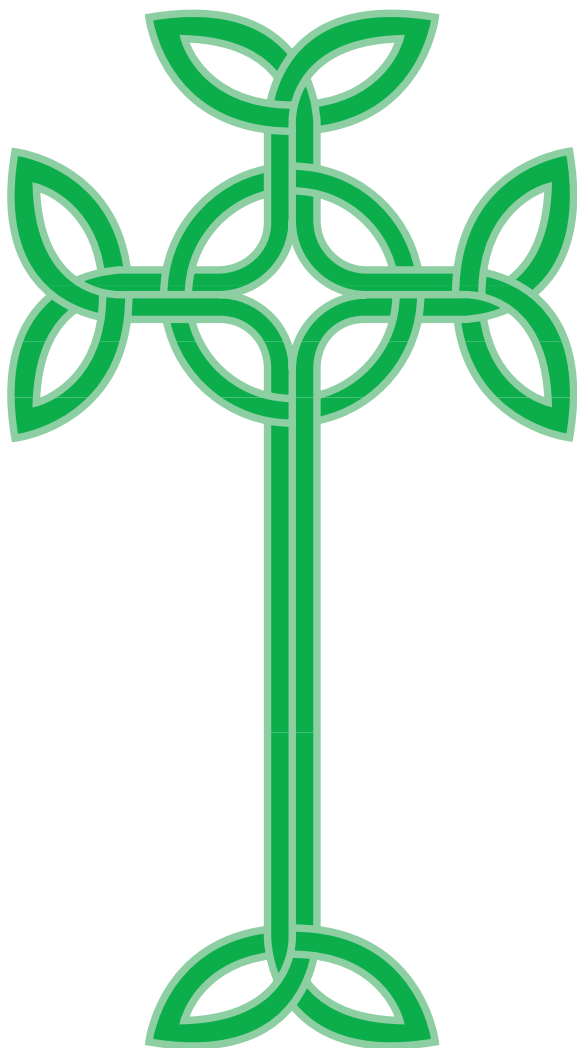


THE MONTHLY MAGAZINE
OF THE PARISH OF
HOUGHTON-LE-SPRING



St. Michael
AND ALL ANGELS

AUGUST 2025

£1

SIGNPOST

THE PARISH CHURCH OF HOUGHTON-LE-SPRING

MINISTRY TEAM

Rector

Rev'd John Barron,
The Rectory, 5 Lingfield, Houghton-le-Spring,
Tyne & Wear, DH5 5QA.
Tel: (0191) 584 7657

We enjoy and benefit from the ministry of a number of retired clergy at St Michael's.

Readers

Susan Elsey (Reader)
Email: Suelsey2@gmail.com

Mrs. Ros Pickersgill (Reader)
Tel: (0191) 584 5642

Mrs. Anne Clappison (Reader)
Tel: (0191) 584 7533

Church Wardens

Mrs. Rita Turnbull
Tel: (0191) 584 1954

Mr. Alastair Bradley
Tel: (0191) 584 1455

Assistant Church Wardens

Mr. Simon Hardy
Tel: 07854 411884

Mr. Brian Scott
Tel: 07778 577898

Officers of the Parochial Church Council

Angela Slater (Secretary)
Tel: (0191) 584 2036

Mrs. Susan Bradley (Treasurer)
Tel: (0191) 584 1455

Organist & Director of Music

Mr. George Peebles
Tel: (0191) 584 1628

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Mr. David Turnbull
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Safeguarding

Alison Young (Safeguarding Officer)
Tel: 07532 036026

Mrs. Kathleen Close (DBS Officer)
Tel: (0191) 584 0353

Space4

76 Newbottle Street
Next to Houghton Library
Twitter @space4
Facebook houghtonspace4
Tel: (0191) 512 0676

Church Website

Our website contains information on most aspects of church life.
www.stmichaels-hls.org.uk

The Friends of Houghton Parish Church Trust

Contact: Mr. George Peebles, Membership
Secretary on (0191) 584 1628 for information and application forms.

St Michaels and All Angels Mothers Union

The Mothers Union meets on the last Monday of every month at 2pm in the Kepier Hall.

We welcome new members with open arms and if you require any further information please contact:-

Joan Beattie Tel: (0191) 512 6032
Sheila Wynne Tel: 07916 629043
Anne Todd Tel: (0191) 584 1032

UNIFORMED ORGANISATIONS

Rainbows, Brownies, Guides and Rangers

Contact: Sheila Wynne, Tel: 07916629043

Beavers, Cubs and Scouts

Contact: Steve Gibson, Tel: 07507 161366
Website: www.1stthoughtonscouts.org.uk

REGULAR SERVICES

Our pattern of services at St Michael and All Angels over a 'normal' week:

Sun	8.30am	A shorter 'said' service of Communion.
Sun	10am	Parish Communion (a 'sung' service, with 'Young Church') (1st Sunday is 'All-age Communion').
Sun	6pm	Evening Service: 1st Sun 'Engage' – contemporary music & themed service; 2nd Sun 'Choral Evensong' – a traditional service led by our choir; 3rd Sun 'Service of Light' – a relaxed sung service; 4th Sun 'Celtic Eucharist' – 'Iona' style Communion.
Tues	7pm	Holy Communion (4th Sunday, during winter)
Thur	10am	Holy Communion with Hymns (& refreshments afterwards).

We hold a quieter service of Holy Communion on the 4th Tuesday of the month at 7pm. Our Young Church takes place during the 10am Sunday Holy Communion on the 2nd and 3rd Sunday of the month, with our All Age Service aim for the Young members of the congregation to be a part of on the 1st Sunday of the month.

Contact Information

Our website and Facebook page contain details of how to join others online for worship. We send regular updates via our church distribution list – please call us or email us if you know someone who would like to receive our email updates.

