

## The Benefice of Mitford and Hebron Newsletter April 2026

Dear Friends

Welcome to the sixth of our quarterly Newsletters. We hope you will find this issue both interesting and informative.

As we stated last time, we would like to make the editions as relevant and 'newsy' as possible. We want to ensure as far as it is possible that you, the recipients are kept up to date with all the church activities and associated events.

We would therefore be grateful to receive articles about the activities of your Church group, what you are doing, plans for the future, help needed etc. You could also include photographs. The Newsletter is issued once a quarter, so lots of time for you to pen an article.

### Seeking

Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?" John 20:15

What does it mean to seek Jesus? According to the Bible Hub... 'seeking Jesus means actively pursuing a personal relationship with him through prayer, worship and wholehearted devotion, guided by Scripture'.

Seek in the Bible conveys more than a simple search. The Hebrew root word darash implies a pursuit of knowledge and a closer relationship. The Greek zeto embodies searching, desiring and striving to obtain what is sought.

Seeking therefore is not passive but active and intentional. It is an ongoing process requiring effort, reflection and commitment. It is about pursuing a deeper relationship with Jesus, understanding his teachings and living according to his example. Reading the Bible, spending time in prayer and worship, being still in God's presence and joining with fellow Christians are all ways that aid our seeking.

On that early Easter morning Mary went seeking Jesus, and found him, not as she expected. He was not lying dead in a sealed tomb but risen having borne all our sins on the cross and offers us all new life, new hope and new beginnings. Perhaps, we like Mary may seek Jesus and find him in the unexpected, encouraging us and challenging us, leading us into a deeper relationship.

We just need to follow the guidance given in Jeremiah – 'You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart' Jeremiah 29:13.

*Father, thank you for your powerful promise that if I seek you, I will find you. Grant me a deeper desire to seek you. Amen*



## Mitford, Hebron, Longhorsley and Upper Wansbeck Church Services

### St Mary Magdalene Mitford & St Cuthbert's Hebron April 2026

<b>Benefice Diary March</b>		
<b>Sunday 5th Easter Day</b>	6.00am - Sunrise Bonfire and Breakfast 10.00am - Holy Communion 10.00am - Holy Communion 10.30am - Holy Communion and Baptism 10.30am - Family Service 4.00pm - Evensong	Mitford Mitford Longhorsley Hartburn Bolam Hebron
<b>Monday 6th</b>	1.00-3pm - Wellbeing Café	Mitford Village Hall
<b>Sunday 12th</b>	10.00am – All Age Worship 10.00am – Morning Prayer 10.30am – Holy Communion 4.00 pm - Messy Church	Mitford Longhorsley Whalton Longhorsley
<b>Tuesday 14th</b>	1200 pm - Lunch Club 7.00pm - PCC Whalton	Hartburn
<b>Wednesday 15th</b>	9.30am - Morning Prayer and Coffee	Netherwitton
<b>Sunday 19th</b>	10.00am – Holy Communion 10.30am – Joint Benefice Holy Communion 10.30am – Morning Prayer 4.00pm – Storytime Church	Hebron Netherwitton Whalton Mitford
<b>Wednesday 22nd</b>	9.30am - Morning Prayer	Mitford Chapel
<b>Thursday 23rd</b>	2.00pm - Anna Chaplains	Hebron
<b>Friday 24th</b>	9.00am - School and Community All Age Worship	Whalton
<b>Saturday 25th</b>	10.00am - Sewing Group	Mitford Stable Room
<b>Sunday 23rd</b>	10.00am – Morning Prayer 10.00am – BCP Morning Prayer 10.00am – Café Church with Breakfast 10.30am – Holy Communion 11.30am - APCM Longhorsley 1.00pm - Baptism Longhorsley	Longhorsley Mitford Mitford Village Hall Bolam
<b>Monday 27th</b>	3.00pm - Governors Meeting Trillington School	
<b>Wednesday 29th</b>	7.00pm - Mitford Church Enhancement Team Meeting	Stable Room Mitford

**Notices this Month**

**Help Wanted: Churchyard Volunteers**

We are looking for **friendly, enthusiastic volunteers** to help care for our churchyards and gardens. Tasks include **mowing** (training and instruction on mower driving will be provided), general tidying, weeding, and helping to keep the churchyards looking welcoming and well cared for.

