

**Stranton and Burbank Community**

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# **SIGNPOST**



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

**October 2025**

## Another summer, another mountain... (The musings of a priest)

It's that time of year again, where I return from holiday having climbed another mountain. This time, the big one... Ben Nevis. It's 25 years since I first, and last went up with a group of friends, and this time I went up with my youngest – Daniel, who seems to have caught the bug last year when we climbed Snowdon.



The key to climbing mountains is to be prepared – making sure we have the right equipment (tick), checking the weather forecast (tick), making sure we know our route (tick), and practising on smaller walks before you set out on the big one (erm... maybe I should have done that!!).

This time, I almost didn't get to the top. Too little preparation and practice in the run up. In fact, the last hill of any description that I climbed was Snowdon – a whole year before! But I persevered, pushed through the pain, to reach the top and the sense of achievement that comes from completing the task we set ourselves. Daniel technically reached the summit twice as I sent him on before me – I've been there before, and I wanted to make sure he got to the very top even if I didn't make it all the way. We weren't that far from the top, but the joints were hurting, the muscles starting to seize up, and there was one last steep climb to go. But I was struggling. So, when I eventually reached the plateau at the top – about 10 minutes from the summit point, I met Daniel on his way back down. Any further and I might have just turned around, but with the summit in sight I was determined to get there and made him turn around



and compete the last short stretch again. It would have been so much easier with a little more practice, a little more preparation.

That was the lesson for me on my hike up Ben Nevis – to get the best out of anything, we need to keep working at it.

Our faith and our relationship with God is no different. Everything works well and we get complacent, thinking we can just switch it on and off whenever we want. But if we don't take enough care

of ourselves or our faith, we get out of practice, it doesn't quite happen the way we want it to. It suddenly becomes much harder than it used to be.

If we neglect our relationship with God, thinking it's always there when we need it, then we don't quite know how to reconnect with God when we need to. A bit like the friend you've had for years but lost touch with – the conversation when you finally do meet up is a bit awkward. It not as easy as it once was and what once came so naturally takes a lot more effort.

Whatever it is that's important to you, keep practicing. Whether it's playing an instrument, studying a foreign language, or climbing mountains. Keep practicing. And when it comes to relationships, we need to keep up the effort too. We need to keep connected to the people who matter to us, we need to keep connected to God.

Next year, I fully expect someone to try and persuade me to go up Scafell Pike again – I've already said he's on his own, but we'll see what next year brings... One thing's for certain, I'll need to put in the effort before-hand...

I leave you with a picture (and a message) from the summit – left by someone who was much more prepared than I was for such an adventure.



Grace and peace,  
**Revd John**

## From the Home Front

When God wants to speak to us it is not always in words! He can often give us pictures, feelings or dreams. That is how He frequently gets my attention!

Sitting in church over several weeks I had felt as if the altar at the east end was dark (even with the lights, candles and banners) and that the Holy Spirit was being held back. I felt despondent and empty at times, and I could not feel the spirit's presence within the church.

Then one morning I was woken early with the feeling that I must go to Morning Prayer. So off I went to the Vicarage. Revd John and Revd Claire guided me through the liturgy, but I had no real idea why I was there. However, during the time of prayer God gave me a very clear picture. I was looking at Stranton Church from Vicarage Gardens – but all I could see was the churchyard wall, a few steps and the top of the flagpole. The church itself was surrounded and hidden by a high black curtain, and I just knew that people in the town couldn't see the church, which was why our congregation was not growing. This veil was something malevolent coming between God, the Church and the people of Hartlepool. Revd John confirmed that I was not the first person to have had this sort of image. The only way to break it down was through targeted spiritual prayer.

A group from within the church met one evening and carrying the cross with the image of the Lamb of God before us (a definite prompt from God) we prayed at the church gates, around the churchyard and at all the entrances of the church; prayers were said for all the rooms within (no matter what their size or use) and most importantly from the high altar down through the chancel into the nave. We prayed prayers of repentance and confession; we asked for past hurts and sins to be forgiven; we prayed for the breaking of malevolent bonds and the tearing down of anything coming between God and His children. We prayed for the in-dwelling of God and the Holy Spirit within the building and for its outpouring into our Parish and community. When we opened the gates on the altar rail I felt as if the Holy Spirit was cascading from the altar and down into the church and out into Stranton Parish. The atmosphere in the church lightened – hard to explain - it just felt as if God was home and we were welcome.

This has not been easy to write and explain – we need to remember that we have a supernatural God – Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Our strongest weapons against the powers of darkness are our faith and trust in God's power and in His word. He works in a way beyond our understanding...

**J.A.R.**



## Diocese of Durham Lay Ministry Service 13<sup>th</sup> September

A group from Stranton congregation attended this special service in Durham Cathedral to witness Kate Lawson authorised as our Lay Children's Minister and Hayley Liversidge Licensed as a Lay Minister to Stranton (within the Central Hartlepool Group).

