

## January 2026 -----BENEFICE NEWS-----January 2026

**For enquiries please contact Revd Dr Robert Brown**

Priest-in-Charge, Bewcastle, Stapleton and Kirklington with Hethersgill

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| Date     | Sunday            | Bewcastle     | Stapleton | Hethersgill | Kirklington |
|----------|-------------------|---------------|-----------|-------------|-------------|
| 4th Jan  | Epiphany          |               |           |             | 10 am HC    |
| 11th Jan | Baptism of Christ |               |           | 10 am HC    |             |
| 18th Jan | Epiphany 2        |               | 10 am MP  |             |             |
| 25th Jan | Epiphany 3        | 3 pm Evensong |           |             |             |
| 1 Feb    | Candlemas         |               |           |             | 10 am HC    |

HC = Holy Communion, MP = Morning Prayer, EP = Evening Prayer

**Knowe United Reformed Church, Bewcastle**

**1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of the month at 2.15 pm**

### Prayer for the Month

We bring before thee, O Lord, the troubles and perils of people and nations, the sighing of prisoners and captives, the sorrows of the bereaved, the necessities of strangers, the helplessness of the weak, the despondency of the weary, the failing powers of the ages. O Lord, draw near to each; for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. (*St Anslem, 1033-1109, Archbishop of Canterbury*)

### Church Notice

**Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> January Burns Night Supper & Dancing at Stapleton Public Hall.** Supper with a light touch of Burns and dancing led by the wonderful Margaret Main to help the PCC raise funds for St Mary's Church. Tickets £12.50 (under 12s free) to include 2 courses and a nip of whisky. Haggis, neeps & tatties, or steak pie/veggie option. Bar available. Details and tickets from Catherine 016977 48322/07746 286311 or Tricia 016977 48833 or any member of the PCC. Please bring plate, glass and cutlery

Please note **evening services at Bewcastle** during the winter will be held at **3 pm** instead of the usual 6 pm in summer.

**Bewcastle church is hoping to improve the look of the churchyard** by "rewilding" it - sowing wildflower seeds and possibly adding in native shrubs around the walls - generally taking it away from the monoculture it now has and improving the biodiversity. We would aim to mow paths through the flowers so that all headstones are accessible. We need to ensure the wildflowers we use are those that are and were native to Bewcastle so working with Cumbria Wildlife Trust we would welcome contributions from anyone who can recall the flowers in our old hay meadows and along roadside verges. To collect this information and to chat through the idea we will be at the midweek Hub on Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> of January – please come and share your knowledge with us.

If you know of someone who would is unable to attend church but would like to receive communion at home, or would appreciate a visit from me, please do let me know. My contact details are below and at the top of the newsletter.

If anyone would like to talk to me about anything (doesn't need to be church-related, for example if you don't know where to turn for help or someone to speak to), please do feel free to contact me.

Conversations will always be confidential. My normal parish working days are Monday and Friday (plus Sundays) but I will always try and find time to listen. Phone no: 016977 48438, email:

[Robert.Brown@BewcastleHouseOfPrayer.org.uk](mailto:Robert.Brown@BewcastleHouseOfPrayer.org.uk)

A selection of podcast sermons can be found on the [Bewcastle House of Prayer](http://BewcastleHouseofPrayer.org.uk) website under the 'Podcasts' menu tab.

## **January 2026 -----Benefice News-----January 2026**

At the beginning of a New Year (and a Happy New Year to all who may be reading this!) I want to share something which may get me into trouble but which has been niggling me for some time. And it's prompted by an article I happened to read written by a priest in North London called Daniel Sandham. People used to die, he wrote. Now it seems they "pass away" or even just "pass". It's the language commonly used by Undertakers making funeral arrangements - deliberately trying to soften the blow.

In a post-Christian, post-religious Society I guess we need a euphemism for death and dying. If for many people the word "Passing" seems a convenient word, and they feel comfortable with it - so be it. It's just that for me such language whilst being pastorally sensitive also implies a lack of confidence in what lies at the heart of the Christian Gospel.

The day after the last Pope died, the Daily Mail had a banner headline on its front page. "The Passing of Pope Francis ". Giles Coren (my favourite Correspondent on The Times) exploded. "It's the DEATH of Pope Francis" he wrote. "Not his Passing. Of all the humans in the world he surely was the one with least to fear in dying. You pass wind..... You pass the ball ... You do NOT pass the Pope! ". Brilliant stuff!

Of course it would be easy to over react and perhaps I am. When it comes to death - as with so many aspects of the Christian Faith - there is so much we can neither see nor understand, just have to take on trust. And that goes as much for me as anyone else.

