

Spire Newsletter

FREE



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

**Issue no.11:
May and June 2026**

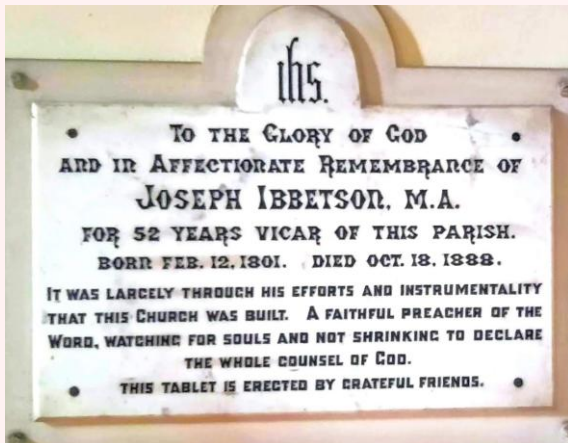


RED is the colour of WHITSUN

MAY 24TH is WHITSUNDAY, also called PENTECOST from the Greek for 50, as it comes fifty days (if counting inclusively) after Easter Sunday. The colour RED symbolizes joy and the fire of the Holy Spirit. When Peter addressed a crowd, 3000 asked to be baptised; so Pentecost is often considered the Birthday of the Church.

IN THIS ISSUE:

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CHRIST CHURCH AT 150
SPRING AT ST OSWALD'S
CHRISTIAN AID WEEK
LOOKING BACK TO EASTER



GREAT AYTON'S NEW CHRIST CHURCH WAS FIRST USED IN MAY 1876 – 150 YEARS AGO THIS MONTH.

Our 12th century All Saints' Church had become too small for the growing population of the village, so our new church, costing £5,000, was constructed thanks to the efforts primarily of Rev Joseph Ibbetson, vicar here for 52 years (whose memorial, left, can be seen on the church's north wall), who had, thirty years earlier, also seen to the building of the neighbouring vicarage. The church was consecrated by the Archbishop of York on 12th March 1877.

The first of the Christ Church 150th Anniversary Celebrations will take place on **Wednesday May 20th at 5.00 pm** with a short 'All Age' service and a bring-your-own picnic, to which **all are welcome**.

(More details inside)

Dear Friends and Neighbours - Happy Easter!

Do you ever get a random song pop into your head and then stick around? I am writing this in the week after Easter Day; it was glorious and we sang my favourite hymn *Thine be the Glory*. It has a great tune and stirring words telling of the stone rolled away, the risen Christ conquering death, and in response we sing hymns of gladness and triumph. Strangely this is not the song that is my current earworm. In my head is the 1982 *Hot Chocolate* hit '*It Started with a kiss*'!! This possibly is testament to my age and it's a good song, although not as good as their 1978 '*Every 1's a Winner*' – the late Errol Brown had a great voice.

Our journey through Holy Week reminded us of all that Jesus encountered following his entry into Jerusalem on a donkey with the crowds waving palm branches. Maundy Thursday is the night of The Last Supper, where Jesus commanded us to remember him in bread and wine, and we do that week in week out in service of Holy Communion/ Eucharist. It was as he washed his disciples' feet and broke bread with them that Judas left to bring the guards to arrest Jesus. They found him later that night in the Garden of Gethsemane and Judas greeted his friend with a kiss – the signal that he was the man to be arrested. Jesus' trial, torture, crucifixion and death literally started with a kiss. Many scholars have written about Judas' motive in the arrest, but, whatever it was, the betrayal with a kiss seems too much. It was the last non-violent thing to happened to Jesus before Joseph of Arimathea carefully took his body down to lay him in the tomb. At Christmas we can easily imagine Jesus' mother Mary kissing her son - the child God had asked her to carry so he could be the saviour of the world. Two very different kisses on our Lord, one kiss of tenderness and motherly love, the other kiss of betrayal and a signal for violence. Despite the pain and rejection Jesus was shown following the kiss of betrayal, he called from the cross for his Father to forgive. He recited words from Psalm 22 and showed care for his mother and his friends by asking them to care for each other. We too are called to show care and support, to forgive, and praise God using words from scripture and our own words too. We are set free from sin and death not by our own actions but those of Christ crucified and risen.

