

Stranton and Burbank Community Church

SIGNPOST



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

40p

July 2019

ALL SAINTS CHURCH, STRANTON CHURCH SERVICES

Sunday

8.30am. Holy Communion (Book of Common Prayer)

10.30am. Service (with children's groups for 3-14s)

1st Sunday of the month will be Holy Communion

2nd Sunday of the month will be Morning Worship

3rd Sunday of the month will be Holy Communion

4th Sunday of the month will be Lighthouse Service

11.00am. Morning Worship at Burbank Community Church,
at Ward Jackson School.

7.30pm Youth Fellowship (14 years +)

On the Third Sunday of each month, **Messy Church** takes place at St Matthew's Community Centre at 4.00pm. This is a time for parents/carers and children to have fun together, doing crafts and various activities, based on a bible theme.

Occasionally, (2 or 3 times a year) the congregations at Stranton and Burbank all come together for the 10.30am service, and this is followed by a bring and share meal.

Wednesday Morning

10.00am. Holy Communion (Book of Common Prayer)
at St Matthew's Community Centre.

Please note that the next **Messy Church** will be on **14th July 2019** and will continue to take place on the **Third Sunday of each Month**

Lessons from history – things change...

If you think Brexit seriously divides our nation at the moment, imagine what it was like during the middle of the 16th Century in England, when religion was the political issue of the day and hundreds of academics, clergy and officials were summarily executed, many of them by burning, for belonging to the “wrong” branch of Christianity. The following Century, in 1616, an inquisition established by the (Roman) Catholic Church declared that Galileo Galilei’s belief that the Sun, not the Earth, is at the centre of the universe is “foolish and absurd in philosophy, and formally heretical since it explicitly contradicts in many places the sense of Holy Scripture”. In our country the question of whether God ordained (or pre-destined) a person to be King and gave him an absolute right to rule (or not) resulted in a brutal civil war that was ended when the King himself was beheaded. Things had settled down somewhat by the 18th Century: subversive non-conformists to the state religion were mutilated (had parts cut off), but were not usually executed. They were all Christians! In the 19th Century, society as a whole was “Christian” but evils such as slavery and child labour were only slowly and controversially abolished alongside the diseases (e.g. cholera) and depravations of the Industrial Revolution that made Great Britain into a World Power. Charles Darwin was criticised and lampooned for proposing that humankind and all of life was subject to a process of evolution and had not been created in 4004BC, as the Bible seemed to suggest. Two World Wars were waged in the 20th Century, mainly between “Christian” nations. Only from the middle of that century did increased global communications and immigration from Muslim and Hindu countries force most Christians to start asking what God thinks of people from other cultures and faiths. Most people assumed that only a man could be a church leader – it wasn’t until 1994 that any women were ordained priests in the Church of England. Today the most divisive issue facing the Church seems to be whether people who aren’t in conventional heterosexual relationships can be accepted as full members of the Body of Christ and leaders of his Church.

I have certain nostalgia for an earlier age when there was more deference and common assumptions about right beliefs and right living that seemed to be based on Biblical truth. Nowadays “is it true?” seems to be a less important question than “does it work for me?” Having a vast amount of information at our fingertips, we rely on electronic devices to inform us and entertain us. Values and truth are formed more than ever by the media - without much distinction between reality, “virtual reality” and personal opinion – certainly not by a common faith or a common story that links us together.

When Society’s understanding about God and God’s truth has changed so much over the centuries and continues to evolve more rapidly than ever, how can we assert that God doesn’t change? What constant can we hold on to and proclaim with confidence, knowing that it will be the same in every future age as well as the past?

“Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and for ever” (Heb. 13:8) “so do not be swept off course by all sorts of outlandish teachings; it is good that we should gain inner strength from the grace of God and not from rules . . . Through Jesus let us continually offer up to God a sacrifice of praise, that is, the tribute of lips which acknowledge his name. Never neglect to show kindness and to share what you have with others, for such are the sacrifices which God approves.”

