

Spire Newsletter

FREE



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

Issue no.9
February & March 2026



WELCOME TO OUR FIRST NEWSLETTER OF 2026. Advent, Christmas and Epiphany have come and gone, and we have been delighted with the willingness of our church members and friends across our parishes to support and join in so many of our recent events. **IT WILL SOON BE LENT!** Ash Wednesday - the beginning of Lent - is on Wednesday 18th February, with Easter being celebrated early this year – on Sunday 5th April.

LENT “*Forty days and forty nights, You were fasting in the wild...*” As the hymn reminds us, Jesus spent time preparing for his ministry, which ended with his triumphal entry into Jerusalem, his painful death, then his glorious resurrection. Our period of Lent invites us too to prepare for Easter for 40 days (46 actually, but Sundays aren’t included) - maybe by reflection or by abstinence; sometimes people give up something (chocolate? alcohol?) or decide to take on something new to benefit others. And this is a very good time to reflect on our relationship with God (see *further p 4.*) . The word *Lent* isn’t itself religious; in Old English, as the days were lengthening, it signified ‘spring season’, but fasting before Easter became a custom very early in the Christian Church. It starts on Ash Wednesday; the ashes, traditionally prepared by the burning of the palm leaves from the previous year, are a sign of repentance after the ‘shriving’ on Shrove Tuesday. In the medieval world fasting often meant giving up dairy produce (which we still observe on the day we make our pancakes) and meat; in some – especially Catholic - countries, they still say farewell (*vale*) to their stores of flesh (*carne*) with exuberant *carnivals*. For us the music in our main church services tends to be more restrained during Lent - our hymns more contemplative, organ voluntaries more subdued, the ‘Gloria’ replaced by penitence, no Alleluias sung; but, in forty days’ time, how much more meaningful will be our “**HE IS RISEN; ALLELUIA.**”

Our Vicar, Revd Sarah, has a message of hope for us all.

Dear Friends & Neighbours February and March are very different months, and big changes happen between them. February often feels like a month caught between seasons. Christmas is packed away, the days are short and the good intentions of New Year resolutions have slipped. But, if we look closely, we see signs of hope and bulbs are already pushing through the cold ground. Snowdrops appear almost unnoticed at first, lambing time edges closer, and the light lingers just a little longer each evening.

In the church calendar, February brings us *Candlemas*, the feast that marks the presentation of baby Jesus in the Temple. It’s a moment that can easily be overlooked, but it holds something deeply precious. Simeon and Anna, two elderly figures who have waited faithfully for years... finally they see what they have long hoped for: the light of God coming into the world.

Light is such a powerful image at this time of year. We are all weary of darkness by February... dark mornings, dark evenings, and sometimes dark news that weighs heavily on our hearts. Yet *Candlemas* reminds us that God’s light does not wait for perfect conditions. It shines into imperfect, ordinary, even difficult circumstances. Hope doesn’t arrive with a fanfare; it often comes quietly, held gently in waiting arms.

February is also a month when we’re invited to pause and reflect, to take time before we step into the busyness of spring, and *Lent* calls us through into March to reflect once again

on Jesus’ journey to the Cross. It is a good time to ask a few important questions: Where have I noticed light recently? Who has helped me see hope when I struggled to find it myself? And how might I be a small bearer of that light to others? Our Lenten journey takes us to the end of March and to Palm Sunday that begins *Holy Week*. This year Palm Sunday is the day the clocks go forward – when light is very much the talking point and days stretch out past late afternoon – joy indeed.

In our community, light often shows itself in very practical ways: neighbours checking in on one another, lifts offered, conversations held at the gate or over a cup of tea. These moments matter more than we sometimes realise. They are reflections of God’s care, lived out in everyday faithfulness.

As we move through February and into March my prayer is that we would have eyes to notice the light already among us...to see God’s love at work in the small details of a friendly ‘hello’ or a glimpse of the first snowdrops. Why not join in the Lent journey towards the dazzling light of *Easter*, but to get there we first walk the darker quieter path of Lent. And of course, there is and will always be a warm welcome and the promise of God’s light for you in our churches which we’d love to share with you. May you each know the light of Christ Child of *Candlemas* and in the hope of the Lenten walk with Jesus.

Blessings Sarah

OUR CHURCHES SUPPORTING OTHERS

As is customary, both parishes held Christmas appeals this year. Thank you to all of you who generously found the time, energy and money to think of others.

The recipient of this year's Christmas Appeal at Christ Church was [Teesside Hospice](#). We raised a total of £2092 (including Gift Aid) from Carol Services at Christ Church and All Saints and the ever-popular Crib Service on Christmas Eve, an increase of over £450 on last year's donations.

Also, at Christmas we accept donations from those who support the [Memory Tree](#). This year a total of £82 (a little less than last year) was raised for [Heriot Hospice Homecare](#).

