

The Benefice of Mitford and Hebron Newsletter August/September 2023

Dear Friends

At the moment, summer is a bit of a wash out, with cooler days and heavy rain. The farmers are anxiously scanning weather forecasts and parents are looking for indoor summer holiday activities.

Yet during these damp and dismal days, there is one plant that continues to bring a smile to my face. Despite the wind and the rain, it has remained firm and upright, a circle of sunshine on a gloomy day – the sunflower.

I am aware that this flower is not the favourite of everyone, but like all creation they have a story to tell about their maker.



If you have travelled past fields of sunflowers, you will have seen them turning their faces to the sun, welcoming the warming rays and basking in the heat. This boost of energy will help sustain them through the cloudy and stormy days. But whatever the weather they remain strong and smiling, even when bowed with the weight of the rain.

We too need to turn our faces to receive the living giving source of the Holy Spirit, to help sustain us through the challenges we may face. To seek to develop a deeper understanding through prayer and Bible study, to meet and worship together.

Not only will we be sustained and strengthened, but we will then be equipped to show our smiling faces to others, to help those in need.

Can you be a sunflower today? Turning to the Son and turning to others.

Prayer to Grow Spiritually Like Sunflowers

Lord, help me to turn my heart toward you. Anchor my thoughts and help me to bend and adjust my stubborn and unwillingness to change. Guide my steps and protect my spiritual growth. Be my wall of strength so I can lean against you as I grow. Make me fearless when the heat of indecision causes me to stumble. Help me to adjust my direction when life's storms threaten me. Help me to appreciate diversity and learn from those you send my way. Help me to follow your ways and not my own.

Amen

WHAT'S ON IN AUGUST

Sun 6th	1000-1100	Morning Praise & Holy Communion Theme: Prayer	St Mary Magdalene, Mitford
	1030-1130	Holy Communion	St Andrew's, Hartburn
	1030-1130	Family Service	St Andrew's, Bolam
Wed 9th	19.00	Mitford Historical Society 100 Years of Robson & Cowan	Mitford Community Centre
Sun 13th	1000-1100	BCP Morning Prayer Theme: Stewardship & Governance	St Mary Magdalene, Mitford
	1000-1100	Celtic Morning Prayer Theme: Stewardship & Governance	St Cuthbert's, Hebron
	1030-1130	Holy Communion	St Mary Magdalene, Whalton
Sun 20th	1000-1100	Morning Praise Theme: Welcome & Hospitality	St Mary Magdalene, Mitford
	1030-1130	Morning Prayer & Family Service	St Mary Magdalene, Whalton
	1030-1130	Morning Prayer	St Giles, Netherwitton
Thurs 24th	1400-1500	Anna Chaplaincy	St Cuthbert's, Hebron
Sun 27th	1000-1100	Holy Communion Theme: Creation & Environment	St Cuthbert's, Hebron
	1000-1100	Café Church Theme: Creation & Environment	Mitford Village Hall
	1030-1130	Holy Communion	St Andrew's, Bolam
	1600-1700	Evensong	St Andrew's, Hartburn

Upcoming events

Mitford & Hebron Vision weekend – Friday 22 September – Sunday 24 September 2023 – more details to follow.

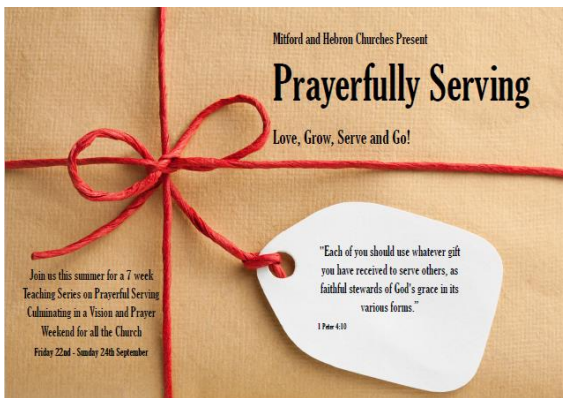
MESSAGE FROM OUR PRIEST IN CHARGE



Dear Church

Happy Summer!

