

**Stranton and Burbank Community Church**

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# **SIGNPOST**



**Rooted in God's love  
Growing together with Jesus  
Branching out in the  
Power of the Holy Spirit**

August 2021

This life is full of loss and full of grief. Though there are times we experience great swells of joy, we also experience deep depths of sorrow. No sorrow is deeper than the sorrow of loss. Thanks be to God that Christ has Lordship over all of life, even grief.

The gospel informs all we do, including our grieving. It calls us, as people of the way of Christ, to turn to Him and to each other in prayer in times of great need. This has been a lesson that is particularly poignant to me, my family and many others in this season. My heart has broken at the loss of my mum, brother and nephew. I've also had the sad privilege to walk beside many others in their grief.

As Christians the loss of a loved one hurts us and breaks our hearts the same as anyone's. But our story doesn't end there because we are children of an Eternal Father God. Death is a temporary separation for us. That is why we are called to keep our eyes and hearts on the light of Christ and not let the darkness, not even the darkness of grief, overcome us.

*"And the light shines in darkness; and the darkness cannot overcome it!"* John 1:5

We are to grieve as 'people of the Way' of Christ. What is that way? It is a way of honesty and openness, of vulnerability and tears. It is the way of the hurting hearts that still dare to hope. Above all these things, it is the way of surrender to and receipt of the Love of God and the love of others. It is a time to ask for help, to seek prayer and to remember to breathe and give ourselves time and space to heal. Each person's journey through grief is unique, but a kind word or a thoughtful gesture helps most of us along the way. So don't be afraid to offer practical help as well as your condolences.

Sisters and brothers let's not lose hope even on the darker days. Our beautiful Papa is with us always. I love these 2 verses from Romans which remind us that nothing can separate us from God's Love.

*'For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord'. Romans 8:38-39*

In 1 Thessalonians (4:13) Paul provides helpful instruction on grieving and begins with these words: *"We do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope"*

The reason we have hope is that *Christians grieve temporarily*. We grieve genuinely, but hopefully, because our grief will come to an end. Paul goes on to write: *"For since we believe that [in the past] Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will [in the future] bring with him those who have fallen asleep" (1 Thess 4:14)*. Paul anchors our future hope in our past reality.

While our loved ones have left us, they have not ceased to be. They've simply gone on ahead. Because Jesus rose again, they will rise again. Because Jesus conquered death, they will conquer death. Because Jesus lives, they live. And so we grieve. We grieve in times of loss and our grief may last many days, weeks, or years. The pain is real, the sorrow is real, so the grief is real and raw. But we grieve hopefully because we are convinced, we grieve temporarily.

## The Sailing Ship

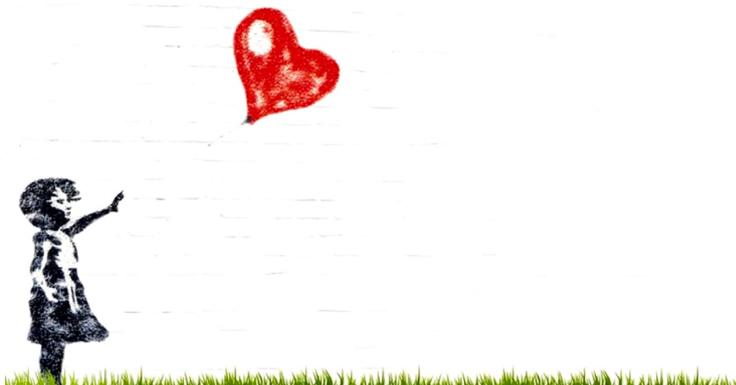
*A ship sails and I stand watching  
till she fades on the horizon and someone at my side says, "she is gone!"  
Gone where? Gone from my sight, that is all.  
She is just as large now as when I last saw her.  
Her diminished size and total loss from my sight is in me, not in her.  
And just at the moment when someone at my side says, "she is gone,"  
there are others who are watching her  
coming over their horizon and other voices  
take up a glad shout,  
"There she comes!"  
That is what dying is;  
A horizon and just the limit of our sight.  
Lift us up, Oh Lord, that we may see further  
By Bishop Charles Henry Brent*

May Abba Father  
Give His Comfort and Peace to all who mourn.  
May He lift us up, that we may see further  
Amen

In love and hope

**Rev Michelle**

When you have to let go of someone you love, may you be given faith to remember that nothing can take away your memories. If you cannot release your grip, may you be given the courage to trust them to God's grace. God sees. God knows. God sits with you tonight too [#niteblessing](#)



Rev Michelle

# Mother's Union

This summer we would normally have celebrated, in Durham Cathedral, the 145<sup>th</sup> Birthday of the Mothers Union and also acknowledged 100 years since the death of Mary Sumner, our founder. Large gatherings have been put on hold in the Cathedral, but Kathleen Wilson (MU Durham President), has inquired about holding an acknowledgement of Mary Sumner's legacy in an Evensong in August. We normally have a celebration of Mary Sumner's actual birthday on August 9<sup>th</sup>, but we are awaiting the actual date of the Evensong to be confirmed (if agreed) and also to work out how many MU representatives would be able to join in the congregation as Evensong is open to many other worshippers. I'll let you know as soon as I hear the outcome of this. But... I thought we could (in the safety of our homes) take part in an appreciation of Mothers Union and Mary Sumner at the same time as the Evensong.

