



Church



The magazine of **A**llen Memorial
and **T**rinity Methodist Churches

Fairtrade Fortnight **26th February to 11th March**



February 2018

Ministers Muse

Dear friends, isn't it nice to be able to say that. Friends are special. John in his gospel has Jesus saying, *"I do not call you servants any longer, because the servant does not know what the master is doing; but I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my Father."* When we greet each other as friends in church we also greet each other as brothers and sisters, part of God's family. Now families do not always get along with each other, even families that belong to the church. In January Colin and I met with family at my mothers', the matriarch; there were 14 of us and we all enjoyed a meal out together. I wondered what an onlooker would have made of us all. Three generations, chatting and laughing together, having a good time, sharing stories and presents, but to the 'insider', there were tensions.

There are tensions in the church too. We do not always agree with each other, we have different opinions and ideas on how the church should be run, how we move forward in mission and what our vision is for the future.

We are being asked by the Connexion to think about our plans for the future. Are we a church with plans to grow, either numerically or spiritually? Would this mean a change that some of us would not want and could be frightened of? How do we grow together? These are all questions we need to ask ourselves.

In the meantime, we need to share as friends and family, to love each other and support each other in the ups and downs of life. John in his gospel has Jesus telling us this.

"This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends." Let us be willing to give of ourselves for our friends and not to count the cost.

May God bless you in your words and actions and may you bless others in God's name.

Your friend and minister, Janet

Welcome to the new AT Church Magazine

At the back end of last year, the Church Councils of Trinity and Allen Memorial Churches agreed that we would have one magazine for both churches.

This is the first edition of that magazine and I hope you like its general layout and content.

The AT Church Logo on the front was designed by Mark Burdon and as far as I can tell everyone is pleased with it. The A & T particularly picked to represent Allen and Trinity.

We need articles from the members and friends of both churches and you will always find an Articles By? paragraph at the end of the diary section telling you when to hand articles in by. Articles can be emailed direct to me alan@trinitymethodist.co.uk or passed to Anne Gallagher at Allen Memorial or myself at Trinity.

If you don't have email or facility to type, don't worry, we can type things out for you. Takes me a bit longer as a One Finger typist, but I get there eventually.

So please tell us what you think about the magazine. What articles you like. What you would like to see, or not see. It's your magazine, so let's have your thoughts.

Alan Barker

Editor

Deacons Muse

Dear Friends

Welcome to 'AT Church' the new look magazine of Allen Memorial and Trinity Methodist Churches. This is an exciting new development which will enable all of you who are reading this magazine to know more about the activities that happen in church throughout the week and to learn more about the church family. We hope that you will enjoy reading about the life of the church and how God's kingdom is growing here in Wallsend.

And on that note

I saw my first tiny clump of snowdrops the other day. I had very nearly walked past them as my head was full of other things. But just in time out of the corner of my eye I saw them. One of those special God moments when I am reminded that God is in the small things and to be thankful. I went on my way feeling so blessed.

As Advent is a time of watching and waiting so Lent is a time of journeying as we follow the life and ministry of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. We will read and hear stories about Jesus that involved people's lives being changed. They saw miracles as people were healed, they heard stories of love and compassion. Stories that enabled its listeners to learn about the true nature of God. Many became followers of Jesus and for those closest to him he taught them all he knew trying to give them an insight into what lay ahead of him.

Lent is a time when many of us give up something we enjoy such as chocolate. Often this is done to enable us to change and shed a few pounds. Some may decide to 'fast,' missing a meal on a given day and using that time to pray.

What will the shape of your journey be in this time of lent? Are you open to being changed? Sometimes the journey can be tough, but we only need look at Jesus who for us gave the ultimate sacrifice.

In the Parable of the Shepherd, John 10: 10b Jesus says, 'I have come in order that you might have life – life in all its fullness.'

What an invitation God loves us so much that he gives us 'life in all its fullness.'

A prayer for Lent from the Methodist Church website

Jesus, you prayed and fasted. As your disciple teach me about spiritual discipline in my relationship with you. **Amen**

And from me

Loving God, may we be encouraged this Lent to know 'life in all its fullness.' **Amen**

Grace and peace to you in this Lent Season

Deacon Gail

What is Bible a Month?

With Bible a Month, you give a Bible to those longing for the word of God. It costs just £5 every month. That's the typical cost of providing a Bible in someone's heart language.

You can complete a Direct Debit form (churches can do this too), for a monthly payment. Over time, you will be reaching more people of all ages with the Bible- changing many lives.

Or at Trinity see Sylvia Aston who collects monthly donations for Bible a month.

Bring the Bible to life, every month, for those who need it most. Join Bible a Month today!

For further information contact British and Foreign Bible Society, Stonehill Green, Westlea, Swindon, SN5 7DG

Bible a Month Club: Iraq

"We often suffer, but we are never crushed. Even when we don't know what to do, we never give up. In times of trouble, God is with us, and when we are knocked down, we get up again." 2 Corinthians 4, vs 8-9. (CEV)

Iraq is a land-locked country in the Middle East and is surrounded by Iran, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Syria and Turkey. It covers an area of 438,000 sq. km, which is about 1.8 times larger than the UK. It has a population of 39.2 million, approx. 61% of the UK.

