

Stranton and Burbank Community

SIGNPOST



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

April 2026

Reflections on a Psalm... (The musings of a priest)

Over the last few weeks, I've been reflecting on the joint PCC Away Day between Stranton and St Luke's PCCs as we look for fresh energy and a renewed vision for both parishes; and as I've been reflecting, I've been struck by the opening verses of Psalm 127.

Unless the Lord builds the house, the builders labour in vain.

Unless the Lord watches over the city, the guards stand watch in vain.

In vain you rise early and stay up late,

Toiling for food to eat – for he grants sleep to those he loves.

As we seek renewed vision, whose vision is it that we seek? Whose eyes are we using? Are we simply seeking through our own limited vision that can't see beyond the horizon, that can't see into the future? Or are we using God's eyes? Are we turning to him as we wake and as we sleep, searching out his will for his churches here in Hartlepool? Are we looking only at what we alone can see in our own strength with our own limited vision? Or are we allowing God to help us think big, dream big, and go big?

The Psalm says, unless the Lord builds the house, the builders labour in vain. In other words, all the hard work in the world is futile unless it's God and his will that we rely on. Proverbs 3 tells us to "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight."

Are we trusting in God as we seek new vision, new purpose, new direction? Are we relying on God as we seek to grow deeper in our relationship with him, as we seek reach out into our communities and witness the good news of Christ? Are we discerning the Spirit's will for us as we look to grow in numbers, as we look to grow younger, as we look to welcome more people through our doors?

The prophet Jeremiah writes: "This is what the Lord says: 'Stand at the crossroads and look; ask for the ancient paths, ask where the good way is, and walk in it, and you will find rest for your souls.'" (Jer 6:16)

Both the Psalm and the Prophecy tell us that when we turn to God, when we seek his guidance, when we stand at the crossroads and look, discerning his path, and then walking in it, we will find rest for our souls. It's God's path we need to seek, and when we find it, we need to walk in it, for then he grants sleep to those he loves. But if we strive to do things only in our own strength, then in vain we get up early and stay up late, in vain we burn the candle at both ends. We burn out, we exhaust ourselves, and we become ineffective.

So, as we seek renewed vision, I encourage each and every one of you to pray into God's will for our parishes – our churches and our communities, and all who live among us. Ask for his guidance, and if you hear God speaking to you, if you receive any pictures or words of wisdom, then please come and share them with a member of the team, as we continue to look ahead to God's will and the future he has in store for us.

Grace and peace, Revd John

From the Home Front

I know I have spoken before about how God must chuckle and smile at us when we make our plans for each day, diary upcoming events and organise our lives in detail, usually without consulting Him...

Well, that was just what I did, but God had very different ideas to mine.

My usual early morning video call to my daughter in Scotland was abruptly curtailed when her house cat escaped out of an open window. Ten minutes later my daughter was sobbing that she had fallen off the side of her back door-steps and it seemed as if she had broken a bone, a friend was coming to take her to A&E and would I be able to come to look after her and her sons if I was needed? She was right, she had broken her foot, was in a plaster cast and would need surgery to pin the bones and she was hobbling around on crutches unable to do any everyday tasks.

I immediately set about reorganising everything that was on my calendar and in my diary – grandson school pick-ups, work in schools, helping with the Craft Fair, reading in church, meetings, volunteering work and much more. I then had to reorganise my medications to have enough for several weeks away, contact various people to take over roles, bring forward replacing my new car tyres – the list seemed endless! But within 48 hours I was safely at my daughter's despite never having driven the full journey on my own before.

My days are very busy cooking, washing, cleaning, hospital trips, helping sort out the house, taking children to after school clubs and animal care (yes, the lost cat was found!), plus trying to coordinate and organise Signpost long distance and survive my cat allergy symptoms!

