

Newsletter

14 and 21 June 2026

St Richard of Chichester 1253 16 June St Alban 1st British martyr c.250 22 June



Good News ministries
an initiative of the Diocese
 gnm.org

Thanks be to You, my Lord Jesus Christ,
 For all the benefits You have given me,
 For all the pains and insults Which You have borne for me,
 O most merciful Redeemer, Friend, and Brother,
 May I know You more clearly,
 Love You more dearly,
 Follow You more nearly,
 Day by day. Amen.

Saint Richard of Chichester (1197-1253 A.D.)
 Feast Day April 3

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Services for Sunday 14 June 2026 Trinity 2

St Paul's 10am **All Stage Worship** lead and preach Anthea Darlington
 St Andrew's 11am **Holy Communion** preside and preach Rev Avis Gordon

Services for Sunday 21 June 2026 Trinity 3 St John Baptist

St Paul's 10am **Morning Praise** lead and preach Anthea Darlington
 St Andrew's 11am **Holy Communion** preside and preach Rev Avis Gordon



Trinity

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Readings for Sun 14 June

Romans 5: 1-8

(1) *Justified by faith*

Matt 9:35-10:8

(2) *Calling of Matthew: raising the dead*

Readings for Sun 21 June

Isaiah 40: 1-11

(3) *He shall feed his flock*

Matt 3: 1-6, 11,13-17

(4) *John the Baptist*

Wed 17 June: Ps 31:21-end; Matt 6: 1-6,16-18 Wed 24 June: Ps 85:7-end; Luke 1: 57-66,80

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On 21 June we are celebrating the feast of **St John the Baptist at Midsummer**, who prepared the way for Jesus and called people to repent.

Midsummer Day, celebrated on June 24, is associated with John the Baptist because his birth is marked by the summer solstice. Its Christian celebration goes back at least a millennium and a half. The Council of Agde mentions the feast in 506 AD. Most saints' festivals are tied to their death, but John's is connected to his birth.

Who was John the Baptizer? He was the son of Jesus' mother's sister, Elizabeth, making him



Jesus' cousin. As John grew up, he became a prophet in the Old Testament tradition, the first to be recorded since Malachi, 400 years earlier. John's ministry attracted large crowds, and his message, in preparation for the coming of the Messiah, was: "*Repent, for the kingdom of Heaven is at hand.*" When people responded to his call for repentance, he *baptized* them at the Jordan River. He baptized Jesus when he came to the river, and *Matthew's gospel* tells us the heavens opened, the Holy Spirit was seen descending like a dove, and the voice of God was heard to say: "*This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.*" Several paintings of John the Baptist feature his

finger pointing up toward heaven, denoting the coming of Christ, like this one believed to be Leonardo da Vinci's last painting.

Why 24 June? There are some clues in the biblical texts that John was 6 months older than Jesus. If Jesus were born on Christmas Day near the Winter Solstice, then six months earlier, John the Baptist would have been born around Midsummer, near the Summer Solstice. In John 3:30, John the Baptist says "*He [Jesus] must increase, but I must decrease.*"



Following the Summer Solstice, the amount of daylight *decreases* until the Winter Solstice near Christmas, when it *increases*.

What happened to John? John's popularity attracted large crowds, which alarmed the authorities. The Roman-appointed tetrarch of Galilee, King Herod Antipas, angered by John's preaching, had him arrested and imprisoned. On Herod's birthday, the daughter of his wife Herodias, Salome, danced before Herod and his guests. This pleased Herod so much that he promised the girl whatever she asked. Herodias suggested that her daughter request the head



of John the Baptist on a platter. The king reluctantly obliged. John was executed, and not long afterwards Herod lost his kingship and die in exile.

How was the feast celebrated? As early as the 1200s, St. John's Eve festivities in England were recorded, accompanied by songs, games, feasting, and bonfires. In Yorkshire new neighbours were invited to a meal on this day. It was very popular throughout Europe with bonfires and fireworks. There was an ancient belief that witches and dragons came out at midsummer: the bonfires were

originally to drive them away.

Is this a church festival? In England, Wales, and Ireland, this holiday is considered one of the *Quarter Days* in the church calendar, along with March 25: Lady Day, or Feast of the Annunciation, September 29: Michaelmas Day, or the Feast of St. Michael and All the Angels, and December 25: Christmas Day.



Our Prayers. We continue to pray for Tracy Kehoe, Maureen Roberts, Annie Thomas, Barbara Plumb, John Battye, and Rev Mike. This week the prayer for our shared Diocesan vision is for **Church Planting and Revitalisation**: *God of life, you call your Church to proclaim afresh the gospel in every generation. We pray for the growth of your church, that we may see new churches planted and others revitalised. Draw us into the work of your Spirit that we might see an increase in number, discipleship and fruitfulness. May new communities of faith take root, grow strong, and be signs of your kingdom. We ask all this for the glory of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

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7 Churches Walk on 6 June: thankyou to all who took part in this year's walk to visit all 7 of our Mission Community Churches. The rain held off for most of the time! We were delighted to be visited recently at St Paul's by our friend Jummai who brought **gifts** for widows and widowers from the **NANA Nigeria** charity- here



are some of the grateful recipients.

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St Paul's School was inspected by OFSTED on 9-10 June. The inspection went well and did the school justice- a very professional team. More information to follow when available.

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Monthly fundraising and social event programme update

June: Sun 21 June- St Paul's **Midsummer and John the Baptist service** followed by lunch. £5- tickets from Eileen **July:** Sun 12 July- St Paul's **Presentation Sunday service** followed by pizza, games and bottle tombola (donations welcome) **August:** flower arranging demonstration and afternoon tea 29(?) August- tickets on sale soon **September: Heritage Open Days** 12-13 Sept at St Paul's- talks and churchyard tours **October: Stewardship campaign** begins.

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Details of Services and Events for the next 2 weeks

- Tuesday 16 June: Homegroup** 7pm at 5 Moorside Road
- Wed 17 June: Holy Communion** 10am led by Rev Avis Gordon
- Tuesday 23 June: Time Out** St Paul's 1.30pm 250th anniversary of US independence
- Wed 24 June:** 10am St Paul's **Holy Communion** led by Rev Lisa Battye
- Thur 25 June: Homegroup** 7pm at 47 Agecroft Road

CONTACT INFORMATION

Current Clergy Team:
 Revd Mike Dyson (Associate Minister)
 792 1098 beardandsandals@hotmail.com
 Revd Hilary Shedlock (Associate Minister)
 07817 651408 revhilaryshedlock@gmail.com
 Revd Andy Smith (Associate Priest)
 07496726669 smudger1275@gmail.com
 For more information visit our websites:
 St Paul's: www.achurchnearyou.com/church/15877
 St Andrew's: www.achurchnearyou.com/church/15878

All other needs:

David Martin St Pauls Churchwarden
 0161 766 2736 dandmartin@live.co.uk
Brenda Platt St Andrews Churchwarden
 07769673305 brendaplatt@hotmail.co.uk
Anthea Darlington Parish Administrator 0161 792 1780
awdarlington@hotmail.co.uk
Eileen Booth PCC Secretary 0161 792 9960
eileenchris5@gmail.com