

Stranton and Burbank Community

SIGNPOST



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

August & September 2023

If Only – Reflections on a Psalm

Call it what you will but I love my job, my calling, my vocation. It's a role that at one point I would never have considered for all sorts of reasons, but I love it. In answering God's call, I have found where I am meant to be.

The opportunities to draw alongside people and hear their stories, the highs and lows of their lives, the joys that make their hearts sing, and the trials that bring them pain. It's such a privilege to spend time with people, to be there at some of the greatest moments in their lives – at their baptisms, their weddings, and, sadly, at their funerals too.

It isn't always easy, and I often feel there's much more I could do, but never enough time to do it. If only there were more hours in the day...

There are many of the psalms that I really connect with, that I'm able to draw strength and encouragement from, but in the last couple of weeks, I have been reminded of a psalm that I haven't often turned to. A psalm which has been a great help to me. A psalm which our dear friend and sister, Ann, had bookmarked when she died. Psalm 31.

“In you O Lord I seek refuge... you are indeed my rock and my fortress; for your name's sake lead me and guide me, take me out of the net that is hidden for me, for you are my refuge. Into your hand I commit my spirit; you have redeemed me, O Lord, faithful God... But I trust in you, O Lord; I say, ‘You are my God.’ My times are in your hand... Be strong, and let your heart take courage, all you who wait for the Lord.” (Ps 31: 1a, 3-5, 14-15a, 24).

If only there was more time. Time to do all that I wanted to do, all that I need to do - all that God wants or needs me to do... but this psalm reminded me that my time is in God's hands. It has helped me to reflect, to stop and seek refuge in God, to rest in His presence, to let Him lead me and guide me away from those things I could so easily allow myself to get bogged down in – the hidden nets that could trap me, slow me down, and prevent me from doing those things He is calling me to do, the things that are really key to my ministry here in Hartlepool. Some of them are still a mystery – and that's all part of the journey we are all on. He will reveal His plan in His time because my time, your time, all time is in His hands.

We just need to be strong and take courage as we wait for the Lord, committing our spirits into His hands.

He is our God, and our times are in His hand.

Every Blessing,

John

From the Home Front

We have just returned from an active family holiday in the north of Scotland. Morayshire is an awesome area – from beautiful coastline to forests and hill tops with stunning views, fast flowing rivers, fantastic flora and wildlife, incredible castles and ever changing weather. There was always something to take our breath away and make me appreciate the complexity of God’s creation and the skills and ingenuity He has given to human kind. We managed some firsts – the first time we had seen an osprey in the wild at Spey Bay, the first time I had seen house martins nesting in the dungeons and stairwells of castle ruins, a red squirrel running across a road was a definite first, driving up a steep hill with a river of rainwater coming down as the car was pelted with hailstones was a first, riding on a ‘death slide’ was a first for me (okay, it was a children’s playpark, but I still felt brave doing it!), making rock sculptures on a hill top and on pebble beaches was a new challenge, catching a frisbee (twice) while throwing 3 frisbees amongst 5 adults and three children, watching rain showers blow across the hills, valleys and coastline – all firsts! It felt good to have fun, enjoy ourselves and be amazed by God’s wonderful planet.

“God made us for joy. God is joy, and the joy of living reflects the original joy that God felt in creating us.”



A stone sculpture against a dramatic sky



The beauty and perfume of old fashioned roses

Views for miles and miles...



A storm sweeps in from sea



J.A.R.

Tribute to Ann Courtenay



Ann has been a longstanding and integral part of our congregation since 1997 and was involved in so many things right up to the end. In fact, I think it was because she was still carrying on doing all these things that it was such a shock to me and, I am sure, many others to hear the news that she had passed away. I knew that she had been unwell, but the last time I spoke to her, the penultimate Sunday before she died, she was still singing in the music group and told me that she was okay apart from feeling very tired.

She was a constant presence in our church life for so many years – Mothers Union, the choir then the music group, decorating the church, writing her regular articles for Signpost, organising Sunday dinner outings, helping with the Wednesday Communion service at St Matthew's Community Centre, catering and helping out for ad hoc events, and probably other things that I am not aware of. Once, when I called, she was busy planting bulbs in pots to deliver to members of Mothers Union.

I had known Ann since she started coming to Stranton after moving back to Hartlepool, but I got to know her better during the Covid lockdowns, when the Pastoral Team took on the role of keeping in touch with people while we were unable to meet at church. Ann was always very well supported by her family and her next door neighbours, but, living alone during that time of separation from loved ones, she was always very welcoming when I rang or called. Living in Seaton, it was easy for me to knock on the door when I was out walking and, weather permitting (and sometimes it was borderline!), we would sit, socially distanced, on the two benches in her front garden, facing the sea. I continued stopping off at Ann's occasionally after we got back to church, enjoying the view and

her company.

