

Stranton and Burbank Community

SIGNPOST



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

April 2022

I am sitting down to write this article on a sunny afternoon in March. The dark cold winter is turning into the warmth of spring, bright yellow daffodils are in bloom in the garden and the birds are beginning to nest. In the coming month of April we will celebrate together Easter, Jesus risen from the tomb. I continue to believe that Easter remains the most important of the Christian festivals. It is because of Easter we can look to the future. We are people of hope.

I am sure that some of us feel our hope in recent days has worn thin. The Chambers dictionary is pretty cautious about the word hope. It talks about 'to desire for some expectation of success or fulfilment'. There is a sense in which this hope may fade with circumstances. Christian hope is much more robust than this. Our hope, the hope of a future with God, is based on the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. The darkness and pain of the cross is replaced by the light and joy of Easter.

In the bible faith, hope and love are often linked (for example 1 Corinthians 13: 13, 1 Thessalonians 1:3). As Lent turns to Easter may we encourage one another in faith, may we grow deeper in love and may our hope in God be renewed. Towards the end of Romans Paul prays, 'May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.' (Romans 15:13). May this prayer be true for each of us this Easter.

In peace and Joy

Norman



Mothers Union

At our meeting on 14th March we were hoping Linda Cartwright would be with us to take part in our membership service, for her to be enrolled and for other MU members to renew their vows made in the past. Unfortunately Linda and her mum Sally, were not well, but we remembered them as Pamela Harding (St Luke's MU Leader and also MU Diocesan Representative in our Deanery) led us in our renewal service.

Our next meeting will be in Holy Week, the day after Palm Sunday, on Monday 11th April at 1:30 pm. Please let me know of a favourite prayer, reading or poem for Holy Week, that you have found spoke specially to you and we will focus on them on that day.

The following prayer is from an MU member in the USA:

Dear Lord you gave us Holy Week to reflect on what you went through for us. Heavenly Father help us to make every day of our lives a holy one, that we might hide your word in our heart and meditate on it day and night. In the name of your Son, Jesus Christ we pray Amen.

I was able to go to the short act of Civic Reflection on Wednesday 14th March when the Hartlepool War Memorial was alight with the colours of the Ukrainian flag. It was a moving and touching reflection in spite of the rainstorm a lot of people were present and upheld the Ukrainian people in our prayers. One of the short films shown on the base of the memorial was of a choir singing the Ukrainian National Anthem – very stirring and uplifting but sad. Do keep this nation and its people in your prayers.

Remember also our members not well at this time – Covid is still very present in our area.

Take care and God Bless

Ann Courtenay



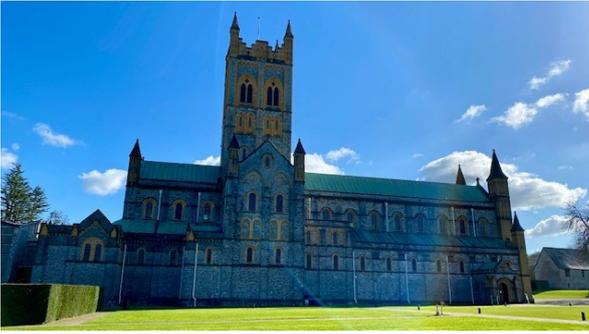
From the Home Front

Recently my older sister and I managed a long awaited road trip to Devon. We managed to avoid covid and refused to cancel because of fuel prices and possible scarcity of diesel. However when our hostess had an accident we thought long and hard but decided we should go ahead in order to give her support and to ensure she was fed and cared for (this was the right decision as we left her in far better health and spirits than we found her). I have never ventured to Devon or Cornwall before so was looking forward to seeing for myself the sights I had only seen in the media. After a long but uneventful drive, we arrived and as we turned towards our destination village our Satnav turned us into a steep, winding, overhung, single track lane! My heart sank and I felt very apprehensive and anxious - I really dislike driving on narrow roads with restricted sightlines, give me a motorway any day! However my sister was driving and she lives in the Scottish countryside, up a valley and is used to these type of roads, so she was totally unphased and just adapted to the conditions.



I felt worried about travelling around the area if these were the sorts of roads we would encounter, and was not looking forward to sightseeing.... However our host's daughter took us out and about and she was so confident and relaxed as we drove through these narrow lanes, other drivers were so sensible and considerate about giving way and waiting, that my anxieties soon dissipated. The day we returned to travel down that original narrow lane, you know it didn't seem so narrow or frightening at all!!! I learned a lesson about not giving in to my fears and to trust in others who know what they are doing. God uses everyday events to teach us so much.

