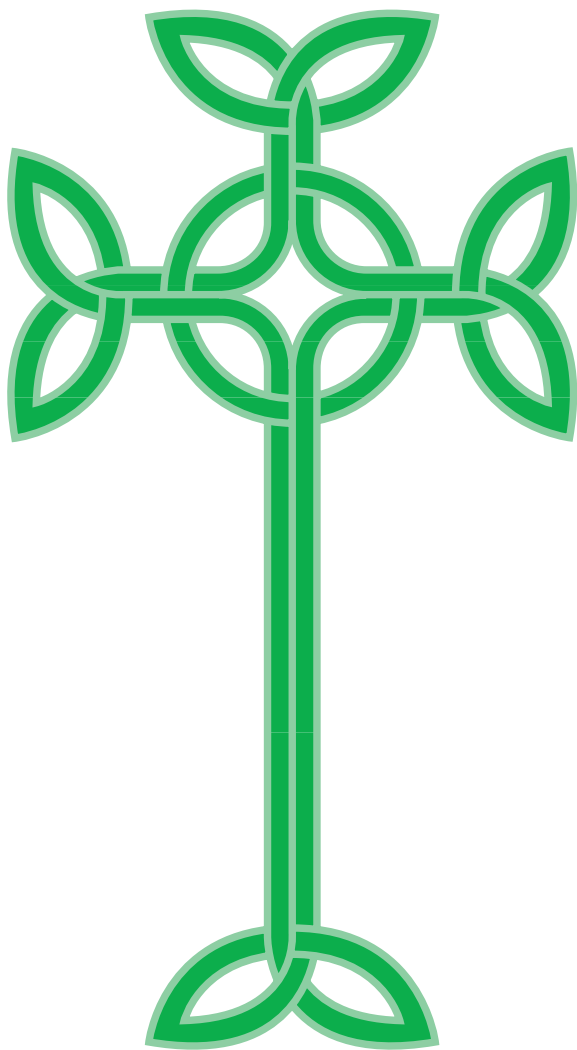


THE MONTHLY MAGAZINE
OF THE PARISH OF
HOUGHTON-LE-SPRING



St. Michael
AND ALL ANGELS

OCTOBER 2025

£1

SIGNPOST

THE PARISH CHURCH OF HOUGHTON-LE-SPRING

MINISTRY TEAM

Rector

Rev'd John Barron,
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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.

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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.1sthoughtonscouts.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

As the leaves begin to fall and the nights draw in, we mark the festival of St Michael and All Angels and approach 'Feast time' in our church calendar – the traditional time of year when we in church and the wider Houghton community celebrates an extended Patronal Festival of St Michael and All Angels.

Traditionally, the celebration of Houghton Feast over a 10-day festival is a wonderful opportunity for our whole community to come together. In recent years, in our church, we have fashioned this time of year as a 'Season of Invitation' which we begin around the time of our Patronal. As we gather with friends and family to mark these important occasions, let us remember that we are not only celebrating our heritage and the foundations of our community, but also looking to the future, inviting others to join us on our journey of faith.



During the Season of Invitation, we are called to reach out to those around us, welcoming them to experience the love and support that we seek to share within and through our church community. As we reflect on the bravery and protection of St Michael and the guidance and care of all Angels, let us consider how we can emulate their inspiration in our daily lives. By joining together as a church named for Michael and All Angels, we might draw strength from one another and help others encounter God's transformative love in their lives.

Over the coming weeks, there will be numerous services, events, and activities taking place within our church. From more traditional services to more contemporary pet services & harvest festivals; with brass & choir concerts as well as a ceilidh and other social gatherings and fundraisers, there are countless opportunities for us to deepen our own spiritual growth while inviting others to share in the warmth and fellowship of our community.

I want to invite us all to take part in as many events as possible, opening your hearts to the blessings that come from sharing time with each other and our faith with others. I want to encourage us all to extend invitations to those who may be open to coming to church in these weeks, whether they are friends, family members, or neighbours. In doing so, we not only honour the example set by St Michael but also help strengthen our community, drawing closer to God through our shared faith and commitment to spreading something of his love in our welcome.

As we celebrate Houghton Feast and journey through this extended Season of Invitation, let us remember that we are not only honouring the past but also paving the way for a brighter future, hand in hand with those we love and those we have yet to meet. Together, let us make this a time of growth, joy, and community, inspired by the examples of St Michael and All Angels.

With my prayers and very best wishes.

Christian concern after UN fails to reach agreement on the problem of plastic

The recent UN talks in Geneva were intended to finalise a legally binding agreement for countries to tackle plastic pollution. Almost 190 countries were represented.

But despite ten days of negotiations, no consensus was reached. A small number of oil-producing nations, including Russia and Saudi Arabia, blocked key proposals on reducing plastic production and phasing out hazardous chemicals.

