

REACHING OUT

from the Cockfield Benefice



Church of England Parish
Churches serving the villages of:
Bradfield St Clare, Bradfield St
George w Lt Whelnetham,
Bradfield Combust, Cockfield,
Felsham, Gedding, Gt
Whelnetham & Stanningfield

April 2025
Issue 125

From the Rector's desk:

I write this as we move into the fourth week of Lent, and with some spring daffodils nodding in the sunshine. It is so good to see the sun at last after what seems to have been an interminable time of darkness.

It does feel to many of us that the world is going through an equally long time of darkness, and it seems at times that we will never have the political and economic stability that we all long for. Many look back to what they feel were happier and better days.

I was reading an article the other day about nostalgia and the author was explaining why we remember the past so fondly. Apparently, we humans are wired to look back at the past through rose-tinted glasses - also known as 'rosy retrospection'. It's a tendency we all have where we paint the past in a favourable light. It's also the reason why we seem to remake mistakes from the past. We exaggerate the good parts about our memories and minimise the negative ones. It's something to do with helping our mental health. This comforts us and often helps us to bond with others. There's nothing like meeting with friends and reminiscing about the 'good old days' is there?

However, there are times when we need to be jolted out of our reminiscing and to refocus ourselves on the future. Yes, the world may be in a terrible state, but the same could be said by generations that have come before us.

We will soon be celebrating Easter - that joyous feast remembering Christ's triumph over darkness. And we are Easter people, tasked with bringing the light of Christ into the dark places in our communities. It is our job to show people that there is hope - despite all that is going on around us, and perhaps within us.

So, this Easter, may we all renew our faith in the God who raised his Son from the dead, to show us the way to eternal life, and in our daily lives confess that Jesus is our Lord and Saviour. And may our Churches glow with love and friendship as we greet one another on Easter Sunday morning!

I wish you a very blessed and chocolate-filled Easter,

'Alleluia! Christ is risen.

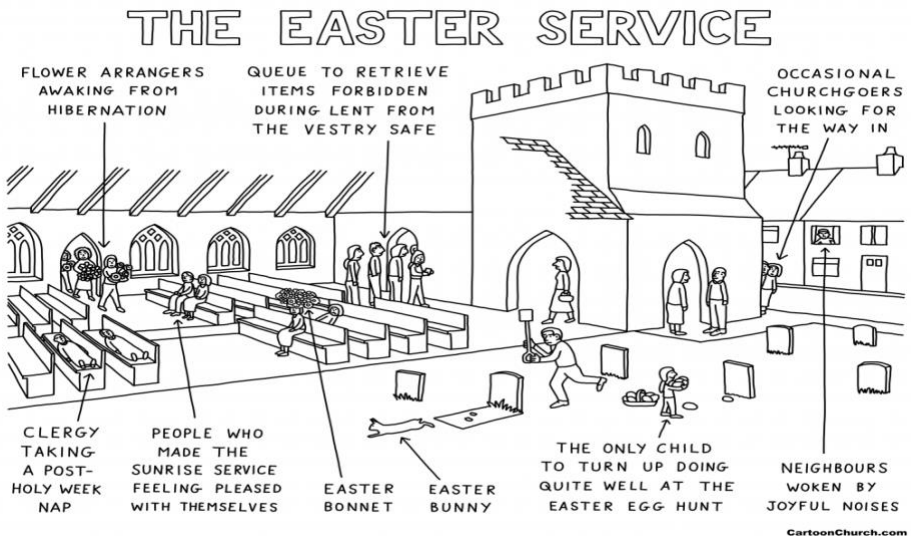
He is risen indeed. Alleluia!'

Sharon

Rev Canon Sharon Potter

Rector, Cockfield Benefice

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Village Friends (*our over 65's friendship group*)

The April Village Friends meeting will take place on **Thursday 17 April** at Felsham Village Hall, from 2-4pm. This month we will be making Easter Garlands. Everyone is welcome. Please let Canon Sharon know if you'd like transport. Contact her on 01284 828599 or 07825 086063, or email. revsharon2@gmail.com.



Big Green Challenge for April

Christians around the world are being encouraged to take legal action against polluters and those who finance them.