And “May the God of peace, who brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of an eternal covenant, make you perfect in all goodness so that you may do his will; and may he create in us what is pleasing to him, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever! Amen” . (Heb. 13:20)

With love,

Andrew

Mothers Union

At our last meeting Joyce Dryden and I were able to share our visit to the Mothers Union Festival Service where we represented our members. It was a memorable service where all the Officers, Vice Presidents, Diocesan Unit Coordinators and Indoor Members Coordinators were commissioned by the Bishop of Jarrow, The Right Reverend Sarah Clark.

Somehow Joyce and I got involved in taking the collection with the gowned sides-people of the Cathedral (we thought there would be other MU members helping too). It was a lovely service with the congregation being included and also charged with reaffirming their enrolling promises – as our Branch also did later.

Yesterday was Father's Day and this week "Families Worldwide" (our daily prayer diary) is focussing on fatherhood. It was also Trinity Sunday and I felt that the prayers for that week emphasised the importance of fathers here on earth and the significance of our Father in heaven.

Dates:

Strawberry Tea 8th July at 1:30pm in the Small Hall at St Matthew's CC
Entry £2 – To be confirmed nearer the day.

Mary Sumner Day 9th August at 2pm in St Nicholas Church Durham

Autumn Sessions start 9th September 1:30pm in Asda Room St Matthew's CC.

This year, 2019, is whizzing by. Please remember to pray for MU and for those people sworn in at the Cathedral Service. Please pray also as we face changes in Sunday service times in church. In addition pray for the strengthening of relationships with our sister churches. In our personal lives many are facing difficult decisions with health and other family concerns. May we use the MU LOA prayer to empower and strengthen us as a Branch and as witnesses as we daily meet others in today's world:-

We pray that God will make us fit
For whatever He has called us to be;
That He will fill our good ideas
And acts of faith with His energy
So that it all amounts to something
Wonderful in His name.
As our lives honour the name of Jesus
May He honour us by His Grace.
Amen

God Bless

Ann Courtenay

From the Home Front

Recently I have found that God has been challenging me in my life. I know I often don't relish or welcome these challenges, nonetheless I also know I have to be obedient and trust in the wisdom and love of my heavenly Father and the promptings of the Holy Spirit...

In May I handed in my notice to terminate my teaching contract and take retirement after 42 years in the profession. I felt physically sick and tearful for days beforehand and when I gave my letter to the Headteacher I was quite distressed. Fortunately she just hugged me! However so many concerns are still running through my thoughts - I worry that "being a teacher" is my identity, how people see me and my status in society. I have also been the main wage earner for many of my 42 years in schools – how will we manage without my regular salary? I know I will miss my colleagues, many of whom have become good friends over the years, also I will miss the children who never cease to fascinate me and I learn so much from them! Plus of course the myriad challenges to my knowledge that I have had to surmount and solve everyday! The Lord has confirmed that this is the right time to finish, while I still love my work and enjoy going to school each morning.

I have felt prompted to look into volunteering as my circumstances are about to change, God has pushed me towards two areas. One is to work with Safe Families. After a difficult experience pursuing fostering a few years ago, I was really apprehensive. However the groundwork and training so far have been a positive and affirming experience. Now I have to trust that God will use me in the way He wants, in a new context with adults and children. I was also approached to take part in a drugs trial – at several points I told God I would be willing to stop if I didn't meet the criteria – wishful thinking! The process is likely to be complicated at times with travelling, monitoring, injections and blood tests, yet I feel I am being allowed to give something back to the Health Service which has been there for me since before I was born.

In church a couple of times I have been physically shaken by the Holy Spirit and instructed to speak words to the congregation – this is really frightening as I feel exposed to ridicule and terrified I might physically fall down... Yet I am becoming more obedient and trusting enough to stand up and go to the front – with encouragement and acceptance from Norman.

Even the boundaries of my quiet times are being pushed – to do another Bible reading at the end of the day, in addition to my morning devotional!

But so far I have coped with everything God has lain on my heart – and I have to trust that He will continue to give me the courage, strength, time and grace to see through all that He requires in the sure knowledge that He will use each area for the glory of His Kingdom....

