



St. Alban's Earsdon

CHURCH VIEWS

August

2026

£1.00



St. John's Backworth



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



THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH

AUGUST 2026

On Sunday July 12th, Reader Jo McEvedy preached at St Alban's on Jesus' parable of the wheat and the weeds. In this engaging short story, a farmer sows good seed in his field. In the night, his enemy comes and sows weeds among the wheat. So when the wheat starts to grow, the weeds grow up with it.

The farmers' workers are outraged. They ask the farmer if he wants them to weed out the weeds. The farmer says no. Leave both growing alongside each other. At harvest time we'll harvest it all, and *then* separate the weeds from the wheat.

It's tempting to see this as a picture of the world we live in. Some people are good; some people are bad; God will sort it out in the end.

However, Jo didn't go down this route. As she explained, the temptation might be for us to see ourselves as 'good people' [the wheat]. This opens the door to self-righteousness as we (potentially) look down on 'bad people' [the weeds].

So Jo's interpretation was that we look inside ourselves. The jumbled-up field is a good picture of what human beings are like. We have some good impulses [the wheat], rubbing shoulders with things that are harmful for us [the weeds].

To help us reflect on this, Jo introduced us to three characters from John Bunyan's 'Pilgrim's Progress'. 'Talkative' is much happier to talk than to listen. 'Formality' is more interested in rules than in full living. And 'timorous' is too fearful to enter into that full living themselves.

However, Jo's sermon was much more than 'just words'. She produced a spectacular visual aid. It's pictured here: the largest thistle surely in the history of thistles. Jo donned a protective glove to hold it, and planted it on the lectern as she spoke: it was wonderful.

One of the great things about such strong visuals is that other people can then play with them.

Jo kindly loaned me her glove so I could brandish the thistle during the blessing: ‘The God of love weed out from you anything and everything that might cause you harm, and the blessing of God

Almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit be with you, and remain with you always’.

I then processed out with the thistle, and laid it in the church porch.

Enter then Joan Armstrong. Joan had created a floral display with the cross. This is also pictured. Finding a vase, Joan wove the thistle into her display. The whole thing now might say ‘look how the cross of Jesus holds together my good parts and my less good parts’.

A rich, reflective morning was completed as Jo and I stood at the church door to see people out. I noticed that the smart white pebbles laid Alongside the new ramp were in urgent need of weeding [pictured].

God, weed out from me everything that it not good for me. And may everything in me that is good for me grow and flourish like nourishing wheat. Amen.

Rev’d Tim Mayfield

See next page for more pictures.





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All in the month of AUGUST

250 years ago, on 2nd August 1776 that the formal signing of the US Declaration of Independence took place.

175 years ago, on 12th August 1851 that the American inventor Isaac Singer was granted a US Patent for his sewing machine. Since then, well over 100 million various models of Singer sewing machines have been sold worldwide.

125 years ago, on 4th August 1901 that Louis Armstrong, US jazz trumpeter and singer, was born.

90 years ago, on 1st August 1936 that Yves Saint-Laurent, Algerian-born French fashion designer, was born. (Died 2008)

80 years ago, on 13th August 1946 that H G Wells, British science fiction novelist (*War of the Worlds*, *The Time Machine*, etc) died.

Also 70 years ago, on 27th August 1956 that Britain's first nuclear power station, Calder Hall in

Cumbria, began operating. It was the first nuclear power station in the world to generate power on an industrial scale and formed part of the Sellafield complex. Closed in 2003.

65 years ago, on 13th August 1961 that East Germany sealed the border between East and West Berlin with barbed wire to prevent an exodus of refugees to the West. Construction on the Berlin Wall began on 15th August. The border reopened in 1989.

40 years ago, on 9th August 1986 that the rock band Queen performed its final live concert at Knebworth Park before the death of singer Freddie Mercury. (Pneumonia, late 1991.)

40 years ago, on 31st August 1986 that Henry Moore, British sculptor, died. His monumental, semi-abstract bronze sculptures are displayed in public spaces around the world.

15 years ago, on 21st August 2011 Hurricane Irene hit the Caribbean and then North Carolina.

49 people were killed and more than \$14 billion worth of damage was done.

Around our Buildings

Worshippers at **St Alban's** on Sunday July 26th heard the ominous sound of dripping. The roof above the gallery is leaking, and the Grant Applications Team is working hard to raise the necessary funds. The current total stands at £22,500, leaving us still a shortfall in the range of £8,000 to £12,000 still to find.

We are concerned about the state of the floor and the roof in the **Eccles Hall**. We need £24,000 to lay a new floor. We already had £4,000, to which a kind anonymous donor added £12,000. PICA have made a grant of £5,000, so we're very nearly there. Meanwhile, contractors have been quoting for completely replacing the roof. This will be in the region of £125,000. There's no news yet on where we would find such a sum of money.