Find us online at:

website: www.stmichaels.hls.org.uk

facebook: www.facebook.com/stmichaels.hls

The Parish Office is open between 9am & 3pm on a Tuesday and 9am & 2pm Thursday. You can contact us on Tel: (0191) 512 1769. On occasions, when we need to close the 'physical' office, you can contact us between these times on Mob: 07707 043 395. You can also contact us on email or message us during the week and we will respond during opening hours:

Email: stmichaels.hls@gmail.com

Facebook: www.facebook.com/stmichaels.hls

Website: www.stmichaels-hls.org.uk

For urgent issues contact Rev'd John Barron on (0191) 584 7657.

If you'd like your child to be a part of Young Church contact Clare our Young Church leader at stmichaels.youngchurch@btinternet.com

To make an appointment for 'Vestry hour' to book baptisms and weddings call the Church Office or email us. Vestry Hour usually takes place on a Monday between 6 – 7pm. You will be able to talk to the team about all your Wedding and Christening needs, whether that is booking dates, finding prices or finding out the process in more details.

ABOUT SIGNPOST

Signpost is the magazine of the Parish Church of St. Michael & All Angels Houghton-le-Spring. In addition to providing information about the life of the church, it also aims to reflect the interests of the broader community and to provide a source of local news and a forum in which matters of common concern can be raised. The Editors welcome comments and suggestions, and invite contributions. Items to be included in Signpost should be submitted to the Editors by 10th of the month (end of 1st week of the month for memorials) to ensure inclusion in the next issue. It should be noted, however, that the Editors cannot guarantee to publish material and wish to point out that items included do not necessarily reflect their views nor those of the Parochial Church Council. Editor: Malcolm Foster, Tel: 07860 250 300. Distribution: Joan Bond, Tel: (0191) 584 1031.

Circulation: 300 copies per month.

Space4

At our community project, our aim is to provide 'Space4 everyone to flourish!'

We run out of our 'Hub' (next to the library) on Newbottle Street and the Kepier Hall (behind church). You can find us on our Space4 Facebook page: www.facebook.com/HoughtonSpace4/

There's lots going on throughout the week and all are welcome:

Mon	10am-1pm	Drop in (Space4 Hub, Newbottle Street)
Tues	10am-12noon	Community Food Store (Kepier Hall)
	10am-1pm	Drop in (Space4 Hub, Newbottle Street)
	3.30pm-5pm	Tuesday Treat
Wed	10am-1pm	Drop in & Craft Group (Space4 Hub, Newbottle Street)
Thur	10am-1pm	Drop in (Space4 Hub, Newbottle Street)
Fri	10am-12noon	Community Food Store (Kepier Hall)
	10am-1pm	Drop in (Space4 Hub, Newbottle Street)
	2pm-4pm	Cake & Chat (Space4 Hub, Newbottle Street)
Sat	2pm-4pm	Monthly Saturday Group (Space4 Hub, Newbottle Street)

Other events are advertised on Facebook and in the buildings.

Our Community Foodstore is open on a Tuesday and Friday: it is for anyone in the community who wants to use it, for a donation.

Rector's Letter

We've felt truly blessed over the last few weeks by children and their families taking part in different services and events going on in St Michael's church. The month began with a Youth Assembly that we hosted for children in Houghton and the wider region who met with our MP Bridget Philipson – you can read more about that in an article later in Signpost. All the children involved did an amazing job and spoke passionately about making changes for the better for our local area. Our All-age service at the beginning of the month saw large numbers of children coming to us including a lot of families of children who will be Baptised over the summer. At the service (and at a follow up meeting) the parents told us about some of the reasons they're bringing their children to be baptised that included for traditional reasons, to be part of a community and to help their children learn good values in life. They expressed that they felt we were a very welcoming and child-friendly and they felt very comfortable and happy coming to us on a Sunday.



Towards the end of the month, we had local Year 6 children visiting us for a Leaver's Service as they end their time at primary school and prepare for their move to secondary school. In the service, we had a number of different 'stations' around church which they visited and used for reflection & prayer. At one of the stations, the children were asked to 'have their say' and to tell us what they wanted church to be for them. At another station the children made a little Lego model to represent themselves and they placed these onto our Altar (for many people the most Holy place in church) to acknowledge how precious they are to God. There were some really amazing and creative 'prayers' from the children in these stations – a child who made a model of himself as a bridge because of the way he helps people, a girl who made a paint palette because of the way she helps bring colour to situations. The children made some really profound insights at the service.

One of the readings that we use in infant baptism services comes from Mark's Gospel chapter 10 verses 13 to 16 where Jesus says: '...let the little children come to me... the Kingdom of God belongs to such as these.' The reading feels very apt to reflect on at this time given all that's going on in our church at present. I think often we can consider the words of Jesus to 'let the children come to me' as being about the role we have to take to help children learn about Christ. I was struck (as I often am when working with children and young people) by how much we learn from children when we stop and listen to the insights they bring when we ask them about their understanding of God. I wonder if sometimes as adults our preconceptions or the concerns that we carry get in the way of our relationship with God. Jesus tells us in Mark 10 that we need to receive the Kingdom like a child if we are truly to enter it. I wonder then what we can learn from children to help us in our relationship with God?

I have been really blessed by the children who we've met in this last month and I learned a great deal from them: not least to be reminded, that the Kingdom of God truly belongs to 'such as these'.

With my prayers and very best wishes.



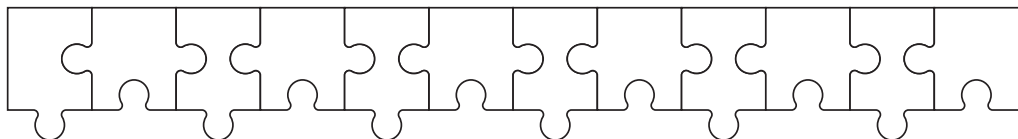
The Gilpin Singers Summer Concert 2025

The Gilpin Singers held their summer concert in church on 9th July. The audience enjoyed a concert with the theme “Music From The Movies”, which was reflected in the selection of songs.

