

Stranton and Burbank Community Church

SIGNPOST



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

June 2021

Be still and know that I am God'

For many of us, the gradual easing of lockdown brings much longed-for opportunities to see friends, play sports, resume contact with family or get back to work that we value. But for many of, even the happy, much anticipated changes and re-adjustment can be difficult for our mental health. So, let's be gentle with ourselves and with each other, allowing ourselves and others to find their own pace as we re-emerge into life after lockdown.

For many others the prospect of coming out of lockdown, when debate is still live about the science supporting it, can be a real worry. This may especially apply to those more vulnerable to the virus and those of us with mental health concerns. This is a time to lean into each other and into God, to hold each other both in prayer and in practical ways.

What are the mental health challenges, and what can we do?

We should be prepared for the fact that the end of lockdown might be as hard for us as the start was. Just as it took us time to find ways of coping during lockdown, we should also expect that it will take time to find our way back, and to fully reconnect with life. Things may not be the same as they were before. Many have lost loved ones, jobs, homes, confidence, a sense of purpose, the list goes on. It is a vulnerable season for many of us and a time for us to really remember Jesus' command to *love each other as he loves us*.

We need to be proactive in forging out our routines, staying connected, eating well, and taking exercise just as much now as we did at the start of lockdown. I would argue even more so as we remain in a period of high stress, but with more demands on us. Because our situations are unique to us, it is vital to try not to compare or judge ourselves harshly based on what other people are doing. Every one of us is facing some uncertainty and challenge – and we have no choice but to move through it as best we can in God's hands and with our own coping mechanisms.

Fear and anxiety are possibly the most common emotional responses any of us will feel as we approach the ending of lockdown. Getting ourselves through it (and the many challenges that it brought) took a lot of our mental and emotional energy. We may have found a place where we could cope, strategies that helped us to survive and that we don't want to leave behind just yet.

That's okay and an absolutely normal response, we just need to take it slowly and ask for help if it feels more than we can bare. Talk to people you trust – it's important to talk about how you feel. Don't dismiss your concerns or judge yourself too harshly. Vulnerability isn't something to be ashamed of, it's something to share with others who love and care for us. When we're real with our vulnerabilities it gives others the space to do the same.

It's important to acknowledge that these feelings are reasonable, and to expect them. It's only by building up tolerance gently that we can move through these fears; always remembering that in our weakness He who calls us is strong. Reciting **2 Timothy 1:7** quietly to myself is really helping to restore my peace during these uncertain times. It reminds me that our beautiful God is a God of Hope and tells us, ***'For he has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.'*** NKJV

If possible, take things at your own speed – but try to challenge yourself to try something different each day or at least every couple of days. Build up tolerance and don't beat yourself up if it doesn't go well, but keep at it. It's very easy to allow the seclusion that was necessary in lockdown to become deliberate isolation as lockdown ends. Don't forget to celebrate small wins (and big wins) and try and keep a note of what you are achieving. That way on the harder days you have a written reminder of how far you've come and how well you're doing.

Remind yourself of things that are still certain and bring them back into focus – whilst a lot of things are uncertain at the moment, there are also things to be hopeful about. Keep a gratitude journal and try to record and appreciate good things as they happen. Don't forget to take opportunities to reset and relax.

Control what can be controlled – there are a lot of things we can't control that cause us fear and anxiety – but there are some things we can manage or plan for. Having an action plan for managing things we might find difficult can help.

We need to pace ourselves – recognising that we need to go at the right pace for us is important. Don't let others, or situations, push or pressure you into doing things you don't want to. That said, try not to let that be an excuse not to push yourself at all. This is especially true when it comes to reconnecting with family and friends safely.

It can be hard to let others move forward without you – maybe your partner or child wants to see friends or needs to return to work, but you can't. It's important to discuss concerns with those close to you, but also to allow other people space to move at their own tempo. Most importantly remind yourself and others, often, that we are not alone and that we are loved more than we could ever imagine by our beautiful Father God and that He remains the same yesterday, today and always.

