

M O R P E T H PATHWAYS

A FORUM FOR CHURCH & COMMUNITY



Summer edition 2026

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Issue No 16

ISSUE NO 16

From the editor

Welcome to the summer issue of Morpeth Pathways.

Summer means many things to many people. It can mean Fair Day, Wimbledon, strawberries and cream or exams, hay fever and drought. Whatever it means to you I hope you will find something to read, stimulate or entertain you in this issue.

I sat down with the new Mayor of Morpeth, Cllr Dr Wendy Fail to chat about the challenges of the coming year for her. She has already opened a successful Fair Day and I'm sure there will be plenty more on her agenda. She is a whirlwind of ideas and energy. Who else do you know who has sailed the Atlantic, done a wing walk and helped to re-introduce harvest mice into Northumberland.

Wendy's colleague, Cllr David Bawn has written about the successful Fair Day and sent in some memorable pictures.

We have an article about Morpeth Camera Club, stunningly illustrated with photographs taken by some talented members. If you would like to learn more about photography either as a beginner or keen enthusiast they would love to hear from you. You will be able to see more of their inspiring photographs on the front cover of the next few issues of Pathways.

Summer is also a time of being in the outdoors, enjoying the colours and sounds of nature. Pat Fuller writes about Caring for Creation and the Festival being organised by Climate Action Wansbeck on Saturday 5th September to showcase the work being done by local groups in response to Climate Change. Rev Jeremy Cooper urges us to save the date for Sunday 6th September when the combined churches in Morpeth will be holding a special Creation Sunday service.

Liz Scott-Tatum is grateful for the volunteers who supported Christian Aid week in the town. The first week in June is the time as a country that we celebrate volunteers / volunteering – giving a little of ourselves can make such a huge impact. So, if you are thinking about volunteering it's not too late to have a look at the following web sites <https://volunteersweek.org/>, <https://northumberlandcva.org.uk/volunteering/>.

One organisation which welcomes volunteers is Contact, a mental health charity founded in 1986 by Gina Temperley, who worshipped at St James's church. Rhona Dunn outlines the history of the charity and explains the increasing need for its services and for volunteers. If times are difficult you might also consider the monthly Healing Service at St Aidan's; Janet Hedley explains what happens if you come along.

Summer is also a time for holidays, relaxing and maybe reading a book. The book group had a mixed reaction to their last book, but you might like to read along with them with their book for June. Or you might like to read the next chapter in the story of Brian the Elf who was made redundant by Santa Claus when he used AI to make Christmas more efficient. Martin Booth has sent us a cliff hanger instalment to enjoy.

However you spend the holiday period I wish you a restful and refreshing one.

I hope you enjoy reading this edition of Pathways. If you would like to contribute or have any suggestions for articles, please do let me know. My email address is sally.borderkeith@gmail.com. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sally Keith

Editor



Would you consider making a donation?

As part of our parish mission, Pathways magazine is produced locally and for donation only. If you are able to afford it, please consider making a donation via this QR code or visit our website www.parishofmorpeth.org.uk to make a donation directly. Thank you so much for your support



Weather Holds Off for Successful Fair Day

Cllr David Bawn looks back over another amazing Fair Day in Morpeth

Despite a few dark clouds, the weather remained dry and warm for the 41st Annual Fair Day which took place in Morpeth on Sunday 14th June to record crowds. The fair was opened by Mayor Dr Wendy Fail from the main stage.

There was a park and ride with vintage buses operating from County Hall and the crowds were enormous. Organisers estimate over 20,000 people attended the event; but there were no incidents and everyone had good day out. The Fair has been growing over the last few years with now many more additional stalls, rides and activities on the Stanners. Perennial favourite fairground attractions from Turners Amusements also made a welcome return to Newmarket, creating a real fairground atmosphere.

The first event in the programme was a fully subscribed children's fun run down Bridge Street, circling the Park and back down Oldgate Street. Later at noon the famous classic vehicles parade took place down Bridge Street culminating at High Stanners. Over 210 vehicles took part in the parade this year, which is a record.

