philbrick**

The Home group meets every Thursday at the home of Max and Monica. We normally study a Bible passage or Biblical theme with someone leading each week. There is open and free discussion. All are welcome but it would be helpful if Max and Monica knew you were coming so they could arrange an appropriate number of seats. For any queries, please get in touch with Max, Paul or Anne.

## **PRAYER GROUP**

**Jennifer Wright**

We meet every week in church, we pray for current issues relevant to our lives here in Corbridge as well as those relating to the country and the rest of the world. We pray for the ministry team and all of the groups working within our church.

Every week we hold before God in prayer those people who have left prayer requests on the prayer board. On one occasion recently it was lovely to hear appreciation for our prayers from someone who had been given the “all clear” following treatment for cancer.

The church prayer diary is available on the prayer table.



This last year seems to have passed more quickly than ever – probably because we are always planning at least four weeks ahead. In September we launched the 1350 Celebrations with a rousing rendition of Parry: I Was Glad, and Bullock: Give us the Wings of Faith, with an augmented choir and Alastair Lord on trumpet. The service began with a setting of the Kyrie Eleison by Hildegard Bingham, a plainsong chant recalling the Foundation of St Andrew's as a monastic church.

This was followed by the Remembrance Service featuring two choral works: For the Fallen by Mark Blatchly, and In Paradisum by the Latvian composer Rihards Dubra. And then we were immersed in music for Advent and Christmas featuring the two highpoints for the choir: the Advent Procession and the traditional Carol Service. The latter service featured our upper voices singing The Holy Boy by John Ireland, of particular poignancy as this was a favourite piece by our former organist John Ross.

The choir practices leading up to Easter are demanding and intensive. By the end of the Easter Day service the choir will have sung 14 individual pieces of music, all of which need to be learnt and rehearsed. We particularly enjoyed the opportunity to sing a Lenten Choral Evensong on Palm Sunday Evening, including a Fauxbourdon Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis by Phillip Moore, a setting of versicles and responses by Bernard Rose, and the anthem Save us O Lord by Edward Bairstow. Each of these pieces is much more challenging than what you might expect to hear from a village Parish Church Choir, and our St Andrew's choir sung superbly, augmented by a few guest singers, including a welcome return visit by ex-member Roger Southern. With the change in the provision of services at St Andrew's (and the shortage of male singers) we do not often get an opportunity to sing Evensong – in fact the only other time this last year was in the intimate setting of Halton Church back in June, at the end of their open day.

Throughout the year the choir has been in good voice enjoying a rich and varied repertoire of music spanning the 16<sup>th</sup> century to contemporary composers. Many of you may not be aware of how much care and thought goes into the selection of the organ and choral music sung and played every Sunday and in the additional services. For example: during Lent (and Advent) our organist John Roper plays nothing but the music of the great J S Bach and, as part of his Lenten discipline, always learns something new (to him, at least) to play publicly for the first time. A number of pieces have been played reflecting the Lent to Palm Sunday season, and (particularly for Bach aficionados) the list of pieces includes:

Erbarm dich mein, oh Herre Gott BWV 721

Aus tiefer Not schrei ich zu die BWV 687

Fantasia and Imitation BWV 563

Ich ruf zu dir BWV 639

Fugue in C minor BWV 575

Pastorale in F major, first 2 movements BWV 590

Liebster Jesu wir sind hier BWV 731

Magnificat (fugato) BWV 733

Fantasia super Valet will ich dir geben BWV 735

Herzlich tut mich verlangen BWV 727

O Mensch, Bewien Dien' Sunde gross BWV 622

John adds, "the main 'project' this Lent has been to bring to performance Bach 'Dorian' Toccata in D minor BWV 538, but we ran out of services. This piece will now be played on Low Sunday."

St Andrews enjoys the luxury of two organists, John Roper and Marc Bryant. Week after week they patiently support the choir though rehearsals, as well as delighting congregations with their musicianship, both during services and summer organ recitals.

Each choir member deserves our thanks for their hard work and dedication. Several individuals perform additional duties: Nicki Swart provides secretarial support, Liz Collins looks after the robes, and Jen Lansberry and Jayne Cook keep the music library in order. I repeat what I said in last year's report: the choir is continually encouraged by David Kennedy who despite the claims on his time joins us whenever he can. We greatly appreciate his enthusiasm and support and not least, his bass voice. To all: my personal gratitude.



