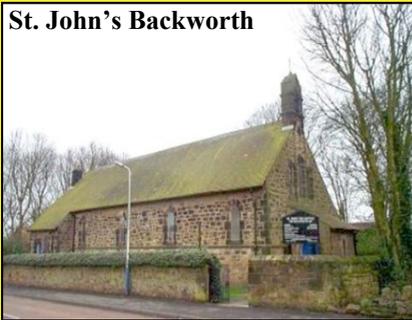




St. Alban's Earsdon



St. John's Backworth

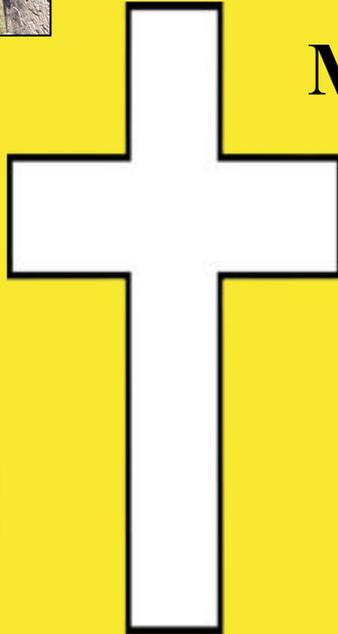


CHURCH VIEWS

MARCH

2026

£1.00



**Immaculate Heart of Mary,
Parish of Our Lady Star of the Sea**



THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH

March 2026

As I write, I'm a couple of days away from delivering a session on 'Life after Death'. This invitation came from Wellfield Middle School. I have half an hour to explore this intriguing subject with the whole of Year 8 (Second Year Secondary).

A simple answer to the question 'what happens after we die?' could be 'we don't know'. There are certain things we can *believe*. But the answer to the question 'is there life after death?' lies beyond the realm of knowledge you can prove.

However, this is an RE lesson. So what does the Christian story tell us about a possible answer to our question?

Well firstly, there is no 'tomb of Jesus'. Unlike with many historical figures, you can't make a pilgrimage to Jesus's grave. Jesus made a huge impression on many, many people. He was very publically executed. Members of his family were there at the time. So what happened to Jesus' body?

If Jesus' enemies had taken Jesus' body, they could simply have put it on display the minute rumours started circulating that Jesus was alive again after death. If Jesus' disciples had taken Jesus' body, and then pretended they had met him alive, they would have known their message was a lie. Very odd behaviour, then, for his disciples themselves later to suffer agonising martyrdom for something they knew wasn't true.

Then there's the first witness – Mary Magdalene. In first century Palestine, women were not allowed to be witnesses in a court of law. So if you were making up 'a myth of Jesus', the last person you'd have as your first witness would be a grieving woman – and in the half-light of the early dawn at that.

Yet that's what the Bible tells us – that Mary Magdalene went to the tomb 'early on the first day of the week', and met Jesus alive.

So perhaps Jesus wasn't ever actually fully dead. Yet Jesus was executed by hard-bitten Roman squaddies who knew a thing or two about putting people through it. The legs of crucifixion victims were sometimes broken to put them out of their prolonged agony. The person nailed to the cross would seesaw up and down trying to find some relief from their appalling suffering. The broken legs meant that the victim effectively drowned in their own body fluid. Yet we're told that the soldiers didn't need to break Jesus' legs as he was already dead.

And finally, the most telling piece of evidence in our favour is what happened to Jesus' disciples. Many people had claimed to be the Messiah. They had gathered a following, and when they died, those followers went back to 'life as normal'. Not the disciples of Jesus. Take Peter for example. When Jesus was arrested, Peter lied through his teeth. He was terrified of sharing Jesus' terrifying fate. But only weeks later he was a changed man. Standing up in the streets of Jerusalem, he told anyone who cared to listen that he had met Jesus, alive again from the dead. Peter did not go back to his fishing nets. He embraced a life of proclaiming the risen Christ. When threatened with martyrdom as a result, Peter humbly accepted it. Tradition tells us that his only request was to be crucified upside down as he did not deserve to share the same fate as his Lord.