Our insurers have paid up following damage done by Storm Dave. Repairs to **St John's** will be done later on in August.

Towards a Better World

Our world is changing quickly. I'm writing this on Monday July 27th 2026. As I write, wildfires are raging in France and Spain. Thousands have been evacuated – the largest evacuations since the Second World War.

From Wednesday September 9th, at 7.30pm in St Alban's, we'll host a new four-part course **Towards a Better World**. We'll ask why our climate is changing, and what is causing this. We'll think about the ways in which our planet is changing, and grieve over the rate at which we're losing animal species. We'll ask the question 'what future do we want?', and think about ways in which governments, local communities, and we as individuals can play our part. We'll share stories of hope, and try our hand at simple practical things like cooking a vegetarian meal. Look out for sign-up lists at St John's and at St Alban's. Vicar Tim.

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Weather Outlook for the month of August 2026.

General overview.

The month commences with fresher and changeable conditions, low pressure bringing occasional rain and cooler temperatures early in the month, before high pressure builds toward mid-to-late August giving rise to drier, settled, and warmer conditions.

Daytime air temperatures will average between 19°C to 21°C.

The first half of August.

An unsettled start, we can expect a mix of bright sunny spells with scattered showers and blustery winds moving through the region, western parts could see rain that is a bit more persistent. This is due to an area of low pressure moving close to or across the UK.

Temperatures are expected to be near normal with daytime highs generally reaching +/- 21°C and overnight lows dropping to +/- 10°C.

The second half of August.

High pressure is expected to build near to the UK with associated frontal systems influencing the regions weather and dominating much of this period, leading to an increasing amount of dry and sunny weather. Temperatures may rise slightly above average at times during any prolonged sunny spells; extreme heatwaves are unlikely in the northeast

Coastal areas may experience onshore breezes and occasional low cloud and sea-fret/mist commonly known as Haar – it forms when warm moist air passes over the cold surface of the North Sea. This will clear away quickly to allow fine afternoons.

Please be mindful of the damaging effects of prolonged exposure to UV radiation especially during the hours either side of mid-day and try not to spend long periods in the sun and seek shade whenever possible. It is essential that you protect yourself by wearing suitable clothing and applying high factor sunscreen also consider wearing good quality (UVA filter) eye protection (sunglasses) in accordance with your Optometrist recommendations. Most weather apps have a daily UV level prediction for your area.

David Gibson, 30th July 2026.

Under and over the Tyne

On Sunday June 28th five intrepid cyclists set off from St Alban's. Led by first-rate tour guide Peter Davison he, his friend Keith, Cathryn Richardson, Rob Gowdy and Tim Mayfield undertook a local tour of 18.5 miles.



Setting off

Peter took us through the pedestrian and cycling tunnel at Howdon. We then cycled to the ferry terminal to cross a sparkling Tyne from South to North Shields.

A homecoming along the spectacular new cycle track along the coast completed the trip.

A feature of the outing was some good-natured teasing of Peter.

No sooner had we set foot on the ferry than it

set sail. When we got to Allards on the Fish Quay the perfect table 'just happened' to be free at just the right time. We wondered how Mr Davison managed to pull off these extraordinary feats of planning.



For the record, I clocked two hours twenty-two minutes and fourteen seconds of cycling time, covering a distance of 18.45 miles at an average speed of speed 7.8mph. This burnt 683 calories, and took my heart rate to an average of 114bpm. *Tim Mayfield*

NEWS FROM THE PARISH OF OUR LADY STAR OF THE SEA

Monsignor Faley To Retire

Mgr Faley, more popularly just Fr Andrew, will retire as parish priest of Our Lady Star of the Sea on 31 August. He retires reluctantly on medical grounds, and the parish has, equally reluctantly, accepted his decision.

Immaculate Heart of Mary, now part of Our Lady Star of the Sea, has been 'my church' for almost sixty years, and it has always been blessed by the dedicated ministry of its priests. In that sense Fr Andrew follows a long tradition, but he has brought to it his own very personal stamp. After completing his studies at Ushaw College, he was ordained in 1979 and served in several parishes south of the Tyne, but his obvious managerial and administrative skills took him to educational roles in the Diocese and in 1994 to a national appointment at the Bishop's Conference for England and Wales as National Adviser for Catechetics and Religious Education.



In 1999 he took up a post as Vice Rector and Pastoral Director of the Beda College in Rome before being recalled as Assistant General Secretary to the Bishop's Conference with a papal appointment as Monsignor. Latterly he served on the personal staff of Cardinal Cormac Murphy O'Connor.



On October 18 2013 his Induction as Co-Pastor of the Priory Partnership was conducted by Fr Anthony Donoghue in a packed St Edward's. Forming one parish from three, each with its own culture and identity was not for the faint-hearted, but Our Lady Star of the Sea became a reality in 2015 with a

remarkable sense of unity.