## **WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP**

**The Rev'd Linda E. Hunter**

**Treasurer:** Sheila Neilson

**Social Secretary:** Claire Hay

**Minute Secretary:** Rosemary Rayfield **Programme Secretaries:** Liz Buckley & Yvonne Piper

**Committee Members:** Janet Kennedy, Elsie Fletcher (until April 2025) Janice McLean, Daphne Anderson (until April 2024)

We have been meeting in the Community Hub now for over a year and generally speaking apart from the odd hiccup it has been a good space to meet. This last year has been good year for WF, we have 48 members. However, sadly Daphne Anderson died suddenly this year, we do miss her ideas and wisdom at the committee meetings as much as her great knowledge of Corbridge and the many families she knew. Elsie Fletcher a member of our committee too, who had a very good sense of humour and a marvellous singing voice died in April this year. Evelyn Charlton a past member died this year too.

After our AGM last year, we began our programme in **February with Margaret Bozac** who gave a fascinating talk about the The Lit & Phil in Newcastle which was founded in 1793 and has been in the centre of Newcastle upon Tyne since 1825. It houses a library of both historic as well as contemporary books and music. The building is used for a wide range of public such as talks, concerts, readings, discussions and book launches.

In March our **Lent Reflection** took the form of a Journey through Holy Week with readings, hymns and prayers. Members of the group took part reading and placing objects on the table.

We had a change of programme when we welcomed **Sharon Brown from the Northumberland Domestic Abuse Service**

In May **Jane Dixon, from the Soroptimists**, came to talk about "Life in May" and was an excellent speaker, full of life, humour and able to relate her thoughts to biblical quotations.

This year for our **summer event in June we decided to have a Strawberry tea with entertainment** in the hub. We had a lovely afternoon, chatting, enjoying the scones, strawberries and bubbly and listening to the music of Hextra. It was quite hard work for the committee and we appreciated the work they all put into making it a very successful afternoon.

We began again in **September** after our Summer break, with a wonderful talk and display of **photography by Phil Benson**. He had lots of really nice coasters, and pictures for sale



We had a fascinating afternoon in **October when Dr Christopher Cunningham** shared with us his experiences of working in remote healthcare settings, it was really humbling to see the length people would go to, to receive vaccinations and healthcare treatment. Something we all take for granted.

**November** was the ideal time to have **members of Hexham Flower Club** to share with us some ideas for Christmas table decorations and wreaths. Even better they were raffled off for members to win.

We rounded the year off with our **Advent reflection**, the theme this year was **Waiting** this was an opportunity for us to have some quiet reflective time amidst that Christmas hustle and bustle. Of course, we finished off the afternoon with more mince pies and tea.

If you would like to try out Women's Fellowship, do come along you would be most welcome. We usually meet on the last Monday of the month in the Community Hub at 2.00pm.



## OUTREACH

### ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION

Simon Hunter

[www.corbridgechurch.org.uk](http://www.corbridgechurch.org.uk)

Since St Andrew's Church website was redesigned so that it could be used with ease on Smart phones, Mobile devices, and Desktop computers, the number of pages viewed on the website has increased to 37,548 (1<sup>st</sup> April 2024 – 1<sup>st</sup> April 2025) with about 88% of those views being returning visitors. This shows how St Andrew's Website is **a very effective** way to get information across to the congregation and the wider community of Corbridge and beyond. The **THIS WEEK** page is the most popular because of its weekly information. The graph below shows the number of direct visitors to the **THIS WEEK** page each week. (Jan 2025 – March 2025)



If you haven't already bookmarked the **THIS WEEK** page – please do so because all the weekly information is in one place on this page: [www.corbridgechurch.org.uk/this-week](http://www.corbridgechurch.org.uk/this-week)

The website pages which are of interest to the wider community of Corbridge and beyond, as well as the congregation, receive the largest number of unique visitors. These are the **Christmas Tree Festival** page, **Events** page, **Musical Events** page, **1350** pages.

A new set of web pages were added this year for 1350<sup>th</sup> Anniversary all with 1350 logos.