The programme featured a wide variety of songs, including Edelweiss from The Sound of Music and Pure Imagination from Willi Wonka and the Chocolate Factory to the Abba Medley. The small group sang a Carole King medley and the large group sang Tomorrow. There were solos from Nikki and Rector John and the piece Graham played left us in admiration of his talents. The first part of the concert finished with The Rhythm of Life, which proved to be a firm favourite with the audience. Refreshments were served in the interval and there was also a raffle. The concert finished in dramatic style with The Impossible Dream.

Thanks must go to our conductor Laura for her enthusiasm and commitment to the Singers. We also congratulate her on her recent marriage to Gary, and wish them every happiness in the future. Thanks also go to our amazing accompanist Graham and to everyone who helped with the behind the scenes preparation for the concert. Finally our thanks go to everyone who came along to the concert, we really appreciate your support.

Dian Scott



The Celebration Jigsaw August Progress Report

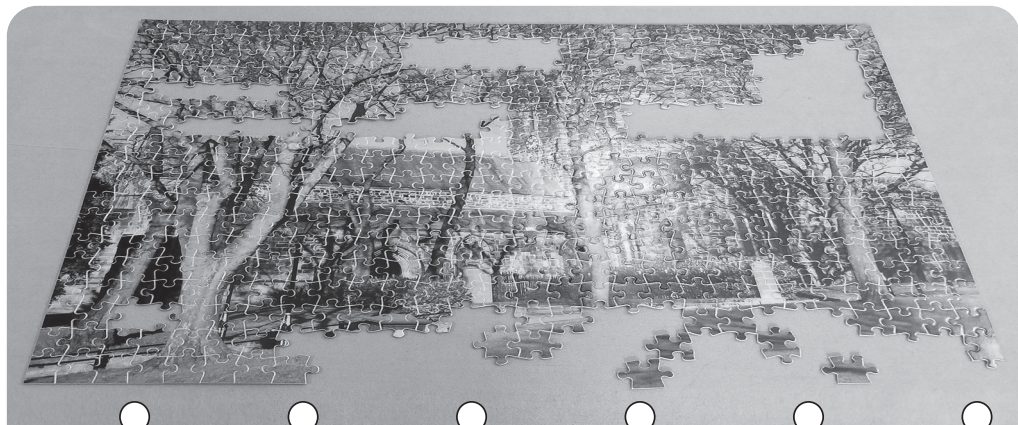
When is a 500 piece jigsaw not a 500 piece jigsaw?

As hoped, we passed our last end of month target of 380, achieving 387 pieces. This month's jigsaw photograph shows what that looks like! We have since gone on to break the 400 pieces threshold, which means that we are definitely on the homeward strait. The next target is 420 pieces.

Guess what! Our 500 piece jigsaw has 18 rows of 28 pieces - which actually equals 504 PIECES!! The FINAL FOUR 'BONUS' PIECES will become available only when the first 500 pieces have already been sponsored. Our target date for this is the final day of this year's Houghton Feast! We anticipate a lot of interest in the bonus pieces, and so we will be running a £1 per ticket RAFFLE for the chance to win one of them, with all funds going to our Church. Look out for the raffle announcement in a couple of months' time!

Remember that you can still get jigsaw pieces from Dian Scott (07979 022 652) or Denise Hall (07896 648 857) or me - Angela Slater (07931 064 891). Or just catch us in Church.

Thank you for being a piece of St Michael's!



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 Email: **kim@hettontowntrust.co.uk**



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Contact: The Clubhouse 0191 584 1460
 Email: **houghtonrugbyclub@outlook.com**

Youth Assembly with the Education Secretary



*Local School Children front and centre with Education Secretary
Bridget Philipson at our Youth Assembly on 4th July*

As part of our community work at St Michael and All Angels, we are involved in a number of projects to help raise the voices of local people to challenge injustice and ultimately help people bring about change for the better for local communities in Houghton-le-Spring. Friday 4th Jul saw an important milestone in that work - we held a 'Youth Assembly' with our MP Bridget Philipson: she attended wearing two hats those of Education Secretary and our local Member of Parliament. The delegates (all children) were seeking to gain her commitment to working with them to address some of the issues impacting children locally and nationally. This was one of a number of Youth Assemblies that took place across the country with MPs and members of the government on the first anniversary of the general election.

Pupils and staff were involved from our local Burnside, Gillas Lane, Eppleton & Newbottle Primary and Kepier Schools also St Cuthberts, West Denton, Thomas More High School from wider afield as well as students from the University of Sunderland. Numbers in the Assembly itself had to be limited and a much larger group of children were present in spirit with their pictures and school banners on display in church. The delegates did extremely well – they were a huge credit to their schools, the town of Houghton and the North East Region. Everyone agreed that the Assembly was a great experience (including Bridget!). She made a number of commitments to the children including to meet with them again at a future Assembly.

The Place of Light

Lampstands are mentioned a lot in the Bible, in both the Old and New Testaments.

In Hebrew, lampstand means 'the place of light' and this light was very important to the religious rites performed in the tabernacle and then the temple. Made of pure gold, the lampstand had two main functions. Practically, it enabled the priests to be able to see properly and perform the necessary rituals. Spiritually, it represented the light and life God gave to his people. The lampstand had to be attended continually so it did not go out.

Jesus talked about the lampstand in his Sermon on the Mount (Mark 4:21-23). He expanded the meaning to include the priesthood of all believers, not just the appointed religious priests. Jesus explained to his followers that they must let their light shine out so others could see it and be impacted rightly by their words and actions. This would have been quite difficult for the early church as they were under threat of persecution, imprisonment or even death because of their faith. Many Christians around the world today still face this challenge. How difficult do we find it ourselves in this time?

Jesus is represented in Revelation 1&2 where he is seen walking amongst the lampstands, examining the light. Let's visualise Jesus walking beside us as well, examining our light, encouraging us in our faith, and demonstrating by our actions that we are his followers.

The world desperately needs the light of Christ, and we are his lampstands.

Matthew 5:16 "So let your light shine out before humanity, so that they may see your good works and may glorify your Father in the heavens."