Buckfast Abbey



Later in my stay in Devon we went to Buckfast Abbey. I had heard and seen snippets about the Abbey on travel programmes but I was bowled over by it's history. It was originally a Cistercian Abbey dissolved by Henry VIII in the 1530's. The abbey buildings were dismantled and parts used as a house,

but in 1902 French Benedictine monks bought the property and site. Then in 1907 they excavated the original abbey foundations and a team of six monks, with only one trained stonemason, set about rebuilding the Abbey, learning skills and training as they built. Equipment was rudimentary and quite primitive, with health and safety virtually nonexistent but only two accidents occurred in the almost 100 years it took to rebuild. The Abbey, its Conference Centre, monastery, gardens, grounds and buildings were so tranquil. The interior of the abbey was beautiful in its simplicity. The walls were cream or grey depending on the sunlight, relieved only by the small coloured stations of the cross and the wonderful stained glass windows. In the quiet prayer chapel at the east end, the light streaming through the mosaic like windows and the image of Jesus were awe inspiring. Walking around the medicinal herb garden I was shadowed by an extremely brave robin whose proximity and curiosity tied God, nature and mankind inextricably together in this very special place and haven of peace.

J.A.R.

Prayer chapel



Medicinal Garden





Ukraine refugee crisis—What can we do??

As Welcome Churches coordinator and with the agreement of the Parochial Church Council I have registered with the Government Home Office scheme to offer accommodation and support for a Ukrainian family if needed: I do not know at this stage if any refugees will be directed to Hartlepool but I feel that as God has gifted us with a large house and spare rooms, we are in a position to do this, as our kids have flown the nest. There may be others in our church and indeed our Group of Parishes, who can help in this and other ways such as befriending, help with shopping, showing people around the town, accessing services from the council etc. There are also (I understand) “Alpha” type courses being developed for refugees whose ability in English is sufficient.

The government is asking for a minimum six-month commitment for hosting, and I think the Home Office will be happier to place people in a charity linked organisation setting such as a church than in individual unlinked homes.

If you feel moved and able to help in this way, I think it would be good to offer more hosting opportunities so the families can have support from fellow Ukrainians in the area. Other offers of help, friendship etc will be most welcome.

Follow this link for more information about the Government Scheme, including the opportunity to register offers of accommodation individually. [Homes for Ukraine – Homes for Ukraine – Local Sponsorship Scheme for Ukraine \(campaign.gov.uk\)](#)

The Diocese of Durham has advised Churches to work with the Sanctuary Foundation, which is co-ordinating action and support nationally – you can register your personal interest and obtain up to date information and ideas and make donations through their web site at <https://www.sanctuaryfoundation.org.uk/>

Please email me via: refugeesupport@stranton-church.org.uk if you wish to offer assistance or receive further news and information about what is happening locally, or have registered with the Home Office refugee scheme and wish to collaborate. Any information you provide will be used solely for the purpose of our local response to this crisis and will not be shared with third parties without your express permission.

Angela & David Craig

Dear friends

I hope you do not mind another communication in what is becoming a rapidly evolving response to the deepening refugee crisis in Ukraine. The following link is to the Current National guidance from the Church of England:

[War in Ukraine: advice for parishes on helping refugees | The Church of England](#)

A point to note is that war refugees will be in a vulnerable and often traumatised state, and full safeguarding policies and measures must apply to those directly involved in all our efforts to support individuals and families as a Church Community.

Please also note our email address for co-ordinating local offers of practical support at Stranton Church
refugeesupport@stranton-church.org.uk

please also see the attached news of how we are now formally signed up as a Church, the key points of which are:

1. We have now registered as a hosting faith organisation with the Home Office
2. We have followed the Diocesan recommendation to sign up with the Sanctuary Foundation, to help with training us and resourcing our work..
<https://www.sanctuaryfoundation.org.uk/>
3. The Home Office is encouraging individual as well as organisational responses and offers of accommodation, which if you are minded to follow up we would like to assist and help to co-ordinate,
[Homes for Ukraine – Homes for Ukraine – Local Sponsorship Scheme for Ukraine \(campaign.gov.uk\)](#)

Hope and Peace Quiz

(Tip - best attempted after fish and chips!!!)

- H** Which **H** was married to Antipas?
O Which **O** was Ruth's sister in law?
P Which **P** converted an Ethiopian?
E Which **E**'s were written by Paul?
- A** Which **A** was married to Jezebel?
N Which **N** was a disciple?
D Which **D** is a tribe of Israel?
- P** Which **P** was written by Moses?
E Was written by Paul?
A **A** had a brother called Cain?
C Render unto **C** _____
E In which **E** was Joseph Prime Minister?

Pamela Thompson



Pam Thompson was born in Sutton in Craven but later the family moved to Carleton where she attended the village school. Pam enjoyed playing the violin and as a teenager began playing in Mr Peckover's pupil's orchestra in the nearby town of Skipton. It was here that Pam first met another budding violinist Michael... who hailed from the village of Gargrave. Pam left school when she was 14 and began work in Timothy Whites and Taylor in Skipton, as an apprentice pharmacist, but she continued with the orchestra.

