



OCTOBER 2026

Stockton Country Parish

Newsheet for St John's, St James',
St Peter's and St Cuthbert's



OCTOBER & NOVEMBER Look out for:

PUMPKIN TRAIL OF LIGHT Saturday 31st October 2026

4pm - 5.30pm, St John's Churchyard, Stillington Come in costume or just as you are and admire locally carved pumpkin trail. Pop in for Hot Chocolate and Treats (no tricks - we promise) and perhaps light a candle to remember someone you love.

Fancy having a go at carving a cheerful pumpkin for the trail? As a church we'll be offering hot chocolate and treats to those who visit - if you'd like to help out please speak to Rev Lindsay 07720242468 email: lindsay.southern@durham.anglican.org by 25th Oct.

CHURCH & COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS ROADSHOW

Over the next few months there will be **opportunities** to hear more about the challenges & changes local parish are experiencing, the decisions facing Stockton Country Parish Church Council regarding **the future of the local church community and church buildings** of St Johns, St James, St Cuthbert's and St Peter's.

Wed 21st Oct 7-9pm Bishopton Village Hall, Bishopton

Tues 27th Oct 7-9pm Grindon Village Hall, Thorpe Thewles

Please come along to find out more, ask questions, contribute ideas... Stillington date coming 2027.

TOY SERVICE - November 2026 Each year we invite the congregation to donate TOYS (new), SELECTION BOXES, TUBS OF CHOCOLATE/SWEETS - these are distributed to the Salvation Army, Women's refuge, local Children's homes...

From Sunday 29th Nov

Sunday Worship

Same time, same place
every Sunday!

**10am, St John's,
Stillington**

To go on an email list for regular email updates please email: lindsay.southern@durham.anglican.org with the title: Request SCP updates.



SUNDAY SERVICES 10.30AM

October

4th St John's, Stillington
11th St James Thorpe Thewles
18th St Cuthbert's
Redmarshall
27th St Peter's, Bishopton

November

1st St John's, Stillington
8th St James Thorpe Thewles
REMEMBRANCE

15th St Cuthbert's
Redmarshall

22nd St Peter's, Bishopton

Toy Service

29th St John's, Stillington

December - every Sunday

10am St John's, Stillington

6th St John's, Stillington

13th St John's, Stillington

20th St John's, Stillington

27th St John's, Stillington

COMING UP

**Celtic Communion 12 Noon,
St Cuthberts 14th Oct,
Prayers around the Parish**

Tuesday 13th Oct 1.45 - 2.15pm
St Peter's Bishopton

Drop in to pray for the parish,
people and churches...

10th Dec Remembering

Loved Ones 7pm St Peter's
Bishopton

24th Dec Service of Light

5pm St James, Thorpe Thewles

'Blessing our communities in Jesus' name for the transformation of us all'

SPOTLIGHT ON... CONGREGATIONS



On November 29th 2026 the service rota changes and there will be a regular 10am service at St John's, Stillington each Sunday.

St Peter's, St James and St Cuthbert's will no longer have a Sunday morning service although they will still be open for baptisms, weddings and funerals - St Cuthbert's will still be hosting the monthly midweek Celtic Communion for example. Hopefully there will also be some special 'festival' style services throughout 2026 - at least until final decisions have been made regarding any closures.

This is a wrench for many in the congregation who love worshipping in these sacred spaces, particularly in their local village church. **Change can be costly as well as life-giving** and it's important that sadness is recognised and respected as we journey together as a church community.

Moving the Sunday service to the same place every week at the slightly earlier time of 10am offers opportunities too. It will be easier for regular worshippers, occasional visitors and first timers alike to know where the service is each week! Perhaps we could provide refreshments before or after the service so we can spend time together socially. (Any volunteers?!) As we commit to worshipping together weekly, we pray that the Holy Spirit will continue to be with us and in us, building us into the 'living temples'. Together, we will be looking for ways to be present and active throughout Stockton Country Parish

October ends with All Souls & All Saints - the church throughout time and space. We remember all those who have gone before us in the faith - and especially those whose faith inspired our own. We also reflect on our own discipleship and community life - what it means to be part of the Body of Christ and part of a local church congregation. **Wherever we worship, we are called to be the Body of Christ** - and perhaps it is the health of that Body which is critical. So what does a Healthy Church look like? Personally, I find Bob Warren's summaries for healthy churches very relevant. His seven marks for healthy churches are (i) that churches are energised by faith, (ii) are outward-looking, (iii) seek to find out what God wants (listening prayer is crucial), (iv) face the cost of change and growth, (v) operate as a community, (vi) make room for all (that radical hospitality, respectful of differences) and (vii) 'do a few things and do them well' - encouraging words for smaller churches that are often discouraged and have less capacity to face change. **For Prayer** - what are the few things God is calling us to as a church community & how can we grow healthily?

USEFUL CONTACTS

Priest in Charge

Rev'd Lindsay Southern

Interim Change Minister

07720 242468

lindsay.southern@durham.anglican.org

Churchwardens

Philip Tingle 01740 630589

Alison Borer 01740 630330

Parish Safeguarding Officer

Savilla Hickey 07454 275411

savillahickey@hotmail.com

Weddings, Funerals & Finance

Joyce Hewitt 07738 489894

PCC Lay Chair

Anne Tingle 01740 630589

anneltingle@gmail.com

BAPTISMS & PCC Secretary

Christine Briscoe 01740 630333

christinebriscoe.cb@gmail.com

You can support your local church by:

worshipping there,
+praying + being part of it
& if you would like to give
financially you can do so
through PGS websites
(Parish Giving Scheme)

<https://>

[www.parishgiving.org.uk/
donors/find-your-parish](https://www.parishgiving.org.uk/donors/find-your-parish)



Thank you!

INTERIM CHANGE MINISTRY PRIORITIES FOR THE NEXT 18 MONTHS

- Work with the PCC, congregation and community to establish regular weekly worship in one location, fostering a healthy, flourishing church.
- Help the parish come to terms with loss and closure of buildings.
- Encourage good working relationships with both C of E Primary Schools.
- Work with the congregation and community to discern the vision for the future of mission and ministry in the Country Parish.
- Build and trial a missional plan for reaching into every community in the parish.

SEPTEMBER & OCTOBER Look out for:



NEW Creation in Christ Festival

Sun 6th Sept 10.30am St John's, Stillington

NEW Back to School Services

for the young & young at heart, celebrate the start of the new school year...

Sun 20th Sept 4pm St John's Stillington

Sun 27th Sept 10.30am St Peter's Bishopton

Who knows - there might even be some Primary School Bangers

HARVEST FESTIVAL SONGS OF PRAISE & SHARED SUPPER

Fri 9th Oct 7pm, St Peter's Church, Bishopton

followed by shared supper in the village hall

CHURCH & COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS ROADSHOW

Coming soon to a village near you... Over the next few months there will be **opportunities** to hear more about the challenges & changes local parish are experiencing, the decisions facing Stockton Country Parish Church Council regarding **the future of the local church community and church buildings** of St Johns, St James, St Cuthbert's and St Peter's.

Fri 18th Sept 7-9pm WI Hall, **Carlton**

Wed 21st Oct 7-9pm Bishopton Village Hall, **Bishopton**

Tues 27th Oct 7-9pm Grindon Village Hall, **Thorpe Thewles**

Date TBC **Stillington**

Please come along to find out more, ask questions, contribute ideas...



NEW SERVICE



**starting soon in
Stockton Country Parish**

from

Sunday 29th November 2026

10am

**@St John's,
Stillington**

EVERY SUNDAY

See you there!