Debra Anderson

FROM THE REGISTERS

Funerals

25 June	Elaine King	Age 81
	Hetton-le-Hole	
1 July	Susan Campbell	Age 77
	Houghton-le-Spring	
24 July	Ian Tait	Age 60
	Houghton-le-Spring	

Baptisms

20 July	Isaac Ian Robson
20 July	Adelaide Rose Smith
27 July	Joseph William Anderson
27 July	Orla Rae Wilkinson

*Can
anyone
guess who
this is?*

*Contact
the Editor
with
answers*





Prayer for August

Heavenly Father,
August – summer holidays and
sunny skies. All should be well
and yet, around the world all is
not well!

Every day, it seems, new wars
begin, catastrophes occur, world
politicians play power games –
and people suffer.

It can feel overwhelming and
we want to bury our heads in
the sand, rather than build
sandcastles on the beach.
Help us Lord, to look up; to see
things with Your perspective;
to remember that Jesus warned
us that in this world we will
have trouble. Then help us
to remember that He told us
to take heart, because He has
overcome the world.

Father, help us to savor the
summer, as we put our trust in
You – our strength, our hope,
our ultimate and unfailing
security.

In Jesus name,
Amen

Major investment in local churches and parish clergy as £1.6bn three-year national spending plans unveiled

The Church Commissioners' funding towards work of the church is set to leap by 36 per cent in the three-year period 2026-28, amounting to the biggest distribution in Church's history.

The C of E plans to invest more than £1.6 billion towards sharing the good news of Jesus Christ and serving local communities over the next three years. In total, it plans to invest £4.6 billion over the next nine years, from 2026 to 2034.

Also, the typical stipend is set to rise 10.7 per cent next year, under new proposals as clergy well-being put at centre of spending plans.

On top of that, the funding for churches in the lowest income communities will jump from £91 million spent in the last three years, to £133.5 million.

There will also be a major focus on safeguarding, for which £30 million has been allocated.

The **Archbishop of York, Stephen Cottrell**, said: "Parishes and clergy are at the heart of everything we do in the Church."

Saint for August

Florence Nightingale – nurse, social reformer

If you have a strong sense of calling from God, then you will well understand Florence Nightingale. At the age of 16 she felt God was calling her to some great lifework, and so she determined to avoid marriage, and thus be available to obey Him.

Florence had been born in Italy in 1820, while her parents were travelling - hence her name. But she grew up at Lea Hurst in Derbyshire. Her parents were Unitarian, but Florence later joined the Anglican Church.

Florence had a strong sense of God's personal presence in her life, and in 1844, when she was 24, Florence came to believe that her calling was to nurse the sick. In 1849 she set off to study nursing in the hospitals of Europe.

It was on 12th May, 1850 that she wrote in her diary: 'Today I am 30 – the age Christ began His mission. Now no more childish things. No more love. No more marriage. Now Lord let me think only of Thy will, what Thou wilt me to do.'

Later that same year she went to train in the hospital of Alexandria in Egypt, and then the Lutheran Deaconess Institute at Kaiserwerth in Germany. In 1853 she returned to England, and was appointed superintendent of the Hospital for Invalid Gentlewomen in London.

Then the following year, 1854, war broke out in the Crimea. Florence contacted friends in high places, and soon got permission to take 38 nurses to serve at the military hospitals at Scutari in Turkey, and later Balaklava in the Crimea. These hospitals were dreadful places, but with better nursing and better sanitation, the mortality rate among the sick and wounded men soon fell dramatically.

When, by night, Florence took to patrolling the hospital wards, carrying a dim lamp, the legend of 'the Lady with the Lamp' was born.

After the Crimean war, Florence returned to England determined to establish the first professional nurse training scheme in the country. She found a base at St Thomas' Hospital in London, and through her efforts the stature of nursing gradually rose to become that of a respected medical profession.

But Florence had been working too long and too hard, and now her own health broke down, and she became an invalid. But she was not forgotten, and the honours rolled in. In 1907 she became the first woman to receive the Order of Merit. Florence died in London on 13th August 1910, aged 90, and was buried in St Margaret's, East Wellow, in Hampshire. Her tombstone says simply: F.N. 1820 – 1910.

Lord's Prayer tops Shakespeare, Dickens, Churchill and National Anthem in public recognition poll

People in the UK are more likely to identify correctly a short extract from the Lord's Prayer – also known as the Our Father – than one from the National Anthem and other sources chosen for their deep cultural resonance, a new poll has found.

The polling, carried out for the Church of England, also found the reference in the prayer to being forgiven and forgiving others was the element people found most meaningful to them.

Pollsters Savanta surveyed more than 2,000 people across the UK. They asked them to match seven famous lines - spanning areas ranging from literature and history to popular culture – with their source, from a list of correct answers.

Overall, the phrase from the Lord's Prayer was recognised correctly by the largest number of people (80.3 per cent), just ahead of Star Wars (79.9 per cent).

They were followed by Hamlet's "To be or not to be" (73 per cent) the extract from the National Anthem (63 per cent); the line from Churchill's 'The Few' speech (61 per cent); and You'll Never Walk Alone (58 per cent).

Overall, 89 per cent of those surveyed said that they had previously heard of the Lord's Prayer or the Our Father. This was highest among those who described themselves as Christian (95 per cent), but also by 88 per cent of those who said they had no religion.

The Archbishop of York, Stephen Cottrell, is currently leading a 'Lord's Prayer Tour' of events at churches and cathedrals across the north of England attended by thousands of people, as part of his Faith *In The North* initiative.

He said: "In a world of shifting cultures and changing circumstances, the Lord's Prayer remains a steady guide - perhaps never more so than now.

"Lines like 'Give us this day our daily bread' speak powerfully to today's challenges, reminding us to seek sufficiency, not excess, and to consider what 'enough' truly means."

RECIPE OF THE MONTH



So Easy Fish Curry

Serves 4 – Cooking time 14 minutes

500g. cherry tomatoes

500g. white fish fillets, such as haddock, cod etc.

