

Stranton and Burbank Community Church

SIGNPOST



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

October 2021

One of the best things for me about living in Hartlepool is being within walking distance of the beach. And one of my favourite things about the beach in this part of the world is the sea glass that's washed up on the sand and sparkles in the sunlight. It's pretty to collect but it is also a picture of life with God.

The glass came to be in the sea (so I am told by native North-Easterners!) because it was dumped from the glass and bottle works at Seaham and Sunderland. It was essentially rubbish – the reject bits that were no good for glass making.

Yet over the years of being tossed and turned in the waves, the unwanted glass becomes treasure, sought out by children, artists, and collectors. The rough edges are smoothed out by the sea. The re-named 'sea glass' is repurposed to make all sorts of beautiful things like jewellery or, in my case, wedding table decorations!

This is a great analogy for what happens when we open ourselves up to God. When we offer him our 'rubbish' and let him repurpose it in his kingdom. In fact we might find that it is these parts of us that we thought were most rubbish and useless – whether that's sadness, grief, disappointment, anger – that turn out to be the things that God uses to show himself to us.

It reminds me of the story of Jesus healing the man born blind in John 9. When asked by his disciples "who sinned: this man or his parents, causing him to be born blind?", Jesus responds "you're asking the wrong question. You're looking for someone to blame. There is no such cause-effect here. Look instead for what God can do." *[Message translation]* The man's physical impairment becomes the means of a revelation of the power and mercy of God in Jesus.

Later on in the story, it is the Pharisees who are questioning the healed man as they try to find reason to condemn Jesus as a sinner. As the discussion becomes heated, the man puts the matter strikingly simply by saying "I know one thing for sure: I was blind...I now see".

The whole story is, on one level, an illustration of how true sight is being able to recognise where God is at work in a dark world in which people are groping around for light, often by asking the wrong questions. The man born blind readily receives his sight, physically and spiritually, while the Pharisees remain stuck in their narrow understanding of how they think God works. They are not open to receiving Jesus' sight and revelation.

Back to sea glass: many of us probably feel tossed and turned in the waves of the past 18 months. What bits of 'rubbish' has God used to teach you something more of himself during the time in the rough waters? How have you experienced His power and mercy by opening yourself up to Him? I wonder if there are aspects of your life that are now being 'washed up' as sea glass, having been smoothed out ready for repurposing?

We could ask these questions of our church and community, too. As we move forward this autumn, let's commit ourselves to being like the man born blind, whose faith enabled him to see and experience God's light in the darkness. And let's look for and celebrate in each other the beautiful bits of sea glass, testimonies of God's unending love, glory and hope.

Rachel Price

Mothers Union

It was lovely to be able to restart our Mothers Union meetings after a break of eighteen months! We are now in the Small Hall at St Matthew's Community Centre in Elwick Road to maintain the social distancing required by Covid rules. Our session started with a simple meeting and then we were able to have a time of catching up over refreshments. We missed those MU members unable to join with us and hope to see them soon.

Our next meeting is on Monday 4th October at 1:30pm, and Jo Leslie will join us to tell us about the Communities of Hope project in our church and in the surrounding area.

I am hoping to have the Christmas Lunch information from the Marine Hotel so we can decide on our Christmas meal. We'll still have our normal Christmas Meeting on Monday 6th December and then go to the Marine on 13th December.

Our annual subscription to MU remains at £18 so we will sort that out at the next meeting.

Please let me have any orders for Christmas cards, diaries and calendars asap, as they go quite quickly but I have still got some catalogues.

2021 theme for Mothers Union is 'Rebuilding hope and confidence'. In the Durham Diocese Summer Newsround our President, Kathleen Wilson, finishes her letter to us referring to this: "Let your living water flow over my soul. Let your Holy Spirit come and take control."

Let's take these words into our hearts as we hopefully return to some sort of normal life again. May we remember those who are still finding it difficult to venture back to re-joining meeting friends again. Let's pray that we can still keep in touch and support them.

Hope to see you on the 4th October.

God Bless
Ann Courtenay

From the Home Front

I have been following Mother Gemma's build up to emigration with all its ups and downs, her departure, journey and arrival in Australia. Following on to her 14 day Sydney hotel quarantine, release and now 14 day isolation in her final destination Perth, after meeting up at long last with Craig, her soon to be husband. Her Facebook posts and then blog have made for an interesting and thought provoking read....

A link from her thoughts to UCB readings on patience and trust have resonated with me. Two things: Be careful what you pray, for then be prepared for God to engineer situations in order to answer that prayer!