J.A.R.

I first met Margaret when I was transferred to Stranton and found her a lovely spiritual lady with her 3rd Order Franciscan commitment to service which has been more than evident in her quiet and devoted service to Stranton Church. She had an all embracing commitment to service. This became evident to me when she volunteered to join my first team to serve seafarers in our new Seafarers' Centre at Seal Sands for The Mission to Seafarers – a most unlikely candidate I thought at the time!

To volunteer to serve seafarers of all nationalities and faiths and to 'Meet them as they are' and extend a hand of Christian Fellowship regardless of creed. To learn to pull a pint of beer or help them to phone home and wrestle with the technology at that time to enable them to speak to their families across the world.

These were most unlike Margaret - but she embraced it with enthusiasm and her spirit of service rooted in her Christian spirituality was evident to everyone. She served faithfully for more than 20 years while I was Chaplain and continued long after I left. She faithfully served her ministry every week at the Seafarers' Centre, usually not returning home until well after 11pm, after the last seafarer had returned to their ship.

She engaged in conversation (sometimes deep conversation) with seafarers with a quiet listening and compassionate manner – reflecting her own spirituality and 'met people where they were'.

I remember many times when I had gone home from the Centre and Margaret would telephone to tell me she had met a seafarer who perhaps needed a little counselling or a chat and would pass on the name of the ship etc., so we could keep a watch on him. She was very sensitive to a silent cry for help.

Seafarers would ask sometimes "Where is Mama?", if she wasn't on duty that night.

A lovely deeply spiritual lady who served faithfully both her Church and The Mission to Seafarers and a most unlikely person to embrace the rough world of shipping and seafarers - you couldn't imagine - but she did it faithfully and I know she left a lasting impression on all those seafarers she met, cared for, and (I sincerely believe), helped them on their own spiritual journey.

"Well done, Thou good and faithful servant" - and God Bless.

Ken Cornforth

Mission to Seafarers Chaplain 1989 to 2007

C.O.F.F.E.E.

Christ Offers Forgiveness For Everyone Everywhere

Tea, Coffee, Cake and Good Company at St Matthew's CC

Patricia Vaughan, Maureen Anderson and Ann Courtenay started these meetings in May with helpers Adam and Heather, when about thirty people, mainly retired, attended. The 1:00pm to 3:00pm slot was just as well attended in June.

Over delicious cakes and a good refreshing cuppa, old acquaintances were reignited and connections were discovered. Someone brought an old photo and others were able to give information about the folk on it from over 50 years ago. A lady brought crocheting and helped someone else to get started and rectify their mistakes. A photo quiz took place. Someone made greetings cards. There is the promise of games of cards and dominoes, and an oldies film time. Those attending were asked if they had a talent which could be used – reading aloud or playing music for future dates.

It was amazing how quickly tables had to be joined up to extend the discussion groups. Being a Saturday adult offspring were able to bring along their parents as they were not working. There was a buzz in the room and a good time was had by all.

Do you know someone who would like to come along to Tea, Coffee, Cake and Good Company in St Matthew's CC on the first Saturday in July – the 6th – anyone of any age is welcome to attend – just come between 1:00pm and 3:00pm and you are assured of a warm welcome, good company and enjoyable refreshments.....

J.A.R.

Feeding Children and Families during School Holidays

The Summer months can be a testing time for many families. As schools close and school meals stop, families struggle to feed their children and many go hungry. Our Christian tradition teaches us the wonders of sharing food with one another and how easily community can be created when we sit at table together. With this in mind, we are going to run a Summer lunch club in the hope of bringing families in our parishes and schools together, to share food and have fun.



The club is open to the whole family, not just children and will run every Thursday lunch time of the Summer holidays. Times and venue are still to be announced.

We are in the process of trying to put together a rota of volunteers to cover a variety of roles on each day. Volunteers are most welcome to bring their families along too. If you could let us have the dates when you are available to join in, we will set up a rota to make sure that each week has enough volunteers there to run smoothly. More updates to follow. Forms to fill in preferred dates are in church and with Clive.

