

Stranton and Burbank Community

SIGNPOST



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

August/September 2025

Together

I have just got back from the Durham Clergy Conference where, for 2 and a half days, clergy from all over the diocese gathered together, prayed together, ate together and studied together. It was great to be united as a group, and to share how things were going with each of us: what we were struggling with and what we were celebrating. And the most inspiring thing about it was, although some of us liked to wave our hands during songs while others of us preferred to bow during psalms, we were all able to share good natured fellowship and find a blessing in each other's company.

This unity is something, sadly, which we can't always find in the wider Christian world at the moment, but as I get to know the Hartlepool Group of Churches, I think it is fair to say that we have an affection and respect for each other which crosses individual church boundaries. This is a precious thing and has the power to witness to Hartlepool that churches are able to work together despite different traditions. It has really encouraged me that as we launch more missional activities in the group, such as our cell groups, meditation groups, Lent course and pub theology meet ups, all of these have been attended by people from all the parishes. This seems to be the way forwards for us to connect as a group, and I look forward to the group barbeque on the 9th August as a way for us to get to know each other better and to enjoy each other's company.

There has been more good news Ray Turner has been given PTO (Permission to Officiate) as a lay reader to work, initially in St Aidan's. As Ray and I met last Monday morning to say morning prayer, a line from our New Testament reading jumped out at me:

Let us therefore no longer pass judgement on one another...Do not let what you eat cause the ruin of one for whom Christ died.

'One for whom Christ died'. We are all one for whom Christ died - the ones of us who bow and the ones who wave. The ones who like 'thees' and 'thous' when they worship and the ones who would be happy with everything unscripted. Imagine if, every time we saw someone from one of the four churches in the group we thought to ourselves 'there goes someone for whom Christ died'. How would that change what we did, or thought or said next? Something special happens when what binds us together overpowers all the little things which act as stumbling blocks between us and it is called the kingdom. Long may it reign!

Rev Becky

From the Home Front

Heron on tributary of the Tweed



I recently returned to my sister's home in the Scottish Borders to help her out after an operation. I was keeping the house running and as my sister recovered, taking her out and about or sitting with her as she rested. The birdlife around her home always gives me such pleasure. This visit was a humdinger of sightings. Firstly, the heron we saw in the stream by the carpark was fantastic – it was the closest I have ever been to one. It stood still on the pile of twigs patiently looking and waiting for a long time. As I prepared to take a photo it turned its head, so I had a wonderful body shot!

Goldcrest visiting the garden for food

As we sat on the sofa in the kitchen the birdfeeders outside the picture windows were a constant coming and going of every sort of small bird you can imagine – sparrows, starlings, various tits, jackdaws, finches, magpies, thrushes, woodpecker and this goldcrest – a new one for me. So small, yet so



beautiful it darted in several times a day to gorge on peanuts. But every so often all the birds would disappear – then the sparrow hawk would rush through...fortunately no obvious 'kills' whilst I was there!



Golden Eagle swooping (RSPB)



My photo of Golden Eagle soaring!

Just as I was packing the car to come home my brother in law became super excited as he spotted a Golden Eagle soaring over the fields and hill opposite the house. We grabbed binoculars and my phone camera as it rose and swooped on the thermals, close enough for us to see its markings and the ID tag on its tail base! Over the years I have seen buzzards, kestrels and sparrow hawks flying around the valley and over the house, but I have never seen a Golden Eagle except in a zoo! It was so majestic and beautiful, we could clearly see its markings and the way it adjusted its wings to manoeuvre... My photographic attempt wasn't good but in my mind's eye I can see it in all its glory.

