

Stranton and Burbank Community

SIGNPOST



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

December/January 2022/2023

Old Treasures and New – A Thought from John

It is so good to finally be here as Priest in Charge of both All Saints and St Luke's, as well as serving St Aidan's and St Columba's. The licensing service itself was such a lovely occasion with an opportunity to visit all of the churches as part of the four part pilgrimage around the group. It was a joy to see so many new faces offering warm welcomes to both me and my family. Thank you all so much. We look forward to getting to know you all over the coming weeks, months and years. Thank you to all those involved in the planning of the service too. There were so many elements that needed to come together, and they came together brilliantly. For my part, it was quite a challenge finding music for the service that hopefully reflected something of the different traditions across each of the churches within the group as well as reflecting something of me in the choices too. I'm hoping there was something old and familiar as well as maybe new and exciting within them for everyone.

In his talk on Sunday afternoon, Bishop Paul spoke of new treasures as well as old, referring to the Gospel passage from Matthew 13. In this, Jesus was speaking to his disciples about holding onto all of the good things from the Jewish teachings, while welcoming in the new.

“Therefore every teacher of the law who has become a disciple in the kingdom of heaven is like the owner of a house who brings out of his storeroom new treasures as well as old.” Matt 13:52

During the licensing service, there was, for me, a really profound moment when I pledged an Oath of Allegiance to His Majesty, King Charles III. Even though I'd read the words, it was the first time I'd spoken them out loud and it reminded me how much Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II had been a part of all our lives for many, many years. She is the only monarch many of us have ever known and had reigned over us for more than twenty years before I was born. With her passing, many things will remain the same, but I'm sure King Charles' will bring his own perspective into our monarchy, as he finds his place in his role as our King.

It was a huge privilege to be able to welcome the return of the church bells to All Saints, and as I reflected what to say I was reminded again of all the changes that have happened this year because the bells had already been removed when the Queen's death was announced and weren't able to join in the tolling of church bells, as part of our national mourning. There are changes with the bells themselves too, with a new No 4 Bell being installed. But much has remained the same. The new bell was needed to replace one that could no longer be maintained, but it will work well alongside the other seven that have been carefully restored and retuned ready to be reinstated to full working order.

Many things have changed in the last 12 months, and I can't wait to see where God wants to lead us as His people. Matthew 13 tells us that there are treasures in the store house – new as well as old. I look forward to seeing what 'old treasures' we can grow and develop and what 'new treasures' are out there for us to discover together.

Grace and Peace,

John



Mothers Union

Welcome to the Reverend John George Bell, our new minister in charge here at All Saints Stranton, of St Luke's and St Aidan's and St Columba's in the Deanery of Hartlepool, and on behalf of the Mothers Union. We welcome you and your family arriving at what is always a busy time of year. Hopefully after Christmas you will be able to join with us at one of our meetings at St Matthew's.

At the beginning of our MU prayer diaries for December we can read a reflection, a monthly prayer and a creative prayer that states:- Look at an image of the Nativity. Imagine where you would place yourself in the setting and reflect on why you have chosen that particular place. Think of others who may feel outside the scene and pray for both yourself and those who might be drawn to the Christ child this Christmas.

So many people this year are upset and worried about health and financial matters - what with the cost of living on an upward climb, so look out for those whom you can help - friends, neighbours, or someone who needs prayers. I can remember living in a very cold house when I was a child and then difficult times in the sixties, seventies, and not long ago. Pray for our town, our area, may we have giving hearts and willing hands.

Two hymns which were sung on at the licensing service were favourites of mine, the first 'In Christ alone my hope is found' and the last one 'Be thou my Vision' both powerful hymns stirring us as we sang. Let us continue our joining together to meet in the small hall at St Matthew's as we see what 2023 will bring.

Our next meeting is a lunch at the Marine Hotel at Seaton Carew on Monday 12th December at 12 noon. I will be in touch for your food selections.

Our new year meeting will be on January 9th (second Monday) with our usual New Year catch up and perhaps a few games before a little tea party. When we return bring a 'memory' with you about someone you have met, it could even be a relative (no names), and we can think about and pray for their situation.

I will finish with the monthly prayer.

God of Glory

Awaken our souls; open our hearts, as we make ready to celebrate anew, the coming of love incarnate, our promised Messiah,

Lead us to the newborn Christ, that we may gaze in worship and give our lives to Him

Amen

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year

Ann Courtenay

From the Home Front

I am a real slipper lover. I wear them whenever I am in the house and I can't wait to put on my slippers each time I return home. I wear them continuously from September to May at least. My moccasins keep me comfy and warm. They have a hard sole so I can nip outside in them without getting wet feet. I have had this pair for almost two years and suddenly realised that they weren't quite as comfy. This was due to the fact that most of the sheepskin lining had flattened or rubbed off, the leather had stretched and my feet were moving around inside the slipper, no matter how many times I tightened the laces my feet threatened to come out of the slippers. In fact they were beginning to be a bit dangerous walking up and down stairs. Off I went to the cobbler who sells this style and I managed to purchase a new pair.