When Michael was 17 he developed polio, requiring a long convalescent period. When he returned to the orchestra Pam offered to help carry his violin to the bus stop, before continuing up the road to her bus stop. Once Michael finished school he commuted to the Manchester College of Music where he trained as a teacher and performer. Famously Michael was invited to Pam's twenty first birthday, where Pam gave Michael a place at the top table, and so the relationship began to flourish. Michael's first job was in Oldham as a teacher, but he returned home at weekends to enjoy time together and days out riding their tandem. Michael and Pamela married in 1956 in Carleton Village Church.

The following year, 1957, Pam and Michael moved to Lincoln where Michael secured a role as a 'Lay Vicar' (singing bass in the Cathedral choir) complete with 14th century house in the historic Vicars' Court. They immersed themselves in cathedral life and Pamela was a talented arranger of cathedral flowers. He also secured a job teaching History, Music and RE at the local grammar school. It was here that the two children Adrian and Clare were born. Both Pam and Michael adored being parents and were so very proud of Adrian and Clare. The young couple enjoyed the cultural life in Lincoln often attending and playing in concerts. They also established a new orchestra 'Promusica' – an orchestra that has continued for over 50 years. As founder members Pam and Michael were able to play at Promusica's 50th anniversary concert in 2014.

The next big move for the family came in 1974 when they moved to Hartlepool. Michael had secured a job as head of Hartlepool string, teaching with the Cleveland Music Service. Pam also taught violin in school and also taking on private pupils – a number of whom went on to play professionally. For a number of years she travelled back to Lincoln by train once a week to continue teaching her

pupils. Inevitably British Rail failed to make the connection from Darlington and Michael would have to collect her at midnight from either Darlington or Thornaby.

Initially Pam and Michael lived in Colwyn Road but in 2002 they were able to move to Claremont Drive. Here Pam loved to design and build the garden. She was heard to say 'A garden at last'. Pam was a member of the National Trust and Royal Horticultural Society and enjoyed visits to the Chelsea Flower Show with Adrian.

Pam retained a lifelong love of music, particularly when she was able to play: She played in many concerts, not least in a quartet in which Michael also played. Pam also performed in the Cleveland Chamber orchestra. Pam and Michael enjoyed concerts – and going to Opera North. Visits to Clare also enabled visits together to the opera at Glyndebourne, which they loved.

Pam was a great cake baker and cake decorator– perhaps most famous in both Church and the family was Pam's lemon drizzle, which could be sent to you through the post. Home group would also include fruit cake, Victoria sandwich and many others, at Christmastime Yule logs were a speciality.

Pam was also a volunteer with the Samaritans and a trustee (along with Michael) of the Hartlepool Civic Society. Over many years, Michael had a keen interest in classic cars and they both enjoyed the social life around the Daimler and Lanchester Owners Club and the Saab Club. Michael usually did all the driving and as the cars were quite distinctive Pamela was once mistaken for the queen! Now to anybody who knew Pam this probably comes as no surprise because Pam Thompson had a regal air about her. She was a lady in every sense of the word.

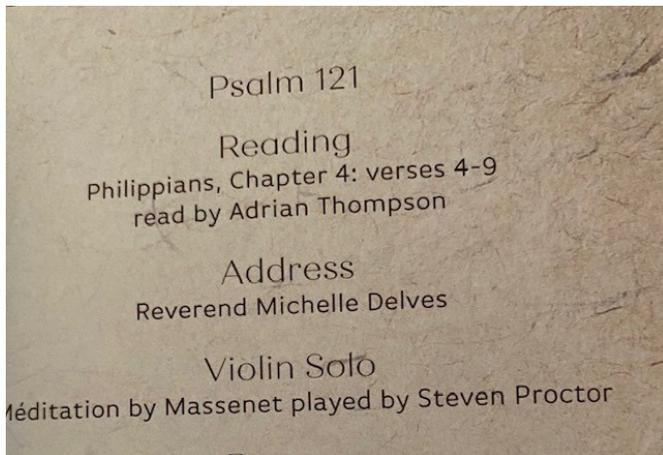
Pam and Michael have also been a big part of Stranton church: they attended the early service, and Wednesday Communion whenever they were able. They also hosted a home group, and supported other projects here at Stranton All Saints. Pam loved God's word and would love to chat about the sermons and the things that had spoken to her. She was open and authentic in her faith and the love of Christ just shone from her. It was an absolute joy to chat with Pam as she had a zest for life that was infectious. Michael said of Pam, 'she was beyond compare'... 'a wonderful wife'... 'she took me on as a lame duck, I couldn't have asked for more'. Clare and Adrian, said that, Pam was, *"A lovely mum, always up beat, and could see beyond our faults, she was always generous and always ready to give us time. Mum was very loyal to her family. She delighted in other people's achievements."*

Pam always seemed to have time to listen whenever you needed a chat. She had a heart for everyone. She loved her family and friends with a passion and often put others before herself. Pam truly was a lover of people and remained active all her life. Her death came as such a shock to all who knew her. But for Michael, her beloved husband, for Clare, Adrian and their families it shook their very world so please continue to hold them all in your prayers.