As we rest and take stock of what has passed, we also turn our focus towards the next season. I believe that God is prompting us to think about His church here in Mitford and Hebron and where we might be going. I think our Mission Statement of 'Love, Grow, Serve and Go' is very much at the forefront of where we are and a pointer to the future.



As we consider how we live out these values, we will be thinking about them throughout the summer with a Teaching Series called 'Prayerfully Serving' in which we will be looking at bible examples of serving God and the community faithfully and prayerfully seeking God's guidance both for ourselves and the wider church.

You may have seen the lovely open space in church after the clean-up weekend, this is very much part of our vision in how we use our building in the community and extend that generous hand of hospitality and service. I am very excited about the next steps in our church and community journey together and I hope

you are too!

Each of us has a role to play in the life of the church and every person's contribution is vital in how we are called to serve. No role is too big or too small and every act of service is blessed and anointed by God. Perhaps, God is challenging you in where you find that role, maybe you are being called to a new role or being encouraged to step into something new!

We will have an opportunity to reflect on all these and more over the summer and leading up to our Church Vision Weekend in September. (22nd – 24th) We must be a community who are rooted in prayer and reflect prayerfully as we join in with God's Kingdom Work in our community together.

In the meantime, I pray that you have a restful and peaceful summer!

“Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms.”

1 Peter 4:10

Elaine



ANNA CHAPLAINCY BLOG

Anna Chaplaincy News

My heart is uplifted this morning as the sun is shining and the rain has stopped which after the month of changeable weather this is so welcome. Yet as I think of countries with fires, wind and the catastrophic effect, complaining should certainly not be what I am about regarding our summer weather. Thankfulness to God is what I should feel.



To glad news now- my wildflower seeds, duly given to 'our more senior' as our King asked us to plant wildflowers during the Coronation Year - mine have been planted and are beginning to flower, with hopefully, a lot more to come. To my delight as well there have been so many fluffy bumble bees hovering around the blooms. Each morning as I open the back door I look out for these lovely bees and am really pleased to see them. Attached is a photograph. It is hoped that your wildflowers along with bees are doing as well. We do have seeds left and if you would like some more, please contact Janice or myself.

Our trips to the opera and ballet viewings at the Vue, Cramlington have been most enjoyable. Although the programme beginning September 2023 has not been advertised, the information we have had sounds a very varied, lively selection of opera and ballet to suit all tastes. More details to follow. Hopefully they will be afternoon performances and we can share transport. It is a delightful experience to relax in huge comfortable seats and be completely transported to another world for an afternoon of pure indulgence. All this while you can enjoy your favourite tipple and munch on chocolate treats.

During this summer our small group 'Tea or Coffee' get togethers have been very welcomed and enjoyed — don't worry your turn will come! Our generation certainly share points of view and lively discussion plus enjoying eats and drinks together. The love of God has always been around us in this precious time, strong and there!

The services at Hebron during each calendar month are much appreciated including the Thursday afternoon service which has fellowship afterwards (cup of tea and chatter). We would be so pleased to see you if you can manage and if you need transport do let us know. We are also finding the use of the printed booklet of Morning and Evening Prayer so helpful, no longer searching through flimsy pages or trying to read print that is too small. A big thank you for this resource.

Janice and I continue to make home visits, which gives us time to listen, to talk, to share & to pray. Home Communion can also be arranged. Confidentiality always being respected. Our phone numbers are in this Newsletter under 'Contact Details'.

The Memory Garden continues to progress thanks to the dedicated work of the Churchyard Group. The ribbons with prayers which church members and the community tied on the church railings and gates during the Covid Pandemic have now all been carefully buried deep in the soil of the garden, never to be forgotten. There is also a beautiful red rose, planted beside the stable room to commemorate the Covid Pandemic. This year the first lovely bloom was yielded!



May you continue to enjoy the summer.

Our love and prayers to you all,

Janice and Mary.

For your thoughts and quiet times, a prayer from Eva Laverick

Let us pray for the church and the world.



