

For enquiries please contact Revd Dr Robert Brown

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Notices

Sunday Services for October are as follows:

Sunday 11th October, 10am, St Cuthbert Kirklington. Morning Prayer

Sunday 25th October, 6pm, St Cuthbert Bewcastle. Evensong

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.

Annual Parochial Church Meetings (APCM)

We are required by law to hold our APCMs each year. Due to the Coronavirus situation, these were postponed from their usual requirement to be held in April. However, these must all be held by 31st October, and notice is hereby given for each APCM. Official notices for the APCMs for each parish, including agendas, can be viewed on the parish page for each church, given below, along with the dates for each meeting:

APCM for St Cuthbert Bewcastle at Bewcastle church, 7pm, Monday 19th October 2020.

<https://www.achurchnearyou.com/church/12233/>

APCM for St Cuthbert Kirklington and St Mary Hethersgill at Kirklington church, 7pm, Tuesday 20th October 2020.

<https://www.achurchnearyou.com/church/12250/>

<https://www.achurchnearyou.com/church/12251/>

APCM for St Mary Stapleton at Stapleton church, 7pm, Wednesday 21st October 2020.

<https://www.achurchnearyou.com/church/12259/>

Note that government law in England still requires us to wear facemasks at these meetings and we will maintain (un)social distancing.

Please also note that due to the requirement to hold these APCMs the united benefice PCC gathering that was planned for **Monday 12th October is now postponed** until a later date.

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 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), where this newsletter can also be viewed or downloaded

BEWCASTLE BOOK SWAP

This is a new facility for our area and you are invited to come and choose a book or two to read – then return it and change for another! Our own mini library: Wednesdays 10.30 – noon, Roadhead Village Hall – completely free of charge. Returned and donated books will be kept separate for a week before being reintroduced.

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 Garry Phillips or contact Carol 01697748604 or Kathleen 01697748210. Thank you for your support

And now as they say for something entirely different!

I read recently in the Church Times (which a local friend chooses to call "my Comic!") an article by a priest called Tom Lusty. With a name like that he's bound to make his mark! and I believe he has!

Anyhow like me, Tom was, for several years, chaplain to a local Hospice. What challenged him was that so many of those with whom he shared were in a dark place and needed help to get in touch with their deepest thoughts and fears. He came up with a form of prayer which he called "A Hand in the Darkness".

"Try wherever you happen to be sitting", he would suggest, "just placing one hand in the other, then with the other hand hold each finger in turn, letting it represent how, currently, you are feeling (not unlike, perhaps, the telling of a Rosary).

First your thumb, which, simply because it is your strongest finger, is often associated with force, and the pain that sometimes results. Let this remind you of your own present physical or emotional pain. Despair. Depression, Loneliness, Stress.

Next to it your index finger – often associated with authority. The finger which beckons and says "Come here. We need to talk," making you feel nervous or scared. Hold this finger and explore whatever is making you afraid. Fear of the unknown perhaps. Of no longer being in control or able to see round the corner.

Your middle finger is often associated with anger. The finger with which we might express our outrage when someone has just cut us up on the road! What currently is making you angry? A sense of injustice perhaps? Why me? Or, if there is a God, why doesn't He come to my help?

Your fourth finger (your ring finger) is your weakest. So a natural link with that feeling of powerlessness. Like all the other patients around you increasingly dependent on others – the skills of professional staff, the love and kindness of family and friends.

Last your little finger – the smallest – a natural link with that sense – common to us all – of feeling inadequate, small. No blue plaque outside your door! Instead, perhaps just that sense that (wrongly of course) you count for nothing. That when you depart this world you will have left nothing behind to show for your life. Just an ordinary person soon to be gone and forgotten.

That simple exercise, he said, apparently helped many to relate to whatever really was the darkness within. In a Hospice situation there was an obvious connect.

Reading his article, I found myself thinking "But why only in a Hospice?" Those same feelings of anger, anxiety, fear, resentment, inadequacy are a normal part of everyday living, and our natural Christian instinct should be not just to own them but to bring them to Our Lord – entrusting all that we truly are to His Love and Care.

I came across, recently, these words by C.S. Lewis. "God whispers to us in our pleasures. He speaks to us in our consciences, but He shouts at us in our pain." Why? Because He knows (and has taught us) that Faith is not just about the easy things of life - "Tea and cucumber sandwiches" – but the sharing of all that Life really has thrown at us – good and not so good. All that makes us smile, together with all that is Hell. "Share it with me," He says, "Remember that I too have passed that way before and that there is no place, no situation where I am not within you and beside you to love, to help carry and to bring you safe to the other side." It's no coincidence that so often faith seems at its most powerful in the darkest places – if only we have the courage to own and to share all that really is going on deep within.

The last verse of the Hymn "Fight the good fight" memorably puts it thus, "Faint nor fear, His arms are near. He changes not and thou art dear. Only believe and thou shalt see that Christ is all in all to thee". I have found that sometimes to remember that can be a life saver.

+ John

PS. Church Services of course are obvious opportunities to practise this exercise...So if one day when I am in the pulpit I see you sitting there, one hand in another but clearly miles away I like to think that it's not just that I am being boring, but that you are putting your time to far better use!

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, www.BewcastleHouseOfPrayer.org.uk/parish-notices

Deadline for the November 2020 issue is 1pm on Saturday 17th October to Tricia Coombe, Damhead, Lyneholmford, Roweltown, CA6 6LQ. 016977 48833 or triciacoombe@damhead.me