But always with such things, looking at them through the eyes of a traditional parish priest, I want to suggest that when it comes to death and dying the most helpful funerals are often those which try to hold together three aspects.

First the need to recognise, comfort and to stand beside the bereaved for whom death may be utterly devastating. Second to celebrate all those good and memorable things in the deceased's life which the bereaved will always remember. Last to offer the Christian Hope of a life yet to come.

To this end there's one particular Funeral Sentence which is commonly used as the coffin is carried into the Church or Crematorium and which I always try to use. "I am the Resurrection and the life saith the Lord. Those who believe in me though they are dead, yet shall they live. And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die ".

In those few words lies the heart of the Christian Gospel. That God loves each one of us as if we were His Only child - both in this world and the next. And this regardless of who we are, whatever we've done or failed to do, whatever we believe or can't. Not because we are saintly or deserving but because that's just how God is - forever loving, forgiving and understanding. Indeed for me that's why every funeral however sad is a proclamation of the Resurrection. It's a message I have tried constantly to preach over these last 62 years!

So - when my time comes, please don't say "John has passed " ! Be bold enough to say John has DIED - together with all his faults and failings! But confident in his belief that the God who has loved and cared for him in this life will be waiting to greet him on the other side with understanding and a smile.

And on that happy note I wish you all a Happy New Year!  
Bishop John.

## ***January 2026-----BENEFICE NEWS-----January 2026***

**Monday 29<sup>th</sup> December 8 pm Folk Tunes Sessions at the Black Lion, Hethersgill.** All welcome

**Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> January Games Day at the Black Lion.** Killer darts, pool, the dice game, play your cards right and win prizes up to £100. etc. lots of prizes

**Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> January 8 pm Stapleton Public Hall Dance with.** Details Mary Thompson 016977 48379

**Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> January 11 am – 2 pm Bewcastle Mini Hub at Roadhead Hall.** Come for a chat and free coffee in the supper room; scones and cakes for sale. There will also be a chance to chat through the proposal to rewild the Bewcastle churchyard.

**Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> January 7 pm Stapleton Knit and Natter group** recommencing after the Christmas break

**Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> January 10.30 am Stapleton WI:** Coffee morning and Bring & Buy Sale. For more details about WI contact the President Tel 07398 130363

**Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> January 7.30 - 11 pm Hethersgill Parish Hall Dance** with Brian Griffin. Coffee/tea and biscuits. Bar, raffle. Details Irene 01228 675389. Everyone welcome

**Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> January 10.30 am – 2 pm Bewcastle Hub at Roadhead Hall.** Community drop in event, free entry and refreshments. Cakes, bacon rolls, crafts and produce for sale. All welcome.

**Monday 19<sup>th</sup> January 8 pm Folk Tunes Sessions at the Black Lion.** All welcome to come along and play or listen. Some tunes to ensure we have something in common to play can be found on the [Bewcastle House of Prayer](#) website. Music can be found on [TheSession.org](#) website

**Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> January 8 pm Bewcastle Heritage Society at Roadhead Hall** Programme planning meeting. All ideas welcomed.

**Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> January Burns Night Supper & Dancing at Stapleton Public Hall.** Supper with a light touch of Burns and dancing led by the wonderful Margaret Main to help the PCC raise funds for St Mary's Church. Tickets £12.50 (under 12s free) to include 2 courses and a nip of whisky. Haggis, neeps & tatties, or steak pie/veggie option. Bar available. Details and tickets from Catherine 016977 48322/07746 286311 or Tricia 016977 48833 or any member of the PCC. Please bring plate, glass and cutlery

**Wednesday 28 January Bewcastle School Community Lunch.** To book our delicious two course meal for £5.50 per person, please contact [office@shankhill.cumbria.sch.uk](mailto:office@shankhill.cumbria.sch.uk) or call 01228 577264 by Friday 23 January 2026.

### **Claiming Dates**

**Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> February Hethersgill Social Committee Ceilidh** at Hethersgill Parish Hall with Iain Anderson

**Line Dancing Classes: Every Monday 7.30 - 9 pm** at Stapleton Public Hall. Ann Robb 07855 919368  
Anyone who can't attend please let Ann Robb know.