Gracious Heavenly Father, at this season of Peter tide, we give thanks for all those engaged in theological education and research throughout the world, for all those in training for ordained and trained ministry and for those who have been ordained this weekend in our Diocese of Newcastle. Fill them with your spirit, encourage and inspire them. We thank you Father for our ministers and lay readers at Mitford & Hebron and for all who lead our worship and serve as officials. Fill them with the transforming energy of your spirit.

We look with sadness at the suffering caused across the world by human trafficking and modern slavery, help us to eradicate its causes, poverty, injustice, corruption, and lack of education. May the church cooperate with governments and other agencies to raise awareness among the vulnerable supporting the survivors and protecting the poor from becoming victims. We pray for every life that has been touched by torture and slavery.

We pray also for those whose human rights are denied, for indigenous peoples, vulnerable minorities the destitute and the marginalised. Lord, we seek justice and security, freedom and mercy for our brothers and sisters in this broken and divided world. Let us participate in the freeing of falsely imprisoned, protecting the innocent and free us all Heavenly Father, who are held captive by sin.

We pray Lord for the end to war in Ukraine, Yemen, Syria, Sudan. We pray that those responsible seek to settle differences through diplomatic Channels and we ask for harmonious relationships in all places of unrest.

God our Creator, we thank you for the beauty and wonder of the natural world, for its rich resources and fruitful harvests. Renew our efforts to deliver a world of sustainability and to take urgent steps to restore and repair our fragile environment. We thank you for research into the expanding use of green energy and we ask you to help us take responsibility, even in small ways, for our own carbon footprint.

Loving Lord we pray for the sick in body, mind and spirit. Touch them with your hand of blessing and healing., We name those whom we know are unwell and commend them to your care.

We think of those who have died recently and whom we remember with gratitude. May they rest in peace and rise in glory.



Be with those who mourn, grant them hope and be with all those near to death: may the sense of your presence dispel their fears and may they know the support of your everlasting arms.

Heavenly Father we pray for ourselves. May we be prayerful students of your word, always alert, watchful and obedient and when you call us to action, we are ready to do your work.

Amen

Parish Giving Scheme

Please remember to have a look at the Parish Giving Scheme and think about transferring over to this – it will make things much easier administratively and gives you more visibility on what you give. If you want any help setting it up speak to Carol Thompson.



Regular Giving by Direct Debit

The Parish Giving Scheme (PGS) is a secure and simple way of giving to **St Mary Magdalene** on a regular monthly basis (or quarterly or annually if you prefer). It works by making a Direct Debit from your bank account on the 1st of the month, which is credited to [church]'s bank account by the 10th of the month. If eligible, you can opt to add Gift Aid and PGS claims this on our behalf, passing it back to **St Mary Magdalene** which benefits our cash flow.

Optional Annual Increases

If you opt to increase your gift annually, PGS will write to you and advise you of the new amount. If this is acceptable you don't need to do anything, but you can choose to add more or to decrease the amount if you wish. If the majority of our planned givers were to opt for this, it would have a huge impact on our finances. Like many churches, one of the problems we face is that of 'static giving', often through inertia rather than intention.

One-Off Giving

It is also possible to make a one-off gift online and add Gift Aid if you are eligible. Instead of setting up a new Direct Debit, you use a debit or credit card, Apple Pay or Google Pay. Scan the QR code to get started.

Three ways you can set up a regular gift with PGS

- Online at www.parishgiving.org.uk or simply scan the QR code above
- By phone: 0333 002 1271, Monday to Friday 9.00am-5.00pm
- By post using the application form at the back of church

You will need your bank details to set up the Direct Debit and, for phone or postal applications, **St Mary Magdalene's** unique parish code **250625230**.

Thank you for considering this option in your support of
St Mary Magdalene Mitford

MISSION AND CHARITY GROUP NEWS

We are planning to welcome our friends from the HUB on Sunday 10th September. The day will follow the pattern of similar visits, with lunch and tea being provided, as well as entertainment, fun, fellowship, and games.

This event is a highlight in both calendars, and we know we can rely on our church family to support this visit by practical donations and their personal presence.