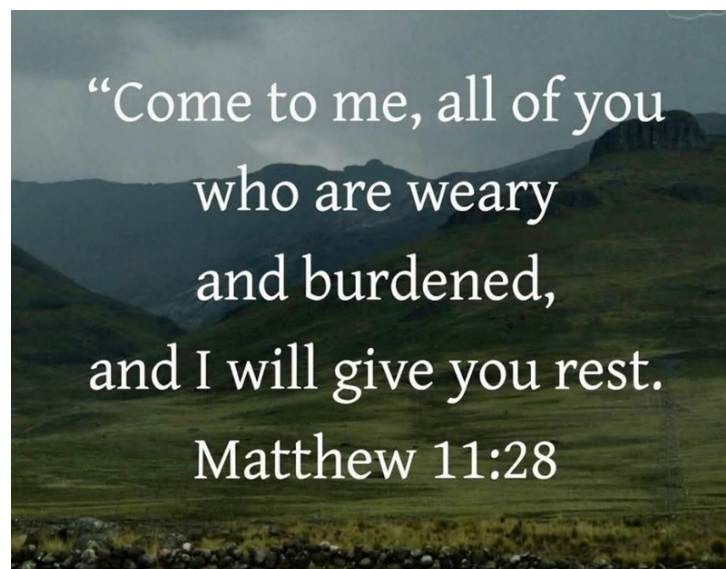
Matthew 6:26

Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?

This Bible quotation kept coming into my head as I pondered all the birds I saw. So many colours, shapes, sizes, lifestyles – all existing together and all made by the loving hand of our creator Father. Each have its traits for survival – patience and stillness, agility and camouflage, stealth, observation skills and sheer power... Yet we humans with all our faults and disobedience are considered of more value...WOW! God really does love each one of us despite our behaviour, how loved does that make you feel?

Should we be using our God given skills and abilities with more focus and thought for the Glory of the Kingdom on earth? Makes you think doesn't it?

J.A.R.



.Ordination of Claire Mead in Durham Cathedral on 29th June



A beautiful day where everyone enjoyed the cool of the Cathedral. A joyful occasion filled with excitement, anticipation, worship and love. Superb music, good preaching and solemn liturgy.



Can you spot Claire and Lizelke our former MEV?



Bishop Sarah, the Dean, family, friends & church members greeting the ordinands.

Claire preaching her first sermon in Stranton.



Claire was welcomed by St Luke's and Stranton Congregations with a Bring and Share lunch.



Northern College of Art Graduation Day

Hartlepool Life Newspaper Article



Northern School of Art students graduation day at All Saints Church. Below, Tabatha Swinburne and her proud father Nigel

Guard of honour and applause for graduating art students

ART school students celebrated their graduation ceremony in the plush surroundings of one of the town's most historic churches.

Students from The Northern School of Art celebrated their achievements on their graduation day at the All Saints Church in Stranton.

Almost 200 students were graduating from the school's wide range of creative degree courses in ceremonies attended by an audience of invited guests including friends and families.

Principal and Chief Executive, Martin Raby said: "We are here to celebrate the emergence of new creative voices, the fulfilment of long-held aspirations, and the promise of a generation poised to shape the cultural landscape with vision, integrity, and imagination."

To those receiving their awards he said: "Today is not just an end, but also a threshold - marking your passage into a world rich with potential and complexity. Take with you the knowledge that your creativity holds transformative power; the power to challenge convention, provoke meaningful discourse, and effect enduring change."

Martin added: "I urge you to approach the road ahead with courage and clarity. Remain unwavering in your creative convictions, embrace challenges, and continue to expand the boundaries of what is possible."

As they emerged from their ceremony into the summer sunshine, the new graduates were



greeted by an informal guard of honour and applause from their former lecturers.

And there were emotional scenes outside the 900-year-old church as the newly-graduated students were reunited with their delighted families and friends.

How the church was prepared for this special graduation event...

The Church was deep cleaned by a small band of helpers who put in a great deal of time and energy. Internal high windows cleaned, Fulthorpe Chapel windows cleaned. Pews dusted and vacuumed, wooden panelling cleaned, furniture polished, floors vacuumed and wiring tidied up. Fulthorpe Chapel also deep cleaned.

The dilapidated magazine stand near church entrance has been removed and temporarily replaced by a bookcase, pending the construction of a bespoke wooden replacement.

Chairs set out and put away as required. Much of the work carried out and overseen by our church wardens and their spouses, a huge thank you to all from the congregation.

Many appreciative comments were made by the visitors and college staff to the Northern College of Art graduation ceremonies. We hope to foster increasing ties with them, especially in the run up to 900 year celebrations.