Emma Cain



Holiday

Hunger

Did you know that 3 million children in the UK are at risk of going hungry during the school holidays?

With the loss of free school meals given out during term time, in addition to the extra childcare costs around the holidays, families already struggling with low budgets find it difficult to feed their children.

The need:

The All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on hunger published a report earlier this year which showed that hunger amongst children during the school holidays may exacerbate inequalities that already exist between children from wealthier and poorer backgrounds. Those children most at risk of hunger during the holidays may also suffer from social isolation, loneliness, and inactivity. These factors combined can lead to significant weight loss or gain, and negative impacts on physical and mental well-being.

Holiday Clubs offer four main advantages:

Socialising and activities for children

Financial relief for parents on very low incomes

Skill building for parents and pathways to future work

Improved physical and mental health, setting children up to excel in their studies after the holidays

Each of these advantages improves children's quality of life, as well as their chances of growing up to become healthy, well-educated adults, while simultaneously increasing parents' confidence and adding to their skills base.

Holiday Food Clubs are also an excellent way to promote social inclusion through food, and that they add an important element of happiness and community to the lives of those families who are supported.



Ordinand in training Pete Gunstone revisits Stranton on June 2nd

Pete and Kirsten returned to Stranton at the end of Pete's training for the ministry. He told us that he was to be ordained in Wakefield on 29th June before moving to Bradford where he will be curate as part of a team who will be planting a new resource church in the city centre. The team will be led by Rev Linda Maslen and Rev Nathanael Poole, (who was also on placement at Stranton and Burbank some years ago) will be the associate leader.

Pete preached on Ezekiel 36. Ezekiel's name means 'God strengthens'. Ezekiel brought about cleansing, renewal and restoration through God. The exiled Israelites received a supernatural washing and were given a new heart and a new spirit. Pete reminded us that it is through God's grace that we can receive a new life, through the cleansing of past sins. Kirsten was preparing for the Coast to Coast cycle ride and was delighted when we sang 'And can it be - my chains fell off'. The hymn used by Kirsten and her cycling partner to bolster their spirits on long rides!!

We pray for Pete's ordination and that he and Kirsten settle into life in Bradford and that a good Yorkshire welcome awaits them.

J.A.R.

Baptisms Pentecost Sunday 9th June



Vickie with her sons Callum, Jaydon and Tyler plus Mani with Shadi, Farhad and Resa make their declarations and promises with their supporters.



The Holy Spirit was present during this service and all those baptised felt joyous and blessed.



All were given candles to represent Christ's light in the world and encouraged to go out into the world and spread the light of Christ.... Afterwards the whole congregation enjoyed cake and corned beef slice made by Vickie and the boys – delicious!

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Confirmation Service at St Luke's Monday 11th June

Bishop Paul led 25 candidates of all ages from St Luke's, Hart and Elwick, St Aidan's St Hilda's and Stranton churches towards Confirmation and for one lady, Reception into the Church of England. It was wonderful to read and hear some of their testimonies on this path towards a fuller relationship with God and our Saviour. The Holy Spirit had worked quietly or mightily in each person's life to bring them to this point.



Amir, Shadi, Sara and Sajad were given candles and told – 'You have received the light of Christ; walk in this light all the days of your life – Shine as a light in the world to the glory of God the Father'.

Sara gave an incredibly moving testimony about her struggles being a Christian in Iran and the passive and active persecution she experienced for her faith. This led to her long and

difficult journey to GB via Greece, where she had faced further persecution and aggression. Despite the horrors she has experienced she is so grateful to have a Loving Father and Living God to follow and to give her support. All of us who heard her words felt grateful and humbled – how would we have come through such persecution? She, and others with similar backgrounds are an inspiration to us all – Praise God.