Hopefully I've delivered the Summer Newsrounds to you all and you have read this edition. Sheran Harper (Worldwide President) asks us to support these momentous dates (already mentioned) and we will do that as soon as we return back to normality. Instead of strawberries and cream I feel it will be hot soup and rolls!

Please pray for the leaders involved in Mothers Union work around the world. We may feel disconnected sometimes but all prayer is important, as is trying to keep in touch, even when tired, or sad, or just fed up with lockdowns, facemasks, social distancing and loneliness. When we pray it helps us to – keeping us, however young or old we may be, joined with so many others, who are linked with the chain of prayer around the world.

I hope you received your "Summer of Hope" letter from Sheran Harper about using the enclosed calendar of August and 'A Blessings Jar' to pray and perhaps donate a little to help MU members develop their leadership skills. Please pray for Stranton and St Luke's MU Branches, remembering those who are unwell and receiving treatment at this time. Give them peace and hope as they rest and recover.

I'm very aware that this article is focussed on prayer and know that MU members, alongside many others in our churches, are faithful prayer warriors. Thank you for your prayers.

I'll be in touch as soon as I know dates and any other information.

May God Bless you all

With love from

**Ann Courtenay**

# From the Home Front

Acceptance of change is a really hard concept in life. But it is also a fact of life – children grow up and move on, get married, get divorced, we move house, change jobs. Friends and colleagues move to pastures new, meet new partners, relationships wax and wane over time. We ourselves grow older, our health changes – we go grey and wrinkles appear!

When I was working in schools I had to steel myself when the colleagues with whom I worked closest moved on. I knew that I would have to readjust my working practises to suit new staff members, plus often teach them the fundamentals of my role and how we could work together in the most efficient way. I loved to see the pupils I worked with respond positively to the support they were given, to grow in confidence and to increase their learning achievements and move on to the next stage of their education.

As a child I struggled with the monumental change to my life when my parents went to live and work in the West Indies, taking my little brother with them, while I went to live with my Auntie and remain at grammar school here. My head knew that they had my best interests at heart (I was the only one of their six children to get to grammar school and there were no grammar schools on the island!), also that my Auntie would give me the academic support and encouragement to succeed. But my heart ached at the separation from my parents as I became a teenager and I missed my little brother immensely. It was many years before I resolved my anxiety about changes.... But I did!

My faith certainly was the turning point – the knowledge that Abba Father is ALWAYS with me no matter where I am, was a revelation. I have coped with so much of life's slings and arrows in the sure knowledge that God is right there with me, even if I can't always feel His presence... Psalm 139 is my turn to psalm at times of upheaval. I am reading it now as another major change happens within my family and I know adjustments will be needed and patience prayed for! These are the verses that speak loudly to me....

Psalm 139

<sup>5</sup>You hem me in behind and before,  
and you lay your hand upon me.

<sup>6</sup>Such knowledge is too wonderful for me,  
too lofty for me to attain.

<sup>7</sup>Where can I go from your Spirit?  
Where can I flee from your presence?

<sup>8</sup>If I go up to the heavens, you are there;  
if I make my bed in the depths, you are there.

<sup>9</sup>If I rise on the wings of the dawn,  
if I settle on the far side of the sea,  
<sup>10</sup>even there your hand will guide me,  
your right hand will hold me fast.

<sup>11</sup>If I say, 'Surely the darkness will hide me  
and the light become night around me,'

<sup>12</sup>even the darkness will not be dark to you;  
the night will shine like the day,  
for darkness is as light to you.

**J.A.R.**

# Letter from Rev Norman to the Parish

12 July 2021

Dear Friends in Christ,

After a considerable amount of discussion with Archdeacon Rick and Bishop Paul I need to let you know that I intend to retire in the summer of 2022. This letter is much earlier than I would normally write but we live in very strange times. Sharing this news will allow Archdeacon Rick to come to the Group Council on 27<sup>th</sup> July to begin the recruitment process for a new experienced minister within the Central Hartlepool Group ministry. Hopefully this person will be in post by the spring of 2022. The archdeacon will explain much more when he comes.

I would like to emphasise that this is not a sudden decision and is not a reaction to any recent events or circumstances but a decision that has been in process for a long time. Indeed at one stage Julie and I were thinking about retiring in 2021 but with the pandemic and Mother Gemma's decision to move to Australia this summer I have committed to staying a further year.

Please be reassured that we remain committed to ministry within the group over the coming year. We face many challenges in the coming weeks as we emerge from the pandemic. What is important is that we plan and work together to establish and maintain sustainable and flourishing mission and ministry. Let's endeavour to keep worship and prayer, loving and caring relationships, and an outward looking focus on loving our neighbours at the heart of what we do.

In love, hope and peace

**Norman**

## Euro 2020 Quiz

**E** Which **E** wrote about a valley of the dry bones?

**U** What **U** bread was eaten at the time of the Passover?

**R** Which **R** ruled Judah and a bottle of champagne is named after him?

**O** Which **O** Northumbrian King is a saint?

**2** Which books of the Old Testament consist of two books?

S \_\_\_\_\_ K \_\_\_ & C \_\_\_\_\_

**0** In the parable of the talents what **W** is the servant called who got 0% interest on his talent?

**2** Two disciples had the same name who were they?

S \_\_\_\_\_ P \_\_\_\_\_ & S \_\_\_\_\_ the Z \_\_\_\_\_

**0** When there was nothing left to throw overboard on the ship travelling to Nineveh who was jettisoned?

## Mike Dodds' 70<sup>th</sup> Birthday Celebration 21<sup>st</sup> June

It was wonderful for many members of Burbank Church and Stranton Church to be able to meet together – albeit sticking to Covid restrictions – to celebrate Mike's milestone 70<sup>th</sup> birthday. Mike's sister Pauline and Rohan organised the surprise fish and chip lunch at Seaton. A great time was had by all – it was good to see each other and catch up on this special occasion.