St Matthew's
Community Centre
Elwick Road



Coffee or Tea, Cake and Company

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



Saturday 6th September 2025

*A time to spend together,
meet new people, make new friends*

Ward Jackson CE Primary Update

Blanchland class had a brilliant time weaseling and rock climbing yesterday. The children showed courage, determination and resilience. We are very proud of them! 🧗



Today was National Numeracy Day and this year's focus was 'Money.'

Children have been working both in and out of the classrooms despite the melting heat! Staff worked hard to provide activities focused on money but children also created their own Mathematical games to play.

We even had parents come and have a go at the end of the day. [#wardjacksonway](#)
[#NationalNumeracyDay](#)



Norlina Nurture Group visiting the Headland exploring the coast and Lighthouses as well as collecting little treasures to wash and cherish for when we get back home 🐚 🪸 🌈 🌧️ due to the unexpected rain we're dining in style today.. [#wardjacksonway](#)





Sports day 2025 🏆 We hope everyone had as much fun watching as the children did taking part. It was wonderful to see everyone having fun and cheering each other on! 🏆
#wardjacksonway



School's out for summer! ☀️
The children (and staff!) celebrated the end of the year by having an absolute blast with water play and some epic water fights! 💧 😊

Thanks to all the children, staff and parents who helped make this year so special. Have a fantastic summer, everyone! ☀️
#wardjacksonway



Wingfield class have been to Teesmouth today to learn all about our brilliant coastline. They have developed their navigation skills by using a compass and have explored the impact people have on nature. We love to learn through exploring at Ward Jackson #wardjacksonway ☀️ 🌊 😊



CELEBRATING OUR 2025 KS2 SATs SUCCESS!

We are so proud of our amazing Year 6 pupils! ✨

✓ Reading

- ✓ 100% of pupils achieved the expected standard
- ✓ 40% achieved Greater Depth

✓ Maths

- ✓ 80% of pupils achieved the expected standard

✓ Reading, Writing & Maths Combined

- ✓ 70% achieved the expected standard across all three areas

These results reflect the hard work, resilience and dedication of our pupils and staff. We are incredibly proud of what we have achieved together.

The Ward Jackson Way: to love. to learn. to explore



Gardening News - Summer 2025 (Continued)



If anybody out there read 'Gardening News' in June's edition and if you also managed to reach the end of what turned out to be a very long article and, finally, if you were not suffering from attention deficit by the time you got to the end (much like this sentence in fact), you might have noticed that the final paragraph did not make sense, ending as it did half way through a sentence. The reason for this is that the final few words went missing. Where they went I have no idea, but, in case anyone is interested, I have now recovered them and they are (hopefully!) in bold below:

"One of the great things about many plants is their fragrance, so enjoy the summer and, whatever you do – **take time to smell the roses.**"

At least you still have time to do this, as, whilst the first flush may be over, there are many varieties of roses in bloom ready and waiting to impress you with their scent.

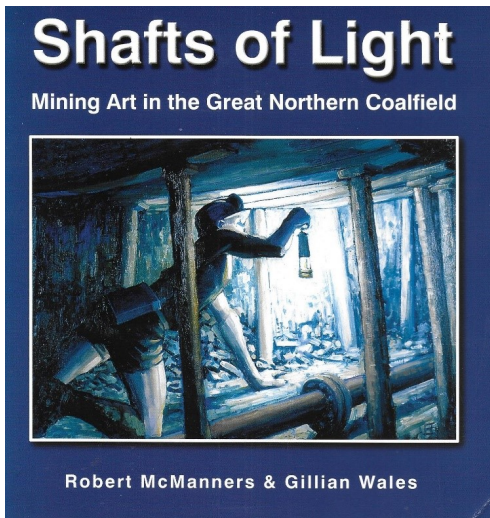
Since I am here again, I may as well update you with news of Jet (the resident magpie), as I couldn't fit it in last time. He is still tapping insistently on our front door and I am happy to report that he has become a father. I can give no further details of his family (as they all look pretty much alike), but they seem to be thriving. I am hoping, however, that the tapping is not a family trait, as one attention seeking magpie is enough for one household!

Pam Stockton

(Editor – Fairly sure that the office computer works independently once everything has been proof read! Sorry Pam.)