My patience level is very variable – just ask my family! However God has it as a work in progress... He keeps giving me things to test and extend my patience. Having the family living back with us is very testing at times. After eighteen months of our own company rattling around in our house doing as we want, when we want, the infliction of routines of meals, bath and bedtimes and school runs, plus constant playing and entertainment and a house with wall to wall toys and 'stuff', has required a great deal of adjustment and patience – it is not an easy journey! Also the large dog rampaging around the garden and two boys playing football all bent on flattening as many of the carefully nurtured plants and shrubs as possible – my teeth have never been as gritted in order to bear the devastation!!

I am having to learn to be calm and trusting in the God of the Impossible – who would know that nursery hours are not transferrable from Scotland to England and have to be applied for; and there is a deadline, which was passed before we even knew it existed!!! God sorted that in a week thankfully. Now with a house sale looking as if it has fallen through and a house purchase hanging in the balance, we are back to trusting in God because we can do nothing in our strength, prayer and praise being the primary resource.

We wait now giving thanks for all He does, trusting and being grateful for His grace and mercy...

J.A.R.

Rev David Webster



23rd August 2021

it is with great sadness this week that we record the death of Rev David Webster, following a long illness.

During the last few years of his life, it amazed David that he ended up living in a bungalow, on Blakelock Road, yards away from the place where he had spent a very happy childhood as a boy with his family in the houses and grounds that had once made up the estate of Brantford.

The big house at Brantford was built on the site where Hartlepool Sixth Form College now stands. The house had originally belonged to the Withy family who had made their fortune through ship-building. Unfortunately, the sons of the Withy family had been killed during the Great War and the big house was left empty. David's grandfather, Albert Webster had been the gardener and lived in one of the cottages in the grounds. Through his enterprise, he bought the land, sold some of it for development, demolished the old house and turned the grounds into a market garden; keeping the cottages as homes for family members. This became a beloved home and playground to his children and in turn for their children, including David and Geoffrey.

David's father, Robert Webster, known as Bob, worked in the Custom's House on the docks. His family, including his father, Albert, the gardener, always worshipped at All Saints Stranton, where Albert was a churchwarden for many years. They were also a family of enthusiastic bell ringers. David's mother, Doris, had been brought up in the high church tradition. Her father, Archibald Brown, was the vicar at nearby Heselden and Doris had been taught to play the organ from an early age.

Although David was baptised in All Saint's Stranton, he, Geoffrey and their mother attended St James' church, which was then on the corner of Tower St. The vicar at the time was John Hughes, a man who had a huge influence on David and who fostered his vocation to the priesthood. David became fully immersed in parish life as a young person, joining the team of servers, singing in the choir, and playing the organ for children's services. It was after a Sunday morning service at St James, that David remembered cycling home with his mother, arriving just in time to hear the news on the wireless that Britain was once more at war with Germany. He later recalled, that his first reaction was to go outside, into the garden, and look up at the sky to see if he could spot the German planes.

Like many children in Hartlepool, David and Geoffrey, were evacuated. They went with their mother to live in the Yorkshire Dales, in a remote village called West Scafton. Although school life as an evacuee left a lot to be desired, David retained a fondness for the Dales and it was an area he would often return to as a vicar, with church youth groups – many of whom now have fond memories of times spent at Marrick Priory near Reeth. It was during the time of their evacuation that David first had piano lessons with his mother. From being a small boy, David had always loved hearing music on the wireless, but learning to play the piano was the beginning of a lifelong passion for playing and participating in musical events.

As a keen pupil at Hartlepool Grammar School for Boys...back once more on Blakelock Road... he developed his interest in music, playing the French horn in the school orchestra, singing in the choir and attending many classical concerts and recitals with school friends.

One memorable event for David, was hearing the Halle Orchestra play Tchaikovsky in Middlesbrough Town Hall, conducted by Sir John Barbirolli.

It was during his time in the sixth form, that David first voiced his desire to be ordained. He was accepted for training, on the understanding that he would first have to complete two years of national service.

So, after leaving school, David joined the RAF, becoming a junior technician translator and attended the Russian Course at the Joint Services School for Languages, before being posted to Hamburg - where it was his job to listen in to the conversations of Russian pilots.

Never one to waste an opportunity, once in Hamburg, David developed a love for opera and it was also here that he learnt to sail, on Lake Alster. The story as told by David goes that having gotten into a bit of trouble on hiring a sailing boat on impulse, with no past experience, he was rescued from being mowed down by a ship, by a 14-year-old boy, called Harald.

Harald had expertly come up alongside him in his own sailing boat, jumped onboard, took control of the tiller, pulled a few ropes and saved David and his boat from destruction. Harald went on to teach David how to sail and remained a lifelong friend.

On leaving the RAF, David studied theology at Selwyn College, Cambridge. As a student, David got involved with the College Chapel Choir and the Music Society and unfortunately for his exam results, neglected his New Testament Greek.