Bishop Sarah spoke of the importance of the role of the laity preaching and leading to bring the word to the people in our parishes, and of the vital work of teaching and nourishing children in their understanding of God, Christ and the Holy Spirit as they are the future of our worldwide church.

We sang 'Christ is the sure foundation', 'Will you come and follow me', 'I will offer up my life' and 'Be thou my vision'. There were readings from Acts 16 and Luke 6. The various individuals were authorised, licensed, admitted and blessed in their future callings.

It was a joyful occasion where we witnessed those who have responded to God's call to service in our churches. We pray that they may all know God's guidance and love as they speak and teach of His grace and love.

**J.A.R.**

**Bishop Sarah with the newly authorised Lay Children's Ministers**



**Revd John and Kate Lawson now our Lay Children's Minister**



**Bishop Sarah with the Licensed Lay Ministers, Lay Pastoral Minister, Lay Chaplain, Lay Ministers of the Word and Lay Children's Ministers**



**Revd John with Hayley Liversidge now our Licensed Lay Minister**

**Mike Peacock a former member of Stranton Church and Stranton Music Group now a Licensed Lay Minister in three Durham churches.**



## **.Authorised Children's Minister**

As I sit quietly in my living room after my Authorisation service at Durham Cathedral, I am struck by the feeling of joy and excitement to share this ministry with others and the potential it has. In January, I started my Authorised Children's Minister course with an amazing group of people – although I missed the first session with being on a mini holiday (you know me). Throughout the course I had the opportunity to deepen my understanding of children's ministry and discuss with others what it may

look like. Alongside the course I had to complete a project. My project was to improve the children's corner in church (hopefully everyone thinks it is an improvement, not just me). I chose to do this because the area is often one of the first places that children look for when entering our church – a dedicated place for them. Although it is important to remember that children are welcome and necessary in all parts of the church – a children's corner needs to be a welcoming space for children and a reminder that everyone is welcome and valued in our church! I am looking forward to being



Stranton's Authorised Children's Minister and using what I have learned to help continue to grow and nourish our children's ministry.

The service itself was a bit overwhelming as Bishop Sarah authorised us in our ministry. At the beginning of the service, Bishop Sarah introduced the many ministries which were being authorised and I felt that the way she described children's ministry was really interesting. She said, "Lay Children's Ministers are to nurture children in their faith and discipleship, as the most important part of the whole Body of Christ". This both excites and slightly worries me, as it feels like a big responsibility, although I know that I am not alone in this. I hope that I am able to help nurture children in their faith and discipleship as we all know that Jesus spoke of the importance of children when he blessed them.

During the service we sang 'Will you come and follow me if I but call your name?' which I think sums up what we must do. I encourage anyone who feels that God is calling them to explore this and to talk to someone. I personally understand how scary it can be as it is the sheer unknown at



times that can feel like it is disrupting our usual life. While completing the Children's Minister course, I feel I have been called to something and have just started an Authorised Minister of the Word course. Without the support of many people at church and in my life, I am not sure that I would have had the strength nor courage to try and follow where I feel I am being called. I am not sure exactly what God is calling me to, but I am excited (and also very nervous) to discover what is next for me. However, I think that it is important that we all consider some of the questions from the aforementioned hymn,

Will you come and follow me if I but call your name?

Will you go where you don't go and never be the same?

Will you let my life be grown in you and you in me?

I was very surprised that when I began listening, (with some prompting from various people) I felt that God was calling me to something, so I hope that everyone can consider those questions and what it might mean for them. It can be difficult to listen to God's voice, but it is always worth exploring what he is calling us to do as he has an amazing plan for us all. We just need to remember to listen.

Thank you to everyone who attended the service to support me, and I look forward to continuing to explore my faith and ministry.

**Kate Lawson**

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Community Centre  
Elwick Road



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CANCER SUPPORT**  
RIGHT THERE WITH YOU



# Letter from our Father

Dear Child,

I invite you to walk boldly to my throne.

You do not enter my presence with shame or fear.

I invite you to come with confidence.

You are wearing a red robe of righteousness that has been purchased by my precious Son's blood.

I no longer see your sin or guilt, all I see is you washed clean.

Please do not carry the guilt of your past mistakes.

Do not keep ruminating over your past sins.

Once you have repented and given it to me. You have been made clean.

I am not a condemning God reminding you of all the wrong you have done.

When Jesus was taking his last breaths on the cross he said, "It is finished."

When you keep bringing your past up to me you are calling my Son a liar.

Walk in the freedom of forgiveness.

Let my love and mercy flood you.

Once you grasp how loved and forgiven you are, you will find it easier to release forgiveness to others.