Throughout the day excellent live music could be enjoyed from the main stage from Pop and Rock music, Colliery Bands and the traditional music of the Morpeth Pipe Band. On Oldgate the KEVI Steel band played to a keen crowd.

Morpeth is lucky to be able to continue this popular tradition thanks to the tireless work of the organising committee, many volunteers and the local businesses generously giving sponsorship.





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The Parish Ladies Breakfast – a chance to meet, share and give

Churches can be a great place to meet other people as we come together to worship, but sometimes, even though there is usually an option for a cuppa and chat before or after the service, you may not feel able to strike up a conversation with someone because you are new to the church, or you don't manage to catch up with someone you'd hoped to because you're already chatting to someone else, ... or you need to dash off for something else, a lunch date with family or friends, or to watch your children or grandchildren playing in a sports match, or to watch Morpeth Town play. Our lives are so busy now, and it is important to create space for us to be with others in a more relaxed environment.

Not to be outdone by the men in our parish who'd set up a Men's breakfast group, a small number of women in the parish thought it was about time to have our own group, which we refer to as the Ladies' Breakfast. Our first breakfast was 15th January 2021, and we have met monthly ever since. A huge thank you to Rachel Anderson who organises us all.



The group is open to any woman in the parish of Morpeth. It's a great way to meet new people if you have recently moved to Morpeth, or you want to meet and catch up with women from church. We meet for breakfast every third Saturday of the

month at 8.30am, at the Waterford Lodge, with vegetarian / vegan breakfast options available.

On average there are usually about 12 of us there, numbers vary depending on what's happening in people's lives. The cost of the breakfast includes a donation for charity of the group's choosing, with

one to two charities chosen at the beginning of the year by the group members.

The charities we have supported so far include:

The Leprosy Mission in Nepal, CAP (Christians Against Poverty), The Toby Henderson Charity, Mary's Meals, The Freya Foundation and R21.

We also sometimes have other events, which have included a day trip to Howick Hall, joint events with the members of the Men's and Ladies' breakfast groups - Sunday Lunches and on one occasion a Cocktail evening.

The Ladies' breakfast group provides a comfortable space to meet and catch up with other women in the parish. If you'd like to come along to a breakfast, please drop an email to the parish office, who can put you in touch with Rachel who organises the group. If you'd like to join the Men's Breakfast group, again e-mail the parish office, which can put you in touch with Cyril Meehan who organises the Men's group.

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Morpeth Camera Club

A welcoming creative community, where we focus on what matters



Last Tree Standing: Peter Downs

From September to April, we meet every Tuesday evening at Morpeth's Methodist Church for a lively and varied programme. Our sessions explore a wide range of photographic styles — landscape, wildlife, still life, creative and artistic work using imagination, and fun themed challenges such as "three of a kind." Members enjoy practical workshops, image-sharing evenings, and — always a highlight — inspiring guest speakers who bring fresh ideas, specialist knowledge and creative energy to the club.



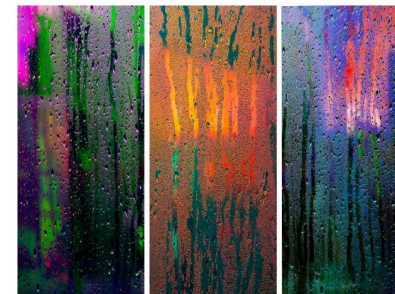
Milkyways Folly: Natalie Wright



Gloucester Cathedral Triptych: Jeremy Cooper

Competitions also play an enjoyable part in club life. They offer a friendly way to stretch your skills, learn from comments made by the judge, try new techniques and celebrate achievement. Whether you're entering for the first time or refining a long-practised craft, competitions are designed to encourage growth, confidence and artistic expression.

Learning and creativity sit at the heart of everything we do. We aim to share skills, support one another and celebrate the joy of seeing the world through a lens. Above all, we value the friendships and connections that grow naturally when people create together.