Because of the depth of love Pam had for each of you, you will carry her always in your hearts and in your minds.... In your heart by loving yourselves and others as she taught you to do.... and in your mind by remembering all she has taught you

and the treasured times you spent together.

Pam Thompson was a woman who lived, is loved and loved well and because of this she leaves you with some beautiful legacies.... These are legacies of love, of family, faith and friendship. Many hearts were broken when she passed away so suddenly with so much life left to live. But her family are a credit to her and to each other the way they have once pulled together.



Revd. Michelle Delves

Answers

(Hope you enjoyed your fish & chips?)

H	Which H was married to Antipas?	Herodias
O	Which O was Ruth's sister in law?	Oprah
P	Which P converted an Ethiopian?	Phillip
E	Which E's were written by Paul?	Epistles
A	Which A was married to Jezebel?	Ahab
N	Which N was a disciple?	Nathaniel
D	Which D is a tribe of Israel?	Dan
P	Which P was written by Moses?	Pentateuch
E	Was written by Paul? _____	Ephesians
A	had a brother called Cain?	Abel
C	Render unto C _____	Caesar
E	In which E was Joseph Prime Minister?	Egypt

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.

W

Whitefly in the greenhouse? – plant parsley around the inside wall.
Water plants in the morning. Night watering cools the soil more rapidly.
Water in which eggs have been boiled is good for maidenhair ferns and African violets.

When you are weeding leave any seedlings you do not recognise to grow for a little longer. It might just identify itself as a 'child' of one of your choicest plants.

The white butterfly looks pretty as it dances over the garden but the trick is to dissuade it from laying eggs on your cabbages. It doesn't like the scent from sage, rosemary, hyssop, thyme, dill or mint. A border of these herbs will help keep them away.

White butterfly on your cabbages? Boil lettuce and spray the cooled water over the plants.

No flower is easier to grow than waterlily. Simply place a mix of half manure and soil into a container and place it all into the pool. After that, all you need to do is admire it.

Wisteria – the size of the vine can be daunting but with the right pruning it can be kept to any size you like. Prune in October/November, cut long whip like shoots back to 2/3 leaves as they grow. This not only keeps the plants in bounds but it encourages the shoots that bear the flowers
Add leaves and small branches of willow trees to water and stand your cuttings in this for better root development.



What would you do if you knew you would NEVER fail??

I was listening to 1 Samuel 17 being read the other night.

The story of David and Goliath.

I first heard that story when I was a child!

The thing with God's word is you can read it over and over again and you will always get fresh manna from it! Why, because it's living and active. It's God breathed.

Goliath a huge giant had been bullying the Israelites for 40 days.

He wanted someone to fight him.

No one came forward until David a humble shepherd boy who was just happening to be visiting his brothers.

This verse struck me-

David replied to Saul

"The Lord who rescued me from the paw of the lion and the paw of the bear will rescue me from the hand of this Philistine." Saul said to David, "Go, and the Lord be with you."

1 Samuel 17:37 NIV

David with his little bag of stones and a sling was walking towards the massive giant Goliath.

With the utter confidence and dependence that his God was with him and his God was not going to fail.

His brothers were whispering in his ears "who do you think you are?"

Others would have been looking at his small frame and thinking he is going to be snapped in two!

David knew his God. His faith was so much bigger than his fear.

He had testimony after testimony of God fighting for him. God had helped him slay lions and bears.

This Giant in front of him was just another opportunity for God to show His power.

He knew that God had NEVER failed and He wasn't going to start now!

With one small stone and a sling - the giant fell and died. David stepped out in faith because he knew his God.

This passage challenged me.

What would I do if I knew God and I would never fail?

I would pray over people to be healed or delivered a lot more than I do now.

I would introduce my Jesus to so many more people than I do now.

I know my God has never failed me I have testimonies to prove that.

I know that I need to shut out the lies of the enemy when the fear is trying to be louder than my faith.

Father God

Thank you that you are so much bigger than any giant we will ever face.

I repent of the numerous times I have partnered with fear, usually of man.

Thank you that you are always faithful and you are always near.

I now step out in your power and authority knowing you and I cannot fail.

Amen

Ang Hall

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Stranton Sunday Club News!

We have had lots of fun this month in Sunday Club. In March our theme has been looking at children in the Bible. First, we looked at Josiah who was a boy king. The children made a huge temple just like Josiah did in the story.



On Sunday 13th March the children learned about David and Goliath. They thought about how amazing it is to have God on our side and that if we have faith in him then he will help us. The children made nest cakes with five stones (mini eggs) in to remind them that David used a simple sling with some stones to defeat Goliath. Tyler, Callum, Autumn and Lexi really enjoyed making their cakes!

Tyler, Jaydon and Lorelai really enjoyed decorating their cakes.



What's On in March

Our theme this month is Easter. We will be looking at bible stories which focus on the Easter story and that link with our Easter services.

3rd April

This week we will be thinking about the beginning of the Easter story and how Jesus entered Jerusalem riding on a donkey.