Whether you can offer a little time regularly or occasionally, your help will make a real difference in maintaining our beautiful church grounds for everyone to enjoy.

If you are able to lend a hand, please **speak to Richard** for more details and to get involved. Your time and effort will be greatly appreciated!

**Monthly Prayer Gathering** – Join us at 9.30am on the first Saturday of the month for coffee and refreshments before gathering to pray as a community for our world and each other. For more details speak to Izzy Quinby.



If you or someone you know would benefit from pastoral support, prayer, or communion, please contact the office. We will gladly arrange for a member of our team to visit you.

**WELLBEING CAFE**

We are excited to announce that starting in May, the Wellbeing Café will run **weekly on Mondays** (including bank holidays) at **Mitford Village Hall, Fontside, from 1pm to 3pm**. Everyone is welcome—whether you want to join in conversation, try an activity, or simply enjoy a cup of tea in good company.

Our next session will be on **Monday 4th May**, and we can't wait to welcome you to join us for fun, friendship, and community every week. Come along, make new friends, share stories, and enjoy a space that's all about **wellbeing and belonging**.

For details speak to Elaine, Janice or Elodie

Or email: [mitfordwellbeingcafe@gmail.com](mailto:mitfordwellbeingcafe@gmail.com)



**How to Get in Touch**

<p><b>Rev'd Elaine Jones</b>                  Priest in Charge                  07521 106158  <a href="mailto:revelainejones@gmail.com">revelainejones@gmail.com</a></p>		<p><b>Elodie Hewes</b>                  Benefice Administrator                  Monday – 9-5                  Tuesday &amp; Wednesday 9-1  <a href="mailto:Wansbeckvicarshelo@gmail.com">Wansbeckvicarshelo@gmail.com</a></p>
<p><b>Churchwardens</b>                  Hebron  <i>James Roff</i>  <i>Ian Craigs</i></p>	<p><b>Churchwardens</b>                  Mitford  <i>Janice Robinson</i>  <i>Richard Addison</i></p>	<p><b>Contact the wardens via the church office:</b>                  07769 763104</p>

[mitfordandwansbeckchurches.com](http://mitfordandwansbeckchurches.com)

## THOUGHT FROM THE VICAR

### Spring and Easter 2026

Dear all

As we welcome the season of spring here at Mitford and Hebron Churches, we find ourselves surrounded by signs of new life and quiet transformation. After the long, often grey days of winter, the world is stirring once again. The mornings grow lighter, birdsong fills the air, and across our churchyards the first daffodils are blooming—bright, hopeful, and full of promise. Flowers are springing into life, and what once seemed still and lifeless is now awakening in beauty.



This changing of the seasons speaks deeply to us as Christians, for it reflects the very heart of our faith. Easter is not simply a date in the calendar, but the living, breathing reminder of God's greatest act of love—the resurrection of Jesus Christ. From the darkness of Good Friday came the glory of Easter morning, when the stone was rolled away, and death was defeated forever.

In a world that can sometimes feel uncertain or heavy, the message of Easter stands firm: life conquers death, hope rises from despair, and God is always at work bringing renewal, even when we cannot yet see it. Just as the earth lies dormant through winter before bursting into life in spring, so too does the resurrection remind us that God brings new beginnings out of endings, and light out of darkness.

As we walk through our churchyards in Mitford and Hebron, seeing the daffodils dancing in the breeze and the flowers opening to the sun, we are given a glimpse of this resurrection hope. These are not just signs of a new season, but echoes of the new life we are offered in Christ. They remind us that the same power that raised Jesus from the dead is at work in us—renewing, restoring, and calling us into fullness of life.

Easter invites each one of us to share in this new beginning. It calls us to lay aside what has weighed us down, to turn again toward God's love, and to step forward in faith with renewed hearts. Whether we come with joy or with burdens, certainty or questions, the risen Christ meets us where we are and leads us into life.