The literacy rate- people who can read and write- is 79% and the main languages are Arabic, Kurdish, Turkmen, Syriac and Armenian.

Christians make up less than 1% of the Iraqi population and recent reports suggest this may have reduced even further with many fleeing to Jordan and Lebanon. While hundreds of families like Ihsan and Laras have returned, many others are still afraid. Christians have lost homes and experienced tragedy in the conflict with ISIS. It takes time and resources to support the return of refugees, the reconstruction of cities and villages devastated by war.

Thank you for your continuing support which enables us to encourage Christian communities which are under enormous pressure by providing food, medicines and other essential supplies as well as distributing Bibles.

People are hungry for the comfort and affirmation they find in God's word and thanks to the Bibles your support provides, there is hope in the midst of hardship.

Prayer Pointers

- Give thanks that as ISIS retreats, refugees are returning to Iraq. Please pray for those with the very difficult task of bringing stability in the aftermath of the conflict.
- Pray for God's protection over Ihsan and Lara as they rebuild their lives in Qaraqosh, bearing witness to Jesus and his resurrection in their community. Pray for their continued healing and recovery
- Praise God for all that we are able to do through partnering with local churches to provide Bibles, food packages and trauma healing.
- Pray that the Christian population in Iraq will grow in strength, faith and numbers and Iraqi Christians will be emboldened to share the reason for the hope they have.

Bible a Month: Eyewitness Report from Iraq: Returning to bear witness

By Lina Musharbash

The town of Ninevah in modern-day Iraq has a chequered history. In the Old Testament, God spared it from destruction, having sent the reluctant prophet Jonah there. But in recent years, it has been the scene of mass devastation as the so-called Islamic State and Iraqi authorities fought for control of the city. ISIS' grip on the city ended in August 2017 and now hundreds of families are returning.

I travelled there to find out what life is like for returning Christians and how we can help them. The journey to Ninevah was shocking and painful with extensive damage in every direction assaulting my senses: houses and churches ravaged by fire, looted and in some cases, riddled with networks of tunnels.

Walking through the abandoned market and seeing the rubble that had once been the homes of Christian families, it was not hard to feel demoralised. But, I was also struck by the amazing resilience of the refugees, when I visited Al-Tahera Church, formerly one of the biggest and most beautiful churches in Iraq, and observed a small congregation praying with their priest amidst the chaos of the ransacked building.

I met a young couple called Ihsan and Lara, both from Qaraqosh, the largest Christian city in Iraq. They have two children and Ihsan used to work as a blacksmith, until ISIS took over their city in August 2014. They had no choice but to flee their beautiful new home which had taken six years of sweat and sacrifice to build. Ihsan's mother died a few days after they fled Qaraqosh when they were sharing the church hall with other refugee families.

Ihsan's house had become a pile of stones. Like many returning Christians the first thing the couple did was to remove the letter "N" in Arabic which had been daubed on the door, meaning "Nasrini" (Christian), to indicate that there were Christians living there and the inhabitants could be killed. You may be familiar with this symbol as people around the world took it up on social media to show solidarity with Christians in Iraq.

I saw lots of graffiti on the Christian houses. Some said, "No more church- the Islamic state is remaining and expanding" but many of these had been overwritten with statements like "Jesus is the light of the world" and "God is love".

Ihsan said, "We have to return because this is our life and home, our history and the church has always helped us. Bible Society also did a good job. We get strength from this help. I believe God permitted the pain to realise the good and the love.

We bear witness to Jesus and his resurrection when we live here like our Christian ancestors. There are 2,000 years of history behind us, how can we deny that?"

Through your gifts and support, you are providing Bibles and food packages which are distributed by local churches. Our Bible- based Trauma Healing program is also helping refugees to talk through their experiences and discover God's love for them.

Please pray for the Iraqi Christians who are still living as refugees in foreign countries. They are physically and emotionally exhausted, living in terrible conditions. Now, as their cities are freed from ISIS a few have started to return. Churches and other organisations are helping them to rebuild their houses, but the feelings of uncertainty and unsafety are still deep in their hearts. Thank you for standing with them.

From the Bible a Month Newsletter, Dec/Jan issue.

Translating the Bible into Vlach Romani

Chile is the longest country from north to South in the world. But 90% of the country's population live around the capital of Santiago including many of the country's 12,000 Roma (Gypsy) people.

Bible Society's team in Chile has been working for many years to translate the Bible into the main Romani dialect spoken by the Roma people in Chile. The New Testament translation was completed in 2007 and since then our team have been working on the Old Testament.

Thanks to your Bible a Month gifts, the full translation is now on the verge of completion and due to be printed in 2018. This will be the first complete Bible for Roma people anywhere in the Americas.

In Chile, like many places around the world, Roma people experience social discrimination. They also maintain their own culture and close themselves off to the rest of Chilean society. This makes them hard to reach. But thanks to the power of the word of God, the barriers in reaching them are being overcome.