Of course they cost nearly 25% more than my last pair, but they are good value for the amount of wear I get from them. Pushing my feet into the plump sheepskin the feeling of comfort was immediate, they seemed to hug my feet and were incredibly warm and secure. Ah bliss....



Spot the difference – old and new

Sometimes my faith and prayer life can be a bit like my slippers. I have found a secure way of following God's word, of praying and living my Christian life. It feels safe, right, acceptable. Although over time things change in our lives and circumstances impact on our routines and habits, relationships

transform-what was once a secure spiritual Christian life has become lax, corner cutting; a distance is growing between me and God, and my faith is less secure. At this point I know I need to readjust my thinking, my seeking, my communication and my praying, I need to ramp up my worship and praise and spend time with other spirit filled folk. Amazingly God was there all the time - just waiting for me to refocus and reprioritise! So if your faith life is like the 'old slippers' – take yourself in hand, recalibrate your Christian life and rebuild your relationship with our wonderful Abba Father, His Son Jesus our Saviour and our Companion Holy Spirit. Don't delay, do it today!

J.A.R.

Return of Stranton's refurbished and tuned bells Tuesday 15th November

We reported here that the church bells were removed in July and went to Taylor's of Loughborough to be cleaned down and retuned. All the bell fittings were manufactured new to replace the old fittings which were on their way out. The bells frame has been cleaned down and treated to keep it in good shape for another 100 years.

On arrival at Taylor's the No 4 bell dated c1664 was, on inspection, found to be impossible to tune properly as it might crack due to the thin metal. But it was decided that it should return to the church to remain part of the history of Stranton. A new bell has been included in the peal of 8.

Tuesday 15th November dawned dry but by the time the lorry arrived with the bells it was raining steadily. Revd John Bell blessed the bells before they were lifted one at a time into the tower; the rain had got considerably heavier by then!

So, now, all 8 bells are back on the frame and are being prepared for ringing once again. The old No 4 bell hangs from its own frame and will be chimed as a Service Bell.

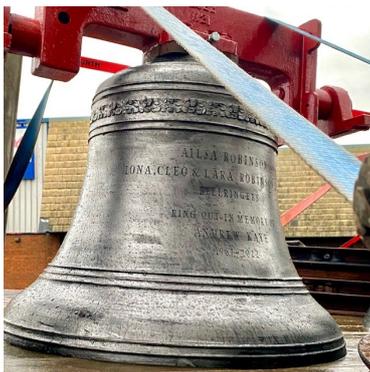
The church had wanted to have the No 6 bell retuned. It was thought to date from c1599 so The Church Buildings Council expressed objections as the bell is listed for preservation. But The Diocesan Chancellor agreed with the Stranton Church Council that it should be retuned. When the bells arrived at Taylor's their Historian examined No 6 and found marking on it which showed that it was actually cast around 1520 by a family of Bell Founders named Selliok that were from Nottingham. So, when readers hear No 6 bell being rung, they will know that it has been heard since the time of King Henry VIII for over 500 years.

Work will complete on refitting the bells around the end of November. Stonemasons will refit the belfry west window but no date is confirmed for that. It is possible that the bells will be rung before Christmas but this is not guaranteed.

Andrew Frost

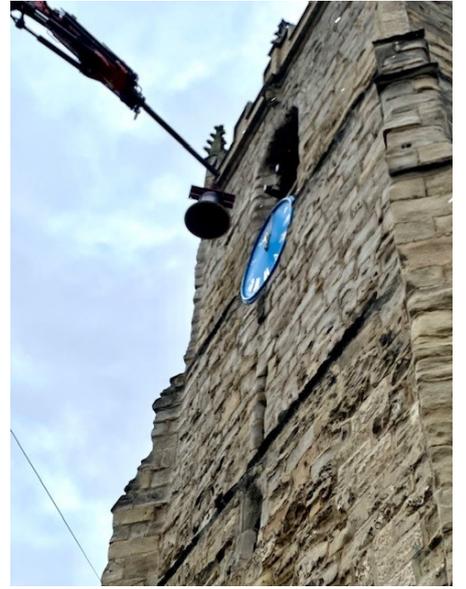


Eight bells left the tower in June but nine bells returned. Rev John Bell's first official duty as minister to the Central Group of Churches was to bless the bells.



This bell was dedicated to the memory of former Tower Captain Andy Kaye who died in September.

Andy Kaye's family



Licensing and installation of Rev John Bell In All Saints Stranton on 13th November 2022

The Rev John Bell was licensed by Bishop Paul and installed by Archdeacon Rick as Priest in Charge of All Saints Stranton and St Luke's, serving the Central Hartlepool Group Ministry of All Saints, St Luke, St Aidan and St Columba in the Deanery of Hartlepool.



Bishop Paul spoke of the mix of people who were parishioners and leaders and encouraged us all to check we were 'good fish' not 'stinky fish'!

Rev John affirming his calling to our parishes.