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Trying to get rid of my earworm, I looked up the lyrics of 'It Started with a Kiss' and there is a line about the 'aroma of your perfume' – I'd forgotten that bit. Writing this letter about a kiss took me back to the woman who anointed Jesus' feet with perfume and then kissed his feet. The story is in all the Gospels. In John's Gospel the woman is Mary, the sister of Lazarus; Judas and the others try to complain at the money being wasted on the perfume. In other accounts the complaints are she is a sinful woman and she should not be caring for Jesus. Jesus rebukes the complaints and praises the woman's actions in kissing and anointing him, saying 'Truly I tell you, wherever the gospel is preached throughout the world, what she has done will also be told, in memory of her.' Jesus was betrayed with a kiss and his body was not anointed for burial, but we rejoice that he received a kiss and carried the aroma of perfume by someone others dismissed. Know this Eastertide that Jesus died for the named and unnamed, the ones who think they are in the know and the ones who are dismissed or excluded. It did start with a kiss, but in his death and resurrection Every 1's a Winner indeed!

Alleluia Christ is Risen - Sarah



Dorothy Walton, Headteacher of Marwood Infant School, shares her pupils' Easter joys....

Our school community recently enjoyed a special Easter Spirituality Morning, where Rev. Sarah led beautiful Godly Play sessions for every class. The children were captivated as they explored the Easter story, thought deeply about its rich symbols, and discovered signs of new life all around them. They especially loved creating and decorating their own crosses, each one a thoughtful reflection of hope and renewal. It was a meaningful time of stillness, creativity, and spiritual wonder for all involved. Rev. Sarah also taught Year 2 how to make palm crosses from real palm leaves.

Altogether the children made 180 crosses to be used in the Palm Sunday service at Christ Church.

PLEASE CELEBRATE OUR 150th WITH US

You are warmly invited to a **SERVICE OF CELEBRATION** on **WEDNESDAY 20th MAY AT 5 PM** to mark 150 years of worship in Christ Church, followed by a Family Picnic.

Tea, coffee & juice will be available. Please bring your own picnics. Join our celebrations and bring a friend!

To commemorate this special occasion, we aim to undertake a number of projects to make the church more welcoming and accessible for all: *Renew/repair to the floor coverings and Make alterations to the porch to improve visibility when coming in.*

If you would like to donate to these projects, you can do so via this QR code.

This link also gives you the option to set up a regular donation by the Parish Giving Scheme, to ensure that our beautiful church continues to serve our village for the next 150 years.

Look out for other special events to commemorate the church's 150th anniversary including:

Songs of Praise/Hymns & Pimms

Come and Sing Choral Evensong

Baptism/Godparent Event

Wedding Event

Talk on the History of Christ Church

Please keep checking Facebook and our Website for further details.

The celebrations will culminate with a **Thanksgiving Service** marking the consecration of Christ Church on **Friday 12th March 2027.**



Our Wild Flower Patch

Our new Wild Flower Patch is taking shape. Thanks to Jenny Earle for providing a range of good pollinator plants. A mix of wildflower seeds has been sown and plug plants will be planted.





Details of opening times will soon be available, so watch this space and then come and visit our own Pilgrim Place in the North; you won't be disappointed.



A PILGRIM PLACE

Christine Stinson shares some great ST. OSWALD'S news with us...

Faith in the North is a project within the York Diocese to celebrate and develop further the faith in the north. It looks to encourage a movement of prayer, storytelling and church planting inspired by the Northern Saints. It emerged from a series of consultations with churches, school leaders, heritage partners and others asking how together we can mark the 1400th anniversary, in 2027, of the baptism in York by Bishop Paulinus of King Edwin the first King of Northumbria to profess the Christian faith.

Those early saints of the north and people living at that time saw the whole of life as a pilgrim-journey with God at their side. We too are all pilgrims, journeying through life visiting special places to learn and find forgiveness, healing and guidance. Some of the most special places in the north are our churches and Pilgrim Places offer a warm welcome to any 'pilgrims' who are journeying by, sharing with them a space for relaxation, meditation and learning.

