



The Way



The FREE newspaper of the Church in Cumbria – Winter 2019/20



Programme helps the
leaders of the future
CENTRE PAGES



May you all have a
wonderful Christmas
and Christ-filled 2020!

BIKER DAVE HAS PRAYER ANSWERED

By Dave Roberts

DAVE Flitcroft vividly remembers when his life hit rock bottom.

Slumped in a shop doorway on a cold winter's night in Carlisle, he found himself homeless, jobless and penniless, with no friends or family to turn to.

The former biker gang member had cut ties with all those he had once held dear; everyone, that is, apart from God.

Dave recalls: "I just prayed, though I hadn't prayed for years, and asked 'Please God get me out of this and I will never turn my back on you again'. Within three days I'd got a job and found somewhere to live!"

It was a remarkable turnaround in fortune for the Barrow-born man, one which he firmly believes was a God-given gift. And it was an experience which saw his life change for the better.

■ Former gang member turns his back on drugs and now considers ordination after 'making friends' with God again

Gone were the days of drink and drug-fuelled three-day-long parties which he would attend as a member of the biker gang. Gone too were the casual relationships he entered into with women who were part of the biker scene.

Instead, Dave renewed a commitment to God, having previously walked away from his faith in his early 20s, due to losing his mum to alcoholism.

"After mum passed away, I think I just basically went off the rails," Dave admits. "It was as if I felt boxed into a corner. I'd always been interested in motorbikes and then came across this group of guys, a motorcycle gang.

"At that time I really admired the camaraderie they had, they felt like

family to me. I went through all the initiations to become a member of the gang. I was married at the time but I was totally selfish and so the marriage collapsed. At the time I didn't care, I didn't give a damn about anybody."

For a number of years Dave devoted himself to the biker gang, though deep down he says he knew his life was missing something. He became more and more depressed and his drug-taking increased.

One day in the early 2000s he decided to walk away from it all, eventually finding himself alone in the shop doorway, praying to God.

"The hardest part for me was asking for God's forgiveness," Dave adds. "Of course he's a loving God – I know that

– but at that point I couldn't say I was a Christian. It was as if I was 'making friends' with God again and having to look at myself and all that I'd done wrong to harm that relationship."

His is a faith – once held dear as a child – which has been reignited. The 47 year old is now a member of St James' Whitehaven, which he attends with his new wife Donna and their children, and where he sings in the choir.

He is also exploring the possibility of ordination as well as preparing to become a Franciscan Tertiary, someone who lives out in society but under a form of the Franciscan Rule.

■ Turn to page six to read Dave's full story

INSIDE THIS EDITION



COMMUNITY



Sweaty Church arrives
PAGE 5

WINTER SHELTER

Volunteers step up in time of need



PAGE 10

HILL HAVEN



Oasis for prayerful reflection
PAGE 12

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The Way is the newspaper of the Church in Cumbria. It is produced in partnership between the Church of England Diocese of Carlisle, the Methodist District of Cumbria, the United Reformed Church in Cumbria and Churches Together in Cumbria. Through Churches Together in Cumbria, we ensure coverage of and distribution to the Roman Catholic, Salvation Army, Quakers and independent churches. The editorial team is made up of representatives from across the denominations.

The purpose of *The Way* is to reflect the Church in Cumbria to itself and to our communities more widely.

We do not seek to promote any particular theological viewpoint, but rather aim to stimulate debate by featuring writers from a variety of church traditions and from society more widely.

While we are happy to consider unsolicited submissions, we operate largely on a system of commissions and do not guarantee to publish any materials received.

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The Way
Newspaper of
the Church
in Cumbria

County loses key God for All guide

By Dave Roberts

■ Sarah takes on new URC role

The President of the United Reformed Church (URC) in Cumbria is set to move on to a new church leadership role in Scotland.

The Rev Sarah Moore has ministered in the county since 2012, helping to oversee the countywide introduction of the God for All strategy, alongside other ecumenical leaders.

Sarah said: "I have absolutely loved living and working in Cumbria. I can't quite believe that I shall be leaving; I may not believe it totally until I see the removals truck arrive!

"I have no doubt that I'm called to move on but there's a large part of me that will be sad to go. I really value my time in ministry here, the colleagues I've worked alongside and the friends I have made, both inside and outside the church."

Sarah came to faith through her years as a Girl Guide. Drifting away from church in her teenage years, she eventually joined a local Rangers Guide unit in a south London URC church. It led to her faith being reignited.

"The congregation I was part of was happy to have this mouthy young woman asking questions and were totally supportive of my exploration of ministry," Sarah added. "It's this kind of thoughtful Christianity which has seen me stay within the United Reformed Church."

After A' Levels she studied theology at the Roehampton Institute in London.

"I'm eternally grateful that while there I was able to read the Bible alongside Hindus and Muslims because these people brought with them a different perspective," Sarah explained.



Sarah Moore: 'Though we read the Bible in different ways, we all have the highest respect for God's word'

While at university she applied for a place on the URC's ministry training, eventually spending four years at its Westminster College in Cambridge. She was ordained at 26, and moved into ministry in Darwen, Lancashire, joining an ecumenical partnership of seven churches.

Sarah said: "I was there for seven years and that's where I learned what mission is and how churches could work together."

Sarah's next move saw her come to Cumbria as the URC's Area President. It is within that role that she has been one of the denominational driving forces for the God for All vision and strategy.

"I believe God for All is the only game in town for us as churches in Cumbria," Sarah added. "I cannot see how we can more effectively work together to serve our communities and grow disciples in Christ.

"The partner denominations do complement each other and we have truly learned from one another, just as we have with our companion denominations. Though we may all read the Bible in slightly different ways, we all have the highest respect for God's word."

Sarah will continue to serve the wider Church as a trustee of Churches Together in Britain and Ireland, and as a UK member on the central committee of the World Council of Churches.

In her new role as the URC's transitional champion in Scotland, she takes responsibility for developing new ways of being church and developing mission as well as exploring how churches can work together differently.

Sarah will draw alongside the 44 URC congregations from the Borders up to Orkney, and will be based in Dunblane.

We want your ideas on what happens now

PEOPLE across Cumbria are being encouraged to feed in their thoughts about the God for All vision refresh.

At the beginning of October, an invitation went out from the Bishop of Penrith, the Rt Rev Dr Emma Ineson, for people to engage in 100 Days of Listening.

It follows 100 Days of Prayer, and a set of resources has been created to help the feedback process.

These include an explanatory



note, a PowerPoint workshop template, a vision refresh leaflet, a proposed priorities options template and the opportunity to complete a survey.

Bishop Emma said: "The idea is that groups across Cumbria can come together to talk about the refresh process and what they consider to be the priorities from 2020 to 2025. Of course, the invitation is open to individuals too."

People are asked to identify four top priorities for the vision refresh, along with any gaps they feel there may be.

The resources are available at www.godforall.org.uk.

EVENTS AT CARLISLE CATHEDRAL

DECEMBER

Fri 6 - 7.30pm, Eden Valley Hospice Carol Service. Carols for all with the Cathedral Carlisle Choir. Preacher, the Rev John Bell

Mon 9 - 7pm, University of Cumbria Christmas Celebration

Fri 13 - 7.30pm, Cathedral Choirs Christmas Concert. Tickets (£10 or under-18s free) on sale via www.ticketsource.co.uk/carlisle-cathedral or in person at the gift shop

Mon 16 - 7pm, Trinity School Carol Service

Sun 22 - 3pm, Hurry to Bethlehem: carols for all to sing and enjoy

Mon 23 - 6.30pm, Festival of Readings and Carols with the Cathedral Choir

Tues 24 - 3pm, The Christmas Eve Crib Service with Cantate Children's Choir

Tues 24 - 6.30pm, Festival of Readings and Carols with the Cathedral Choir

Tues 24 - 11.30pm, Christmas Midnight Eucharist with the Consort and Lay Clerks. Preacher, Canon Michael Manley

Wed 25 - 10.30am, Christmas Morning Eucharist. President, the Bishop of Carlisle; preacher, the Dean

JANUARY 2020

Sun 5 - 3pm, Carols for the Feast of Epiphany with the Cathedral Consort

Tues 14 - 7.30pm, Christingle

FEBRUARY

Sun 2 - 3pm, Candlemas Service

Sun 9 - 10.30am, Family-friendly PLUS+ service

Mon 17 to Sat 29 - Exhibition by Carlisle artist Maggie Hall in the south aisle

MARCH

Sat 21 - 7.30pm, Cumbria Rural Choirs in Concert with the British Sinfonietta

APRIL

Sun 5 - 10.30am, Palm Sunday Sung Eucharist with Procession of Palms from St Cuthbert's Church

Sun 5 - 3pm, Passiontide Devotion
Mon 6 - 7.30pm, Holy Week Sung Eucharist

Tuesday 7 - 7.30pm, Holy Week Sung Eucharist

Wed 8 - 7.30pm, Holy Week Sung Eucharist

Thurs 9 - 11am, Chrim Eucharist

Thurs 9 - 7.30pm, The Eucharist of the Lord's Supper, followed by Watch of the Passion

Good Friday 10 - 12 noon, Meditation

Good Friday 10 - 1.30pm, The Good Friday Liturgy

Good Friday 10 - 9pm, The Cross of Lights with music

Easter Eve, Sat 11 - 7.30pm, Easter Vigil and Confirmation

Easter Sunday 12 - 10.30am, Festival Eucharist sung by the Cathedral Choir

Easter Sunday 12 - 3pm, Choral Evensong sung by the Cathedral Choir

GOING UNDERGROUND

■ Service in heart of Lake District fell moves many 'stoic' parishioners to tears

By Dave Roberts

"WHY the heck did we do it?" laughs the Rev Malcolm Stonestreet. "That's a good question."

He refers to ambitious plans which saw 74 parishioners and visitors from Borrowdale and the surrounding area, leave their churches to worship deep in the heart of a Lake District slate mine.

Six months in the planning, Mass in the Mountain saw the congregation members travel up their valley for a service of Holy Communion in a beautiful cavern in Honister Slate Mine.

The service was the idea of Malcom, a retired priest who still officiates in the valley where he has had a home for decades.

"This was an opportunity for us as a congregation to get off our bums and go out into the world," he explains. "The incarnation is about a juxtaposition of the spiritual and holy and the secular and swear. And I can tell you that there would have been a lot of swearing going on in that mine over 400 years!"

"We can become too comfortable in our church buildings and there are times when we have to look elsewhere to find Christ. And, guess what? That's just what happened when we held the service in the mountain, but God's all about surprises, isn't he?"

Parishioners from Holy Trinity, Grange, were joined by some congregation members from Keswick St John and the Rev Charles Hope, Vicar of Keswick St John's with Borrowdale.

Once up at the site, buses transported worshippers to their subterranean place of worship, to join members of the national Gaudeamus Choir who sang a 16th-century French mass.

The Rev Hope, who presided and celebrated during the service, says: "It was a simple service in many ways but one which had tremendous significance. The mountain is such an important focus for those living in the valley so to have the opportunity to come together within it, to worship a creator God and give thanks for all those who have worked its seams over the centuries was profoundly moving."