1 heaped tblspn. Korma curry paste

1 tblspn. Lime pickle

1 x 400 ml. tin of light coconut milk

Method

1. Place 1 tblspn of olive oil in a large shallow casserole pan on a high heat.
2. Halve the tomatoes, adding them to the pan skin side down. Blister for two minutes without moving them while you chop the fish into 4 cm. chunks.
3. Stir fish Korma paste, lime pickle and coconut milk into the pan. Bring to the boil, then simmer for six minutes, taking care not to break up the fish.
4. Taste, season to perfection with sea salt and black pepper, then serve

If you think it's a good idea to share your recipes with our readership, please forward them to emme0707@gmail.com. *Thank you.*

Wildfires in the UK

If you venture into the countryside this month, be careful and stay vigilant: be wildfire aware. So warns the National Fire Chiefs Council, after a record-breaking season for wildfires.

The concern is based on some alarming data. By June (the most recent data on hand) firefighters

had responded to more than 500 wildfires across England and Wales. That was a 717 per cent increase on the same period as last year, and more than double the number seen in 2022.

Dry, sunny weather this Spring created ideal conditions for wildfires, which thrive on plenty of dead and dormant vegetation, and spread rapidly.

The Month Ahead.....August

1	Fri	9.30 am	Stay & Play (Kepier Hall, until 11.15 am)
		10.00 am	Community Food Store (Kepier)
		2.00 pm	Cake & Chat (Hub, Newbottle Street)
2	Sat	2.00 pm	Drop-in (Hub, Newbottle Street)
3	Sun	Seventh Sunday after Trinity	
		8.30 am	Holy Communion (in Church)
		10.00 am	Holy Communion (in Church & Facebook)
		6.00 pm	Summer Concert (in Church)
4	Mon	10.00 am	Drop-in (Hub, Newbottle Street)
		6.00 pm	Vestry hour (call Parish Office for appointment)
5	Tues	10.00 am	Community Food Store (Kepier Hall)
		10.00 am	Drop-in (Hub, Newbottle Street)
		12.45 pm	Stay & Play (Kepier Hall, until 2.30pm)
		1.15 pm	'Light' – Drop In Bereavement Group (The Hub, Newbottle Street)
		3.30 pm	Tuesday Treat (Hub, Newbottle Street)
6	Wed	10.00 am	Drop-in (Hub, Newbottle Street)
7	Thur	10.00 am	Holy Communion (in Church)
		10.00 am	Drop-in (Hub, Newbottle Street)
		6.00 pm	Choir Practice (Choir Vestry)
8	Fri	9.30 am	Stay & Play (Kepier Hall, until 11.15 am)
		10.00 am	Community Food Store (Kepier Hall)
		2.00 pm	Cake & Chat (Hub, Newbottle Street)
10	Sun	Eighth Sunday after Trinity	
		8.30 am	Holy Communion (in Church)
		10.00 am	Holy Communion (in Church & Facebook)
		6.00 pm	Choral Evensong (in Church)
11	Mon	10.00 am	Drop-in (Hub, Newbottle Street)
		6.00 pm	Vestry hour (call Parish Office for appointment)
12	Tues	10.00 am	Community Food Store (Kepier Hall)
		10.00 am	Drop-in (Hub, Newbottle Street)
		12.45 pm	Stay & Play (Kepier Hall, until 2.30pm)
		3.30 pm	Tuesday Treat (Hub, Newbottle Street)
13	Wed	10.00 am	Drop-in (Hub, Newbottle Street)
14	Thur	10.00 am	Holy Communion (in Church)
		10.00 am	Drop-in (Hub, Newbottle Street)
		6.00 pm	Choir Practice (Choir Vestry)
15	Fri	9.30 am	Stay & Play (Kepier Hall, until 11.15 am)
		10.00 am	Community Food Store (Kepier Hall)
		2.00 pm	Cake & Chat (Hub, Newbottle Street)
17	Sun	Ninth Sunday after Trinity	
		8.30 am	Holy Communion (in Church)
		10.00 am	Holy Communion (in Church & Facebook)

	12.00 noon	Baptisms
	12.45 pm	Baptisms
	6.00 pm	Service of Light
18 Mon	10.00 am	Drop-in (Hub, Newbottle Street)
	6.00 pm	Vestry hour (call Parish Office for appointment)
19 Tues	10.00 am	Community Food Store (Kepier Hall)
	10.00 am	Drop-in (Hub, Newbottle Street)
	12.45 pm	Stay & Play (Kepier Hall, until 2.30pm)
	3.30 pm	Tuesday Treat (Hub, Newbottle Street)
20 Wed	10.00 am	Drop-in (Hub, Newbottle Street)
21 Thur	10.00 am	Holy Communion (in Church)
	10.00 am	Drop-in (Hub, Newbottle Street)
	6.00 pm	Choir Practice (Choir Vestry)
22 Fri	9.30 am	Stay & Play (Kepier Hall, until 11.15 am)
	10.00 am	Community Food Store (Kepier Hall)
	2.00 pm	Cake & Chat (Hub, Newbottle Street)
	2.00 pm	Drop-in (Hub, Newbottle Street)
24 Sun	Tenth Sunday after Trinity/Bartholomew	
	8.30 am	Holy Communion (in Church)
	10.00 am	Holy Communion (in Church & Facebook)
	12.00 noon	Baptisms
	12.45 pm	Baptisms
	6.00 pm	Celtic Eucharist (in Church)
25 Mon	10.00 am	Drop-in (Hub, Newbottle Street)
	6.00 pm	<i>No Vestry hour</i> (call Parish Office for appointment)
26 Tues	10.00 am	Community Food Store (Kepier Hall)
	10.00 am	Drop-in (Hub, Newbottle Street)
	12.45 pm	Stay & Play (Kepier Hall, until 2.30pm)
	3.30 pm	Tuesday Treat (Hub, Newbottle Street)
	7.00 pm	Holy Communion (Hub, Newbottle Street)
	7.30 pm	PCC (Hub, Newbottle Street)
27 Wed	10.00 am	Drop-in (Hub, Newbottle Street)
28 Thur	10.00 am	Holy Communion (in Church)
	10.00 am	Drop-in (Hub, Newbottle Street)
	6.00 pm	Choir Practice (Choir Vestry)
29 Fri	9.30 am	Stay & Play (Kepier Hall, until 11.15 am)
	10.00 am	Community Food Store (Kepier Hall)
	2.00 pm	Cake & Chat (Hub, Newbottle Street)
31 Sun	Eleventh Sunday after Trinity	
	8.30 am	Holy Communion (in Church)
	10.00 am	Holy Communion (in Church & Facebook)
	6.00 pm	Taize (in Church)

New reflections released to mark 1700 years of the Nicene Creed

A new booklet of biblical reflections and prayers, *We Believe: Exploring the Nicene Creed*, has been recently released to support churches, small groups and individuals as Christians around the world mark the 1700th anniversary of the Council of Nicaea.