His student days were also his introduction to the Franciscan Order, through his attendance at St Benet's Church. It was a couple of years later, when he was training for the ministry at Lincoln Theological College, that he was invited by the Franciscan brother, Edward, to help run the Boy's Camp at Budle Bay in Northumberland. It was there that he first met Pat Ewen, a young parish worker from London, Stepney, who was assisting with the girls' camp. Their time at camp only overlapped by a couple of days, but it was a pivotal point in both their lives. It

led to a long-distance romance of letters and a weekly 5-minute phone call for a couple of years, as David completed his training for the ministry.

It was during their courtship, that David and Pat, together with Geoffrey and his fiancé Kathy went on holiday together, driving through the Mosel Valley in Germany in David's father's Morris minor. The boys camped in one tent, the girls in another. In Geoffrey's words, "The holiday was a hoot – from start to finish."

He remembers funny moments when the two couples grappled with their limited knowledge of the German language. In one such episode, David struggled to find the right German words to describe "cornflakes" in a grocery shop, only to be told by another customer that actually the word for Cornflakes in German is.... yes, you guessed it...Cornflakes.



It was only once David had secured a curacy at St Cuthbert's Billingham that he proposed to Pat. They were married on Pat's birthday, 7th May 1960, with John Hughes officiating, the priest who had had such an influence on David as a boy, and who was now as the Bishop of Croyden – Pat's Bishop.

As newly-weds, the couple had to lodge with parishioners for a while before they moved to Doncaster, where David served his second curacy in St George's, a church in the town centre.

Mary and Aidan were born in the curate's house in Doncaster. By the time Aby, Verity and Johnny came along, David was vicar of Christ Church, Great Lumley where the family lived for twelve years. A former miners' village, David became involved in local politics, as a way of improving local services for the community, and eventually he was elected as an Independent County Councillor.

Rare days off, consisted of taking the family along to watch him play cricket for the Durham Diocesan Cricket Team. The pinnacle of David's cricketing career was the day their team won the coveted Church Times Cup, aided by David's bowling skill. Although most of David's time was taken up by parish and council duties, he enjoyed planning family holidays. These were usually unintentionally adventurous – due to the unpredictability of the transport and the weather worthiness of the camping equipment.

The camper van would set off on holiday, filled with family and often other friends, every nook and cranny loaded to the gunnels by Pat, often with the homemade mirror sailing dingy strapped to the roof and pulling a trailer filled with camping gear behind!

Looking back, it's not surprising that many hours were spent in laybys waiting for the AA, accompanied by the horrible smell of a burnt-out fan belt.

A favourite holiday destination was the village of Hathersage in the Peak District, where David and family would stay in an old friend's house when they were away. David also enjoyed organising sailing and canal boat holidays for family and accompanying friends.

The move to Belmont came in 1976, when David was licensed as the vicar of St Mary Magdalene's Parish. As at Lumley, he took great pleasure in building up and encouraging the choir, rehearsing them thoroughly so that they could take part in the annual RSCM festivals in Durham Cathedral. He also supervised many ordinands on placement, as they underwent training for the ministry at Cramner Hall, including a very fresh-faced John Lund, who many of you will know.

At Belmont, David using a mixture of business acumen and charm, persuaded a local businessman to buy the old primary school buildings and rent them to the church. This became the Old School Centre – a wonderful resource and source of income for the parish. David's godson, Stephen Bainbridge, was roped into carrying out renovations and decorating and the Centre became a busy place for community groups and parish events, including Aby and Ian's wedding reception. Parish life in Belmont was fulfilling but extremely busy. Summer holidays were spent involving the younger members of the church in musical productions such as Greater than Gold and a Grain of Mustard Seed and later on introducing young choir member to Moreland Choir Camp – a place that many of them still remember with great fondness.

It was during this time that David's health started to suffer due to a heart arrhythmia. When things became too much, Geoffrey, a newly ordained deacon, moved to Belmont from Bedfordshire to help with ministry in the parish.

David was, of course, also assisted by Pat, who had been relicensed as a parish worker and was ordained deacon herself in 1987.

In the end, poor health forced David to retire from full-time parish ministry and a year after officiating at mine and Andrew's wedding in Belmont church, David and Pat moved to Hartlepool, into the first home they had ever owned - number 25 Eldon Grove.

Finding himself back in Hartlepool, David enjoyed being a member of several organisations in the town – notably, Hartlepool Music Society, the Art Club led by the local artist, Tom McAndrew and Hartlepool Grammar School Old Boys Association.

Following treatment at St Luke's Hospital in London, David regained some of his health and strength. Pat was ordained priest in 1994 and so they were both able to minister in and around Hartlepool Deanery, covering many vacancies, including three here at St Hilda's and generally helping out wherever they were needed.