For Malcolm, the service which was held in September, offered an opportunity for local Christians to gather in a 'thin place', one where only a veil separates earth from heaven.

He adds: "People who live here are pretty stoic, there aren't many tears. But people were crying during the Mass in the Mountain. They felt touched by God in a way that may not have happened before."

"A church building has feelings about it, not least because of the weddings, baptisms and funerals



Going deeper: Scenes from the Mass in the Mountain service at Honister and, bottom right, the Rev Malcolm Stonestreet at home in Borrowdale
MINE PICTURES, FILM ON THE BRAIN; MALCOLM STONESTREET PORTRAIT, DAVE ROBERTS

which have been held in it. Likewise the mine taps into our feelings; it makes us feel vulnerable and closer to God."

It is a service which has also attracted the interest of the national media. Producers from the BBC's *countryfile* have expressed an interest in filming should another service ever be held in the mine.

And other cameras were there to catch the special service, with Malcolm having commissioned a crew from Manchester-based production company Film On The Brain.

He adds: "I'm not sure exactly why I asked the crew to come along but they have caught the essence of the service very well; the intimacy of the mine which mirrors our intimate and personal relationship with God."

■ To watch the film visit <https://vimeo.com/364012092>.

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By The Way

'United we stand'

IT WAS good to hear last Sunday that St John's Newton Arlosh and St Bride's Kirkbride are now part of the Solway Plain Mission Community, incorporating other church communities in and around Silloth and Wigton parish areas. Being part of a wider community has obvious benefits in terms of mutual support – 'better together' or 'united we stand' may be the types of slogan that spring to mind.

Fraser Clark, Parish Magazine, St Bride's Parish Church, Kirkbride, and St John's, Newton Arlosh

ONE of the particularly challenging things about moving into a new group or community is learning people's names. It takes time.

Again, it has been quite a fun challenge as I've gradually put more names to faces as things have progressed here. Getting someone's name right is, I feel, not only polite but is also a form of recognition of how people matter.

Richard Goodfellow, Harraby Viewpoint, Parish Magazine of St Elizabeth's Church, Harraby

LISTENING is something I've trained in; 'active listening' is a pastoral and mediation technique which includes knowing when to offer interventions such as 'reflecting back' what's heard and 'reframing' to remove blaming language or reduce distress.....Listening and hearing are not the same. It takes time, thought and (in this context) prayer to listen, to hear and further to discern God's will for us as Christ's body; the Church.

Lucie Lunn, Church of Low Furness Community Magazine

CHURCH Hall Decoration: The work was done by a small team of volunteers. The ceilings and walls were prepared and painted together with the surrounding dado. The doors were treated with a wood finisher and the windows and carpet cleaned. All the work was completed by Wednesday afternoon, by which time 90 hours had been worked and circa £250 spent on materials. The average age of the workforce has been estimated at 74!

The Stricklandgater, Newsletter of the Stricklandgate Methodist Church Kendal

AS you are aware we now have Bronze Eco Church status at St Cuthbert's Lorton. Autumn is a time to reflect on our world and how we use it in harvesting food. The Bible is clear that although planet Earth is our home, at the same time the earth is the Lord's. This planet does not belong to us. It belongs to God.

Sandra Ward, The Link, United Benefice of Lorton and Loweswater with Buttermer

ON Remembrance Sunday in churches across the land, people gather to remember those killed in war, but also to reflect on the courage of those who fought and still fight alongside their comrades who take the words of Jesus to heart recorded in John's Gospel: "The greatest love people can show is to die for their friends."

Nigel Davies, Skelsmergh, Selside and Longsleddale Church and Community News

GOD of love, we thank you for the 130 years that Carlisle Diocese Mothers' Union has been bringing the light of your love to families and communities in Cumbria and across the world. We thank you for the determination and enthusiasm of the founder members and for the commitment and service of those who have continued to share the beauty of your love.

Mothers' Union News

WOW! I can't believe it has been a whole year. It feels like only five minutes ago that I joined you at that great circuit service with Richard Teal. Yet we have achieved so much in this time, serving faithfully and expectantly. I want to thank you for your continued hospitality, enthusiasm for the gospel and willingness to continue to reach out in the name of Christ.

David Newlove, The Messenger, Wigton Road Methodist Church

Bishop's fresh look at ambition in new book

■ Archbishop of Canterbury has written foreword

By Dave Roberts

A NEW book for leaders, written by the Bishop of Penrith, explores what success looks like from a Biblical perspective.

Ambition: What Jesus Said About Power, Success and Counting Stuff was published in November and is the second book to be penned by the Rt Rev Dr Emma Ineson.

It provides church and secular leaders with a chance to reflect on the pressures of Church growth which are allied with ambition, a search for success, and the need to monitor and measure outcomes.

Bishop Emma said: "I'm somebody who loves to see the Church growing. But being around church leaders – training them at theological college, being married to one and being one myself – I have seen the effect that the constant pressure to grow the Church can have on people.

"The book does not say that we shouldn't count numbers or look to grow the Church; it's absolutely correct that we look to do this. But I wanted to offer a chance for us to pause so that we can ask ourselves, 'How do we not get caught up in the competitiveness of it all, about whose church is bigger?'"

"It's also important to reflect on the disillusionment that we can experience when the graphs are going in the wrong direction. It's vital we remain full of faith and hope no matter whether a church is growing by numbers, remains



Emma Ineson: Wants her book, inset, to give leaders a chance to pause DAVE ROBERTS

the same or even declining – though we will want to examine why that's happening."

Bishop Emma felt called to write the book as she reflected on her role as the principal of Trinity College in Bristol and as she prepared for installation as the Bishop of Penrith in early 2019. She completed the book during a month's study leave, before her consecration.

"As a college principal I was passionate about men and women being formed well for their future ministry in the church," Bishop Emma added. "But at the same time I was also acting as a businesswoman. I was running a college, which relies on student numbers to break even so I had to constantly look at the bottom line.

"I quite enjoyed that business side of things but I can understand

how that can draw people a particular way. Half way through writing the book, I was called to be the Bishop of Penrith. It's interesting that people talk in terms of this being a 'promotion'. It's not. The way we should see the Church, is that it's a place where people are all seen to have certain roles to perform."

Over six chapters Bishop Emma considers success and failure, climbing, counting, comparing, leadership in the image of the Trinity and the key spiritual dispositions for ambitious people.

In the book's foreword, the Archbishop of Canterbury, The Most Rev Justin Welby, writes: "As Christians, we often want to make a difference. We want to see the world changed. Yet, at the very beginning of the Christian faith, Christ didn't look successful

at all. He was crucified, suffering the shame and ignominy of a criminal's death, mocked by his detractors and leaving his supporters despairing."

Bishop Emma added: "In our approach to leadership we've got to constantly ask ourselves if we are looking at something through 'Kingdom lenses' or are we approaching matters in a different way; are we simply looking at the economics of a given situation or considering things through Biblical lenses?"

Book signings are planned for two of the county's Christian bookshops – Kendal's Market Place Books and Cornerstone Christian Bookshop in Whitehaven.

■ *Ambition: What Jesus Said About Power, Success and Counting Stuff* is published by SPCK and is also available online.

Sarah to lead learning programmes at cathedral



Sarah Cameron: 'I love being able to work with different groups of people'

A CUMBRIAN woman with a passion for history has been appointed head of heritage learning at Carlisle Cathedral.

Sarah Cameron, 28, has an MA in public history from York University and has worked in several museums, including Millom's Discovery Centre where she developed an educational programme.

Her new job is linked to the Cathedral's Fraternity Project, with work on the £2.4m scheme due to be completed early in 2020.

Sarah said: "My role – which is due to last for three years – will concentrate on two main areas of

learning. Through formal learning I will work alongside schools and pupils of all age ranges to develop workshops and activities and build up school engagement with the cathedral.

"And through informal learning, I'll create a hub through which the wider community can find out more about the building's history. That will include workshops and activities in the Fraternity and the undercroft.

"I'm so excited to have this job. I love being able to work with different groups of people, of different ages, and to help them

engage with heritage and culture."

Since coming to post in September Sarah, originally from Ulverston, has immersed herself in the cathedral's history. She plans to continue to develop tours, while using the undercroft space as a place where people can "get messy".

She added: "If we're looking at the building's architecture then we will want to give children the opportunity to sculpt or paint. Obviously, we wouldn't want paint to be flying around in the cathedral itself but there'll be ample opportunity to do that elsewhere."

GO ON, SWEAT IT!

■ Fresh Expression of church engages families in Bible stories through games, sport and other fun activ-

By Dave Roberts

“IN Deuteronomy we’re told ‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart, mind, soul and strength.’ Well, we might be good in church with the heart, mind and soul bits, but what about the strength?”

That’s the question asked by the Rev Craig Bentley, currently serving his curacy in the south Lakes. And the dad-of-two believes he has found an answer – Sweaty Church.

Craig explained: “When I was in training at Durham I came across Sweaty Church at a church in Chester-le-Street. It was brilliant to see people engaging in Bible stories through movement, running about and working at activity stations.

“We’re all very good at sitting still in a church and listening but that can be tough, particularly when you may have young children. Sweaty Church offers a great alternative for families, keeping fit and learning about the Gospel at the same time.”

Sweaty Church was launched in a church in York in 2010 after the team there realised huge number of children were involved in sports activities on a Sunday morning, clashing with traditional family services.

It complements Messy Church, but uses games, sports and activities to build community, rather than crafts. Initially aimed at seven to 11-year-old boys, it became clear that Sweaty Church appealed to all.

Craig is now looking to develop it in the parishes where he is based in the Benefice of Natland and the Benefice of Old Hutton



Active learning: Back row, from left, Jean Dobson, Elizabeth Chandler, Barbara Nelson, Margaret Myers and Linda Graves, front, from left, the Rev Craig Bentley, the Rev Angela Whittaker, Micah, 11, Lucy, three, one-year-old James and Emma Bentley

PICTURES: CHRISTOPHER HOLMES PHOTOGRAPHY



Pressure: Micah and Emma enjoy some penalty kicks

and New Hutton. A taster session has already been held at St Mark’s CE Primary in Natland and plans are being drawn up for a Christmas session in Old Hutton.

Craig joked: “When we held the first session there was concern amongst some of the volunteers as to just how sweaty Sweaty



Balance: The Rev Craig Bentley with young James

Church was actually going to be but they all had a great time. We couldn’t do it without their help; they’re great. The bottom line is that you can work at your own level of physical activity and do what suits you best.”

The taster session saw children and volunteers focus on the Bible

story of David and Goliath through games and activities. These allowed reflection on how people dealt with pressure situations such as taking football penalty kicks.

“The overall message was that, even if you feel under pressure, you can always turn to God to ask for help in easing that pressure,” Craig explained. “So Sweaty Church helped the kids understand that through prayer and trusting in God, pressure can be handled.”

■ *If you would like to start your own Sweaty Church, please contact the team at www.sweatychurch.wordpress.com/contact/. Resources are also available to download from Scripture Union.*

Five-part course helps parents bond with young



‘Gift’: Lara Enebeli felt both she and her daughter Morayo benefitted

HOW do we connect with and support new families within our community?