Love from your  
Heavenly Father

Psalm 32:5

Then I acknowledged my sin to you  
and did not cover up my iniquity.

I said, "I will confess  
my transgressions to the Lord."

And you forgave  
the guilt of my sin.

He sacrificed for their sins once for all when he offered himself."

Hebrews 7:27 NIV

"For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more."

Hebrews 8:12 NIV

**Ang Hall**



## My new life and ministry in Hartlepool

Time has flown by since my ordination back in June, my first Sunday services and lovely bring and share lunch shared together after the 11am service!

I wanted to share my grateful thanks to you all for the very warm welcome I have received at All Saints' Stranton and indeed across all the Central Hartlepool Group. The first week that I was here I received lots of lovely goodies to help me stock up my cupboards in my new home which was a great blessing to me! A big thank you to everyone who contributed to this very generous gift.

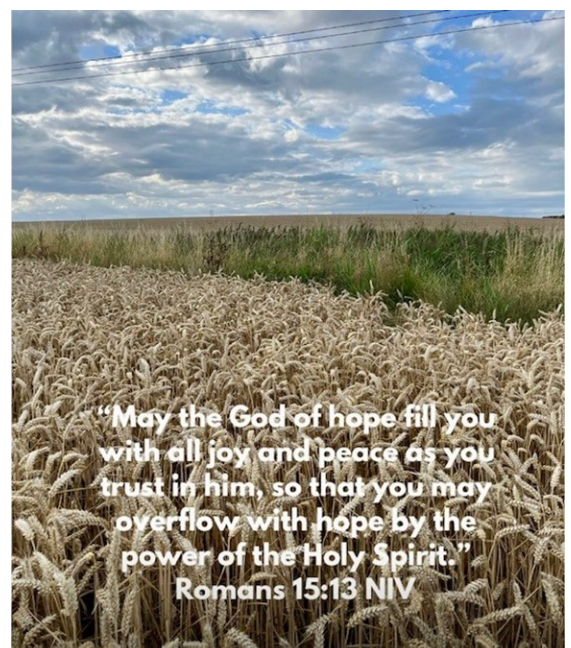
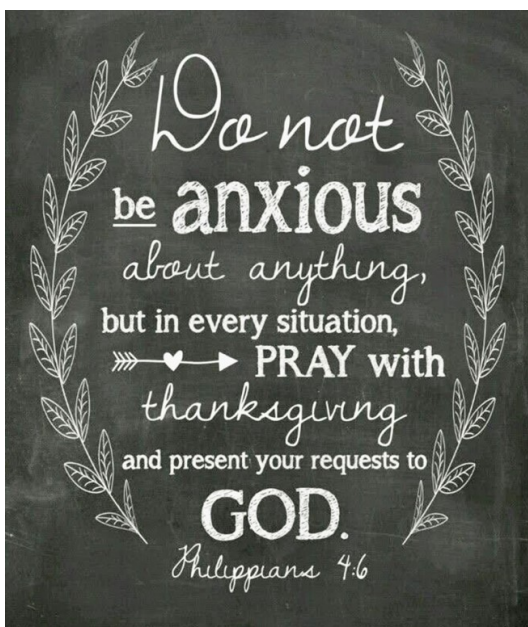
I've already shared great times of fellowship with church members and local community. It was lovely to meet new people at Coffee, Cake and Chat at St Matthew's earlier in the month, and at Messy Church back in July. It was a joy to see the way in which we're outreaching as a church into our community! I've loved going into see residents at Elwick Grange Care Home at our monthly Home Communion Service. I've also really enjoyed spending time with the bellringing community and getting stuck into practice when I can.

With a small group from church PCC, we've begun exploring ideas to celebrate the forthcoming 900<sup>th</sup> anniversary of All Saints Stranton and we're really excited about celebrating this from November 2025 to November 2026. We look forward to sharing more with you in the next Signpost!

It continues to be a real privilege for me to share life and the journey of faith with those within our parish. I'm excited to see what God has in store for my first year as a deacon!

Every blessing to you all

**Revd Claire**



# Visit to Stranton by Sam Ireton from Safe Families and Home for Good

Sam Ireton attended the 9:00am and 11:00am services to talk about the work of Safe Families and Home for Good. He emphasised God's generosity in each of our lives and how we can share some of that generosity with families who are struggling for any number of reasons – be it with our time, our skills, our money or our prayers.

Hartlepool has the third highest number of children taken into care in the country! Safe Families hopes through early intervention in families to bring down this number.



## About Safe Families and Home for Good

Safe Families and Home for Good have a vision to provide a more holistic solution, through the Church, to prevent children entering the care system through family support and then, if they do, ensuring there are enough safe and nurturing homes through fostering, adoption, and supported lodgings.