Shafts of light

On one of our trips to the North-east a few years ago we came across a signpost just outside Ashington, (the largest pit village in the country some 15 miles north of Newcastle upon Tyne and on the very edge of the Great Northern Coalfield). This indicated a museum of coal mining in the area. Sadly, when we arrived at the site, Woodhorn Colliery, we found that we had misread the sign and the Museum was not yet open to visitors.



Rooting around in the local bookshops I came across a book relating to The Mining Art in the Great Northern Coalfield.

The book paints a fascinating picture (excuse the pun!) of the often hidden and latent talents of those men, and boys, who spent their working lives in difficult and appalling conditions in the dimness and oppressive atmosphere underground, winning King Coal for their masters.

Names such as Oliver Kilbourne, Jimmy Floyd, Fred Laider and many others and their links with groups such as The Ashington Group and the Spennymoor Settlement where they were encouraged to develop their artistic talents in many different ways.

And, of course, the whole way of life encapsulated and epitomised at the annual Durham Miners' Gala where the sounds of Colliery Bands could be heard playing the Durham Miners Hymn "Gresford" during the annual service in the cathedral, where the Miners' Memorial in the south aisle is located with the inscription -

"Remember before God the Durham Miners who have given their lives in the pits of this County and those who work in darkness and danger in those pits today".

Perhaps one of the more well known of the artists is Rob Olley. Starting life as a painter and decorator, he soon joined his father and brother working down the pits around his hometown of South Shields, (Westoe and Whitburn.)

His picture of The Westoe Netty, whilst not included in Shafts of Light, is probably better known than many thus featured. It has been said that it has made the artist a small fortune over the years and has travelled the globe.

The picture is perhaps one of his more humorous attempts at recording pit village life. The Westoe Netty (c1960) depicts an outdoor urinal and a distracted little boy not realising what he was doing.

It is said that when this outdoor urinal was being demolished, Olley took it upon himself to organise the reclamation of the materials and arranged for them to be stored locally until the time came when a suitable site could be found for its reconstruction for the sake of posterity.

Well that time did come in 2008, when the said structure was rebuilt at the outdoor Beamish Museum near Stanley in Co Durham.



The Westoe Netty- Rob Olley.



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

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

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

**We also have our own private car park and some outdoor space if you fancy
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Letter from our Father to You

Dear child

Please know that I don't require you to come to me with scripted or eloquent words when you talk with me.

All I ask is that you step into my presence and remember that you are seated in heavenly places.

When you know your position with me, your conversations with me will be different.

We are connected spirit to spirit.

I love your words, but I also can hear your sighs and groans. It's ok to be silent in my company.

When you are seated with me you will hear heavenly solutions for your earthly concerns.

You will be able to see through my eyes.

You may be asking "How do I do step into your presence?"

My child it's not hard, it's not something to be forced.

Focus on me, turn your thoughts and heart towards me and you are in my presence.

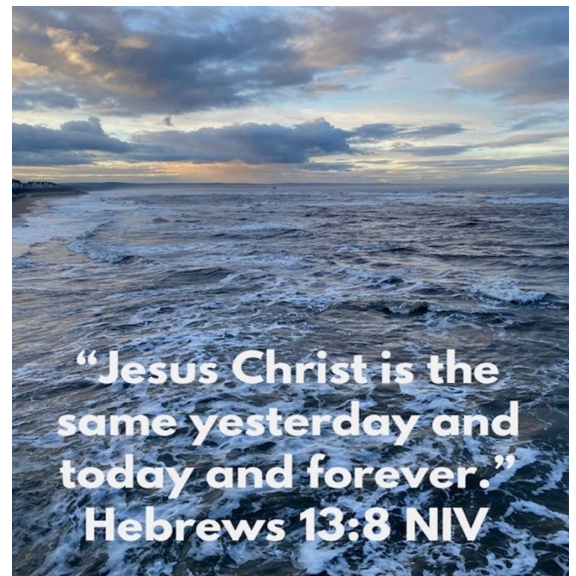
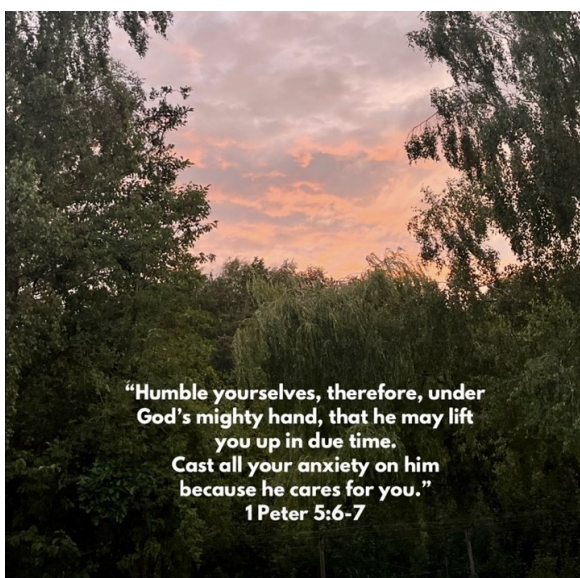
In the busyness of this world take a breath and still your mind and refocus on me. It can be as little as five minutes or as long as you want it to be...