The timetable for the visit will be as follows:

12 noon to 12.30 – Arrival and welcome by the Mission and Charity Group

12.30 to 2.00 pm – Lunch – hosted by Mission and Charity Group.

2.00 to 4.30 – Entertainment, games, activities, tea and cake. During this time, we would encourage members of our Church family to meet the group, talk with our visitors and join in the activities. As usual during this time, there will be a very competitive game of musical chairs involving the adults!!!!



Contributions of traybakes/cakes and/or fresh fruit would be very welcome. Please note the cakes need to be portable so they can fit into take home goodie bags. Please bring your contributions on the day, if this is not practicable, please contact Linda Fugill or Sheila Rowley or email news@mitfordchurch.org and your message will be passed on.

Please help make this a special day to remember.

PASTORAL CARE

“A new commandment I give unto you that you love one another as I have loved you”

We must indeed care for each other as he commands us.
If you need help, support, advice, or prayer, or know someone who does.

PLEASE know that you can contact the Pastoral Care Team.

Dick Quinby 07960792198

Mary Dowswell 07890269028



FAMILY NEWS

DIAMOND WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

The family of Rev David Johnson, who was vicar of Mitford in the mid 1980's sent the following message, when they were all able to join together to mark an incredible milestone.



On July 8th, 2023, Rev David Johnson and Doreen Johnson celebrate 60 years of marriage at The Lairds House in Bedlington, with more than 30 of their family. This includes 4 generations. Their wedding took place at St Martins Church, Barnehurst in North Kent July 6th, 1963.

David was Vicar of St Mary Magdalene, Mitford from 1983 to 1987 and Assistant Chaplain at The Royal Victoria Infirmary in Newcastle upon Tyne from 1987-1989. He and Doreen returned to the North East on retirement in 2004, living in Bedlington after 15 years serving as Chaplain to the Royal

Shrewsbury Hospital. Doreen has worked tirelessly for the Church as a support to David and a Reader as well as being his Secretary.

David is requesting donations for the Lantern Initiative at St Nicholas Anglican Cathedral in Newcastle which provides support for people with addictions and mental health needs.



SILVER WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

Elaine and Andy are celebrating their Silver Wedding in August and are inviting you all to a garden party on 5th August from 7pm – bring yourselves and a bottle and celebrate with them.

NEWS FROM MITFORD VILLAGE

MITFORD HISTORICAL SOCIETY

9th AUGUST - Mr Andy Cowan – 100 years of Robson & Cowan, the Country Store at Scots Gap.

13th SEPTEMBER – Rev John Rowley – A History of Morpeth (preceded by AGM.)

A warm welcome and an informative evening awaits everyone.



LET US PRAY

Then you will call on me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you.
Jeremiah 29:12

A small group are looking to develop ways we can extend and deepen the prayer life in the Benefice.



One suggestion we are proposing is to re-introduce a monthly prayer focus sheet. We are aware that we are blessed with a host of prayer warriors, who do pray continually for individuals, the church, and the world. The prayer focus is not intended to supersede such practices but rather to enhance them. There is much strength and comfort gained by knowing that others are praying with the same focus.

The points are intended to help create a togetherness in the prayer life of the church.

We do not have to be together physically, to join together in prayer, by the spirit we are united as we pray in Jesus' name.

Please be creative in how you use the Prayer Focus Sheet, perhaps you could agree with a friend or group of friends to pray at certain time, on a certain day. Use it as a focus in Home Groups, or for daily prayer time. You don't have to pray through all sections each time, choose your own daily focus from the lists.

If you would like to receive the monthly sheet by email, please contact prayer@mitfordchurch.org and let us know you are happy for us to send it to you.

If you would like to be included on the prayer list, then please contact prayer@mitfordchurch.org and confirm that you are happy to have your name included.

There will also be printed copies available in church.

If you have any suggestions for other prayer initiatives, then again please contact prayer@mitfordchurch.org

"A prayerful church is a powerful church." Charles Spurgeon

CONTACT DETAILS

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