Being on call 24/7 is very hard work as I'm not as young as I was and have quite got used to a sitting and 'reading/relaxing' session during the day! However, there are compensations such as being woken by the sound of skeins of geese flying over the house on the way to their morning feeding grounds, the lambs in the fields, witnessing the start of spring again (we are about two weeks behind Hartlepool here), eyeballing an adult doe which appeared in front of my car from under a barrier as dusk fell, spending Mum and Daughter time and time with our oldest grandsons and enjoying cuddles as we read Harry Potter, the view from the kitchen window of the hills, drives along the coast of the Moray Firth watching waves crash over the rock stacks and into the cliffs and learning my way around the local area plus understanding more of the local accent. I have also been attending the local Church of Scotland kirk where I have been made very welcome and where I have found peace and rest in the prayers and, even, in the very old traditional music.

It may not be how I was expecting to spend March and probably some of April, but I feel thankful and blessed to have been able to come, to help and to receive so many gifts from God along the way knowing He is always with me...

Christ with me, Christ before me, Christ behind me, Christ in me,
Christ beneath me, Christ above me, Christ on my right, Christ on my left,
Christ when I lie down, Christ when I sit down, Christ when I arise,
Christ in the heart of every man who thinks of me,
Christ in the mouth of everyone who speaks of me,
Christ in every eye that sees me, Christ in every ear that hears me.

J.A.R.

Acclaiming Archdeacon Rick as the New Bishop of Durham

The College of Canons in the Chapter House at Durham Cathedral formerly electing the New Bishop of Durham.



900th Anniversary Craft Fair on 14th March

A 900th Anniversary Craft Fair was held in St Matthew's Community Centre with a wide variety of stalls – wood turning, sweets, flowers, baby clothes, photographs, bags, Easter goods, tombola, raffles, Stranton merchandise and jewellery.

Drinks, cakes plus soup and a bun were available throughout the day. It was a successful and enjoyable day with many interesting conversations taking place.

Many thanks to all the stallholders, customers and to all those who organised and helped before and, on the day, especially Trish in the office who coordinated all the sellers and the stalls.



Walls

I love walking in the Dales and looking across the amazing patchwork of quilt-like fields.

Each field has a beautifully crafted drystone wall as its border.

Drystone walls intrigue me. They have no cement to hold them together.

Yet a well-made wall can last up to 100 or 150 years.

The builder starts with a good foundation, then chooses flat, wide stones and small stones to fill up the gaps. I found out that this technique is called hearting.

I started thinking about walls in general. A brick wall is solid and immovable, with each brick identical to the others. Whereas a drystone wall can be dismantled and rebuilt, even moved to another part of the field if required.

I like how the drystone wall is made up of stones of all shapes and sizes.

Each one is packed together, all needing each other to fulfil its purpose. Walls are boundaries. They keep animals safely in their fields and keep predators out.

In life, we need boundaries to keep ourselves safe.

If we build brick walls around ourselves, we can end up trapped.

We may miss out on beautiful connections because we won't let people close to us.

We may even build a spiritual brick wall, preventing God from doing the work inside us that needs to be addressed.

A drystone wall depicts community. We were created to be together, to include one another, and to accept one another's differences. I love that the word for filling the gaps in the wall with smaller stones is called hearting.

How wonderful it would be if we saw someone on their own and said, "Come be with us", and included them in our community.

That's called hearting and drywalling.

... I will take away their stony, stubborn heart and give them a tender, responsive heart. Ezekial 11:19

Ang Hall

Easter Quiz

- 1) Which city did Jesus enter?
- 2) What was He riding?
- 3) What did the crowd shout, wave and lay on the ground? (3 answers)
- 4) What did Jesus do at the temple to show it was being run wrongly?
- 5) Who was the high priest?
- 6) Where was the last supper held?
- 7) What did the bread represent?
- 8) What did the wine represent?
- 9) What do we call this Last Supper now? E_____
- 10) Which garden did they go to?
- 11) Who betrayed Jesus & who denied Jesus? (2 answers)
- 12) How did the betrayer show who was Jesus?
- 13) Who was the Roman Governor?
- 14) Who was set free instead of Jesus?
- 15) What was placed on Jesus' head?
- 16) Who warned the Roman Governor 'Have nothing to do with this man'?
- 17) The Roman Governor sent Jesus to see which King?
- 18) Who were crucified with Jesus?
- 19) What was the hill of execution called G_____ or C_____?
(2 answers)
- 20) What was written on the sign above Jesus' cross?
- 21) Who provided the tomb?
- 22) What was rolled in front of the tomb?
- 23) Who saw the gardener?
- 24) Who was the gardener?
- 25) What road were Cleophas and his companion travelling on?
- 26) Who was the stranger?
- 27) When did they recognise Him?
- 28) Who doubted Jesus?
- 29) What did Jesus show him?
- 30) Who were bribed?

