

Spire Newsletter

FREE



NEWS FROM THE PARISHES OF
GREAT AYTON WITH EASBY &
NEWTON UNDER ROSEBERRY

Issue no.7 : November 2025



**WELCOME TO OUR NEW VICAR
REV SARAH CLIFF
WHO WAS INDUCTED INTO OUR PARISHES
BY BARRY, BISHOP OF WHITBY,
ON 7TH OCTOBER**

On Tuesday 7th, a packed Christ Church was delighted to welcome our new vicar, Rev Sarah Cliff, in a joyful and uplifting celebration led by Barry Hill, Bishop of Whitby. Parishioners were joined in the service and afterwards for refreshments by local clergy, representatives from Great Ayton (including the local Council, Methodist Church and Marwood C of E Infant School), and a large number of well-wishers from Sarah's previous churches in Darlington, Barnard Castle and Morecambe.

A first message to us from Sarah:

Hello new friends and neighbours

I am writing this just a few days into my first week as your new Vicar. We (husband Garry and cats Solomon and Lola) moved into Ayton at the end of August. Since then we have unpacked very many boxes, learnt that you need a pass to go to the tip and also not to go to tip on Wednesdays! We have also learnt how friendly and welcoming everyone is and what a fruitful place this corner of God's own county really is. So many gifts of apples, plums, vegetables and more cards than the new vicarage can display. Thank you, it has been really affirming to be welcomed so heartily. Tuesday this week (7th October) saw the church packed with new faces to see the Bishop of Whitby licence me to these parishes. Also swelling the numbers were clergy, friends and family from near and far. They all remarked how welcomed they were and what a good buffet was offered; hospitality is certainly a hallmark of a supportive community. It is no surprise that Jesus often shared meals with friends and strangers. He commanded us to share a simple meal of bread and wine every time we gather in remembrance of him. Churches call it many different names: Holy Communion, Eucharist, Mass, The Lord's Supper. It doesn't really matter what we call it because the important thing is we come together as God's children to hear Christ's words, to sing of God's glory and to share simple bread and wine.

*So I say to you, as I begin this new chapter of ministry for me as well as for Christ Church and St Oswald's - **welcome.***

Sarah with her husband Garry at her Welcome service.



Sarah is holding the lovely welcome card created by the children of Marwood School, presented to her during the service by their headteacher, Mrs Dorothy Walton.

*If you have been coming to church for longer than you remember - **welcome.***

*Or you have never been before - **welcome.***

*Or if it has been a long time since you attended church - **welcome.***

*If you know your Bible inside out - **welcome.***

*If you are full of questions and not sure what this faith thing is all about - **welcome.***

As I have been welcomed by Jesus' love and saving grace, so you are also welcomed to share with all that goes on in the churches I have been called to serve. Hopefully the weeks and months ahead will enable me to meet with more of you who live and work in Great Ayton and Newton. It may take me a while to remember everyone's name - but be assured that God knows each and every one of your names. He loves you and offers you a welcome to spend time in prayer, worship and fellowship in His house.

Blessings Sarah

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Bishop Barry with, to his right, Rev Sarah Cliff and (behind) Rev Jon Dean and Area Dean, Rev Tessa Stephens, then St Oswald's Churchwardens, Steve Followes and Christine Stinson, and Licensed Lay Minister, Margaret Lewis, and, to the Bishop's left, Archdeacon of Cleveland, Ven Amanda Bloor, and (behind) Christ Church Warden Alison Collins, then Rev Geoff Jaques, Warden and Authorised Lay Minister, Rosemary Wheway, and Licensed Lay Minister, Peter Titchmarsh.



A VERY, VERY GREAT BIG THANK YOU from all our congregations to all those across our churches who 'raised their game' and took on so much more to guide and direct us through the last year's vacancy. Though recognising that it was invidious to name individuals, Bishop Barry felt it right during the service to single out our four Church wardens, all the clergy and readers, and, most particularly, Rev Jon Dean - who, he said, now deserves a rest!

Sarah's first Sunday services with us were celebrations of HARVEST in both parishes. At Christ Church the ladies gave us, as always, some excellent displays. Here photographer Rodney Wildsmith captures them making the final touches:



The ladies are already planning for Christmas and would love you to help sponsor the season's flowers. Please contact Marina Charlton for information at Christ Church or on 01642 723087.

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Sarah's first Sunday service was in Christ Church on Sunday 12th October, when we celebrated HARVEST.

Offerings of money and food were collected for MIDDLESBROUGH FOOD BANK.



We were joined by lots of our younger members from our local uniformed groups parading their colours.



The young people brought their offerings to the altar and there was a lot more left at the back of church by the congregation.

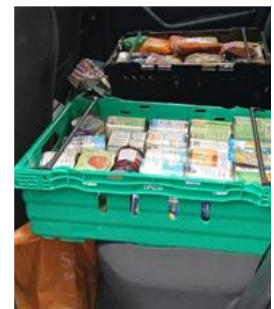
Then it was all squeezed into Helen Land's car to get it to Middlesbrough.