We had many interesting conversations, exchanging news about our families, especially our assorted grandchildren, about church and about what was going on in the world. Ann told me about her childhood and about where she had lived since then. She loved the house on the Green, one of the oldest houses (she believed it to be the oldest) in Seaton, which she bought because decades earlier she had first met her husband-to-be at a party in that very house. When it came up for sale, she decided to move back to Hartlepool, where she and her husband had both grown up. One thing I am glad of is that she never had to leave the house, because she was determined never to move from there, even if she had to live downstairs. Of course, she was also ideally situated for taking her dog, Ember, for walks on the beach. Over the years she had had a succession of dogs and cats and told me many stories about them too.

We had a shared interest in plants and gardening and had many conversations about our respective gardens. The garden wasn't just of interest because of the plants, of course, because, as we all know from her monthly Signpost article, she took great interest in the wildlife it attracted, especially the birds. She knew all their habits and idiosyncrasies and had bird feeders everywhere. She knew which birds to expect at which times of the year and noticed if they failed to reappear.

Our shared interest in plants and flowers brought us together in recent years when I started helping to decorate the church at Christmas, Easter and Harvest. Ann had taken on the lead role and had a veritable cornucopia of stock at home from which to choose. If I ever needed anything extra to fill a gap in my designated windows, Ann would always have something that fitted the bill. I have started following her example, on a much smaller scale, of looking out for things that might come in useful for future displays, especially in the January sales!

Ann was however, much more than a stock keeper of useful things. She was always ready with an interesting story, a listening ear, a word of wisdom or one of her delicious cakes and gave freely of her time whenever there was a need. On the Sunday after Ann passed away, I was feeling very sad in church thinking about her, but, as we sang 'Amazing Grace', I was very struck by the words:

"My chains are gone, I've been set free."

I felt like God was saying that, though it is a sad time for her friends and especially her family, Ann is indeed set free and we must take comfort from that.

Ann herself quoted a poem in her last Mothers Union article about those we have loved living on in our hearts and our memory and she herself encouraged us to take comfort from it. I think it is worth re-quoting it. This is for you, Ann:

“Those we love remain with us
For love itself lives on.
Cherished memories never fade
Because one loved is gone.
Those we love can never be
More than a thought apart,
For as long as there’s a memory
They live on in our heart.

Pam Stockton

Ann Courtenay

It is with a heavy heart that I am writing this, Ann’s sudden death came as a great shock, but when our Father calls He doesn’t always allow us to tarry to say goodbyes.

Ann arrived in Stranton a few years after my family and I returned here from Hampshire. Over the years we have discussed so many things from children to dogs, husbands to car journeys. Ann served on the PCC with us and was a Church Warden. She sang in the choir, then joined us in the music group. She always made light of her serious illnesses over the years. Ann was one of the original members of the Book Club set up by Jenny Gilbertson, her quiet voice discussing details and opinions about the book we were reading. She was always committed to everything she undertook. She helped organise the tea and refreshments at our daughter’s January wedding to keep guests warm while photographs were taken. Her flower, gardening and bird knowledge was excellent. We often chatted about our respective dogs over the years, Ann brought me a photo of a dog she had had many years ago who was the image of our last dog Dougal. We sympathised with each other at the loss of our four legged friends.

Ann’s baking was legendary – she knew my love of her meringues and often put one aside for me! In recent years she had faithfully handwritten her Mothers Union column and Birds of a Feather piece each month for Signpost. It meant that Andrew and I always came together as he read aloud, and I typed out her articles. We shall miss this monthly ritual....

A kind and generous friend. A committed member of our church family. A good and faithful servant of her loving Father God and Saviour Jesus, who has earned her eternal rest. We will miss Ann – until we meet again....

Jacqui Rogers, Editor

A Service of Thanksgiving For the Life of Ann Courtenay 11th December 1944-28th June 2023

After a private family committal at Stranton Grange Crematorium Rev John Bell officiated the service in Stranton Church where family, friends, church family, Mothers Union members and others who knew Ann came to give thanks and celebrate her life.

The Area President of Mothers Union spoke of Ann's years of service and dedication to promoting the aims and objectives of the organisation and to encouraging members across the Diocese over the years.

Tributes were bravely led by her grandchildren Robert, Rachel and Hollie, then by her younger daughter Nicola. These memories gave the congregation an outline of Ann's roots here in Hartlepool, her schooling, her work, meeting her husband Graham, their early married life in South London and then the arrival of their daughters and Graham's sudden death in the early 1990s. She returned to Hartlepool after seeing that the house in Seaton where she had originally met Graham at a party, was up for sale. She returned in 1997 and quickly adjusted to life back in the North East.