You need to remember though I never move away from you. So, when you feel far away from me just refocus your heart and your mind and step close to me. Knowing that the distance is a feeling not a fact.

I love you my precious child

Your Heavenly Father

Ang Hall



Ordination of Grace Kanungha at Truro Cathedral

A new phase for Grace and Festo after years at St John's School in Kilimatinde and settling into life in the South West; Grace has been led by God into the ministry.



May God Bless You

May God bless you with discomfort at easy answers, half-truths, superficial relationships, so that you live deep within your heart.

May God bless you with anger at injustice, oppression and exploitation of people so that you will work for justice, equality, and peace.

May God bless you with tears to shed for those who suffer from pain, rejection, starvation and war, so that you will reach out your hand to comfort them and change their pain into joy.

And may God bless you with the foolishness to think that you can make a difference in the world, so that you will do the things which others tell you cannot be done.

The Choir Stall Quiz

- T** What **T** sea was named after a Roman Emperor?
- H** What **H** describes a large group of angels?
- E** Which road to **E** did Jesus take on Easter Sunday?

- C** Which **C** were first named in Antioch?
- H** Which **H** was married to Antipas?
- O** What **O** means last?
- I** Which **I** was the father of twins?
- R** What **R** did Samson give his wedding guests?

- S** Who was the last Judge of Israel? **S**
- T** Which **T** was Elijah from?
- A** What **A** was built by Noah?
- L** What **L** an animal did Samson slay?
- L** Which **L** is mentioned in The Good Samaritan?

So, what is the correct tune?

How many times have we heard the comment after a service.....

“Why didn’t they have the proper tune for that hymn this morning?

And of course in their mind and memory “they” did not play the proper tune. “They” being the organist, possibly in cahoots with the Preacher.

There are countless hymns across the whole spectrum of Hymnody of all denominations and if you look at them, many have been set to different tunes down the ages, possibly bowing to the whims of the editor or Venerable Hymn Committee of a particular collection or to reflect changes in style or preference of the Minister or Vicar.

I don’t think it is a bad thing to have a variety of different tunes to a particular hymn just as long as the musical setting does not detract from the words and message. In the hands of a capable and sympathetic organist or indeed music group, there should be no insurmountable problems over the musical interpretation.

It is only if the organist throws in something totally out of keeping (with connotations far from a song of praise), such as The Muppet Theme Tune to that old favourite “O Jesus, I have promised to serve thee to the end”, or even The Star Wars Theme for Ye Servants of God, that fur is likely to fly! I can assure you that with some minor adjustments the tunes fit the words!

One particular hymn springs to mind in terms of the “correct tune”, and that is “*O Master, let me walk with thee*”.

O Master, let me walk with thee, In lowly paths of service free, Teach me thy secret; help me bear the strain of toil, the fret of care. (verse 1)

And Verse 4

In hope that sends a shining ray far down the future's broadening way, In peace that only thou canst give, With thee, O Master, let me live

The words were by an American Congregational Minister, Washington (naturally!) Gladden and it was his wish, nay instruction, that the only tune for his words was to be MARYTON. This was written by an Anglican priest, H Percy Smith, who had set it originally for the words of John Keble, "Sun of my Soul".