This year St Oswald's decided that they would give the proceeds of their Christmas services to [The Genesis Project](#), and a pleasing £590 was raised for the charity.

Meanwhile, during the year, usually in the week leading to the 3rd Sunday of each month, Christ Church collects goods to donate to the Food Bank. Do please consider helping others.



"I will give you rest, come"

WORLD DAY OF PRAYER

This year's World Day of Prayer service has been composed by the women of Nigeria, the theme being "*I will give you rest, come*".

In Great Ayton the service will be held on Friday 6th March at 10.30am in the Friends' Meeting House.

It will include songs, prayers, meditation, music and much more - a great chance for everyone to come together on the same day all over the world. Refreshments will be served afterwards.

Please do come and join in this joyful time of praise, prayerful worship and fellowship and invite your friends.

Further details from Angela Jaques
07884486396.

PROSTHETICS AND ORTHOTICS AT GUINEBOR 2 HOSPITAL IN CHAD

THIS IS ONE OF THE CHARITIES WHICH CHRIST CHURCH PCC AGREED TO SUPPORT THIS YEAR

Roger and Ingrid Hamlet write: *Thank you, Christ Church, for your very generous gift to our work in Chad.*



Guinebor 2 Hospital (G2) on the northern outskirts of the Chadian capital, N'Djamena (see map), has been serving the local community for 15 years. It was started by an American surgeon and nurse couple and has grown over the years, partnering with several different missions across the world. The hospital provides reliable and affordable healthcare, which isn't always easy to find in this part of the world. G2 has become well-known in the area for its orthopaedic provision with a highly respected surgical and physiotherapy service.

The new prosthetics and orthotics (P&O) service will increase the scope of G2's rehabilitation services providing artificial limbs to amputees and body braces and supports to the injured or disabled.

P&O access in Chad is severely limited. Where you would expect to find these services in every major town in the UK with over 1100 clinicians across the nation, in Chad, there are just two centres with six clinicians between them. There are an estimated 95,000 people in Chad that would benefit from P&O services. Increasing the access to this essential service will allow people to walk to work, to feed their family.

We have met amputees at G2 that have asked us if we can make them a leg. People like Issa (right) have asked us this exact question. Issa lost his leg above the knee when he was 13 years old due to a chronic skin infection. Treatment for the type of infection he had is difficult and expensive, and amputation is often the only viable option. He has spent the last year on crutches, unable to keep up with his peers. Tragically, we had to tell him 'not yet'.



We joined the G2 team a year ago and have spent time doing the detailed planning involved in starting up a new service from scratch. As so few of the components and materials we need can be found in Chad, our biggest challenge will be importing it into this land-locked, central African nation with poor infrastructure, in a cost effective and efficient way.

We thank God for the progress that has been made. Thanks to generous donations and grants we will very soon be able to start building a small section of the department building and order the large workshop equipment and tools needed to start seeing patients. Thank you for your generous donation and being a part of our work here in Chad, your support means a lot. We are grateful that soon we will no longer have to say 'not yet' to people like Issa.



"I COUNT NO HOURS BUT THE BRIGHT ONES"

"James, go down to the church and let me know the time, will you?"
"OK ma."

And off down the hill from his father's farm the teenager strolls, whistling his favourite sea shanty.

"The shadow is on the six, Ma." he replies on his return, "and I'm hungry."

Whether Mrs Cook actually sent her son is unknown - and probably unlikely. But it is very likely that James Cook and his family made use of the first sundial set on All Saints church porch; it had been erected in 1743, two years before James left for Staithes, then Whitby and the sea.

Now its replacement, a copy from the 1980s and recently restored by Richard Wood, can be seen in Rodney Wildsmith's photograph being put back in place by Kevin Tate. And its motto? *"Horas Non Numero, Nisi Serenas"* - *I count no hours but the bright ones.*

Have you been to a [REPAIR CAFE](#) yet?

Rev Geoff has used the Repair Cafe hosted by Climate Action on several occasions now, most recently to get a vacuum cleaner repaired. Repairer Des features in the photo together with Angela, myself and 2 grandsons.

Previously we've had shears sharpened and glass ornaments repaired (can't spot the joins). They have skilled volunteers who for a donation will assess anything and repair it while you wait.



The idea of SaVRC is not to take work away from existing repair businesses (they also publish a local [Repair Professionals Directory](#)), but to fill the gap where there is no repair available.

There's a Repair Cafe from 10-12:00 each month alternating between Stokesley Globe Community Library (2nd Saturdays - Feb, April etc) and Swainby Village Hall (3rd Saturdays - March, May etc.) There is also a Repair Cafe in Guisborough on the last Saturday of each month in the Methodist Church.

Brassed off? Our Altar gleamed brightly this Christmas thanks to these willing cleaners.