In a new climate justice handbook, the World Council of Churches sets out practical ways faith organisations can help protect young people and future generations from the climate crisis. Drawing on Christian teachings on stewardship and justice, it presents strategic litigation as a tool to “create hope and hold responsible parties accountable”.

The World Council of Churches, which represents a wide range of denominations around the world, said it had become “increasingly clear that advocacy alone is insufficient” as CO₂ emissions continued to rise, driven mainly by the “relentless expansion” of fossil fuel industries. The handbook also outlines a number of possible non-litigious actions including questioning financial organisations about their investments or reporting concerns about companies to regulators or bodies such as the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. Churches are also encouraged to keep divesting from fossil fuels.

(Source: The Guardian)

Legal action may be beyond most of us individually, but could you write to your bank or building society asking them not to invest in fossil fuel companies? Could you write to your insurance company asking them not to insure major fossil fuel extraction schemes?

The Bishops' Lent Appeal

A big 'thank you' to all those who have been following the Lent Appeal leaflet challenges. Could you please send any donations directly to the appeal, but please let Canon Sharon or Rev Richard know what you have donated so we have an idea of how much has been raised in the benefice. Thank you.

Giving to your local Church

We are all challenged by charitable giving at this point in time. Many worthy causes tug at our heart strings and sometimes overwhelm us as we are faced with adverts on radio and TV, leaflets coming through our door, and then the local church asking for more moneybut for what?

We can group the costs roughly into the following:

- maintaining and running the church building including energy costs, insurance, annual safety checks and repairs
- maintaining the churchyard i.e. mowing and any boundary structure maintenance
- contribution to the minister's stipend (salary) and housing costs
- share of the administration costs i.e. photocopier, stationery, clergy expenses etc

It costs roughly £400-550 per week for each of our churches in the benefice to remain open and to have services taking place, which is a very large ask of a small group of people - and there are 9 church buildings which are virtually all Grade I listed!

We are always grateful for the generosity of so many of you in contributing to the mission and ministry of your local church - and I am always amazed at how much financial support we already receive. So THANK YOU if you have given to us in any way, be it regularly through attending services and giving via the collection, by standing order or parish giving scheme direct debit, or by attending our fundraising activities.

Ways to Give

There are several ways in which you can give regularly to your local church. The Parish Giving Scheme is by far the easiest way to do this, by going online to <https://www.parishgiving.org.uk/home/> and searching for the church you wish to give to, and then you can give a 'one off' gift, or set up a regular direct debit.

Or, you can give by Standing Order if you prefer, please contact me if you'd like to know how you can do that, and if you pay tax by filling in a gift aid form we can claim back 25p for every £1 you give from the government, under the Gift Aid Scheme.

If you'd prefer to give cash at a service, that's great, and we operate an 'envelope scheme' in all our churches. These are great for those who pay tax, as we can claim Gift Aid (as above) from the cash that's given. You simply put your cash in the envelope, but you must fill in your name, address and date on the envelope in order for us to claim the Gift Aid.

I know that many of you value your local parish church, even if it is just simply a place where you can sit and get five minutes peace from the hustle and bustle of the day.

But your local parish church is more than that, it is a place where generations of local people have been christened, married or mourned. It is a place where days of national importance are observed, and of course, where the major festivals of the year are celebrated such as Easter and Christmas.

In order to enable this to continue, and to work with the young families that come to initiatives such as Messy Church or Holiday Club, to support the local primary schools and to run our over 65's friendship group, we do need financial support (as well as volunteers).

So thank you once again, if you are a contributor to your local church, and thank you for reading this!

CNC news

I am a member of the Crown Nominations Commission for our Diocese, which is the group of people who are part of discerning who our next Diocesan Bishop will be. They include six members of General Synod as well as the six diocesan reps. The group is chaired by Archbishop Stephen Cottrell, and the Bishop of London is also a member.

We have shortlisted candidates for interview, and the interviews will be taking place on 28-29 April. I would value your prayers for these very important days, and I hope and pray that the person called by God to be our next Bishop will also be the one that we choose! Please pray for all those involved in the interview process, and for those who have supported us from the National Church and the Archbishop's Appointment Office.

