

Stranton and Burbank Community

SIGNPOST



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

February/March 2023

Suffering and Anxiety

"I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."
John 16:33

As a church family we know that recently in the world and even amongst the congregation there has been much pain and suffering and loss. Especially in the last few years. I also sense that anxiety is on the increase. There are so many things that can cause a rise in anxiety. Cost of living, the cost of heating, illness and death, the unknown future?

When one part of the body suffers, we all suffer. In times like these big questions can come up and they are difficult to answer. Communication of feelings and thoughts is vital for our mental health. So let me say here 'Don't bottle things up'. Find a friend to talk things over with, if you would like a chat with me, just make that known.

God never promised us an easy life here on earth, but when hard times happen it can knock our faith. There is a teaching in the Bible that tells us that some of Jesus disciples left him. Things became too hard for them! It is in these hard times that God wants us to draw near to Him, so He can give comfort and reassure us that He still loves us. Even if that doesn't make the problem go away!

God is always on His throne; He sees over everything. I don't think that He causes everything to happen. When I fell off my bike and hurt my ribs. I don't think God stuck an invisible stick into my spokes! I believe accidents happen. I may have a follow up question of "Why didn't you catch me?". So, whatever you're going through right now, talk to God about it.

He is open to hearing your questions and He is also open to hearing the anger you may be feeling about your situation. God knows and understands emotions, so talk to Him. One of the verses that shows Jesus's emotion was at the death of Lazarus. Jesus meets Lazarus's sisters, and in the Bible it simply says 'Jesus wept'... He cried and shared his tears with the sisters who had lost their brother. He was overcome by emotions.

One strange thing about that shedding of tears is the fact that he then went on to bring Lazarus back to life? So why was Jesus crying when he knew that was about to happen? He could have said "don't cry, it is going to be alright". He didn't do that, he just wept with them...

"Trust in him at all times, you people; pour out your hearts to him, for God is our refuge."

Psalms 62:8

Rev Clive

Mothers Union

This morning my friend and I were a bit late getting to the beach. The tide was about to turn and it was quite rough and we had to quickly follow our own footprints back to safer ground. My dog Ember, black Labrador, was very wet after running into the waves (she doesn't swim, just charges through – she does swim in ponds and streams!). Today it was very cold but the dogs needed the exercise as we did. Coming off the beach we were surrounded by the Saturday Runners and just missed being swept along with them!

Getting home I started to vacuum and then carried on putting things away that my family had left here after Christmas. It wasn't for a while that I remembered I hadn't dried Ember - too late! The settee she was asleep on was quite damp and she was sound asleep. I must remember to put her towels in the hall and get her dry as soon as we get home.

Thinking about the other things that were missed out I remember hurried prayers and Bible readings. Lent will soon be with us, a chance to recharge our faith with deeper reflections and much thanks for answers to prayer that may not be what we want, but are the better way. Our Mothers Union Prayer is so uplifting as we join with so many across our world in these difficult times.

Loving Lord,

We thank you for your love so freely given

To us all.

We pray for families around the world.

Bless the work of Mothers Union as we

Seek to share your love through the

Encouragement, strengthening and support

Of marriage and family life.

Empowered by your spirit may we be

United in prayer and worship, and in

Love and service reach out as your

Hands across the world.

In Jesus name

Amen

Lent starts on Ash Wednesday – 22nd February this year. Our February meeting is on 13th February and the March meeting is on 13th March, both at 1:30pm.

Hope to see you then.

God Bless

Ann Courtenay

From the Home Front

I always find the time after the Christmas Celebrations quite challenging – the festive season is ended and its excesses are haunting the waistline! The nights are still dark and long, the weather still wintery and so many people succumb to nasty illnesses, which seem to maraud around looking for their next victim. It is also a sad truth that so many older and sick people give up these earthly trials at the start of the New Year. According to the media January is a month where depression is rife, the worst day being ‘Blue Monday’ - 16th January this year!

I have always felt lucky that I have my birthday to look forward to at the start of February. I enjoy birthdays, even when they are celebrated quietly. Some folk are upset by significant birthdays or really feel the passing of time and their lives. Being part of a large family I just enjoyed the day – even when as a teenager I had exams every year, then as a teacher I could never have my birthday off work unless it fell on a weekend! Now I am retired I revel in not having to get up and out early on the cold or wet mornings, snuggling down with a cup of tea is a reward I feel I have earned, but I do empathise with those not so fortunate...