May this springtime be for all of us a season of spiritual renewal. As we see the world coming alive again, may our faith also be refreshed. May we notice God's presence in the small and beautiful things—the flowers in bloom, the warmth of the sun, the fellowship we share—and may these remind us of the living hope we have in Jesus.

On behalf of Mitford and Hebron Churches, I wish you a joyful and blessed Easter. May the risen Christ fill your hearts with peace, your lives with hope, and your days with the promise of new life.

Alleluia! Christ is risen. He is risen indeed. Alleluia!

## PARISH NEWS

### EASTER ACROSS OUR CHURCHES

This year, it has been a joy to see so many people gather across our benefices to reflect, remember, and celebrate throughout Lent and Easter. It has been especially encouraging to witness our different churches coming together in worship, sharing in this important season as one community of faith.



Our Lenten journey began on Ash Wednesday with a Eucharist at Mitford, where we marked the start of this reflective season with the imposition of ashes. This simple yet powerful act invites us into a time of repentance and renewal. The ashes remind us of our human frailty and our tendency to fall short, but also of the grace and love of God, through which we are offered forgiveness and new life. Even at the very beginning of Lent, we are gently pointed toward the hope that is fulfilled in Easter—the saving work of Christ, through which we are restored and made new.

#### **Sharing Together**

Throughout Lent this year, we were blessed to share in a rich and thoughtful journey of learning and reflection using the Church of England's 2026 Lent Course, *Living Hope: Life Giving Habits for Lent*. This resource helped to shape and frame our teaching across the Sundays of Lent, giving a shared focus and depth to our worship as we explored together how we might grow in faith and in the habits of Christian living.

The themes of the course were not only present in our Sunday services, but were also taken into our home groups, where people gathered in smaller settings to reflect, pray, and discuss more deeply. These times created space for honest conversation, encouragement, and spiritual growth, as we supported one another along the Lenten journey.

In addition, many came together for the gathered Lent course at St Helen's, Longhorsley, where we met across our churches and benefice. These gatherings were a valuable opportunity to learn together, to listen, and to be renewed in faith as we journeyed toward Easter.

What has been especially encouraging is the way this shared course helped to unite us—not only in what we were learning, but in how we were growing as a community. Whether in church on a Sunday, in a home group, or gathered midweek, we were all engaging with the same themes, deepening our understanding of God's word, and reflecting on how these habits can shape our daily lives as followers of Christ.

## **Palm Sunday**



Our journey through Lent continued on Palm Sunday, when we gathered to remember and celebrate Jesus' triumphant entry into Jerusalem. Across our churches, there was a real sense of joy and anticipation as we marked this important moment in the story of our faith.

With palm crosses in hand, we joined in recalling the crowds who welcomed Jesus with shouts of "Hosanna," recognising him as the one who comes in the name of the Lord. Yet, even within this celebration, Palm Sunday holds a deeper note of reflection, as it marks the beginning of the path that leads to the cross.

Our services captured both of these themes—joyful praise and quiet contemplation—as we listened once again to the story of Christ's passion. It was a moving reminder of the love and humility of Jesus, who entered Jerusalem not in power and glory as the world might expect, but in peace and self-giving love.

As we stood together in worship, we were invited not only to remember these events, but to reflect on our own response to Christ: to welcome him into our lives, to walk with him through the coming days of Holy Week, and to prepare our hearts for the hope and new life of Easter.

## **Maundy Thursday**

On Maundy Thursday, we gathered at St Andrew's, Hartburn, for a deeply moving Tenebrae service, as we entered into the solemn events of the Last Supper and the arrest of Jesus.

Together, we reflected on that final evening when Jesus shared a meal with his disciples, offering bread and wine as signs of his body and blood, and commanding them to love one another. From this place of fellowship and intimacy, the story led us into the darkness of Gethsemane and the betrayal and arrest of Christ.