St. Oswald's, at Newton under Roseberry, is just one of those special little places to visit. Historically it has not been open for visitors other than at the times of worship. However the grounds are regularly visited by many individuals and families as they walk to and from Roseberry Topping, as well as those exploring the village whilst holidaying in the area. Consequently it felt right to register St. Oswald's Church as a Pilgrim Place and open it for visitors/pilgrims. The PCC took the decision in February resulting in resources from Faith in the North being purchased which are now available in the church for all visitors.

CHURCHES' YEW TREE NATIONAL SURVEY

...and Steve Fellowes appreciates St Oswald's Yews

This year's Yew Tree survey took place from February 8th to 15th and was titled 'Love your Yew Trees'. It was a collaboration involving organisations 'Caring for God's Acre', the Ancient Yew Group, and churches with yew trees within their grounds. There are over 800 ancient yews within churchyards in England and Wales; Britain is a stronghold of veteran yew trees and churchyard yews are important at a global level.

As part of Yew Tree week churches were invited to join a national week of action in clearing the ground around the base of their trees to help sustain growth to the rooting system. At St. Oswald's we have a yew that was planted at the same time the Temple Moor tower was added to the Norman nave at the beginning of the 20th century, so it is about 120 years old. This was confirmed using the national tree calculation formulae by measuring the circumference of the trunk at 1.5 metres and then dividing that by Pi (3.142) and multiplying that by 1.5 (annual growth figure for yew trees); the final age figure was broadly the same as what had been expected.



The berries of the yew tree are poisonous but are a source of nutrients for birds, particularly the thrush family, which includes our winter migrants, the fieldfare and redwing. The yew trees in autumn are covered in red berries, a favourite choice for these birds. In addition to our yew tree we also have ten smaller golden yews lining the church's entrance pathway. *Please feel free to visit our church throughout the year to see the species of trees within the grounds.*



Mothering Sunday was very well attended at St Oswald's. Candles were lit to remember mothers who have passed on and marigold seeds were given out. Its flowers can be used in salads, the plant makes a soothing balm for cuts and, if planted in your vegetable garden, will keep away pests. They feed, they soothe and they protect - just like our mothers do, or those who care for us.

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“THE GREAT RACE” - one editor appreciates another

“Great” - that’s the word the Evening Gazette chose to describe Malcolm when they presented him with a brass plaque of a mock-up front page on the day Malcolm Race finally retired in July 1989 – plus “second to none” and “a gentleman of the old school” (see photograph). And, ever since, Great Ayton and Christ Church have benefited from the truth of it. Next month, on June 24th, Malcolm will reach his 100th birthday!

Malcolm is still full of fun; his eyes twinkle as he easily recounts his memories from pre-war to post-war, from ‘Boro to Ayton, from school to army, journalism to the Palace. Celia Elliott (a regular visitor from church) and Stephen Whitehead (your current *Spire* editor) recently spent time talking and reminiscing with him in his lovely Fry Court apartment. Where to start?

Well, at ‘Barney’ of course (see *Spire* issue 7). As a teenager evacuated to Barnard Castle from Middlesbrough early in the war, he received his schooling in Bowes Museum and, aged just 15, had his first byline (crediting his authorship) in the Teesdale Mercury when asked to send in a report on a local organ concert. Clearly, he must have been very good in his written English; he had already, at the age of 11, won a school essay competition and, whilst in the Scouts, produced a regular troop newsletter. So, in 1942, he became a junior reporter for the Gazette - only three weeks after a bomb was dropped on Middlesbrough railway station on August Bank Holiday Monday – and there he remained for 47 years. He still has - and proudly shows us - his newspaper cuttings from those earliest years during the war. And his first salary? He remembers it as a huge 15 shillings (75p)... a week!

As the war was ending, he was called up for army service, which took him to Cairo (where he celebrated his 21st in the shadow of the pyramids). In Cairo he worked on an army magazine, ‘*Parade*’ for two years. He remembers with some glee his demob on York station where the army managed to confuse all the troops’ baggage. He married Brenda in 1952, and they lived in Middlesbrough, where sons David and Christopher were born. The family moved to Yarm in 1971.