Starting Rite is a baby-centred course run over five sessions which celebrates the new life that has begun and helps parents and children bond.

Through activities such as singing, story-telling, baby massage and multisensory play, we explore the spiritual nurture and development of each child.

The sessions are designed to help parents engage with the values they wish their child to grow up with.

By Sarah Hulme,
Outreach and Fresh
Expression Enabler

Lara Enebeli, who attends the course with her baby girl, Morayo, said: “I took my baby along last week and we both loved it.

“It was lovely to have a time of reflection and to spend time being grateful, enjoying the precious gift that my baby is; something I can easily take for granted amongst the everyday focus of the hum-drum

routine of feeding, bathing, nappies, entertaining, and repeat...”

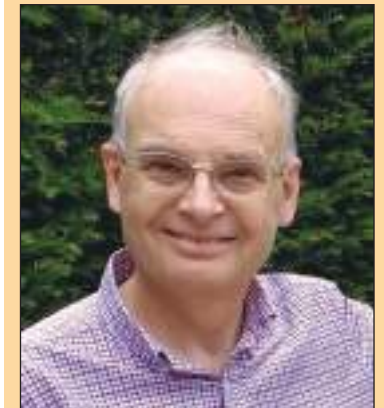
The aim is to grow a smaller community of families at the same life stage, bonds that can continue in the years ahead.

Woven into each session are natural ways to introduce small children to God, while having lots of play and bonding time.

It can also help prepare families considering having a thanksgiving or christening for their child.

■ *For details of the course, or help in setting up one, email sarah.hulme@carlisle-diocese.org.uk.*

Paul leads training for ministry



The Rev Paul Dunthorne: Moving to Cumbria from the Diocese of Winchester

A MISSION-HEARTED minister has been appointed to lead ministry training in the Diocese of Carlisle.

The Rev Paul Dunthorne takes up the post of principal of initial ministerial education (phase one) in January 2020, moving to Cumbria from his current role as dean of licensed ministry training for the Diocese of Winchester.

Paul, 56, said: “It is always an immense privilege to serve those whom God is calling into licensed ministry.

“It is even more exciting to be asked to do so in an area like this, full of pioneering mission and ministry developments alongside diverse communities and stunning natural beauty.”

As principal of IME1, Paul joins the God for All team and will oversee training of the diocese’s ordinands and trainee lay readers.

He will work with a growing number of self-supporting ordained ministers and will also be involved with a new Northern Centre for Pioneer Mission, a recently-launched collaboration between the diocese and the Church Mission Society.

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By The Way

It's in God's hands

WHATEVER situation we face in our lives, in our families or as a church family, it is a great comfort to know that God says to us: "For I know the plans I have for you." As we contemplate the days ahead with all the fears, anxieties and uncertainties that the future holds, we can have confidence that things are in God's hands.

John Riley,
Parish Magazine for Gosforth and Wasdale

OUR relationship with God (what we call prayer) is about opening our hearts, minds and bodies to be receptive to God's active presence. He is already here, closer to us than we have ever imagined; it's just that we don't recognise him because life is so full of busyness and rubbish a lot of the time.

Michael Woodcock, Two Valleys Parish News,
Cartmell Fell, Crosthwaite, Crook, Helsington,
Winster, Witherslack and Underbarrow

COLLECTIVELY we have done well during our interregnum – to keep everything running smoothly and even to extend some areas of our outreach. Let us hope and pray our patience and steadfastness will bring us closer as a community and closer to our Lord.

Duncan Jackson, Parish Magazine, The Benefice of Egremont with Bigg and Haile

YHA Borrowdale turned 80 in 2019 and, after months of preparation, Sunday saw our birthday party. At 10am we opened our Heritage Open Day exhibition and members of the public dropped in throughout the day to have a cuppa and cake, read about the hostel and have a tour.

The Borrowdale News

DEAN C of E School: What a wonderful celebration we had for Harvest Festival! We had a delicious Harvest Parent lunch, followed later by a lively and thought-provoking Harvest Festival service with beautiful singing and clear confident voices from our children.

Dean Parish News

THE ministry of readers was celebrated during their annual licensing service in Kendal. Bishop James led the ceremony at Holy Trinity, Kendal, and welcomed Dianne Maguire, previously from the Fellside Team Ministry in the Diocese of Blackburn, as she transferred to the Cartmel Peninsula Team. We wish her well in her ministry with us and look forward to working with her.

Parish Church of St Paul Grange-over-Sands

AS we begin a new Methodist year it is good to reflect on Jesus, the author of our faith and salvation. To fix our eyes on Jesus means to look intently on the one, our God, who lived his life – an example of grace and truth and who died for us and who rose again. Let us look to Jesus for strength and wisdom and grace for each new day.

Stephen Radford, Newsletter, Kirkby Stephen,
Appleby and Tebay Methodist Circuit

POLITICS is the 'art of the possible' and democracy only works by compromise or negotiation. A referendum inevitably forces us into yes/no, either/or, in/out positions. The reality is more subtle, as we are finding. It will take more than passionate conviction to guide us through this and to restore some sense of unity in our national life, not least because people are passionately convinced about opposing points of view.

David Sargent, Penrith Beacon,
The Magazine for St Andrew's Penrith,
Christ Church Penrith, St John's Newton
Reigny and St John's Plumpton Wall

WILL your anchor hold? It's difficult to choose one hymn, but this one has a special place for me as it's a good sing and, with its rousing chorus, has a solid message. It is also the anthem of the Boys' Brigade which brings back memories of when we helped run the Dearham branch.

Graham Williams, Pow Maughan,
Magazine of All Saints' Scotby and St John's,
Cotehill with Cumwhinton

'I was married but totally selfish. I got involved with drugs. I didn't give a damn'

■ Now considering ordination, ex-biker gang member looks back on his life

By Dave Roberts

SITTING astride a powerful motorbike, Dave Flitcroft stares confidently into the camera's lens.

It is the only picture he has which records his years as a biker gang member; a time fuelled by drink, drugs and casual relationships, and a time when he turned away from God and his faith.

"I grew up in Barrow and had a typical Anglican upbringing," Dave explains. "I went to St Paul's Church of England Primary school, Sunday school and Pathfinders and I joined the local Cubs group.

"It was my grandad who first got me interested in faith. He loved the Old Testament writings and used to tell us some cracking Bible stories. He even brought water back from the River Jordan which my older brother and I were baptised with."

Brought up by his mother – his parents having split up when he and his brother were only young – Dave eventually discovered his mum had hidden a drink problem. She died aged just 63.

Dave says: "My mum was a fantastic woman; she always did her best for us. As her health worsened I knew that I needed to stay nearby for her so I got a job and just got on with things.

"As a child I remember studying monasticism at school and thinking 'That's the life I want; I want to be a monk.' But obviously that was not to be because of the situation.

"After mum died I became really bitter: initially towards her and certainly towards God asking, 'Why have you put me in this position? You've taken away my dreams'."

Dave, 47, sought solace elsewhere, turning to the biker gang. It was to cost him his first marriage.

He remembers: "I went through all the initiations to become a member. I was married at the time but I was totally selfish. I got involved with drugs and all kinds of things. Parties would start on a Thursday and finish on a Sunday. At the time I didn't care, I didn't give a damn about anybody.

"I rose through the club ranks. I had money, girlfriends and the respect of others. People were scared of me. But there was some-



Changed man: Dave Flitcroft in 2019, above, and, right, when he was a biker

MAIN
PICTURE:
DAVE
ROBERTS



thing that was not sitting right."

Dave suffered from increasing depression, taking more and more drugs – cocaine and amphetamines – before his behaviour saw him thrown out of the biker club, and lose his job and home.

On a cold winter's night in a shop doorway in Carlisle he prayed to God for help. Three

days later he'd found new work and shelter in a hostel.

"I felt very humbled, no one had wanted to help me when I was at my lowest," Dave says. "I went off to the north of Scotland to work as a security contractor where I was completely alone and where I could reflect on all the harm I'd caused and make friends

with God again. It was like my 40 days in the wilderness.

"The hardest thing as a Christian is to look in the mirror and see someone you don't like. I'm not even sure I was a Christian at that point; I was trying to make friends with God again, trying to make things better."

A security warden's job at Sellafield led him back to Cumbria, where he met his wife Donna. They married three years ago and have a young son, David, Donna's two children, and Dave's grown-up son, Matthew.

Donna encouraged him to return to church, initially attending the Roman Catholic Church where she worshipped.

"I really enjoyed going to church again," Dave explains. "I left feeling rested, cleansed, happy. It was then that I began to feel that God was telling me he wanted me to do something else.

"We started to attend St James' in Whitehaven and my sense of vocation started to get stronger and stronger. When our curate was being ordained as a Deacon I heard Bishop James talking to the congregation about vocations. It was as if he was speaking directly to me; I had to explore this."

What that vocation may be is still being explored. Dave is working towards a Bishop's Advisory Panel which selects those to be considered for ordination. He remains open to a calling as a self-supporting or salaried minister but he does feel called to some form of mission at Sellafield.

"There are 20,000 people working on that site and currently there's no chaplain," Dave says. "At this time it would be a lay chaplaincy and I've made a few enquiries. The company has been cautiously open to the idea."

And those childhood dreams of monasticism are being answered. Dave is looking to become a member of the Third Order of Saint Francis – people who live out in society but abide by the three rules of simplicity, chastity (faithfulness to your married partner) and obedience.

"Everything I have is a gift from God: my family, my job, my friends," Dave says. "It's all been given to me by God and I have a duty to look after it. I've messed it all up once before but I know now that I am just the steward for all that has been granted to me."

Young, 'green' voice on PCC

■ Abbi, 24, says Church should be an environmental leader

ABBI Lawson is passionate that the Church takes a leading role in caring for the environment – for God's creation.

It's what led to this 24 year old joining the Parochial Church Council (PCC) of her parish church, where she now sits alongside others who are, in some cases, 40 to 50 years her senior.

Sitting in St James's Church in Tebay, where she and her family have lived for the past three years, Abbi explains: "I wanted to join the PCC because I feel the Church generally can do so much more to be environmental leaders.

"Having a voice on the PCC means I'm able to raise this as an issue for us locally and so, together, we can look to see what we can do. I love the fact that I'm actively involved in my church. I think it's really important that, as a younger person, I'm seen to be involved in a church setting. I think the older members of the congregation like the fact that there's someone of my age involved in discussions."

Abbi has already started to measure how eco-friendly local churches are. She has completed a church eco-survey for St Oswald's, Ravenstonedale, and is looking to complete a further two surveys for other congregations.

She adds: "I've used a survey produced by A Rocha, a Chris-

By Dave Roberts

tian charity working for the protection and restoration of the natural world. It's one which I worked for during a gap year.

"It's a great template to use because it doesn't just look at a church building's fabric but also invites congregations to consider if they pray for their environment and if, for instance, their youth work reflects the need to care for the environment.