Candles had to be blown out in the doorway as the wind just blew them out the minute the cake came outside!



Clive gave a speech full of memories of Mike and his involvement both formal and informal within the church family

Mike enjoys opening cards and presents with plenty of his witty asides!



## Baptisms 27<sup>th</sup> June

There were two baptisms on Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> during the main service. Nyan (who is an Iraqi Kurdish speaker) and Hossein (who is an Iraqi, Arabic speaker). Both were asked to give reasons for their decisions to be baptised. The Kurdish English translator Araz Khdir directly translated Nyan's answers. However Hossein's questions had to be translated into Kurdish by Araz, then Nyan translated them into Arabic – with the reverse three way translation of the answers!



Araz translates for Nyan

Nyan translates for Hossein and Araz translates into English for Nyan – complicated but it worked!



Baptism promises were made and the water blessed.



Nyan is baptised. Jo Prays for Nyan



Hossein is baptised Norman prayed for Hossein



Both are given lighted candles to represent the light of Christ in the World

Baptised and with their certificates and candles

# Alphabet of Gardening tips

*I was given a little book of gardening tips "Green fingers and dirty nails", when I was in New Zealand, which I thought I would share with you over the months*  
- J.A.R.

## **K**

Plant Kohlrabi with beetroot and onions but not with beans, peppers or tomatoes.

## **L**

Plant lettuce with carrots, onions, radish, strawberries, beetroot & marigolds. If you see a ladybird in your garden, coax it to your aphid- ridden plants.

Lily bulbs lack the protective tunic most bulbs have. Handle them with care and plant them as soon as you receive them

Lettuce like plenty of water - do not let them dry out or else they will be bitter.

Lavenders tolerate all sorts of soils, but good drainage is important. Pruning is the key to maintaining compact bushy growth.

Lupins put nitrogen back into the soil.

Plant leeks with carrots and celery, but not broad beans or broccoli

Lemon balm goes hand in hand with tomatoes.

Lilacs in a vase – remove side shoots, split and crush the stem, scrape and place in warm water till nearly ready to use.



## Answers Euro 2020 Quiz

- |  |                                |
|--|--------------------------------|
| E Which E wrote about a valley of the dry bones ?  | Ezekiel                        |
| U What U bread was eaten at the time of the Passover?  | Unleavened                     |
| R Which R ruled Judah and a bottle of champagne is named after him                                     | Rehoboam                       |
| O Which O Northumbrian King is a saint?  | Oswald                         |
| 2 Which books of the Old Testament consist of two books?   | Samuel, Kings & Chronicles     |
| 0 In the parable of the talents what W is the servant called who got 0% interest on his talent?        | Wicked                         |
| 2 Two disciples had the same name who were they?   | Simon Peter & Simon the Zealot |
| 0 When there was nothing left to throw overboard on the ship travelling to Nineveh who was jettisoned? | Jonah                          |

# Stranton Church and changes in Covid safety regulations

**It is hoped to maintain a Covid safe environment to limit risk of transmission and it is expected that church users will use common sense and be respectful of the concerns and safety of all those wishing to use the building.**

## **9am Sunday Service**

The 9am Service will retain a very Covid protective/secure service at Holy Communion with all the current restrictions remaining in place: i.e. face masks to be worn, continue to maintain current distancing, no congregational singing for the Holy Communion, wine given by dipping the wafer. Conversations and meetings to be conducted outside the building. The seat cushions will be returned now we have been given the go ahead by the church authority, cleaning between services of hand-touch areas will continue.

## **11am Sunday Service**

For the 11.00am service we wish people to continue to wear face coverings when entering and leaving and also moving around the church, but they may be removed once seated. People with problems breathing when wearing masks may attend church without coverings. Distancing will be as spaced as possible (but exceptionally this may be less than one and a half metres). Building ventilation will be helped by opening all the external church doors.

Congregational singing can recommence now the guidance to do this has been given by the church authorities. However we would prefer the congregation to wear masks when singing to minimise the spread of air droplets.

We will set aside the south aisle for people who want to maintain face coverings through the service, who are shielding or feel vulnerable.

We encourage families with young people to sit in the north aisle, which will give better access to Sunday club.

Holy Communion will continue to be by dipping the wafer.

Permission has been given for the seat cushions to be returned to the seats.

The serving of refreshments from the servery will **not** start immediately, this will be reviewed towards the end of the summer when infection rates start to fall.

Socialising and fellowship is encouraged to be **outside** the church **or** while wearing face coverings and distancing out of consideration for others.

Cleaning of hand touch surfaces will continue.

## **Guidance for baptisms, weddings and funerals and other occasional offices:**

It will be requested that people coming into church wear face coverings until seated, (but this is not enforceable) and sit spaced in bubbles with as much distancing as possible. For large funerals (with 80+ attendees) seating plans to be prearranged with the funeral directors, remembering to take all names/ numbers in each group attending and limit to 100. Doors to be open for ventilation. Hand-touch surfaces will be wiped down afterwards.