Sister Margarita Rivas has been an integral part of the Chilean Bible Society's efforts to reach the Roma people. Through persistence and prayer, she is sharing the message of God's love in the Bible.

Many Roma women and children do not know how to read, so Sister Margarita has been educating them, using New Testament portions in their language. She tells stories of lives changed thanks to the power of the gospel message. Roma women who were engaged in practises such as fortune telling now understand it is not good for them because of what they hear in God's word.

Children who had reputations for bad behaviour on the streets are now part of local churches where they are inviting and encouraging others. One of the first children Sister Margarita ever helped, Arankichi, has chosen to become a pastor for the Roma community.

Your Bible a Month gifts have provided materials and Scripture portions for the Roma people and helped fuel the changed hearts and lives that our team are seeing in Chile. Please pray the full translation will help more of the Roma people learn about God's love through the Bible and ultimately result in many more lives changed for good.

From Bible a Month Newsletter, Dec/Jan

Count Your Blessings 2018

Walk into the Wilderness this Lent. Through daily reflections, share your journey with your Sisters and Brothers around the world.

How to count your blessings

1. Read the daily reflection
2. Count the blessings
3. Pray and act with Christian Aid to share your blessings.

Into the wilderness

Wednesday 14th February: Ash Wednesday

Today is also Valentine's Day. *What do you love?*

Climate change threatens the things we love and hits our poorest neighbours hardest. Extreme weather from drought to flooding forces so many to flee their homes. *Hold them in your heart.*

Thursday 15th

Imagine having to leave everything; your home, your family, your community, all for an uncertain future. For many of our sisters and brothers, this wilderness is all too real. Whatever they're fleeing, be it conflict or the devastation of climate change, they're all hoping for a new start.

Friday 16th

More than 40 million people worldwide are "internally displaced". This means they're forced from their homes but remain in their own country. They're often overlooked, without the protections given to refugees, and must create lives for themselves in unfamiliar places.

Take a short walk in your area. As you walk, thank God for everything that brings you joy in your community.

Weekend 17th & 18th

"Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, left the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness" Luke 4:1.

Jesus faced challenges in the wilderness but was not alone. The Holy Spirit guided him on the journey.

Dub works for Christian Aid's partner in northern Kenya. He comes from a family of nomadic farmers and now speaks up for those in desperate need. Our sisters and brothers in the wilderness often find support from people like Dub on their journey.

Who would be there for you in times of need?

Ibrahim's journey

Monday 19th.

Nana and Ibrahim's village in Nigeria was taken over by Boko Haram. For the past year, they've survived in a displaced people's camp with their three children. Home is an important place for us all.

How many times have you walked through your front door today?

Tuesday 20th.

Just like the early Christians, many of our sisters and brothers around the world courageously stand up for their beliefs, even when threatened with death. Ibrahim refused to join Boko Haram, putting his life on the line.

Today, pray for all those who face persecution.

Wednesday 21st

When Nana escaped, Boko Haram stopped her in the road and stole her donkey. She and her children were forced to walk for three days to reach safety. They slept under trees on the way.

Thursday 22nd

Colombia. The Democratic Republic of Congo. Iraq. Nigeria. Sudan. Syria. These countries have the highest numbers of internally displaced people in the world. Ibrahim and his family are just one story among millions.

Light a candle and pray for one of these countries. Invite others to pray.

Weekend 24th & 25th.

“Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen....to share your food with the hungry and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter- when you see the naked, to clothe him, and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood?” Isaiah 58, 6-7.

Our journey though Lent is one of hope. Hope that we can grow in our discipleship, hope that our hearts will be filled with more of God's love.

This weekend, take some time to reflect on your Lenten journey. Are you letting God change your heart? How are you taking action for a better world?

Dimma's journey

Monday 26th.

Fairtrade Fortnight. Did you know that Fairtrade helps farmers protect the environment? They learn to grow their crops in sustainable ways and invest in projects that care for their community.

Challenge yourself to buy more Fairtrade and environmentally-friendly products this week.

Tuesday 27th.

The last time Dimma remembers rain in her part of Kenya was two years ago. Climate change is making droughts much worse in Kenya and Dimma's family have lost many of their sheep and goats. They've been forced to move in desperate search of water.

Thank God for whatever weather comes your way today.

Wednesday 28th.

Christian Aid's partner gave Dimma livestock feed and cash. Dimma uses it to keep her flock alive and buys food her family urgently needs, such as milk, rice and beans. They wouldn't have survived without our support.

Have you bought a treat today? Give the same amount to help people like Dimma.

Thursday 1st March

It's not just Dimma's family that can't survive where they are. Climate change makes survival a struggle for millions. Everyone should have a safe home.

Friday 2nd March

Dimma's journey has been difficult, but she and her family have now settled in their new home. Now she's near a shop, so she can buy milk for her children, giving them a healthy diet. It's a small but significant step to a better life.

Could you live without milk in your tea or coffee? Try it today.

Weekend 3rd & 4th.