Some of Ann's favourite hymns were sung – Praise, My Soul, The King of Heaven, In Christ Alone, and Be Thou My Vision. During the playing of Johnny Cash's - If We Never Meet Again This Side Of Heaven, a slide show of photographs of her life was shown. Readings included Psalm 23 and John 14 verses 1-6. Rev John gave an address emphasising how Ann's faith and beliefs were interwoven with her life and ultimately that Ann has now found one of the promised rooms in her Father's House.

All were able to reminisce over refreshments in the Fulthorpe Chapel after the service.



Summer Holidays Quiz

- S** Which S was the son of Hannah?
U In which U did Abraham originate?
M Which M means taken out of the water?
M Which MM spoke to the 'Gardener'?
E Which was jeered because of his baldness?
R Which R was married to Isaac?
- H** Which H, a minor prophet, reconciled with his wife?
O Which O is a Northumbrian saint?
L Which L was the second person to ignore the injured victim in the story of the Good Samaritan?
I What does the I in INRI stand for - answer in Latin? (Should keep you busy on a wet day!!)
D Which D killed Goliath?
A Which A was the son of David?
Y Which man after meeting Jesus was told to sell his possessions?

All Saints Stranton Church



Live Music by

Sunniside-up Ceilidh Band

**Saturday 21st October 6.30-10pm at
St Matthew's Community Centre**

Tickets £2 for Adults, £1 for Child & £5 for Family Tickets

It will be a Faith Supper, please bring any drinks you wish. Tea, Coffee and Juice will be provided. Please call the office for tickets or more information 01429 894006 or see Trish Playfor, John Bell, Maureen Anderson or Church Wardens .

If you have any donations for Raffle Prizes please contact the office.

Mind Health check!

How healthy is your mind right now? Are you being kind to your mind?

Do you constantly berate yourself with harsh questions like:

Why did I do that?

Why haven't I?

Why am I not like others?

How often do you speak kindly to yourself?

When we are a child of God we are challenged to have the mind of Christ.

“Who has known the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?”

But we have the mind of Christ.

1 Corinthians 2:16 NIV

To have the mind of Christ means to think like He thinks, to speak like He speaks.

God created us for His pleasure, He delights in you.

Rev 4:11

“Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power; for Thou hast created all things, and for Thy pleasure they are, and were created.”

God your creator does not berate you or condemn you. He speaks words of love and life over you. God convicts us when we are not pleasing Him but He doesn't condemn. He is so gracious and quick to forgive. So when thoughts come in your mind that are contrary to what God speaks over you, you must challenge that thinking and throw it out!

“We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.”

2 Corinthians 10:5 NIV

“Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable-if anything is excellent or praiseworthy-think about such things.”

Philippians 4:8

This verse is easy to read not always easy to put into practise.

We may challenge our thoughts about others and try and think admirable and lovely thoughts about them. We must also think good thoughts about ourselves.

If God created us for His pleasure and delights in us. Then when we start to talk negatively over ourselves (His art work!) We are hurting Gods heart.

When we start living with the mind of Christ and daily renew our minds we will think differently and act differently.

When we walk around our streets and when we walk into our work place and live amongst our family, we will think like Jesus about the people He has put in our lives.

We will speak life over them we will love them like Jesus loves them.

Let's pray

Jesus thank you that when we belong to you we have your mind.

I ask now that you will renew my mind wash it clean.

Let me think like you think about me and the people in my life.

Show me what you think about my situation, so that I can speak over myself and others with your life giving words.

Amen

Ang Hall

Memories of those who connected to Stranton who have been called to ministry

Meet our Ordinands: Bethany McNeeley
Bethany moved to the UK to serve on a gap year with [Tees Valley Youth for Christ](#) in 2013. However, one year turned into ten years of ministry in the north east, including spending time as a youth worker. After training at [Cranmer Hall](#), Bethany is looking forward to serving in [Usworth Parish - Holy Trinity and St Michael's & All Angels](#). More about Bethany and our other [#NewRevs](#) 📩 <https://bit.ly/3JfTf9X>



Ang Hall attended Durham Cathedral on 2nd July to see Bethany McNeeley of Tees Valley Youth for Christ ordained a Deacon.



Diocese of Durham

14 h · 🌐

Meet our Ordinands: Anita Burke
Prior to training for ordination, Anita was deputy CEO of a charity supporting women experiencing poverty and suffering with addiction. She has loved every minute of her year as deacon and has felt warmly welcomed in [Oxclose Hope Family Church](#). Anita feels particularly privileged to have been able to baptise young people and preside at funerals. Find out more about Anita and our other [#NewRevs](#) 📩 <https://bit.ly/3JfTf9X>



Rev Anita Burke who was on placement in Stranton, was ordained a priest on 1st July by Bishop Paul.