However, over the years a number of different musical settings have been applied to these words. The on-line Hymnary website notes that the hymn is to be found in over 500 collections. Suffice to say that I have not looked at all of them but have focussed on those relevant to our own and associated Hymn collections.

Rather sadly this hymn has been dropped from the latest Methodist hymnal Singing the Faith, likewise the tune Maryton does not feature either in this collection.

Scanning through the Salvation Army Tune book of 1928 I found another setting, this time to a tune by Alan Jackson (and harmonised by Clement Hill), which he called Silver Hill** but by 1987 this tune, although still in the Tune Book was no longer allocated to O Master. In 1987 O Master was being sung to Maryton.

Having spent some time delving into the history of this hymn and its various settings, and about to wind down on this particular topic I suddenly came upon another variation. I quite often find myself surfing the net to chase down hymns and tunes and recently came across this one from the Salvation Army stable, but sadly not available from SA Supplies.

It was a recording on the Oshawa Temple (Canada) website and sung by the Melbourne (Vic) Staff Band Singers. It was not a tune which I recognised, but asking around it transpired to be an arrangement of a very old (17thC) lullaby "Golden Slumbers". The arrangement was by Lt Col Norman Bearcroft (1926-2020) who with over 180 published works across band and vocal journals, was regarded as one of the Salvation Army's most prolific and respected composers.

Some details

Primitive Methodist Hymn Book supplement (1910) Tune Stanley Dr Mann

Methodist Hymn Book 1904 Tune "Stanley" by Dr. A H Mann (One time Director of Music at The Leys School Cambridge)

Methodist Hymn Book 1933 Tune "Stanley and "Kettering(London) John Sheeles (1720)

Hymns and Psalms 1983 Tune Kettering(London)

Stanley and Kettering are both DLM or 8 line stanzas, and with quite strident melody lines whereas Maryton and Golden Slumbers are LM (88.88) 4 line stanzas and a much gentler melody.

I could find no instance however of Maryton being used as the set tune in any Methodist

Hymnary.

Congregational Praise 1951 Tune Maryton H Percy Smith

Salvation Army 1928 Silver Hill (Alan Jackson)** 1987 Maryton 2015 Maryton

** Frederick C Maker (1844-1927) is also said to have written Silver Hill, but there is some uncertainty regarding this as it is also attributed to Alan Jackson and Clement Hill.

© Jeff Parsons 2025 In conversation with J. Cornelius Starbuck



Boys Brigade News



Anchors and Juniors Visit to Stranton Church

The Anchors and Juniors were told about 2nd Lieutenant Donald Ord Ross (his commemorative window is on the left as you walk into church), 2nd Lieutenant Reginald Bennet and the Robson brothers (commemorative window and plaque in the Fulthorpe chapel).

We then looked at the broken statue above the door entrance and learnt the story of St George and St Margaret of Antioch.

The Anchors then had to make the difficult choice as to whether the statue was of St George or St Margaret. Whatever they chose they had to colour in a picture of their chosen saint - our guest for the night, Rohan, then judged the best picture. The overall voting of the Anchors was 7 - 2 for St Margaret.

In the Fulthorpe Chapel we looked at the window telling key points in Christ's Life and Resurrection.

The Juniors did grave rubbings prior to entering church and then enjoyed a quiz about Stranton followed by a trip to McDonalds.

Apart from Camp our Summer Programme is now complete - full pictures of all activities are on our Facebook page and following on from this update.

Summer Fayre We raised the fantastic sum of £1031.05 - many thanks to all who supported us in anyway.

Summer Camp is at Birch Scout Centre - Landale End Yorkshire (about 8 miles from Scarborough).

We are hoping the fine weather continues as we carry out our programme which includes trips to Whitby, Scarborough Castle (hope we don't leave it in ruins!) adventure and water-based activities.

The devotions are based on the life of St Peter and many thanks go to Joseph who planned the devotions.

Our Facebook page will be regularly updated throughout camp for you to follow.