1st Guides, 2nd Rainbows & 1st Brownies

But people in our local area will still be going hungry well after our harvest offerings have all been eaten.

If you would like to continue giving food, please bring your donations to Christ Church on the 3rd Sunday of each month or during the previous week.



Let us share God's goodness to us with those who are less fortunate today.



ANOTHER SARAH! The Rt Revd and Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE, Bishop of London since 2018, is to become 106th Archbishop of Canterbury, the first woman leader of the Church of England since Saint Augustine arrived in Kent from Rome in 597. She will be installed in a service at Canterbury Cathedral in March 2026. Prior to her ordination in 2001, she was the Government's Chief Nursing Officer for England – the youngest person ever to be appointed to that role at the age of 37 – having previously specialised as a cancer nurse. In 2024, some 582,000 people regularly attended Anglican Sunday services, an increase of some 8,000 since 2023.

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THE ROSEBERRY SCHOOL IN DARJEELING



We invited Helen Jones, a resident of Great Ayton and former teacher at Stokesley School, to update us on the school she helped to set up many years ago and which our parish has supported from time to time. Helen has returned to India many times and set up the UK charity School Aid India to raise funds.

Things are going well at Roseberry this year. An outbreak of chicken pox at the beginning of the new school year did not prevent the new intake of pre-school children from settling quickly into their lovely building once the infection had passed. The teachers were especially pleased to welcome Divyansh (*right*) whose mother and father are both deaf and mute, so that the family communicate by signing. He is enjoying school and happily engages with other children as well as working on individual tasks.



It has always been a sadness that children with serious mobility issues cannot access our lovely school but there are just too many very steep steps to negotiate. So we were very



Kushi, air stewardess, was selected for her good presence and clear spoken English.

pleased to hear about nine year old Sagarika's progress. She suffers from dwarfism but loves school and has many friends. At Roseberry she has a special small size table and chair, but otherwise she manages well. Her teachers are concerned that she may not cope with the large classes in Secondary School but are doing their best to give her a good start.

The School's Director reports that, just as in the UK, there have been some unwelcome changes in children's behaviour since Covid, and it is not hard to see why. Most of our pupils live in one or perhaps two small rooms and the children have very few toys or other diversions or indeed any space to play, meaning lockdown was torture for their families. Their teachers are not equipped to deal with the resulting issues and so have greatly welcomed some unexpected help. Our Director's daughter has just completed a Master's Degree in Psychology and plans to go into the education sector. She is keen to work with young children and has been getting valuable work experience at Roseberry School. Until very recently, psychological issues received no attention at all in Indian schools, so Roseberry pupils and their teachers are hugely fortunate.

We are delighted that the school is again able to offer hot meals cooked on the premise. Varied and nutritious menus are supplied at very low cost and most parents take advantage of them, with a few especially needy children receiving meals free of charge.



We continue to be amazed at the way the school manages to turn children from deprived backgrounds into such confident and balanced youngsters by the time they leave Roseberry. This head-start continues to help ex pupils into a wide variety of career paths. Recently two girls obtained posts as air stewardesses in the face of much competition. They are now travelling all over Asia and receiving good salaries. A batch of ex pupils now in the last year at college hope to embark on their chosen careers next year, so watch this space!

If you would like to support Helen and the Roseberry School, look online at the charity's website – and be inspired: www.schoolaidindia.org

In issue 6 of this church newsletter, in our series of Our Church in the Community we recognised those in the churches in our village who have volunteered their time to support the development of the excellent Discovery Centre; we included a photograph of five trustees, two of whom are from Christ Church. It appears that there was room for misunderstanding; we were not ignoring the huge contributions of many others from Gt Ayton and apologise if we gave any offence by their omission.

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Remembering Barney

*Noting that Sarah once served as a curate in Barnard Castle, **Malcolm Race** (a former editor of our old *Spire* magazine) was reminded of his link with the town many years ago.*

After the fall of France in 1940, boys of Middlesbrough High School were evacuated – for a second time – this time to Upper Teasdale where we were billeted in homes in the villages of Cotherstone, Romaldkirk and Lartington. I and another pupil were allocated to the village grocer and his housekeeper in Cotherstone. Each day we travelled by train into Barnard Castle to attend school in part of Bowes Museum. The school Scout troop was reformed and took part in local activities, including collaborating with the village Girl Guides in the collection of wastepaper for the war effort, putting on two concerts in aid of charity and (with parental permission), enlisting as runners for the Home Guard (although fortunately we were never needed). One boy received a bravery award for rescuing a soldier from the River Tees.

One day in May 1941 when the German battleship Bismarck was sunk, the headmaster and a number of boys were in a High Street café in Barnard Castle when the announcement was made over the wireless. He promptly ordered desserts all round to celebrate.