"If we don't do something now to protect our environment it will have a devastating effect for future generations. God has given us this Earth and asked that we look after it but instead we're just destroying it.

"It makes me very sad and I think that, as Christians, we have a responsibility to lead others towards a better way. If people can see their local church as a beacon of good environmental practice then that is really inspiring."

Her passion for the environment is set within a strong Christian faith – one which is shared by her dad, Martin, a consultant in social enterprises, mum, Pam, a primary school teacher who also runs a children's worship group, and brother John, 22, and sister, Hannah, 21. It's a faith which sees her worship in a small congregation of between eight and 14 people and where she



Abbi Lawson: 'God has given us this Earth and asked that we look after it...'

is deputy churchwarden.

"Sure, it would be nice to have a couple of people my own age to worship with but I get on so well with the older members of the congregation," Abbi says.

"We can be picking crab apples together to make preserves and then they tell me a beautiful story about their childhood. I love that God has given me the opportunity to listen to their wealth of experience."

One in four experience abuse

By Esther Sweetman,
Survivors' Co-ordinator, Restored

RESEARCHERS from Coventry University and the University of Leicester asked 438 churchgoers in Cumbria about their experiences of domestic abuse.

One in four experienced at least one abusive act in a current relationship, reflecting the similar prevalence of domestic abuse in the wider society.

Seventy-one per cent of respondents were aware of domestic abuse in their community but only two in seven churchgoers considered their church to be adequately equipped to deal with a disclosure of domestic abuse.

That is why, Restored, an international Christian alliance working to transform relationships and end violence against



New: Handbook looks at practical and spiritual issues

women, develops resources to support churches to identify and deal well with domestic abuse.

Its most recent publication, *A Handbook for Female Christian Survivors of Domestic Abuse*, addresses the practical, emotional and spiritual challenges a survivor experiences after they leave an abuser.

This handbook is valuable for survivors, church leaders,

churchgoers and friends and families of survivors. Chapters cover issues such as forgiveness, debt, the law and healing.

■ *To order a copy, email info@restoredrelationships.org. The handbook is free to survivors of domestic abuse and a donation of £10 is asked from supporters. Restored also has a church pack available to download at www.restoredrelationships.org/churchpack.*



Our 2020 Events Programme is now out!
Check our website for full programme.
Here is a sneak peak!

Friday 10th January -
Friday 31st January 2020
LAZY DAYS & LOG FIRES
From £62 per person,
per night.
Dinner, Bed & Breakfast



Sunday 1st March -
Saturday 7th March 2020
**EARLY SPRING WALKING
IN THE LAKE DISTRICT**
£522 per person.
Dinner, Bed & Breakfast



Saturday 7th March
10am - 4pm
QUIET DAY FOR LENT
£ Donations.
Booking Required



Rydal Hall, Ambleside, Cumbria LA22 9LX
Booking Office: **015394 32050**
mail@rydalhall.org www.rydalhall.org

By The Way

In a time of need...

WHAT a wonderfully loving and caring church fellowship we enjoy here, as I discovered anew when a sudden health concern occurred recently. I want to thank Graham, and all those who got to hear of this episode, for their visits and messages of supportive concern. It is a humbling and joyful reminder of how the Lord uses his faithful people to spread his love.

Trevor Beeby, The Grapevine, Newsletter of the Methodist Churches of Coniston, Swarthmoor and Ulverston

AMONGST all the strife and disagreement, the war and conflict, let your model be Christ, let his peace be with you. I wonder what the world would be like if we really could live out the model that Jesus gave us: Go in peace to love and serve the Lord. Amen.

Ian Johnstone, The Link, Holy Trinity and St Barnabas with Sandsfield Fellowship

WE have recently sent £865 to the Leprosy Mission following your donations in August, and £185 to the National Churches Trust following our Patronal Festival. Thank you.

St Mary's, Wigton

AFTER 24 years of dedicated, caring service to St John's Parish and all those who worship in the Church, Jim and Katie [Hyslop] have retired. Their last service was the 10am Parish Communion. We were joined by our friends from the Methodist Church and children from the Bishop Harvey Goodwin School who sang for us and recited a poem.

The Observer, Saint John the Baptist Upperville

THE voices of the Flimby Male Voice Choir and the Misted Echoes Duo made for a varied evening's music at the community centre. The men of Flimby gave spirited renditions of well-known hymns, folk tunes and songs from musicals. Tania, with Alex as the piano half of this duo, sang songs that were new to us, as they had been composed by the performers themselves. Altogether it was a very enjoyable treat.

Link, Aspatria Methodist Church, St Kentigern's Aspatria, St Mary's Gilcrux, St James' Hayton

RECENTLY, we clergy spent an inspirational time at Rydal Hall. Even as we drove through Windermere in the sunshine, it seemed Mother Nature was putting on a spectacular show for us; then at Rydal Hall, all the colours of the season again and a reminder of the power of nature in the full river and towering, crashing waterfall. It's easy to feel closer to God in such surroundings.

Carole Marsden, Parish News, Parish of Kirkby Stephen with Mallerstang, Crosby Garrett and Souldry

FAITH means stepping out beyond the boundaries of our normal experience, not with our fingers crossed in the vain hope that what we seek may come true, but with the assurance that it will, because its fulfillment lies with the promises and actions of God, and with us. Faith takes us beyond our experience.

Jack Knill-Jones, Proclaim, Parish Magazine of North Barrow Team Ministry

SO tomorrow, if you find yourself sitting on a bus, waiting at the checkout, or baking me a fruit cake (it's my favourite), remind yourself of the lessons Brother Lawrence taught: that God is always with us and in the world all around. Ask for his help and praise for sending Jesus to show us how to live our everyday lives.

Rob Jackson, Parish of Whitehaven

I REALISE how often I take the beauty of all that surrounds me here for granted. When I wash up at the vicarage and survey the Solway, I don't always notice how glorious the scene is, as I did when I first arrived. I have become used to the view from my window. Yet, if I stop to look carefully at all that is in front of me, it is just as beautiful as it was when I first saw it.

Mary Day, Allonby Beachcomber Monthly Village Newsletter

DOWN YOUR WAY... WITH YOUNG LEADERS

ABI HULME
Age 17



Abi Hulme: 'Church has to evolve'

I'VE ALWAYS had a very strong faith. When I've been through some tough times, it's always been great to have God there as a pillow to cushion my fall.

The biggest pillars in my faith journey are all the youth leaders who have been there to help me, such as Paul Rose at Penrith Methodist Church (PMC) and Network Youth Church leader Rachel Milburn.

The first time I went into church was on the first day of my life! Mum had just given birth and my dad took me into Penrith Methodist Church later that day so he could show me off! We used to go to New Wine all the time and so I was surrounded by other Christian children. So I never had that 'bingo moment' of just how great God is. I just always knew he was.

Some of my friends at PMC decided they would like to develop a spirit-led service for people. We wanted to look at the music within that service too and I have ended up leading the worship.

We've got a band and are concentrating on new music and

ministry sets. We may play a couple of lively songs to start off with but the ministry sets are then really light and chilled; it may just be the gentle strumming of the guitar.

When I'm singing or playing for God, then it feels like everything sounds so much better - God tones everything into what he wants it to be.

It's brilliant to look up at times when I'm playing and to see people praying; it feels like I'm being a middle man for God so he can reach out to those people.

There are times when, during the week, I may not listen to God as much as I should do, but when we get together for our service then it's great to get lost in the music and spirit of the moment.

It feels to me that church has to evolve and that God is speaking through young people. It's nice to have change and in that change you can find God all over again. We need to be mouthpieces for what needs to happen to encourage more young people to know God.

Programme encourages younger Christians to lead the way ahead

By Dave Roberts

ACROSS Cumbria more than 1,000 young people a month are involved with Network Youth Church (NYC).

NYC organises events such as drop-in youth clubs, question spaces, cafe spaces, prayer spaces, schools work, street-based youth work, outdoor activities and indoor sports.

Three years ago those behind the development of NYC realised many of the young people they were connecting with wanted to develop leadership skills themselves.

So a new programme was introduced, the Young Leaders Labyrinth, co-developed by Emma Richardson, the God for All team's outreach and Fresh Expression enabler.

Emma said: "We realised we needed to develop a programme about leadership which was married to discipleship or exploring more about faith in a light touch way."

The Labyrinth is a learning pathway run on three levels. It can be used in group or individual settings.

A local level sees young leaders complete 12 A-Z cards which are used to explore different themes, either in small groups or a one-to-one basis. A take-away activity is also completed and young leaders serve in their local context and attend a residential.

Skills can be broadened at the regional level by volunteering in a different region.

They engage with two activities - one regional and one local - and continue to serve in their local context and attend an away-day.

The enhanced level sees young leaders put their skills into practice by taking the lead at a countywide event or developing and being the main lead for an ongoing project in their own context.

Emma added: "The programme provides the opportunity for young people to explore who they are in God and how they can live that out. It's been wonderful to see young people's giftings grow."

In this 'Down Your Way', we speak with some of those young people who have taken part in the Young Leaders Labyrinth programme and explore how it has helped them grow as Christians.



Emily Milburn: 'I've built up a team of about 10 volunteers who are all Christians'

EMILY MILBURN
Age 18

I LIVE in Brough but I work in Penrith as one of two local youth workers.

I've grown up in a Christian family but I think it was really only earlier this year that I truly understood the power of God when I took part in a mission with other young people in Bosnia. The fellowship was amazing and then, when we got to Bosnia, I realised that the impact we could have on other people's lives was God-given.

When I came back I was really filled with the Holy Spirit and that feeling has never left me. I've realised that I can step out of my comfort zone and be happy and strong. That might sound crazy for an 18 year old to say but it is an amazing feeling.

When the job came up at The Bridge - the Youth Club which runs alongside Penrith Methodist Church - I felt called to go for it. I'm the café youth worker, so I run the café as well as work pastorally with the young people who come here.

I'm here every Wednesday evening and every Saturday from 12 to 5.30pm.

I also work from home to plan and advertise events.

I keep an eye on the kids, make sure they're okay and that school's going well. The kids say it's nice to have me around because they feel I understand them.

I'm also encouraging them to get involved in the running of the place which I feel could help them with basic life skills in the future. On a Wednesday we focus on teenagers who may need extra help - we have about 10 people at The Bridge then. On Saturday we can expect to see 30 young people.

I've built up a team of about 10 volunteers who are all Christians. I thought it would be quite tough to run a team of people - some of them are twice my age and I was worried about having to ask them to do things - but they're all lovely and can't do enough to help.

Since starting I've looked to get more board games and card games out which has helped the young people bond. We also have an Xbox which is a big draw.

I feel my role is all about developing relationships so it can be quite slow. When I first started they asked me, 'Are you a Bible basher?' and I said, 'Yes, I'm a Christian, this is who I am' and they've been cool with that.

MEG COLLINS
Age 14



Labyrinth helps to make you think about how you are living your life and so you refrain from doing things which might hurt other people.

I was introduced to Christianity through friends who went to a lunch club at school. The more I've learned, the more my eyes have been opened. My aim is to stay at Network Youth Church and become a youth leader when I'm 18. I know how the leaders have helped me and that's inspired me to want to help others.