This, then, is the Christian's evidence for the resurrection of Jesus. And Peter's colleague Saint Paul says that Jesus is 'the first fruits'. In other words, Jesus guarantees that the harvest is good. If Jesus the first fruits knew a new life beyond the death of the body, so will we. So back to our question: 'is there life after death?' The Christian confidently answers 'yes' – and early next month we'll celebrate the reason why.

Rev'd Tim Mayfield

A lovely picture from Helen Jackman, a long-term member of St Alban's church.

Helen is very much missing her church family. She sends everyone her love, and wanted you to see this picture. It's Helen on Christmas Day, cuddling 'Jenny the Giraffe' – a Christmas present from Helen's family.



We miss you, too Helen. Sending thoughts and prayers to you.

XXXXX



...and this is Jenny watching the livestream service with Helen on Sunday February 22nd.

(Tim thinks this picture is crying out to be a caption competition.)



*If anyone would like a regular copy of the link to St Alban's church live-streamed services, please let me know and send me your email address
Jean : 0191 2377273 or 07855 149844*

Palm Sunday, Holy Week and Easter

Palm Sunday falls on March 29th. There'll be worship at St John's (9am) and St Alban's (10.30am). The Children's Church Easter Special is at 4pm in St John's that same day.

There will be events on the Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday evenings of Holy Week – look out for more details. Then Maundy Thursday is on April 2nd: we mark this with a service of Holy Communion at St Alban's followed by Gethsemane Vigil.

On Good Friday, April 3rd, St Alban's will host a Children's Workshop from 10am till 12noon. Then 'At the Foot of the Cross' is at 2pm.

The darkness and pain of Good Friday then yield to the astonishing joy of Easter Day – worship at St John's (9am) and St Alban's (10.30am). We wish you a deep, rich Holy Week journey, and all the joy of Easter when it comes.



BST begins Sunday 29th March

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Smile Lines...

A grandmother was taking her young grandson for a walk in the park. The daffodils were in bloom, and it was a beautiful Spring day. Wanting to encourage her grandson's spiritual understanding of the world, she said: "Doesn't it look like an artist painted this scenery? Did you know God did all this?"

Her grandson replied: "Oh yes, and God did it left-handed, too." In astonishment, the grandmother asked what he meant. "Well, He must have done," said her grandson, "because we learned at church last week that Jesus sits on God's right hand."

Ask children about angels - *and this is what you get!*

Angels talk all the way while they're flying you up to heaven. The main subject is where you went wrong before you got dead. - Daniel, aged 9

When an angel gets mad, he takes a deep breath and counts to ten. And when he lets out his breath again, somewhere there's a tornado. - Reagan, aged 10

Angels have a lot to do and they keep very busy. If you lose a tooth, an angel comes in through your window and leaves money under your pillow. Then when it gets cold, angels go south for the winter. - Sara, aged 6

Angels live in cloud houses made by God and His Son, who's a very good carpenter. - Jared, aged 8

All angels are girls because they've got to wear dresses and boys didn't go for it. - Antonio, aged 9

Winging his way to America from Ireland, Father O'Leary asked a flight attendant, "How high is this plane, Miss?" The attendant replied, "About 32,000 feet, Father." The priest's jaw dropped in amazement. "Who'd have believed it? And could you tell me how wide it is?"



A mother asked her young son, as they waited for the bus, to tell the driver he was five years old, because then he would ride for free. As they got into the bus the driver asked him how old he was. "I am five years old," said the little boy proudly.

The driver had a son of his own that age, and so he smiled. "And when will you be six years old?" he asked.

"When I get off the bus," answered the boy.

An irritated mother complained to her friend: "When I was a child, my parents sent me to my room without supper if I misbehaved. But my son has his own TV, smartphone and computer in his room!"

"So how do you handle it?" her friend asked.

"I send him to MY room!"

"Just cleared out some space in the freezer" sounds so much more productive than "I just polished off another pint of ice cream."

The following appeared in the magazine of the Light Music Society:

Agnus Dei was a woman composer famous for her church music – *schoolchild's essay*.

Most composers don't live until they are dead – *child's essay*.

Sign on door of music shop: Gone Chopin, but have Liszt, so Bach in a Minuet!

Please note - all material for next month's magazine (April 2026) will need to be in before Tuesday 24th March. Thank you, <i>Jean</i> .
--

Weather Outlook for the month of March 2026.

Direct from the Captain's Charts.