Commissioned to mark 1700 years since the Nicene Creed's original development, and published by Church House Publishing, the booklet explores the theological depth and contemporary relevance of the Nicene Creed – one of the most enduring and universal expressions of Christian faith.

The Nicene Creed is one of the foundational statements of Christian belief, shared across most Christian traditions. It was first agreed at the Council of Nicaea in AD 325, a gathering of bishops from across the Christian world convened by the Emperor Constantine. The Council sought to resolve disputes about the identity of Jesus Christ and affirmed that he is “of one being with the Father”. The Creed was expanded in its present form at the First Council of Constantinople in AD 381. It sets out the Church's faith in the Trinity – Father, Son and Holy Spirit – and has been recited in Christian worship down the centuries as a shared declaration of belief, unity and hope.

Structured as a 24-day devotional, *We Believe: Exploring the Nicene Creed* invites readers to engage prayerfully with each phrase of the Creed. Through daily Scripture passages, thoughtful commentary, prayers and prompts for reflection, the booklet encourages individuals and communities to explore what it means to say “we believe” in the context of today's world.

Printed copies are available as single booklets or in packs of ten for use in parishes. Downloadable resources, including social media graphics, logos, posters and a parish resource pack are now live at [AChurchNearYou.com](https://www.AChurchNearYou.com) (login required). Churches are invited to make use of these at any other suitable time during 2025.

Dr Michael Ipgrave, Bishop of Lichfield and Chair of the Liturgical Commission, said: “*The Nicene Creed has been a cornerstone of Christian belief for 1700 years – a statement of faith that connects us not only to one another, but also to generations before us as well as to Christians across the world today. We Believe is a timely and beautifully written resource that will help churches explore this historic creed afresh, inviting reflection, deepening discipleship, and opening space for theological discovery. I warmly commend it to parishes, groups and individuals across the Church.*”

Journalists urge the new Pope to take action on press freedom

Campaigning journalists have called on Pope Leo XIV, to back up his recent words in support of press freedom with strong action.

Reporters without Borders (RSF), an international non-profit organisation that lobbies on behalf of journalists worldwide, has called on the Pope “to maintain a strong, committed voice for press freedom and the protection of journalists everywhere.”

In his first audience with media representatives, Pope Leo had called for the release of journalists imprisoned “for seeking to report the truth” and for safeguarding “the precious gift of free speech and of the press.” He expressed “the Church’s solidarity” with unjustly jailed journalists.

This stance, says RSF, aligns with his predecessor’s commitments and now requires more concrete action.

The organisation is calling on Pope Leo to: defend the right to inform, the right to access information and journalism’s role as a social good; support and visit journalists unjustly persecuted for their work; help ease relations between journalists and the Vatican; promote the freedom to inform and of information integrity in the age of artificial intelligence; and support information for the voiceless and disadvantaged.

In the UK, St Bride’s Church in Fleet Street, London, is known as ‘the Journalists’ church’. It has an altar dedicated to journalists who are jailed, missing or have died reporting the news.

This Anglican church, sited in the very heart of the City of London, has produced the Journalists’ Prayer:

*Almighty God,
strengthen and direct, we pray,
the will of all whose work it is to write what many read,
and to speak where many listen.
May we be bold in confronting evil and injustice,
and compassionate in our understanding of human weakness,
rejecting alike the half-truth that deceives, and the slanted word that corrupts.
May the power that is ours, for good or ill,
always be used with honesty and courage,
with respect and integrity;
so that when all here has been written, said, and done,
we may, unashamed, meet Thee face to face,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.*

Evening Chronicle The Northern Echo

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*Snippets from the Evening Chronicle and The Northern Echo
which you may have missed.*

Plans for new Houghton-le-Spring retail banking hub submitted to Sunderland City Council

The site includes a retail unit and sits adjacent to the entrance of Houghton-le-Spring Library and Learning Centre.

By Chris Binding, Local Democracy Reporter 16:39, 17 Jul 2025

Proposals for a fresh “retail banking hub” in Houghton-le-Spring have moved a step nearer to fruition, with applications now formally lodged with council planning officials. The planning department at Sunderland City Council has been presented with a submission concerning 72 Newbottle Street within the Houghton ward.

The location encompasses a retail premises and is positioned next to the doorway of Houghton-le-Spring Library and Learning Centre. Cash Access UK, the applicant, has sought planning consent to transform the “existing vacant unit into a retail banking hub with internal and external alterations”, incorporating a “new ATM machine.”

Should the proposal receive approval, the facility would function under the Post Office Banking Hub banner, with an additional application for advertising signage having been lodged separately.

Banking hubs represent a communal banking facility, akin to a conventional bank branch, yet accessible to all customers, and are being introduced across the country to safeguard cash access.

The suggested branch in Houghton-le-Spring was revealed earlier this year (2025) alongside information regarding the practical operation of these bank hub developments.

This encompasses each hub featuring a counter service run by Post Office staff, enabling patrons from any financial institution to withdraw and deposit money, settle bills and conduct routine banking business.

Additionally, it was highlighted there would be “private spaces where customers can speak to community bankers from their own bank for more complicated matters that require specialist knowledge or privacy”. Banks are set to operate from the retail banking hubs on a rotational basis, ensuring that staff from various banks will be present on different days.