Bishop Paul used the story of St Barnabas - the Encourager - from Acts. He described Barnabas' life and actions to show how God can use each one of us to come alongside those who have no or little faith and to encourage them to find and grow in their relationship with God and to become obedient to His calling and prompts. An inspirational story when you consider Barnabas championed Paul when he was newly converted and suspected of being a 'double agent' on a mission to track down and persecute Christians. Barnabas also supported Mark through his times of doubt and Mark ended up writing a Gospel! Bishop Paul commissioned all those being confirmed and the entire congregation to be like Barnabas and become encouragers...

All those who were confirmed huddled around Bishop Paul for a reassuring chat about the way forward with Christ firmly in their lives.

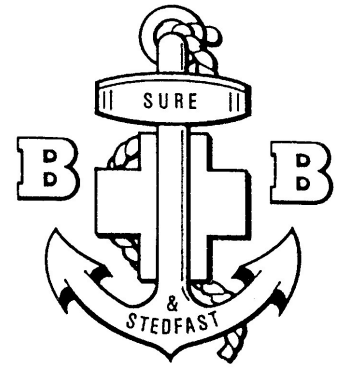
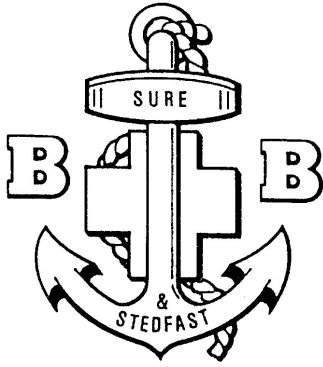
Bishop Paul with Sara, Shadi, Sajad and Amir.



Bethany McNeely with Bishop Paul.

We remember Bethany with affection for all her work with the Youth for Christ Mission Teams. Bethany has been following God from a young age and was baptised at 19. When she was 23 she came to England as a missionary worker and served alongside Tees Valley Youth for Christ and Headland Baptist Church. She served in Hartlepool for three years. In 2016, she accepted a position as Youth and Children's Worker at St Mary's Church in Norton. These past two and a half years God has been working in and through her - revealing gifts and passions she didn't realise she had. Through Rev Martin Anderson (who was an Oasis worker in Stranton many years ago), friends and strangers, the seed of pursuing being ordained in the Church of England was planted. In these past eight months she has been having conversations and meetings to pursue vocation and confirmation is another step to one day hopefully being ordained.





BB & St Matthew's

The East Side Project is now completed and that means we have 'moved' to our new store.

We are in the process of building shelving and sorting out our equipment. (Could be a job for life...)



Many thanks go to the Wilson family who stored the bulk of our equipment. We have now also transferred equipment from the filing cabinets. Many thanks to Jack for removing them from St Matthew's



The Anchor stone plaque is probably the only one in Great Britain and we are proud to see it next to our new store.

Boys Brigade Course at Durham Cricket Club

On June 8th several leaders attended a Raise the Bar course which involved morning sessions on the new proposed programme and badges for the Anchors and Juniors.

During the afternoon we had a talk about 'Challenging Children' which was extremely interesting

Camp - We are busy planning the final details for camp and hope to take a dozen Lads to Melton Scout Centre near Hull.

Plans for September include designing an Anchor Boys Membership Booklet and planning for Harvest Festival.

If you would like more information why not visit our Facebook page.

George Bainbridge

St Matthew's Project

The building work at St Matthew's Community Centre has all been passed by the building inspector and the official opening of the extensions is on Monday 15th July.

It is really tremendous that we now have a Community Centre that is fit for the middle of the 21st Century!

We would like to thank Garfield and Weston 60th Anniversary Fund and the Impetus Environment Trust who provided the bulk of the funding and a thank you to our mystery donor who gave £5000...

Also a huge thank you to Barbara Butcher and Carol Laud whose determination to ensure the success of this project has been outstanding.

The Future - time stands still for no building - so during the summer months we will start to think about what the next project may involve.



Welcome Back



Praise God for answers to prayers – It was wonderful to have Jill Barrett back in church. She has made a steady recovery from her recent stroke, but now thinks that God has 'rewired' her and she feels better than she has for a long time.