A SAMARITAN AT CHRISTMAS

Elsa Taylor stood up in Christ Church early in December and invited volunteers to join her in singing carols in a prison. Surprised and impressed, we have asked Elsa to tell us more about the event....

I spend a great deal of time in Stockton's Holme House Category B men's Prison on behalf of Samaritans, interviewing prisoners, selecting and training, and then monitoring and debriefing them to be Listeners within the Prison. They work on a rota, mostly at night, going out in pairs to emotionally distressed fellow prisoners. They are the equivalent of Samaritans working within the Prison. Often it is the first time they have ever done anything for anyone else, and I find it a privilege to watch them grow in stature as a consequence.

The Lead Chaplain there suggested I organise a group to help augment the two Carol Concerts on Dec 15th and 17th; she calls them concerts and not services because the up to 1250 men in the Prison are of all faiths and none. She could invite only a few men from each of the eight House Blocks because it is obviously not safe to allow more than 40-50 to gather in any one place, without risking losing control.

I took a group of 22 on the first day, 9 on the second, from our congregation, friends, and from my choir (Cleveland Phil) and Middlesbrough Community Choir. All reported back to me that they found it a very rewarding and interesting experience. Several were chatting to the inmates and found it difficult to equate how pleasant they were to the obvious severity of their crimes, having been given long sentences to be served in a high security Cat B Prison. One of us is a Ukrainian singer, whose male family members are all on the front line back home; she sang a short solo in her own language which was very poignant.

I expect I will be asked again next Christmas, so hopefully even more may feel they would like to join us.



A WILDFLOWER PATCH ?



The 'patch' viewed from the hall, steps to the right. If you would like to find out what these coloured lines mean or to be involved, please get in touch with Rev Geoff Jaques, Helen Land or Sue Grey.

"ONE OF THE MAJOR CRISES OF OUR TIME"

Rev Geoff writes: Safeguarding the integrity of creation is one of the Five Marks of Mission established 35 years ago by the Anglican Commission. In their recent report "Spotlight on Nature", the Church Commissioners have reiterated their commitment to supporting nature and enhancing biodiversity. Noting the 97% of wildflower meadows lost since the 1930s, they describe biodiversity loss as "one of the major crises of our time, threatening the diversity of God's creation".

Here at Christ Church we are taking a small step towards reversing this loss. Last November the Parochial Church Council agreed to create a 'wildflower patch' in front of the church hall beside the steps. A small group met in mid-January to begin planning the transformation. It will take time - and may well look a bit wild - but hopefully the insect life will benefit.

OUR REGULAR CHURCH SERVICES

Christ Church, Great Ayton

Sunday	8.00am	Holy Communion	(every Sunday)
	9:15am	Parish Communion	(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	(not school holidays)
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)

Are you on our ELECTORAL ROLL?

Vicki Nath reminds us that, whilst a new electoral roll was compiled last year, every CofE parish has to review its roll annually. So, If your name isn't on the current roll and you now wish to join (or have changed any of your contact details since last year) please would you complete a form, available at the back of church? This revision will take place between 4th February and 4th March in readiness for the [Annual Church Meeting on Wednesday, 18th March at 7.30](#).

CONTACT DETAILS

Rev Sarah Cliff 07355 711010
sarah@christchurchgreatayton.onmicrosoft.com

For events and bookings:

Church Office: 01642 722665
gapo1876@outlook.com

For Safeguarding issues:

Mary Mason 07788643930
mary.mason@gmx.co.uk

Church website address:

<https://www.achurchnearyou.com>

SPECIAL SERVICES IN LENT

From 16th Feb: Mondays weekly at 6:30pm at Christ Church, in the Coffee Lounge.

A 7 - week series begins for those who are curious about the Christian Faith and those who already have faith but want to think a bit more about Jesus and his ministry. Not a deep theological analysis nor a Bible Study but using the TV series *The Chosen*, we will watch an episode and have time for discussion and a short time of prayer.

Monday 23rd Feb and every Monday in Lent at 8.30pm:

A short service of COMPLINE (Night Prayer) by Livestream. Please see the weekly Pew Sheets or email the clergy or church office for any further details.

Wednesday Feb 18th: ASH WEDNESDAY

10.00am Holy Communion (BCP)

7.00pm Holy Communion (Common Worship)

at Christ Church; both services with optional imposition of ashes

**Friday March 6th 10.30am:
WORLD DAY OF PRAYER**

in the Friends' Meeting House

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.

Note that the church is gradually moving our information from our former [website](#) to the above national CofE site.

Sincere thanks are due to all the contributors of the above articles and to our photographers.

The next issue of this **Spire Newsletter** is planned for mid-March in order to anticipate Holy Week and Easter. 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 editor, Stephen Whitehead, at: stephen.whitehead1948@gmail.com.

The closing date for the next issue will be 28th February 2026.