Back with the Gazette, Malcolm’s work was very varied. He recalls spending five days in Berlin in 1951 with the Durham Light Infantry, including a climb to the top of the ruined shell of the Reichstag and a visit to the communist side of the Berlin Wall. And in the 1970s he visited the Polish port of Szczecin as part of a Teesside delegation, where, on leaving, the only people questioned by the communist officials were the three journalists! Malcolm’s toothpaste was checked to see whether any film had been secreted in it and the heels of his shoes checked to see whether they contained secret compartments. The local Polish paper translated his Gazette article story later – his only foreign byline!

In 1967 he was promoted to be the Gazette’s Municipal Editor and, for a quarter of a century, this took him into local government council and committee meetings in order to report; he told us how much pleasure he had received from seeing at first hand the post-war developments on Teesside. He covered every election for some 30 years and became a familiar face to councillors. And, for 33 years, as a JP he sat in the magistrates’ court and wrote a book on the history of the local courts. He served in various offices for the Teesside branch of the National Union of Journalists.

Retirement? Can you imagine Malcolm putting his feet up? Having moved to Great Ayton in 1986, into a bungalow in Angrove Close, Brenda and he soon became active members of Christ Church. Brenda will be remembered for her very strong faith and, more practically, her flower-arranging skills, and Malcolm as Secretary of the PCC and, for many years, editor of the (then) *Spire Magazine*. Many readers will fondly remember his *Malcolm’s Musings* (short amusing anecdotes he had heard or read), which, afterwards, he continued to contribute to the monthly *Spire* until only a few years ago. He assured us that they were all true; he has an acute ear for registering the unintended gaffe!



A recent photo of Malcolm at home

These were so popular that he had more musings printed in three pamphlets in order to raise funds for our church. He also wrote and professionally published further books: as well as the one on the courts, there was *Yarm of Yesteryear* and another on *Teesside at War*, both lavishly illustrated, still available and very good reads. He also wrote *A History of St Luke’s Hospital* on its centenary.

51 years after their marriage, Brenda sadly passed away in 2003. Malcolm, though now with some limited vision, still has a high level of independence in his apartment where he has support from daily carers. And, whilst son David lives in the south, Chris is still local and he and his wife Alli are very frequent visitors and are a constant support to him.



His family has always been very important to him and he follows the progress of his grandsons Pete and Nick with evident pride. The family will of course be gathering to celebrate his centenary with Malcolm; the rest of our Christ Church readers, we know, will be remembering him now as **we send him our happiest and warmest congratulations.**

We were about to leave. “Oh,” he added as an apologetic afterthought, “I suppose you could mention that I met the Queen.” “Really?” “Oh yes, three times.” “WHAT?” Malcolm had accompanied his sister Hazel when she was awarded the Imperial Service Medal, attended a royal Garden Party at Buckingham Palace with Brenda, and, on Maundy Thursday 2012, was one of the beneficiaries of Queen Elizabeth II’s Maundy Money in York Minster. Could anyone have been more deserving?

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Christian Aid Week



10th – 16th MAY

YOUR FAITH. MAKE IT COUNT.

**7 DAYS TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE –
What Will YOU Do?**

**FIGHT GLOBAL POVERTY
AND INJUSTICE**

LECTIO 365 - Celia Elliott Recommends Bedtime Prayer



Did you know there's an app you can download, giving you daily 10-minute devotionals? It's a way of praying without saying anything.

I listen to the automatically updated sessions when I wake and at bedtime. I don't have to concentrate on reading anything (although you can) and I can lie in bed or sit in a chair with my eyes closed as I listen to short sections of a Psalm or other Scripture, followed by a reflection on them. It feels as though a kind and understanding friend is talking just to me. There's no lecturing or criticism, and there are lots of little pauses (with or without background music) giving me a chance to think about what I'm hearing. I find the bedtime ones especially relaxing and the app just shuts down automatically, so I can drift off to sleep without even moving a muscle!

I haven't made regular time yet for the midday prayer, but why not try out one of these daily devotionals yourself? Download the app today!