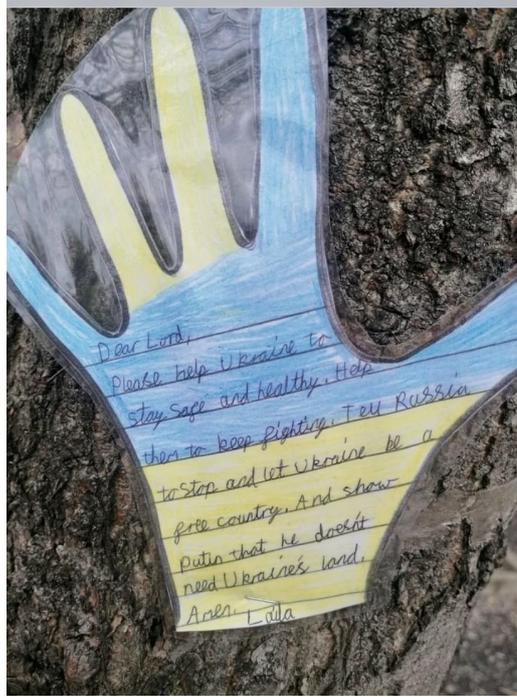
24th April

This week we will be think about how Jesus is alive!

If you have any questions, please let me or the church wardens know.

Kate

Stranton Sunday Club Leader

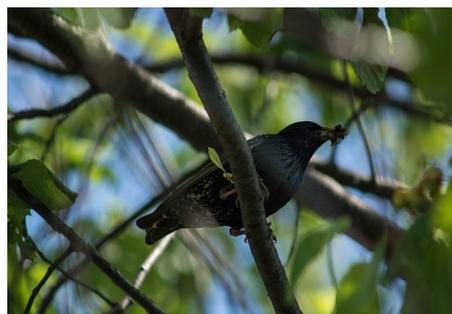


This morning we welcomed Rev. Clive from Stranton Church to school to lead our Eucharist service with Angela. Our theme for this week is peace and it was lovely to spend time in quiet reflection thinking about our lives and participating in such an important act of worship.



Birds of a Feather

I have a tamarisk tree in my front garden, like the house it is very old and in Spring it has beautiful pink blossom. These trees are found in very dry countries of the world. The last year I had pruned it was 2020 and I was beginning to think that it wasn't coming back to life. My neighbour was very concerned about it too. After giving it a good watering I told it to be good and come back to making the corner beautiful again-and it did! This year it has just started to grow its leaves-very fine hints of green at the moment.



The birds must love this tree because it has at least three old nests in it. Just lately Spring is in the air and the birds are checking over the tree. First the sparrows started bringing beaks full of nest material after clearing out the remains of last year's nest. A couple of days later there was quite a noisy altercation in the tree – the sparrows were evicted and a pair of starlings took up residence. Then I spotted the magpies having a sly glance and jackdaws are also checking it out. One year even ravens turned up! Once the full canopy of leaves and blossom appears it all calms down.

One year a pair of mallards took over the corner for a couple of weeks, nesting on the ground before flying off to find the nearest fresh water lake.

I do feed the birds but give less food as the year warms up and the garden pests appear and are gobbled up by the now parent birds.

The ravens in the Bible are an example of God's gracious provision for all His creatures. In Psalm 147 v9, Job 38 v41 and also in the New Testament ravens are used by Jesus as an illustration of God's provision in Luke 12 v 24.

Who will finally capture the nests – watch this space! I don't think it will be the starlings as they prefer to be in a larger flock. I will find out soon

Ann Courtenay

*St Matthew's
Community Centre
Elwick Road*



Please come and join us

Saturday 2nd April 2022

2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Coffee or Tea, Cake and Company

*A time to spend together,
meet new people, make new friends*

Holiday in Turkey

For our first holiday abroad in two years, we went in March to Turkey, staying in Kusadasi, which is about ten miles from the ancient city of Ephesus: we found the weather in March (sunny, but colder than Hartlepool) leading us to sightseeing rather than to lazing by the pool or on the beach (the pool was empty anyway and the beach very windy).

Ephesus was the principal city of the Roman Empire on the west coast of what is now Turkey. The harbour at Ephesus silted up completely in the late Roman period, and despite it remaining as a centre of trade and pilgrimage, its importance diminished greatly after the time when Paul visited it, especially as it suffered in the medieval period from earthquakes and the conquest of other empires. Nevertheless, it remains a most impressive place – the city gate from the bottom of the main street to the market place and Harbour road is dated



(by its inscribed dedication to the Emperor Augustus on his twelfth Consulship) to 2 BC, and the apostle Paul must have passed through it. Equally impressive are the huge 25,000 seat theatre and remains of early Christian basilicas (see picture), one down by the harbour where the Church held an ecumenical council in the early 4th century shortly after Christianity had been recognised as an "official" religion of the Roman Empire.