The initial announcement regarding the proposed Houghton ward branch was made by LINK, the UK’s cash access and ATM network, which confirmed that banking hubs will be implemented by Cash Access UK.

A note on the Post Office website acknowledges the importance of face-to-face banking for many individuals, stating: “how important in-person banking still is for many people”.

The note elaborates: “That’s why we’re expanding our network of banking hubs, owned by Cash Access and run by Post Office in partnership with nine major high street banks.”

It continues: “Soon, you’ll be able to access personal and business banking services, pay bills and get help from community bankers, all in person.”

Decisions regarding the planning applications for 72 Newbottle Street are anticipated by early-September, 2025, subsequent to a council consultation process.

Everything you need to know about Nissan Sunderland's £1.4m investment in local facility to help the environment

The city's biggest employer Nissan is investing £1.4m in local facilities to help reduce carbon emissions.

The car manufacturing giant has today (July 17) unveiled an electric charging station for heavy goods vehicles (HGVs) to use when visiting the plant.

The Sunderland manufacturing plant has a steady stream of HGVs bringing parts and supplies to the site as well as transporting finished cars to be sold.

The £1.4m facility has seven charging stations, capable of powering up to ten eHGVs simultaneously. The charging stations will initially serve 25 electric trucks that will travel more than 2.4 million kilometres a year, saving around 1,500 tonnes of CO₂ annually.

The project is a first in the UK automotive industry, establishing an electric, end-to-end supply chain that transports materials into the Nissan plant and delivers finished vehicles out.

The new facility also complements the plant's EV36Zero vision for sustainable manufacturing, bringing together electric vehicles, renewable energy and battery production.

Michael Simpson, Vice President Supply Chain Management at Nissan said: "It is fantastic for our plant to be leading the charge to an electrified supply chain with this project.

"We welcome the support we've received from our partners to bring the charging station to life and we're proud of what we have achieved.

"The charging station looks brilliant and is a big step forward in Nissan's EV360 vision, which brings together electric vehicles, zero carbon energy and battery manufacturing."

The station will support 60 UK eHGV deliveries to the plant daily and represents just the start of the plant's journey towards electrifying its supply chain.

Michael added: "We're exploring further opportunities to allow other hauliers to use the charging station as well as looking at other opportunities to maximise its full potential."

The charging station will support a fleet of 25 trucks with a charging capacity of up to 360kW. The trucks will collect parts from Nissan's UK supply base stretching as far afield as Derby; as well as delivering finished vehicles to and from the Port of Tyne.

Bringing together Nissan and partners Fergusons, Yusen and BCA, the project is part of the Electric Freightway consortium that is transforming sustainable freight logistics through deployment of eHGVs and high-power charging infrastructure.

Led by electric charger provider GRIDSERVE, Electric Freightway forms part of the Zero Emission HGV and Infrastructure Demonstrator programme, funded by the UK Government and delivered in partnership with Innovate UK.

UK Government Minister for the Future of Roads Lilian Greenwood said: "We're working closely with the road freight sector to slash transport emissions, and our £200m zero emission HGV programme is helping businesses across the country to power the electrification of its fleets.

"It's great to see Nissan taking advantage of our scheme which is supporting high paid jobs and putting money in the pockets of working people – all part of delivering our Plan for Change.'

Daniel Kunkel, CEO at GRIDSERVE added: "The decarbonisation of transport logistics is much stronger and reaches far wider when done in partnership.

"This is why, as leaders of the Electric Freightway consortium, we are so pleased to support this UK first with Nissan and their haulage partners. Depot charging is critical for the electrification of HGVs, going hand in hand with future public infrastructure developments.

"As a first shared usage site, this location is leading the way in sustainable freight logistics."

Looking back on JAWS

– 50 years on

The shark that came to Amity Island for dinner – most people aged 60 and over remember him as the scariest fish they ever saw.

As this summer the famous film celebrates its golden anniversary, here are some fun facts about the film which you may not have known...

1. When *Jaws* was released in the summer of 1975, its 28-year-old director Stephen Spielberg was very nervous – making the film had been beset with disasters. He worried that he might never work on films again. But *Jaws* was an instant success – spending 14 consecutive weeks at number one in the USA and eventually grossing \$470 million worldwide.
2. *Jaws* was shot on the island of Martha's Vineyard, and scared people so badly that seaside resorts on the eastern US coastline reported a marked downturn in visitors that summer.
3. *Jaws* is based on the 1974 novel by Peter Benchley, who was inspired by the Jersey Shore shark attacks of 1916. Five attacks, four fatal, had left New Jersey residents terrified of the water.
4. The three 1.2 ton, 25-ft-long pneumatically powered sharks were given a name on the film set – Bruce. They were named after Spielberg's lawyer, Bruce Ramer.
5. These mechanical sharks were so prone to malfunction that the script was rewritten, so as not even to show the shark until one hour and 21 minutes into the film. But this served as a stroke of genius – for it allowed the tension to build and build.
6. There were endless problems on the set: bad weather, water-logged equipment and even the main boat sinking. The actors were often seasick, and sometimes feuding. The 55-day schedule overran to 159 days, raising the budget from £3.5m to \$9m.

7. George Lucas, who visited his pal Spielberg on the set, got his head stuck in the shark's mouth. They nearly broke the mechanical shark in their frantic efforts to free him.
8. The film's most famous line, 'You're gonna need a bigger boat', uttered by Chief Brody (Roy Scheider) when he first saw the shark, was not in the script, but improvised. The film crew had been constantly saying it in their complaints about the support vessel on set.
9. When Spielberg first heard composer John Williams' score for the film, the famous 'dun-dun', played on a tuba, he thought it was a joke. Later he said it was 50% responsible for making the film a smash hit.
10. *Jaws* has not been good for the conservation of sharks. It reportedly led to an increase in killings, much to Spielberg's regret.