It can be tough to be like this all the time subconsciously, but the

LILY-BETH SMITH
Age 15



THIS was all about me trying to push myself out of my comfort zone. I would normally not want to get involved in a leadership role. Normally I'd be the person in the crowd listening along with everyone else, but the Youth Labyrinth offered me something different. I've really enjoyed it.

I really enjoy helping people and the A to Z cards have helped so much in showing how we can go about things in a different way and be kinder and more humble towards people.

I think it's really important that young people have a chance to help lead; it gives the Church an opportunity to hear our voice, to know what's important to us.

When I was about eight, me and my dad went on a course at our

church that was led by the Bishop. I found myself really intrigued and I started taking notes. That's when I realised that God really does love me and I became a Christian.

I think I would use the skills I've learned through Labyrinth, particularly when I'm with non-Christians. It's taken me a long time to feel able to take control and to lead but I'm beginning to really enjoy it.

SUMMER PEARS
Age 14



I ALWAYS like to help setting up for Ignite Network Youth Church and being a part of a team. Sometimes people can get a bit rowdy so I wanted to be able to learn leadership skills which would help people to calm down.

We normally meet as Network Youth Church every Friday night at St Andrew's in Mirehouse. There can be fun and games, cooking and we had a talent show too.

We went to a Maryport youth celebration a few weeks ago with our band and we also helped lead worship at the Bishop's Roadshow in Cockermouth.

My faith brings a whole new perspective to my life. Network Youth Church is really important for me; it is my extended family. There are people there that I can have a laugh with but also there are people there that I can talk to about anything I need to.

Helping people at the lunch club at school is great way for me to open up out of my shell. It's also important to take our leadership skills outside of church.

By The Way

What are promises?

AS I write, the two main political parties are in full election mode. Promises fly around like autumn leaves. The promised land is just round the corner if you vote for us.

St Bridget's Parish News

THERE'S something compelling about Jesus. He's not a giving up sort of person. He's not a favouritism sort of person. He's not an easy to dismiss sort of person. Compelling. Definitely. Even his enemies were keen to hear what he was saying – the gospels often describe the Pharisees and teachers of the law as being near enough to Jesus to dispute with him.

Andy Murphie, Crosthwaite Parish Keswick

AT Café Church, local families were encouraged to join in some sporty fun as they enjoyed games, songs and refreshment, thinking about how God has made us all so awesome. It was a most appropriate theme for the day as the village sports day for children was held in the afternoon, opened by Tim who also presented the prizes. How blessed we are that the Christian presence in the community is being recognised in this way.

Penrith Circuit Magazine

WE say a farewell to Callum Baker who will be leaving us at the end of the month. Chloe and Callum are expecting the birth of a baby in a few weeks and this is the opportune time for them to move on having completed the one-year contract.

Callum has been a real servant to the church and schools in the area, through assemblies, the holiday club, Sunday activities and the thriving Tots groups.

Focus on Eden, Holme Eden and Wetheral with Warwick

HOW I Met Bob: After I'd been going to the Young Farmers a while, Bob used to come and pick us up with my sister and a few others from round about. Then he decided to buy a motorbike and he used to ask me to go to the pictures in Cocker-mouth... Then, when we were going round corners on the bike, he'd shout: "Swing with the bike!" I really didn't like it. Well, I was stiff as a poker, for fear of tumbling off.

Martha Jackson, Contact, Lamplugh, Kirkland and Ennerdale Ecumenical Parish

A GROUP focussing on Christian Contemplation is starting in December, the start of the church year. The aim is to provide stillness and space to listen to God and to reflect on what we've heard. We will explore ancient spiritual disciplines and how they can help us develop a way of life centred on God in the modern world. Each gathering will have a theme and a framework and work as a stand-alone unit, based on material from the God for All programme.

Parish of St Martin's, Windermere

AS YOU take time to reflect in the coming weeks, I invite you to use the following prayer. International Prayer for Peace: Lead me from death to life, from falsehood to truth, Lead me from despair to hope, from fear to trust, Lead me from hate to love, from war to peace, Let peace fill our heart, our world, our universe. Amen.

Dave Harkison, Living Stones, Whitehaven URC

MANY people have been knitting Christmas angels and we hope they have all been handed in to our churches and collected centrally. We plan to kit them out with gift tags and a message, and return them to distributors the first week in December. They can then be sent out around our communities the week beginning December 9. The angels are a way of reminding everyone of the true meaning of Christmas and giving them a little message of love.

Solway Plain Team Magazine

Town churches open doors to homeless and vulnerable

By Dave Roberts

A WINTER shelter offered by a network of Kendal churches has opened again in the run-up to Christmas.

Organised by the town's Christian charity Manna House – which supports the homeless, vulnerably housed and lonely – the shelters opened at the start of December and run until March.

Six churches across Kendal are rostered to open their doors on a particular night, offering shelter for rough sleepers in the area.

The Winter Shelter is in its sixth year and was originally set up by Manna House's outreach and development worker Penny Severn.

She said: "I started the Winter Shelter with a particular Christian focus in mind. One of the primary reasons for reaching out to churches across the town was the fact that they have big enough buildings to make this work."

"I'm a Christian and I know that the Winter Shelter fits in with my value base and that of the churches I'm involved with. It's a wonderful way in which the whole town community can get involved in tackling the problem of rough sleeping; so it's not just seen as an issue that falls into the hands of Manna House. In turn that creates a more compassionate approach right across the town."

Manna House acts as a referral point for people to be booked into the Winter Shelter; people can't just turn up unexpectedly at a church. There are also strict rules governing the misuse of drugs and alcohol.

Once there, clients are given a warm meal, with everyone eating together before being offered a bed for the night. Penny added: "Eating around the table together is a beautiful time, a time to share, to be vulnerable together and to be open. We would never say people are allowed into the Winter Shelter, rather that they are welcomed."

This year the six churches involved are the town's Salvation Army citadel, St George's, St Thomas's, Holy Trinity and St George's Catholic Church, Sandylands Methodist Church and Stricklandgate Methodist Church.

Andrea Aldridge, chief officer at Manna House, said: "Before the Winter Shelter was set up I remember waving one of our guys off into the night with tears streaming down my face, wondering how they would cope. So, having the shelter in place helps put our staff's minds at rest too."

Meanwhile, Manna House is celebrating the first anniversary of its move to new premises in the town, courtesy of support from a

'We're there to reflect the love of Christ and offer hospitality without judgement'

Anne Pater, 70, leads a team of volunteers – both Christians and those without a faith – at the Winter Shelter in Stricklandgate Methodist Church in Kendal. The building opens on a Sunday night, providing a refuge for those who need it. Here she talks about what the team does...

IT WAS a no-brainer for us to get involved when Manna House first floated the idea of the Winter Shelter. Christ calls us to love those who need help and, on a personal level, it's always been something I have a heart for; it's a social gospel thing for me.

As a church we were involved in the first year but, for whatever reason, we weren't for the following two years. I volunteered at the Salvation Army citadel during that time. We then became involved again as a church.

As team leader I like to get to church before everyone else. People in the team arrive from about six in the evening and we set up. We have a store of camp beds, sleeping bags and towels and we set up a room for sleeping.

In the hall itself we lay out a big table for a meal and other tables and chairs for activities such as newspaper reading and games.

The deputy team leader and his wife are from the parish church and bring food for hot meals prepared by their parishioners. The cooks get busy in the kitchen and, from seven onwards, our guests begin to arrive.

They must have signed in with Manna House beforehand and no one is allowed to bring alcohol or drugs on to the premises. Occasionally, we have to turn people away, which can be tough but it's done for the safety of everyone.

We have time to chat to our guests before we all come together for a meal. That's always been a joyful time. After the meal, sometimes people may want to chat while others may want to



Anna Pater: Leads a Winter Shelter volunteer team

to bed – Sunday can be a long day on the streets as many places where they seek shelter are shut.

The largest number of guests we've had to stay has been seven.

Two people stay overnight after other volunteers have left. One sleeps while the other monitors things and then they swap over. It can be tiring but when I've done

an overnight I've enjoyed it. It's a quiet time and often a time when a guest may open up.

A couple of people come in at seven in the morning to cook the breakfast.

We're not there to sell our faith. We're there to reflect the love of Christ and offer hospitality without judgement, as he would have done.



Welcome: Penny talks with Manna House client Peter

grant-making trust. The Stephenson Centre offers a place for clients to access housing and benefits advice. There are showers



Refuge: Mattresses are set up in St George's Church

available, toiletries are offered, help is given to arrange GP appointments and hot lunches are provided each day.

Set up in 2002, the charity is Christian in foundation. It supports about 400 people annually.

Andrea added: "This is not something that has been developed by design, but many of our staff happen to be people of faith. We do have prayers every Friday but there's never any pressure to get involved."

"We're so blessed with the local support we receive. I've been in the charity sector my whole working life and I have never known anything like the generosity which is shown to Manna House."

■ Manna House is looking for Christmas week volunteers. If you can help, please ring 01539 725534.

Help for residents of crime hot spot

■ Partners set up 'Hub' in deprived area of Barrow

By Dave Roberts

WHEN you walk into the tenement courtyard on Barrow Island you can't fail but be struck by the level of deprivation.

In one corner lies a pile of old mattresses, a rusting machine stands in the middle of the square and graffiti is daubed on some brickwork. This is Egerton Court.

But look past those signs and understand that this is home to dozens of people. It may not be an easy place in which to live – it's known to be one of the town's drug-related crime hot spots – but it's valued by many here.

A few minutes later, and I'm sitting in the recently opened Wellbeing Hub. It is a rented flat space in the Court, one which has become a focus of support and resourcing for people living here.

Around a table, a group of people are talking animatedly about their commitment to help improve residents' lives. The Rev Andy Batchelor, vicar of the nearby St John's Church, and one of his congregation members, Marylyn Kynaston, a former social worker, are part of the gathering.

"I remember that when I came to St John's as Priest-in-Charge, one of the first questions asked of me was what the church was going to do about the people and problems of Egerton Court," Andy explains. "That was a bit of a challenge and it's been on my heart from the outset. Actually, it reminded me of that sign you see in many workplaces, 'The impossible we can do straight away, miracles may take a little longer'."

The chance to help the residents of Egerton Court was to come more quickly than Andy may have anticipated.

In September 2016, emergency services and local residents identified the estate as being a particular problem area for the town. Fly-tipping, drug-related crime and anti-social behaviour were all seen to be linked to the area.



Working together: From left, Insp Jim Bailey, the Rev Andy Batchelor, Alison Meadows and Marylyn Kynaston

PICTURES: DAVE ROBERTS



Committed: Insp Bailey with Alison Meadows in the Wellbeing Hub

Through a joint agency project – involving tenants, Cumbria County Council, Barrow Borough Council, Cumbria Constabulary and Cumbria Fire and Rescue Service – a commitment was made to draw alongside the community to help cut crime and anti-social behaviour.

