

**For enquiries please contact Revd Dr Robert Brown**

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**From the Register:**

**Funerals**

Patricia Hannah Barnes Tuddenham (nee Jameson), age 74, of Bramble Court, Brampton. Ashes interred at St Marys Hethersgill, 15<sup>th</sup> August 2020

**Notices**

**Sunday Services** will recommence with **Morning Prayer at 10am on Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> September at Stapleton Church**. The following restrictions apply to all services held in any of our churches until further notice. We are not allowed any singing and face masks must be worn indoors at all times. Alternate pews are blocked off, and everyone must maintain 2m distance (except people in the same household), including when seated, and when socialising after the service. The church wardens also have to do Test and Trace, which means we will need written contact details and telephone numbers for everyone who attends the service, and a plan of where they are seated during the service. We will need to keep these details for 21 days from the service date. Everyone is asked to use hand sanitiser (provided) as they enter and leave the church.

We had our benefice joint PCC meeting at Stapleton Hall on 17<sup>th</sup> August to discuss how to recommence worship in our churches. Approximately half of all PCC members were absent, mostly because they are still self-isolating. This reflects the general situation within the benefice among our more elderly community: many folk are still very nervous about mixing with others, and others are vulnerable and therefore self-isolating. A wide range of views was expressed, both by those present and those who got in touch before the meeting. However, there was a general sense that, given the highly unstable circumstances in which we live at the moment, and the continued reticence of many to mix, we should ease into services, which should resume with one service a fortnight that rotates around the benefice. I will therefore be drawing up a rota for the coming months based on this pattern. Services will be mainly morning prayer, with an occasional service of Holy Communion, which will be in one kind only (just bread).

**The next Benefice PCC meeting will be at 2pm on Monday 12<sup>th</sup> October at Stapleton Hall** to review the situation with church services, events and finances

This virus and the consequential lockdown has affected us all as a community. It is only right that we respond as a community. Please can I therefore urge each of you to support each other's churches by travelling to services around the benefice if you are able. There is such joy in coming together to worship God, and it demonstrates a commitment to our wider community, and a recognition that we are not alone – that we are there for each other. And we are, aren't we?

**Churches are open for individual private prayer (except Hethersgill)**. However, if you wish to use the church, please adhere strictly to distancing rules if you meet anyone else there and clean your hands before and after entering. Hand sanitiser is provided. Please also do not handle any books in church.

**Funerals** will continue to be held at the graveside unless weather conditions dictate otherwise, in which case they will be held in the church. The maximum number of people that can attend is 30, including the officiant, undertaker, and pallbearers. Memorial Services can be arranged at a later date so everyone can celebrate the life of the deceased. Please see the notice above concerning Sunday services in church for further details.

**Weddings and baptisms** may now also take place, but again are restricted to a maximum of thirty present – including the priest and church wardens, and bride and groom or parents, godparents and children. Please see the notice above concerning Sunday services in church for further details.

**Prayer Resources**. There is a series of 15-20 minute Morning Prayer videos with a Celtic flavour that I have produced, focussed on the life of St Cuthbert. Please do use these as and when you feel able. They are not specific to any particular day, nor do you need to do them on consecutive days – just when you find you are able. They are available on the Bewcastle House of Prayer Website ([www.bewcastlehouseofprayer.org.uk](http://www.bewcastlehouseofprayer.org.uk)), where this newsletter can also be viewed or downloaded

As the distribution of paper copies of the newsletter is severely restricted at present, we have arranged several pick-up points around the Benefice where you can collect a copy from a box. These are:

Kirklington Church porch, Hethersgill Church porch, Stapleton Church, Bewcastle Church, Stapleton Parish Hall Porch, Smithfield Garage office, Garry Phillip's Garage, and Mary Phillips, 7 Sleetbeck.