Whilst camp is the final act of this Boys Brigade Session we start to look to the next one

Re-Starting Dates

Anchors (6- 8 year olds) Friday 12th September

Juniors (8- 11 year olds) Monday 8th September

Company (11plus) Friday 12th September

New Members are welcome in each group

George Bainbridge

07816445829

Juniors enjoyed the Battle of St Matthew's!



The Choir Stall Quiz Answers

T What sea was named after a Roman Emperor?	Tiberias
H What H describes a large group of angels?	Host
E Which road to E did Jesus take on Easter Sunday?	Emmaus
C Which C were first named in Antioch?	Christians
H Which H was married to Antipas?	Herodias
O What O means last?	Omega
I Which I was the father of twins?	Isaac
R What R did Samson give his wedding guests?	Riddle
S Who was the last Judge of Israel?	Samuel
T Which T was Elijah from?	Tishbe
A What A was built by Noah?	Ark
L What L an animal did Samson slay?	Lion
L Which L is mentioned in The Good Samaritan?	Levite

CELEBRATE!

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

to

August

Lorelai Anderson
Steph Boyd
Michael Cartwright
Ruth Smith
Andrew Milner
Rev Becky Reeve
Linda Southgate
Jordan Thornhill
Rohan Wanduragala
David Wilson

September

Freyja Bruce
George Coils
Joan Herbert
Katie Herbert
Jack Hanlon
Mel Hutchinson
Annika Sanders
Maureen Wilford



Wedding Anniversary

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

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

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

Dates for the Diary

August

Sat 9th Group Barbeque St Luke's Vicarage, Granville Ave 2.00pm

Sat 16th VJ Day Celebration: St Luke's Church Rooms 2.00pm
Join us to celebrate the end of WWII. Tickets £2 each

September

Sat 6th Coffee Cake & Company St Matthew's CC 2.00-4.00pm

Mon 8th BB Juniors restart

Fri 12th BB Anchors restart

Fri 12th BB Company restart

Sun 14th Messy Church St Matthew's CC 4.00-5.30pm

Mon 15th Group Council 7.00pm

Tues 16th PCC 7.00pm



Thank GOD! Pray to him by name!

Tell everyone you meet what he has done! ...

Keep your eyes open for GOD, watch for his works;

be alert for signs of his presence.

Remember the world of wonders he has made,

his miracles, and the verdicts he's rendered—

O seed of Abraham, his servant,

O child of Jacob, his chosen.

He's GOD, our God,

in charge of the whole earth.

Psalm 105:1,4–7 (MSG)



From Lectio 365

Who's Who

Church Office	St Matthew's Community Centre Arncliffe Gardens TS26 9JF
Administrator	Trish Playfor "Tues- Fri, 9.00 to 11.00am" 01429 894006 or 07305 550009 E-Mail: admin@stranton-church.org.uk Web Site: www.stranton-church.org.uk
To contact clergy by E-mail	E-Mail: clergy@stranton-church.org.uk

Priest in Charge 34A Westbourne Road 07512 481115
 Revd. John Bell
 Email: **revdjohndbell@stranton-church.org.uk**

Curate
 Revd Claire Mead (Stranton & St Luke's) 07598 070481
 Email: **curate@stranton-church.org.uk**
 Usual day off – Friday

Reader
 Mary Tones 40a Blakelock Road 07972 342890

St Aidan's & Columba's Church

Priest in Charge
 Revd. Becky Reeve 5 Tunstall Avenue 01429 671358
 Email: **revbeckystaidanandcolumba@gmail.com**

Safeguarding: Jacqui Rogers (Stranton Parish Safeguarding Officer)
 Email: **safeguarding@stranton-church.org.uk** 07749 163606

Churches Together in Hartlepool

Secretary Susan Atkinson,
 St Mary's RC

Church Wardens Angela Craig 57 Claremont Drive 07899 897444
 Peter Anderson 22 Thetford Road 871266

PCC Secretary Maureen Anderson 22 Thetford Road 871266
Treasurer David Craig 57 Claremont Drive Contact Stanton Office
 894006

Asst. Treasurer Maureen Anderson 22 Thetford Road 871266
Loyalty Treasurer Ken Shepherd 251 Park Road 268007

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
St Matthew's Booking Trish Playfor Church Office 894006

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