“He scattered the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables” John 2: 15. When Jesus saw his Father's house being exploited, he immediately took action to restore justice. *This weekend, ask yourself: Who exploits power in our world? Which tables still need to be overturned?*

A Story from Fairtrade: Changing Gender Inequalities on Kenyan Coffee Farms

by Marion Ng'ang'a of Fairtrade Africa

A new three-year project aims to empower women coffee farmers in Kenya by making Fairtrade personal and addressing gender inequalities and economic marginalization.

Marion Ng'ang'a talks us through her journey with women coffee growers. Marion became involved with the Growing Women in Coffee project in 2013. Marion was leading a tour around the Kabng'etuny Coffee Cooperative Society in eastern Kenya when she found herself speaking to a group of 100 women who had come specifically to hear what she had to say about Fairtrade.

From women for women

“I thought there would be 5 or 10 women there. The team had told the women I was coming and 100 of them turned up! I didn't have anything to share with them at that stage, but I was touched by their support. I told them that we would tell their story.

“And so, we sat down with the women and asked them what they needed, and we could work together to help bring about empowerment of women in their communities.”

Marion describes this coffee cooperative as really special and forward thinking.

“It is a truly ground up initiative. The change came first from a man – our hero – the Chairman of the Kabng'etuny group, Samson Koskei.

“As part of the Fairtrade certification a cooperative has to address marginalised groups, they have to comply with Fairtrade standards, including issues such as child labour, gender equality and environmental concerns.

“In Kenya, the most marginalised were the women, and the youth.”

Breaking cultural barriers

“In Kenya a woman will first help out on her father’s farm, and then she will work on her husband’s farm when she is married. She will work often 12 hours a day, tending the coffee bushes and attending to household duties. This includes fetching firewood, cooking and cleaning. She has no time of her own and no property or money of her own.”

Samson Koskei decided to give his wife some of his coffee bushes to see how this might change the gender imbalance.

“Because women do not own their own property, they cannot sell their own coffee, and they cannot become a member of the co-operative. Through ‘asset transfer’ of coffee bush ownership from men to their female partners, women can become full cooperative members and control the income which is generated from their coffee.

“Women who have grown up in the village, gone to school in the village down the hill and moved to their husband’s village next door, can now go to the shop, buy maize to make the family’s staple food ugali (a mixture made from maize flour that resembles mashed potato or polenta). Because they own their own coffee bushes they can be a member of the cooperative society, they can attend meetings where their voices are heard, and they can learn how to grow higher quality coffee.”

Wider impact

“The impact of empowering women stretches into the community. Training women – the greater part of the workforce in most coffee cooperatives in Kenya – means not only that their coffee plantations can become more productive, but that they learn about diversity and how to gain a secondary income from their smallholdings, they learn about food security and cover crops and they also learn about how to protect their products from the impact of climate change.

“They say to train a woman is to train a whole nation. This project certainly shows that is true in these communities!”

Pioneering for the future

“It has been amazing to watch this project develop. The next stage is to market and sell the women’s coffee. It will be the first Fairtrade certified coffee grown by women in Kenya – where others have failed. We need to make sure the coffee gets the right marketing and is the right quality so that people will keep on buying it, and the impact of the project will be felt for longer and spread into even more areas.”

From the Fairtrade blog online

Smile!

- Sad news indeed. The promoters of super Groups Cream and The Jam have had to cancel a Tour of Devon and Cornwall, because they can't decide which one goes on first.
- I got mugged by 6 dwarfs last night. Not happy.
- Breaking news. A cement mixer has collided with a prison van on the A1. Police are looking for 10 hardened criminals.
- I dreamed about drowning in an ocean of orange pop last night. It took me a while to work out it was just a Fanta Sea.
- The next time you get a nuisance call from an unknown number, just say, "It's done, but there's blood everywhere"
- I remember I signed up in the army, but I just couldn't get my feet right on the parade squares and just couldn't work out how to walk properly in time with everyone else. Eventually they had to give me my marching orders.
- A long time ago I worked in a café and got into a blazing row with a customer who thought I was drinking out of their mug. Eventually I decided it wasn't my cup of tea.
- I've got a job interview today to become an Argos delivery driver. To show them that I'll fit in well, I'm going to turn up anytime I like between 7 am and 7pm.
- I once worked in a medical school putting together the study skeletons. But I kept losing bits of the arm and never managed to finish one properly. Eventually they had to give me the elbow.
- Just been told my local vicar hasn't been seen since last night and didn't turn up for Sunday service this morning. Anyone got a number for Missing Parsons?
- A group of chess enthusiasts checked into a hotel and were standing in the lobby discussing their recent tournament victories. After about an hour, the manager came out of the office and asked them to disperse. "But why?" they asked, as they moved off, "because" he said, "I can't stand chess nuts boasting in an open foyer."
- My wife is always blowing things out of proportion. She single handedly ruined my balloon animal business.

With thanks to LIVErNEWS, the support letter for Liver Patients, their carers and families.