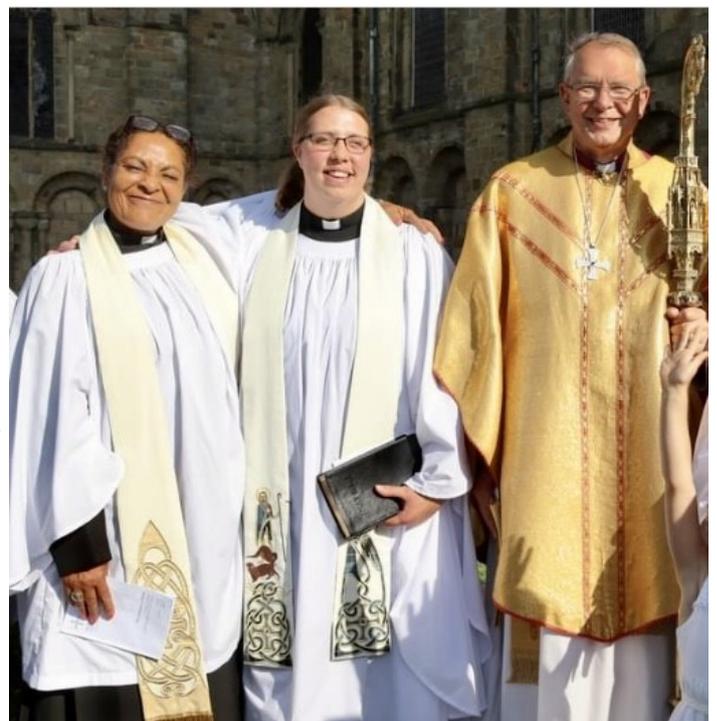
Mother Gemma returns to Durham for Petertide Ordinations

On the anniversary of my ordination I thought I'd come back and see where it all happened!



Jess Monopoli formerly from Communities of Hope and St Aidan's was ordained a Deacon on 2nd July.

Rev Michelle Delves attended Durham Cathedral on 1st July to see Rev Lou (Holy Trinity Seaton) ordained Priest.



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

**Have you thought about
St Matthew's Community Centre?**

**We have 2 large halls which can accommodate up to 140 persons
as well as 1 large and 2 small kitchens for your catering needs.**

**One hall is even big enough to house a bouncy castle –
ideal for children's parties.**

**We also have our own private car park and some outdoor space if you fancy
al fresco fun for your guests.**

**If you would like further information please call:
Trish Playfor (01429 894006) during office hours,
or Carol Laud (01429 290290)
and we will be happy to help.**

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**Keith Walker
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Tel: 01429 275551**

Ward Jackson CE Primary School Summer Sizzler July

An amazing turn out for our Summer Sizzler and beautiful blue skies too! Thank you to all who attended and all the staff involved for going the extra mile to make it happen. A great time had by all #wardjacksonway



Everybody at Ward Jackson had a chance to learn some real cricket skills today and apply them to a mini-game. Even the big kids got to play! Huge thanks to Paul and Mark for making it so enjoyable! [Durham Cricket](#)



Blanchland class have had the best day sailing at the Marina. A huge thank you to our friends at the yacht club for giving up their time and allowing the children (and staff) to have an amazing experience. 🚤 😊 Fantastic memories made today!



The weather may have cut the day short but Aurora had a fantastic time cycling as part of National Sports Week. A huge thank you to Adam for teaching us some new cycling skills!



Final celebration worship and last day for Y6 children after 4 days secondary transition. We had to sing Happy Birthday to 21 children who celebrate summer birthdays.

Nothing is impossible for God!

Nothing is impossible for God!

Shane and Shane (an American worship group) sing a beautiful worship song called

'You've already won.' The chorus goes

*And I'm fighting a battle
You've already won,
No matter what comes my way
I will overcome.
Don't know what you're doing,
But I know what you've done.
And I'm fighting a battle
You've already won.*

The line 'don't know what are you doing, but I know what you've done' really got me because so many people are going through a lot of sickness, trauma, heaviness, or hard times and when you're in that space it's hard to see where God is.

The song is a great reminder to us all of all God has done in the past. And all that he can do in the now!!

God brought the Israelites out of slavery, He brought them through the wilderness providing daily manna and quail! He parted the Red Sea - that's not humanly possible or logical. He led them with a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of light by night.

In the New Testament Jesus performed miracle after miracle that defy human reasoning!