David was particularly in demand officiating at funerals, being well-known in the town from his earlier days and having made many connections with local people. He also thoroughly enjoyed his time as choir master at Stranton church - once again, taking the opportunity to share his own love of choral music with others. Together, David and Pat made the most of their early retirement years – they undertook a chaplaincy in Menorca and covered a parish in Sydney, Australia - both for several months. They also enjoyed holidays abroad, especially on the Mediterranean islands.

At home they created a wonderful garden, growing a variety of fruit and veg in the greenhouse and vegetable beds. This became a wonderful playground for visiting grandchildren and carried on the family tradition of green-fingered creativity.

As time went on and Pat's health started to fail, David took on the household chores and cared for Pat. A man of his generation, David was not what you could call an accomplished cook, but he did his best, creating some strange but memorable dishes! However, he did become extremely adept at ironing, which he did with great enthusiasm. Eventually, family members helped David and Pat downsize, and four years ago they moved into a newly built bungalow at 4 The Laurels.

David's life had come full circle as he found himself living on Blakelock Road once again.

If David was able to speak to you himself today, I know his words would be full of wonder, gratitude and love. He always possessed a sense of wonder at God's world and the beauty of creation. He was so grateful for the opportunities that life afforded him; opportunities to serve as a priest, to be a husband, father, grandfather and great-grandfather.

And he was someone who lived and loved life to the full and was always keen to pass on that enthusiasm for life to others: whether it was through introducing them to music, to new writers, authors and areas of study, to exploring the great outdoors and all that it has to offer, or of course introducing them to the Christian faith, to his Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who remained for him the foundation stone of his life and work.

Every part of life, for David, took on the form of a wonderful adventure, brought to us in and through the grace of God our Father.

Rev Verity Brown – David's daughter

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.

N

Nasturtiums are a must in the garden. They repel aphids, protect greenhouse plants against white fly, act as a decoy for insects where cabbage, cauliflower, broccoli and Brussels sprouts grow. If allowed to grow up apple trees they control woolly aphids.

According to one gardener, burying newspapers in a trench and then planting on top has a great deal of merit. The newspaper retains moisture and gradually breakdown the soil increasing the humus content.

O

Onions planted with beetroot, cabbage, carrots, lettuce, potatoes, strawberries, tomatoes will all grow well; but do not grow them beside beans or peas.

Onions prefer light free draining soils, with well-aged stable or chicken manure. Wood ashes are something they also like so long as it is just wood ash with **no** coal.

Onion odour on your hands? – wash them with a little milk.



**"Our job is to love others,
without stopping to enquire whether or
not they are worthy;
That is not our business, and in fact is
nobody's business.**

**What we are asked to do is to love,
And this love itself will render both
ourselves,
and our neighbours worthy
If anything can."**

THOMAS MERTON (1915-1968)

Bear Ladies are having an event in the Duke of Cleveland on Saturday 9th October 2021 to support the KilimatindeTrust

Morning Family event 10am-1pm

See bear making in action
Get involved, cutting sewing, decorating, stuffing bears, naming and giving personalities.....

12pm Teddy Bear Picnic and slide show.
All ages welcome

Afternoon 2 - 4.30pm

Hear about Kilimatinde Trust and how our bears can make a difference

2pm slide show and Talk about the
Kilimatinde Trust and update from the burn unit/hospital and school
(Stephen Taylor)

3pm afternoon tea and Craft sale

4pm bear auction

Evening event 6pm - 9pm

6pm welcome with drinks and nibbles
6.30 pm short introduction - who are the Bear Ladies why do they exist?
7pm the Bear Ladies meet for what's next! (for those who have joined the group.)
Throughout the evening, browse the craft stalls meet the bear ladies
See the bears,
8pm Games including bear quiz/ bear bingo
9.15pm raffle is drawn and close

ALL SAINTS DAY QUIZ

best attempted after fish and chips or some other brain food!!!

- A** Which **A** battle was fought on Saint Crispin's Day?
- L** Which **L** is a book written by Moses?
- L** Which **L** is another book written by Moses?

- S** Saint Crispin is the patron saint of **S**?
- A** Which **A** is the Patron saint of Scotland?
- I** Which **I** is an island in the Inner Hebrides mainly known for its Abbey?
- N** Which **N** is the Patron saint of wolves and pawn brokers?
- T** Saint Eligius is the patron saint of **T**?
- S** Which **S** was the first Martyr?

- D** Which **D** swallowed Saint Margaret of Antioch?
- A** Saint Barbara is the patron saint of which **A** military branch?
- Y** Aloysius Gonzaga is the patron saint of **Y**?

Kilimatinde News

Wonderful news from Kilimatinde - the toilet block is finished and there is good sanitation now across the whole of the school site and there is delight with the way the school is progressing. The student results are very good. Much more to show and tell and there's an opportunity to come to an event to hear and see more about what's been happening. (see Bear Ladies event).