Backlit Condensation: Dave Bisset Cooper

When summer arrives, our meetings move outdoors. Most Tuesday evenings we head out on relaxed photographic walks, exploring a variety of local locations — riversides, historic sites, woodlands, coastal spots and hidden corners of Morpeth. These walks offer a great chance to practise photography in real settings while getting to know one another better.

We're also committed to building meaningful links with our wider community. Through exhibitions, collaborations and shared projects, we aim to contribute creatively to local life and celebrate the beauty of the world around us.



The Chantry: Stephen Perry

If you'd like to join us on one of our summer walks, it's easy to find out what's coming up. Simply check our Facebook page, visit the club website or send us an email. New faces are always warmly welcomed.



Boats Resting: John Thompson



Three Foxes: Glyn Trueman

Contact:
Email: morpethcameraclub@gmail.com
Website: www.morpethcameraclub.co.uk

Facebook: @MorpethCameraClub

Jeremy Cooper - Chair of Morpeth Camera Club

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Contact Morpeth Mental Health



Contact was started by a lady called Gena Temperley in 1986 who had tragically lost her daughter due to health problems. It started off as a self-help group for families and carers of people suffering from mental health problems. Over the years it has moved around town in different venues, some better than others.

Rhona Dunn
outlines the
increasing need
for mental health
services in
Morpeth and how
Contact can help.

However in 2011 Contact moved into the premises belonging to Margaret and Lenny Brady in Grey's Yard and it has been a resounding success. Contact covers the area of south east Northumberland and has over 100 members of varying ages and different mental health problems. It is a safe haven for many people, as most of them live on their own and if they do not visit us they just sit at home all day. We also help out members with receiving benefits as many of them cannot really understand what they have to do.

We try to make life interesting for our members and run activities every day including Creative Art, Knit and Natter, Maths Group, Brew and Banter, Film club, Photography, Funky Fitness, Mosaic, Meditation and Creative writing. Meals are also provided by volunteers and members as some of our members are really good in the kitchen and for many it is their only meal of the day.

Our members like visiting The Roost at Netherwitton, where we planted a tree for Nicola (whom many of you will remember).

We also have a respite caravan at Amble and whilst it is mainly for our members we try and get funding to help needy families have a holiday as well. This year we are using some money from the 'Tree of Light' to help out two families.

When we first started, we carried out Counselling in a small way but over the past two years it has grown and grown. From two counsellors

we now have ten and also four listeners, so it is extremely busy as we now have counselling at night time to help those people who work during the day. So many people need help and support.

We have outings and holidays and our next trip is to Holy Island.

A Board of Trustees is responsible for the running of Contact and many people volunteer their time as well. If anyone feels they would like to help out in any way, please contact us, particularly if you have a hobby you would like to share with us.

Financially we receive no Government funding, but have a Fundraiser and an Admin member of staff and we manage.

Rhona Dunn BEM
Chair

The Parish Book Club



This month's book was "The 100 Year Old Man Who Climbed Out of the Window and Disappeared" by Jonas Jonasson (2009). The author is a Swedish journalist and novelist.

Well! A lot of us had found this book tedious in parts. Ridiculous. Yet others had enjoyed the absurdist humour. The old man can't bear the thought of a birthday celebration in his despised nursing home. He escapes through the window in his slippers (suspend disbelief!) and somehow ends up with a suitcase stuffed with a fortune in stolen banknotes. He doesn't know that yet, but was left holding it while the crook went to the bus station toilet. Allan Karlson, our old man, simply boards a bus. Now begins a chase in which somehow Allan ends up in a camper van with more crooks, friendly ones this time, and a baby elephant which had escaped its own incarceration. It's entertaining to discover everyone's backstories. We find out about Allan's younger life, in which he gets tangentially involved in major 20th century events. This is what Jonas Jonasson described in an interview as "the lousiest century of all times".