Bonus question - Jesus promised 'I am with you till the End of the A____'

Ward Jackson CE Primary Update

Wingfield has a lovely day at Beamish Museum.

We found out how ice cream was invented and then we got to explore the 1950's museum!

👍 9 💬 ➦



📖 ✨ Reading & Story Afterschool Club ✨ 📖
To promote the love and importance of reading, we are lucky to have teamed up with students from [Hartlepool College of Further Education](#) to run a Reading and Story Afterschool Club. Our first session was yesterday and was a great success - it lots of fun and the children absolutely loved it! We'll be running the club every week - there are still a few places



HAPPY EASTER TO EVERYONE

ALLELUIA CHRIST IS RISEN

HE IS RISEN INDEED ALLELUIA



St Matthew's
Community Centre
Elwick Road



Coffee or Tea, Cake and Company

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

Saturday 2nd May 2026

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

Tradition of Making Miniature Easter Gardens

The tradition of making miniature Easter gardens is a delightful way to celebrate the resurrection of Christ and the arrival of Spring. These gardens are often placed in churches, on windowsills or used as a table centrepiece during Easter celebrations. They symbolise the resurrection of Christ and the hope of a prosperous year. Families may use pebbles, twigs, flowers or a small tomb to enhance the scene's visual storytelling. The gardens serve as a visual reminder of the true meaning of Easter and are a fun project to do with children to embed the Easter story.

Proverbial Homemaker



**A prayer can go where I cannot go.
Through prayers I can be with you
Without being there.
I may be miles away but my prayers
will always be with you.**



Easter Eggs: What Is the History Behind This Tradition?

Easter eggs symbolize new life and the resurrection of Jesus Christ, combining Christian and pre-Christian traditions.

Christian Symbolism

In Christianity, eggs represent the empty tomb of Jesus. The hard shell symbolizes the sealed tomb, and cracking the egg open represents Christ's resurrection and victory over death. Early Christians, particularly in Eastern Orthodox traditions, would have priests bless eggs during the Paschal vigil, and these eggs were distributed to the congregation as a symbol of new spiritual life. Red-dyed eggs specifically symbolize the blood of Christ, linking the egg directly to the Easter story.

Pre-Christian and Seasonal Roots

Before Christianity, eggs were widely recognized as symbols of fertility, rebirth, and the renewal of life in spring. Many ancient cultures, including Indo-European societies, celebrated the emergence of new life at the spring equinox by giving eggs as gifts. This seasonal symbolism of regeneration was later incorporated into Easter celebrations, blending natural cycles with religious meaning.

Practical and Cultural Traditions

During the medieval period, eating eggs was forbidden during Lent, the 40-day period of fasting before Easter. Chickens, however, continued to lay eggs, so by Easter Sunday, eggs were abundant and often decorated or given as gifts. Traditions such as egg rolling, decorating, and hiding eggs for children developed over time, maintaining both the festive and symbolic aspects of the holiday. In some cultures, eggs were elaborately decorated, like the Ukrainian pysanky, and were sometimes preserved as heirlooms.

Today, Easter eggs are celebrated in both religious and secular contexts. Chocolate eggs, egg hunts, and decorative eggs continue the tradition of symbolizing new life and joy, while still reflecting the historical Christian and seasonal origins.

In summary, Easter eggs are a fusion of Christian resurrection symbolism and ancient springtime fertility customs, enriched over centuries by cultural practices and festive traditions.