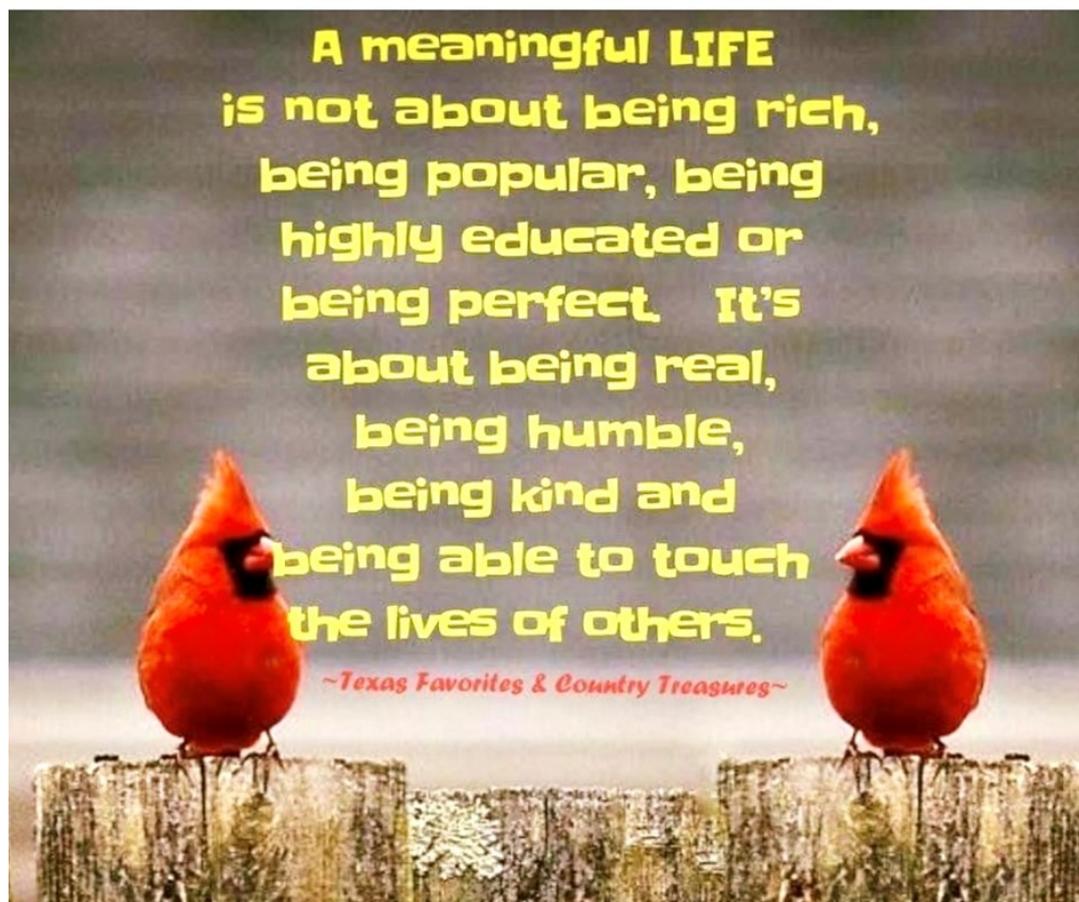
**All changes and guidance will be on the weekly notice sheet and on entry into church.**

## Communities of Hope July 2021

Looking back over the last year the Communities of Hope Project has through its work achieved some exceptional outcomes. This has included the distribution of hampers at Christmas, the Friday 'pop up' café outside St Matthew's Community Centre, growing work with St Aidan's and Eskdale Schools and the starting of 'Forest Church' at St Aidan's school. Our thanks go particularly to Jo and Jess for their hard work on the ground.

At the end of July Jess will be leaving to train for ordained ministry, and there are currently other transitions taking place. Jess' role as Children's and Family worker will be advertised in August with a view to making an appointment in early September. Please do hold the team and the work we all do in our community in your prayers.

**Norman**



**Posted by Rev Michelle**



In the daily devotional app Lectio365 I read  
'Jesus let your love guide me.'  
I started to think what would that look like?  
If every decision I made passed through that saying?

I know that when I walk in the flesh my motives are not always pure.  
My attitudes towards others are not always gracious.

When someone is unkind and acts selfishly,

When people speak about you behind your back.

When you're drawn into gossiping when you know that is the very thing you detest.

The struggle is real.

I'm challenging myself to speak these words out loud numerous times a day!  
'Jesus let your love lead me'

That way it will remind me to let his love flow through me to the people I struggle with.

His love will lead me in the right direction.

His love would never harm others.

His love would never pull down others.

His love would never judge others.

His love would always lead to forgiveness.

His love would lead me to speak life over people, not death.

His love would lead me to bless others, not curse them.

His love leads to unity, not division.

Let Jesus' love guide you too.

**Ang Hall**

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# Tehran – Hartlepool in 61 days!

## Who's ready for a challenge?

Dust down your walking boots, oil your bikes: we've got some miles to cover!

### WHAT?

Over August and September, members and friends of our Central Hartlepool Group will be travelling the equivalent distance from Tehran to Hartlepool to raise money to support asylum seekers and refugees in our town.

### REALLY??

Yes, really.  
3,655 miles.  
In 61 days.

We need your help!