Later, a huge Basilica Church was built celebrating and enshrining the tomb of St John on the nearby fortified hill overlooking the remains of the Temple of Artemis (Diana) – the place where Paul had fallen out with the silversmiths who made their living by making and selling votive offerings to their goddess. Only one column remains of that temple, which is less visited today than the "Mary House", a pilgrimage site in the mountains a few miles away, where John is supposed to have looked after Mary the Mother of Christ until she died. All Roman emperors seem to have visited Ephesus including Hadrian whose famous wall from Carlisle to Tyneside is as impressive as his arch in Ephesus (below).

David & Angela Craig

Recipes

Tomato Crumble

- 1 onion finely chopped
- 1 oz margarine
- 2 oz grated cheese
- 6 heaped tablespoons new bread crumbs
- ½ lb peeled & sliced tomatoes
- Salt & pepper to taste
- 1 egg
- 4 tablespoons milk



Melt marg in a pan add onion and cook till clear. Remove from heat and stir in cheese and breadcrumbs.

Line a pie dish with a thin layer of the mixture. Cover with a layer of sliced tomatoes, sprinkle with seasoning. Continue with mixture in layers of sliced tomato and final topping should be cheese mixture. Pour beaten egg and milk over.

Bake in middle oven on Gas 7, 200C fan oven, 210C for 10-15 minutes until golden brown.

One step Peanut Cookies

- | | |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| 6 oz SR flour | ¼ teasp salt |
| 4 oz soft marg | 3 oz caster sugar |
| 3 tablesp peanut butter | 3 oz soft brown sugar |
| 1 medium egg | 2 oz plain chocolate |
- A few chopped salty peanuts – for decoration

Sieve flour and salt into a bowl. Add remaining ingredients and beat together until well mixed. Gather the mixture together with finger tips and form into a roll. (At this stage it can be wrapped in double greaseproof paper and frozen – remove when needed and thaw).

Slice thinly and place well apart on the baking sheet. Bake in oven gas 5, electric 180C, fan 170C and bake for 7-10 minutes. Spread with melted chocolate and press on the salty peanuts



BB An Arresting Time!!!!



The Police visited our Anchor Boys on Friday March 18th and talked about their uniform, equipment and their working lives. They also faced an avalanche of questions by the Boys, happily no one was arrested!!

Other activities for each section include brass rubbings, Mother's Day Jewellery, ink printing, advanced marching and drill plus we have now been given information about our Summer Camp near Pickering.

The Anchors and Juniors are taking part in Easter Eggheads from April 11th- 15th at St Matthew's CC starting at 6.00pm til 7.15pm (Monday to Thursday) with Good Friday Activity with Messy Church from 10-11.30am at St Matthew's CC.

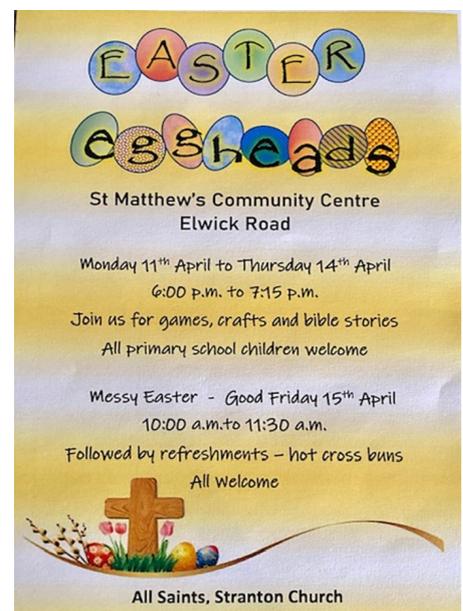
This involves games videos, quizzes, talks and most importantly LOTS OF FUN as the youngsters learn about the First Easter and what that means in 2022.

All the Lads are working to a Platinum Jubilee badge by making displays, printing and crafts.

Mother's Day 27th March - we are holding a bacon butty at St Matthew's Community Centre before we go down to Stranton Church for a family friendly service.

We still have room for new starters in all sections ranging from 6 - 16 years

George Bainbridge



Andy and Kati Walsh our CMS Mission partners in Brazil March Newsletter



Dear friends,

We are all so pleased that we made it to Florianopolis on 21st January as planned. At certain points last year we did wonder when this would happen for us! It's now been four weeks since our arrival and we are pleased to be living in a flat on a short-term let. It's in a good location, a short walk away from Vineyard Floripa and Eva's new primary school, with good access to local amenities. Eva's doing really well at school and making new friends, despite not being conversant in Portuguese yet. Being such a social little girl, we're confident that she will soon be enjoying life here even more, as she engages in some new activities including capoeira, a form of dance with deep roots in Brazilian culture. Saying farewell to our family was always going to be hard. We said goodbye to Nora, Andy's grandma who is 104 and looked after in a care home, not knowing whether we'll see her again. Nothing had prepared us to have to say goodbye to Andy's family the day after the death of Bernadette, Andy's 31-year-old sister, moments after giving birth to her son Tim. A day that should have brought so much joy to Bernadette and our family has been marked by such grief and shock. Needless to say we're absolutely delighted that Tim was born healthy, is a beautiful baby and Aaron, his dad, is doing well under the circumstances. All our family are doing okay although it's still very painful and this process will take time. Saying goodbye at the airport under these distressing circumstances after such a long period of anticipation was very tough. On the outbound flight Andy was reminded (and encouraged by) the verses relating to the cost of following Christ (Luke 9:57–62) and pursuing God's Kingdom. We are allowing the Holy Spirit to minister into this situation and shape the way forward for our purpose here at this time. We are thankful to CMS, who have offered their support and who continue to pray this through with us at this difficult time. We'd like to take this opportunity to also thank all of you for your prayers and kind messages in the days following our arrival.

