**Feb 16th: Second Sunday before Lent**

**Coming up: Afternoon Tea – Leap Day: Sat 29th Feb, 2-4pm, at Colburn Village Hall, to fundraise for the Natalie Harker Memorial Garden…**

We are grateful to Cllr Angie Dale, who has offered for us to hold one of her fundraising teas to support the costs of the Memorial Garden. She and her team will make the teas, but *we* need to provide a team to serve them, to take the money at the door, and to run both a raffle and a tombola on the day. We’re going to need quite a good number to do this, and we’re also looking for good quality prizes for the raffle and tombola. If you would like to help, please speak to Marie or myself. We will have *a briefing over coffee after the 11am service next Sunday 23rd Feb*. We also need to get as many of our friends and neighbours as possible to come along to the tea support John, Deborah & Alistair. Please get it in your diary & offer to help if you can!

**Giving Back**

Last September Simon Eastwood, our PCC Treasurer, shared with us proposed budgets for the coming year, together with the level of giving needed to make them possible, through the new ‘**Giving Back’** scheme. Simon explained to us that St John’s and St Cuthbert’s need to raise £400 and £500 per week, respectively, to keep going.

Simon tells us that we have made a good start, but are only part way there. So far, 15 of the 40 individuals and families who received his ‘**Giving Back’** pack have responded. Simon wishes to thank everyone who gives to support either (or both) churches, and especially those who have been able to review their giving, as well as those who have been able to give regularly for the first time. He is concerned that there may be some who have mislaid the packs and may be wishing for another. If so, please do get in touch with him: treasurer@hipswellparish.org Simon, on behalf of the PCC, thanks us for our prayers, participation in the work of the Kingdom and in our generous financial partnership with our churches. As our gospel reading today reminds us, we continue to trust God and give him thanks for supplying our needs, and as church members we aim to give generously as we share in the task of growing God’s Kingdom.

**Lent Resources:** Today’s readings include the first Genesis account of the Creation, the overall theme of Ruth Valerio’s book, ‘**Saying Yes to Life’** (this year’s Archbishop of Canterbury’s Lent Book). As explained previously, Dr Ruth Valerio, Global Advocacy and Influencing Director at Tearfund, is a respected theologian, environmentalist & social activist.. It is a great book, and extremely well written! It is designed to be read by individuals either alone as part of a discussion group. To be used alongside this, the Church of England has produced some thought-provoking booklets with 40 daily prayers, reflections and challenges. There are two versions – for adults & children. We will be using these through Lent, and as a focus at our **Lent Lunches** (Wednesdays, 11.45am, following the weekly Drop-in, commencing 4th March). We will also be running a series of **Lent Course** sessions based on this material on Monday evenings, starting March 2nd. Please get those in your diary and come along!.

**Great sadness:** As mentioned last week, Baby Christopher Lucas’ funeral will take place at St Cuthbert’s Church at 10am on Monday 24th February, followed by burial at Hipswell Cemetery. The refreshments will be served in St Cuthbert’s Community Hall. Our hearts continue to go out to Ann, Mel, Jonathan, Skyla-Marie, Tiani and their wider family at this very sad time. In addition to the normal retiring collection, there will be an opportunity to support the Royal Victoria Infirmary, Newcastle, via a collecting box.

**Forthcoming Events:**

**Café Church at St Mary’s with Revd Canon Dr Alan Bartlett** This afternoon’s Café Church at St Mary’s, Richmond (4pm, 17th Feb) features Revd Canon Dr Alan Bartlett, Ministry Development Adviser, Diocese of Durham in conversation with +John Pritchard. This should be a very good afternoon.

Why not come along & hear what he has to say?

**This week in the Parish:**

**Tues:**

**NB No** **Veterans & Community Art Group** half term

**NB No Warden’s Hour**, half-term

**Wed: NB No** **Drop-in** half-term

**NB No** **Prayers for the World** half term

**Thurs:** 10.15 am **Funeral of TL Alice Brown** St Cuthbert’s & committal at Darlington Crematorium, Peter Kane presiding

**Fri:** 11.30am **Funeral of TL Simon Williams** St Cuthbert’s, followed by burial in Hipswell, Fr Richard, RC, presiding

***Prayers For those seeking comfort & healing:*** Lisa, Glen, Stuart, Lee, Eve, Graham, Angelika, Gracie, Derek, Tricia, Ann, Jenny & Pauline.

We pray for the families & friends of those who have died: **Alice Brown**, **Christopher Lucas** & **Simon Williams** .

**Next Sunday: Sunday next before Lent**

**St John’s –** 9.30am **Holy Communion**

**St Cuthbert’s** – 11am**, All-age Worship**