He used a boy's packed lunch to feed more than 5000 people. Jesus used mud and his own saliva to heal blind eyes. Jesus cast out demons in a man that had been buried deep in his life, and with just one word they came out and he was in his right mind.

A woman who had been troubled by haemorrhaging all her life that no doctor could cure - just touched Jesus' robe and she was healed!!

So when we look back at all He's done, and we really, really dwell on the God of the impossible we can trust him for anything we are going through in the now.

Jeremiah 32:27

I am the Lord the God of all mankind. If anything too hard for me?

Nothing absolutely nothing is impossible with God. Let's start to declare that with our lips daily.

The devil will whisper lies to you, do not listen to him...

Jesus reminds us ..

“The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.”

John 10:10 NIV

Feel free to pray this with me. It's often good to pray it out loud!

Mighty powerful God

I repent for making you so small in my life.

I repent of not always having the faith that you are still a miracle working God.

Thank you that you are so much bigger and greater than sickness, trauma, heaviness, debt, *(insert here what is weighing you down!!)*

Thank you that you hold me and all those I love in the palm of your magnificent hands and that nothing is too difficult for you.

I speak your breath of life into my situation because you came to give us life.

I trust you, I trust you, I trust you

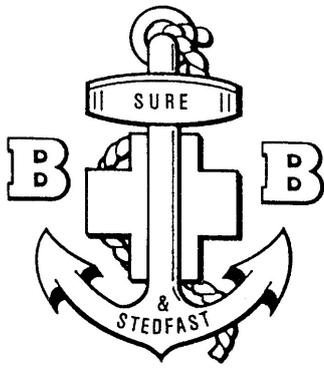
In your powerful name Jesus

Amen.

Ang Hall

Summer Holidays Quiz Answers

S	Which S was the son of Hanah?	Samuel
U	In which U did Abraham originate?	Ur
M	Which M means taken out of the water?	Moses
M	Which MM spoke to the 'Gardener'?	Mary Magdalene
E	Which was jeered because of his baldness?	Elisha
R	Which R was married to Isaac?	Rebekah
H	Which H, a minor prophet, reconciled with his wife?	Hosea
O	Which O is a Northumbrian saint?	Oswald
L	Which L was the second person to ignore the injured victim in the story of the Good Samaritan?	Levite
I	What does the I in INRI stand for - answer in Latin? (Should keep you busy on a wet day!!)	Iesus
D	Which D killed Goliath?	David
A	Which A was the son of David?	Absalom
Y	Which man after meeting Jesus was told to sell his possessions?	Young rich ruler



Boys Brigade



A great but wet night with the company lads at Hartlepool Rovers learning some rugby basics with [Dan Charters](#). Thanks to Dan for his time and to the club for letting us use their facilities!



Anchor Boys were Superheroes and a fun night was had by them all.



The Great Tidy Up at St Matthew's Community Centre

On Saturday July 1st our Company Lads, along with help from others too, massacred the weeds and rubbish at St Matthew's Car Park restoring it to a more respectable standard.

Over 45 bags of rubbish were collected and dumped during the week, the Lads were treated by Mrs Maureen Anderson to hot dogs and cupcakes - this recipe of tidying up success will hopefully happen on an annual basis.

A great morning cleaning up our outside spaces at St Matthew's - thanks to some of the lads and their families for helping. Many hands make light work 🚧



Ann Courtenay

The BB lost a good friend in Ann who in the early 2000's helped with the tuckshop in the Company Section.

She was a great supporter of our Christmas and Summer Fayres sorting out and running the book stall, her cheese scones were legendary as was her encouragement with our Harvest Festival displays throughout the years.

Camp 2023

This year we are staying at Fanwood Scout Centre near Cleckheaton, altogether we have fifteen Lads going to camp this year.

The devotions are based on the story of Joseph aided by a DVD of Joseph King of Dreams.

Activities include visits to Ninja Warrior (at Leeds), The Imperial War Museum, The Chill Factor, Kayaking, High Ropes, National Coal Mine Museum, Calypso Cave, Ponderosa Zoo and the favourite of all the Lads - Paintballing.

Plus all the old favourites, potted sports, chess, draughts, football and many others...