Central to the Tenebrae service was the gradual extinguishing of candles. As each reading unfolded, one by one the candles were put out, and the church slowly fell into shadow. This powerful and visual act helped us to enter more fully into the deepening darkness of that night, symbolising the apparent triumph of sin, fear, and betrayal as Jesus was taken away.



By the end of the service, we sat together in near darkness and silence, holding the weight of what was to come. It was a stark and poignant reminder of the cost of Christ's love, and it prepared us to walk more intentionally into the solemnity of Good Friday.

Yet even in the darkness, we held onto the quiet hope that this was not the end of the story. The shadows of Maundy Thursday would give way, in time, to the light of Easter morning.

## Good Friday

On Good Friday, our churches across the benefice offered a day of solemn reflection on the journey of Christ to the cross. At 2pm, congregations gathered at Whalton and Longhorsley to follow Jesus' path of suffering and sacrifice. Using the meditative chants of Taizé music, we were guided into quiet prayer and contemplation, allowing the music to deepen our reflections on the meaning of the cross and its significance in our own lives.



Later, we gathered at St Giles', Netherwitton, for a solemn and reflective Service of the Nails, as we contemplated the depth of Christ's sacrifice on the cross.

During this powerful service, we were invited to reflect personally on our own part in the brokenness of the world—the ways in which we fall short, the burdens we carry, and the reality of sin in our lives. In a simple yet deeply moving act, each person was given a nail and invited to bring it forward, placing it

at the foot of the cross.

This act served as a tangible sign of repentance, a way of acknowledging that it was for our sake that Christ endured the suffering of Good Friday. The sound of each nail placed down echoed through the silence, creating a shared moment of honesty, humility, and prayer.

Yet this was not an act without hope. As we laid down our nails, we did so in the knowledge and anticipation of God's forgiveness—trusting in the love made known through Jesus' death on the cross. Even in the sorrow and stillness of Good Friday, there was a quiet assurance that grace would have the final word.

The service left us with a profound sense of both the cost of the cross and the depth of God's mercy, preparing our hearts to receive the joy and new life of Easter.

On Good Friday, we hosted a **Family Craft and Activity Drop-In** at the Stable Room in Mitford, welcoming families, children, and adults alike to share in some festive Easter fun. The room was

filled with creativity and laughter as everyone enjoyed **Easter-themed crafts, prayers, and activities**, accompanied by **hot cross buns and delicious refreshments**.

One of the highlights of the afternoon was our **Easter Egg Hunt** in the church. Participants followed a trail of clues, discovering words associated with the church along the way. The challenge was to unscramble the letters to reveal a hidden Easter phrase, and winners were rewarded with a **delicious chocolate treat**. Children and adults alike had a wonderful time exploring, solving the clues, and celebrating together.

It was heartwarming to see so many families from our **church community, local school, and Woodland Toddlers group** join us. The event was a joyful opportunity for fellowship, creativity, and celebration, and a true reminder of the fun and togetherness that Easter brings. A great time was had by all, leaving everyone with happy memories and a taste of the season's joy.



## Holy Saturday

On Holy Saturday, we gathered in Mitford Chapel for a candlelit vigil, entering into a time of quiet reflection and anticipation. The soft glow of the candles created a space of stillness, allowing us to focus our hearts on the hope and promise of God's redeeming work throughout history.

During the vigil, we listened to readings from Scripture that traced God's rescuing of humanity—from the stories of creation and deliverance in the Old Testament to the promise of the coming Messiah. These passages reminded us that the Easter story is part of a much larger narrative of God's love and faithfulness, offering hope even in the darkest times.

As we reflected together in the candlelight, we were invited to hold before God both the sorrows of the past and the hope of the future, looking forward to the resurrection of Jesus Christ. The vigil served as a bridge between the solemnity of Good Friday and the joy of Easter morning, filling us with anticipation for the new life and renewal that Christ's rising brings.



## Easter Sunday



Easter Sunday began with a beautiful and uplifting celebration as we gathered at first light around a Sunrise Bonfire. The darkness of the early morning was broken as the Paschal Candle was lit from the fire, symbolising the light of Christ coming into the world and triumphing over the darkness of sin and death. As the flame spread, so too did a sense of joy and hope, filling the hearts of all who had come to witness this powerful moment of new life.