We would welcome contributions for the Events section which can be emailed to [corbridgechurchwebsite@btinternet.com](mailto:corbridgechurchwebsite@btinternet.com) (for events section send information at least 2 weeks before the event)

**Weekly Email:** Each week we have over 250 households receiving the St Andrew's church weekly email. This keeps readers up to date with information for the forthcoming week and it also provides a link to the **THIS WEEK** page on the Church website which gives access to the bulletin, reflection, orders of services and other relevant information. This information can also be accessed via the Church website directly.

### **Social Media**

- Facebook: We have three Facebook pages: Corbridge Church, Corbridge Church Families and St Andrew's Church Christmas Tree Festival.
- X (twitter) account: Corbridge Church tweets@CorbridgeChurc1

*(Paper copies of Bulletin and Booklets are available in church to members of the congregation who don't have access to the internet)*

## **DEANERY SYNOD**

**Alice Stephenson**

The Deanery Synod have only met twice since our last AGM.

The first at Prudhoe in July the guest speaker was John Canessa who gave a very informative talk about the Lantern Initiative which aims are to welcome, inspiring worship and empowering worth. This for people who are socially isolated, for a variety of reasons included the homeless, recovering addicts and those mentally challenged. There are several groups which can radically change people's lives. People find an open and understandably space where they are heard and understood which can aid the beginning or continuing of their journey to hear and see God while their physical and individual needs can also be addressed.

During the finance talk we were told that our parish share was on target to be achieved. Next year's target will a real challenge to achieve.

We met at Stocksfield in November. Having discussed the resignation of the Archbishop of Canterbury where David Kennedy led us in prayer, we moved on to Diana Johnson's report on 'Seeking, Sharing, and Sending'. The 'Year of Seeking' invites us to pray and discern together towards a deeper understanding of God.

The Very Revd. Lee Batson, Dean of the Cathedral, who previously was a Parish priest, talked about the role of the Cathedral and how it can link up with the Parishes and their need to be able to identify with the Cathedral. The Cathedral has around 200,000 visitors a year.

The number of Stipendiary clergy in the diocese has been cut to 80, this will not affect our Deanery as we are already at our required 5.3. This could change if the Diocese does not receive as much of the Parish share it has asked for. As a Deanery we were on target to reach our contri

## EVENTS & FUNDRAISING

### MUSICAL EVENTS

Jean Wilks and Revd Linda E. Hunter

A small team comprises ourselves, Marc Bryant, Mary Oswell, Coleen Petrie, Nicki Swart, and Jenny Watson Sadly, Gail Williams one of our members died this year we do miss her input and wisdom to our meetings. We have welcomed Jayne Cook onto the team. The team meet regularly to plan the musical events for St Andrew's, this year has been a particularly good year for concerts. St Andrew's is a wonderful venue so musicians love performing here, and we love hosting and working with them. Some hire the building and manage the concert themselves, and some work jointly with us so that some or all of the profits come to St Andrews. We especially enjoy hosting our seasons of Friday lunchtime music, when we have had a wide range of performers.

These were the concerts we hosted in **April 2024 – April 2025**

|   |   |
|---|---|
| 18 <sup>th</sup> April                    | Eden Stell Guitar Concert   |
| 27 <sup>th</sup> April                    | Ryton Choral Society  |
| 8 <sup>th</sup> June                      | Madness and Melancholy organised by John Green in conjunction with St Andrew's  |
| 28 <sup>th</sup> June                     | Lunchtime concert: Corbridge First School Choir   |
| 29 <sup>th</sup> June                     | John Ross Memorial Concert  |
| 6 <sup>th</sup> July                      | Ryton Choral Society  |
| 25 <sup>th</sup> to 28 <sup>th</sup> July | Chamber Music Festival  |
| August/Sept                               | Friday lunchtime music, incl. Warren Smith (organist), Marygate Singers, Michael (organ)& Jean (alto) Grave, Cristo Harijan (pianist) Deborah Thorne (cellist) & John Green (harpsichord) Nicki Billington (pianist,) Sarah Roberts (violinist) Sarah Robinson (pianist) and Deborah Thorne (cellist) the St Andrew's organists |
| 5 <sup>th</sup> October                   | Noxwode organised by John Green in conjunction with St Andrew's   |
| 19 <sup>th</sup> October                  | Choral concert for Tynedale Hospice at Home   |
| 2 <sup>nd</sup> November                  | Antiphon  |
| 9 <sup>th</sup> November                  | Orpheus   |