On Saturday 5th February, we were pleased to be introduced to the leadership team of Vineyard Floripa. For a church with a smaller congregation of around 80 people, comprising families and young adults, it's so encouraging to see how actively involved the church is in the local community. It certainly punches above its weight! Later in the evening Andy went out with a team from the church to pray and to talk to folk on the street about Jesus. It was interesting to observe how this is done here. The group met to pray, then split into pairs and went out to approach people from a place of truly wanting to befriend people. There was a debrief at the end and Andy was able to encourage the team and share ideas which we could possibly take forward.

The following evening we were presented as a family to the church congregation. By this point the senior pastor, (our brother-in-law and fellow CMS mission partner!) had already made the congregation aware of our arrival. As you can imagine, our welcome and reception was very warm, in keeping with the Brazilian culture! We can foresee that in time we will feel at home here in Florianopolis as we integrate into the local culture and develop strong, accountable Christian relationships. Before we embark on outreach activity into some of the tough areas of the community, and I suppose this goes without saying, we recognise how fundamental it is to develop and maintain a strong routine in our walk with the Lord and our family life. We understand that in the long run this will lead to a better outcome and is key to avoiding adverse stress levels, burnout or disillusionment. Andy is also exploring some theological training through the Vineyard here and can report on progress in due course. As a sidenote we're reading some books that Colin, mission learning manager at CMS recommended to us. We are really enjoying *In Search of Christ in Latin America* by Samuel Escobar and *Reading the Bible with the Damned* by Bob Ekblad. Connected to this, we're praying to develop appropriate partnerships with local leaders, even if it takes longer to get new initiatives off the ground. We've already been approached by a "bishop" from an Assemblies of God church. It was made clear to us before long that significant financial investment on our part was being sought to launch their new ministries. I've since understood that titles such as bishop can be used lightly here as they can be self proclaimed! Soon, we have the opportunity to meet the chaplain of the youth offenders' institute, who we hope can provide access into Florianopolis adult penitentiary. Kati is interested to develop links with a chaplain who visits the women's prison. Before long we can see that a comprehensive induction will be underway! We would therefore value prayer as we seek the Lord's direction for our mission here and focus on justice in this upcoming period. We're sensitive to the continuous signs of economic and spiritual poverty around us. Please pray for wisdom and discernment in this very different culture we find ourselves immersed in and for how to build good foundations and connections for the future. Finally, since our arrival, there have been two terrible natural disasters in Brazil resulting from a burst dam (Bahia state) and landslides (Rio de Janeiro state) with many thousands displaced, killed or missing. Once again, the government does next to nothing to help. Please keep the people affected by these disasters in prayer.

Andy and Kati

For additional information - <http://www.stranton-church.org.uk>

Tony and Katherine Paton – March update

Our family by the sea

Dear friends,

Some days it is “just like a washing machine”. Since we returned from South East Asia, seven months ago, I have regularly been indulging in something that was impossible in the landlocked country we called home: swimming in the sea. I joined a local swimming group and started swimming in time to take in the sunrise – I have never seen so many beautiful sunrises before. I have realised, more than ever before, how changeable the sea is. Depending on winds and tides, the sea can be calm almost like a mirror. On days such as these, I can get a good workout, swimming for as long as the cold water remains tolerable. Today it was windy and the sea was rough. Trying to swim in such conditions, when getting beyond the breaking waves is challenging and even dangerous and the sea is “just like a washing machine”, the joy of swimming is replaced with the invigorating pummelling of a sea water massage. It is frustrating to concede defeat against insurmountable odds, but that is what we must do. Since we returned, that simile of some days being “just like a washing machine” also holds true. We start off the day, hoping to achieve a number of goals, to make progress in readjusting to life in the UK, but things don’t go as planned: there is disappointing news regarding a possible job, one of the children has had a tough day at school and doesn’t want to go back, our daughter who has moved away from home is doing well in her course and making friends but none of them are Christians. The Israelites grumbled against Moses that life was better in Egypt, forgetting that they had been oppressed as slaves there. We were so well settled in South East Asia, why did we leave to return here, where life seems like trying to swim in a washing machine?