Fairtrade Fortnight

Many Churches, including Trinity, signed up years ago to be a “Fairtrade Church”.

This involved trying always to use Fairtrade goods where possible in the church and at home.

Looking around at Trinity, it seems to have gone out of fashion. Only the coffee morning and one organisation that I know of use Fairtrade coffee and probably only the coffee morning use Fairtrade tea and sugar.

It is sometimes a bit difficult to find Fairtrade in the supermarkets today, but all Marks & Spencer and Co-op tea and coffee are Fairtrade and even Aldi sell one line of Fairtrade coffee and at least one tea.

These days Fairtrade tea and coffee are just as good and sometimes better than the rest and usually only a little bit more expensive.

I know that some of us make a point of buying Fairtrade whenever we can. Bananas, tea and coffee are the usual regular things that you may get but also Fairtrade Easter Eggs are sometimes available along with Fairtrade chocolate. So, when you’re not keeping an eye on your figure, think of the small producers that rely on us to exist and not be put out of business and their livelihood by the ever present big business.

This year, Fairtrade Fortnight is 26th February to 11th March. If you don’t already support Fairtrade, please use this fortnight to try and start supporting the little producers around the world who really need your help.

Alan Barker

I am a Christian

When I say that “I am a Christian”, I am not shouting that “I am clean living”, I’m whispering “I was lost, but now I’m found and forgiven”.

When I say, “I am a Christian”, I don’t speak of this with pride. I’m confessing that I stumble and need Christ to be my guide.

When I say, “I am a Christian”, I’m not trying to be strong. I’m professing that I’m weak and need his strength to carry on.

When I say, “I am a Christian”, I’m not bragging of success. I’m admitting I have failed and need God to clean my mess.

When I say, “I am a Christian”, I’m not claiming to be perfect. My flaws are far too visible, but God believes I am worth it.

When I say, “I am a Christian”, I still feel the sting of pain. I have my share of heartaches, so I call upon His name.

When I say, “I am a Christian”, I’m not holier than thou. I’m just a simple sinner who received God’s good grace, somehow!

United Christian Broadcasters post, on the Internet.

Nigeria- Mission on the Edge

By Pius Ogbu Sunday, Operations Manager for the Leprosy Mission in Nigeria.

We have a really wonderful church here in Minna, where I live with my wife, Doris, and our three children. Its hot today and even hotter in church! As I was worshipping God this morning I thanked him for the privilege of serving people who have leprosy, and those who are cured, but permanently disabled by the disease. I love to come to church to praise God and hear the Word, but I also find it sad because we have so much security on the door. There are barriers and police who carry out body checks as people come in. Many churches here even use hand scanners like they use for airport security. There is always the threat of attack against churches and Christians by extremists and terrorists.

Here in Nigeria, as across the Mission, we serve everyone who is affected by leprosy regardless of their religion or tribal background. But we have to be really careful in some parts of the country where we travel with the Leprosy Mission because of religious tensions. It can be dangerous for Christians here. Sometimes we take an armed escort when travelling to a particularly dangerous area, on the advice of security reports.

Despite all the dangers, my family has been kept safe. Every week I travel from Minna to the office of TLM Nigeria in Abuja- our capital city. The road is mostly in very poor condition, there are huge potholes and craters where it hasn't been maintained. The dust and dirt fly up as I drive. It was on this road a year ago that my family and I were attacked.

It's a two and a half hour drive between Minna and Abuja. Ahead of the drive I can feel a lurch in my stomach and plead with our dear Lord for his divine protection. It is only by his grace that I will arrive safely. After last year's incident, when the family were with me, we were all traumatised. We were returning to Minna and heard gunfire, not unusual in Nigeria. But within seconds, there were men with machine guns and machetes pulling at the car doors shouting at me to unlock them. It was then that God clearly spoke to me. He said, "Keep Moving". So, when I saw an opening in the cars ahead I squeezed through and slammed my foot on the accelerator. I was absolutely terrified. I then saw a man ahead with his gun poised. I shouted to my family to get down on the floor of the car and we drove through a hail of bullets.

When we got to Minna I stopped the car to check for damage. I thought it would be riddled with bullet holes but there was not a scratch and we were all amazed. All we could do was thank God for shielding us with his divine power. Tragically, violence is increasingly becoming part of normal everyday life here and we are coming to terms with this reality. Even at home in Minna we are not completely safe. Our home has been robbed at gunpoint twice.

Possessions don't really matter though. What matters are our loved ones. My colleague, Friday, who works tirelessly for the Leprosy Mission, experienced the violence of the militant Islamist group Boko Haram in 2015. His mother was killed by members of the group along with his sister in law and her children. Friday and his brother lost the whole family in the attack.

Kidnappings are not uncommon here. My niece was kidnapped on her 13th birthday. They held her for four days while we came up with the ransom money. Thankfully she was released physically unharmed, but the memories and trauma stayed with her.