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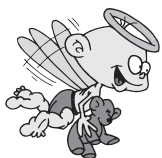
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Michael's Angels

Luke 2

Shepherds Listen!

The shepherds heard a special message from an angel, and then they listened to many angels praising God. What was the special message the angels delivered? Color in all the circles and triangles on the angel's robe. The uncolored letters will spell the message. You can read the message in Luke 2:8-20.



Christian media owner calls on Elon Musk to become more accountable

Sir Paul Marshall, an evangelical Christian and prominent British media owner has called on Elon Musk and the bosses of other social media platforms to publish the algorithms that determine the visibility of posts – and to become more accountable.

Speaking in a lecture at Oxford University, Sir Paul, a leading investor in TV channel GB News, and owner of The Spectator magazine and UnHerd, the news and opinion website, called on the Big Tech platforms to make major changes to the way they operate.

He said, “Social media platforms like X, Bluesky or Meta should be required to publish all the algorithms that they use to analyse or influence our preferences. Elon Musk believes in open source and transparency for manufacturing. He should do the same for X.

“We should all be able to know how the algorithms work which place certain stories and characters in our timeline and not others.”

Sir Paul also called on the platforms to become more accountable. He explained, “Social media platforms should be regulated as common carriers. Under the current regulations, they are exempted from any of the responsibilities of a traditional publisher. They have power without responsibility. Effectively, those who post are treated as publishers.

“The platforms cannot be held to account for what is published, yet they still enjoy many of the powers of a publisher.

“This is wrong, and platforms need to have less power and more accountability. At the very least, there need to be constraints around them such as you would impose on a bank or a railway. They should not be allowed to refuse or suspend accounts or to actively demote the visibility of a post, unless it is in clear breach of the law.”

Sir Paul is a leading philanthropist, supporting a wide range of charities. He is known as a member and supporter of Holy Trinity Brompton Church, London, the home of the internationally successful Alpha Course.

He was giving a lecture hosted by The Pharos Foundation, an Oxford-based research institution and educational charity.

Sir Paul explained: “The key overriding principle for me is to ensure that there is a golden thread of responsibility and accountability running through everything, whether that be the platforms, the publishers or self-publishing individuals.”

‘Don’t forget the seafarers,’ says Christian mission agency

A Christian mission agency has called for the welfare of nearly two million seafarers to be taken into consideration, as the global shipping fleet cuts costs by adopting new technologies.

The Mission to Seafarers (MtS) runs 121 welfare centres in ports around the world, and its people visit more than 40,000 ships each year. Seafarers face dangerous oceans and seas to transport more than 90 per cent of the world’s goods and fuels – making them essential key workers who often go unrecognised by the general population.

MtS Secretary General Peter Rouch has expressed concern that often ships’ crews are overlooked when investment is being made in new technology.

He said: “Conditions aboard ships should not focus solely on minimising costs but also on ensuring the health and well-being of the crew. Humanly, as well as operationally sustainable crew sizes, shift rotations, and shore leave are essential for maintaining the mental and physical health of seafarers.

“Overworked crew members are more likely to make costly mistakes, which can harm the shipping industry of course, but the more important aspect is to understand seafarers as much more than a simple resource.”

Mr Rouch explained that while the shipping industry was embracing digital technology and low-carbon fuels, the needs of seafarers often remained secondary. He had heard a politician from a leading maritime nation name the major issues facing the industry over the next five to ten years – but failing to address the human aspects of seafarers’ working lives.

Peter Rouch added: “At its core, any human activity such as a commercial activity like shipping should serve the flourishing of humanity, and this includes the well-being of seafarers.

“The Mission to Seafarers, grounded in faith and a vision that values human dignity and human community in and of itself, continues to advocate for seafarers’ well-being and we are glad to partner with others in the shipping industry who share these values.”

Collectively, there are more than 1.89 million seafarers across the world, made up of many nationalities. They often spend up to nine months at a time far away from their family, friends and loved ones. This can lead to loneliness and mental health issues.

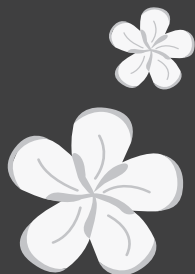
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Cut out the slip and place it in the intercessions box at least one week prior to the Sunday for remembrance.

If you are unable to get to church, please post the slip to the Church Administrator: Mrs Philippa Elsey, Parish Church of St Michael and All Angels, The Broadway, Houghton-le-Spring.

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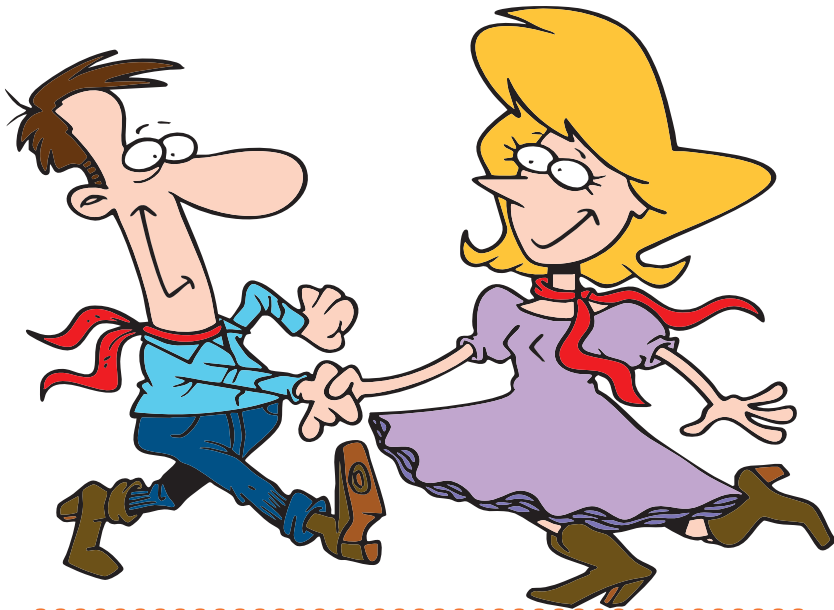
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