Easter Eggheads

Monday 30th March to Thursday 2nd April 2026
6:00 pm to 7:15 pm

Games, Crafts and the Easter Story followed by a Quiz

All Primary School Children Welcome

Messy Easter

Good Friday 3rd April 2026
10:00 am to 11:30 am

Refreshments including Hot Cross Buns

All Welcome

900th ANNIVERSARY

Venue
St Matthew's CC
Elwick Road
TS26 9JF

Messy CHURCH

St Matthew's Community Centre at 4-5.30pm

Crafts

Games

Sunday May 10th

Sunday June 14th

Sunday July 12th

Bible Story

Food

For more information contact
Mary Tones on 07972 342890
See our Facebook page: Stranton Messy Church

Lots of Fun for the whole Family

God of peace,

When fear threatens to consume us our hearts, send us your Spirit of power and love.

We pray urgently and unceasingly for peace across the Middle East.

We pray for communities who have been displaced and for families traumatised by bombing.

We hold before you those who need comfort and help, especially those who are injured or bereaved.

Amen

"He will not let you stumble; the one who watches over you will not slumber. Indeed, he who watches over Israel never slumbers or sleeps."
Psalms 121:3-4 NLT

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

**Have you thought about
St Matthew's Community Centre?**

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

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

**We also have our own private car park and some outdoor space if you fancy
al fresco fun for your guests.**

**If you would like further information please call:
Trish Playfor (01429 894006) or 07305 550009 during office hours,
and we will be happy to help.**

**Steven McConnell
Roofing Contractor**

37 Greta Avenue
Hartlepool
TS25 5LE

Tel: 01429 221784

Fax: 01429 281609

Mobile 07850 925183

*Member of the National
Federation of Roofing
Contractors*



THE CARPET DOCTOR
COMMERCIAL & DOMESTIC
CARPET & UPHOLSTERY CLEANING

www.thecarpetdoctor.co.uk



TELEPHONE
01642 566551
Mobile 07770 451111



Victoria House
FUNERAL SERVICE

Under the personal guidance of



Carl Mean
Dip FD, MBIE



Apolena Wilson
Dip FD, MBIFD



Andrew Evans
MBIE



Andrew Gardner
Dip FD

TELEPHONE: (01429) 234777 • 26 VICTORIA ROAD, HARTLEPOOL TS26 8DD
WWW.VICTORIAHOUSEFUNERALSERVICE.CO.UK

**BRABINER
CARPETS**

**249 – 251 YORK ROAD
HARTLEPOOL
TS26 9AD**

TEL: (01429) 272298



LET US HELP YOU GET THROUGH YOUR LOSS

We'll guide and assist you through all the funeral arrangements.
Call us 24 hours a day.

**MASON'S & MEYNELL
FUNERAL DIRECTORS
01429 862021**

**129 Park Road, Hartlepool.
TS26 9HT**



**Do you need a
Helping Hand?**

Our Stranton care team has been providing award winning quality home care since 1989.

We offer you a one to one live in care service which enables you or your loved one to remain at home with compassion and dignity.

**To find out more, call:
0808 180 1033 or visit:
www.helpinghands.co.uk**

**Keith Walker
Ophthalmic Opticians**

**28 Victoria Road, Hartlepool
Tel: 01429 275551**

Hartlepool & District Hospice

Provides free palliative care for patients.
Offers of voluntary help are always welcome,
as are donations.

Please contact us at:

**Alice House Wells Avenue
Hartlepool. TS24 9DA
Tel: 01429 855555**



Stranton Business Centre

Accountancy, Taxation and Payroll

49 Stockton Road
Hartlepool
TS25 1TX

Telephone: 01429 280444
Email: office.admin@strantonbusiness.co.uk
www.strantonbusiness.co.uk

Joanna's Poochies Paradise

147 Elwick Road
Hartlepool
TS26 9BW

**Pet Shop
&
Dog Grooming**

01429 270056

MOVING HOME?

Does your property need an

ENERGY PERFORMANCE CERTIFICATE?