### WHY?

We are fundraising for the Asylum Seeker and Refugee Group, a support network run by Hartlepower, who organise weekly drop-ins, day trips and general support for those who have fled violence or persecution and are seeking to rebuild their lives in our town.

### HOW?

Miles can be covered by walking, running, cycling, swimming, skateboarding, wheeling, scooting – just not in a car or on public transport!

Everyone who signs up will have access to an online spreadsheet where miles can be accumulated as they are travelled, so we can keep track of how close we are to our total!

### WHAT CAN I DO?

We'd love as many people to be involved as possible! You don't have to be super-fit to join the challenge – whether you could do a couple of 2 mile walks a week, or 100 miles on your bike, every mile will help us reach our goal!

Rachel and Seth are aiming to cover 1,000 miles between them.

So we could reach the goal if in addition:

12 people walked 3 miles every day  
5 people cycled 20 miles every week

Why not get a group together for a weekend hike – 10 people walking 10 miles = 100 miles in total!

If you're wondering how to track your miles, most smart phones have a pre-loaded app that measures distance travelled by GPS. Strava and MapMyWalk are also free and easy to use.

Email Rachel to ask questions or to sign up to take part:

[rachel@stranton-church.org.uk](mailto:rachel@stranton-church.org.uk)

All donations are gratefully received, thank you! You can sponsor us on our fundraising page which will be circulated shortly on notice sheets and on social media.

(if you're not online, please pass some cash on to Rachel or someone else who is, so it can be added)

Thank you and we look forward to completing this challenge together!

## **Burbank Report July 2021**

**Burbank Church** – I have now brought all the equipment from Ward Jackson School into the Vicar's Vestry and we know some of it will be used by Michelle and the allotment group. We did donate some microphones to Ward Jackson School, which they hope would be especially helpful in class room Zoom meetings. I do still keep in contact with all the church members, mainly through phone calls along, with the distribution of the Signpost magazine and Word for Today daily readings. I still need to plan a final closure celebration for the church members - when it is safe!!

**Ward Jackson School** – This term I have been leading worship on line. One of the talks was about Mary and why she wore the colour blue. I have to admit I did not know till I started to prepare this talk that the Ark of the Covenant was covered in a blue cloth. The symbolism was God's presence was in the Ark of the Covenant and also in Mary so she too was covered in blue cloth.

I did go into class and I gave a talk about the Holy Spirit. It became quite a deep and spiritual conversation together.

This week I went into school and I did the end of year assembly for the Year 6 pupils, this was the first time I have done this.

**YF** - We started YF in church on 23<sup>rd</sup> May. We were all social distanced and masked till sitting in our seats. It has been going really well. We were also joined by two of the Bruce Family from Germany on Zoom. It was a bit tricky trying to find games which meant not running around and which also included the Zoom girls.

We finished with a summer party on the beach, where Frisbee and a game of Cricket kept us entertained till we had an ice cream to top off the day. We also talked about favourite memories and prayed especially for two members who are 18 years old, one is going to University, and the other is looking for a job in Hartlepool.

So we do need to recruit new members for September and so I talked about YF and gave out leaflets in Ward Jackson School at the end of year assembly. I had told them that the favourite YF game to play was Hide and Seek in the dark, in church. Angela told me afterwards that a number of them said they can't wait to play that game!! Hopefully a good sign.

**Stranton Church** – Now that things are starting to open up there are more Baptisms and Weddings to do. I did my first Baptism at St Luke's Church on the 27<sup>th</sup> June. I am doing a Wedding in July at Stranton, which is the first one where I take the whole service. I am doing two baptisms at St Aidan's in August. So things are getting busier.

I organised a First Aid course for 11 of the volunteers who work under the umbrella of the church. This was Covid friendly (we had to put ourselves into the recovery position!) but it went well and means we have good cover for first aiders within our church groups.

**Community** – The Burbank Community Centre has just opened a drop in café on Thursday mornings, but that is my day off and I will not be able to attend yet. I will be attending the funeral of Norma Morrish, she was a lady who along with her husband, has been involved with Residents Association work on the estate. She also volunteered within the Thirteen Housing Group for many years.

**Personal** – Since my last report I have met with Bishop Sarah and I have been signed off as Priest and I can now apply for jobs, I would like to stay in the Durham Diocese. I went to see Archdeacon Rick Simpson and he explained there are vacancies in the diocese, but they are only putting them out one at a time and about one a month. So it could be a while before anything arises for which I can apply. So I am waiting and trusting God in this process. Do please pray for us.

Regards

**Rev Clive Hall**

I pray a prayer of gathering and releasing, by ✕  
preacher and poet Ted Loder:

'Oh God, gather me now to be with you  
as you are with me.

Soothe my tiredness;  
quiet my fretfulness;  
curb my aimlessness;  
relieve my compulsiveness;  
let me be easy for a moment.

O Lord, release me  
from the fears and guilts which grip me so tightly;  
from the expectations and opinions which I so  
tightly grip,  
that I may be open  
to receiving what you give,  
to risking something genuinely new,  
to learning something refreshingly different.

O God, gather me to be with you  
as you are with me'.\*\*



## Boys Brigade Session Over



Despite the challenging situation over the last year as a Boys Brigade Company we have managed to grow not only numerically but also in our programme offerings.

Our Anchor Boys ended the session with 15 names on our roll book, the Juniors with 16 and the Company with 15 plus!