I have special reason to remember the evacuation; one of the soldiers stationed in the village after Dunkirk had been a BBC broadcasting organist and was persuaded to give a concert in Cotherstone Methodist Church. The Teesdale Mercury asked me to do a report and so I got my first 'by-line' at 15. I still have the cutting of the report, as well as my old school cap and other memorabilia to remind me of the life-shaping evacuation experience.

After two years, I left school at 16 to start work as a junior reporter at the Gazette before being called up for army service in 1944.



Malcolm Race
in a recent photo

OUR REGULAR CHURCH SERVICES

Christ Church, Great Ayton

Sunday 8.00am Holy Communion
9:15am Parish Communion with choir (every Sunday)
4:00pm for 4.30pm Café Church (2nd & 4th Sundays)

Monday 2.00pm Coffee Lounge Communion (1st Monday)

Tuesday 9.45am Little Fishes

Wednesday 10.00 Holy Communion (BCP) or Morning Prayer

St Oswald's, Newton under Roseberry

Sunday 11.00 Holy Communion with hymns (1st & 5th Sundays)
All Age Service (3rd Sunday each month)

SPECIAL SERVICES AT CHRIST CHURCH IN NOVEMBER

Sun 2nd Nov is All Souls' Day when we remember those close to us who have left this life. At 5.00pm a **Memorial Service** will be held to which all are welcome.

Sun 9th Nov is Remembrance Sunday, when we remember those who have died for us in past conflicts. The usual outdoor service will be held at 10.45am at the war memorial with laying of wreaths and a silence at 11.00 am, followed by a service in the church.

Sunday 30th Nov is Advent Sunday, when the Church's year starts afresh and we prepare our minds and spirits for Christmas and the Nativity of our Lord. At 4.00pm there will be a **Christingle Service**, especially for children.

Rev Geoff Jaques suggests we

Pray a Psalm each day

Gordon, then the Bishop of Whitby who ordained me priest in Christ Church in July 1998, told me 'if you do nothing else pray a psalm each day'. I have!

Like other collections of poetry, the psalms express many moods; they fit many different occasions; they open up new horizons; they impact on each of us in different ways at different times. The psalms were the prayers of Jesus, Mary, Joseph and Jesus' disciples. They are a fundamental treasury of prayer for the whole Christian Church.

Why not say a psalm each day and meet up with others every couple of weeks to share your experiences?

If this idea appeals, let Geoff know.

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Our Christ Church treasurer, Ken Taylor, shares a few "Snippets from the PCC"

- Following the successful Gift Day last year and the giving appeal earlier this year, the PCC has decided to increase the Free Will Offer* to the Diocese from £90,000 to £93,000 in 2026 and the annual mission giving from £5,000 to £6,000.
- The Church received a legacy of £1000 in September.
- To help fund the repair and repointing of the church spire, the treasurer has applied to a number of grant providers- one of them has already offered a grant of £1,900. The total cost of the spire repairs is £24,500.
- The Diocese will gift the proposed new path from Marwood School to Christ Church and will pay for the full cost of the initial works. The Church will however be responsible for future maintenance of the path.
- With regard to safeguarding, the PCC approved the use of social media within the Parish.

(For context) The Freewill Offering is our contribution to the Diocese of York to fund mission and ministry across our parish and the diocese at large, including those parishes less able to contribute. (A pamphlet explaining the Free Will Offer, produced by the Diocese, is available in Church.)

The Prayer and Meditation area in Christ Church is available for private and personal use throughout the day.

CONGRATULATIONS to our friends in the Methodist Church. Like Christ Church and St Oswald's, they have been awarded the *Silver Eco Church Award*!



NEW CONTACT DETAILS:

Rev Sarah Cliff

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For events and bookings:

Church Office: 01642 722665

gapo1876@outlook.com

For Safeguarding issues:

Mary Mason 01642 724316

ccgasafeguarding@gmail.com

Church website address:

<https://www.christchurchgreatayton.org.uk>

Our Facebook pages:

Christ Church, Great Ayton;
St Oswald's, Newton under Roseberry;
All Saints Church, Great Ayton;
Christ Church Choir, Great Ayton

Little Fishes have a Private Group on Facebook for parents and carers of pre-school children; you can request to join it.

The Adult Discipleship Group also has a Private Group.

Sincere thanks are due to all the contributors of the above articles and to our photographers, and to Rev Geoff Jaques, who has been chairing and encouraging a small working group on communications within our parishes.

A two-month issue of this *Spire Newsletter* is planned for the end of November in order to anticipate Christmas and the New Year. If you would like to submit an article, news or details of events likely to interest our readers or merely offer suggestions for future possible issues, you are welcome to send them to the interim editor, Stephen Whitehead, at: stephen.whitehead1948@gmail.com. The closing date for the next issue will be 7th November.