Christian campaigning charities have been among those expressing great concern. They warn that the failure will have grave consequences for vulnerable communities and the natural world.

Tearfund says that more than two billion people around the world lack access to safe waste disposal. Mismanaged plastic waste, often dumped or burned, contributes, the charity's research suggests, to up to a million deaths a year — one every 30 seconds.

Surge in violent attacks on A&E nurses

A&E nurses face an increasing barrage of punches, kicks and spitting - and having weapons aimed at them. One was even threatened with an acid attack.

The violence has been blamed on enforced long waits in A&E departments, corridor care, and chronic staffing problems.

The Royal College of Nursing report that the number of attacks has doubled in five years, from 2093 cases in 2019, to 4054 in 2024.

One senior charge nurse in the East Midlands said: "Even patients you would expect to be placid are becoming irate because of just how long they have to wait. So, you can only imagine the behaviour of those who are already prone to violence." She herself has been punched in the face by a "drunken six-foot-two bloke."

A senior sister in an A&E in east London was knocked unconscious after being punched in the head by a patient. "The violence is awful," she said. "And it's just constant. Nurses, doctors, receptionists – none of us feels safe."

Another nurse said: "It's not going to help with our retention and recruitment if you think you're going to be clobbered every shift."

The RCN warns that such attacks lead to both physical and mental scarring, lengthy time off and sometimes staff never returning.

How does our nearest airport rank?

Have you flown recently? What did you think of the airport? A recent survey considered the various merits of our 30 biggest airports, and chose the following for its 'Top Ten' best airports in the UK.

10. Jersey - 1.5million passengers in 2024. 17 destinations across five countries. One of the airline's hangars (now disused) was built by the Luftwaffe during WW2.
9. Aberdeen - 2.3 million passengers in 2024. The only British airport with an outdoor beer garden.
8. Inverness - 800, 000 passengers in 2024. All flights only to Amsterdam.
7. Birmingham - 12.8 million passengers in 2024. Seventh busiest UK airport with flights to 130 destinations across 40 countries. In 2012, they considered renaming it the Ozzy Osborne Airport.
6. London Gatwick - 43 million passengers in 2024. Second busiest UK airport with flights to 205 destinations across 69 countries. Has 37 bars and restaurants.
5. Newcastle - 5.1 million passengers in 2024. Flights to 76 destinations across 28 countries. Once partly owned by Copenhagen Airport.
4. London Heathrow - 84 million passengers in 2024. Flights to 216 destinations across 82 countries. The world's fifth busiest airport. 20 four-star hotels within two miles.
3. London City (in Docklands) - 3.6 million passengers in 2024. 31 destinations across 15 European countries. Short-haul specialist.
2. George Best Belfast City – 2.39 passengers in 2024. 23 destinations across four countries. Most punctual airport in UK, excels as a short-haul hub, and is only five miles from the city centre.
1. Liverpool, John Lennon – is considered our best airport. 5 million passengers in 2024. 70 destinations across 29 countries. The airport's motto, painted on its roof – 'Above us only sky' – is from John Lennon's 1971 song *Imagine*.

The survey was carried out by the Daily Telegraph. The consumer magazine *Which?* has also named Liverpool Airport as best in the country.

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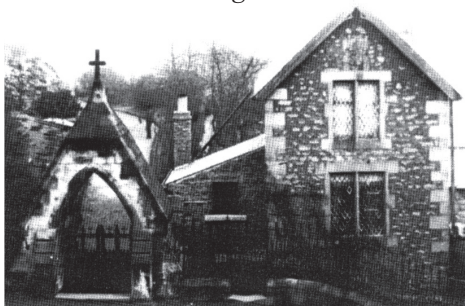
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 Email: **houghtonrugbyclub@outlook.com**

The Life and Legacy of Bernard Gilpin

Bernard Gilpin, often hailed as the “Apostle of the North,” stands as one of the most remarkable figures of the English Reformation. Born in the rugged landscapes of Westmorland in 1517, during the turbulent reign of Henry VIII, Gilpin’s life bridged the seismic shifts from Catholic dominance to Protestant ascendancy under Elizabeth I. His story is not merely one of ecclesiastical manoeuvring but of profound personal piety, unyielding commitment to moral reform, and a revolutionary approach to philanthropy that transformed the lives of the impoverished in northern England. Gilpin’s legacy endures as a testament to the power of compassionate leadership amid religious upheaval, influencing generations through his educational initiatives, pastoral innovations, and unwavering defence of the Elizabethan church settlement. This essay explores the contours of his life – from humble origins to scholarly pursuits, perilous career turns, and enduring impact – revealing a man whose influence extended far beyond the pulpit, shaping the social and spiritual fabric of his era and beyond.