Following the lighting of the Paschal Candle, we shared breakfast together in the Stable Room. This simple, communal meal offered a chance to rejoice together in fellowship, to greet one another with smiles and laughter, and to continue celebrating the joy of Christ's resurrection in a warm and welcoming setting.

The morning set the tone for a day of praise and thanksgiving, reminding us that Easter is a

celebration not only of Jesus' victory over the grave, but also of the new life and hope that we are invited to embrace in our own lives. From the first light of dawn to the shared joy of community, Easter Sunday was a living reminder that Christ is risen indeed!

The joy of Easter continued throughout the day with three celebratory Eucharist services at Hartburn, Mitford, and Longhorsley, each filled to capacity with people coming together to rejoice in the resurrection of Jesus. The worship was lively and uplifting, with music, hymns, and prayers creating a vibrant atmosphere of praise and thanksgiving.

At Bolam, the Easter celebration took a wonderfully joyful turn with a Family Service led by the children of the church. Their enthusiasm and creativity brought the Easter story to life in a way that delighted all ages, reminding us afresh of the wonder and hope that the resurrection brings. It was a heartwarming reminder of the importance of nurturing faith in our youngest members and of the energy and life they bring to our church communities.

Later in the day, at Hebron, we concluded the Easter celebrations with a quieter Evensong, providing a reflective space to give thanks for the new life we have in Christ. From the early morning bonfire to the lively Eucharists, the joyful family service, and the serene Evensong, Easter Sunday across our benefice was a rich tapestry of worship, community, and celebration of the resurrection.

### **Thank you!**

A **huge thank you** to everyone who helped decorate our church at Mitford for Easter! The beautiful **flowers, thoughtful decorations, prayer stations, reflections, and the Easter Garden** don't just appear by themselves – they are the result of the dedication and creativity of a wonderful team who work tirelessly behind the scenes.

Your hard work and love for our church community truly bring the Easter story to life and create a space where everyone can reflect, pray, and celebrate. You know who you are – so from all of us, **THANK YOU** for making our church so welcoming and beautiful this Easter season!

---

## **News from our School**

### **Easter in our Schools**

This year, our children engaged with the Easter story in a way that combined art, imagination, and reflective thinking, offering them a rich and immersive experience of the events of Holy Week. Rather than simply hearing the story, they were invited to place themselves within it, imagining how they might have responded to the unfolding narrative and what it might have felt like to be present at these pivotal moments in Jesus' life.



and

Many of the children enjoyed thinking about where they would have sat at the Last Supper, imagining the conversations and emotions around the table. They reflected on the intimacy of that final meal and the trust and friendship shared among Jesus and his disciples. Moving from the joy of the supper to the sorrow and horror of the cross, they were encouraged to consider their own feelings and responses to Christ's suffering, helping them to connect emotionally and spiritually with the story.

Younger children were particularly captivated by the way the story was brought to life through symbols, watching the narrative unfold in a visual and tangible way that made the events of Holy Week more accessible and memorable. Older children, meanwhile, were challenged to wrestle with some of the deeper moral and ethical questions within the Easter story. They explored dilemmas around justice, fairness, and the courage it takes to choose what is right rather than what is easy—lessons that resonate far beyond the events of Holy Week and into everyday life.

Throughout these sessions, the children not only gained a deeper understanding of the Easter story itself but were also invited to reflect on their own faith, their responses to God's love, and the ways in which the story of Jesus' sacrifice can inspire and guide their lives. It was a joyful, thought-provoking, and creative way for our youngest members of the church to enter into the heart of the Easter message and experience the hope and renewal it brings.



On the Wednesday before Easter, children, staff, families, and friends from Tritlington School gathered at Hebron for a very special Easter service led by the children themselves. The service was full of energy, creativity, and fun, as the children brought the story of the empty tomb to life in a way that engaged everyone present.