Rev Michelle

**JESUS DID NOT SAY
THAT THE WHOLE
WORLD SHOULD GO
TO CHURCH, BUT HE
DID SAY THAT THE
CHURCH SHOULD
GO TO THE WHOLE
WORLD.**

- GREG LAURIE

Mothers Union

As I am writing this the east wind and rain are battering the windows of my house facing the sea. I have been on the beach with Ember (my black labrador) and we both returned home very wet. In a normal year it would be early summer, the weather would be pleasantly mild and if it rained it would only be a shower. This year we are still awaiting release from the varying levels of lockdown and still not sure of when we will be able to meet as MU again. It will hopefully happen before too long.

The following prayer is usually for Indoor Members. I suddenly realised that is what we all are at the moment. So we can pray for all our members, including MU members who can go out shopping and who are gradually becoming able to go out more.

Loving Heavenly Father Lord of the World

You know the secret thoughts of every heart and hear the prayers of all.

You have chosen us to work for you and be as one in prayer.

Guide us in our prayerful task and strengthen us to do your will.

Uphold us in our weakness and our doubt that those for whom we intercede may truly come to know your healing peace and love.

We ask in Jesus name, Your only Son our Lord

Amen

Please remember to pray for those members who are unwell and receiving treatments. We pray for our church, for St Aidan's and St Luke's. We pray for all our clergy, church wardens, PCC and the many others who tirelessly continue the work behind the scenes. We thank all those who have been caring for our members through phone calls, socially distanced visits, shopping, prayers and many other kindnesses.

God Bless

Ann Courtenay

Congratulations to Rev Clive Hall

I just told my family I have just passed all my training to be a Priest. They set off a snow flake confetti bomb.



From the Home Front

Luke 12:40

"You also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect."

What does it mean 'to expect the unexpected'?

"To not be surprised by an unusual event. Anything **could** happen, and probably will."

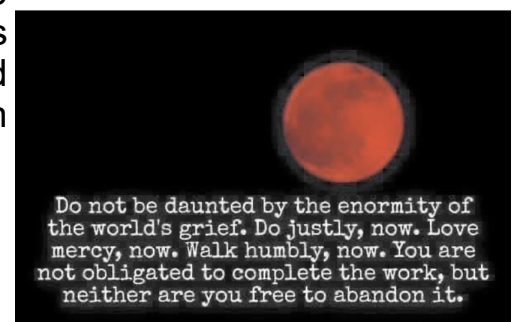
Well recently the unexpected has happened a couple of times in our road.....

As we were preparing our Friday evening dinner I glanced out of the dining room window to see a cavalcade of cars sweep into the avenue. Surprisingly I knew that it was Boris Johnston's official cars (we had been held up by same said vehicles on a journey home from Leeds Bradford Airport). It halted and out stepped the Prime Minister, followed by the Mayor of Teesside and the Tory candidate and a large number of security personnel. They proceeded to speak to all the neighbours and ourselves. We managed not to be phased and to ask questions and challenge the PM on things we were concerned about – unfortunately he couldn't give us any answers!! He just moved on



The next week as I finished Sunday dinner I looked out of the window to see a mallard duck waddling down the road, cross over the road and waddle back across our lawns (same route as Boris – but no entourage!). I went out to give it some bird seed and we eyeballed each other for a few minutes, then he flew off. He didn't answer any questions either. I later discovered he had lost the drake standoff in my next door neighbour's garden, as he attempted to woo away the female duck from her existing mate. (the pair of ducks had made themselves at home on my neighbour's pond a couple of weeks earlier)

We have all endured over a year of totally unexpected events – a pandemic, lockdown, isolation, loss of freedom, overwhelming anxiety, health and financial concerns, loss of loved ones – the list is endless. For many of us it has meant we have had to turn to God in a way we had never expected to – and He has been there and answered our prayers. He has met us in our needs and loved us and enabled us to find new ways to support each other within and outside of the church family. We have not been abandoned or ignored. He has answered the questions voiced in our hearts and held our hands, wrapped us in His embrace or just been there..... as He was, is and always has been. **J.A.R.**



Nana Jean Retires May 2021

Presentation from Norman on behalf of the church and the Asylum Seeker community to Nana Jean



Five years ago Jean Waller met Azam, Negar and Nilou who had arrived at Stranton Church and were seeking asylum in the UK. She took them into her heart and felt God nudge her into working with asylum seekers who were newly arrived in Hartlepool and looking for care, compassion and help to make their way in a new country after persecution in their home countries, plus often enduring unimaginable hardships to get here.