We have had some remarkable and happy occasions since then not least celebrating Fr Andrew's fortieth anniversary of his ordination at Ushaw in 2019 and



in July 2024 we welcomed the newly ordained Fr Joseph O'Brian, son of Michael and Maria, to celebrate his first two Masses in the parish.

Inevitably, there have been some difficult decisions, particularly the closure of Our Lady and St Edmund in 2024. The final Mass there, conducted by Bishop Stephen Wright and Bishop Paul Mason celebrated its history and its place in so many lives. Its stained glass windows and altar crucifix are preserved at Immaculate Heart of Mary while the altar and sanctuary lamp grace St Mary's.



During his thirteen years, Fr Andrew has also ensured that practical aspects have not been neglected, and buildings maintenance and safety requirements have been carried out. Most recently the restoration of St Edward's facade, the roof repairs at St Mary's and the refurbishment of the entrance at Immaculate Heart of Mary have demanded attention.

I must add that throughout all of this, and despite his health issues, he has continued his ministry with great emphasis on safeguarding, sensitivity in bereavement support, and to promoting the children's liturgy. His clear organisation has encouraged the participation of parishioners in so many ways. The Parish Pastoral Council and its sub-committees work well and people have been happy to play their individual parts to make our churches places of welcome as well as worship. The gardeners and flower arrangers, the musicians and choirs, the Readers and Bidding Prayers writers, the Luncheon Club volunteers all willingly give their time and skills for the benefit of the parish.

As he steps down we appreciate the great difference he has made to the people and churches in our parish through his commitment and devoted ministry.



Thank you, Father Andrew.

Good news from Tanzania

We are celebrating two pieces of good news with our partners at St Andrew's Majeleko. Firstly and most importantly, this year's harvest is good. Lister Nyanganyi, who leads the work of Conservation Agriculture, wrote 'As of now (July 17th), farmers are harvesting and storing grain. Crops in this cropping season did very well and therefore there will be a good harvest.' You might like to note that the PCC has again decided to support Conservation Agriculture at this year's Harvest Festival.

Secondly, after a long and complicated process, we finally managed to get to St Andrew's the monies raised for the new church. The fundraiser was about a year ago, and we hoped to establish a simple pipeline for sending funds to Majeleko. In the end this proved impossible. Moreover, each time we tried to send funds, we were being charged fees for sending it, and then more fees for when it was sent back into our account. As we're not exactly made of money we needed to be very careful about finding a route that worked. In the end we did, and Revd Harun wrote 'With a humble heart, I thank you very much for your efforts to successfully transfer funds from the UK'.



Barbara's lovely cupcakes for a Children's Church special on the Lost Sheep. This was at St John's on Sunday July 5th



Janet, Joan and Linda

Happy to help out at
Barbara Harmsworth's
open garden

Thank you very much Barbara for opening up your beautiful garden
to raise funds for St Alban's church.



*And thanks
also to Jill
for the
pictures.*

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

Ann Donnelly, RIP



Ann and Joan, the jam ladies, at the very start of their enterprise

We have learned sadly of the death of Ann Donnelly. Although later living in Preston Village, Ann was a long-time parishioner of Our Lady and St Edmund in Backworth and later Our Lady Star of the Sea. She was a remarkable woman, one of the 'jam ladies' seen left of picture with Joan Skelton. It was an unremarkable title for two extraordinary women who would eventually raise more than £18,000 to help sixty three International Refugee Trust projects throughout Africa, the Middle East and Far East. They were moved by the orphaned or abandoned child-victims of terrorism and war. They chose to raise their first donation by making and selling jam. By the end of their first year they were happy to have sold 200 jars but it grew into a cottage industry and the sales grew into thousands. They even recycled 5,000 jam-jars. Ann's faith was central to her, and her involvement in parish life was both unobtrusive and indefatigable. As her health failed in later years the unstinting love and untiring support of her family allowed her to maintain at least some of her cherished independence. May she rest in peace.

On Pilgrimage

Our Diocesan pilgrims and supporters left for Lourdes on 31 July and our prayers and petitions go with them. In October 2027 the Diocesan Pilgrimage will be to Rome and Assisi, the shrine of St Francis, whose holiness was acknowledged by both Christians and Muslims during the Crusades.

Summer's Arrived!



The lavender hedge at Immaculate Heart of Mary is in full bloom this month and the bees are making the most of it - good news after the recent concern for bumblebees in the heat. The apple trees, staked up and pruned last January, are showing the benefits of forward planning. The rose beds are as bright as ever. This autumn the shrubs, ivy and trees surrounding the car park are to be cut back and shaped to give us and our neighbours more light and space.

Luncheon Club

The Luncheon Club July meeting was a ten year milestone. It is now a fixture in the parish calendar, but it really does not seem that long - or is time just flying again? Congratulations and thanks to everyone who makes it happen.