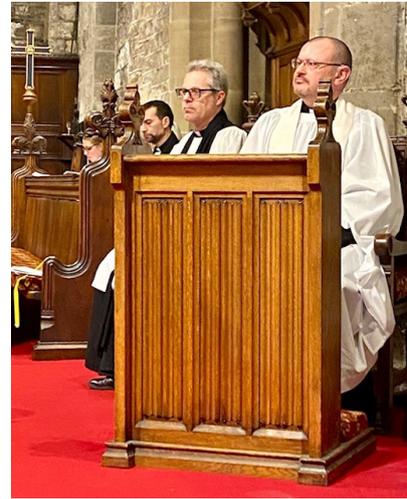


Bishop Paul welcomes Rev John (and family) and confirms he is to be Priest in charge of All Saints and St Luke's whilst also serving St Aidan's and St Columba's.

After affirming his vows to the church, the King and the Bishop, Rev John signs the Declaration of Oaths witnessed by Archdeacon Rick. John then received his Licence from the Bishop, followed by a blessing.



The Churchwardens of the all the churches presented Rev John with keys to all the churches, then brought him back to the bishop to be installed in the Vicar's Chair.



Installed officially.



Area Dean Janet officially welcomed John as minister to The Central Group.

Rev John was also welcomed by representatives from Bishop's council, St John's College Durham who are Stranton's patron (Rev Dr Nick Moore our former curate had this role – a double blessing), other local Christian churches, bell ringers and uniformed organisations plus the local community.



Rev John received symbols emphasising our mission for engaging with children, youth and young adults (montage from Messy Church), challenging poverty (Foodbank information), and God's creation (seeds).

John, Rebecca, Sophie and Daniel.



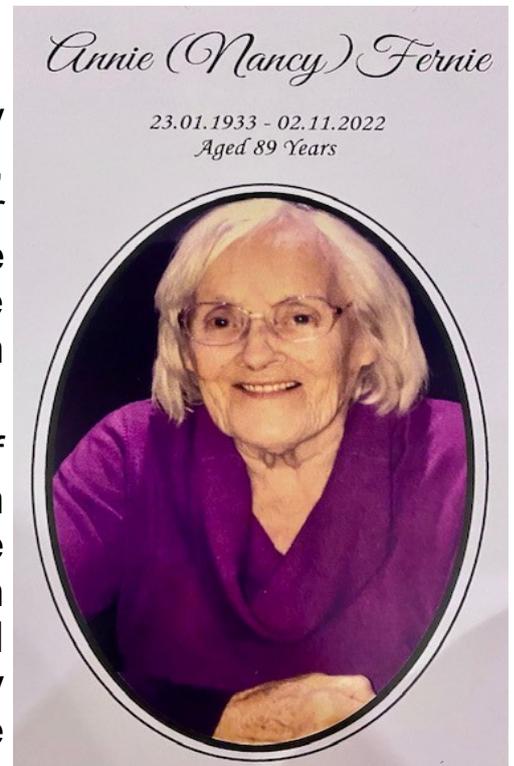
The service was followed by a time of fellowship and food, including visitors from Rev John's sending church in Bedford, family, friends, the various congregations and community guests.

Nancy Fernie

We mark with sadness the death of Nancy Fernie, a longstanding member of our church, who had been restricted by age and poor health to her home for several years. Despite her physical infirmity she radiated joy in the Lord and witnessed to her thankful living faith to all whom she met.

Nancy was loved and appreciated by many of the mums and children in SMACC (Stranton Mothers and Children Club) where, during the 1980s and 1990s, she cared for the children while the mums found time to be with God and have fellowship with each other. She regularly attended Aglow meetings where she gave prayerful support to many. She spread the word of the Lord in every situation – even evangelising from her hospital bed at times.

Nancy's funeral was held at the Hartlepool Crematorium on Friday 11th November where mourners wore something pink. It was well attended by her sisters and brothers in Christ from Stranton, Aglow and other church groups. Thanks to all those who visited her and kept in touch, and we offer prayers for comfort for her family, and all who mourn. A faithful and loving servant of Christ now attaining her heavenly reward. We give thanks for her long and blessed life.



**St Matthew's
Community Centre
Elwick Road**



Please come and join us
Saturday 3rd December 2022
Saturday 7th January 2023
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

Farewell Words from Rev Michelle

“I led them with cords of human kindness, with ties of love; I lifted the yoke from their neck and bent down to feed them” (Hosea 11:4)

This verse brings to heart all the love that has been shown to me during my time here in Hartlepool. The love shown to me by so many members of our church families across the Central Group, has quite literally led me out of the desert place I was in after training and back into a place of flourishing. I believe these are the very chords of human kindness that this scripture verse speaks of and they lifted a heavy yoke from me at a time when I had no strength to lift it myself.

The authenticity I have found here has enabled me to be more authentic in my own ministry, which is amazing because our beautiful Lord calls us to come as we are, not as others think we could or should be, but as we are. In this place of vulnerability and openness God is so present, His comfort is tangible. It's in our surrender, our willingness to take all our brokenness and blind spots to Him that the Holy Spirit can work powerfully, bringing healing and wholeness. In this place our wounds heal and then we can help others to heal, to find their way home to our beautiful Abba Father, through Christ and in the power of the Spirit.