Thank you as ever for your continued support
Jill



Answers To Quiz

A	Which battle was fought on Saint Crispin's Day?	Agincourt
L	Which L is a book written by Moses?	Leviticus
L	Which L is another book written by Moses?	Lamentations
S	Saint Crispin is the patron saint of S?	Shoemakers
A	Which A is the Patron saint of Scotland?	Andrew
I	Which I is an island in the Inner Hebrides mainly known for its Abbey?	Iona
N	Which N is the Patron saint of Wolves and pawn brokers?	Nicolas
T	Saint Eligius is the patron saint of T?	Toolmakers
S	Which S was the first Martyr?	Stephen
D	Which D swallowed Saint Margaret of Antioch?	Dragon
A	Saint Barbara is the patron saint of which A military branch?	Artillery
Y	Aloysius Gonzaga is the patron saint of Y?	Youth

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Visit by Ruth (nee Stranex) and William Deeth

Sunday 12th September



Ruth Stranex was our worker in Burbank in the 1990s. She re-established the original Burbank Community Church in the Community Centre with the support of Cathy and Keith Parvin. She was born in England but was brought up in South Africa. She became a missionary in Uganda and was imprisoned by Idi Amin. Her miraculous deliverance from prison she attributed to prayer and God's intervention.

Ruth and Cathy went to Romania to help in St Lawrence's Orphanage. Using her nursing background she also went to help in Kilimatinde. Ruth was totally involved in the life of Stranton Parish and was respected and loved by the whole congregation. She retired in 2000 and met William Deeth, a retired vicar. They married in Stranton in 2001 and moved to Northumberland. They are now living in Ripon. It was wonderful to worship together again and to have time for catching up over lunch courtesy of Andrew and Elspeth.



Mother Gemma's last day of quarantine blog.....

The Door is Open...

Do you remember that day, back in March 2020, when the whole of the UK gathered around their TV sets to listen to Prime Minister Boris Johnson say those fateful words, 'go home and stay home'? AND WE ALL DID...

That still chills me to the bone, to be honest. People said there would be revolts and nobody would do it, yet we did. I remember walking my Maggie, right up the central white line of the main road, just because there were literally zero cars on it. And the same is happening here in Hotel Quarantine. When we each arrived, we were told 'stand on that red spot', 'leave your luggage there', 'do this', 'do that' and then we were each delivered to our room and told to stay there for 14 days – only opening the door to receive a meal or a visit from the nurse. AND WE ARE ALL DOING IT.

Today is day 13, the day I got my release papers so I can leave here in the morning. I was handed my letter from NSW Police and from a medical professional, to prove I have 'fulfilled the requirements' of the stay. I got a band secured around my wrist with huge letters on it, saying WEDNESDAY and then the official asked me what time I want to leave (incidentally, that's the first and only choice I've been able to make in a fortnight. It felt good). I opted for 7am and he said this remarkable thing: 'just open the door and leave at 7am and walk out of the building'.

Just walk out. The door is open? I just get to leave?!

Basically, I could have walked out at any point. I *could* have; nothing was physically restraining me or preventing me from doing so but I didn't, of course. I didn't because I was here to get quarantine done and because, the rules of quarantine state that you stay put and you do not leave, for anything (not even a fire alarm. That's what the 'welcome' letter said. Awful welcome that...!). And tomorrow I get to see that the door was open all the time – I can just pull it and let it shut behind me and walk out, all my personal agency restored to me (well, kind of), and go.

And while I've been reflecting in here, and thinking about our beloved friends at the Kitchen, I've been considering how this 'open door' thing is true in so many other ways. How often have I not 'pushed the door' due to fear, or anxiety, or worrying what people will think? How often have I thought I was trapped in a place or situation because I didn't know that the door was open all along? How often do we succumb to addictions or ways of living because we don't dare to see if the door is open? And, heartbreakingly, how often have we just stayed put, in some miry murky place, simply because nobody told us we could just open the door and go? How often?

Tomorrow morning, bang on 7am, I will open this hotel room door and walk right out of here. And as I go, I will make a conscious effort to pray for those who are still stuck in whatever their room is, that they may see that the door is open all along. Didn't Jesus say something about being the gate? And being the Way? Maybe the door isn't *just* open, maybe it is the Christ...

Thank you for keeping me company here in quarantine. You've been my own personal therapists, each one of you. I will continue to journal my Holy Adventures right here, but I can't promise it will be every day – now it's time to get up to some of this Holy Chaos so I have something more to right about.

But first, let's get these doors open!

Lots of love ♥ Gemma

Stranton Sunday Club News!

Our face-to-face Sunday Club sessions have been a great success and the children have enjoyed participating in a range of fun activities. On our first session back, we looked at Matthew 6:24-27 and thought about how God provides for us. We created bird feeders to help look after the birds in our gardens. We had great fun getting messy and learning more about God!



Tyler and Lorelai carefully mixing the bird seed and lard.