She and Azam stuck together wading through officialdom and learning how to deal with the local authority departments, housing associations, utilities, Department of Works and Pensions, Jobcentres, Immigration Department paperwork and officials, other support agencies and immigration interviews and appeals.

Jean has given sacrificially of her time, energy and resources over the years. She has drawn in members of the church, Food Bank, friends and neighbours to help meet needs as they arose.

Jean has been bowled over by the ongoing generosity and support of members of the church over the years. She has collected, sorted and distributed car-boots and house clearances loaded with of every imaginable household requirement. She has thoughtfully matched possessions to the tastes and styles of individuals and families. She has met the needs of so many young people and families, often battling illness to ensure their needs were met. Jean even ended up being a birth partner to one young mum!

Nana Jean will now have time to socialise with 'her families' enjoying their company and becoming a special member of their family lives as they settle into new homes.

She has helped in so many lives over the last five years, she has offered love and comfort and been the trustworthy 'Nana' they could turn to whatever their problem, day or night!

She has had her work recognised with a civic award. However it is with grateful thanks from Stranton Church - Clergy and Community – and all the asylum seekers and refugees who have benefitted from her gentle compassion and steely determination 'to do right by them' over the years, that we all say -

Happy Retirement Nana Jean and God Bless You.



INTERNATIONAL WORKER'S MEMORIAL DAY 2021

April 28th is the date set apart for this day. So on Wednesday morning 28th April Reverend Clive Hall attended the College of Further Education. There he laid a wreath by the Tree of Remembrance. Two other wreaths were also laid there by Darren Hankey, Principal of the College and John Brookes, NASUWT, on behalf of HTUC ('on behalf of all workers'). In attendance was Edwin Jeffries, President Hartlepool T.U.C. Clive then said a prayer and a blessing for the day and for the people who will have been affected by this day

This day is to remember all those who die at work, which is more in a year than is caused by wars in the world. There is a theme of **Remember the dead: Fight for the living**. This day will be about remembrance but the organisations who get involved are also working towards much better Health and Safety at work, to keep all workers safe.

This day of remembrance is a worldwide event and there will be lots of different events happening throughout the day. Here in Hartlepool there was a wreath laying at the Workers Memorial, Church Square. Here a number of dignitaries and also a bereaved family will all lay wreaths, there will also be a blessing of the day and of the Workers Memorial by Revd Roz Hall.

I personally worked in a factory where the Health and Safety aspect of the job was not taken seriously. It was down to the workers and the unions to make their voices heard to create safer working environments. So I was moved and felt privileged to represent workers and the Church at this ceremony today.

Reverend Clive Hall.



Anzac Day Memories



I am a little bit late for this year with this one (April 25th Anzac Day). I note from the Shields Gazette that there will be a virtual ANZAC Day ceremony this year. When we were in Oz in 2017 we went to the Service and Parade at Wolumla a settlement just south of Bega (where our family live). Very moving service; I think they put a lot more into ANZAC than we seem to do for Remembrance Day. Lovely piccie which I took of two wrinklies reminiscing; the lady was wearing her dad's medals, he was in

Bomber Command and she had only recently been made aware of that fact - he kept it very quiet from his family.

Jeff Parsons

Last year we were in New Zealand in full lockdown for Anzac Day which is equivalent to our Remembrance Day. There were to be no gatherings to commemorate this special day, but all householders were asked to go to their front gates and observe a minute's silence at 6am! Well that was okay, except April 25th is late Autumn in New Zealand consequently 6am is still dark and we were on a farmstead not in a town, so with no street lights it was very dark! Plus the day in question was very foggy and at that time of day zero degrees centigrade. We may have all been very respectful, but by the time we had walked down to the road end, in the foggy, cold, dark morning it was a very lonely and desolate experience. But it certainly made us relate to those brave servicemen and women experiencing the horrors of warfare...

J.A.R.



Can you see us outside? We couldn't even see each other!