Key to that was the creation of the Wellbeing Hub, with funds secured to create a drop-in centre in a ground-floor flat at Egerton Court. It has been up and running since January 2019, open from 10am to 7pm Monday to Friday, with plans to increase opening hours into the weekend.

Andy adds: "When we got to hear about it, straight away we wanted to be involved. Egerton is the kind of place that, as Christians, we should be in; forging relationships with these vulnerable and needy people and hopefully bringing the love of God into their lives."

The Hub is now largely run

by members of The Well Communities, a not-for-profit community interest company in Barrow which was set up by Dave Higham – who came to faith in prison – and which supports recovering drug addicts and former prisoners.

Representatives of other agencies including Women's Community Matters, Health and Wellbeing Coaches and St John's Church, are all on a rota to staff the Hub.

Alison Meadows, county council community development officer for the Barrow area, said: "This is a community that has struggled with statutory agencies in the past, so to have these partner agencies working with us has been a huge help."

"No matter who is here at the Wellbeing Hub, it's essential tenants feel comfortable and it's clear from the feedback that they do. It takes time to build a project like this: building community and relationships."

Andy and Marylyn are on duty for two hours each Friday, providing a chance for Egerton Court residents to drop in for a chat, a cuppa and to seek support around issues such as problem landlords, neighbours, mental health and drugs.

They are keen to stress that their role, as church volunteers, is only a small one in the overall running of the Hub, but there's an understanding that,

without third-sector support, projects like this simply could not happen.

Insp Jim Bailey, community inspector for Barrow, says: "There is no doubt we couldn't make this work without that help. It's great that the church and others feel they want to be a part of this."

Marylyn has been approached by some people who use the Wellbeing Hub to speak about her own faith journey.

"It's been wonderful, as a church, to be approached to see if we wanted to get involved," she says. "We're at the heart of things here, supporting those who need it."

"We've also seen crime rates cut by between five and ten per cent, and this has really helped to tackle the problems that come through social isolation."

Other local churches provide a wider support network, ensuring that stocks for the Hub, including Foodbank parcels, are sufficient.

Andy says: "It's been amazing to see how we've been able to build up relationships: people coming in with such tragic stories and backgrounds and who have opened up to us, being honest about their past and their hopes for the future, and in some instances being able to explore faith with us and ask for prayer."

"It's such a privilege to have this opportunity".

WHAT'S ON AROUND CUMBRIA

LAZY DAYS AND LOG FIRES

Fri Jan 10 to Fri Jan 31, Rydal Hall, Ambleside, Cumbria LA22 9LX

Each day starts with morning prayers in chapel. Later, there will be time to enjoy the surrounding countryside on gentle walks or more challenging hikes, or simply relax in front of the fire. Dinner, bed and breakfast at £62pppn, minimum of two nights. To book contact 015394 32050 or mail@rydalahall.org.

LOVE - THE GOLDEN THREAD OF THE MYSTICS

Sat Jan 25, 10am for 10.30am-3pm, Ambleside Parish Centre, Vicarage Rd, Ambleside LA22 9DH

Bob Morley leads a day of gathering with meditation, wisdom from various mystics and time to talk. £10 donation suggested. Drinks are provided but please bring your own lunch. Contact Bob on 016974 72644 or rgm1@live.co.uk.

LIVING WITH THE MYSTICS

Tues Feb 4, 10am for 10.30am-3pm, Friends Meeting House, Elliot Park, Keswick

Sue Pexton leads a day on Mary Oliver. Cost is £5. Drinks are provided but please bring your own lunch. To book contact Bob Morley on 016974 72644 or rgm1@live.co.uk.

RECORDERS AT RYDAL

Wed Feb 12 (4pm) to Fri 14 (3pm), Rydal Hall, Ambleside, Cumbria LA22 9LX

Enjoy beautiful music and develop your skills in the company of players of a similar foundation and lower intermediate level ability with tutor Mary Tyers. Cost is £225pp residential and £112.50 non-residential. To book, contact 015394 32050 or mail@rydalahall.org.

0-5s GOD FOR ALL EVENT

Sat Feb 29, 10am-4pm, Penrith Methodist Church, Wordsworth Street, Penrith, CA11 7QW

For all those volunteers working alongside families and children under-five, this is a day of networking, resourcing and encouragement. Keynote speaker is the Rev Mary Hawes (national children and youth adviser). To book, visit www.godforall.org.uk/0-5g4a.html.

QUIET DAY FOR LENT

Sat March 7, 10am-4pm, Rydal Hall, Ambleside, Cumbria LA22 9LX

The Rev David Wilmot leads a quiet day on the theme 'Learning to be your people once again', re-engaging with Word and Sacrament through the Gospel of John. Booking essential, donations suggested. Bring your own packed lunch or visit Rydal's tea shop. To book, contact 015394 32050 or mail@rydalahall.org.

HIDDEN GOSPEL - MEDITATIONS WITH THE ARAMAIC WORDS OF JESUS

Sat March 7, 10am for 10.30am-3pm, Ambleside Parish Centre, Vicarage Rd, Ambleside LA22 9DH

Neil Douglas-Klotz leads the day. £20 donation suggested. Drinks are provided but please bring your own lunch. To book, contact Bob Morley on 016974 72644 or rgm1@live.co.uk.

THE HYNING RETREAT

Fri March 27 to Sun 29, Monastery of Our Lady of Hynning, Carnforth LA5 9SE

Members of the Cumbria Christian Meditation Community lead the retreat on a theme of 'Living the Presence'. The cost for the residential retreat is £130 (£100 concessions). To book, contact Kevin McNally on 01229 774929 or kevin@ukmcnally.co.uk.

KENTIGERN SCHOOL OF CONTEMPLATION

Fri April 24 (5pm) to Sun 26 (1pm), Blencathra Centre, Threlkeld, CA12 4SG

The programme consists of two residential weekends with home learning in between. This is the second residential weekend. Booking essential - lori.passmore@carlisle-diocese.org.uk.

By The Way

Our Canadian collie

WE ARE moving to the parish from Canada, but we are not Canadians. Indeed, all of my family are Cumbrian except for myself. My wife was born in Kendal and the children were born in Whitehaven, Cockermouth and Stanwix respectively. I was born in London but love Cumbria, having served in Cockermouth and Stanwix before we moved to Brazil and then Canada. Issy, our border collie, is the only Canadian in the family.

Ben Phillips, Dalston Parish Paper

'REMEMBRANCE' is also celebrated within Christian tradition. Just before Jesus was tried and led off to be killed, he had a meal with his closest friends and followers. He said, in words that are celebrated all over the world by Christians today: "Do this in remembrance of me." He was referring to his death... his body and his blood... broken and shed for us, symbolised in the bread and wine of Holy Communion, and pointing to resurrection, rising from the dead, and his presence with us now. So 'remembrance' has a present reality.

Morris Rodham, Together Community Newsletter, provided by the churches of Matterdale, Watermillock, Patterdale, Greystoke, Penruddock and Mungrisdale

HAVE you heard the one about the vicar, the assistant priest and the organist whose cars all broke down? Sadly, this is not the start of some corny joke but a true summary of what happened to Rob, Andy and me within days of each other over the summer holidays... In each case, Good Samaritans came to our aid.

Ashley Henderson, Parish Life, Holy Trinity Parish Church, Kendal

IF you wish to commemorate the sacrifice of the fallen this year then I encourage you to engage with your community to create and sustain peace. As Edmund Burke was once thought to have said: "The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing." Each of us has this choice; to wait and watch or to get involved before things go too far. Let us not forget their sacrifices and let us remember our role in our future.

Raughton Head Parish Magazine

Tiny chapel provides a haven among the hills

By Dave Roberts

"WE SEE this place as an oasis," the Rev Kath Dodd explains. "People come here to rest, to 'sip the living water' and then move on. What impact it has on their lives we may never know but people come and go; it's our vision to be an open door for them."

She's referring to the tiny Baptist chapel at Hawkshead Hill. A mile or so from Hawkshead, the chapel and its grounds provide a haven for prayerful reflection, contemplation and retreat.

It's been home to Kath and her husband, the Rev Andrew Dodd, since 1992, when they moved there with their three young children.

Andrew recalls: "Since the age of 18 I had sensed a calling to ministry but felt conflicted because I was also working as a partner in a law firm in Fylde. Eventually, at the age of 36 the call to ministry became too strong to resist and with the understanding of my partners I was released from the partnership. "I trained for four years at Northern Baptist College while I continued to work as a consultant



'Oasis': Andrew and Kath Dodd moved to Hawkshead Hill in 1992

DAVE ROBERTS

for the law firm but then I was made redundant. It forced me to go into full-time ministry training and then we had the opportunity to come here on a summer placement.

"It was a tough time for the family. In the second year of training my faith collapsed; I'd nothing left. It was on Easter Monday and I came to speak with the then minister who told me he and his wife were leaving that summer and said we should come. I couldn't believe he was offering this to us after all I'd told him about where I was at personally but I remember him telling me 'I don't trust the chapel to you, I trust you to the chapel'."

More than 27 years later, and that re-found trust is as strong as ever, with the couple jointly ministering to an average congregation of 12 people – a committed core of local people along with visitors. In addition, there are countless visitors to the chapel and gardens which are open at all times.

It's very different to the large congregation of Ansdell Baptist Church in Lytham St Anne's where Andrew started to worship in 1973 and where he met Kath. He'd previously come to faith after listening to a gospel band on Lytham St Anne's promenade as a 17 year old.

During their time in Hawkshead Hill, Andrew also worked for the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS); a bi-vocational role which helped to support their ministry. He retired from the CPS five years ago.

The couple married in 1979, with Kath having returned from Brazil where she had taught missionaries' children. She took up work in the Lancashire Baptist church she attended with Andrew,



Team: The Hungarians involved with the renovations

as well as teaching piano. Her route to ordained ministry saw her accepted on to an Anglican ordination course, paid for with the money she'd saved from teaching piano at Coniston Primary School.

She explains: "I wasn't sure where the course would take me. Part way through I realised I really did want to be a Baptist minister. As part of that I was placed with Abbey Road Baptist Church in Barrow. I was ordained in 2001."

Their ministry has flourished in this quiet Lake District setting where there has been a Baptist worshipping community since 1699. The current chapel was registered as a meeting place in 1709.

Both are passionate about leading worship through music and in the early days of their ministry they developed family-friendly services. They recognise their approach is informal, the congregation sits 'in the round' each week.

"What that says to people is that we meet as equals," Kath explains. "We want to hear from them. The chapel is only a small worship

space but people say they love the homely feel."


Under the Dodds' watch, there have been changes. By 2006, the chapel had been refurbished, with self-catering holiday accommodation added. A team of 17 Hungarians spent three weeks working on the renovations.

The grounds include a burial site, sensory garden and prayer space. A local beck provides an outdoor baptistery.

Both are advocates of ecumenism. The Baptist Church is a companion denomination of the God for All strategy and Kath sits on the strategy steering group and that of the Central Lakes Mission Community. Meanwhile, in January, Andrew will become president of Churches Together in Cumbria (CTiC), taking over the role from the Rev Sarah Moore. He was previously CTiC ecumenical officer.