Life is far from easy here, but people affected by leprosy have so much more to contend with than I do. People often live in extreme poverty, not knowing if they will be able to feed their children. How can you grow food if your hands and feet are deformed and disabled by leprosy? Doctors and medical care cost money and people are usually far too poor to afford this. There is nothing more devastating to me than seeing people living in desperate poverty, cast out by friends and family and their communities, just because they have been diagnosed with a disease that is easily cured.

That is why the Leprosy Mission is like a lifeline. I am honoured to be part of a team giving practical help, medical care, love and acceptance to people suffering with so much. Leprosy Mission staff always pray before each journey and thank our Lord for our safe arrival. We are entirely dependent on his grace. I am ready to go out again to serve God's people.

“God is our refuge and strength, an ever present help in trouble” Psalm 46: 1. (NIV)

Please join us in prayer:

- Pray for the safety of Leprosy Mission staff and their families in Africa.
- Pray for God to lead them to people affected by leprosy, in the greatest need.
- Pray for peace and an end to conflict across Africa.

From New Day, the Newsletter of the Leprosy Mission.

(The Leprosy Mission, Goldhay Way, Orton Goldhay, Peterborough PE2 5GZ. www.leprosymission.org.uk)

Is it Ministry or just a Job?

This appeared in Trinity News a few years ago but it is worth repeating and considering again.

If you are doing it because no one else will, it's a job.

If you are doing it to serve the Lord, it's a ministry.

If you are doing it just well enough to get by, it's a job.

If you are doing it to the best of your ability, it's ministry.

If you do it only so long as it doesn't interfere with other activities, it's a job.

If you are committed to staying with it, even when it means letting go of other things, it's ministry.

If you quit because no one praised or thanked you, it was a job.

If you stay with it even when no one seems to notice, it's ministry.

If you do it because someone else said it needs to be done, it's a job.

If you do it because God has convinced you it needs to be done, it's ministry.

It is hard to get excited about a job.

It's almost impossible not to get excited about ministry.

People may say "Well done" when you do the job.

The Lord will say, "Well done" when you complete your ministry.

An average church is filled with people doing jobs.

A great church is filled with people involved in ministry.

Prayers for the World

Creator God, you come among us in the colour and richness of this day full of promises. In richness of the earth and the joy of fellowship we meet you.

Living God, you sweep in among us in the life and energy which gives rhythm to the day. In the faces of friends and of strangers, we greet you.

Spirit God, you speak to us, words of challenge and comfort which give purpose to our day, whispering encouragement, calling us to love.

We listen to you.

Rev'd Tina Kemp, Starters for Sunday, churchofscotland.org.uk

A prayer of the church

What then is Apollos? What is Paul? Servants through whom you came to believe, as the Lord assigned to each. I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. So, neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth. The one who plants and the one who waters have a common purpose, and each will receive wages according to the labour of each. For we are God's servants, working together; you are God's field, God's building.

Corinthians 3, 5-9. NRSV

As we look ahead to Lent, it is a good time to reflect on why we still have so many different denominations- including many not represented in this end of Newcastle. We may dogmatically believe that we are right about sin and salvation, how to celebrate Communion, how to choose and train ministers, or how congregations and denominations should govern themselves; but God seems prepared to let varieties of conviction flourish. So, let us instead pray to be sincere, informed, yet humble in how we declare our faith; and pray that God may use us all to plant and water, according to his own will.

Prayers for Trinity and Allen Memorial

Father, we come to you with empty hands to receive from you.

We come with heavy hearts, that you might carry our burden.

We come with our self-satisfaction, that you might open our eyes to the needs of others.

We come with our self-centredness, that you may deal with our deafness to the cries of our neighbour.

We come with our hopes and fears, our joys and sorrows,

We come as we are, longing to be made new.

We come in the name of Jesus, because he first came to us. Amen

May God fill you with his life and hope.

May he strengthen you in mind and body.

And the blessing of God be with you now and always, Amen

Points to Ponder

- Let the manner of your ministry be your conduct, friendship, commitment, joy and peace, and preach them at all times. And if necessary, use words.
- Just because my path is different, doesn't mean I'm lost.
- In a world where you can be anything, be kind.
- An act of kindness is priceless to a discouraged individual. Sharing Experience, Strength, and Hope to all those weary in heart; with God on our side and Love in our heart, we DO make a difference.
- Dear God, you've forgiven me so many times and blessed me in so many ways. I just wanted to say Thank you! Amen.
- Dear God, today I give you all of me.... all of my situations, all of my stress, all of my anxiety, all of my fears. Please guide my way and give me your peace.
- You may be fighting some serious battles right now. But, the good news is that God is bigger than anything you're facing. Never lose hope!
- When you are down to nothing, God is up to something.
- Thank you, God, for another beautiful day and for choosing me to be part of Your plan.
- Grace is when God gives us good things that we don't deserve. Mercy is when He spares us from bad things we deserve. Blessings are when He is generous with both. God is good all the time!
- Leave footprints of kindness wherever you go.
- Home is not where you are from, it is where you belong. Some of us travel the whole world to find it. Others find it in a person.
- God's peace will not only come into your heart in prayer but will bring stability into your entire being.

The above are mostly from the Internet and cannot be attributed to any particular author.