John Simpson- Kirkpatrick

The Man with the Donkey

“ANZAC” Is not merely about loss, it is about courage, and duty, and love of country, and mateship and good humour. And the survival of a sense of self worth and decency in the face of dreadful odds. (Sir William Deane. Gov. General of Australia ANZAC Day 1999).

One of Australia’s most famous “sons” is John Simpson – the man with the donkey. Numerous stories and legends have grown up over the years since his exploits and subsequent death at Gallipoli in May 1915.

His story is one of bravery, some might say foolhardiness in refusing to obey orders, in the face of enemy fire as he strove to bring his wounded comrades from the battlefield to safety, on the shores of Anzac Cove. These efforts brought no reward save Mentions in Despatches, despite the efforts of a number of groups and individuals over many years.

John Simpson Kirkpatrick was born in South Shields Co Durham on 6th July 1892 the son of a merchant seaman Robert Kirkpatrick and his wife Sarah. Robert died from a crippling accident in 1909 leaving John to support his mother and sister.

John worked as a milk roundsman in South Shields, which of course in those days meant he was used to handling horses and in the summer months is reputed to have helped with the donkeys on the sands at South Shields.

In order to provide a better life for his mother and sister he followed his father into the merchant navy, sailing first on the SS Heighington and then the SS Yeddo. It was from the latter, due to the allegedly appalling conditions that John and thirteen of his shipmates jumped ship in Newcastle NSW, a serious crime for a merchant seaman.

For the next few years he took a number of jobs around Australia including working on coastal vessels. He was by this time getting homesick, although he regularly sent letters and money home to his mother. In 1914 he once again jumped ship in Fremantle, looking for a way to return to England, only to discover that Britain was now at war with Germany.

Seeing a chance to return home he enlisted with the Australian forces under the name of John Simpson thinking that he would not be traced as a former deserter. He joined the C Bearer Section 3rd Field Ambulance Unit and was sent on a rigorous training stint in the bush country outside Perth. He was anticipating being sent to Aldershot for further training, from where it would be a relatively easy matter to get home to Shields. His plans to return home to England however took a bad turn, as by the time his ship had reached Egypt, Turkey had entered the war on the side of Germany and troops were being trained and diverted with the aim of a landing at Gallipoli.

The ANZAC troops were put ashore some 2 kilometres from the intended position in hostile terrain with dense undergrowth and sheer cliffs rising above them, and with the Turks sitting comfortably on the plateau above firing down on them.

The operation of rescuing the wounded was hampered by a lack of stretcher bearers and so Simpson commandeered a stray donkey and set to work to rescue the wounded.

In the face of severe odds and sometimes against orders he continued his rescue operations for three and a half weeks with a number of different donkeys until on the morning of 19th May he was hit by a sniper’s bullet. He was 22 years old. They buried him at Hell Spit and subsequently remembered him with a headstone at the Beach Cemetery in Anzac Cove.

A number of attempts over the years have been made to officially recognise his exploits with a posthumous decoration but to date with no success.

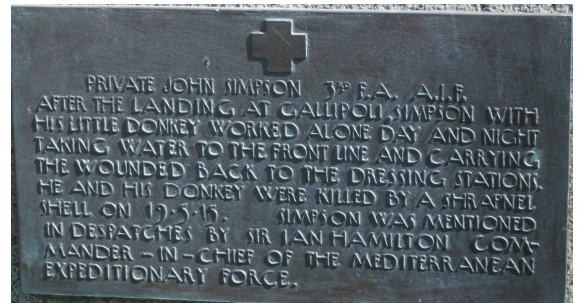
He is commemorated in the grounds of the National Shrine of Remembrance in

Melbourne , the National War Memorial in Canberra and with some interesting tree sculptures on the promenade at Lakes Entrance in Southern Victoria and also a statue in King Street South Shields.



National Shrine of Remembrance Melbourne

National Shrine of Remembrance Melbourne



Tree Sculpture, Lakes Entrance Victoria "Simpson helping a wounded soldier to where his donkey and another patient waits" Carved by John Brady 1998. King Street South Shields



Jeff Parsons © November 2020 A Moving Finger Publication

News of David Wilson in New Zealand

Mum Debbie Wilson (who went for ordination from Stranton and was curate at St Luke's) sent this message via Facebook:

very proud parent moment today. Many prayers and blessings for [David Wilson](#). Lovely service in a wonderful school.