Allan had helped Robert Oppenheimer in the making of the atomic bomb in his early days. Somehow he gets involved in major events close to world leaders, among them Franco, Mao, and President Truman. Allan said once that any political conflict could be resolved by putting the two leaders in a room and adding a bottle of vodka.

We did find the book over long and tedious in part but we had a good discussion.

Jonas Jonasson says "I think each of us should climb out of their own windows once or twice in their lives ... If you travel enough – mentally and physically – you will die happy."

Marian Martin

The next meeting of the Parish Book Club is on Saturday July 25th when they will be discussing "A month in the country" by J L Carr. If you would like more information please contact Vivienne Sommerville on VivienneSommerville@gmail.com

Meet the Mayor

It would be an understatement to say that the new Mayor of Morpeth likes a challenge. The Mayor, Cllr Dr Wendy Fail, has had an adventurous life so far.

In 2011/12 Wendy sailed from New York to Southampton in the Clipper Round the World Yacht race. That was two months on a 60 foot racing yacht with shifts of four hours on and four hours off. For Wendy the biggest challenge was sharing the boat with 18 strangers in a confined space!

Seven years ago, she did a wing walk on a bi-plane in North Yorkshire for charity.

So this year's challenge is being Mayor of Morpeth. Three weeks in to her term of office and Wendy has already enjoyed the Mayor-making ceremony and peal of bells rung for her and opened the Millenium Green garden fete.

The biggest event is the Town Fair. "I open the Fair at ten and then I will be there throughout the day," explains Wendy. "It's a great day out and a great showcase for the town. I understand that it has the biggest attendance of any fair in the county, including the Northumberland County Show!"

"Other key events I will be attending are the Christmas Lights Switch on and the Remembrance Day parade," continued Wendy. "I'm really excited for the year ahead. It's a massive responsibility. It is an honour to be elected and voted in as Mayor. This is something I will cherish for the rest of my life. I know I've got big boots to fill".

Her consort is her husband, Dr Bill Lynch, and her deputy is Cllr Pat Elton. His consort is his wife, Caroline.

Wendy's chosen charity for her year in office is the British Heart Foundation (BHF). "It has a personal connection for me because my father had a cardiac arrest last year. Every penny raised will go to the

Sally Keith sat down with the new Mayor of Morpeth to find out more about her and her plans for her year of office.

local BHF Heart of the Tyne, which covers Northumberland and Tyneside.

"However, for me the support is as much about raising awareness of the BHF's work as raising money" explained Wendy. "BHF Heart of the Tyne supports research, education, supplying more defibrillators and raising awareness of CPR. The BHF team will be coming along to events throughout my term as mayor and I am hoping to be able to go into schools as well as part of the challenge of raising awareness."

The Mayor's first fundraiser is on Monday 27 July at Lollo Rosso and you can get tickets from the Town Hall.

Wendy is passionate about Morpeth and Northumberland. She grew up on a family farm just outside Morpeth, going to school at the town's Chantry Middle School and KEVI. Apart from four years when she was a student in Scotland, Wendy has always lived in Morpeth and now lives in the town centre.

She works for Northumberland County Council at County Hall as a Senior Waste Management Officer. "It's a very demanding job," she explains. When asked about the balance between work and mayoral duties, she is clear: "I need to have strict boundaries with my role as mayor; when I walk through the door at County Hall I put the role of mayor behind me. However most events are in the evenings or at the weekend so that keeps things simple. I've worked at County Hall for six and a half years now."

Another challenge Wendy set herself was to gain a Doctorate in Waste Management education.



© Ken Stait

"I did it while working full time so it involved a lot of late nights," she laughs.

Wendy came in to politics by accident. She was asked to stand as a councillor for Morpeth North and, ever up for a new challenge, she said yes. This is a challenge she takes very seriously: "It's a massive honour." Given her passion for Morpeth, she explains that party politics does not come in to once in the town hall. "We work as a team for the best of the town."