Then call Andrew Rogers at
Energy Education North
On 07831 314375

energy.education@btconnect.com

A favourite hymn

Do you have a favourite hymn, or perhaps a number of hymns or worship songs which remind you of events or family connections, or which for no obvious reason resonate with you? There really are so many to choose from across a whole range of Hymnals. And your views may be changed from time to time as you hear a different hymn or hear again one which has seemed to have been lost in the mists of times past. I suppose to some degree it is a bit like having your own Top Twenty Hymn Chart.

Back in the days of lock-down our church had a fortnightly news sheet to keep contact for our members with the latest news and other relevant matters. I occasionally submitted some thoughts on hymns and worship songs which I liked, but not necessarily my outright favourites. It generated little response which I must admit was disappointing.

I suppose that many folk attend a church service without giving a lot of thought to the musical side of matters, just so long as they can have a good sing and that the sermon is kept to three points and twelve minutes duration.

I have a fairly comprehensive collection of hymnals including some containing the old American Mission songs including a Sankey and Moody collection. It gives me a lot of pleasure in leafing through these to see if I can find something new or different and appealing.

A recent service at our local Methodist Church was taken by the Stewards in what is known as a Local Arrangement, when there is no Ordained Minister or accredited Local Preacher available to take the service. This can often throw up some interestingly different styles of Sunday morning worship. In this particular service we were asked, well beforehand if there was a particular hymn or song which we would like, and from the suggestions a very interesting act of worship took place.

My choice was for number 409 from Singing the Faith, Let us build a house where love can dwell.

This is the hymn which we chose for the start of Nick's (our youngest son) and later, my wife Jane's funeral services. The words I believe epitomised our whole philosophy in the manner in which we tried to live our married life. This was written by an American Evangelist Marty Haugen.

I will set out the first two lines of each verse, and for your homework you can then perhaps look up the full set of words, follow our story and see how the words fit.

V1... Let us build a house where love can dwell, and all can safely live.

V2... Let us build a house where prophets speak, and words are strong and true

V3... Let us build a house where love is found, In water, wine and wheat

V4... Let us build a house where hands will reach, beyond the wood and stone

V5... Let us build a house where all are named, their songs and visions heard.

Each verse takes a particular aspect of the past 54 years, starting with the physical side of actually building our house in Bradford on Avon, and making it a welcome place for all.

Ours was OPEN HOUSE for the family and all their friends, a gathering place, a friendly place, where they all built and lived out their dreams.

Ours was a house where we nurtured them and encouraged them to lead a Christian life, and although they all fell by the wayside at times, they did not relinquish their solid Christian upbringing in being concerned for others.

Ours was a house where all were always welcome and could be certain of finding hospitality for all manner of occasions. It may have been for a Choir Social event, birthday and Christmas parties and throughout the year the gathering of our boys' friends – we never ran out of orange squash and biscuits, but at times it was a close run thing.

Our house was the centre of activities for our links with local organisations; committee meetings for the WI, committee meetings for the Lions Club, and our links with the town were centred around our home life in our service to the community.

And ours was a house of love, not only to our family but to anyone in need of support and a comforting word.

A truly relevant song or hymn reflecting on our lives together, despite the numerous difficulties encountered from time to time on the journey.

Sadly, twenty three years ago when the family had grown up and moved out, the house became too large and we moved to something a little more manageable, but still maintaining that Ethos engendered in the original family home.