As I write this, Ukraine is being invaded by Russia and so much in this part of the world seems such a mess. Putting up with the long dark nights and cold weather – and cold seas – seems a doddle compared to trying to find our place back in a culture that has changed so much since we left in 2005. Of course it isn’t all doom and gloom. Not every day feels like trying to swim in a washing machine. Two high points for me have been attending the funeral services of two elderly people I’ve been close to in the past. That these were high points might seem strange, but nothing clarifies perspective like death, grief and loss. As Katherine and I walked towards the church for one of the funerals, I overheard the daughter of the man who had died. When asked how she was, she replied: “pretty rubbish”. I thought, what a wonderfully frank and honest answer, so typical of the person concerned – a kind of plain-speaking female equivalent of Nathanael in the Gospels. Yet in the course of that funeral service and the other I attended (at which the son, who battles a severe stammer, spoke so

eloquently and movingly about his mother), the descriptions of the people who had died and how they had devoted their lives in love for God and other people, coupled to their and our shared hope in the Good News of Jesus, lifted the clouds, just like when the sun and blue skies sweep aside the greyest of grey days. The songs, the prayers, the eulogies and the Word of God, together with the warm conversations afterwards, made those two sad days seem joyful and special, sanctified by God's gracious loving care.

Other special times have been our visits to those of our link churches we have been able to visit in person. We have felt so welcomed, so affirmed in the work we have been doing, so cared for. It has been a real privilege to partner in the Good News with you, sharing in God's mission in South East Asia and then back here, as I have preached and (along with Katherine and the family) sought to share our life and work there with you here. We look back with thankfulness for the past – although we hope to still maintain a live connection with the country in which we've served, without it holding us back from making progress here. We are grateful for God's faithfulness through the difficult process of moving back to the UK. What of the future? Our first day as former mission partners is also the first day of "meteorological" spring. The trees I can see outside are still very bare, but I believe buds and other evidence of renewed life will appear on them soon. As I write this, I have heard of two possible opportunities for fulltime ordained ministry and there may be others. In the meantime, I hope to get some secondary school teaching work to tide us over until we begin life and work in the new place God is calling us to. We very much hope that though this is the end of our time as mission partners for the foreseeable future, we can still be involved in the life of the CMS (UK) community and in the ongoing work in South East Asia. We also hope we can keep in touch with as many of you who have faithfully supported us through these past sixteen years, as we can. We very much appreciate your prayers past, present and in the future. And we encourage you to stay connected to CMS – if you would like to support other mission partners on their journey, please contact churchrelations@churchmissionsociety.org Finally... "But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labour in the Lord is not in vain." (1 Corinthians 15:57,58)

God bless you,

Tony, Katherine, Anna, Innes, Euan and Eilidh Paton

CELEBRATE!

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

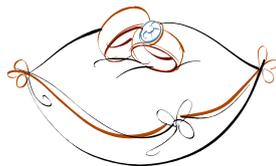
to

April

Matt Appleyard
Rachel Cartwright
Paul Cartwright
Ben Coils
Abigail Craig
Andrew Craig
Frank Endean
Angela Hall
Rebekah Hart
Kate Lawson
Linda Parvin
Alan Robertson
David Robertson



**Wedding Anniversary
Congratulations
to
Ruth Craig & Gavin Smith
Chloe & Jordan Thornhill**



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

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

Dates for the Diary

for April

Worship continues on Sundays at 9am and 11am.

Midweek Holy Communion at St Matthew's CC 10am on Wednesdays

April

Mon 4 th	Stranton SMDT, 7.30pm Fulthorpe Chapel
Tues 5 th	PCC (Accounts), 7.30pm venue St Matthew's CC
Sat 9 th	Wedding, 12 noon
Sun 10 th	Palm Sunday, 11.00am Lighthouse with Welcomes

Holy Week

Mon 11 th -Thurs 14 th	Eggheads, 6.00-7.15pm St Matthew's CC
Mon 11 th -Wed 13 th	Holy Week Communion, 7.00pm St Columba's
Thurs 14 th	An informal meal with Communion, 7.00pm St Luke's
Good Friday 15 th	'Messy Easter', 10.00-11.30am St Matthew's CC Church open for silent prayer 12 noon An hour at the cross 2.00-3.00pm
Easter Day 17 th	Holy Communion 9.00am Family Communion with Easter Egg Hunt 11.00am
Sun 24 th	Normal Services, APCM to follow 11.00am service (Anita Burke's final Sunday)

Advance Notice

Norman and Julie's final Sunday will be Sunday 19th June. We are planning one united group Communion service at Stranton at 10.00am.

A Ceilidh is planned for Saturday 18th June in St. Matthew's CC



Who's Who

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Burbank Community Church Worker & Curate

Revd Clive Hall 10 Clarkson Court 278504

Reader

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Churches Together in Hartlepool

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St Mary's RC

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Signpost Advertising Maureen Anderson 22 Thetford Road 871266

Signpost Subscription Maureen Anderson 22 Thetford Road 871266

St Matthew's Booking Trish Playfor Church Office 894006

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