The Central Group and the town of Hartlepool and it's people have been such a blessing to Trinity and I and I'll be forever grateful to all those who've reached out to us. Thank you from the bottom of my heart for the kindness, the kinship and the Kingdom ways we've seen and will carry with us always. I will be keeping you all in my heart and prayers as you enter this new season and would be grateful for your prayers as Trinity and I enter ours. The light of Christ shines in and through each of you so never be afraid to let it shine and remember always wherever there is the light and love of Christ, darkness has to flee.

Let me leave you with an advent prayer:

Father God help us to prepare for our advent journey with open arms, hearts and minds and a ready “yes”.

Help us to look toward the coming of Immanuel with great expectancy and a contagious joy.

Help us to remember always,
in our hearts by faith with thanksgiving,
the coming of the one true Hope, Jesus.

God of advent who sent His Son as helpless babe; so that all who turn to Him may
Have their hope revived, renewed in Him.

Soften and turn our hearts to you anew.

Help us to surrender this advent journey to your will.

Prompt us by the power of the Holy Spirit

To say YES to you more.

Thank you for your gift given once for all.

Help us to shine the light of Christ into a broken world, like a Holy beacon shining in the darkness.

Maranatha – Come Lord Jesus

In whose precious name we pray. Amen

Every Blessing in Christ Always

In Love and Joy

Rev Michelle

Online Streaming of Services

At our Parochial Church Council meeting on 22nd November we received a report on responses to and public engagement with our streaming of services, on Facebook and YouTube which was introduced during COVID-19 lockdown.

We do have a number of regular "online attenders" at our Sunday 9am traditional Holy Communion services on Facebook, but the take-up from online streaming of our 11am Morning Worship, Lighthouse and Family Communion Services is low in number and usually for short periods within the service.

Accordingly we agreed to the following pattern of streaming from the start of January 2023 (subject to comments and ongoing review), we also discussed the possibility of steaming Sunday Sermons-

- 9.00am Holy Communions will continue to be streamed to Facebook.
- 11.00am regular Services - not streamed, from 1st January 2023.
- We will however stream (and advertise in advance through notices website and Social media) our Christmas and Easter services, other major festivals, one off Worship services, Group joint services and other noteworthy events.
- Midweek Holy Communion services will be simply steamed at the discretion of the Priest.

-if you have any comments questions or suggestions about streaming, please contact Revd John Bell or the Church office.

General Knowledge Merry Christmas Quiz

- M** Under which **M** was Mummy spied on?
E Which **E** City did Dorothy visit?
R Complete the pop song - **R** _____ around the Christmas Tree
R Which **R** was laughed at before the weather changed?
Y What **Y** road did Dorothy take?
- C** Which **CC** were first used in the 1840's? (2 words)
H Complete the line - The _____ and fears of all the years are met in thee
tonight
- R** Which **R** is a bird is associated with Christmas?
I What **I** part of Christmas belongs to Australia?
S Which feast is held on the 26th December?
T Name the **TT** in a Christmas Carol? (2 words)
M What **M** happened on 34th Street?
A Complete the carol line - With the _____ host proclaim?
S According to Shakin Stevens What "**S** was falling" all around him?
- Q** The White Witch was **Q** of Narnia?
U Which **U** is where Christmas gifts are traditionally placed?
I Complete the carol - **I** _____ the bleak Mid Winter
Z What **Z** holds Christmas markets each year (Clue think Switzerland)

A little yeast goes a long way!!

Mark ch 8 ; 15

“Be careful “ Jesus warned them “ watch out for the yeast of the Pharisees and that of Herod”

Anyone who has known me for a while knows I like making my own bread!

My mum used to make 8 loaves at a time in a huge baby’s bath!

Quite a few years ago I was on a course and one of the assignments was to instruct the class on how to make something!

I brought along my Kenwood mixer and showed the class step by step how to make bread! Now the problem was there was no oven, so I had to leave the dough in the Kenwood mixer. The course was a couple of hours long!

By the time I got home and went to the boot of the car to get the mixer out, the dough had oozed out of the bowl !! It was everywhere!!

Yeast works its way through the ingredients and multiplies.

In Mark Jesus warns his followers about the yeast or leaven of Herod and the Pharisees, why? The Pharisees criticised everything Jesus did. They lived by the law when Jesus was trying to show the way to grace.

Criticism like yeast multiplies and affects you plus everyone around you. They constantly wanted to trip up Jesus and his followers, and trick them by twisting Jesus teaching.

“Leaven (yeast) has this property, that, however small it may be in quantity, it spreads its influence rapidly through the mass. And so if only a little spark of heretical doctrine be admitted into the soul, speedily a great flame arises, and envelopes the whole man.” Bible Hub

What are we listening to ? Who are we listening to? This verse challenges us to listen to God’s voice and discern very carefully what is truth.

If we are listening to anything other than God’s voice we can let the yeast of doubt and fear in. Like yeast, fear takes root and grows till it overwhelms us.

In Mark ch 9:7 we read –‘Then a cloud appeared and enveloped them and a voice came from the cloud, “ This is my son listen to Him”.’

When the lies of fear come from the enemy or the lies of man come to blind us to the truth of God’s word. We must take captive these thoughts and bring them into obedience and only listen to Jesus. We need to soak ourselves in God’s word and in His presence. Ask him for the gift of wisdom and discernment.