### 2025

|                        |                                |
|------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 12 <sup>th</sup> March | Chamber Music Festival Concert |
| 23 <sup>rd</sup> March | St John Passion                |
| 29 <sup>th</sup> March | Ryton Choral Society           |
| 5 <sup>th</sup> April  | Antiphon                       |



## OTHER EVENTS

12<sup>th</sup> June Richard Coles – Forum Books

20<sup>th</sup> – 21<sup>st</sup> June Textile and Art Exhibition in conjunction with the Sewing Bee

28<sup>th</sup> Nov to 3<sup>rd</sup> Dec Christmas Tree Festival with 135 trees and 135 carols sung

Feb 13<sup>th</sup> Pancakes and Quiz evening, organised by Pauline and Susan Bennett.

1<sup>st</sup> March Mad March Market

May 5<sup>th</sup> Village Bake-off

A huge thank you to the team and of course to all who support all our events in St. Andrew's.

## FUNDRAISING:

Thanks to Suzette and Warwick Milne for arranging the Grand Draw which brought in over £1,000.

If you would like to be involved in helping with any of our events, or have some suggestions of others that we may have, do let us know.

The 'lifters and shifters' for the Christmas Tree Festival



**Progress**

I am pleased to report that the Flower Arranging Team has increased further this year and therefore we have started a rota such that our efforts can be spread more evenly across the enlarged team.

**The Coming Year**

We have been busy organizing the exhibits for the 1350 Flower Festival which will be in June 2025.

Many of our Flower Team are taking part in the festival along with members of various flower clubs, the Women's Institute together with other churches, Hexham Abbey and Minsteracres, etc.

We are looking forward to the event with great enthusiasm and we hope that it will be very successful.

**Continued Development**

We are always keen to welcome new members to our Flower Arranging Team and so we invite anyone interested to contact Ann Prudhoe on mobile 07483 855385 or home 01434 632971.

**Finally**

We wish to sincerely thank all those people who have donated money for flowers during the year.





At Corbridge Church of England First School, we have the Christian values of respect, forgiveness, truth, thankfulness and kindness guiding us in all we do, helping us to be courageous advocates who make a difference in our local community and the wider world.

‘Let us love, not in word or speech, but in truth and action.’ 1 John 3:18

Through high expectations and encouragement, we empower our children to believe in themselves and be the best they can be!

### **School Information**

Number of children on roll: 140    % SEND pupils: 20% (up from 14.8%)

Age range of pupils: 3-9 years    % of disadvantaged pupils: 10.7%

### **Key Developments (Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Education)**

The whole school ethos, and promotion of personal development, are enhanced through collective worship, RE, the work of the Buddies, the work of the School Council, the Eco-Council, the Diversity Council and Reading Ambassadors. Picture News is used in whole school worship to discuss current affairs; pupils can access the content at a suitable level. The use of Picture News encourages discussion and debate through links to current affairs. Pupils are encouraged to talk about things happening in the world right now, becoming courageous advocates for change.

Staff look at how the Bible can be linked to Picture News. The worship schedule is on the school website so that parents can use links from Picture News at home and know what has been discussed in school. Children have accessed further, special assemblies including a live Black History Month assembly, a presentation on anxiety delivered by the Be You Team, weekly worship delivered by the Ministry Team from St. Andrew's and a suite of assemblies on gender stereotyping and respect, delivered by the Headteacher.

Rev. Linda has established a team of worship leaders at school who write and deliver prayers for the whole school and during church services.

Reading Ambassadors and a Diversity Council have been established at both schools.



The PSHE enrichment calendar has been updated for the year across the Federation; it includes, for example, Black History Month, Christianity projects, Anti-Bullying Week, STEM, Remembrance Day and World Mental Health Day. There is a strong focus on the purpose of the days and why the school takes part. Loti Nambombe, a public speaker on race, came to speak to both schools about the racist bullying he has experienced throughout his life and the deportation threats he has faced. He led dynamic sessions with all KS1 and 2 children, really helping them to understand what his lived experience has been.

Every day, every class chooses someone to be a special person. The special person hears positive affirmations from their peers and provides their own self-affirmations; some pupils can initially find this difficult to do, however self-esteem is boosted as a result. The work also supports oracy and language development.