As soon as February arrives the signs of spring multiply – longer days, the occasional mild day, and the emerging blooms, buds plus birdlife and lambs in the fields. God’s awesome handiwork lifts the spirits. No matter the weather or our circumstances God’s love is always there to encompass and fill us, His gifts available to all for the asking. So reach out over the coming weeks look for God in the everyday, listen to His whispering and know how special you are to Abba Father.

JAR

Sunday Club Nativity December 18th



It was wonderful to have so many children taking part in the Nativity. Their performance was amazing particularly as they had no rehearsal.



John steps in for emergency repairs to wardrobe malfunction!

Margery Maughan Died 9th December 2022



A Tribute to Margery Maughan by her eldest daughter.

My mother died at the age of 91, which was a huge success as she had had a very shaky start to her life. My grandmother had tripped over a dog and given birth very prematurely. We heard that my mother was wrapped in cotton wool and fed with a fountain pen filler by Grandma and her friend, whom we knew as Auntie Gladys. Mam was never a large person, but at this point her head fitted into a teacup!

Mam went to school - Lister Street Infants, Elwick Road Junior School, and Eldon Grove High School for Girls. The only fact that we ever knew about her early school years was that she had elocution lessons, and she won a prize - of money- for reciting "Sea Fever" by John Masefield. This poem was read out at her Celebration Service.

During the Second World War, she was sent to live in Harrogate for a while, with her Grandmother and Aunt. She always said that this was because she cried when the bombs came. However, she left her parents and brother, Edgar, behind, and had rather a difficult time as her Grandmother was very strict.

However, better times were ahead, and she stayed on at school until the sixth form, where she took her School Certificate in English, R.E. and French, and then went on to St Hild's Teacher Training College at Durham. In the meantime, she had been attending Stranton Church, and through the Youth Club had met my Dad, This led to her learning to ring bells, which became a constant theme throughout her life!

Mam and Dad were married in 1953, and decided they would become vegetarian, as they were concerned about how animals were being treated. I think this shows great strength of character, as it was very unusual at the time. Another time where this trait was apparent was when my mother was pregnant with me. The consultant was concerned as Mam wasn't very tall, and said that she would need a caesarean section. When my mother refused, he called her "the stupidest woman he had ever met"! Mam was proved right, as I came along very naturally, almost in the bath! My other siblings, Catherine, Philip, Julia and Alasdair followed over the next few years.

When I was small, we used to go camping. We used to have a great time, but I didn't appreciate how hard it was for my mother, as we had a tiny tent and it generally rained. Dad was very keen to go swimming the instant he arrived at a campsite, and Mam then had to deal with wet towels along with all the other difficulties of camping with little children. We also usually had some sort of car problem on holiday as well. Dad was a motor mechanic, so he could always fix whatever had gone wrong, but Mam had to deal with everything else! As time went on, we stayed in cottages, which I can now see made life much easier for Mam. We all enjoyed holidays in Keswick and Mull. Eventually, when I left home, the family actually persuaded Dad to go abroad, to see where Beethoven had been born, and so the family started camping in the sunshine, and met a German family who became long-term friends.

There was always music playing in the house, usually Radio 3, and many of us had music lessons. Julia remembers Mam making a cup of tea and sitting through all her piano practices.

When we were little, my mother occasionally did some teaching, but when we were all at school, she got a job working in Hartlepool Registrar's Office. This job came about through Stranton Church, as the organist, Alfie Peacock, was the Registrar at the time. Mam loved this job, and worked there for many years. She had the most beautiful handwriting, which she used in writing out all the certificates.

Stranton Church was a big part of my parents' lives. Bellringing was, of course, one aspect, but in addition, Mam sang in the choir and also ran the Junior Sunday School. My parents were always interested in learning things, and so attended evening classes run by the WEA on astronomy, geology, music and other topics. They also went Scottish dancing! Family was very important, and so Mam and Dad were there helping out when Grandchildren arrived. I have very fond memories of Mam looking after me after I had my babies.

Mam and Dad were a devoted couple, and so it was the most tremendous

shock when Dad died in 1989. Mam's strength of character came through again, as she made a new life for herself. She moved up to live near me in Shilbottle, joined the Church, joined the Choral Society, and joined in with everything she could. She had never learned to drive, but she happily went everywhere on the bus! She also made a new life for herself after it was found that she had a heart problem. She had an operation to replace a heart valve, which was supposed to be good for 12 years, but did her proud for the rest of her life! Astonishingly, Mam was climbing the steep stairs to her bedroom right up until a couple of months before her death!