She chose Rev Canon Simon White to be her Chaplain. "I picked Simon because he knows the town well and is a lovely guy. For me he was the obvious choice. It's amazing how many people in the town we both know. I am a Christian myself, although I do not practice. I feel it in my heart though," she gestures hand on heart.

"Oh," adds Wendy as we conclude our conversation. "I have a claim to fame. I was part of a team that reintroduced harvest mice into Northumberland, in a project with Newcastle University. Volunteers bred over 200 harvest mice which were released in Druridge Bay. 16 years later I took a call from the Wildlife Trust to say the colony was still going strong. The story made the BBC news and was a big story in wildlife media."

What will Wendy do next?!

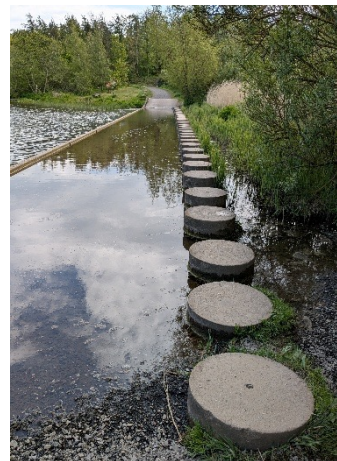
Christian Aid - A thank You

A time of thanks and to celebrate volunteers ...
do you feel a Calling to act?

Well, what a busy time Morpeth's Christian Aid Group had in May. Our volunteers have delivered collection envelopes through as many doors as we could in Christian Aid week, ran a number of fund-raising activities during the week at St George's URC Church, held special services or collections at the churches in the town, or have taken part in a sponsored activity.



Thank you to all the volunteers, and to everyone for your generous donations and support. We'll be able to let you know exactly how much we raised as a group in the next Pathways magazine. It makes a huge difference to so many lives.



During my sponsored 70K in May walk, I explored a number of the wonderful walks we have in Northumberland. We are so lucky to live in such a beautiful county aren't we? Some walks offered a few more challenges than others - have you crossed these stepping stones?

When walking, I also reflected on the difference we can all make through our actions for the people and things we care about. The first week in June is the time as a country that we celebrate volunteers / volunteering – giving a little of ourselves can make such a huge impact. So, if you are thinking about volunteering have a look at the following web sites <https://volunteersweek.org/>, <https://northumberlandcva.org.uk/volunteering/>

Together we can change lives, support health and well-being, nature and look after our environment. If you want to support Christian Aid, please contact us at: Morpethchristianaidgroup@gmail.com

Liz Scott-Tatum, Co-chair Morpeth Chrisitan Aid Group.



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What's up, WhatsApp?

By Martin Booth

Brian slipped a coffee pod into the machine and looked out of the window of his flat onto the garden below.

Five months after being made redundant from the North Pole, Brian rarely thought of the place now and had fully embraced his new life in the outside world. Following his success in the movie industry, Brian had been offered a job at a small company who created special models for film and TV.

At his interview he had painted the lining on a OO gauge model locomotive freehand and had been offered the job on the spot. He was happy in his work... more so than at the Pole, really, and he actually got paid for doing what he enjoyed.

Life had changed for Brian. He had taken the lease on a small flat close to where he worked and dressed in what he would have thought of as 'civilian' clothes all the time. In fact, his Elf greens hung in the wardrobe, along with his shiny black boots and his pointed green hat. Jeans and T-shirts with trainers were much more comfortable! As the coffee filled his mug, Brian added a spoonful of sugar and some milk, then stood in the spring sunshine, thinking. The Elves who had left the Pole had set up a WhatsApp group and, for a while, Brian had contributed to it, but as time had gone by, he hardly looked at it. Recently, though, there had been a lot of activity on it and he wondered if he should perhaps check it to see if anything was happening. Pulling out his phone, he opened the App and read through some of the messages.