General overview for the North East of England.

Mild conditions are more likely than cold next week, with temperatures mostly above the early March average.

The jet stream should adopt a more northerly track while pressure rises to the east and south, and that should also mean drier conditions than recently for much of the country.

Low pressure and frontal systems will affect the northwestern UK for the early to mid-March period giving rise to wet and windy weather in those areas.

Until the middle of the month, it is most likely that the UK will find itself situated between European high pressure and Atlantic low pressure and their associated frontal systems. Occasional rain and brisk winds are likely, although indications are for near average precipitation amounts for this period.

Milder than average conditions are expected overall, or at least near seasonal. There is a slight possibility that high pressure could build at higher latitudes in the second half of March bringing colder outbreaks, but at the moment that's rather speculative and no significant early spring cold weather is likely.

Early to mid-March.

This period will start with heavy cloud, rain and strong winds affecting our region during the first week of the month and will clear away to the southeast later in the week as high pressure builds in from the west mid-week.

There is an indication for high pressure to be largely dominant through the rest of this period. This will mean many places seeing plenty of dry weather with variable cloud amounts and some sunshine, but perhaps with some fog overnight. Frontal systems may still graze the north and west of the UK at times producing periods of wind and rain.

Temperatures will be near or above normal. Patchy overnight frost is still likely at times.

Mid to late March.

After a potentially, mainly dry and settled start to this period, changeable conditions look likely to resume, with Atlantic frontal systems spreading across the UK at times. These will bring spells of rain and perhaps strong winds, with the wettest conditions likely to be in the northwest, whilst the southeast will likely be driest in comparison. Temperatures are likely to be near to or slightly above normal. It is possible that longer spells of drier weather may develop with colder interludes later in the month, however forecasting confidence is very low at this stage.

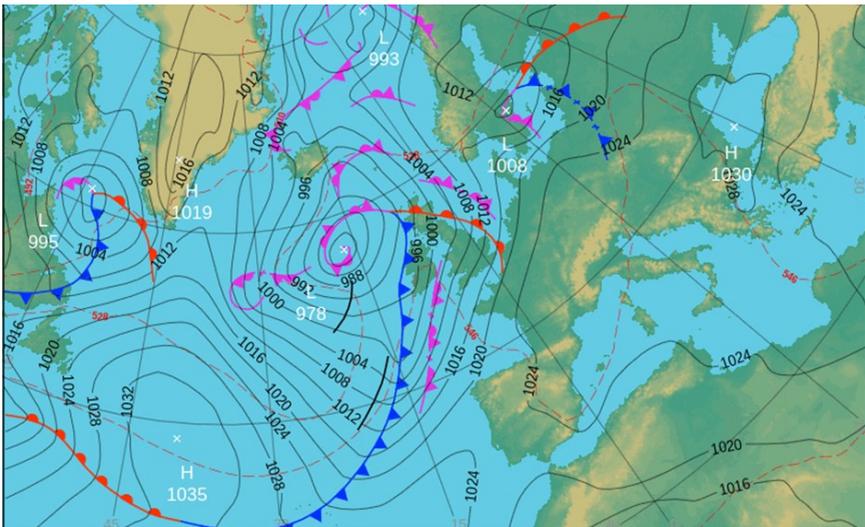
Adverse weather precautions.

Wind will be a significant feature of this month's weather and it is worth reminding you of the need to be cautious when driving and encountering crosswinds.

Whilst out walking be mindful of airborne debris, falling masonry and tree branches, try to keep upwind of any potential hazards.



North Atlantic Surface Pressure Chart Prediction for 12:00 hrs (UTC) on Sunday – 1st March 2026.



David Gibson.
26th February 2026.