My mother loved travelling - when she saw an aeroplane in the sky she would say "I could be on that"! She took every chance to go on holiday and see new places. She was delighted to get to travel to see a grandchild in a new country, especially if it was hot and sunny, and even if they couldn't make a proper cup of tea!

Music and family were a big part of Mam's life, and often these were combined. She was always keen to go and watch events that any of her children were in, and so went to Julia's classical concerts, Alasdair's shows, and was the number one (only!) fan of the family string quartet. Whenever she could, she travelled to see her grandchildren in school concerts, plays, ballets, and other events. She also performed herself in the Alnwick Choral Society, which she continued to do until Covid times.

I was so impressed by my mother during the Pandemic. All the things she did had been stopped, but she was stoic and kept amazingly cheerful throughout, taking the opportunity to watch a lot of Poirot! She wasn't phased being by herself and if you phoned her, she made you feel better about your life. Sometimes during this time, I was able to take her for a walk on Alnmouth beach, where she loved to collect shells.

My mother never complained about anything, and was always so grateful for anything you did for her, right up to the end. She had a strong Faith, which my brother, Philip, talked about during her Celebration Service. She passed away very peacefully at home on December 9th 2022. My sister, Kate, said that Mam had told her, "When the time comes for the Good Lord to take me away to glory, I hope I have done everything He planned for me". I believe that my mother led an exemplary life, and we are left with a marvellous example of how to behave. I am very proud to have been Margery's daughter.

Sue Hanson

Hope in God

I asked Jesus what the word for 2023 was and I received the following:

“I want the world to hope in me.

To put all their trust in me not in wealth, career, relationships or leaders. All that is temporary.

I want them to hope in me.

“Now may God, the fountain of hope, fill you to overflowing with uncontainable joy and perfect peace as you trust in him. And may the power of the Holy Spirit continually surround your life with his super-abundance until you radiate with hope!”

Romans 15:13 TPT

<https://bible.com/bible/1849/rom.15.13.TPT>

I never disappoint. The world disappoints. People disappoint.
Hope and trust go together “

“Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight.”

Proverbs 3:5-6 NIV

<https://bible.com/bible/111/pro.3.5-6.NIV>

When we hope and trust in God alone, He leads us into all truth.

In the midst of darkness and pain we have an anchor of hope as our hope is in God.

When we hope in an eternal living God it's not a false hope.

The world that we are living on is temporary and we await an eternity in God's presence where there is no pain, no suffering and no death.

At the start of a new year seek God's approval not man's. Seek God's wisdom not your own. Seek intimacy with Him.

Ask God questions and trust His answers.

As we focus on God and His purpose, He becomes greater and our temporary suffering becomes less.

Hope in God alone Psalm 42:5

A prayer for 2023

Loving living God

Thank you that you are the Alpha and the Omega. The beginning and the end.

Thank you that at the start of a new year we can put our complete hope and trust in you.

You promised never to leave us or forsake us.

Fill us daily with a fresh pouring of your Holy Spirit that we will live always in step with you.

May we leak out your love, hope and peace to others leading them into your presence.

In your powerful name Jesus

Amen

Ang Hall

Stranton Bell Project

The bell project is nearing completion. The bells were returned in November and, with help from local volunteers, Taylor's bellhanger made them ringable in time for Christmas. They were test rung on Friday 16th December and a few minor adjustments were necessary. Then on 21st Hartlepool's team had a practice night on the bells to reacquaint themselves with them. It was like buying a new car and needing to be comfortable with how it handled. Christmas morning all the bells were rung for the joint churches service at 10am.

There are a few outstanding jobs to be completed including refitting the belfry west window which will be completed during March. Also, with the accumulated sand removed from between the floor and walls in the belfry, to give a clean atmosphere for painting the bell frame, the sound of all the bells is quite loud in the ringing room. This will be dealt with in the coming weeks.

The bells were rung to see in the New Year and then on 2nd January, a Quarter Peal of Plain Bob Triples was rung in memory of Andy Kaye and Margery Maughan as well as being the first to be rung on the newly refurbished bells.