What he saw made him put down his mug and stare at the screen. Sadly, many of the Elves who had gone into the real world had found it really hard to adapt and had ended up doing dead-end jobs for very little money. Even shelf stacking in supermarkets was out for them as

In case you were wondering, Martin Booth fills us in on what Brian the elf has been up to since Christmas and his time in the movies. What will happen next?

they couldn't reach the top shelves. Those, it appeared, who had stayed at the Pole had fared little better. Santa's AI, which had started the whole process, had decided that Santa's sleigh was an unnecessary expense and that Santa should ship his presents out by carriers. Santa himself was not happy with this idea, but had begun to look into costings. Jimmy, the engineer who kept the sleigh working, had handed in his notice and left for places unknown and Briony, the Elf who handled all the administration at the Pole, had started a secret organisation to overthrow the AI! Glancing at the clock, Brian realised he would miss his bus so he grabbed his jacket and headed for the bus stop.

On the journey he remained deep in thought about what was happening and was still distracted as he sat at his workbench and stared at the model spaceship he was building and painting for a TV program. After an hour he had done nothing, and his boss went over to him. "Are you alright, Brian?" he asked.

"Not really," said Brian. "Look, I told you about my history, didn't I?"

His boss looked at him and nodded. "Yes," he said finally. "It was a bit difficult to believe at first, but yes."

Brian told him what was happening at the Pole. "I'm worried," he finished. "I'm worried that Christmas might not happen this year, if Santa has no sleigh and no-one to maintain it if he did. What will all the children think if their presents are delivered by a lorry two weeks late?"

"And you say this is all because Santa started to use AI to cut costs?" asked the boss.

Brian nodded. "Then we have a few months to put things right," said his boss. "Let me make some phone calls." Heaving a deep sigh, Brian picked up his paintbrush and started to carefully paint the cockpit of the spaceship. Unusually, Brian had left his phone on the bench and the WhatsApp group pinged. Brian put down his brush and opened it. 'Brian', it said, 'I need to talk to you. It's Jimmy'.

'What's happening, Jimmy?' he messaged back.

'Revolution! Briony has taken Santa hostage in his office and has confiscated his phone!'

Brian was shocked and appalled in equal measures. That the Elves could actually rebel! Against Santa!!!! It was unheard of, but it led onto the question of what would happen now? Would Briony run the North Pole? Was Santa himself surplus to requirements and would be made redundant by the rampaging AI? Most importantly, what did this mean for Christmas? Brian stared at his phone, unable to think straight. The App pinged again. 'It's Jimmy again. This is a call to all elves who were forced out of the Pole by Santa's use of AI. Please return to the Pole. We need everyone back to save Christmas!'

Service of Prayer for Healing

Have you ever had bad news that a friend has been taken poorly? Or been in an accident? Or is severely depressed? Or has been bereaved? Perhaps it was even a member of your own family.

And then have you asked yourself, "What on earth can I do?" There are things we can do, aren't there? Send a card.....make a phone call....visit....do practical things like shopping.....

But perhaps we can't do much for some reason.
And perhaps we want to do more than we have done already.

So, "What *on earth* can we do?"

Well, there is always something on earth that we can do...it is...PRAY!

Because "The Lord is near to all who call upon Him, to all who call upon Him in truth." Psalm 145:18.

And praying is exactly what we do at St. Aidan's, Stobhill, on the second Sunday evening in every month, at 6 pm. We hold a service where we tell our heavenly Father all about the people we know who need healing in some way. We don't tell the Lord what to do, though we do tell Him what we hope for our person. The big thing is, we bring them to the God who knows them and loves them and wants the best for them. It is a simple service- quiet and gentle. Usually it lasts about 45 minutes to an hour.

We light our Paschal (Easter) candle, reminding ourselves that Jesus is the light of the world... shining in all the dark places of illness, distress and pain. We sing some gentle hymns. We listen to a short reading from the Bible.



One of us gives a short reflection on the reading, and then we bring to God the people for whom we have come to pray.



We may light a candle in prayer.