We believe that by joining together, as one organisation, we will see more churches equipped, more volunteers empowered and trained, more local authorities served, more families supported, less children entering care and for those that do, well-matched homes found.

**Every child needs** a stable place to call home, an environment that feels safe and nurturing, and someone they can trust who will offer unconditional care and support.

**Every family needs** people around who care and can support them, so that when challenges happen, they don't have to face them alone.



Home for Good and Safe Families both hold these statements as crucial for the long-term wellbeing of children, families, and the wider community, and we work at two different ends of the needs spectrum. Safe Families support isolated and overwhelmed families through local volunteers, to give them the best chance of not only staying together but thriving together with a stable home and reinforced support network. Home for Good ensure that when, sadly, children come into care, there is a home for every child who needs one.

Our passion is that the church, in all its shapes and sizes, can play its part in supporting and loving children and families across the UK.

We are excited to see lives transformed and communities strengthened



as we partner with the church across the UK.  
 You can find out more at [safefamilies.uk](http://safefamilies.uk) and [homeforgood.org.uk](http://homeforgood.org.uk).

YOUR DETAILS		I WANT TO HELP CHILDREN AND FAMILIES FLOURISH BY	
<input type="text" value="Name"/>			<b>EXPLORING</b>
<input type="text" value="Email"/>			<input type="checkbox"/> I would like to find out more about volunteering
<input type="text" value="Phone"/>			<input type="checkbox"/> I would like to explore fostering, adoption or supported lodgings
<input type="text" value="Address"/> <input type="text" value="Postcode"/>			
<input type="text" value="Any comments"/>			<b>GIVING</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> I am happy to be contacted with general updates and opportunities to support families and children.			<input type="checkbox"/> I would like to find out more about becoming a financial supporter
I am happy to be contacted in these ways:			<b>PRAYING</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> By email <input type="checkbox"/> By phone/SMS <input type="checkbox"/> By post			<input type="checkbox"/> I would like to receive prayer updates once a month via email
<small>By completing these details, you are consenting to Safe Families and Home for Good storing and processing your data in line with our privacy policy which can be found at <a href="http://safefamilies.uk/cookie-policy">safefamilies.uk/cookie-policy</a></small>			

*As we have been involved as volunteers for 10 years, please feel free to chat with me about what is involved.*

**Jacqui Rogers**

## REFUGEES

They have no need of our help  
 So do not tell me  
 These haggard faces could belong to you or me  
 Should life have dealt a different hand  
 We need to see them for who they really are  
 Chancers and scroungers  
 Layabouts and loungers  
 With bombs up their sleeves  
 Cut-throats and thieves  
 They are not  
 Welcome here  
 We should make them  
 Go back to where they came from  
 They cannot  
 Share our food  
 Share our homes  
 Share our countries  
 Instead let us  
 Build a wall to keep them out  
 It is not okay to say  
 These are people just like us  
 A place should only belong to those who are born there  
 Do not be so stupid to think that  
 The world can be looked at another way

(now read from bottom to top)

*Brian Bilston*





## 10 Misconceptions

Here are 10 common misconceptions about asylum seekers and refugees. These claims are frequently repeated, but they don't stand up to the facts. Below, we set the record straight with accurate information you can share, especially if you're tired of hearing the same misleading and often prejudiced arguments.

1. "Asylum seekers are illegal immigrants."

✗ Seeking asylum is not illegal and this includes any person seeking sanctuary who may arrive in a small boat. Seeking asylum is a legal right under the 1951 Refugee Convention.

2. "They're just here to claim benefits."

✗ Asylum seekers cannot access normal benefits. They receive only minimal support (about £6 a day) and usually cannot work.

3. "The UK takes in more asylum seekers than anyone else."

✗ The UK receives fewer asylum seekers than many countries, including Germany, France, and Lebanon.

4. "Most asylum claims are fake."

✗ Almost half of claims are granted at the first stage, and many appeals are successful, showing the system recognises genuine cases.

5. "Asylum seekers are a burden."

✗ Refugees contribute skills, resilience, and cultural diversity. Once allowed to work, they support local economies and communities.

6. "They should just apply from abroad."

✗ Safe legal routes are extremely limited. International law allows people to apply once they reach the UK.

7. "They're all young men."

✗ Women, children, and families also seek asylum. Young men often travel first because the journey is too dangerous for vulnerable family members.

8. "They get housing ahead of locals."

✗ Asylum seekers cannot choose where they live. They are housed in temporary accommodation and do not take priority over council housing lists.

9. "They must stay in the first safe country."

✗ International law does not require this. Many seek safety in the UK because of family, language, or community connections.

10. "We need to protect our women and children from asylum seekers."