We are pleased that the Bishop of Durham, Paul Butler will be leading a service of rededication of the bells in Stranton Church at 2pm on Saturday 25th February. Everybody is welcome to attend.



The belfry close to completion. The bell on a frame in the distance is the old No 4 bell which is hung "dead" and will be used for striking as a Service Bell.

Industrial Chaos Quiz

- I Which **I** was Abraham's son?
- N Which **N** was a cup bearer?
- D What **D** did Jesus ride on Psalm Sunday
- U The **U** room in which the last supper was held?
- S Which **S** was the first martyr?
- T Which **T** is a collective name for Father Son and Holy Ghost?
- R Which **R** was Joseph's eldest brother?
- I Which **I** is Abraham's son?
- A In which **A** is the term Christian used for the first time?
- L What **L** was killed by Samson?

- C Which **C** was High priest at the time of the first Easter?
- H Which **H** was told by God to marry a promiscuous woman?
- A The statue above the entrance in Stranton could be St Margaret of **A** -----
- O Which **O** is a book in the Old Testament?
- S How did the first Christian martyrs die?

*St Matthew's
Community Centre
Elwick Road*



Please come and join us

Saturday 4th February 2023

Saturday 4th March 2023

Saturday 1st April 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*

Boys Brigade Carol Service

On December 16th we held our first ever Christmas Carol service at Stranton Church. The Anchor Boys sang Away in a Manger including a brilliant solo performance by Oliver Wright, the Junior Boys played carols on hand bells and the Company Lads played Jingle Bells on Boom Whackers (Different lengths of tubing) and Clive did a magic trick and gave a short talk.

Afterwards drinks and mince pies were served (Many thanks to Maureen Anderson).

A massive well done to all the boys who took part. Plus a big thank you to parents and family for support and encouragement. We hope everyone enjoyed the evening.



**Are you planning a special celebration or party
and looking for a venue?**

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CMS update

Andy and Kati's story

We know this city well and that it is home to unreached and diverse marginalised communities. Over time, we will concentrate on engaging subcultures on the fringes including impoverished migrant communities and people that get caught in the cycle of crime just to survive.

Andy is a dual British/Argentinian citizen fluent in Portuguese, and Kati is from Brazil, so Latin America has always been part of our lives and close to our hearts. Before we were married in Florianópolis in 2014, we had a profound sense based on our experiences that we were called to serve among the socially excluded and disadvantaged sectors of Brazil.

We are really up for the new challenges that lie ahead and we will of course be drawing on our personal experience. Kati, who is trained as a lawyer, has enjoyed mentoring young people in the past – particularly teenage girls who are susceptible to abuse and exploitation. Andy has over 20 years' experience leading mercy ministries through the church coupled with managing UK government-funded projects to help tackle homelessness and drug-related crime and initiatives to rehabilitate people caught up in the cycle of re-offending. In Leeds, Andy worked in a senior management position for a national housing association that provides housing solutions and specialist services for young people and adults who are socially excluded due to disabilities, mental health issues and homelessness.

Boys Brigade Christmas Fayre

A big thank you to everyone who attended our Christmas Fayre. It was great to see so many from the community finding bargains and enjoying a cuppa.



Licensing Service of Rev Michelle Delves Sunday 15th January in Holy Trinity Colne



Amazing licensing service @ [Colne, Holy Trinity Church](#). So thankful to everyone who made it so special and humbled by Papa's absolute faithfulness to me and Trinity ❤️🙏❤️ Come Holy Spirit it's time to bring home the prodigals

Such a joy to be at Holy Trinity Colne tonight as they welcomed [Mich Delves](#) to come to live, work and minister the love of Jesus to the communities they serve. Delighted to cheer on Alex & Katy and a privilege to hear Bishop Jill bring a powerful & prophetic message! [#welovelancashire](#)

James Boyd-Hill

2nd January 1998 – 7th December 2022

The funeral of James Boyd-Hill took place on 10th January in Stranton Church officiated by Rev Clive Hall. The church was filled to capacity with James's family, friends, colleagues and sports friends and many others. Tributes were paid by his sisters Lydia (aided by James's partner Ally) and Frances. Rev Clive gave the Eulogy which was filled with fond memories of this effervescent young man. Wide ranging music gave all there time for reflection.

James was a loved member of Stranton Church, children and youth groups, until he left for University and moved to London.