DAVID ROBSON PAINTER & DECORATOR

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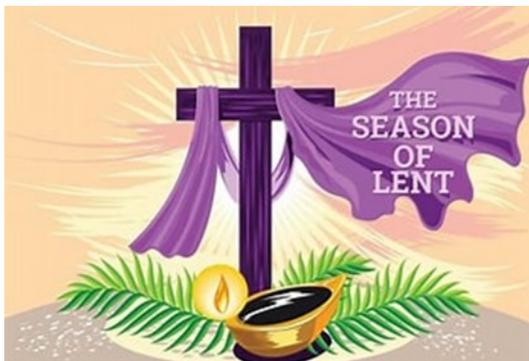
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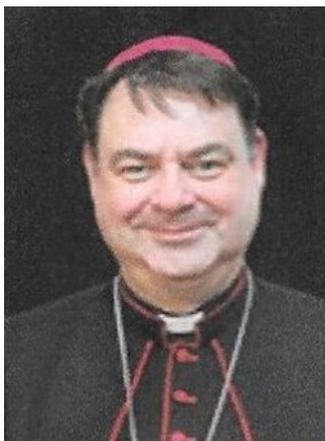
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CHURCH VIEWS FOR MARCH 2026 FROM THE PARISH OF OUR LADY, STAR OF THE SEA



Bishop Stephen Wright's Lenten Letter

Impressive in its clarity of vision, Bishop Stephen's Pastoral Letter gently reminds our parishes that we have to adapt to changed times, even if our purpose and message remain unchanging. This Pastoral letter echoes that of Advent; the need for the Diocese and our parishes to look to the future and consider where we are going; indeed to think about what we are for. In Lent and beyond 'Our mission is to walk with the Lord and in the service of others and enable others to encounter Him in our communities.'



The letter also addresses practicalities; how we can move forward in a sustainable way, given the number of priests who will retire in the next ten years and the number of churches with diminishing attendances.

After 18 months of consultation with parishes across the Diocese there are now parish materials on the Diocesan website, the 'Parish Toolkit', to help a parish to consider its current state and to find ways to move forward both practically and spiritually. The website also gives a summary of realities - numbers attending Mass, the number of clergy and properties of various sorts.

Bishop Stephen does offer reassurance that there is no predetermined plan of closures, and together we must decide how the church can flourish now and in the future, otherwise 'challenging realities will dictate our actions.'

Stations of the Cross



Throughout Lent, Stations of the Cross will be celebrated in all three of the parish churches. At St Edward's this will be before each weekday morning Mass; at Immaculate Heart of Mary it will be on Thursday evenings at 7.00pm; at St Mary's in Cullercoats it will be at 6.30pm on Friday evenings. Illustrated is one of the Stations so beautifully carved by the late John Carr for Immaculate Heart of Mary church. John was one of the last Senior Shipwrights at Swan-Hunters.

St Edward's Centenary 2028



Planning is underway for the Centenary celebration of the current Listed building. The very first St Edward's building was pre-First World War, but before that the nearest Catholic church was St Oswin's in Tynemouth. So many travelled to Sunday Mass there that the first tram from Whitley Bay that day was just known locally as 'the Catholic Tram'!

Ushaw Library Visits, 8/9 March 2026 from 11.30am

The Big Library is described by historian Eamon Duffy as unquestionably the most important Catholic library in Britain". It houses over 50,000 volumes, including unique early manuscripts and rare first editions. A limited selection of books and archival treasures will



be on open display, offering a glimpse into the richness of the collection. Booking is essential and access is by shallow steps only 40 inches wide. Each group has a slot of 30 minutes. Longer visits of 90 minutes will be available in April. I can say that this is a visit well-worth making.

Gerry Latimer, Parish of Our Lady Star of the Sea

Parish Mass Times

St Edward's: Sunday 9.30am, Tuesday & Friday 10.00am

Immaculate Heart of Mary: Saturday Vigil 6.00pm, Wednesday 10.00am

St Mary's: Sunday 11.00am, Thursday 10.00am, Saturday 10.00am

WEIRD ENGLISH FACTS (PART 2)

1. "Queue" is just the letter Q followed by four completely silent letters waiting in line.

2. "Bookkeeper" is the only word with three consecutive double letters, looking like a total glitch.

3. "Sanction" is a contradiction; it means both to "allow" something and to "punish" it.

4. "Typewriter" is the longest word you can type using only the top row of keys.

5. "Pacific Ocean" has three 'C's, and every single one is pronounced differently.

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St Alban's Pancake and Quiz Night

A fantastic night was had by all. Excellent pancakes and Craig's multi section quiz!



Notice there are no pictures of the pancakes— I suspect they vanished very quickly! Here are the quiz shots, during and after.





And the wonderful Quizmaster himself, our very own Craig!