Michelle and Noah working together.



Here is Trinity trying hard not to make too much of a mess!



Lorelai holding her finished bird feeder. We hope the birds enjoy them!

What's coming up:

3rd October – God provides for us

This week our bible reading is Matthew 6:31-34.

Our theme for October is listening to God.

17th October – The Two House Builders

This week our bible reading is Luke 6:46-49. This is a well-known parable which you may be more familiar with calling the wise man and the foolish man!

24th October – A Tree and its Fruit

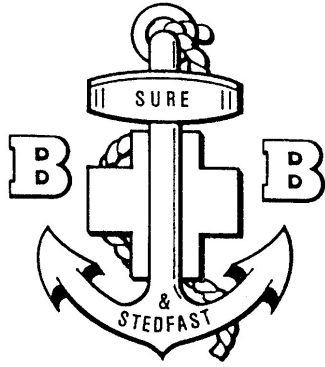
This week our bible reading is Luke 6:43-45.

If you have any questions about Sunday Club please contact the church office or speak to me in church.

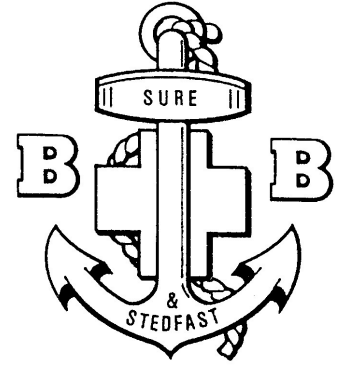
Enjoy,

Kate

Stranton Sunday Club Leader



Boys Brigade



Restart - We have just started up at Boys Brigade and the early indications are very promising. We had a record six Anchor Boys join and three Juniors plus a good turn out from the Company Lads.

Short term plans include issuing badges to the Juniors as we did not have an Open Night last year also re-introducing uniform to the Company Section.

The Anchors are busy making a frieze or two for the Harvest Festival on Sunday 10th October and the Juniors are learning the handbells.

Longer term plans include selecting a new set of NCO's (Non Commissioned Officers) or in ordinary language Junior Leaders who will assist in the running of the Company in any of the three sections.

Future Dates:

Sunday 10th October Bacon Butty Sunday at St Matthew's Community Centre (10 - 10.45am) followed by a family friendly Harvest Festival at Stranton - including Handbells.

Saturday 27th November will be Christmas Fayre at St Matthew's Community Centre (There will be bargains galore!!).

We are still recruiting in all age groups, so if you know any boys who would be interested please pop them along to St Matthew's Centre and we will take it from there...

For pictures and further updates why not check us out on our Facebook page.

George Bainbridge

The Gift of Prophecy

I am currently on a prophetic course which is run by Glasgow Prophetic Ministries.

I have been encouraged to stretch my prophetic muscles and make myself available.

After a discussion with Norman, and with his blessing, I am offering prophetic appointments which can be held in my home or over zoom.

These sessions are to hear what God is saying to you.

If you would like to know more or book an appointment my number is:

07806 520650

Ang Hall

What are you lacking?

God got my attention the other night by showing me the word 'Lack'.

The Definition of 'lack':

'The state of being without or not having enough of something'

I looked up a verse with the word lack in it.

James ch 1:5 If anyone lacks wisdom you should ask God who gives generously to all without finding fault and it will be given to you.

Then all these other verses came to mind when I went through the list of things we could say we are lacking.

I'm lacking sleep... Matt ch 11:28 "I will give you rest"

I'm lacking courage....Deuteronomy 31:8 "I will never leave you or forsake you."

I'm lacking peaceJohn ch 14:27 "My peace I leave with you, my peace I give you".

I'm lacking financePhil ch 4:19 "My God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory,

I'm lacking direction...Prov 3:5&6 Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him and he will make your paths straight.

Whatever you are lacking, Jesus can provide.

Whatever the question, God is the answer.

The well known Psalm 23 puts it so beautifully

'The Lord is my shepherd I lack nothing.'

Instead of worrying or trying to sort your own or other people's problems out.

Go to Jesus, our good shepherd, lay it all out before him. He is bigger than anything we are going through and He will make a way where there seems to be no other way.

Trust Him.

Ang Hall



Urban myth dispelled

While reading the September Signpost Magazine, I noted an article by Pam Stockton on the church history.

I was concerned to see that Pam had inadvertently mentioned what has turned out to be 'an urban myth' regarding the burial place of William Humpherys, whom Charles Dickens made famous in his book "Master Humpherys' Clock."
(The story of Master Humpherys' clock is a story for another day.)

I do not know where this myth started, but let me enlighten you about the actual whereabouts of William Humphreys burial.

William Humphreys, aged 69, was living at 27 Studley Road in the 1881 census with his wife Mary Ann (nee Linn) aged 68 and his son Philip aged 36 who was a compass maker /watchmaker.