Hereworth School

20 h · 🌐



This morning in St James' Chapel, Hereworth School held the Service of Installation for Mr David Wilson as Chaplain.



David with his Mum and Dad

David starts his first teaching job, which is a live in post, at Hereworth School, Hawke's Bay, North Island. It is an Anglican boarding and day school for primary age boys, where David is teaching RE, maths and science and is also chaplain.

Online Sunday Club News!

Thank you to everyone who is watching and enjoying our videos so far. Our weekly videos will continue until the end of August and new ones will be available every Sunday at 2pm. All of the previous videos are still available to watch on our website or Facebook page.

What's coming up:

6th June – A Good Heart

This week we will be looking at the start of the story of David and how he was chosen by God for his good heart.

13th June – David and Goliath

This week we will be looking at the story of David and Goliath and thinking about how no matter our size we can do incredible and amazing things if we trust God.

20th June – King David

This week will be our final look at David and how he finally became king as God intended.

27th June – The Wise King

This week will look at David's son Solomon who was a wise king who praised God.

4th July – God Watches Over the Elijah

This week we will look at the prophet Elijah and how God protects and watches over him.

Enjoy,

Kate

Stranton Sunday Club Leader

Second Jab Quiz

- S** Which **S** encountered Jesus on the road to Jericho?
- E** Which **E** was a cousin to Mary?
- C** Which **C** a King of England is a saint?
- O** Which **O** was a daughter in law of Naomi?
- N** Which **N** was vineyard owner?
- D** What **D** caused a brook to dry up?

- J** Which **J** travelled to Nineveh?
- A** Which **A** was married to Jezebel?
- B** What type of **B** loaves were used in the Feeding of the 5,000?

PCC Burbank Report April 2021

Burbank Church – Since the closure of Burbank Church I have continued to keep in contact with all the members mainly through phone calls. I continue to distribute the Signpost magazine and Word for Today magazine to various people. Two things which still need to be done are 1) Remove the name of Burbank Church from publicity and webpages. 2) Plan a final closure celebration for the church members. I would like to say here, I have been enjoying taking part in the Stranton and St Luke's services in church, it is great to be having fellowship together again.

Ward Jackson School – This term I will be leading worship on line. I am going in to class to talk about 'How does the Holy Spirit help Christians?' in a few weeks' time. I have also re-started meeting with parents at the school gate. I had an interesting talk with someone who is getting married in July and had not heard of the new changes being made by the government on weddings procedures. I had attended a Webinar with over 2,000 people about these new procedures that very morning. The man who was hosting it said we have had over 600 questions sent in on line, and would not get through them all that day!!

Bridge Builders – Burbank Community Centre has restarted its food service that was running from the centre in the first lock down. So it is not available to hire, nor are we allowed to open during lockdown. So we are still uncertain of its future right now.

YF. We have been running YF on Zoom for a few months now. We are doing a fortnightly meeting for an hour on a Sunday at 7:00pm. We have been teaching on the Easter theme with the youngsters. We have got a favourite game called 'Among us' which is played on your phone and you have discussions on Zoom during the game. We are planning our first outdoor meeting on 23rd May after doing a new Risk Assessment and being Covid compliant.

Explorers Camp – The camp will not happen this year.

Personal – My IME training is going well, my next training is on Canon Law. An important day is coming up, on the 10th May at 4:15pm, I meet with Bishop Sarah on Zoom. She will inform me of what the independent advisor conclusion is from all my references, and share what her thoughts are, and a discussion on what my future will look like from that point onwards. So I would appreciate your prayers for that day.

Regards

Rev Clive Hall

Second Jab Quiz Answers

S	Which S encountered Jesus on the road to Jericho?	Saul
E	Which E was a cousin to Mary?	Elizabeth
C	Which C a King of England is a saint?	The Confessor (Edward)
O	Which O was a daughter in law of Naomi?	Oprah
N	Which N was vineyard owner?	Naboth
D	What D caused a brook to dry up?	Drought
J	Which J travelled to Nineveh?	Jonah
A	Which A was married to Jezebel?	Ahab
B	What type of B loaves were used in the Feeding of the 5,000?	Barley

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Exciting News – Sunday Club is back!