Jeff Parsons in conversation with J Cornelius Starbuck © October 2025



Easter Quiz - Answers

- 1) Which city did Jesus enter? **Jerusalem**
- 2) What was He riding? **Donkey**
- 3) What did the crowd shout, wave and lay on the ground?
Hosanna, Palm branches & coats
- 4) What did Jesus do at the temple to show it was being run wrongly?
Turned the tables over
- 5) Who was the high priest? **Caiaphas**
- 6) Where was the last supper held? **The Upper Room**
- 7) What did the bread represent? **Christ's Body**
- 8) What did the wine represent? **His Blood**
- 9) What do we call this? **Eucharist**
- 10) Which garden did they go to? **Gethsemane**
- 11) Who betrayed Jesus? & who denied Jesus?
Judas Iscariot & Peter
- 12) How did the betrayer show who Jesus was? **With a kiss**
- 13) Who was the Roman Governor? **Pontius Pilate**
- 14) Who was set free instead of Jesus? **Barrabas**
- 15) What was placed on Jesus' head?
Crown of Thorns
- 16) Who warned the Roman Governor 'Have nothing to do with this man'?
Pilate's wife
- 17) The Roman Governor sent Jesus to see which King? **Herod**
- 18) Who were crucified with Jesus? **Two robbers**
- 19) What was the hill of execution called? **Golgotha Calvary**
- 20) What was written on the sign above Jesus' cross?
Jesus of Nazareth King of the Jews
- 21) Who provided the tomb? **Joseph of Arimathea**
- 22) What was rolled in front of it? **A large stone**
- 23) Who saw the gardener? **Mary Magdalene**
- 24) Who was the gardener? **Jesus**
- 25) What road were Cleophas and his companion travelling on?
Emmaus Road
- 26) Who was the stranger? **Jesus**
- 27) When did they recognise Him? **When he broke the bread**
- 28) Who doubted Jesus? **Thomas**
- 29) What did Jesus show him? **His wounds / Stigmata**
- 30) Who were bribed? **The guards**

Bonus - Jesus promised 'I am with you till the End of the Age'

My Final Question



I was by His side when he died
For I was really a true bad'un,
Robbed and took whatever I could.
Now like my mate on the other side
My life is slowly and cruelly ebbing away.
No one will mourn my loss on this day
As I die on this cruel rough wooden cross.
My mate mocked and said derisory words
Full of anger, to our other dying companion.
Then I asked the middle guy my final question,
To remember me, when I die, in His kingdom.
Then I heard a reply to me so absurd,
You will be in paradise with me He said.
Shortly after he lowered His head.
The lesson I learnt was twofold
Christ died for me in my last hour,
But His message is out there today
For you to be a much earlier follower.

FUTURE EVENTS

Save the Dates



19
APRIL

**SUNDAYS@6 WITH
REVD DR NICK MOORE**

6 PM IN CHURCH

6
JUNE

COMMUNITY FUN DAY
Ward Jackson CofE Primary School

10AM-3PM

4
JULY

**BEER AND HYMNS
IN CHURCH**

5PM

11
JULY

**ABSEIL CHURCH TOWER
HISTORY EXHIBITION IN CHURCH**

10AM-3PM

17
JULY

**COMMUNITY CHOIR
CONCERT IN CHURCH**

7PM

MORE INFO: 01429 894006, admin@stranton-church.org.uk

www.stranton-church.org.uk

Find us on Facebook: [allsaintsstranton](https://www.facebook.com/allsaintsstranton)

A PRAYER FOR IRAN

BY THE RT REVD DR GULI FRANCIS-DEHQANI,
BISHOP OF CHELMSFORD

Ever loving God,
who hears us in our anguish and distress,
and longs for us to be free.
We pray for the people of Iran
and the wider Middle East,
at this time of fear and uncertainty.
Be near to those who are anxious;
bring comfort to all who are suffering.
Guide those with the power to make decisions,
and lead them in the ways of wisdom,
compassion and moderation:
that people of good will would seek
harmony and reconciliation.
Join us with our Christian brothers
and sisters in all places,
in praying for peace with justice,
through him who is the prince of peace,
Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.



New archbishop to walk from London to Canterbury

The new Archbishop of Canterbury will embark on a six-day pilgrimage to prepare for her installation service.

Dame Sarah Mullally, along with her husband Eamonn, will walk the 140km (87 mile) route from St Paul's Cathedral in London to Canterbury Cathedral before the service on 25 March.

It is the first time in modern history that an Archbishop of Canterbury has undertaken a pilgrimage of this nature in the lead-up to their installation. While walking the Becket Way, her group will join prayer services at churches, cathedrals and abbeys, as well as meeting with other pilgrims and visiting schools.

The Archbishop will walk along stretches of the Thames Path, the Via Britannica and the Augustine Camino, which is the pilgrimage route celebrating the conversion of English-speaking people to Christianity.