William died on May 24th 1887 and was buried in Hart Lane Cemetery (The North Cemetery) after the funeral service in May 1887 which was conducted by the Rev Joseph Bennett M.A. in All Saints Church Stranton.

As the churchyard around Stranton Church had been closed to all burials in 1856, it was not possible for William to be buried in the churchyard in 1887.

I hope this resolves the issues around this 'myth', because this has led to a few very disappointed visitors to Stranton church who came to see the grave of William Humpherys, having to be redirected to the Hart Lane Cemetery instead.

I include a picture of the headstone of William Humpherys, which is next to the head stone of his daughter Harriet Frostland. As these headstones are hard to read from the photo here is a transcription.

The red one on the right reads:-

"In affectionate remembrance of William Humpherys of Barnard Castle who died May 24th 1887, and his wife Mary Ann who died April 17th 1891."

The headstone on the left reads:-

"In loving memory of Harriet the beloved wife of Charles Albert Frostland who died Jan 30th 1890 age 40 years."

David House



Editor's note: The writer of the September article on Church History has asked me to point out that the information regarding William Humphrey was taken from several source documents and was presented in good faith. She regrets any confusion caused by the error and thanks David for clarifying the conflicting information.

Birds of a Feather

The broken fridge has been taken away and I decided to clear up the corner of the front garden in order to attract the nervous birds back. I hard pruned my white buddleia (it had finished flowering and the bees and butterflies gone), then tackled the Tamerisk tree which had really grown large. My neighbour was convinced earlier in the year that I had killed it after a very hard pruning last year. The difference was immediate and after cleaning away the branches and foliage the birds were lining up for food once again.

I have seen a couple of blue tits back in the side garden - I think there have been a couple of predator hawks about, I have noted a few little bundles of feathers when clearing up.

Autumn is a time for clearing up our gardens and also makes us think of how to clear away the accumulation of debris in our lives also. Not just the homes we live in but in our minds too. I am trying to sort through the many, many books old and new, that have accumulated over the years alongside what else needs to go. I am a hoarder, it dates back to a difficult childhood, my brothers are the same. But it does linger. The birds have me to rely on to feed them in difficult times and we have a heavenly Father who is always faithful and cares so deeply for us. So let us replace brain clutter with useful and helpful thoughts as we fill our empty spaces with the love that God gives us to share with others. God tells us to look at the birds of the air, they neither plant, nor sow, but He cares for them and He cares for us too.



Ann Courtenay

A Prayer from Mother Gemma's Quarantine Hotel Blog in Sydney Australia

May God give each of us the grace to be wise yet kind, strong yet gentle, fierce yet soft, generous beyond the norm, and a little bit more like Christ, day-by-day-by-day, amen.

Two Crosses



The cross lists the names of the fallen
Men who gave all that they had
To serve and maintain a freedom
Which we still value to this day
Now remembered every year
As their personal stories fade away



This empty cross has no name on it
Although it was once part of a tragedy
A gross miscarriage of justice had occurred
An experienced centurions witness was heard
The victim was taken down and securely interred
Then His resurrection victory stunned the world

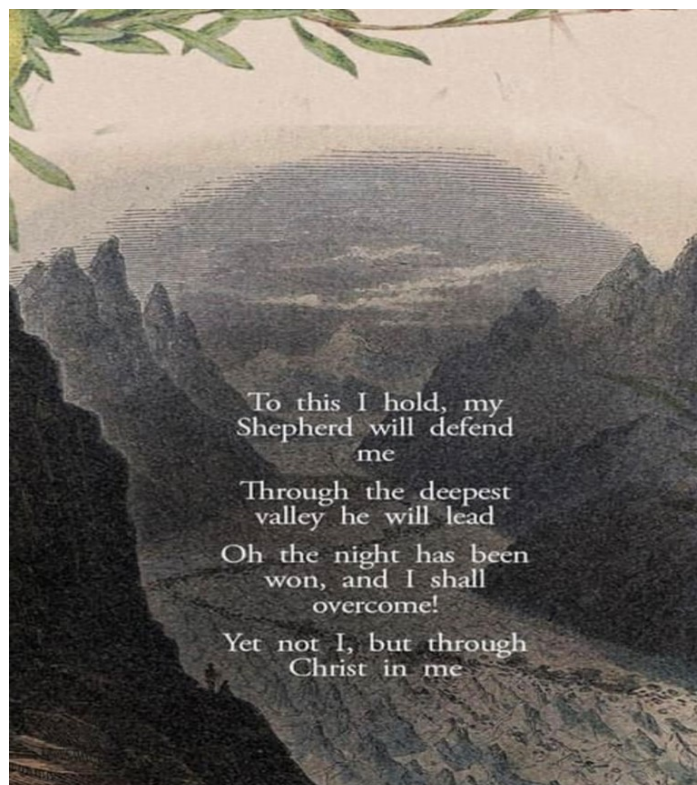
Two crosses reminders of personal sacrifices made,
One etched permanently into mankind's history
The other is still an ongoing living story
The empty cross is now a sign Christ's glory

Tehran to Hartlepool in... 46 days!