His sudden death has deeply affected his family and so many others. Our thoughts and prayers are with Steph, Frances, Lydia, Sean and Ally.



...presents

Lent Concert Series

IAN POUNDER

Sunday - 5th March 2023

2.30 refreshments - 3.30 Concert



St George's Organ

Admission £5.00



...presents

Lent Concert Series

Ian Pounder

Sunday - 5th March 2023

St George's Organ

Auckland Duo

Sunday - 12th March 2023

Guitar and Flute

Kildale Quartet

Sunday - 19th March 2023

String Quartet

Phillipa Mo &
Hannah Perowne

Sunday - 26th March 2023

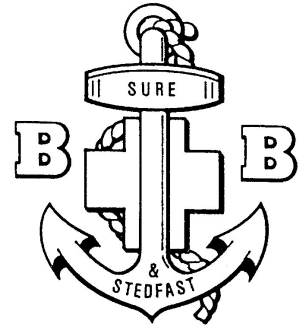
Violin Duo

2.30 Refreshments - 3.30 Concert

All tickets available on www.brownpapertickets.com or at Citizens Advice Bureau, Park Road, Hartlepool Individual tickets £5.00 Series tickets £16.00



Boys Brigade News



We are holding two special nights in January and February, we are being visited by the police and holding a Lego night in the Anchor Boys and Juniors - so hopefully we'll know how to arrest someone and build a cell for them!!

Our camp for the Company Lads is to be held at Fanwood Scout Centre South Yorkshire - July 24th to 29th.

Early plans including transportation and activity hire, which are already in place.

Recruiting:

We have room for new members in all Sections-

Anchor Boys for 5 - 8yr olds every Friday 6.00-7.00pm

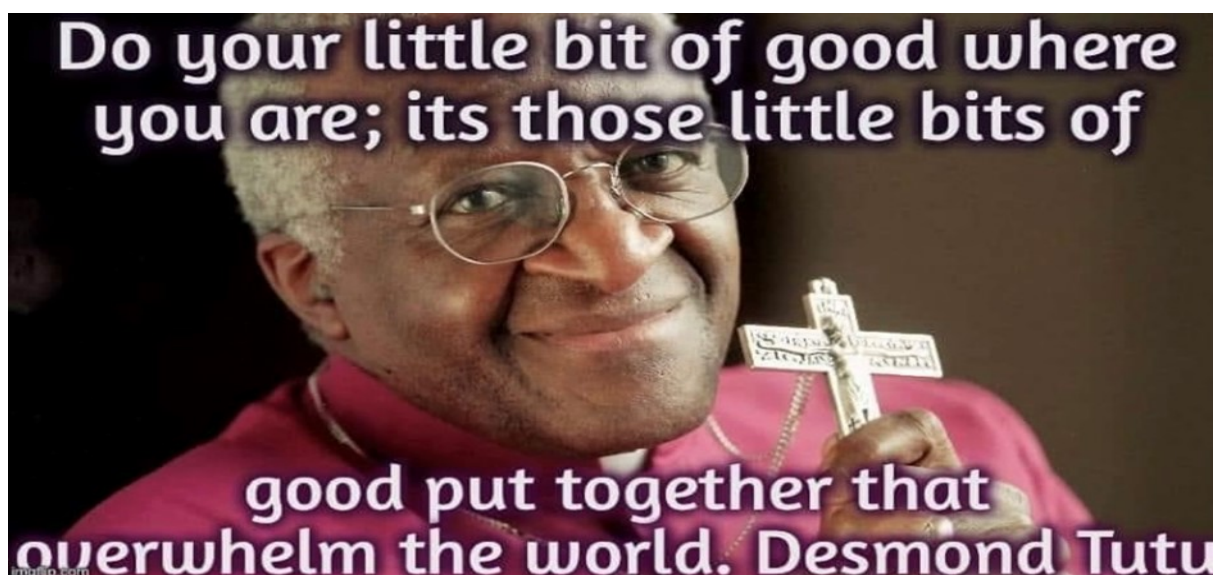
Juniors for 8- 11yr olds every Monday 6.30-8.00pm

Company 11- 18yr olds every Friday 7.15-9.00pm

All meet at St Matthew's Community Centre, Elwick Road and subs in each section are £2.00

If you wish to see what we are up to please visit our Facebook page - 4th Hartlepool Boys Brigade

George Bainbridge



Patons' Christmas Letter, 2022 / New Year 2023

Greetings from a wintry Calder Church Manse in Lochwinnoch, Renfrewshire, Scotland.