I invite you to pray this prayer

Dear Jesus

Thank you that you only speak truth.

Forgive me for often listening or partnering with lies.

I now want to live free from fear and doubt.

I yield my will and spirit to your Holy Spirit. So that I will live in your truth.

I ask for Godly wisdom and discernment to know what is truth and what is from the world.

In your powerful name Amen,

Ang Hall

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and looking for a venue?**

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Communities of Hope News

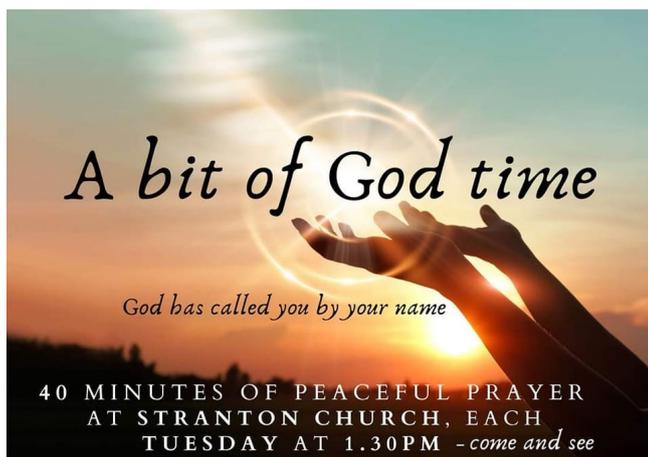
Action Course

The Communities of Hope team has completed the 9 session Diocesan Action Course with the 10th part being a community event which has been planned, details coming soon. During the 9th session we were asked what would we consider the word “Great” to mean in connection with the Communities of Hope project. Many different answers were put forward with a common thread, we are engaging with many people day by day, we are in the moment with precious people, talking, working alongside, ministering to many people who like us all need HOPE In all areas of life. It is a privilege for every one of us in our respective churches when given opportunities through words and action, to speak HOPE into people’s varied situations in life.

The Communities of Hope projects continue to bring waves of comfort to many people in many different ways and God is truly blessing each individual project. Ministering to all areas of individual well-being including, physical, emotional, and spiritual. Many people are being fed, listened too, prayed for, and relationships continue to be being built day by day.

Mine And Yours at the Well

Began on Monday 17th October 1.00 – 3.00pm at St Matthew’s CC. We planned the content of what this new initiative will consist of and look like in future weeks and months. Exercise, dancing including ballroom and line dancing, upholstery, Christmas wreath making, baking scones and cakes etc. All Welcome.



A bit of God Time

Began on Tuesday 18th October 1.30 pm at Stranton Church

Please keep the CoH projects in your prayers.

Sid’s Kitchen (Men’s Group)
Play & Praise (Mother & Toddlers)
Schools Outreach: Open the Book
Mine & Yours At The Well (Women’s Support Group)
A Bit of God Time (Peaceful Prayer)
Sewing Bees (Women’s Craft)
Soup Run (Homeless)
St Aidan’s Kitchen
Drop In (Men & Women’s Group)
One to One



Ward Jackson Primary School

3 h · 🌐

When the Autumn leaves cover the field, what better to do than to have just pure fun during our lunch times.



Blanchland Class had a great time at Preston Park discovering what life was like for Victorian children.



Tuesday 15th November

Today, Aurora and Blanchland Classes were very fortunate to witness the return of the restored bells from Stranton Church. A once in a century event in which the bells were blessed before being lifted by crane back to the belfry.

Big thank you to All Saints Stranton Church for allowing us to take part. Big shout out to Maureen for her delicious cupcakes too!



Family Social November 16th

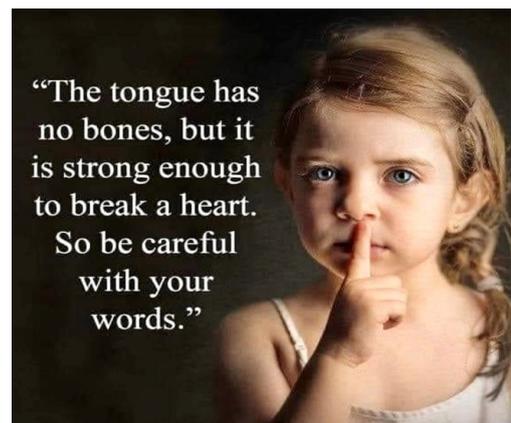


School hosted a Family Winter Social with an age range from 11 weeks to over 65. Adults and children took part in several games of bingo – the caller being Rev Clive, he was such a slick caller that questions were asked if he had done this professionally in another life!!! A delicious nourishing choice of meals was laid on for all. Like the loaves and fishes there was enough for all who wanted to take home a doggy bag too. In addition there was a take-away bag of ingredients with a recipe for a meal to be made at home. A great

evening enjoyed by all. Many thanks for the hard work of Ang Hall and all the staff.