Three Parishes Prayer Walk – 6th June



The Greenside indoors



And outdoors

Members from Stranton, St Luke's and St Aidan's congregations met, talked, drank and walked between The Causeway, The Greenside and The White House Pubs. Folk joined in as and when they could. We even attracted members of St Thomas More's RC and the RC Ladies Singers who happened to be in The White House and were coerced into singing Tallis's canon in a round outside under the canopy... Prayers were said as the three parishes were crossed. A sociable evening getting to know each other better.



And dogs were welcome too to help start conversations – Maggie also interacted with dogs in the pubs on route!



At last the White Birthday chorus for Julia Taylor from St Luke's.

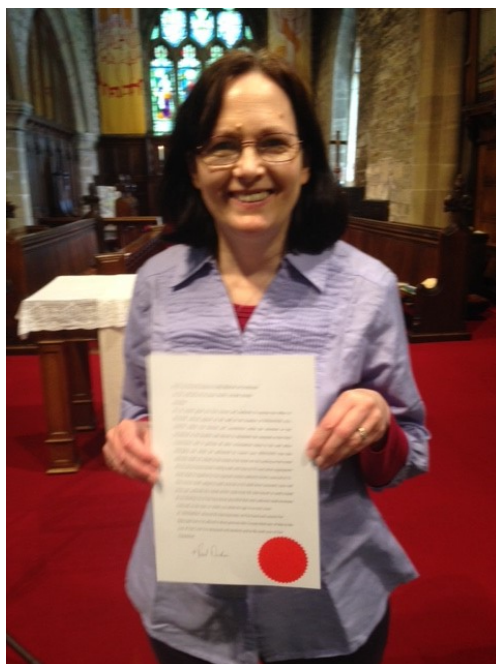
House – and a Happy

Dates for the Diary

Dates for July

Mon 1 st July	7.00pm	Group Council, St Luke's Parish Rooms
Tues 2 nd July	7.30pm	New Beginnings, Fulthorpe Chapel
Wed 3 rd July	7.30pm	Stranton Standing Committee, The Vicarage.
Mon 8 th July	7.30pm	Lighthouse Planning
Sun 14 th July		Andrew Craig's final Sunday before retirement at Stranton Church
Sun 14 th July	4.00pm	Messy Church
Mon 15 th July	6.30pm	Retirement Party for Andrew Craig, Fulthorpe Chapel with Faith Supper
Tues 16 th July	7.30pm	Stranton PCC, Fulthorpe Chapel
Sun 21 st July	11.00am	Joint Service Burbank, no 10.30am service at Stranton
Sun 28 th July	10.30am	Lighthouse Service

Renewal of Lay Reader Licence



On June 2nd Norman was pleased to announce during the service that Mary Tones has had her licence renewed to continue as a Lay Reader at Stranton Church. This will enable Mary to preach and lead in our Parish.

CELEBRATE!

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

to

**Maureen Anderson
Faith Barton
Josh Bruce
Barbara Butcher
Jean Connell
Hilary Harkness
Natalie Proffitt
Mary Robinson
Norman Shave
Max Spors
Jenny Tones
Geoffrey Webster
Diana Wanduragala**



**Congratulations
on your Wedding Anniversary**

**Faith & Adam Barton
Elspeth & Andrew Craig
Malinee & Aga
Julie & Norman Shave**

**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.

Sidespersons

	8.30am	10.30am
7 July	P Porritt	S Shepherd K Shepherd
14 July	M Hutchinson	D Greenwood B Greenwood
21 July	P Thompson	Joint Service At Burbank
28 July	I Walker	N Proffit A Craig



Baptisms

9 June	Victoria Addison Callum Lithgo Jaydon Lithgo Tyler Lithgo Shadi Manshadi Mani Kazemi Farhad Travalayee Reza Dekami
9 June	Max James Harrington
23 June	Max Joseph Wood



Funerals

24 May	Vera Douglas
20 June	Edna Harvey
21 June	Margaret Lumley



Who's Who

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Associate Minister

Revd Andrew Craig 25 Egerton Road 422461

Burbank Community Church Worker & Curate

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Oxford Road Baptist
Secretary Susan Atkinson,
St Mary's RC

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