Canon Sharon

What's on.....



Plant Sale and Coffee Morning

Saturday 3 May

10am-12:30pm

St Peter's Church, Church Lane, Cockfield

COFFEE, TEA, CAKES, BOOKS, PLANTS and RAFFLE

Come and meet old friends and make new ones

fund raising for St Peter's Church, Cockfield



Coming Soon to St Peter's Church, Cockfield!

May Bank Holiday - 24, 25 & 26 May

Bradfield St Clare will be holding an
'Afternoon in the garden with Jazz' at The Lodge, Bradfield St Clare (the
home of Alice and Christian Ward-Thomas)

on Sunday 15th June 2-5pm.

Tickets will cost £10 and will include strawberries and cream, tea or
coffee. Look out for more details coming soon.

Music on a Summer Evening



Bradfield St George Church is holding a fund raising concert
on **Saturday 28 June** in the evening in the Church.



'Angel Delight' - a flute and harp duo will be delighting us with their music!

More details to follow nearer the time.



Messy Church News



I have just returned home from the latest Messy Church and, it being the day before

Mothering Sunday/Mother's day, that was obviously the theme. We based the session around the story of Ruth and Naomi from the Old Testament book of Ruth. (It's only four chapters, so why not re read it? It's a lovely story. (The book of Ruth is not easy to find, but it's the eighth book of the Bible).

The children spent the afternoon making a variety of gifts and cards for their Mums (or someone else special in their lives). These included flower arrangements, painted flower pots with a plant, decorating cupcakes, photograph frames complete with photos, button and jigsaw pictures and the story of Ruth in a jar.

Rev Richard told the story of Ruth at the end, unfortunately with no pictures as the projector was on strike. He said that families change as Ruth's did, but that we are all part of God's family and that he can be part of our family too.



As usual, we finished with tea before everyone went home tired but happy.

We were very happy to have an 'ex Messy Churcher' helping out this afternoon as part of her community service for school. She helped set up, made cakes for tea, ran an activity and then helped to clear up afterwards! Thank you very much
Amelie!



Messy Church this afternoon was very well attended with



over 20 children and assorted adults, nearly 50 people in all, including helpers.

And a big thank you goes to Pat and Morag for their hard work in the kitchen keeping us all fed and watered and washing up afterwards!

The next Messy Church is on Saturday 10 May in Felsham Village Hall from 3-5pm as usual.

Christine

Children's and Families Minister

Cockfield Benefice Services and Events - April 2025

Sunday 6 April Passion Sunday	9.30am Holy Communion - Stanningfield 11am Holy Communion - Bradfield St George 6pm Six2seven - Felsham Village Hall - John Harper will be speaking on TWAM (Tools with a Mission)
Tuesday 8 April	11am Holy Communion - Felsham Village Hall
Sunday 13 April Palm Sunday	Walk of witness from Gedding to Felsham, gather at Gedding Church at 9.30am, followed by: 10.30am Palm Sunday Communion - Felsham
Monday 14 April	7.30pm Compline - Bradfield St Clare
Tuesday 15 April	7.30pm Compline - Bradfield St Clare
Wednesday 16 April	7.30pm Compline - Bradfield St Clare
Thursday 17 April	2-4pm Village Friends - Felsham Village hall
Thursday 17 April Maundy Thursday	7pm Agapé Communion - Bradfield St George Village Hall (places limited - please book via Canon Sharon)
Friday 17 April Good Friday	2pm Reflections on the Cross - Gt Whelnetham
Sunday 20 April Easter Sunday	10am Easter Day Communion - Stanningfield 10am Easter Day Communion - Cockfield 10am Praise God Together at Easter - Felsham
Sunday 27 April Easter 2	9.30am Holy Communion - Gt Whelnetham 10am Worshipping Together - Bradfield St George 10am Holy Communion - Gedding

A service of Celtic-style Morning Prayer is usually held every Tuesday at Cockfield at 9am and at Stanningfield every Thursday at 9am visit www.cockfieldbenefice.com for more details. (Tuesday 22 and Thursday 24 April there will be no Celtic-style Morning Prayer). Please note there is no Knit 'n' natter this month.