Our programme has involved devotions, marching, crafts, displays for Stranton Church, team games (using equipment we have not used for years), plus we made full use of the St Matthew's Community Centre car park in the spring term, allowing all our Lads a taste of outside activities.

As leaders we made every minute count in all sections because as soon as a Boy entered St Matthew's he immediately had to choose from three different activities and no time was wasted.

### **Junior Boy of the Year Award & Gold Awards**

Every week the Juniors are marked on their attendance, marching skills, uniform and conduct. The standard was particularly high this year as all regular members scored over 80%.

The trophy was won by Billy Ratcliffe and Ashton Moore who both scored 94%.

Third place Tyler Anderson who also scored very high on 90%.

All three Boys won the Gold Award recognising the work they have done throughout three years in the Junior section.

You can see all our activities on our Facebook page.

**The Future** - All that's written so far is now history - but in September we will start to write our future...

**George Bainbridge**

### Today

Today, may I give and receive Love

Today may I work for Justice

Today may I listen and pray

Today may I sing God's praises

Today may I delight in God's beauty

Today and every day.

(Ruth Bur-

gess)

from Bare Feet and Buttercups Wild Goose Publications

### God is Great

Life is great, full of glad surprises;

Life is tough, stony paths we've trod!

What makes sense each day sun arises; God

God holds back, venturing matures us;

God steps in, giving strength to cope

God's wise love gives the whole creation; Hope.

God transforms through the gifts we're given,

Leagued with him we make the world anew,

Justice, love, mark a way of life that's true.

Roll up sleeves, use each life entrusted

Take sure hold of transforming power;

Work with God, venturing to meet this hour. (Ian M

Fraser)

from Acorns and Archangels Wild Goose Publications

## **Words from God for the Church**

Clergy in Stranton have been encouraging members of the congregation who feel that God has given words or pictures, to share these in Church for all to hear. This is a really nerve-racking experience for many - their hearts race, they may shake or doubt themselves. But with encouragement, and often confirmation by the words of others, more are now speaking out. Here we share some of those words – they may be spoken to speak directly into **your** life or situation.....

### **20<sup>th</sup> June**

AH: The Master never leaves us – all my life you have been faithful. All my life you have been good. I will sing of the goodness of God...

GW: I am dyslexic but I have been used by God despite dyslexia. When I asked God how I could be of use – He ensured I was ordained a priest within three years. God can do anything. Remember how powerful He is....

## Birds (and Bees) of a Feather

My neighbour told me the other day that I had bees in the patio wall at the back of my house. Yes, I replied-two kinds actually. Buff tailed bumble bees and a much smaller one I'm not sure about, but it could be a mason bee. Oh, said he, and walked away.

I know that the buff tailed (quite large) Queen bees over-winter in my big work room, as I often find them trying to find their way out in the spring, and have become quite adept at catching them with a large matchbox and letting them go into the garden.

The other bees are smaller and I have noticed that my rose bushes have had leaves eaten into curved shapes, I suppose they are mason bees. It's quite interesting when the bees arrive, at the same entry points in the wall together. I assumed the larger ones would push the smaller ones out of the way, or even sting them, no, they somehow manage to enter together. The only snag I could see was very small spiders making webs across the entry holes and the mason bees getting caught up. The buff tails just blunder through, so my neighbour now thinks I'm even more potty when he sees me clearing away the webs!

I've tested the wall just in case it had become weakened, but it has been there for nearly three centuries and I'm amazed how strong it is – built to last!

The birds continue to thrive, but I have become aware of what's missing this year. No goldfinches or wrens lurking in the undergrowth, perhaps the result of a long cold winter.

Bees and honey are mentioned in the Bible – do look and see what you can find.

**Ann Courtenay**

Buff tailed bumblebee



Mason bee



# Sunday Club News!

Our face-to-face Sunday Club sessions have been a great success and the children have enjoyed participating in a range of fun activities. Sadly, we have now finished for this term and there will be no more sessions until September. Thank you to everyone who has volunteered and participated in our Sunday Club this year.

## Online Sunday Club

Thank you to everyone who is watching and enjoying our videos so far. Our weekly videos will continue until the end of August and new ones will be available every Sunday at 2pm. All of the previous videos are still available to watch on our website or Facebook page. Our final video will be on the 29<sup>th</sup> August.

What's coming up:

### **1<sup>st</sup> August – Daniel and the Lions**

*This week we will be looking at how Daniel kept faith in God and was protected by him.*

### **8<sup>th</sup> August – Jonah and the Big Fish**

*This week we are thinking about how Jonah doesn't listen to God. Our fun activities include making a whale model and creating our very own slime!*

### **15<sup>th</sup> August – Jesus Chooses His Disciples**

*This week we are looking at how Jesus chose his disciples and thinking about what makes a good disciple.*

### **Jesus' First Miracle**

*This week we are thinking about how Jesus performed his first miracle turning water into wine.*

### **The Lost Sheep Parable**

*This week we are looking at the parable of the lost sheep and how we are all important to God. Our fun activities include making some delicious sheep cupcakes!*

Enjoy,

**Kate**

Stranton Sunday Club Leader

## When you Doubt Let God's Word - Settle It

You say :

It's impossible

I'm exhausted

Nobody loves me

I can't go on

I can't do it

It's not worth it

I can't make ends meet

I can't forgive myself

I'm afraid

I can't handle this

I'm not smart enough

I'm all alone

God Says:

With me all things are possible *Luke 18:27*

Wait on me & I will renew your strength *Isaiah 40:31*

I have loved you with an everlasting love *Jer 31:3*

My grace is sufficient for you *Prov 3:6*

You can do all things through me *Phil 4:13*

It will be - just keep going *Gal 6:9*

I will supply all your needs *Phol 4:19*

You can-because I have. *Eph 4:32*

I didn't give you a spirit of fear, but of power *2 Tim 1:7*

Give it to me, I'll carry it for you *Psalms 55:22*

I'll give you wisdom *1Corin 1:30*

I will never leave you or forsake you *Heb 13:5*

## To the tune of Onward Christian Soldiers!

### The Commuter's Hymn

For those heading back to work after  
a summer holiday...