As ever, the quiz was really cleverly devised.





And finally ... relaxing for some, clearing up for the team.
Many thanks to you all, what a great job.

(I'm not sure if this picture is prior to the pancakes, or after. Janet's Marigolds would suggest it is afterwards, but then Marilyn is oiling the frying pan. The team look so fresh that it must surely be taken before the hard work.)



On the subject of Mothering Sunday 15th March ...

Granny retired? You've got to be kidding....

The idea that grandmothers retire into an unburdened world of gardening and tea-drinking, golf and knitting is no more than a pleasant fantasy these days.

Instead, nearly 63% of grandparents provide some sort of childcare to their under-16-year-old grandchildren. That amounts to around seven million older people, aged mostly between 55 - 74.

As many as one in three is doing the school run. Nearly one in five is spending more than 10 hours a week giving other childcare.

America has a nickname name for them: the 'granny nannies.'

Granny nannies do it for good reason: to enable their own children to be able to work longer hours. But granny nannies not only care for their grandchildren, they may also be providing comfort for elderly relatives of their own – and hold down a part-time job at the same time.

Perhaps Super-Granny-Nannies is the correct name for them!

Record number of young adults join ministry experience year

A record number of young adults have joined a year-long placement scheme to experience ministry in the Church of England.

The Ministry Experience Scheme (MES) intake this year is 121, the largest the scheme has had since it was founded more than a decade ago. This year's total means that more than 1,000 young adults, including this year's intake, have been part of the Scheme since it was set up in 2013.

St. Alban's and St. John's

Diary Page for March 2026

Sunday	1st		<u>The Second Sunday of Lent</u>	
		9.00am	Holy Communion	St John's
		10.30am	Holy Communion	St Alban's
Thursday	5th	9.30am	Holy Communion	St John's
Sunday	8th		<u>The Third Sunday of Lent</u>	
		9.00am	Holy Communion	St John's
		10.30am	Holy Communion	St Alban's
Sunday	15th		<u>The Fourth Sunday of Lent</u> <u>Mother's Day</u>	
		9.00am	Holy Communion	St John's
		10.30am	Holy Communion	St Alban's
Thursday	19th	9.30am	Holy Communion	St John's
Sunday	22nd		<u>The Fifth Sunday of Lent</u>	
		9.00am	Holy Communion	St John's
		10.30am	Holy Communion	St Alban's
Sunday	29th		<u>Palm Sunday</u>	
		9.00am	Holy Communion	St John's
		10.30am	Holy Communion	St Alban's
Thursday	2nd		<u>Maundy Thursday</u>	
	April	9.30am	Holy Communion	St John's
		7.30pm	Communion for Maundy Thursday, followed by Gethsemane Vigil	St Alban's

Friday	3rd		<u>Good Friday</u>	
	April	10.00am	Good Friday Children's Workshop.	St Alban's
		2pm	At the Foot of the Cross	St Alban's
Sunday	5th		<u>Easter Day</u>	
	April	9.00am	Holy Communion	St John's
		10.30am	Holy Communion	St Alban's

Sunday Gospel Readings for March 2026 :

1st	8th	15th
Matthew 5.13-16	Luke 8.1-8	1 Corinthians 13.1-7, 13
22nd	29th	5th APRIL
John 12.20-33	Matthew 21.1-11	Matthew 28.1-10

Sneak Previews...

Sunday March 15th is **Mothering Sunday**. We mark Mother's Day with a special all-age 10.30 service at St Alban's

On Saturday morning April 25th, St Alban's and St John's will hold the summer term before God in prayer at a special **online prayer morning** (10.15am to 11.30am on Zoom)

Our next **Quiet Day** is on Saturday May 9th. Listen out for more details of theme and venue

Earsdon and Backworth's **Annual Meeting** will follow the 10.30 service on Sunday May 10th in the Eccles Hall

In obedience to the command of Jesus, we will spend time **waiting on God** for the gift of the Holy Spirit on the evening of Wednesday May 20th.



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How many church members does it take to change a light bulb?

What do you mean CHANGE??? That light bulb was given in memory of my grandmother! My father installed it with his bare hands! He donated his time AND the use of his ladder to do it, too! My family's been members of this church for four generations! And if you think you're going to come in here and make a bunch of changes all of a sudden, vicar, you've got another think coming!