Stops will include Southwark Cathedral, Aylesford Priory, the Shrine of St Jude in Faversham, Lesnes Abbey and Rochester Cathedral, Lambeth Palace says.

The final stretch of the journey will see the pilgrims joined by David Monteith, Dean of Canterbury, and members of the Cathedral chapter to walk from the village of Chartham to Canterbury, arriving in time for evensong on Sunday, 22 March.

The group will also give out prayer cards featuring a prayer written by pupils from The Archbishop's School in Canterbury.

'Reflecting on this tradition'

Dame Sarah said: "As I prepare for my installation at Canterbury Cathedral, it feels deeply humbling to be following in the footsteps of those who have walked this ancient route. For centuries, faithful pilgrims have flocked to Canterbury, and I will be reflecting on this tradition as we make our way through the Kent countryside and its towns and cities. I'm looking forward to visiting local churches, cathedrals and holy sites along the route - and to meeting people, praying with them and hearing their stories."

Daniel Sexton

BBC South East

Published 14 March 2026



Nursing the Church’ — NT Wright on the Historic Rise of the Church of England’s First Female Archbishop

Why Former Bishop Says Sarah Mullally is the Leader the Anglican Communion Needs Now

As the bells of Canterbury Cathedral prepare to ring out this Wednesday, March 25, for the historic installation of Sarah Mullally as the 106th Archbishop of Canterbury, the global Anglican Communion finds itself at a defining crossroads.

For the first time in 1,400 years, a woman will occupy the seat of St. Augustine. It’s a move New Testament scholar — and former Bishop of Durham — N.T. Wright describes as a “thankless task” that will require the Most Reverend Mullally to “nurse” a fractured church.

Mullally was chosen to succeed Justin Welby, who resigned in late 2024 “after facing increasing pressure to stand down over his failure to report” a prolific child abuser, according to the BBC.

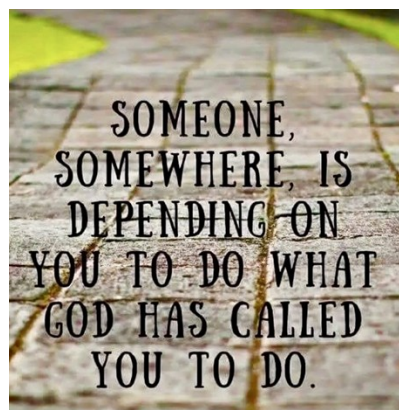
In an exclusive interview with Faithfully Magazine ahead of the installation, Wright offered a candid assessment of the challenges facing Mullally, who closed out her tenure as Bishop of London. While Wright has long been a vocal proponent of women’s ordination, his most provocative remarks centred on the sheer weight of the office she is about to inherit.

Perhaps most notable was Wright’s reflection on Mullally’s professional background. Before her calling to the priesthood, Mullally served as the Chief Nursing Officer for England and was the youngest person ever appointed to the post. Wright suggested that this unique history — which includes a Damehood for her contributions to nursing — might be the archbishop’s greatest asset in a role currently defined by global friction.

“I pray for her,” Wright said. “She was a senior nurse before she was ordained... she will need that nursing ability to nurse the Church of England and the Anglican Communion in the days to come.”

March 24, 2026

ByFM Editors



CELEBRATE!

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

to

April

Temiclayo Akinyele

Tristan Benson

Rachel Cartwright

Paul Cartwright

Andrew Craig

Allison Grosvenor

Kate Lawson

Audrey Mba

Alan Robertson



Wedding Anniversary

Chloe & Jordan Thornhill

Congratulations to

Duncan & Trish Playfor

On the birth of their new
Granddaughter

Jovie Marianne Mellor

beautiful daughter of

Jessica & Jack

If you have something to celebrate we would love to share it - email

admin@stranton-church.org.uk

or phone 894006.

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

Who's Who

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

Priest in Charge 34A Westbourne Road 07512 481115
Revd. John Bell
Email: revdjohnbell@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
Hayley Liversidge hayley@hartlepoolcch.coh.org.uk 07712 008772

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.