WALK OF WITNESS

The annual **Good Friday Walk of Witness** was organised this year by Methodist Minister Rev Rob.

All four Great Ayton Churches participated as did St Oswald's. Different church members carried the cross and this year Rev Sarah handed out Hot Cross Buns to villagers and visitors. Thanks to Chris for his musical accompaniment.



It was a joy to welcome ten families to the Café-style service in the church hall on Good Friday (above).

The songs and prayers were displayed on the screen (thanks to one of the mums for her technical assistance). Rev Sarah led our worship. Thanks to the Little Fishes team and Mandy for their help with refreshments and crafts.

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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 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 Sun)
11.00 All Age Service (3rd Sunday)

ADDITIONAL SERVICES

Tuesday May 5 (not 4th) Coffee Lounge Communion

Thursday May 14 Ascension Day 8am

There will be a short service at 8am at *St. Oswald's* followed by a breakfast (bacon buns or croissants with tea/coffee).

To give an idea of numbers for catering, please sign the sheet at the back of church. All are welcome.

Sunday May 17 Memorial Service 6pm, when we remember those dear to us who have passed on.

Sunday May 31 Cafe Church 4pm (not 24th)

Sunday June 7 Environment Sunday

ECO CHURCH - Environment Sunday

Rev Geoff writes:

One of the **FIVE MARKS OF MISSION** of the Anglican church is: **TREASURE**. Strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth. This fifth mark articulates the ecological dimension of mission, widening the circle of responsibility to its furthest extent. Formally added in 1990, this mark reflects a mature theological understanding that God's redemptive plan is cosmic in scope. It calls human beings to their divinely appointed role as stewards of the earth, presenting environmental care not as a secular agenda but as an integral component of faithfulness to the Creator God.

THE 200 CLUB

Last November the PCC decided to close down the 200 club which ran for many years in support of the hall. Many subscribers decided to donate the remaining portion of their annual donation to the hall. This generosity has enabled both the Coffee Lounge and the Hall to be redecorated, hopefully in the next month or so. To everyone who contributed to the scheme and to those that ran it over the years, Helen, Julie and Karen a huge, huge thank you. Perhaps in the autumn someone will come up with a new fund-raising idea?

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 07788 643930
mary.mason@gmx.co.uk

Church website address:
<https://www.achurchnearyou.com>



6 pm in All Saints Church for 40 minutes
on the first Sunday of each month:
June 7, July 5, August 2, September 6

Taizé style worship is inclusive and contemplative. It incorporates silence, sung and spoken prayer, readings from the Bible and time to reflect.

All are welcome, please invite a friend

CAFÉ CHURCH – SUMMER TERM

This term we are looking at some big questions that our Café church community have posed.

26th April – “Suffering - Why do Bad Things Happen to Good People?” - Andy Hood (Previously of the Institute for Fiscal Studies and now a trainee vicar)

10th May – “Perseverance – How do we keep going when life is difficult?” - Nick Land (Retired Psychiatrist and Reader)

31st May – “Technology – is it our servant or our Master” – Raj Saha (GP and Leader of Jubilee Church)

14th June – “What about other religions? Islam” – Soroush (originally from Iran) will tell us his story of being a Moslem and why he chose to follow Jesus instead.

28th June – “Does God answer Prayer?” – Rev Sarah Cliff (Vicar)

12th July – Café Church Communion – Rev Sarah
Café Church offers informal family-friendly worship, great cake and conversation, and the chance to ask questions and learn together. There are groups for children and young people, and everyone is very welcome. We meet from 4pm in Christ Church Hall (worship starts 4.30) usually on 2nd and 4th Sundays (but 5th Sunday in May because of half term).

Our website address:

Note that the church is gradually moving our information from our former website to the national CofE site. <https://www.achurchnearyou.com>

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

The Adult Discipleship Group has a Private Group.

The NEXT issue of this *Spire Newsletter* is planned for the end of June to cover the two months of July and August. 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 15th June.

HELP US SAVE! If you're reading a paper copy of *Spire*, why not ask to receive a regular digital copy on screen? Just send an email to the Church Office or to the Editor.