If 2021 was a year of endings and transitionings, 2022 has been a year of transitionings and new beginnings. Covid19 prevented us from saying our goodbyes in person to many of our former link churches, connected with our work abroad with CMS. Covid has mucked up so many people's lives and this has made getting satisfactory closure on our sixteen years living and working abroad, more difficult.

One of the challenges of 2021 and the beginning of 2022, was the amount of uncertainty, we faced. I (Tony) had expected my former denomination here in Scotland to welcome me back with open arms and for me to be back in work by January. When this did not happen, I was sure that it was because God had something better for us. In a way, having a door closed, lessened the uncertainty and freed me to explore other options. Cutting a long story short, that after a number of closed doors, the one which opened was working in the United Free Church of Scotland, a small presbyterian denomination. It has not been immune to the challenges facing most of the older denominations; such as declining and ageing congregations. However there are encouraging signs of new life within it.

Having been chosen by the congregation to be their new minister after preaching as "Sole Nominee", a few weeks after Easter, my service of induction to Calder United Free Church, Lochwinnoch took place on the 29th of July, exactly the same date, as we had left Laos, the year before.

We moved from our house in Ferryden to the manse in Lochwinnoch a few weeks beforehand. It was good to have a bigger, more "roomy" house with plenty of garden – it even has visiting ducks etc. which paddle in the lade which runs down the side of it.

Moving house, when it isn't halfway round the world is definitely less stressful, particularly since we have the luxury of keeping on our place in Ferryden. The only downside of upsizing was furnishing a house twice the size of the one we had been in before. Moving house involved taking our stuff we still had in storage in Montrose, along with furniture etc. from Katherine's family in the north-east of England. In spite of this generosity, we inevitably spent most of our "days off" for several of the months that followed, in B&Q, IKEA or suchlike trying to get the various bits and pieces we still needed for the manse. Just ahead of our first Christmas here, it is feeling much more like home.

With the closure of the Church Of Scotland, Calder Church is now the only Christian place of worship in a village, with a population of just under 3,000. The congregation is around a hundred or so, with a slightly smaller number in church Sunday by Sunday. We are still picking up on things which halted during the Covid restrictions, so the church is going through something of a "reboot". Encouragingly, while the age profile of the group is predominantly towards the upper end, we do have a Sunday school and youth group, along with a Boys Brigade and a Girls Brigade group linked to the church. The challenge I am aware of in these early days of ministry here, is balancing my time between the needs of the different ages and stages of the congregation. From experience, I know how important investing time and energy in preaching and teaching is, in terms of discipling the congregation and equipping them to be more effective witnesses in the wider

community. Prayer is also something which I am hoping will develop more in the life of the congregation.

Enough about work: how are Katherine and the rest of the family doing? The answer is mixed. This is principally because although our youngest two Euan (14) and Eilidh (10) are doing okay at school and not too unhappy, our 16 year old Innes, who has important exams this year, has really struggled to cope with school in Scotland. He does not find the work difficult but really does not enjoy school at all. This has been casting a cloud over family life for a couple of months now and there is no obvious solution in sight, other than hoping he can do enough to get this school year over and done with and manage to get the qualifications he needs in order for him to study or do something he enjoys.

Outside of school, both Euan and Innes attend Boys' Brigade and the church Youth Group and Eilidh goes to Girls' Brigade and Sunday School. Innes has also resumed guitar lessons at a nearby music school, which we hope will help ease his frustrations with school. Euan is doing his Bronze Duke of Edinburgh Award.

Anna, our oldest (19) seems to be coping reasonably well with her second year of Biomedical Engineering at Strathclyde University. She finds her course reasonably enjoyable and has made some good friends, amongst whom are students from an Asian background; one from the UK and one from Indonesia.

We also had a couple of new additions to the family in the form of kittens; Angus and Papaya.

I think Katherine is happier here, now we have more space and now that I have a place to continue ministry. Much of Katherine's sense of well-being hinges on how we are doing as a family, which is a heavy burden to bear.

Being closer to Anna, our parents and other family are benefits gained from moving back to Scotland but really what keeps us going is the belief that we were within God's will moving back when we did and that however hard things may seem, God is going to be "Immanuel" - God with us.