September

We are open to new members in all sections:

Anchors for 6-8 year olds every Friday 6.00 - 7.00pm

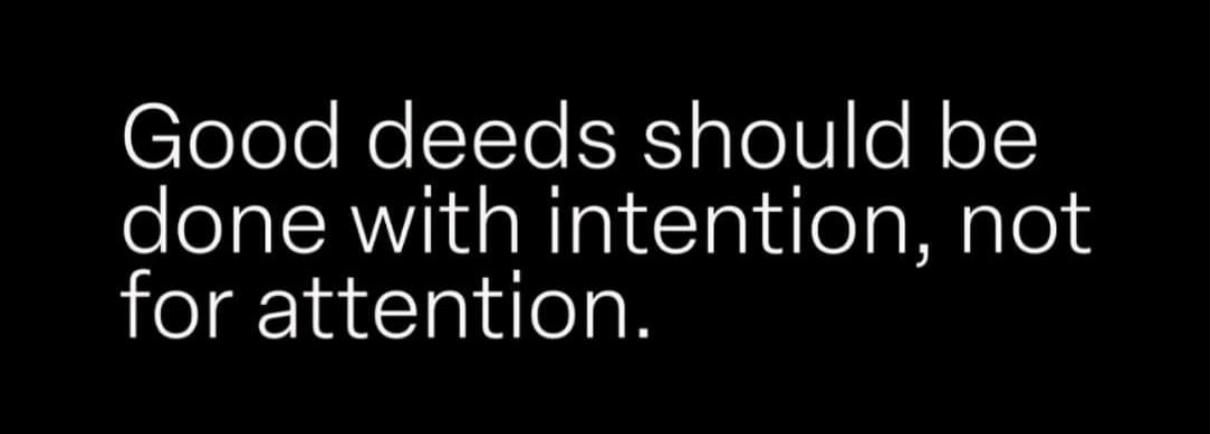
Juniors for 8-11 year olds every Monday 6.30 - 8.00pm

Company 11-17 year olds every Friday 7.15 -9.00pm

All Meet at St Matthew's CC - subs in each Section are £2.00 per night.

If you need any more information please ring George Bainbridge on 07816445829 or find our Facebook page to see our members in action.

George Bainbridge



Good deeds should be
done with intention, not
for attention.

St Matthew's
Community Centre
Elwick Road



Please come and join us

Saturday 9th September 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

St Matthew's
Community Centre
Elwick Road



Please come and join us

Saturday 7th October 2023

2:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Every penny we raise means Macmillan can help more people
with cancer live life as fully as they can



Organised in aid of Macmillan Cancer Support, registered charity in England and Wales (261017) Scotland (SC039907) and the Isle of Man (604). Also operating in Northern Ireland



HARTLEPOOL Town Pastors, (the "Street Angels")

We are still seeking volunteers if you are interested please contact us-
email: aide.hartlepooltownpastors@outlook.com

Communities of Hope

- Play and Praise toddler sessions (free) **Now on a summer break**
- Sid's Kitchen Monday 10.00am-12.00pm at St Matthew's
- Mine and Yours at the Well Women's group Monday 1pm-3pm at St Matthew's.
- Stranton Toddlers Tuesday 9am-11.00am at St Matthew's. **Now on a summer break**
- A Bit of God Time Tuesday 1pm to 2:30 pm at St Aidan's
- Friday Drop In Friday 10.00am – 12.00pm at St Aidan's

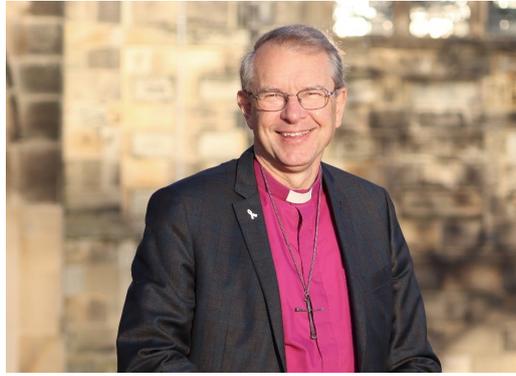
Hartlepool Holiday Activities and Food programme

Our CoH Team will again be leading a Church Based Holiday Club at St Luke's Church, from Tuesday to Friday in the first two weeks of August.

"Coffee with the Bells"

Rebecca and myself would like to invite members of Stranton Church to join us at the Vicarage on Saturday 19th August from 10:00 to 12:00 for Coffee with the Bells (tea, cake and other options will also be on offer). It will be a long overdue opportunity for us to get to know you all a little better (and for some of you to get to know us a bit better too). It would be useful to have a rough idea of numbers and any dietary needs/allergies that we need to be aware of. It would also be helpful if people coming by car could park on the driveway or on the vicarage side of the road.

John and Rebecca



Bishop Paul has announced that he plans to retire from the role of Bishop of Durham at the end of February next year. He will have served as Bishop of Durham for 10 years.

Bishop Paul said: “It has been a huge privilege and honour to serve all the people of Durham Diocese for nearly 10 years. Being called here was an unexpected, and challenging, step. Rosemary and I have loved the variety, beauty and challenges of this diverse Diocese. It is my hope and prayer that my ministry has helped God’s church truly be a blessing to our communities for the transformation of all from the Tyne to the Tees and the Dales to the Sea.