I am very excited to let you know that Sunday Club will be returning on the 6th June! We will be running sessions on a fortnightly basis. Please see when our sessions will run in June/July:

6th June

20th June

4th July

18th July

Sunday Club Important Information

We have a risk assessment in place which will be reviewed as government guidance changes. The following measures have been put in place to ensure we have a safe, healthy and fun Sunday club:-

1. The Sunday club is for children aged 5-11. Unfortunately, due to government guidance younger children will be unable to attend.
2. Hand sanitiser will be available when the children arrive and leave the Sunday club session.
3. The children will go the Sunday club room (the Fulthorpe Chapel) as soon as they arrive at church, where colouring will be available as they wait for the session to begin.
4. The children will sit in space bubbles that are two metres apart. These are marked in masking tape on the floor. Siblings may sit in special double spaces together.
5. Children will be provided with individual craft boxes that will be labelled as theirs and be provided at every session they attend.
6. All paper resources provided will be quarantined for at least 48 hours before use. All materials used will need to be taken home at the end of the session.
7. The children will have access to a toilet if needed, which will be cleaned before and after use. They will also be accompanied by a leader and soap and paper towels will be available.
8. When the children leave they will return to their parents before the end of the service following the leader's guidance.

Here is the children's version of our rules:-

1. Use hand sanitiser to clean your hands.
2. Stay in your space bubble that is marked on the floor.
3. Raise your hand if you need anything.
4. Listen to the leaders.
5. If you need the toilet, ask a leader.
6. Make sure that you take home everything as asked.

Have fun! 😊

If you have any queries or questions, please contact the church to discuss the measures in place.

Thanks,

Kate

Stranton Sunday Club Leader

MAKE STRANTON BELLS FIT FOR THE FUTURE

Many readers, their children and, possibly, grandchildren plus friends and other relatives will have married at Stranton Church and enjoyed the bells celebrating the marriage as they entered and left the church. It is also good to hear the bells ring out for Sunday services to attract worshippers, and for other occasions including civic services.

Stranton has had bells since around 1600. In 1908 the original 3 were increased to the 8 bells that you will hear today. Very little has been done to the bells or their fittings in the 110 years since they were installed and they have become increasingly difficult to ring. The church has had the bells surveyed by two world renowned bell companies and the surveyors concluded that if nothing is done very soon, they will become increasingly unringable, until they will be heard no more in only a few years. A picture of some of the tower bells is here



The PCC has agreed that something must be done now to make the bells ring better, sound better, and need little maintenance for at least another 100 years. The PCC and the Hartlepool Bell Ringers want to continue to hear bells rung at Stranton as they form an important element in the life of the church as well as adding to the cultural background of Hartlepool. John Pladdys, who now lives in Cornwall, but rings at Stranton whenever he can, was born and grew up in Stranton. He was taught to ring by Ken Lawson,

the Tower Captain of the day, over 60 years ago. John has made a significant donation towards having the bells refurbished as he is very keen that future generations can have as much enjoyment from them as he has done.

To have all the work carried out to the degree that is necessary for a long life, will cost in excess of £70,000 even with Hartlepool's bellringers offering their labour free of charge to assist the company; Taylor's of Loughborough.

We are working very hard to raise the funds and have already had some private donations. We are starting to apply for grants from charitable trusts. But there is still a huge amount left to raise. If you or your family agree how important it is to continue hearing the bells ring from Stranton Church then we would welcome any donation that you feel able to make. You could sponsor a bell and have a dedication written on its headstock that would be present for over a century for future generations to see. There is an example image at the foot of this article. All donations would be made to the PCC and could attract gift aid. No matter how small your contribution, you would be helping to keep the bells ringing. Should you or your family think you might like to sponsor a bell, please contact Andrew Frost on Tel: 01429 281767 or email: ag.frost@ntlworld.com for further details.