■ To book the chapel or accommodation, contact 015394 36451, kath.dodd@btinternet.com or visit the website – www.hawksheadhillbaptistchurch.org.uk.

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Chaplaincy takes off

■ Methodist minister appointed to new role at Carlisle's airport

By Dave Roberts

A NEW chaplaincy has been created at Carlisle's recently opened Lake District Airport.

The Rev Rachel Williams, minister at Brampton Methodist Church with responsibility for most of Brampton Deanery, is the new chaplain.

Her appointment comes just months after the airport saw a return to commercial services after a gap of 25 years.

Rachel said: "Initially, our Methodist Circuit put together an offer for the airport chaplaincy, which detailed what we would be able to offer as a staff team and we then had discussions with people at the airport. They were really open to the idea of the chaplaincy and the benefits it would bring for passengers and staff.

"Chaplaincy in today's world is so very important. You are meeting people where they are in the world, in the places where they go. So often in a ministry context, I only meet those people who choose to come to church on a Sunday.

"At the airport there is opportunity to meet with people who may never darken the doors of a church but may well have the same questions as those who do go to church. This is not about proselytising but it is about being the presence of God where people are.

"It's amazing for the airport to be so open to the idea and to work alongside us so positively."

Rachel will visit the airport weekly, for a couple of hours on Thursdays or Fridays. Her visits will be planned around scheduled flights, so she can draw alongside as many people as possible.

She will have opportunity



Pastoral care: Rachel chats to Kieran Boak, who works in the Terminal café



Serving: Above, the Rev Rachel Williams is the new chaplain at Carlisle Lake District Airport; right, Sarah Moore, Mel and Steve Scoulding, Lee Townend, Aftab Khan and David Newlove at the blessing **DAVE ROBERTS**

to spend time with staff at the airport, after first completing a training session which will allow her access to some operational areas. The chaplaincy would also see her called to the site if there was ever an emergency situation.

The airport and Rachel are now exploring the possibility of a Quiet Room for people who need space for reflection.

"I'm aware there will be passengers on flights and staff at the airport who represent many different faiths and that these people may feel called to reflection," Rachel added. "It would be wonderful if a Quiet Room could be provided where people can go if they feel the need.

"My prayer for the chaplaincy is that people feel able to be open about where they are; that they don't feel this is about someone hammering them with the Bible, yet they still feel the presence of something, which I would call God."

Rachel's appointment coincides with her completing an MA in chaplaincy and pastoral care in chaplaincy. She was previously chaplain to Millom Air Training Corps as well as Longtown Auction Mart and the British Legion Club in Brampton.

Around 50 people are employed at the airport which runs scheduled flights to and from Belfast, Dublin and London Southend.

The chaplaincy comes after an inter-faith group gathered in July to bless the new Carlisle Lake District Airport, before the first flight's departure.

The archdeacon of Carlisle, the Ven Lee Townend, led the service on the airport's runway, joined by the Rev David Newlove, superintendent minister of the Methodist Church, Captains Mel and Steve Scoulding of the Salvation Army's Carlisle Citadel, the Rev Sarah Moore, area president

of the United Reformed Church and Aftab Khan from AWAZ Cumbria.

Kate Willard, director of partnership development at Stobart Group, said: "We are delighted to be able to offer pastoral and spiritual care to passengers visiting Carlisle Lake District Airport. This enables us to support all of our customers regardless of faith.

"The chaplain will also promote the good name and reputation of the airport through their daily actions. This shows how Carlisle Lake District Airport isn't just about business or tourism – it's an integral part of the local community."



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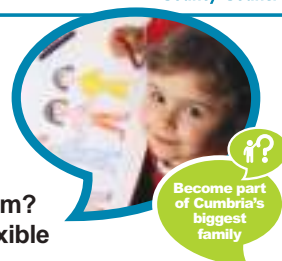
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By The Way

More enlightened now

THE advent of Mission Community will, among other things, involve meeting people from other denominations. There was a time when little or no mixing occurred between denominations, but now a more enlightened atmosphere exists. Instead of differences, let us consider what gifts and insights can be shared in fellowship with other Christians.

Frank Balme, Writings on the Wall, Newsletter from the Anglican Churches of Lanercost with Walton, Gilsland and Nether Denton

ST MARY'S Christmas Tree Festival 2019: That time of the year again! Do not ask me where the intervening months have gone because it only seems like a couple of months ago that we were bringing the boards down. The Festival is on each Friday, Saturday and Sunday between 2 and 5pm for the first three full weekends in December and then from 2 to 4pm the last weekend. A rota has been put at the back of the church for those wishing to volunteer their time to help out.

Sylvia Stoker, New Life, In the Parish of Dalton-in-Furness, Newton and Ireth with Askam

IN Binsey, none of the individual congregations are large, we are all relatively small, and we all need the help and support of each other. In the coming months we need to find more ways to help and support each other. There is a danger that, because each church is small and takes an increasing amount of effort, money and energy to keep it functioning, the idea of working together and sharing can seem like a luxury – that it is something we haven't got time for.

Binsey Link, The magazine of the Binsey Team Mission Community, the churches of Allhallows, Bassenthwaite, Boltons, Embleton, Ireby, Isel, Plumbland, Setmurthy, Torpenhow, Uldale and Wythop

I HAVE so many favourite readings that it's difficult to know which one to choose. Whenever I give a Bible as a gift I always write Romans 8: 38-39 in the front – so maybe that is my Number 1! "I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Jean Radley, Parish News, St George's Kendal

WE are at a turning point in the memory of our nation: The First World War ended 101 years ago and the last of our veterans have died. The Second World War ended 74 years ago. The Korean, Falklands, Gulf, Afghanistan wars and other conflicts have given us more sacrifices to commemorate and remember but we are at a point where we have fewer folk with living memories of the world wars and this means we have to choose not to forget.

St Mary's Church, Wreay

POSADA is the Mexican tradition of people dressing up as Mary and Joseph and going from house to house to tell about Jesus and the Christmas story. Our parish Posada is a simpler tradition and one in which it is easy to participate. During Advent, the knitted figures of Mary and Joseph travel around the parish, staying in people's homes for one night. Their journey begins at the Advent Service, this year at Cliburn church. It ends when the last family on the list brings them to the Crib Service at St Lawrence's Church, Morland, at 5pm on Christmas Eve.

Julia Evans, North Westmorland News

JESUS often tells us to recall the things he did, to explore and look back through the history of the Bible so that we can make the world a better place for everyone. We can only be a good Christian disciple if we read the Bible and allow the Holy Spirit to guide us. Others will only know of the sacrifice Jesus made if we tell them.

Debbie Harkness, Newslink, South West Cumbria United Area



Innovative gatherings: Fresh Expressions of church around the diocese include, clockwise from above, Mountain Pilgrims, Biker Church in Torver and Mini Mountain Pilgrims

Extra help brought in as Fresh Expressions grow

■ New 'curator' posts created to support projects

By Dave Roberts

A NUMBER of special 'curator' posts are being created to support flourishing Fresh Expressions of church across Cumbria.

Earlier this year, a study by the Church Army found that 3,100 people now regularly attend a Fresh Expression. That represents a quarter of all those attending church weekly in the Diocese of Carlisle.

In all, nine new curator posts will help to resource and support the growth of even more Fresh Expressions.

Richard Passmore, director of mission innovation and Fresh Expressions, said: "We have had to develop this new way of supporting our existing Fresh Expressions of church and those that are moving towards becoming one."

"It's great to know we now have more Fresh Expressions across the county than the existing team can help to resource and support. That's a wonderful 'problem' to have."

A Fresh Expression is a new gathering or network that mainly engages with people who have never been to church. In Cumbria these include such gatherings as the Biker Church in Torver, Messy Church or Mountain Pilgrims.

Paul takes church into the countryside

PAUL Rose, 43, is a youth and children's work team leader at Penrith Methodist Church. After training and commissioning with the Church Army, he and his wife moved to Cumbria 13 years ago.

He was initially a Church Army evangelist at Blaithwaite House Christian Outdoor Centre near Wigton, before moving to his current role.

Paul will act as one of the Fresh Expressions curators, drawing on his particular passion for outdoor activity to connect with young people and those not connected to church.

He said: "I'm running two outdoor groups at the moment - Fourth Sunday Adventures and Adventure Sunday Plus."

"Fourth Sunday Adventures came off the back of a dad's group which we'd been running. As the children who came along got older, we realised it would be good to take the activities outdoors."

"This was never simply just an idea to go out and adventure but more an understanding that, by being involved in adventurous



Adventure: A Fourth Sunday group above Ullswater

activities in wild places, we encounter something of God. We try to capture in non-churchy language what it is that we are encountering, what is beyond the view.

"Typically we have anywhere between 20 and 40 people come

along. It's aimed at anybody, but is accessible for families with young children and those people who may never have had contact with church.

"Sunday Adventures Plus is aimed at teenagers upwards and the idea of the 'plus' is to be a bit more challenging - to walk further, go higher, go to wilder places."

"We're also more intentional about using Christian language."

Paul will act as a Fresh Expressions curator for the outdoors and education.

"I may well act as a first point of contact for people who inquire as to how to start this kind of Fresh Expression," he said.

"While an initial contact may be over the phone, it would be good for people to come along to one of the groups we run to see how we do it and explore what it could look like in their own context."

"I'm delighted to be involved. It would be wonderful to think that people across Cumbria could capture something of the Divine while they're out enjoying this beautiful county."

Each Fresh Expression must meet four marks: missional – serving those outside church; contextual – listening to people within their context; formational – making discipleship a priority; and ecclesial – forming new sorts of church communities.

The curators will have up to 15 hours a year through which they can offer support.

As part of their existing roles, outreach and Fresh Expression enablers Sarah Hulme and Emma

Richardson and Network Youth Church leader Kristian Tjemsland will be involved as curators.

They will be supported by six other people – Jeff Rudman, Paul Rose, Anne Underwood, Dan Patimore, Chris Harwood and Martin Lawson – with more curators set to be named.

They will offer support with a good geographical spread and, initially, along most Fresh Expressions strands that seem to be emerging: youth and children;

outdoors and education; new monastics/ alternative spirituality; building community; social action/ enterprise; local neighbourhoods/ deprived communities.

Richard added: "Our thanks go to all those people who have committed to supporting us in developing new ways of doing and being church which will create new disciples in Jesus Christ."

For curator contact details, please email emma.richardson@carlisediocese.org.uk.

Locals work together to renew tiny chapel

■ After talk of it closing, building now welcomes international visitors

By Dave Roberts

“I ALWAYS think this place is like the ‘Room of Requirements’ in the Harry Potter novels,” explains Methodist super-intendent minister the Rev David Newlove.

“In the books it’s a room that contains whatever a character may need. This chapel’s the same. Be it a walker or someone from the village, they’ll find what they are looking for when they come in.”

Solway Methodist Chapel stands on the outskirts of Port Carlisle, on the edge of the beautiful Solway Firth marshes. Built in 1861 by a local farmer for £300, the small brick building features gothic-inspired stained-glass windows.