The SENDCo works closely with a number of external partners to promote positive emotional wellbeing and mental health in school; she has put in place a range of strategies to support pupils and parents. An action plan details the ongoing work. The SENDCo is a highly skilled practitioner who has a sharp focus on achieving the best outcomes for all pupils. Last year, the school was awarded the bronze award by Carnegie for its mental health work. A parent newsletter focusing on SEMH (following parent SEMH survey) has been created, as well as a dedicated section on the school website. Parent workshops will run this term focusing on the relational approach to behaviour management and helping parents to support the mental wellbeing of their children at home.

### **Extra-curricular provision**

A wide range of lunchtime and after-school clubs are on offer with strong numbers. Provision is always inclusive and funded places are available, so no-one misses out. Attendance is monitored. A proportional representation audit has been completed for both schools to ascertain the number of Pupil Premium and SEND children accessing clubs and whether this is in line with Pupil Premium and SEND percentages in school. Crystal Club has been particularly popular at CFS with pupil voice showing high levels of enjoyment and a positive impact on mental wellbeing. Following a very successful Autumn Term, choir numbers have grown to 45 – almost 1/3 of the school!

### **Special Event and Visits**

- Playground buddy training has taken place;
- The Skipping Ninja came to CFS to put on a show for the whole school and then run skipping workshops for each class. The 5x World Record holder was such an inspiration to the children! At the end of the day, they were able to buy ropes and have been skipping every day since –

especially the boys!

- 'Mini Medics' sessions for all KS1 and 2 children, where they learnt vital lifesaving skills.
- Children at CFS took part in the annual village show. Entries to the children's categories were encouraged by allowing the children to bring them to school to be taken to the show. Our children won a number of prizes and the choir sang at the event. It was a wonderful day!
- M&M Theatre Productions came to school to perform, 'The Secret Garden' for free after a last-minute cancellation.
- The KS2 tag rugby tournament for the Federation of Broomhaugh and Corbridge CofE First Schools took place at Tynedale Rugby Club. This was a great experience for the children as they were able to play at the home of rugby. The club were a wonderful help and ran the tournament brilliantly.
- Year 2 visited the Corbridge Community Hub as part of their local history topic. They learnt so much about the village.
- The school choir performed at St. Andrew's 1350th anniversary celebrations and met Bishop Helen-Ann – it was a wonderful day and an honour to be asked. They also took part in the St. Andrew's Christmas Tree Festival and a combined Federation Mega Choir sang for parents. Both choirs have been invited back to sing again in July.
- The school attended Christmas theatre performances of 'The Night Before Chrismouse' and 'Jack and the Beanstalk' at Queen's Hall, Hexham.
- KS2 children visited the Sikh Gurdwara in Newcastle to see their place of worship and share a meal in the Langar.
- Joe Morris, MP visited school in February to tour with the school councils and see the fantastic work that is being done.
- KS2 children (and some specially selected KS1 children) took part in a football tournament with Sporting Journeys NE Ltd at QEHS. All of the children were a credit to the school and modelled our Christian values of respect and kindness throughout. Huge congratulations to the CFS team who made the final and were narrowly beaten in an exciting showdown with Broomley First School. One of our Year 4 players summed it up brilliantly by saying, "It was one of the best days of my life. My whole team lifted me up!"

## **Rainbow Day 2025**

On Friday 31st January we held our annual Rainbow Day, where we celebrate equality, diversity and inclusion. Everyone agreed it was such a magical day. Seeing the children come together on the playground really did encapsulate the wonder of a rainbow: we are all individually amazing but together we make something extraordinary!

This year we explored gender stereotypes and mental health and wellbeing. Very simply, a gender stereotype is a generalised view or preconception about attributes or characteristics, or the roles that are or ought to be possessed by, or performed by, women and men. The children across school investigated stereotypes by looking at toys and job roles, and evaluating whether they are for girls, boys or both. Our older children investigated further by looking at books, sports and adverts to see whether these stereotypes were reinforced. All of the children agreed that toys, jobs and hobbies are for everyone, regardless of their gender!

Throughout the day, the children took part in different activities and workshops to help them better understand the theme. The Be You team came to lead assemblies across school and workshops with our KS2 children. There were sessions on wellbeing, mindfulness and the Zones of Regulation, as well as friendship-based activities. The children also played 'feelings bingo' and thought about all of the things that make them happy.

A Rainbow Bake Off was held in each school to raise money for our nominated charities: Corbridge Youth Initiative and Henry Dancer Days.