We expect the work will take around 4 months but cannot start until we are up to our target. We pray that you will find it in your hearts to donate towards this worthy cause so that future generations can hear Stranton's bells for their own weddings or when attending Sunday services. Want to make a donation?

Electronic Transfer to: a/c number 10146501 sort code 20-82-18 Account Name:

“Stranton Parochial Church Council”. In the reference please put “Bells” and your name for possible gift aid.

By Cheque to David Craig, Treasurer PCC made payable to “Stranton Parochial Church Council” and enclose a note saying that it is for the bells. Send to: 57 Claremont Drive, Hartlepool, TS26 9PE or hand to David in church and tell him it is for the Bells. David will ask if you want to complete a gift aid form.

Andrew Frost
Hartlepool Bellringers



Example of sponsored bell with dedication



4th Hartlepool Boys Brigade St Matthew's - Expanded Activities



Our headquarters St Matthew's Community Centre now has a running track and this gives our Company a greater choice in the Summer(?) Programme.

Our activities have included Smite (an old English game), sprinting, relays, basketball, dodgeball, corn hole (an American game), putting, football and hockey and no doubt we will find more!

You can see videos of the sprinting on our Facebook page.

In the longer term ie after June 21st, we will start to look at events such as an Open Night and a Fayre, as things move on from the pandemic restrictions. Plus we will restock in uniforms as we relaunch in September.

New Starters - we have room for new starters especially in the Anchor Boys (for 6 – 8 year olds)

If you would like to know any more about our Company check us out on our Facebook page.

George Bainbridge

Birds of a Feather

One day last month I was looking out of my kitchen window after topping up my bird feeders, when I spotted a starling doing something unusual. She was tugging away at a small lavender bush that I hadn't cut back as we were still getting night frosts. I first thought that she was taking the old stems from last year's blooms to incorporate into her nest. She wasn't. It was the foliage she wanted. Firstly pulling it away, then dropping it until a nice neat pile was formed and then taking a large beak full and flying off. I was puzzled and wondered what the reason for this behaviour was? Then I twigged that this clever bird was lining her nest with an insect deterrent, to keep lice etc at bay. The scent of the lavender that we use to keep our homes smelling nice, was used in the past to deter flies and is still used today in sprays and polishes. Clever bird!



A few days later on the beach I saw some house martins collecting sand and again using their beaks to carry it off. They mix the sand with mud to build their nests in the eaves, nooks and crannies of our homes. I am now waiting for my swifts to arrive from Africa. My old house has been a swift haven for years and years and it is really summer once they arrive.



I marvel at the birds of the air, their beauty and their skills and thank our Lord for the lessons he can teach us through time spent observing them.

Ann Courtenay

Alphabet of Gardening tips

I was given a little book of gardening tips “Green fingers and dirty nails”, when I was in New Zealand, which I thought I would share with you over the months - J.A.R.

G

Garlic is a general insect repellent. Grow it near carrots, roses and tomatoes – but not near beans, peas or strawberries.

Preserve garlic by peeling and placing cloves in a jar and cover with olive oil.

Garden tools need to be kept clean – rub them with rhubarb leaves.

Grass clippings soaked in a bucket of water and left to ferment are really good as a tomato feed.

Plant your gladioli deep – 18-20 cm, and you won't have to lift and divide every year as only a few of the myriad baby corms are able to grow

Gladioli will flower approximately 90 days after planting.

Gerberas love cold tea.



Dates and services:

Through June our Sunday Services will continue at

9.00am Holy Communion

11.00am Morning Worship (Communion on 6th and 20th June)

9.30am Weekday Holy Communion continues at St Luke's

6th June Sunday Club also restarts Fortnightly

21st June the country moves to 'Roadmap 4'

Sunday 27th Covid restrictions will remain in place, although they will be reviewed for June as the country moves into 'Roadmap 4'

If you are interested in a baptism or a wedding now that restrictions are easing please contact the church office.



Questions!

How often do you question God?

When you are in the company of little children they never stop asking “why?”

Why is the sky blue?

Why do we have belly buttons?

Why can't I have the whole packet of biscuits ??

God loves it when we come to Him and talk with Him.

He loves it when we ask Him questions.

I've started to ask Him questions like

What does this mean?

What are you trying to say to me in this situation?