Merry Christmas Quiz Answers

- | | | |
|---|--|-------------------------------|
| M | Under which M was Mummy spied on? | Mistletoe |
| E | Which E City did Dorothy visit? | Emerald City |
| R | Complete the pop song R_____ around the Christmas tree | Rockin |
| R | Which R was laughed at before the weather changed? | Rudolph |
| Y | What Y road did Dorothy take? | Yellow |
| C | Which CC were first used in the 1840's? (2 words) | Christmas cards |
| H | Complete the line - The _____ and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight | Hopes |
| R | Which R a bird is associated with Christmas? | Robin |
| I | What I part of Christmas belongs to Australia? | Island |
| S | Which feast is held on the 26 th December? | Stephen |
| T | Name the T T in a Christmas Carol? (2 word) | Tiny Tim |
| M | What M happened on 34 th Street? | Miracle |
| A | Complete the carol line - With the _____ host proclaim? | Angelic |
| S | According to Shakin Stevens What "S was falling" all around him? | Snow |
| Q | The White Witch was Q of Narnia? | Queen |
| U | Which U is where Christmas gifts are traditionally placed? | underneath the Christmas tree |
| I | Complete the carol I_ the bleak Mid Winter | In |
| Z | What Z holds Christmas markets each year (Clue think Switzerland) | Zurich |





Boys Brigade



Remembrance 2022

This year the Anchor and Junior Boys made a series of friezes that were displayed at Pools Surplus Store in Catcote Road.

The Juniors were visited by Captain Wells a reserve in the Military Police Corp who spoke about Remembrance Day to the Boys.

The Company Lads were challenged with crosswords, word searches and mixed up words regarding the poem 'In Flanders Fields', they also made Remembrance First Day Covers as well.

Christmas Plans

All sections are preparing for our first Christmas Carol service at Stranton Church on Friday 16th December at 7.00pm.

The Anchor Boys are making a frieze of the first Christmas and singing Away in a Manger, the Junior Boys are practising playing Carols on handbells and the Company are learning to play Boom Whackers (a newer type of musical instrument).

Christmas Activities will include a Lego night for the Anchor boys, an indoor snowball flight for the Juniors and a party for the Company Lads plus an NCO and Staff meal.

Christmas Fayre

Saturday 3rd December is our Christmas Fayre which will have home made cakes, pies and pasties, books, DVDs, bric a brac and will be full of bargains galore. It is held at St Matthew's Community Centre, entrance is £1 and children go free.

One recommendation from a Mrs Claus says, 'It's so good "Our Lad" gets all his gear there!!' So make sure you don't miss out!!

We still have room from more members in each Section and you can see us in action on our face book page

George Bainbridge



4th Hartlepool Boys' Brigade

12 h · 🌐

Making our own Guys for bonfire night, and Mr B was so impressed with how they looked at first he just thought we'd recruited a few new lads!



A special visit from Lt Wells tonight at our Juniors Section ahead of Remembrance day on Sunday.



Great to see some of our lads and others from the town taking part in the remembrance service at English Martyrs School.



A huge well done to our teams partaking in the BB National Quiz Competition. An excellent score in their first national competition. That may be enough to qualify as highest scoring runners up

Merry Christmas Bible Quiz

- M** Which **M** is a original Christmas Gift
- E** What **E** means God with us?
- R** Which **R** do the Angels come from?
- R** Which **R** describes David's city?
- Y** Which **Y** in We three Kings describes the star they followed?
- C** Which **C** describes the relationship between Mary & Elizabeth?
- H** Which **H** was the puppet, King?
- R** What **R** is missing ____ out those bells tonight?
- I** Which **I** were slaughtered by the King?
- S** Which **S** a saint is mentioned in Good King Wencelas?
- T** What **T** is given in Matthew Ch.1?(This might take to New Year to work out!)
- M** What **M** was Jesus laid in?
- A** Which **A**, a saint is mentioned in Good King Wencelas?
- S** Which **S** were working the night shift at the time of the first Christmas?
- Q** Which **Q** was governor of Syria?
- U** Which **U** completes this Carol Unto __ a child is born?
- I** Which **I** completes this Carol? _____ Holy?
- Z** Which **Z** was the father of John the Baptist?

Religion verses Relationship

When anyone asks me what is my religion? My reply is usually "I don't have one, I have a relationship with God."

Truthfully though, recently I have been challenged at how easy it is to fall into religious thinking. Religion tells me "you are not doing enough, you're not praying enough, you are not studying enough. "God isn't answering your prayers because you are not spiritual enough. You are not praying in the right way, that's why you are not seeing miracles."

As a good friend recently said to me "That is nonsense!"

Religion demands.

Relationship invites.

Religion condemns, which leads to guilt.

Relationship convicts, which leads to repentance and restoration.

Religion relies on self.

Relationship relies fully on God.

Religion is stagnant.

Relationship brings fresh revelation.

God our loving father is calling us into a deeper intimate relationship with him.

He says " My beautiful child I created you for relationship.

As the Trinity communes and communicates together, I long to talk with you.

I love it when my children walk and talk with me. My heart leaps when you call on my name and wait in eager expectation for my answer.

I desire intimacy with you.

Pursue me, pursue my presence and fresh revelation.

Refute the enemy when he whispers
the lie " you are not holy etc ".

My precious blood that I poured out on the cross makes you holy.

You have the Holy Spirit living inside you, that makes you holy.

Pursue me."