✗ This claim plays on fear, but there is NO evidence that asylum seekers are more likely to commit crimes than the general population. People seeking sanctuary are often women and children fleeing violence, seeking the same protection and safety we want for our own families.

👉 The truth is that people seeking sanctuary are people fleeing war and persecution. By challenging myths with facts, we help build understanding and compassion. For information on our services visit <https://bit.ly/3XAYvwg>  
#AsylumSeekers #HumanRights

## All Souls Day Quiz

- A** Which **A** means beginning?
- L** What **L** became Matthew?
- L** Which **L** was the sister of Rachel?
- S** Which **S** approved the killing of the first martyr?
- O** What **O** means end?
- U** Where Abram was from - **U**?
- L** What **L** did Jacob dream about?
- S** Which **S** was the first martyr?
- D** Which **D** was told Samson's secret?
- A** Which **A** of Padula is the patron saint of lost things?
- Y** Complete the Hymn title - **Y**\_ Holy Angels Bright?

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## The truth about asylum seekers

Here are 10 prevalent misconceptions regarding asylum hotels, clarified and refuted with accurate information for you to share, particularly if you are sick of hearing the same tired and often racially motivated arguments.

❶ “They’re living in luxury hotels at our expense!”

Fact: These accommodations typically comprise budget hotels or repurposed facilities. The rooms are basic, frequently cramped, lacking kitchen access, and providing limited privacy.

❷ “They get £40 a day spending money.”

Fact: Asylum seekers residing in hotels receive approximately £9.58 per week in cash, equating to about £1.37 daily—insufficient to cover even fundamental necessities.

❸ “They’re taking hotel rooms from paying guests.”

Fact: The government specifically contracts hotels that often have available capacity or are unsuitable for typical guests. Most were not fully booked prior to their use.

❹ “They should be working to pay for their stay.”

Fact: Asylum seekers are prohibited from working while their claims are being processed—a policy decision rather than a personal choice.

❺ “They’re just waiting around doing nothing.”

Fact: The majority of asylum seekers aim to contribute positively. Many engage in volunteering, learning English, or participating in community organisations, despite facing significant uncertainty.

❻ “We’re spending millions on them!”

Fact: The high costs associated with hotel use stem from a broken and backlogged asylum system, not from the individuals utilising it. Delays perpetuate a state of limbo, resulting in increased long-term expenses.

❼ “They’re given better treatment than our homeless.”

Fact: Asylum seekers are housed in hotels due to the government’s legal obligation to accommodate them. Homelessness is a distinct and also underfunded issue; one should not be used to justify neglect of the other.

❽ “They’re all men of fighting age.”

Fact: Asylum hotels also house families, women, and children. The narrative surrounding “fighting-age males” is often intended to incite fear rather than accurately represent the situation.

❾ “They could have stayed in a safe country.”

Fact: International law does not mandate claiming asylum in the first safe country encountered. Individuals arrive in the UK for various reasons—language preferences, family connections, historical ties, or safety concerns elsewhere.

**10** “They’re pretending to be refugees to get free stuff.”

Fact: The vast majority of asylum seekers are legitimate refugees fleeing war, torture, and persecution. Their claims undergo individual assessments based on stringent criteria.

Asylum seekers residing in hotels are not leading luxurious lives—they are enduring hardships while awaiting safety. The core issue lies not with those occupying the hotels but rather with the prolonged circumstances that have led them there.

For information on our services visit <https://www.ciacadvice.com/>



## All Souls Day Quiz Answers

<b>A</b>	Which A means beginning?	<b>Alpha</b>
<b>L</b>	What L became Matthew?	<b>Levi</b>
<b>L</b>	Which L was the sister of Rachel?	<b>Leah</b>
<b>S</b>	Which S approved the killing of the first martyr?	<b>Saul</b>
<b>O</b>	What O means end?	<b>Omega</b>
<b>U</b>	Where Abram was from?	<b>Ur</b>
<b>L</b>	What L did Jacob dream about?	<b>Ladder</b>
<b>S</b>	Which S was the first martyr?	<b>Stephen</b>
<b>D</b>	Which D was told Samson's secret?	<b>Deliah</b>
<b>A</b>	Which A of Padula is the patron saint of lost things?	<b>Anthony</b>
<b>Y</b>	Complete the Hymn title - Y_ Holy Angels Bright?	<b>Ye</b>



# Andy and Kati Walsh

## CMS Link Letter August 2025



Dear friends,

We hope this update finds you well. We're excited to share some encouraging developments and prayer points from our life and ministry here in Florianópolis. On 21<sup>st</sup> June, Andy was ordained as a pastor in the Vineyard Church in Brazil. The ceremony took place during the annual Vineyard conference, held in São Bento do Sul – a small town around four hours north of Florianópolis. It was a deeply moving and joyful occasion for us, made all the more special by having a group of dear friends from our church there. This appointment has grown organically from years of active service in the local church since our arrival in January 2022 – particularly through close collaboration with the leadership team. While this wasn't part of our original mission brief with CMS, it became evident that God was opening the door for us to serve the local church more deeply. Andy co-pastors the church with one of its founding leaders, enabling continuity in both spheres of mission. We count it a real privilege to serve in both church and prison, with the same vision: to see lives transformed by the gospel and people becoming committed followers of Christ.