This Newsletter can also be downloaded from the following sites: [www.Bewcastle.com/news-events](http://www.Bewcastle.com/news-events)  
[www.BewcastleHouseOfPrayer.org.uk/parish-notice](http://www.BewcastleHouseOfPrayer.org.uk/parish-notice)

Deadline for the October 2020 issue is 1pm on Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> September to Tricia Coombe, Damhead, Lyneholmeford, Roweltown, CA6 6LQ. 016977 48833 or [triciacoombe@damhead.me](mailto:triciacoombe@damhead.me)

Dear Friends,

The summer is drawing to an end. The young swallows have fledged and are exercising their wings, dipping and weaving through the air, sewing an invisible thread that binds them to the sky, avidly feeding, preparing for their first, dangerous flight across the continents, across the most fearsome desert in the world, each one just a couple of ounces of feather and hollow bone. Funny that they know nothing of how our lives have been caged down here for the last six months, as we know almost nothing of what they experience up there, and that many will not survive that journey.

We humans have had a long relationship with swallows that extends over the centuries. Take, for example, St Guthlac. He was an early 8<sup>th</sup>C Anglo-Saxon who gained fame as a young Mercian warrior fighting on the Welsh Borders, but then lived as a hermit in the fens around Ely. In his 'Life', the story is told of how two swallows entered his hut and started singing, and "without any hesitation they settled on the shoulders of the man of God, Guthlac, and then chirping their little songs they settled on his arms, his knees, and his breast." The man visiting him was amazed and asked how they had the confidence to come near him. Guthlac answered, "Have you not read how if a man is joined to God in purity of spirit, all things are united to him in God?" He then gives them a basket and places a piece of straw in it. The swallows proceed to build their nest in the basket. When they finish, Guthlac places the basket under the eaves and the swallows settle there. The same thing happened each year.

For the Anglo-Saxons, this nearness to creation, to the birds and the beasts, the land and the water, was a sign of nearness to God. They saw the creatures as fellow-heirs to God's goodness and promises, just like Noah did with his ark, and is why they populate the Bewcastle Cross. It is one of the reasons I have been recording services of Morning Prayer with St Cuthbert for you to join in with during this COVID lockdown period, because living where we do, being close to creation is one thing we have all been able to enjoy. The Life of Cuthbert is full of similar stories about animals and birds responding to him as he draws near to God. If you haven't joined me in any of them yet, please do. They have a Celtic flavour and are there for you, on the Bewcastle House of Prayer website, to help you draw near to God.

This month we will be holding our first Sunday service since 15<sup>th</sup> March. It will be a service of Morning Prayer at Stapleton, at 10am on 27<sup>th</sup> September. I am hoping that many of you will want to come, to pray, and to give thanks to God. We will have measures in place to ensure social distancing is maintained, and there is plenty of hand-sanitiser and other cleaning products to ensure safety as far as possible. Unfortunately, we are not allowed to sing and have to wear face masks indoors. However, if the weather is suitable, we can hold the service outside, in the churchyard. For this reason, it will be quite short – no more than 20-30 minutes. I understand that many of you are quite nervous about leaving your home, having been self-isolating for the last six months, and it will be an act of courage to do so; for others who are particularly vulnerable, staying at home is still recommended. There are other regulations outlined in the notices.

The long closure has also hit church finances hard. There is a persistent myth that the local church has a secret store of wealth and will therefore always be alright. This is a myth. It might have been true once, a hundred years and more ago, but it no longer is. The church's continued existence in our communities cannot be taken for granted, and is dependent on the support of our communities: ministry in our diocese, including our parishes, is very vulnerable. In fact, none of our four churches has enough money to pay for next year's bills – each parish needs to raise around £10,000 each year just to keep going. I would therefore like to extend a plea for help, as we have not been able to arrange our usual fundraising activities, and there is no clear prospect of being able to do so within at least the next 6 months. If you are willing to support your church, either by giving financially, and/or undertaking some creative fundraising activity, that would be so good! Remember, it is both God's church and yours – a holy space for you to pray when you need it, a persistent invitation to you to encounter the mystery of God, a community and family to join when you are ready, a place to celebrate and give thanks for your child, an altar before which to make your promises and lifelong vows to your loved one, and a sanctuary of peace to say farewell to those whom we love and have lost.

With my love and prayers,  
Revd Robert Brown

Due to the current pandemic the Bewcastle Cancer Research UK committee have decided not to hold this year's Whist Drive and Drawing. The annual donation letter will be delivered as usual and anybody wishing to make a donation can do so through any committee member or Gary Phillips or contact Carol 01697748604 or Kathleen 01697748210. Thank you for your support