That is the message of hope we celebrate at Christmas but cling onto in times when we don't feel much like celebrating.

May Jesus the Saviour of the world bring you his joy and peace, this Christmas and throughout the year ahead.

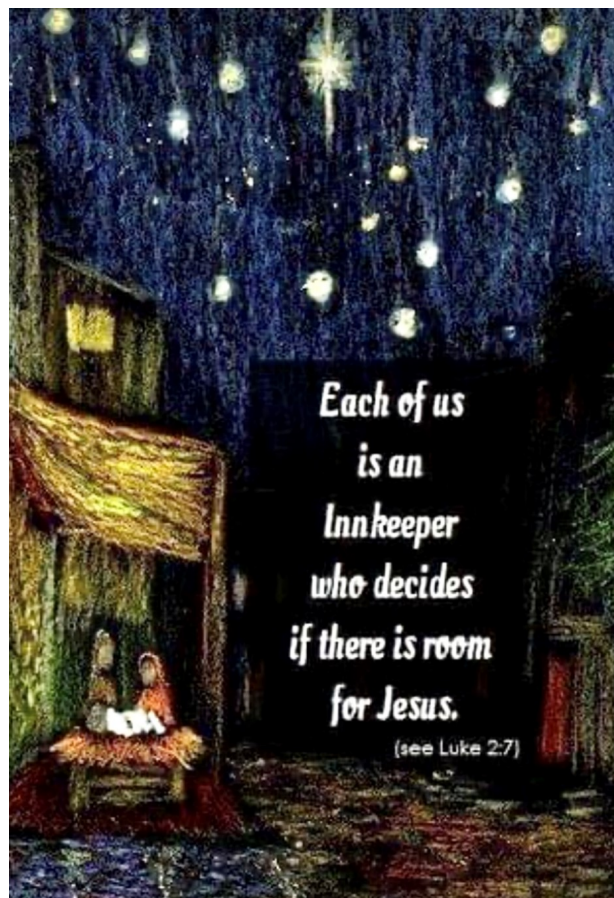
Every blessing,

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



Industrial Chaos Quiz Answers

I	Which I was Abraham's son?	Ishmael
N	Which N was a cup bearer?	Nehemiah
D	What D id Jesus ride on Psalm Sunday	Donkey
U	The U room in which the last supper was held?	Upper
S	Which S was the first martyr?	Stephen
T	Which T is a collective name for Father Son and Holy Ghost?	Trinity
R	Which R was Joseph's eldest brother?	Reuben
I	Which I is Abraham's son?	Isaac
A	In which A is the term Christian used for the first time?	Antioch
L	What L was killed by Samson?	Lion
C	Which C was High priest at the time of the first Easter?	Ciaphas
H	Which H was told by God to marry a promiscuous woman?	Hosea
A	The statue above the entrance in Stranton could be St Margaret of Antioch	
O	Which O is a book in the Old Testament?	Obadiah
S	How did the first Christian martyrs die?	By stoning



Ward Jackson School Prayer Space Day Tuesday 17th January



Interactive areas, quiet areas, prayer areas



Doing areas, investigating areas!



God's awesome handiwork areas and just being with God areas!

Birds of a Feather

As I went out to put the rubbish into the dustbin I was joined by a young female blackbird. She has got used to me putting birdseed out for lots of birds that feed in my side, back and front gardens. This young blackbird is a lovely muted brown and shows some impatience with the other large birds, but lets the smaller birds join with her breakfast and occasionally dinner too. The larger birds are down in a flash, desperate to get as much food as possible. I have a lot of collared doves who Hoover up the food while chasing away their young chicks from last summer.

Smaller birds appear after the larger ones - a robin, great tit, blue tit, blackbirds, starlings, jackdaws, magpies, house sparrows, dunnocks, large wood pigeons and many more later in the year.

The other day I spotted a 'winter' moth on the front of the house. It was one of the rare sunny days and the moth was taking advantage from the heat of the wall. Later it was gone having possibly found a sheltered crack to rest in.

Where I lived in London we had foxes that lived in neighbours gardens, under sheds and other dens. The foxes had used the rail tracks to get up to the city and found waste food cartons easier to 'catch' than live food. They still managed to eat hedgehogs!

I'm quite fed up with not being able to clear up the gardens after cutting back lots of older bushes. But spring will be here fairly soon.