What do you want to talk to me about today?

This morning I had a picture of me talking with Jesus and me asking “So what do you want to do with the time we have together?” His reply “Just enjoy my company”.

I loved the answer he gave, it made me relax and not strive!

The devil gets to us by asking us questions and usually it's “Was that really God speaking to you or was it just your own thoughts?”.

The devil started asking questions in the Garden of Eden “Did God really say you can't eat from that tree?”.

God is for you Roman 8:3 He wants the best for you,

He wants to speak to you and tell you many wonderful things, so don't let the devil put doubts in your mind and steal your intimacy with Him.

Keep asking Him and listen for His reply!

Ang Hall

Words for the Church

Clergy have been encouraging members of the congregation who feel that God has given words or pictures, to share these in Church for all to hear. This is a really nerve-racking experience for many - their hearts race, they may shake or doubt themselves. But with encouragement, and often confirmation by the words of others, more are now speaking out. Here we share some of those words – they may be spoken to speak directly into **your** life or situation.....

May 2nd 2021

A - A word from 1 John. We need to walk in light and fellowship with each other. When Moses returned from being in God's presence, his face shone so bright his face had to be veiled.

The world is a dark place at the moment, but we do not need to fear the darkness. We can spend time with God, listen and hear God's word, then act – What would have happened if Philip had not acted on God's prompting and spoken to the Ethiopian in his chariot?

So listen to His voice, listen to His prompting and act when He has spoken. We can change lives too! **Be the light, be shining bright and change lives.**

M(with a racing heart) - The Holy spirit speaks but there is often a spirit of control, a fear of responsibility if we act in Him. **But in Jesus Christ we are free.** So we ask for Him to prompt us and convict us to move with You Lord.

L (unsure until **A** spoke confirmation) – when Moses came down with his face shining people were afraid so he had to be veiled. When Jesus came down from the mount transfigured and shining people ran towards Him, they were not afraid. Moses represented 'the Law', but Jesus Christ represented Grace.

We need to be like Jesus, to shine like God and invite people in...

J* – The words from Jeremiah 29:11 – For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.

There was a picture of a window with a rusty key in it (the key was shiny when it went into the lock). God will not turn the key.

If you have any fears about standing up for your faith and Christ, you have to turn the key. Let Jesus in, life will never be the same ... Fears and anxieties will be different. The Lord will uphold you and provide a way through. He will always be with you until His plans and purposes in your life are fulfilled – if **you** will allow Him.

J – God was saying – **'Hold out your hand and put it in mine. I love you. Trust in me. I am holding your hand.'**



No one notices when
the strong one is tired of
being strong. I wasn't
myself for months and
nobody noticed.

CELEBRATE!

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

to

June

Peter Anderson
Paul Anderson
Riley Bruce
Emma Craig
Tim Craig
Millie Dobbin
Mike Dodds
Bill Greenwood
Pam Harkness
Simon Jennett
Tim Jennett
Tyler Lithgo
Doug Macaskill
Kelly Spoors
Ramona Thornhill
Kevin Tones
Pat Vaughan
Stan Vaughan



**Congratulations
on your Wedding Anniversary**

Ann & Andy Cuthbert

**Best wishes to Jean Waller
On her retirement as
Pastoral Worker to the
Asylum Seekers and refugees in Hartlepool**

**Congratulations to Andrew McAllister
on his selection to train for the Ministry**

**Congratulations to Paul Anderson on
his new job with Food Bank**

**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.

Who's Who

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

Vicar

Revd Norman Shave 34A Westbourne Road 233609
E-Mail: nshave1@btinternet.com

Curate

Revd Michelle Delves 40 Browning Avenue 723461

Burbank Community Church Worker & Curate

Revd Clive Hall 10 Clarkson Court 278504

Readers

Mary Tones 40a Blakelock Road 265625

Churches Together in Hartlepool

Secretary Susan Atkinson,
St Mary's RC

Church Wardens	Peter Anderson 22 Thetford Road 871266 Angela Craig 57 Claremont Drive 234279
Music Group	Julie Shave 34A Westbourne Road 233609
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	Peter Anderson 22 Thetford Road 871266
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.