A huge thank you to everyone who took part in and donated to our summer fundraising challenge.

The team completed the 3,655 miles on 16th September, well within our 61 day target, and at the time of writing have raised £1284 for the Diversity Group: a fantastic sum which will go towards supporting asylum seekers and refugees in our town. We are blessed by their contribution to our church and community and it is wonderful to be able to give in this way.

Time for the team of walkers, cyclists, runners, sailors, rowers and swimmers to put their feet up and enjoy a well-earned rest!



Autumn Excess Recipes

Apple Marmalade

2 kg cooking apples, weighed after paring
1 kg sugar
2 lemons
Teaspoon grated fresh ginger
Peel and core apples and cut into 2cm cubes
Juice lemons and cut the peel into fine shreds
Put all ingredients into a pan with ½ cup of water
Boil until thick
Put into sterile jars with secure seals.



Plum Cheese

2 kg plums
1 cinnamon stick
300 ml water
650-700 g granulated sugar
Wash & cut fruit in half, leaving stones in. Add fruit, with stones, the cinnamon stick & 300ml water to a large pan. Bring to boil, then reduce heat & simmer for approximately 25 minutes, stirring occasionally, until fruit is completely broken down & very soft.
Pour fruit into a sieve set over a large bowl & push through the sieve, using a wooden spoon to get as much pulpy juice through as you can. Measure the amount extracted - you should have about 1 litre – then rinse out your pan & return pulp to it.
For every 500ml of pulp add 350g sugar. Heat the pan gently, stirring to dissolve the sugar. Once dissolved turn up the heat & bring to the boil, while stirring constantly. Reduce heat to medium-low & bubble steadily until thickened – this will take about an hour. Skim any scum that comes to the surface throughout the cooking time.
Decant mixture into warm sterilised jars & seal. Keep in cool dry place for up to a year. Goes well with cheese, roast meat scones & toast!

Green tomato & apple chutney

Makes: 2 kg chutney

450g (1 lb) green tomatoes, chopped
450g (1 lb) onions, minced
225g (1/2 lb) apples, cored and chopped
450g (1 lb) brown sugar
55g (2 oz) salt
300ml (1/2 pt) malt vinegar
225g (1/2 lb) sultanas
1 teaspoon ground ginger



1. Combine all of the ingredients in a large saucepan and bring to the boil. Reduce to a simmer for 2 hours, stirring occasionally, until the chutney has cooked down and thickened.
2. While the chutney is still hot, ladle into sterilised jars, seal tightly and leave undisturbed overnight to set. Store in a cool dark place until ready to use.

CELEBRATE!

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

to

October

Seeley Bruce
Mia Bruce
Kat Bruce
Rob Butler
Lydia Boyd
Ewan Craig
Georgina Parvin Guerreiro
Joan Hill
Betty Hotham
Ken Shepherd
Will Spoors
Pam Stockton
Gehan Wanduragala
Jean Waller



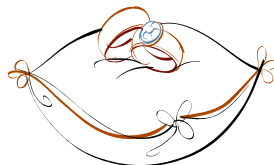
Wedding Anniversary

Peter & Maureen Anderson
Duncan & Trish Playfor
Clive & Angela Hall

Belated Congratulations

to

Pamela and Michael Thompson
On their
65th Wedding Anniversary



If you have something to celebrate we would love to share it - email

admin@stranton-church.org.uk

or phone 864006.

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

Dates for the Diary

Dates for October and early November

October

Sun 3 rd	11am	Family Communion
Tues 5 th		A gathering for all who have been involved in Burbank Community Church, Clarkson Court.
Thurs 7 th		Ward Jackson School Harvest
Sun 10 th		Stranton Harvest Thanksgiving
	9am	Holy Communion
	11am	All Age Celebration
	4pm	Messy Church
Sun 17 th	11am	Family Communion
Wed 20 th	1.30pm	St Matthew's CC Annual Meeting
Sun 24 th	11am	Civic Service (Morning Worship)
	3pm	Forest Church, St Aidan's School
Sun 31 st		Celebration of All Saints Day
	9am	Holy Communion
	11am	Lighthouse

November

Sun 7 th	11am	Thanksgiving service for Burbank Community Church, at Stranton Church
	4pm	Service for the Bereaved
Sun 14 th		Remembrance Sunday
	4pm	Messy Church



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

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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

Reader

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 Rohan Wanduragala 62 Clifton Avenue 223751
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.