After more than three years without formal pastoral oversight, this step also marks a significant moment of renewed stability and direction for the church community. Kati and I continue to invest in emerging leaders, and we're encouraged to see people deepening in faith and stepping up to serve. We're currently praying about relocating to a larger meeting space. We have outgrown our current venue, and we're exploring options to better serve our Sunday gatherings and midweek ministries. The financial step will be significant, so we're trusting the Lord for wisdom and provision.

By the end of August, we'll have completed three additional 12-week courses in prisons around greater Florianópolis. Since launching this ministry in September 2023, we've delivered around 250 hours of gospel centred teaching to over 120 men and women. To date, 11 full terms of Prison Fellowship International's discipleship course have been completed across three facilities. These sessions offer an in-depth exploration of the gospel and its transformative power, even in the most difficult of environments. What continues to move us deeply is what happens beyond the sessions themselves. During their limited time in the courtyards, men often form circles – sometimes of 20 or more – to pray, sing and read God's word.

Some even approach me through the bars as I walk past to offer words of encouragement or share what God is doing in their lives. It's deeply humbling. It's also been an intense and stretching season. I regularly visit three separate prisons each week, offering evangelistic services, Bible teaching,

pastoral support and baptisms. These moments have brought profound encounters. One man, Julio, approached me after a session, visibly distressed, and simply said: "Please pray for my life." As I prayed, tears ran down his face – unashamed before the other men. It reminded me of the tax collector in Luke 18:3–14 – broken, repentant and seeking God's mercy. The very next day, Julio told me he'd been unexpectedly offered a job inside the prison and attributed this to prayer. These may seem like small moments, but in this context, this is a privilege for just a few in a system. 1,800 inmates are confined for 22 hours a day and in many cases go months without even leaving their cells. These signs of answered prayer are restoring dignity. When another heard this testimony, within days, they were also offered a role. The word is getting around and now I'm waiting to hear about whether a third person, a former course student, acquired work!

Weekly we pray for healing, and for the families of inmates going through very tough times. And weekly we hear testimonies of God's faithfulness. Praise the Lord! A growing burden on my heart is to establish a regular space for informal worship within São Pedro de Alcântara penitentiary. Brazilian law actually requires such a space in every unit, but in practice it's rarely implemented. As expected, we've encountered resistance – logistical and bureaucratic: "There's no space," "We can't open the door to one denomination without opening it to all..." Still, there are glimmers of hope. I've held encouraging meetings with the prison director and head of security, and a further meeting is being scheduled. Pastor Antônio and Kati will join me to discuss a pilot initiative – perhaps starting with open-air gatherings in the courtyards, led by an inter-denominational group of local churches. This would allow any inmates to attend, without placing strain on already stretched resources. The proposal remains under review, but we'd value your prayers for wisdom, favour and unity. Our hope is that this could become a regular activity in the prison.

We remain deeply thankful for your support, friendship and prayers. Whether in church or prison, in Sunday services or courtyard prayers, we see God faithfully at work – drawing people to himself, one life at a time.

With love and gratitude,  
**Andy, Kati and Eva**

## **Top of the – Hymns!**

For a few months now we have been singing some traditional Hymns at our 9.00am Service, following occasional requests for congregational hymns from the priest conducting the service. A “straw poll” of the regular attenders showed a positive reaction, and no objections were raised, although one individual said that the quiet austere nature of a “said” service is also appreciated.

It became apparent that without a choir to lead the singing we found it difficult when unfamiliar tunes or words were chosen by the person leading the Service, or the recorded accompaniment didn't precisely match the words. At the suggestion of one of the stalwarts of the 9.00am service, we therefore asked people to suggest a personal list of recommendation of five, familiar regular hymns with some freedom to add seasonal favourites.

About half of those asked responded with their personal lists – some suggesting more hymns than others, and the results have been compared with the available pre-recorded accompaniments (on 18 CDs): 79 hymns in total were suggested of which 38 received 2 nominations, 3 received 3 nominations and the most popular (with 4 nominations each) were “Praise my soul the King of heaven” and “Guide me o thou Great Redeemer”.

The choice of Hymns in future at 9.00am will still be at the discretion of the Clergy leading the service and determined by the season, lectionary and theme of the sermon, but we have provided the list as a guide for selection including a note of the ones for which we have not yet found accompaniments. Advent, Christmas Palm Sunday and Easter “standards” will also be used seasonally. We hope this initiative will encourage those who wish to attend with the confidence that we will be able to sing some familiar hymns in our collective act of worship at 9.00am.