Through an imaginative drama, the children told the story as a mystery, with “investigators” trying to solve the puzzle of the empty tomb. Their performances were full of humour and enthusiasm, keeping the congregation entertained as the detectives searched for answers. In the end, the investigation led to the joyful conclusion that the empty tomb was indeed a miracle—case closed!

Adding to the festive atmosphere, we also savoured some delicious Easter cakes provided by the PTA, giving all who attended a chance to celebrate and share in fellowship. The service was a wonderful reminder of the joy, creativity, and community of the Easter season, and a joyful way to anticipate the hope and new life of Easter Sunday.

## MISSION AND CHARITY

### New Hope for Children

A reminder that Richard Sanderson will be visiting Mitford on Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> May at 6.00pm.

Richard is always an encouraging and engaging speaker and brings us up to date with all the activities of the charity. They are having a particularly challenging time at present as the Government announced a huge increase in the minimum wage (which has been suspended), but which still leaves uncertainty about the future.



Please make a note of this date and come along to support Richard.

---

## WELLBEING CAFE

We are thrilled to share the launch of the **New Mitford Wellbeing Café**, which opened its doors in March 2026! From the very first session, we were delighted to welcome people from across the community into a warm, friendly space designed for connection, conversation, and refreshment.

The Wellbeing Café is a welcoming place for **older adults and anyone at risk of isolation**, as well as a safe, supportive space for people living with dementia and their carers. Each session is gently themed, offering opportunities for conversation, reminiscence, and shared activities—but there's no pressure: everyone can join in as much or as little as they like. And of course, there's always **cake and refreshments** to enjoy while you chat, laugh, and relax.

Our first sessions have been full of fun and creativity. In March, we explored the theme of **biscuits**, sharing favourites, fun facts, and lots of laughs. In April, we embraced **spring and Easter**, trying our hand at making Easter bonnets and enjoying a lively Easter table quiz that had everyone in stitches.

We are excited to announce that starting in May, the Wellbeing Café will run **weekly on Mondays** (including bank holidays) at **Mitford Village Hall, Fontside, from 1pm to 3pm**. Everyone is welcome—whether you want to join in conversation, try an activity, or simply enjoy a cup of tea in good company.

We are also always looking for **friendly volunteers** to help make our sessions even more welcoming. If you'd like to get involved, please speak to **Elaine, Janice, or Elodie**.

Our next session will be on **Monday 4th May**, and we can't wait to welcome you to join us for fun, friendship, and community every week. Come along, make new friends, share stories, and enjoy a space that's all about **wellbeing and belonging**.



Mitford Village Hall  
**WELLBEING CAFE**

A warm, inclusive café for connection, conversation, cake, and calm. Enjoy tea and coffee, themed reminiscence sessions, gentle games, and a welcoming space for older adults, carers, and anyone in need of company.  
Free to attend!

**Every Monday From May 2026**  
1pm till 3pm  
Mitford Village Hall, Fontside, NE61 3PS

**All Welcome**



Contact 07521106158  
mitfordwellbeingcafe@gmail.com

## Help Wanted: Churchyard Volunteers

We are looking for **friendly, enthusiastic volunteers** to help care for our churchyards and gardens. Tasks include **mowing** (training and instruction on mower driving will be provided), general tidying, weeding, and helping to keep the churchyards looking welcoming and well cared for.

Whether you can offer a little time regularly or occasionally, your help will make a real difference in maintaining our beautiful church grounds for everyone to enjoy.

If you are able to lend a hand, please **speak to Richard** for more details and to get involved. Your time and effort will be greatly appreciated!



## Mitford Village Hall Buskers' Night

Proudly Presents:



**Jez Lowe**

Mitford Village Hall,  
Mitford, Morpeth NE61 3PS  
Saturday 11th April 2026 8pm  
Doors open at 7pm

*'one of the UK's finest songwriters'*  
BBC Radio 2

Tickets £10.50 available from:  
<https://www.seetickets.com/event/jez-lowe/mitford-village-hall/3592391>

*Jez Lowe is one of our finest songwriters.' BBC Radio 2*  
Twitter @LoweJez

Contact Paul Elliott:  
07972726504

[www.jezlowe.com](http://www.jezlowe.com)