Ushaw Classic Car and Bike Show Sunday 30 August

Looking for an end of school hols treat? This annual event with a vast



array of vintage, classic and 'modern classic' cars and motorcycles might just be the answer. There will be live music and family friendly events throughout the day; so not just for petrolheads. The fascinating thing is looking at classic cars and thinking "We had one of those!" More details on the Ushaw website.

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 Mass at 10.00am.

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

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St. Alban's and St. John's

Diary Page for August 2026

Sunday	2 nd		<u>Ninth Sunday after Trinity</u>	
		9.00am	Holy Communion	St John's
		10.30am	Holy Communion	St Alban's
Thursday	6 th	9.30am	Holy Communion	St John's
Sunday	9 th		<u>Tenth Sunday after Trinity</u>	
		9.00am	Holy Communion	St John's
		10.30am	Holy Communion	St Alban's
Sunday	16 th		<u>Eleventh after Trinity</u>	
		9.00am	Holy Communion	St John's
		10.30am	Holy Communion	St Alban's
Thursday	20 th	9.30am	Holy Communion	St John's
Sunday	23 rd		<u>Twelfth after Trinity</u>	
		9.00am	Holy Communion	St John's
		10.30am	Holy Communion	St Alban's
Sunday	30 th		<u>Thirteenth after Trinity</u>	
		9.00am	Holy Communion	St John's
		10.30am	Holy Communion	St Alban's
Thursday	3 rd	9.30am	Holy Communion	St John's
	Sept			

My apologies for last month's incorrect times shown for St Alban's Sunday services. I hope no-one was inconvenienced.

From your incompetent editor.

St. Alban's and St. John's

Sunday Gospel Readings for August 2026 :

2nd	9th	16th
Matthew 14. 22-33	Matthew 15. 10-28	Matthew 16. 13-20
23rd	30th	
Matthew 16. 21-end	Matthew 18. 10-20	

Sneak Previews...

Revd Emma Duff will be leading worship at St John's and St Alban's on both August 23rd and August 30th while Tim is on holiday.

Sunday September 6th sees both St John's and St Alban's mark the **Feast of God the Creator**. This is a brand new festival in the church's calendar aiming to inspire people to play their part in caring for creation.

Earsdon's ever-popular **Scarecrow Festival** is on Saturday September 12th. As in previous years, this will coincide with opening the doors of St Alban's as part of the national **Heritage Open Days**.

Our **Harvest Festival** is on Sunday September 27th. Donations in kind will be for The People's Kitchen. Harvest Thanksgiving gifts of money will go towards the work of Conservation Agriculture in the Diocese of Central Tanganyika, Tanzania.

Our next **Quiet Day** is on Saturday October 10th. Venue and theme are yet to be decided.



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Please note - all material for next month's magazine
(September 2026) will need to be in before

Tuesday 25th August. Thank you, Jean.

From the PCC of July 13th: uncoupling Earsdon and Backworth?

Each deanery is being asked to reduce the number of its clergy. In Tim's time as Area Dean, he was asked to reduce to 12. The current Area Dean is now been asked to reduce to 11. The DDG (Deanery Development Group), are considering this and they have come up with two options, both of which result in uncoupling Earsdon and Backworth.

It's not certain that this will happen. However, we are encouraged to think through the implications. These include...

People thought that this might be the start of a plan to close St John's (at no point has this been mooted).

Concern for Children's Church and the potential to lose connection with the local school.

Anna Chaplaincy would be affected as it is an initiative from both churches.

Real concern regarding the Gladys Cross Trust.

If Earsdon and Backworth are uncoupled, the DDG proposes that St Alban's might go in with the Monkseaton parishes as a 'Coast Group'. St John's would go in with Shiremoor and Billy Mill as an 'Estates Group'.



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.

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

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

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Wordsearch for August 2026

John the Baptist

This month, on the 29th, we remember John the Baptist. By all accounts, he had a rough life. He grew up in obscurity, lived in the desert on a diet of bugs. He wore itchy camel hair. He worked in the heat of the sun, constantly challenging people, and wading in and out of muddy Jordan waters to baptise many. Then he was arrested and kept in a reeking, infested dungeon until one day they cut his head off. Not much comfort in that life. Yet the Bible tells us that of all the people in history, no one has even been born who was as great as him. Why? Because of the unique calling God gave him, which was to prepare the way for the coming ministry of his Son, Jesus. Jesus did not have an easy life, either.

John

Baptist

Rough

Obscurity

Desert

Bugs

Camel

Heat

Sun

Challenge

Muddy

Jordan

Arrested

Dungeon

Head

Cut

History

Great

Unique

Prepare

E	E	Q	E	U	Q	I	N	U	D	E
G	G	C	R	C	Y	D	D	U	M	E
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