**David Craig**



## **“GOD SPARED ME TO WORSHIP HIM”**

When Adam in Cameroon was kidnapped by Boko Haram, he was willing to die for his faith. But then he saw God intervene – not once but twice.

Adam became a Christian when friends took him to church. Then he had a dream that would sustain him through the challenges ahead: “Jesus told me I should not worry, for He is with me.” After finishing school and starting a family, Adam became a fishmonger. One day, while working on an island in the far north of Cameroon, he and his colleagues were surrounded by Boko Haram militants. “We had no idea that territory belonged to Muslims! They said Christians should stand on one side, and Muslims on the other.” Adam and seven other Christians were forced onto a canoe and made to paddle with their hands through the night. They then walked for several days, reaching a Boko Haram hideout. After five weeks in captivity, they escaped by capitalising on a power struggle amongst the militants. “We ran away while there was tension,” recalls Adam. “God did it, God helped and we fled.”

But a worse ordeal was to come 18 months later. Adam was asleep in his home when there was a loud knock. “Open the door!” someone yelled. When he stepped outside, Boko Haram fighters tied him up, alongside other members of his family. “They shot my little brother and my father’s little brother. They kidnapped eight of us.” The militants asked Adam and others if they were Christians. “We said, ‘Yes, we are.’ I knew Jesus would perform His miracle, because we were praying.” Despite attempts to break their spirits, they persevered in bold prayer. “If they will kill us, let them kill us. But if we’re going to be free, show us, because we’re tired of suffering. I didn’t see a sign either way.”

Six weeks later, a sign came. The guards at the entrance of the camp fell asleep, leaving the door open, and the group fled. “God spared us!” Adam was reunited with his family, but they were now displaced. He had nightmares and struggled to find work. But support showed Adam that he’s not alone – providing him with practical support and trauma care to help him forgive his persecutors. “With God’s help, you have comforted me,” he says. “I no longer have the weight in my heart. “I was kidnapped twice, but I wasn’t killed. I don’t know why it happened this way, but the Lord is the One who has let me live for His glory. Maybe He spared me to worship Him.”

PLEASE PRAY • That those held captive by Boko Haram will be freed  
• For provision for displaced believers and opportunities to gather safely for worship • For peace to return so that Christians can return home.

**Open Doors – Cameroon**

# Every Picture Tells a Story



Every Picture Tells a Story is an old Sir Rod Stewart album and song, but long before the album, pictures were used by stained-glass makers to illustrate and remind us of many well-known bible stories, and the window nearest to the Fulthorpe Chapel in Stranton church tells not one but three stories!

The left-hand side window tells the parable of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector - Luke 18 v 9 -14.

The centre window the parable of the Good Samaritan - Luke 10 v 25 – 37.

The story in the final window had me puzzled for years until we recently had a reading from Luke 12 v 32- 34.

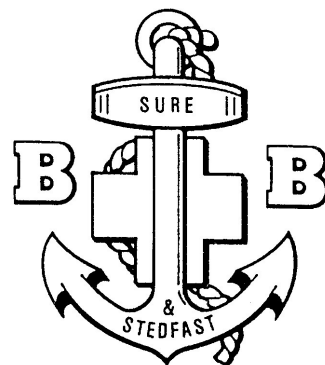
“Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has been pleased to give you the kingdom. Sell your possessions and give to the poor. Provide purses for yourselves that will not wear out, a treasure in heaven that will never fail, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”

In the picture you can see three people kneeling (little flock) and Jesus holding treasure bags. This all seems to fit, but if anyone knows more information about the right-hand side picture that would be appreciated by me, because as a Boys Brigade leader this picture is always used as part of our tour of Stranton Church.

**George Bainbridge**



## Boy's Brigade



### Sad News

One of our former leaders John Lauderdale has passed away. Before helping our company, John was Captain of the 7th Hartlepool (Oxford Road Baptist) for many years. He joined our Company at the turn of this century.

His legacy to the 4<sup>th</sup> is that he introduced the way we camp today in residential buildings rather than tents, plus entering us into National Boys Brigade Competitions.

He was always an inspiration to our leaders and gave good counsel when the Company had a problem to solve. He was committed to the BB and his example as a strong Christian leader was evident to all.

### Harvest Festival Preparations

All our members have been preparing for the Harvest Festival Service on Sunday 28th September.

Each section has produced a display and the Juniors are going to play 'All Things Bright and Beautiful' and the chorus of 'We Plough the Fields and Scatter' on Boom Whackers (Pics on Facebook).