**Bolton Fell Moss Volunteer Work Parties: First Tuesday of the month 10 am – 2 pm.** Contact Ros Campbell [ros.campbell@naturalengland.org.uk](mailto:ros.campbell@naturalengland.org.uk) 07570 370775

**Stapleton Knit and Natter Group: Every Tuesday 7 pm** in Stapleton Hall. **Carol 01697 543094**

**Beading Classes: Wednesday 1.30 – 3.30 pm** fortnightly. Details Christine Batey 01228 791348

**Stapleton WI: 2nd Wednesday of every month 7.30 pm** at Stapleton Hall

**Yoga: Every Thursday 6 pm** in Hethersgill Parish Hall

**Carpet Bowling: Every Thursday** in Stapleton Hall

**Badminton: Every Thursday 7.30 – 9.30 pm** at Hethersgill Parish Hall. Contact Andy Little 07765 244071

## **January 2026 NEWS AND THANKS----- January 2026**

**Recently some of the headstones in the churchyard at St Cuthbert's Church, Bewcastle appear to** have been damaged by the grass cutting equipment used by Cumberland Council. Although the churchyard is closed for new burials, and still owned by the church, its management has been taken over by the Council who are now legally responsible for it. Headstones, however, remain the responsibility of the relevant families or their descendants.

Following the damage, the PCC has secured assurance from the Council that their large motorised cutting decks will no longer be used to cut the grass. They have additionally approached their insurers who advise anyone responsible for a family or ancestors' headstone that appears to have been damaged recently to submit a form they have supplied. Copies of this form are available from the noticeboard in the church vestibule. Alternatively, you can email [info@bewcastle.com](mailto:info@bewcastle.com) to ask for one to be emailed back to you. If you want to consult a specialist monumental mason who might be able to effect repairs to a damaged headstone you'll find some business cards from a restorer beside the claim forms.

The council have also conducted a full assessment of the safety of every headstone, a survey they are required to carry out every five years and have reported that only one had to be laid flat as it was deemed unsafe. They have commissioned another survey of the trees in the churchyard and are formulating a plan to manage them.

**St Mary's Church PCC ask that people tending graves in the churchyard** take plastic wreaths and flowers away with them and do not put them in the compost heap. Thank you.

**Hethersgill Church: A big thank you** to everyone who helps keep Hethersgill church & church yard so lovely. If you have any spare time to help in anyway eg. grass cutting/trimming/cleaning please contact Irene 01228 675389 or Madge 01228 675568.

**Hethersgill Village Hall** All enquiries/bookings please contact Elsie Elliott 01228 675336 or Christine Falder 07790 302016

**Hethersgill Parish Hall 100 Club. December winners: 1st** Willie Wilson; **2nd** Gordon Waugh ; **3rd** Caroline Bouch . Drawn at Black Lion Pub. If you would like to renew or join for 2026 please contact Irene on 01228 675389 or a Committee Member. £11 per year. Thank you for all your support

**Stapleton Public Hall** can be booked or enquiries made by email [bookings@stapletonpublichall.co.uk](mailto:bookings@stapletonpublichall.co.uk) or calling Eileen on 016977 3196.

**Shankhill C of E Primary School and Nursery** - We have places throughout school for children aged 3 - 11, with free 15 & 30 hours places for children aged 3+ Mon-Fri 8.45-3.30 pm, with the option of Breakfast Club for everyone from 07:45 to 8:45, and After-School Clubs/extended childcare from 3:30 to 5:30. Please call 01228 577264 or email [office@shankhill.cumbria.sch.uk](mailto:office@shankhill.cumbria.sch.uk) for more information

**Shankhill Parent & Toddler Group every Tues 1:30 –3:20pm** during term time. 01228 577264 Updates on our Facebook page

**Bewcastle Primary School and Nursery** – places available throughout school for children aged 3 – 11. We now offer wrap around care, 8am -5pm. For further information please call 016977 48662 or email [admin@bewcastle.cumbria.sch.uk](mailto:admin@bewcastle.cumbria.sch.uk)

**Bewcastle School Nursery** – Nursery places available for children aged 3+, full and part time places available. For further information please call 016977 48662 or [emailadmin@bewcastle.cumbria.sch.uk](mailto:emailadmin@bewcastle.cumbria.sch.uk)

**Newsletters can be picked up from:** Kirklington Church porch, Hethersgill Church porch, Stapleton Church, Bewcastle Church, Stapleton Public Hall Porch, Smithfield Garage office, Garry Phillip's Garage. Or downloaded : [www.Bewcastle.com/news-events](http://www.Bewcastle.com/news-events), [www.BewcastleHouseOfPrayer.org.uk/parish-notice](http://www.BewcastleHouseOfPrayer.org.uk/parish-notice)

I have recently got a new computer, and I think I may have lost some email addresses in the process, so please let me know if you hear of anyone who hasn't received their emailed copy, or who would like to be added to the list. Thanks. Tricia

Deadline for the **February 2026** issue is **Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> January** to Tricia Coombe, Damhead, Lyneholme Ford, Roweltown, CA6 6LQ. 016977 48833 or [triciacoombe@damhead.me](mailto:triciacoombe@damhead.me)