My tamarisk tree has shed all its leaves and is looking quite bare, in fact looking almost dead! It rests until about April/May then is covered with small pink blossoms. Every year one of my neighbours thinks it has died but it is only resting. I think the tree has been here for quite a long time, possibly planted when Victoria was on the throne.

Soon the first bulbs will flower with lots of leaves starting to appear already. I'm really behind with planting in the garden pots this year, but will get on once I have tidied up the potting shed – very cold though at the moment.

My gardens are looking very needy at present but will, like us, once spring returns become renewed, strengthened, challenged as we see how winter passes and how our gardens give us exercise. I'm really looking forward to sitting amidst God's handiwork, thanking and praising Him for all the good things He has given us.

Ann Courtenay



**All Saints, Stranton Church,
St Matthew's Community Centre
and
Burn Valley North Residents
Association**

*Have created a Warm Welcome Space
Come and join us for a free soup
lunch, tea or coffee, warmth and
good company*

St Matthew's Community Centre

Wednesdays

12:00 to 3:00

Starting Wednesday 7th December 2022

Car Parking

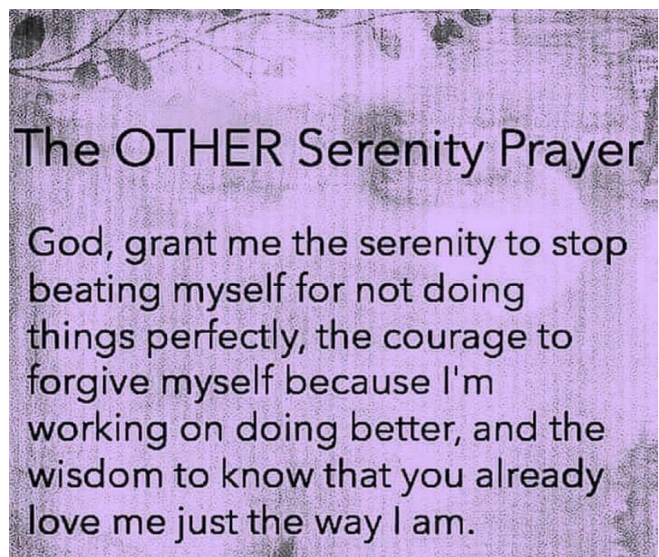
Wheelchair accessible.

Toilets. Accessible toilets. Parking. Child friendly.



**Remember that time
you thought it was over,
and you'd never make it,
but God still brought
you through?**

**He's about to do that
again. Amen**



CELEBRATE!

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

to

February

Caitlin Bruce
Angela Craig
Alex Craig
Charlotte Gleeson
Alan Harkness
Jeni Hart
Peter Hart
Jaydon Lithgo
Duncan Playfor
Jess Playfor
Jacqui Rogers
Sue Rumney
Connor Scott
Zac Spoors
Luke Tones
Gill Siddons
Chris Robinson

March

Teagan Bruce
Kayleigh Bruce
Andrew Busby
Erin Connell
Azam Chaichi
Robyn Farrow
Louix Farrow
James Lawson
Tim Padgett
Rachel Price
Stella Clarke



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

February

Wednesdays	Warm Space & soup lunch at St Matthew's	12.00-3.00pm
Sat 4 th	Coffee, Cake & Company, St Matthew's CC	2.00-4.00pm
Sat 11 th	Jordan and Appletree Concert	
Mon 13 th	Mothers Union St Matthew's CC	1.30pm
Wed 22 nd	Ash Wednesday	

Watch out for Lent Courses which will be on Notice sheets

Sat 25th	Rededication of the refurbished bells by Bishop Paul	2.00pm
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March

Wednesdays	Warm Space & soup lunch at St Matthew's	12.00-3.00pm
Sat 4 th	Coffee, Cake and Company, St Matthew's	2.00-4.00pm
Mon 13 th	Mothers Union St Matthew's CC	1.30pm

Easter Eggheads will be taking place so watch out in the Notice sheets for dates and times.

Dates for St Luke's

All in the Parish Centre:

28 th January	Candlemas Coffee Morning	10.00-12.00noon
21 st February	Pancake Party	6.00pm
Lent Course	Thursdays 6.30pm, 5 session Course throughout March on Art and Religion.	

In Church:

22 nd February	Ash Wednesday	7.00pm Eucharist
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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
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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.