Little Weed

I've just been out in the garden this morning doing a bit of tidying up. I know that God created all things, so I guess the weeds and wild things growing in my garden are God's plants. But really, does he have to contribute so much!?

It seems that the wild grass is everywhere. It always pops up where I have dug over to put my plants. The thing is that you can pull it up from the top thinking that you've dealt with it, but it just seems to grow back the very next day. Of course, when you really dig down, you discover that the roots are quite deep and travel along underground to pop up again somewhere else. It took me quite some time to get to the grass roots and get them out. I guess that's life. There are some things that you have to go quite deep in order to deal with the real problem or it just keeps emerging at a later date and we have the same problem all over again.

One little plant caught my eye though. So, I got my camera out and took a picture to share it. It is so small I barely noticed it. It was growing between two big stone slabs in our patio area. It struck me that there was this little flower, all on its own, in full bloom doing what it was created to do - blossom even against the odds. It wasn't in some carefully maintained soil, fed and watered by the gardener. It just found a small space and did its thing, in all its glory. Even if no-one had noticed it, it would still have blossomed and do what it was created to do.



Ah! How often we do things well so that we are liked or appreciated. If no-one is looking then maybe we think, 'what's the point?'. That was one little weed that I didn't pull up and discard into the bin of garden waste. I left it to remind me that I should do what I'm here to do, regardless of whether I'm noticed or appreciated. As the sports logo says, 'Just do it!'. It's what we used to call Integrity.

From the blog of Mavis Andradez.

Open the Book

Is a project which offers Primary School children an opportunity to hear Bible stories told in an interactive way. A team of volunteers from across the churches are going into

Richardson Dees

Hadrian Park

Battle Hill

Denbigh

Redesdale

We are thanking God for the way have been well received and hundreds of children have heard two stories thus far. This half term we are doing 'A special promise' which tells the story of Noah's Ark.

Please pray for the volunteers and for an opening in other schools.

Deacon Gail

Allen Memorial Messy Church

Thursday 22nd February 2018 3:30-5:30pm

We have a regular attendance of 26 Children accompanied by parents, grandparents or carers. The Theme is based on stories from the bible with crafts related to the theme. Everyone goes through into church for songs and prayers. A meal is served, and we finish with the Messy Grace. (with actions)

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ
and the love of God
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit
be with us all ever more.
Amen.

Anne Gallagher

A Positive Response

14th February will be Ash Wednesday, the first day of Lent. What does the season mean to you? what sort of ideas does it conjure up in your mind? For many, it is associated with giving something up; an opportunity perhaps, to kick that unwanted habit, go at last on that long-intended diet, or deny oneself those unnecessary extra luxuries. All such acts of discipline have their place, as the teaching of Jesus concerning taking up our cross makes clear, but they give a very one-sided view of Lent, for, if anything, it should be about taking something on; committing yourself, in the words of Jesus, to going the extra mile.

That doesn't mean taking work on for work's sake, or looking for extra duties, demands and responsibilities. Rather it is about resolving to follow Christ more faithfully, determined to give him our whole-hearted discipleship. It might mean more disciplined devotion, perhaps more practical service, maybe more effective witness or possibly the offering of previously unused gifts. Whatever it is, it is more than giving something up; it is primarily giving something back to the One who gave us his all.

Consider today what Christ has done for you; then ask what you can do for him, and use Lent as an opportunity to respond.

***Pray:** Living God, forgive me that, too easily, I slip into a faith of negatives, imagining that you are more concerned with what I shouldn't do than what I should. Teach me that although there is a very real place for self-denial there is also a place for affirming and celebrating life in all its fullness. Help me, then, to use this coming season of Lent as a time to grow and learn, to deepen my faith and strengthen my commitment; above all, a time to make more room for you, so that you can work in my life and enrich my experience of your love. Through Jesus Christ my Lord, Amen*