Around our buildings at St Alban's & St John's

- The **Eccles Hall** is urgently in need of a new wooden floor. While we're about it, we're also looking finally to improve insulation to the roof. A grant applications team is working on this. We've made an initial approach to the National Heritage lottery for £80,000. Watch this space.
- Meanwhile, on Sunday February 22nd we launched an Easter Sunday Gift Day towards **urgent repairs to St Alban's**. These have nothing to do with the Netty Project, which is all complete and paid for. Collect an information sheet and gift envelope next time you're in St Alban's.
- Finally, the new heating system at St John's is also fully paid for. However, to do this, we needed to rob Peter to pay Paul. A team is working to access remaining funds held in the **Gladys Cross Trust**. Please pray for this process. It's only recently come to light that the Charity Commission closed the Gladys Cross Trust in 2019 not having heard from the trustees. We are working to reopen the Trust, but this has not yet been achieved.

Rev'd Tim Mayfield.



SUDOKU

Complete the 9x9 grid with digits so that each column, each row, and each of the nine 3x3 blocks contains all of the digits from 1 to 9.

2					3	4	1	
	1		8					5
		6		9				
5							6	
	2	4		7		8	3	
	6							2
				8		6		
6					4		2	
	4	1	9					8

 * If you have any suggestions, comments or requests *
 * regarding the magazine, or for anyone thinking of *
 * sending in their contribution for publication, please *
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 * or call **Jean** on **0191 2377273**. *

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Funeralcare

All in the month of March

It was ...

250 years ago, on 24th March 1776 that John Harrison, carpenter and clockmaker died. Known for inventing the marine chronometer, which enabled sailors to calculate longitude at sea.

175 years ago, on 11th March 1851 that the premiere of Italian composer Giuseppe Verdi's opera *Rigoletto*, was held in Venice.

150 years ago, on 10th March 1876 that the world's first telephone call was made. Alexander Graham Bell used his telephone to call his assistant, Thomas Watson, after spilling acid in his laboratory. The first words ever spoken on a telephone were: "Mr Watson, come here. I want you."

80 years ago, on 11th March 1946 that Rudolf Hess, former Commandant of Auschwitz concentration camp, was captured by the British forces in Germany. At the Nuremberg trials in April, he admitted to being responsible for the deaths of the 2.5 million

people who had been killed at Auschwitz. He was executed on 16th April 1947.

75 years ago, on 15th March 1951 that Dennis the Menace first appeared in the British children's comic, *The Beano*.

40 years ago, on 3rd March 1986 that Queen Elizabeth II signed the Australia Act, severing Australia's remaining legal ties with Britain and granting it full independence.

30 years ago, on 13th March 1996 that the Dunblane Massacre took place in Scotland. Thomas Hamilton, a former Scout leader, entered Dunblane Primary School, shot dead 16 children and a teacher, wounded 15 more, and then committed suicide. As a result, the private ownership of handguns was banned in the UK.

25 years ago, on 26th March 2001 that the UK Post Office was rebranded as Consignia, at a cost of around £2million. The name was so unpopular that the following year it was renamed The Royal Mail Group.

WORDSEARCH

March 2026

Love and serve one another

On Maundy Thursday we recall the final command that Jesus gave to his disciples before his death. After the Last Supper, He rose and washed his disciples' feet. This was astonishing for a 'teacher' to do, but He had a firm purpose in mind: "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another." His disciples were to love through service, not domination, of one another.

In Latin, the opening phrase of this sentence is 'mandatum novum do vobis'. The word 'mundy' is thus a corruption of the Latin 'mandatum' (or command). The 'washing of the feet' ceremony was an important part of the medieval church's liturgy, symbolising the humility of the clergy, in obedience to the example of Christ.

Maundy
Thursday
Final
Command
Jesus
Disciples
Death
Last
Supper
Washed
Feet
Astonishing
Purpose
Teacher
As
Loved
you
Must
One
Another
Service
Domination
Latin
Ceremony
Medieval
Humility
Obedience



Church Contacts

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NE25 0SR

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PCC Secretary

Rob Gowdy, 82 Chipchase Court, New Hartley, Northumberland
NE25 0SR

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PCC Treasurer

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Parish Priest

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