It draws in hundreds of visitors each year. Many are walkers who are journeying along the Hadrian’s Wall Path, a stone’s throw from its doors. Its visitor book includes entries from Honolulu, Vancouver and Australia.

Six years ago things were very different. The chapel’s doors would invariably have been locked – apart from fifth Sunday services and there was talk of a complete closure.

But local residents had other ideas, deciding the chapel should be opened each day, tending its garden and decorating the building, all for free.

Port Carlisle resident Kathleen Brough, who opens the building each day, said: “This was a place which I would come to infrequently before, but it’s a place I’ve grown to love deeply in these last six years.

“It is a special place and I’d like to think that anyone – those of faith or no faith – can come in here, sit, be and feel how special it is. They may not need the church at this time but I’d hope that in years to come they are able to remember the peace that they will have felt here.

“I feel peace and tranquillity when I sit in here and it’s those feelings that I long to share with others.”

Tea and coffee facilities are offered to visitors who can leave a donation. Fifth Sunday services are still held, supported by other local Methodist congregations and members of Bowness-on-Solway’s Anglican church. It’s hoped the number of services in the chapel will grow.

David added: “The aim is to increase the number of services for the village and link them into the festivals of the year – Easter, harvest and Christmas – so even non-church goers can feel this is a time to congregate and express what it is to be a somewhat isolated community.”

The chapel is also being offered as a venue for day retreats and away-days. It has space for up to 30 people, kitchen and toilet facilities, and the chance to also enjoy the spectacular Solway Firth scenery.

“I’d like to think this could be a good place for people who are in mission communities to come to for an away-day,” David said. “There’s a feeling of freedom in this building and just by walking outside you’re faced with the beauty of the Solway.”

■ The chapel can be booked for a half-day for £30 or £50 for a full day. To make a booking, contact Kathleen Brough on 016973 51332.



Enthusiastic: The Solway Chapel Group, from left, the Rev David Newlove, Kathleen Brough and Harold Bowron, north circuit steward

Teatime:
Deacon
Melanie
Beaven and
the Rev David
Newlove in
the chapel

PICTURES:
DAVE
ROBERTS



Richard Corrie: First term

Audio diaries chart road to ordination

A SERIES of audio diaries by BBC Radio Cumbria presenter Richard Corrie are charting his journey to ordination.

Richard and fellow ordinands are currently into their first term’s study, having already completed two residential weekends at Rydal Hall. They also meet seven times a term for tutorials at the Diocese of Carlisle’s Church House.

Richard said: “It feels a little like I’m back at school. We do a lot of our reading and preparatory work on our own. I’ve never been an academic person but I am enjoying this process.”

He continues to present for BBC Radio Cumbria while studying and also running a fish and chip shop in Wigton.

His audio diaries are being broadcast on Radio Cumbria and are also available on the Diocese of Carlisle’s website.

Richard, who will train for two years, added: “The audio diaries have run in our breakfast programme and also our evening programme The Gathering as well as on the Sunday morning show. The idea is that they may nudge people to think ‘I want to try this’.”

The diaries will also reflect Richard’s two placements. One is at his BBC workplace and is a community placement. A second will see him move from his parish church – St Michael’s, Stanwix – to Carlisle Cathedral from Advent through to Easter.

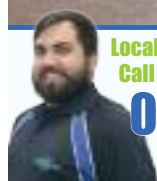
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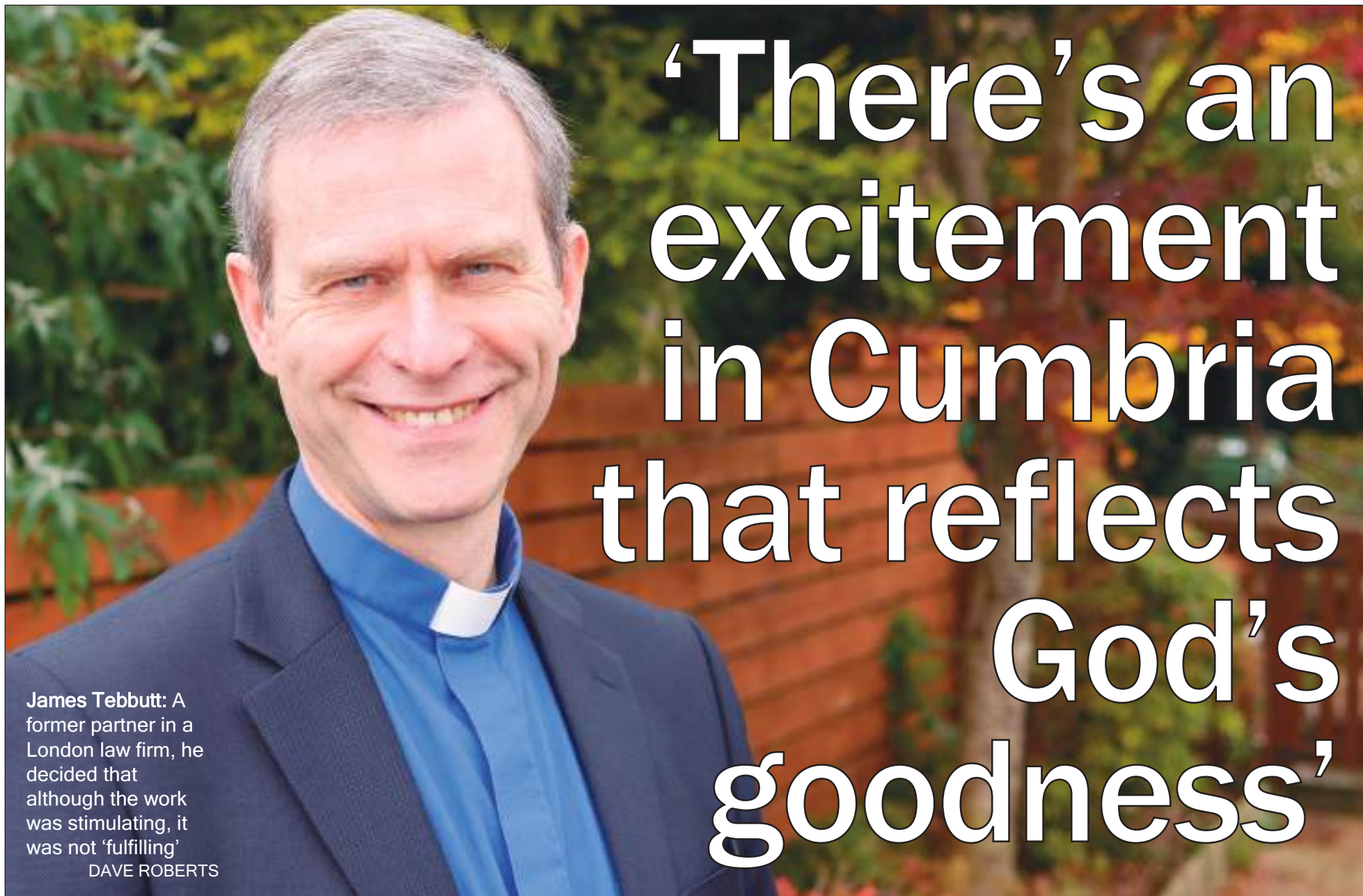
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‘There’s an excitement in Cumbria that reflects God’s goodness’

James Tebbutt: A former partner in a London law firm, he decided that although the work was stimulating, it was not ‘fulfilling’
DAVE ROBERTS

Q Please tell us a little bit about yourself.

A I was born in Stoke-on-Trent but moved from there, aged two, as my father was a Methodist minister and had a new post on the edge of Sheffield. It was there in village chapels that I first gained the sense of a God who is good. Aged seven, we moved to London into a multi-racial, multi-cultural context both in our church and in the school I attended. There I discovered the richness of difference and of God’s calling for us all to live together in fairness, inclusion and harmony.

We then moved to Cheltenham where I completed my O’ and A’ Levels. It was not an easy time as I was bullied but it made me more sensitive to what any form of oppression or bullying can mean for people. It was a hugely formational moment for my future ministry.

I read theology at Cambridge University but then trained and practised as a solicitor for 12 years, becoming a partner in a central London firm, working in litigation.

Ultimately I realised that, for me, it was stimulating but not fulfilling and offered for ministry, training from 1999 to 2001.

■ As the new chair of the Cumbria District of the Methodist Church, the Rev Dr James Tebbutt, 55, is our Focus on Faith in this edition of The Way

In 2001, I joined a Methodist Circuit, responsible for three churches and a part-time prison chaplaincy in the Medway in Kent. After three years I moved to Hayes in west London to look after two churches.

That year I became engaged to my wife, Nicola, who is also a Methodist minister and who was, at that time, based in Sheffield. I was moved there to minister in three churches and as a chaplain in the University of Sheffield. After four years I was granted time out to complete a PhD, before looking after two churches in Poynton near Manchester.

In 2013, we moved to Gloucestershire where I was superintendent of a county circuit. Five circuits had come together as a single circuit, taking in 48 churches. As a family – with our 10-year-old daughter – we moved to Cumbria in August.

Q Why did you feel called to ministry in Cumbria?

A This is a fantastic part of the world where I have holidayed for many years

and where we have good friends. It means that I understand Cumbria is about far more than simply the Lake District. But the main call to Cumbria was because of the ecumenical approach which is uppermost here. This has to be an important strand for the Methodist Church and other churches as they work their way forward. I’m utterly committed to that; that’s why I’m here.

I firmly believe ecumenism is about acknowledging, affirming, celebrating and not losing the gifts, traditions and insights that each denomination brings, in a way that preserves the richness of them all.

Q What will be the challenges for you in your new role?

A As we travel this road together there will inevitably be potential sticking points, for others and for ourselves. It’s at these times that we must look to discern, understand and navigate our way around issues and still journey well together. That is vital for the Church. It is uppermost in the

invitation that John records when Christ prayed for the disciples to be one.

As we seek to join in God’s mission together, it is up to us as denominations to navigate our differences; learn to see the bigger picture, open our hearts wider, listen more fully, more accurately and more clearly.

We’ve also got to consider the contextual challenge of how we can do this in a time when, largely, traditional churches are declining. How do we make a shift in a world which is largely disinterested, where there are aging and tiring congregations and declining resources?

On a personal level, a particular challenge will be the balance I’ll need to retain a more strategic position in ministry while being alert to some of the details, yet also encouraging others and seeking to release them in what they do.

Q What excites you about God for All and the vision refresh?

A It’s exciting to see people who want to work together to respond to God’s

presence now. From what I’ve seen so far – whether we’re talking about individual denominations, God for All or Churches Together in Cumbria – there’s a feeling of energy, even of buoyancy, of people wanting to do their best, wanting to pull together.

By the same token, inevitably there’s also hesitation and frustration that there’s change and sometimes messiness involved with it all, yet I hope still a willingness to move forward.

Thus, for me, there’s a genuine excitement in Cumbria which I believe reflects God’s goodness.

Q What would be your prayer as you move forward in your new role?

A That we can be discerning and receptive enough, in our encounters and our patterns, to receive all that God wants to offer to sustain and enrich our living and relationships and all that we may in turn offer to others.