Ang Hall



Four Journeys



A couple travelling to a home town
To meet an Emperor's request
An eight or so mile sortie...

Wise men following a heavenly star
With their gifts they travel afar
Take two years to arrive there...

Shepherds on a cold night shift
Suddenly showered in angelic light
Take the directions they are given...

Three journeys all of different lengths
Involving severe overcrowding
Along time away from home
A fearful time, at least at first.

There is still a fourth journey,
An opportunity to be taken today
And if you would like to, it can start,

Merry Christmas Bible Quiz Answers

M	Which M is a original Christmas Gift	Myrrh
E	What E means God with us?	Emanuel
R	Which R do the Angels come from?	Realms
R	Which R describes David's City?	Royal
Y	Which Y in We three Kings describes the star they followed?	Yonder
C	Which C describes the relationship between Mary & Elizabeth?	Cousins
H	Which H was the puppet, King?	Herod
R	What R is missing ____ out those bells tonight?	Ring
I	Which I were slaughtered by the King?	Innocents
S	Which S a saint is mentioned in Good King Wencelas?	Stephen
T	What T is given in Matthew Ch. 1?	Time line
M	What M was Jesus laid in? Manger	
A	Which A, a saint is mentioned in Good King Wencelas?	Agnes
S	Which S were working the night shift at the time of the first Christmas?	Shepherds
Q	Which Q was governor of Syria?	Quirinus
U	Which U completes this Carol Unto __ a child is born?	Us
I	Which I completes this Carol? _____ Holy?	Infant
Z	Which Z was the father of John the Baptist?	Zechariah

Birds of a Feather

The Christmas decorations in Seaton Carew have already been put into place about six weeks ago and the Christmas tree is now (November 14th) in position. These decorations await 'darkly' for a grand switching on at some point. I thought they might have been switched on when it was Bonfire Night, but no!

We had a stormy few days recently then a spell of good weather, but now winter is charging in with lots of fog and rain.

The gulls and other birds seem fewer after what has been a difficult year for them and the beach animals, the crabs and shellfish. My granddaughters were quite upset when visiting at half term that the big blue shells were missing from the beach (mussels) – I have lots of these at home.

Starlings are very much around. Great flocks of them gather in the trees and on roof tops then suddenly swoop down and the bird food and fat balls disappear very quickly.*

The side garden is looking very ragged after a hot summer. Hopefully I will get out and do some tree and bush lopping so we can have light, as that garden area faces north.

I'm hoping that my robin stays in the south garden in one of the warmer areas. Both he and a little mouse kept me amused the other day. I had just topped up the bird feeders and spread some seeds on the lawn when the robin reappeared. I went back into the kitchen and watched from there. The robin is so bold he just stayed on the patio and fed there. Suddenly a little mouse dashed out from under some plants, grabbed a mouthful, and just as quickly dived back. The robin didn't even look at him as this was repeated over quite a few minutes. This is the time of year that these very small mice try to get into the house, but I'm very careful about that!

The leaves have nearly all fallen from the trees, so many of the birds can be more easily identified. The leaves are to be swept up to rot down into compost – another job to do!

Looking ahead to Christmas this year I'm looking forward to the family coming here again – it could be a full house. It reminds me of a bird's nest – packed full of bodies – my 'little' grandson is now 6' 4" tall!

Over this year there have been fewer small birds, but swifts, house martins, swallows and sparrows still came. More larger birds visited – crows, rooks, wood pigeons galore, ring necked doves, big gulls and all these plus many others come at set times for food. It's like the gathering of the clans sometimes. It is a joy to see such a variety of birds. They seek food for sustenance but we seek food for body and soul, lifting up our families, friends and others in our prayers that they may also be fed spiritually.

God bless you this Christmas and in the year to come

Ann Courtenay

*A large flock of starlings were holding up cars trying to enter the carpark near Hornsey's on the front as they were all bathing in a large puddle and refused to move!

J.A.R.

Sunday Club News!

We have had lots of fun in Sunday club and have lots planned for December:

4th December - An Angel Visits Mary

11th December - Our Sunday Club Christmas Party/trying on Nativity costumes.

18th December - Our Nativity!

If you would like to be involved in the Nativity please let me know.

Kate

Stranton Sunday Club Leader

Mission to Seafarers

A box has been placed at the back of church in order to collect toiletries, confectionery plus gloves, hats and socks as Christmas presents for seafarers. All donations are gratefully received.

Food Bank

There is a box at the back of church. At the moment the need is for Pot Noodles, pasta sauce, savoury rice and other savoury snack foods. Tins of meat, fish, vegetables, tomatoes and beans. Sweet snacks, chocolate bars, small packets of sweets.

Christmas Hampers 2022

The Communities of Hope team is again planning to make up and distribute Christmas hampers to families in need in our parishes and Christmas food for others. The cost-of-living crisis makes this more important than ever.

Contributions are very welcome to help make this possible and will be much appreciated. Please make any financial donations out to 'Stranton PCC' or send online to 'Stranton PCC Account 20 - 82 -18 10146501' with reference "COH" ...

Any questions or offers to help pack the hampers please speak to Hayley Liversidge or Emma Caine. Many thanks' Communities of Hope Team.