We may place a pebble in a bowl of water to symbolise our person being bathed in God's love.



We may write their name on a slip of paper, fold it, and put in on the plate to be offered to the Lord.

Sometimes we may have come for prayer for ourselves, and then we can receive the oil of anointing. The leader invites us to open our hands, and then they will use the oil to make the sign of the cross on our hands and forehead as they say a little prayer. We end our service by saying, "The peace of the Lord be always with you."

Now that is the end of the service, but not the end of the praying! The names on those slips of paper are shared with a small group of people who join us in praying for them **CONFIDENTIALLY** for at least the next month...and sometimes for as long as needed..for months and even years!

We don't always find out what happens when we pray. But we do know that God listens when we pray in Jesus' name. Psalm 17:6 says, "I have called on you, for you will hear me." And we know, from the many healings Jesus did, that God heals.

So if you know someone in need of prayer for healing, do come and join us at our next service. We would love to join you in praying for them.

Caring for Creation

Pat Fuller talks about the Festival being organised by Climate Action Wansbeck – and urges you to put the 5th and 6th September in your diary

It is an exciting time in Morpeth as there is a growing interest in how local groups respond to Climate Change. To celebrate this, Climate Action Wansbeck (CAW) is organising a Festival on Saturday September 5th, so that several Morpeth groups can showcase their activities as they work to care for creation.

CAW is a group created about five years ago to bring together residents of south east Northumberland and the surrounding areas to mitigate and minimise the effects of climate change, in partnership with others. The group is thrilled to be able to organise this Festival of Community, Nature and Environment. Each invited organisation will showcase their own activities and hopefully gain interest and volunteers from those attending.

At the Festival, CAW will showcase their recent citizen science activities connected with the River Wansbeck. They have been learning how to use water testing kits and will regularly test the river water from Mitford to Sheepwash. The results go directly to the Environment Agency who will be able to spot any pollution issues or water conditions which are out of the ordinary. This should lead to a quick response from the Environment Agency and keep the river healthy.

The Northumberland County Council Waste Management team will also be at the Festival. Their stall will provide information about how we can responsibly recycle our household waste. There has been lots of government legislation recently and it will be good to know how Northumberland County Council will be responding.

So far, other groups who will be represented include Stobhill Link, Cycle with Jan, Millennium Green, Clark's Bog, The Repair Café, Churches Together Eco Group and Greater Morpeth Development Trust. We look forward to other groups joining us, too. There will be activities to take part in, exhibitions, including the Wildlife Art Exhibition from Newminster School, entertainment and refreshments which will be sponsored by David Auld, Solicitors.

It has also been brilliant to see that Morpeth Churches Together have been talking and sharing what the different denominations have been doing to mitigate Climate Change. It has been so encouraging to hear plans for activities to work towards awards as the churches become 'eco churches'. Morpeth Eco Churches Together will showcase what they have been doing at Morpeth's first Festival of Community, Nature and Environment.

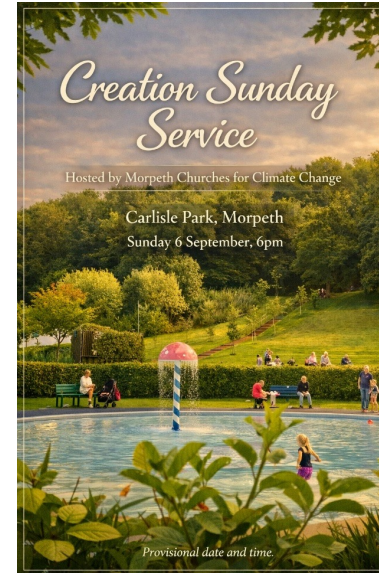
A Churches Together Outdoor Service is being planned for Sunday 6th September in Carlisle Park at 6pm to celebrate Creation Sunday. It all should make a wonderful weekend.

Pat Fuller





Creation Sunday 6th September



What Is Creation Sunday?