Onward, weary travellers  
Trudging through the rain,  
Onward to the station,  
To await your train.  
There, the platform's crowded,  
No trains to be seen,  
And the message 'cancelled'  
On the station screens....

*Onward weary travellers  
Off to catch your train  
Why do you keep saying,  
"Here we go again"?*

Then, the speakers tell you,  
News that won't inspire,  
Seems some thieving vandals  
Stole the signal wire.  
Trains are going nowhere,  
It's a day to dread,  
It's not just the drivers  
That are seeing red!

*Onward weary travellers – etc.*

At long last they fix it,  
Signals turn to green.  
Trains leave with commuters  
Packed in like sardines,  
'Onward, weary travellers',  
We can hear them sing,  
Wonder what calamities  
Their next trip will bring?

*Onward weary travellers  
Off to catch your train,  
We know why you're saying,  
"Here we go again!"*

*By Nigel Beeton*



# Recipes

## Mujadara (Lentils and Rice with Caramelized Onions)

4 medium cloves garlic, smashed and peeled  
2 bay leaves  
1 tablespoon ground cumin  
1  $\frac{3}{4}$  teaspoons fine sea salt, divided  
Freshly ground black pepper  
5 cups water  
1 cup brown basmati rice (regular, not quick-cooking), rinsed and drained  
1 cup regular brown or green lentils, picked over for debris, rinsed and drained  
 $\frac{1}{3}$  cup extra-virgin olive oil (or frylight if you are watching your weight!)  
2 medium-to-large yellow onions, halved and thinly sliced  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  cup thinly sliced green onions, divided  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  cup chopped fresh coriander or flat-leaf parsley, divided  
Plain whole-milk or Greek yogurt, for serving (or soya yoghurt to make it vegan)  
Spicy sauce, for serving (optional): store-bought chili-garlic sauce or even sriracha

In a large Dutch oven or soup pot, combine the garlic, bay leaves, cumin, 1  $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoons of the salt and about 20 twists of freshly ground black pepper. Add the water and bring the mixture to a boil over medium-high heat.

Once boiling, stir in the rice and reduce the heat to medium. Cover and cook, stirring occasionally and adjusting the heat as necessary to maintain a controlled simmer, for 10 minutes.

Stir in the lentils and let the mixture return to a simmer. Cover again, reduce the heat to medium-low, and cook until the liquid is absorbed, and the rice and lentils are tender, about 20 to 23 minutes.

Meanwhile, warm the olive oil in a large (12-inch) skillet over medium-high heat. When it's warm enough that a slice of onion sizzles on contact, add the remaining onions. Stir to combine.

Stir only every 3 minutes or so at first, then more often once the onions at the edges of the pan start browning. If the onions are browning before they have softened, dial down the heat to give them more time. Cook until the onions are deeply caramelized and starting to crisp at the edges, about 20 to 30 minutes. In the meantime, line a large plate or cutting board with a couple paper towels.

Using a slotted spoon or fish spatula, transfer the onions to the lined plate and spread them evenly across. Sprinkle the remaining  $\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon

salt over the onions. They'll crisp up as they cool.

When the lentils and rice are done cooking, drain off any excess water (if there is any) and return the mixture to the pot, off the heat. Lay a kitchen towel across the top of the pot to absorb steam, then cover the pot and let it rest for 10 minutes.

Remove the lid, discard the bay leaves, and smash the garlic cloves against the side of the pan with a fork. Add about  $\frac{3}{4}$ ths of the green onions and cilantro, reserving the rest for garnish. Gently stir and fluff the rice with a fork. Season to taste with additional salt and pepper, if necessary.

Transfer the rice and lentil mixture to a large serving platter or bowl. Top with the caramelized onions and the remaining green onions and coriander. Serve hot, warm or at room temperature, with yogurt and spicy sauce (optional) on the side.

## **Vegan peanut butter cookies**

### **Ingredients**

- 100g dairy-free margarine
- 100g caster sugar
- 2 tbsp vanilla paste
- 100g crunchy peanut butter
- 225g plain flour
- 3 tbsp roasted peanuts, split in half

### **Method**

#### **STEP 1**

Beat the margarine, sugar and vanilla using an electric whisk for 1 min until pale and smooth, then mix in the peanut butter and flour until fully incorporated. Bring together into a smooth dough with your hands.

#### **STEP 2**

Roll out the dough between two sheets of baking parchment until it's about 1cm thick. If the dough is very soft (this will depend on the margarine used), chill for 45 mins until firmed slightly. Heat the oven to 160C/140C fan/gas 3 and line one large or two medium baking trays with baking parchment.