From "Daily Prayer" by Nick Fawcett

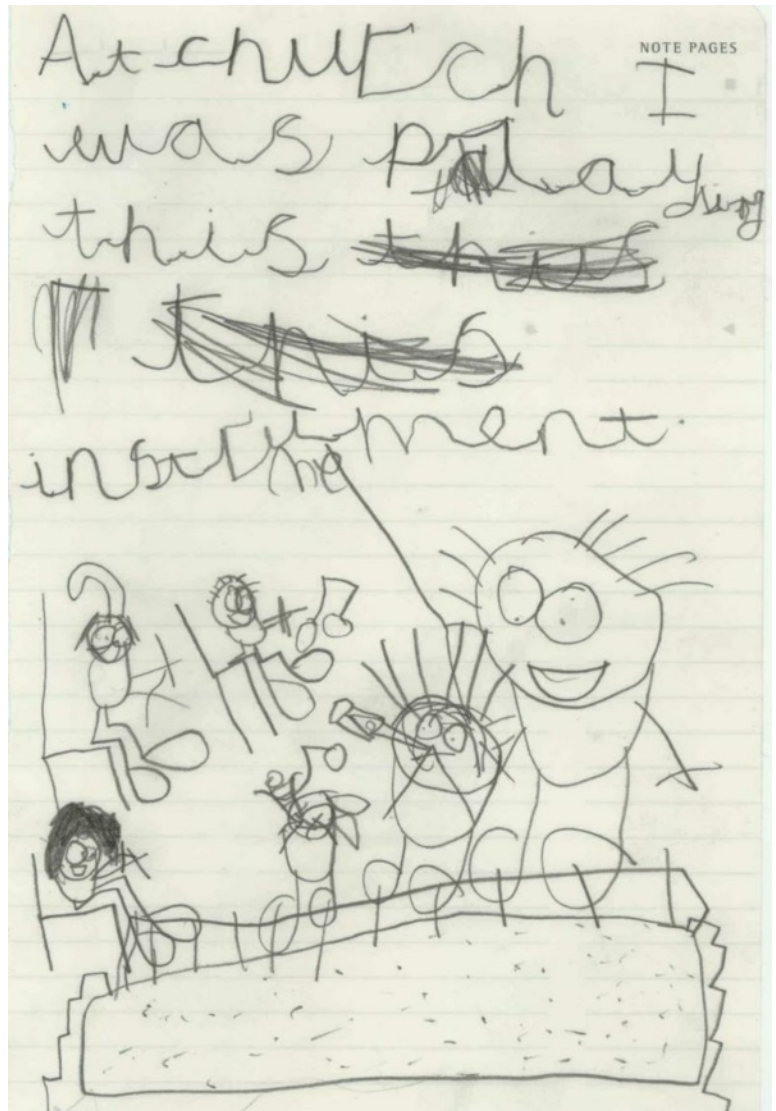
Allen Memorial Prayer Corner

Wednesday 21st February 6 to 7 p.m.

A time to come together for prayer.
Beginning with led prayers then a time for quiet individual prayers.
There are prayers and readings to take home.
Tea is provided.

What are you doing here?
WE ARE LOOKING FOR JESUS
What are you doing here?
WE HAVE QUESTIONS TO ASK
What are you doing here?
WE SEEK HOPE; WE SEEK HEALING
What are you doing here?
WE HAVE HEARD GOD CALLING OUR NAMES

During the Trinity Church Lunch at Soprano's on Sunday 21st January someone asked Shola What he did at church that morning. Sholas reply was this picture. "At church I was playing this instrument" I'm sure Rev Paul Cleever-Thorpe would be very glad that someone was paying attention and remembered what happened. And thanks to Shola for his very good picture.





February Preachers/Services at Trinity

- 4th 10.45 a.m. Mr Keith Jones.
 11th 10.45 a.m. Mr Tim Rogers.
 18th 10.45 a.m. Mrs Pauline Newman.
 25th 10.45 a.m. Rev Janet Jackson
 Communion Service.

at Allen Memorial

- 4th 10.45 a.m. Rev Paul Cleever-Thorpe
 6.00 p.m. Deacon Liesl Warren.
 11th 10.45 a.m. Canon Peter Dodd.
 6.00 p.m. Rev Janet Jackson
 Communion Service.
 18th 10.45 a.m. Rev Malcolm Newman
 Communion Service.
 6.00 p.m. Mrs Chris Carroll.
 25th 10.45 a.m. Deacon Gail Morgan
 Baptism Service.
 6.00 p.m. Mrs Margaret Harrison.

Trinity Door Stewards Rota

(All 10-45 a.m. unless otherwise noted)

February

4th Mrs D Kirkley

11th Mrs M Mills

18th Mrs M McCullough.

25th Mr R Falcus.

March

4th Mrs J Scott.

Trinity Saturday Coffee Morning Rota

February

3rd Mick & Zoe Watson

10th Susan Bewley &
Lynda McQuillan

17th Maureen Mills &
Lorna Morgan

March

3rd Sylvia Aston &
Janis Duff

Trinity Audio Visual Operators

February

4th Alan

11th Susan / Lynda

18th Mark

25th Alan

Allen Door Stewards Rota

February

4th Dorothy Kerr

11th Bess Bell

18th Ann Humphrey

25th Dorothy Kerr

Trinity Flower Rota

Sunday 4th February
Bill & Shirley Filmer

Sunday 11th February
Lynda McQuillan

Sunday 18th February
Sylvia Aston

Sunday 25th February
Janis Duff

Sunday 4th March
Renata Burley

During the past months Trinitys Communion Table Flowers have brought their beauty and our prayers to Tom & Mirium Leighton, Maureen Mills, Ruth Young, Shirley Filmer, Dorothy Barker, Peggy McCullough, Tope & Gemma Alibi and Jan Scott.

Allen Church Stewards Rota

February
4th Alan Emery

11th Anne Gallagher

18th Martin Edworthy

25th Alan Emery

Allen Messy Church

Thursday 22nd February 3:30-5:30pm

Allen Prayer Corner

Wednesday 21st February 6:00-7:00pm

Articles By ?

All articles for the March issue of the AT Church magazine MUST be passed to the editor by Sunday 18th February.