Creation Sunday is a day when the church gives thanks for the gift of creation and renews its commitment to care for the earth.

It reminds us that the world around us—its beauty, its seasons, its creatures—is not simply scenery but part of God's good work, entrusted to our stewardship.

Many churches mark Creation Sunday with prayers of thanksgiving for the natural world, readings that highlight God as Creator, and a renewed commitment to live gently and responsibly. It's also a moment to recognise the environmental challenges facing our planet and to

consider how our faith invites us to respond with hope, compassion, and practical action.

In a place as blessed with natural beauty as Morpeth and Northumberland, Creation Sunday offers a timely opportunity to give thanks, to pay attention, and to rediscover our shared responsibility for the world God has made. To this end we are planning an ecumenical creation themed service on Sunday the 6th September. We hope to hold this in the park but will need council permission, which has been applied for. We are planning a short simple service at 6pm.

Please keep the date in your diary

Sunday 6th September 6pm

Carlisle Park (behind the Paddling Pool and beside the bowling Green)

Jeremy Cooper
(on behalf of the Morpeth Churches for Climate Change)

Rector's ramblings

I'm so fat!

Last week someone was asking me about our recent Alpha course held in one of our family homes. They were genuinely interested in what Alpha was all about and asked me, "So what do people take away from Alpha, what would I take away from it?"

I'm finding it very hard in my old age to be sensible, and my auto comedian kicked in and I said, "Well most of us went away two stone heavier with ten new friends and a cookbook!" The quizzical look I got required a very quick, "Oh and we got to learn about Jesus, the Bible and the church".



But reflecting on that conversation and my apparently flippant remark, I still think I got it the right way round. I'm not sure I am two stone heavier, although Jane thinks I did get a little heavier after our recent Alpha. In reality it was because I found her secret stash of crisps and nuts and she's never going to find me out - although I have just realised Sally uses her to proof read all the Pathway articles, so I suspect I'm going to be busted by next week! The food was great and we took turns in cooking something for each Alpha session. My instructions were no puddings, so we would save time for discussion, but this rule was flouted on week one and every week after that someone produced a full fat scrumptious dessert which possibly did add a few calories to our daily intake, but was such a joy to share.

The hospitality, sharing, deep discussion and fellowship was what changed and transformed the whole group. I couldn't wait for the next Monday session. Yes as a Christian I believe that God was at the heart of all we were doing, but we sometimes forget that Jesus' most powerful witness was around a supper table with food.

In the first weeks of meeting, we were ten very different individuals with very different ideas about faith and life, possibly so different that we would not have even crossed paths. Yet by the last week we might still have had different ideas about faith and life, but we had come to respect and listen to each other with a deep respect and bond that's

hard to describe, I think I would call it family or in Christian terms I might call it "little church".

A very good friend of mine and local pastor Davey Falcus, who wrote "Gangland to God", and who is sadly no longer with us, always liked to say he loved being fat for Jesus. I had presumed it was because he was a large lad and in London if you say you're fat for something it's because you're up for it. But Davey told me he thought of fat as being Flexible, Available and Teachable, FAT, for God. FAT for Jesus. And to be honest when you are fat it's amazing how it can open your mind, heart and spirit to a much deeper world. A spiritual world so often hidden by the noise of the world we live in.

So, if you fancy becoming fat and you like your food and are curious about the Christian faith and church, why not join our next Alpha. But just to make it clear we don't do puddings. 12 Huge thanks to our last cohort from Alpha and for those who lead and host.

Many blessings

Simon

Rector of Morpeth

A promotional graphic for the Alpha course. It features a group of people sitting around a table, smiling and engaged in conversation. The text "Interested in finding our more?" is at the top. Below it, the word "explore" is in large white letters, followed by "life faith meaning" in smaller white letters. A large red question mark is on the right. At the bottom, it says "@ Morpeth Parish" and "email office.morpethparish@gmail.com or call Simon on 07749866402". A red circle with the word "Alpha" is also present.

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