### New Members Wanted

We are looking for new members in each Section:

**Anchor Boys** is for 5 - 8year olds (Y2 & Y3) and meets on Friday nights 6.00pm - 7.00pm

**Juniors** is for 8 - 11year olds (Y4, Y5 and Y6) and meets on Monday nights 6.30pm - 8.00pm

**Company** is for 11year olds plus and meets on Friday nights 7.15pm - 9.00pm

**All sections meet in St Matthew's Community Centre, Elwick Road.**

If you would like to know more about our activities, please visit our Facebook page - 4th Hartlepool Boys Brigade.

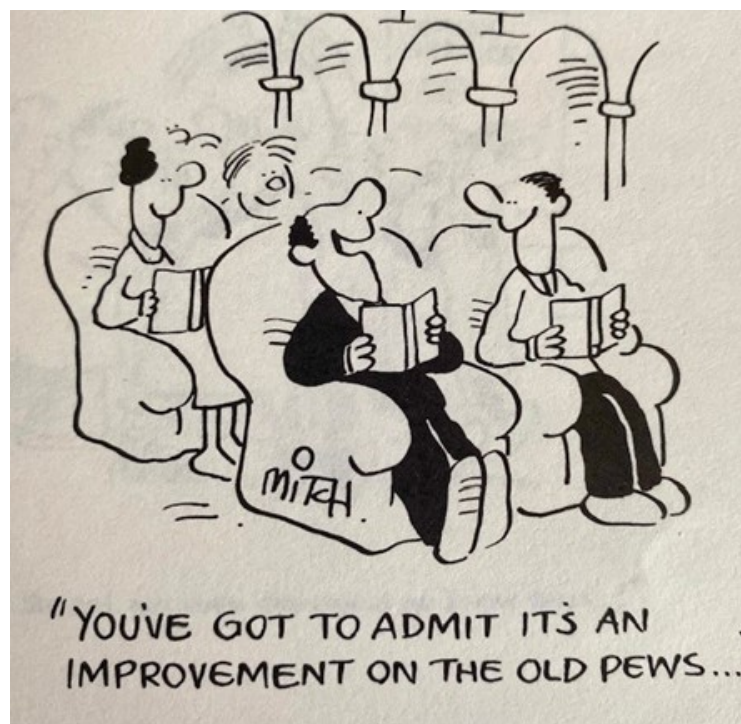


## Juniors started the term with autumn crafts and dodgeball



**George Bainbridge**





## A Prayer of John Henry Newman

O Lord, support us all the day long  
of this troubled life,  
until the shadows lengthen  
and the evening comes  
and the busy world is hushed,  
the fever of life is over,  
and our work is done.  
Then, in your mercy,  
grant us a safe lodging,  
and a holy rest,  
and peace at the last,  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.  
Amen.

# CELEBRATE!

## HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

to

October

Daniel Bell  
Rev John Bell  
Seeley Bruce  
Mia Bruce  
Kat Bruce  
Rob Butler  
Ewan Craig  
James Harkness  
Rebekah Grosvenor  
Joan Hill  
Ken Shepherd  
Will Spoors  
Pam Stockton  
Asher Thornhill  
Gehan Wanduragala



**Wedding Anniversary**

Peter & Maureen Anderson  
Duncan & Trish Playfor

If you have something to celebrate we would love to share it - email  
[admin@stranton-church.org.uk](mailto:admin@stranton-church.org.uk)  
or phone 894006.

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



## Dates for the Diary

### October

Sat 4<sup>th</sup> Coffee, Cake & Company St Matthew's CC 2:00-4:00pm  
Sun 12<sup>th</sup> Messy Church St Matthew's CC 4:00-5:30pm  
Sat 18<sup>th</sup> "LUKETIDE" Coffee Morning & Gift Day 10:00am till Noon  
Sun 19<sup>th</sup> St Luke's Patronal Service

### November

2<sup>nd</sup> November 2025 - All Saints Day a.m. All Souls Service p.m.  
3<sup>rd</sup> Church 900year celebrations to be launched on All Saints Day  
2025 and end on All Saints Day 2026.

## St Luke's Church

Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> October  
LUKETIDE

10:00am till Noon

Coffee Morning & Gift Day

Bric-Brac, Tombola, Cakes & Preserves.

£1 entry includes tea/coffee, under12s free.

We ask that you leave a birthday donation towards the work of the church.

Email: [admin@stlukeshartlepool.org.uk](mailto:admin@stlukeshartlepool.org.uk)

Tel: 01429 756826



**All Souls Day**

St Luke's Church

4:00pm Sunday

2<sup>nd</sup> NOVEMBER

A quiet and contemplative service for the bereaved.

An opportunity to reflect in quietness, with readings and hymns.

Everyone is invited to attend

# Who's Who

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

**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

***Magazine articles to the parish office by 16th of every month.***