“When we move away at the end of February next year we will miss the people and the places deeply. Yet we know the Diocese will be in good hands and that God will uphold and guide for all that lies ahead.”

Bishop Paul was installed and enthroned as Bishop of Durham on 22 February 2014, succeeding Justin Welby, now Archbishop of Canterbury. He was previously Bishop of Southwell and Nottingham, 2010-14 and had also been Suffragan Bishop of Southampton in the Diocese of Winchester from 2004 - 2010.

In May this year, he was by the side of King Charles III as Bishop Assistant to the King during the Coronation at Westminster Abbey.

Once Bishop Paul retires, Bishop Sarah will lead the Diocese and the process to appoint the next Bishop of Durham will begin. Bishop Sarah said: “Bishop Paul will be very missed across the whole Diocese when he retires as the Bishop of Durham, but we will also be so thankful for his wise and challenging strategic leadership, prayerful care and utter commitment to us since coming to our Diocese in 2014. We are particularly grateful for his leadership in the hard times of the pandemic where his love for all our communities put people at the heart of all we did. As our Bishop he has enabled us to grow in boldness and imagination in our response to the opportunities and challenges that we encounter as we seek to be faithful disciples of Jesus. We look to the future thankfully and hopefully from a firm foundation.

“Bishop Paul has been a passionate advocate for the North East, both at a local and national level, championing education, our young people and the poorest in

our society, and the rights of refugees and asylum seekers who come to this country seeking a better and safer life. He has been a voice for those who struggle to get heard.

“Our prayers and love will go with Paul and Rosemary as they prepare to enter the next chapter of their lives and once the end of February arrives, we will wish them well. I am sure God has plans and purposes for them both as they enter their retirement together.”

Bishop Paul acts as an 'Advocate for Children' and he is Chair of the National Society, the body that oversees education in the Church of England and the Church of Wales. He holds one of the permanent 'Lords Spiritual' seats in the House of Lords where he has most recently been passionately campaigning for the rights of refugees and asylum seekers in the UK. He has also been critical of cuts to Universal Credit, and the Two Child Limit which he says are driving more children into poverty.

Bishop Paul is married to Rosemary and they have four adult children and two grandchildren.

Durham Diocese Website

THERE IS NO GOODBYE by Maura Kelly

There are moments on this planet
Periods of special time
That connects us with our loved ones
By revealing certain signs

Then the forces will surround you
To help you if you ask
And smooth a path for you to walk
Unhindered in your task

For your loved ones will be watching
Each day when you awake
To assist you in your struggles
And the errors you might make

Pay attention to their presence
And listen with both ears
For the whisper that will call to you
And the advice that you will hear

Have courage in your footsteps
And use their wisdom without fear
To settle all your worries
From life's troubles that are near

For you travel not alone in time
On the journey that you take
As their spirits stand-by to guide
you
On the choices you now make

So, do not say the word 'goodbye'
To loved ones when you part
As they will tap you on the shoulder
To cause a tremor in your heart

And when that movement stirs your
soul
Get up and march ahead
As they are looking down on you
To see where you might tread

For through your senses a light will
shine
To show you where to turn
As the departed gently teach you
On the lessons you must learn

Meeting the cost of Ministry in the Diocese

How do Church of England parishes meet the cost of Ministry? Some of the answer to this question is obvious in Parishes' annual published accounts – heat, light, upkeep, materials, refreshments, local administration, telephones, expenses, fees to organists and vergers – these are all paid directly through parish accounts. Some parishes also employ a support worker, run a community shop, support overseas mission partners or local outreach work with Asylum Seekers and Homeless people.

But who pays for supporting key areas such as safeguarding, training, grants for local mission, major church repairs and (last winter) “Warm spaces”? Who funds Clergy housing and pastoral support, stipends and pensions, and who pays for wider work on the Diocesan priorities on challenging poverty, energising Growth, caring for God’s creation, and engaging children and young people? You may be surprised to learn that the answer is – Parishes! Yet we don’t pay for these things directly but rather through the “Parish Share” system, though the Diocese, designed to ensure the Church of England’s Ministry is provided across every parish regardless of size or ability to pay, on a mutual basis where larger more affluent parishes support those in more restricted circumstances.