#### **STEP 3**

Cut circles out of the dough using an 8cm cookie cutter, placing the rounds on the lined baking trays. Press a few peanut halves, cut side-up, firmly into the tops of the biscuits. Bake for 12-15 mins until turning lightly golden around the edges. Leave to cool on the trays for 5 mins, then lift onto a wire rack to cool completely.

# CELEBRATE!

**HAPPY BIRTHDAY!**

**to**

## **August**

Lorelai Anderson  
Steph Boyd  
Michael Cartwright  
Ruth Smith  
Michele Delves  
Andrew Milner  
Arthur Moore  
Linda Southgate  
Rohan Wanduragala  
David Wilson



**Congratulations  
on your Wedding Anniversary**

Tim & Vikki Craig  
Andrew & Jacqui Rogers  
Angela & David Craig  
Jeni & Peter Hart  
Rebecca & Christopher Dean

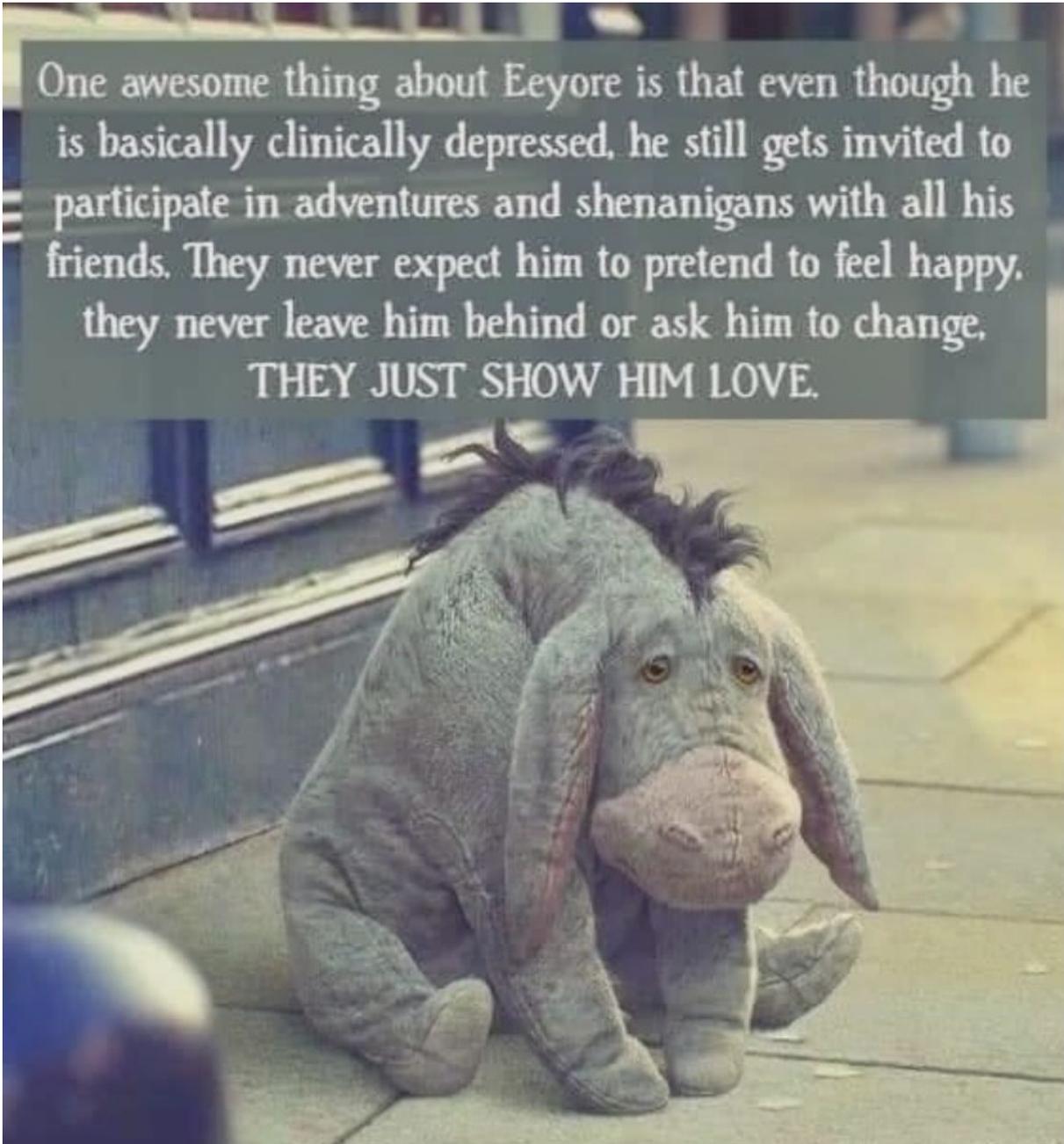
**If you have something to celebrate we would love to share it - email  
[admin@stranton-church.org.uk](mailto:admin@stranton-church.org.uk)  
or phone 864006.**

**All entries to be in by the 16th of the month.**

# Being an Eeyore

I have loved Winnie the Pooh since I was a child - it was my first “proper book”. Eeyore has always been my favourite character. I felt this picture spoke volumes and was so apt with the mental health crisis resulting from the pandemic and lockdowns....

One awesome thing about Eeyore is that even though he is basically clinically depressed, he still gets invited to participate in adventures and shenanigans with all his friends. They never expect him to pretend to feel happy, they never leave him behind or ask him to change, **THEY JUST SHOW HIM LOVE.**



# Who's Who

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***Magazine articles to the parish office by 16th of every month.***