Tearfund Quiz

Thankyou: Many thanks to those who attended the Tearfund Big Quiz last Saturday, £168 was raised to support vulnerable people such as Venezuelan refugees through churches in Colombia. The amount raised can pay for 14 refugee women to be trained in skills to provide income for their families.

Boys Brigade Christmas Fayre

We are holding a Christmas Fayre on Saturday 3rd December at St Matthew's Community Centre.

We need Bric a Brac (but no clothing please).

If you have anything that needs collecting please ring George Bainbridge on 07816445829

Bottle Tombola

To raise money for our social fund. Donations of any type of full bottles are needed

(e.g. washing up liquid, sauce, shower gel, soft drinks, beer, wine etc)

These will be greatly appreciated.

Please bring to Church Office in Arncliffe Gardens or contact Maureen Anderson

**A wise man was asked
"What is anger?" He gave
a beautiful answer, "It is a
punishment you give to
yourself, for somebody
else's mistakes."**

CELEBRATE!

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

to

December

Siobahn Connell
Ann Courtenay
Lauren Davison
Eloise Dobbin
Adam Farrow
Chloe Greenwood
Diane Greenwood
Benjamin Hall
Joseph Hall
Pam Hutchinson
Heather Jennett
Catherine Padgett
Robbie Spoons
Ella Spoons
Lilly Spoons
Mary Tones
Mark Tones
Josie Watson

January

Tyler Anderson
Frances Boyd
James Boyd
Michelle Butler
David Craig
Clive Hall
Daniel Hart
Doreen Lathan
Callum Lithgo
Trish Playfor
Catriona Robertson
Kieran Scott
Isabel Spoons
Luke Tones
Alice Gilhespy- Swann

Wedding Anniversary

Jack Rogers & Gina Guo
Rob & Michelle Butler



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

December

Sat 3 rd December	Boys Brigade Christmas Fayre St Matthew's CC	9:30-12:00
Sun 11 th December	Rev Michelle's last service	
Sun 11th December	Christingle Stranton	4:00 pm
Mon 12 th December	Mothers Union Christmas Lunch, Marine Hotel	12 noon
Fri 16 th December	Boys Brigade Carol Service (all welcome)	7:00 pm
Sat 17 th December	Churches Together Carols for Hartlepool St George's URC, Park Road	7:00pm

* with Brass Band, Vocalise Choir and Chris Milner

Sun 18th December	- Nativity Stranton	11:00 am
	Carols by Candlelight	6:30 pm
Sat 24th December	- Christmas Family Service	4:30 pm
	Christmas Eve Holy Communion Stranton	11:00pm
Sun 25th December	- Christmas Day Joint Family Communion	
	Stranton	10:00 am

Sun 1st January - New Year's Day Joint Mass St Aidan's 10:45 am

Mon 9th January – Mothers Union restarts St Matthew's CC

Communities of Hope Christmas Events

Mon 19 th Dec	Play & Praise Christmas Party St Matthew's CC	10:00-11.15am
Tues 20 th Dec	Toddler's Christmas Party St Matthew's CC	9:00-11:00am
Thurs 22 nd Dec	A Christmas Experience for Families St Luke's	2:00-5:00pm

Booking is required for all these events. Further details speak to COH staff.

Diary Dates for St Luke's

3 rd Dec	10.00am	St Luke's Christmas Fayre
9 th Dec	6.30pm	Cheese & Wine and Carols by Candlelight- ticketed
11 th Dec	9.15am	Toy Service
14 th Dec	8.30am	Churches Together prayer meeting @ 10 Clarkson Court
24 th Dec	6.00pm	Nativity
24 th Dec	11.30pm	Midnight Mass
3 rd Jan	2.00pm	Weekly Sewing Party resumes
28 th Jan	10.00am	Candlemas Coffee Morning

Who's Who

Church Office	St Matthew's Community Centre Arncliffe Gardens TS26 9JF
Administrator	Trish Playfor "Tues- Fri, 9.00 to 11.00am" 01429 894006 or 07305 550009 E-Mail: admin@stranton-church.org.uk Web Site: www.stranton-church.org.uk
To contact clergy by E-mail	E-Mail: clergy@stranton-church.org.uk

Priest in Charge 34A Westbourne Road 07512 481115
Email: revdjohnbell@stranton-church.org.uk

Burbank Community Church Worker & Curate
 Revd Clive Hall 10 Clarkson Court 278504

Reader
 Mary Tones 40a Blakelock Road 07972 342890

Churches Together in Hartlepool

Secretary Susan Atkinson,
 St Mary's RC

Church Wardens	Angela Craig 57 Claremont Drive Rohan Wanduragala 62 Clifton Avenue	234279
PCC Secretary	Maureen Anderson 22 Thetford Road	871266
Treasurer	David Craig 57 Claremont Drive	234279
Asst. Treasurer	Maureen Anderson 22 Thetford Road	871266
Loyalty Treasurer	Ken Shepherd 251 Park Road	268007
Notice Sheet	The Office (Notices by the preceding Wednesday)	
Signpost Editorial	Jacqui Rogers 19 Trentbrooke Avenue	265527
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.