To this end, all parishes are asked each Autumn to consider a “Guided Pledge” which estimates local ability to contribute to these shared costs based on most recent Parish annual accounts, clergy allocated to each parish, local levels of relative wealth or deprivation and the numbers of people who attend and support each Parish Church. The “Guided Pledge” system has been in place for a few years now, but sadly some parishes seem not to have taken the challenge seriously enough and parish vacancy periods have extended as a consequence of shortfalls: so the Diocese is this year encouraging parishes to spread the word more widely among members to have a really well-informed debate and encourage deep commitment to understand and meet pledge commitments as guided pledge requests are distributed to Parishes in late summer for PCCs to respond by October.

We hope and pray that Parishes' responses to the 2023 guided pledge this Autumn will truly reflect Paul’s teaching in 2 Corinthians 8: 10 – 13. “And here is my judgment about what is best for you in this matter. Last year you were the first not only to give but also to have the desire to do so. Now finish the work, so that your eager willingness to do it may be matched by your completion of it, according to your means. For if the willingness is there, the gift is acceptable according to what one has, not according to what one does not have. Our desire is not that others might be relieved while you are hard pressed, but that there might be equality. At the present time your plenty will supply what they need, so that in turn their plenty will supply what you need. The goal is equality, as it is written: ‘The one who gathered much did not have too much, and the one who gathered little did not have too little’”.

If you want to learn more any of our local Clergy, Churchwardens or Treasurer should be able to tell you all about the Parish Pledge for 2024.

Durham Diocese

CELEBRATE!

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

to

August

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



September

Vickie Addison
Freyja Bruce
George Coils
Joan Herbert
Katie Herbert
Jack Hanlon
Mel Hutchinson
Angus Kerr
Maureen Wilford

Wedding Anniversary August

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

September

Alan & Catriona Robertson

If you have something to celebrate we would love to share it - email
admin@stranton-church.org.uk
or phone 894006.

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

Dates for the Diary

August

Sat 19th Aug The Vicarage for Coffee with the Bells 10:00 to 12:00 noon

September

Sun 3rd Sept Joint Service at St Aidan's Church 10:45am
Sat 9th Sept Coffee & Cake at St Matthew's CC 2:00-4:00pm
Sat 16th Sept Group Faith Supper & Quiz at St Luke's Rooms 6.00pm
Tues 19th Sept PCC St Matthew's CC 7:00pm
Sun 24th Sept Harvest Festival Services in church 9:00am & 11:00am
Sat 30th Sept Macmillan Coffee Morning at St Luke's Church

Bereavement Support Training - dates will be announced.

October

Sat 7th Oct Coffee & Cake at St Matthew's CC MacMillan Fund Raiser
2:00-4:00pm
Sun 15th Oct Joint Service at St Luke's 9:15am
Sat 21st Oct Ceilidh at St Matthew's CC 6:30-10:00pm

El Camino Pilgrimage

Members of the congregation are invited to sponsor Steph Boyd, who is going to be walking part of the Camino de Santiago pilgrimage in Spain, in aid of the charity The Headlight Project. This organisation is dedicated to providing counselling services to people bereaved by the suicide of a loved one and has provided strong support for Steph.

Steph will begin her journey on 7th September, walking about 10 miles per day for 8 days, on the last leg of the pilgrimage route, finishing at the shrine of Saint James in the cathedral of Santiago de Compostela. She would be very grateful for any funds raised for The Headlight Project. There is a sponsorship form at the back of church for anyone who would be willing to sponsor her, and Pam Stockton will collect any sponsorship money for her after she has completed the walk.

Bereavement Support Group Update

After several meetings over the past few months, we have reached the point where we are planning to start a series of training sessions in September for those who would like to be involved. This is with a view to being able to offer support in some form following the All Souls Service in November. We are then hoping to start offering regular support sessions in January. For the training sessions, we will be following a programme of 6 sessions called 'The Bereavement Journey', which goes through the stages of grief and has been used previously in other churches. We may then offer this programme for those needing support. During our discussions we have recognised, however, that, whilst bereavement is usually associated with the death of a loved one, loss resulting in grief comes in many forms – loss of health, relationships, employment, ability and independence being just some examples. As a group, we want to encompass all kinds of loss, which can affect people at different times in their life and are unique to them. If anyone has any ideas or views about what we are proposing or if anyone who hasn't been involved so far would like to be included, please talk to John, Maggie or myself about it.

Pam Stockton

Who's Who

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Churches Together in Hartlepool

Susan Atkinson, Secretary
 St Mary's RC

Church Wardens Angela Craig 57 Claremont Drive 234279
 Rohan Wanduragala 62 Clifton Avenue 223751

PCC Secretary Maureen Anderson 22 Thetford Road 871266
Treasurer David Craig 57 Claremont Drive 234279
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Loyalty Treasurer Ken Shepherd 251 Park Road 268007

Notice Sheet The Office (Notices by the preceding Wednesday)
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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.