Gilpin’s early life was rooted in the ancient traditions of a family with deep ties to the English countryside. He entered the world at Kentmere Hall, a modest estate in the Kentmere valley of Westmorland, nestled amid the fells and valleys of what is now Cumbria. The Gilpins traced their lineage back to Richard de Gylpyn around 1206, a knight rewarded for services to a baron of Kendal during the reign of King John. The family seat, Kentmere Hall, had been in their possession since then, symbolizing a continuity of landed gentry amid the feudal upheavals of medieval England.

Bernard’s father, Edwin Gilpin, inherited the estate prematurely after his elder brother fell at the Battle of Bosworth in 1485, likely fighting for Richard III, whose popularity in the northern counties ran deep. Edwin and his wife, Margaret Layton, raised Bernard as one of several children in a household marked by the austere virtues of rural life. Margaret’s uncle, Cuthbert Tunstall, Bishop of London and later Durham, played a pivotal role in Bernard’s future, serving as executor of Henry VIII’s will and providing familial connections to the corridors of ecclesiastical power.

As a younger son in an age where primogeniture confined opportunities for siblings, Bernard’s path was steered toward the church or the military – a common fate for “cadets” of the gentry. The era’s disdain for liberal arts and commerce left few avenues for ambition, yet Gilpin’s intellect and piety set him apart early. He attended Lancaster Royal Grammar School in the 1530s, where his scholarly bent emerged. The nearby parish church of St. Cuthbert in Kentmere, with its ancient yew tree – over a millennium old and still standing today – would have been a familiar backdrop to his boyhood, instilling a sense of timeless reverence for the sacred.

These formative years, amid the whispers of Henry’s break with Rome in 1534, planted seeds of a faith that would evolve from conservative Catholicism to a broad-minded Protestantism, always tempered by a deep humanism. In 1533, at the age of sixteen, Gilpin matriculated at Queen’s College, Oxford, an institution renowned for its theological rigor.

Oxford in the 1530s and 1540s was a cauldron of intellectual ferment, where the Renaissance humanism of Erasmus clashed with the entrenched doctrines of the medieval church. Gilpin immersed himself in Erasmus's works, which emphasized scripture over scholasticism and critiqued clerical corruption – ideas that would profoundly shape his ministry.

He graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in 1540, a Master of Arts in 1542, and a Bachelor of Divinity in 1549, earning election as a fellow of Queen's and ordination in 1542. His academic prowess led to his becoming a Student (equivalent to a fellow) at Christ Church, Oxford, where he engaged in heated debates. Notably, during Pietro Martire Vermigli's lectures on 1 Corinthians, Gilpin defended the Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation against the Italian Reformer's attacks, aligning with conservatives like Doctors Tresham, Chedsey, and Morgan. This stance reflected his initial reluctance to embrace radical Protestantism, viewing the church as a sacred institution in need of reform rather than revolution.

Yet, even as a scholar, Gilpin's conscience wrestled with the oaths required for ordination under shifting monarchs. He accepted a curacy but soon relinquished it, unable to fully subscribe to either Roman Catholic or emerging Anglican doctrines. This internal conflict foreshadowed the broader dilemmas of the Reformation, where loyalty to crown and conscience often collided. By the late 1540s, Gilpin had served as a clergyman in Berwick-upon-Tweed and Newcastle, gaining firsthand exposure to the spiritual neglect of northern borderlands – remote dales plagued by poverty, superstition, and lawlessness.

Gilpin's career proper ignited in the brief, fervent Protestant dawn of Edward VI's reign (1547–1553). In November 1552, through his uncle Tunstall's influence, he was presented to the vicarage of Norton in the Diocese of Durham. More dramatically, he was summoned to preach before the young king at Greenwich on the first Sunday after Epiphany 1553. His sermon on sacrilege, decrying the plunder of church lands by nobles and the moral decay of the clergy, struck a chord. "The church is God's vineyard," he thundered, "and sacrilege is the worst of sins, for it robs God Himself." This bold address earned him a royal license from William Cecil to preach throughout the kingdom – one of only 22 or 23 such privileges granted—cementing his reputation as a prophetic voice.

Edward's death in 1553 plunged England into Catholic restoration under Mary I, the "Bloody Mary" of Protestant lore. Gilpin, now a marked man for his evangelical leanings, fled abroad in 1554 to study theology in Leuven, Antwerp, and Paris. He revelled in the libraries of monastic houses, particularly a Minorite friary in Antwerp, where he deepened his scriptural knowledge. Letters from this period reveal a man of quiet resolve: writing to a patron, he mused, "If God calls your lordship, let not care trouble you; I could secure a lectureship here or in an abbey, where I should not lose my time." This exile honed his resilience, transforming potential despair into scholarly enrichment.

Returning toward the end of Mary's reign, Gilpin was invested in 1556 as Archdeacon of Durham and Rector of Easington by Tunstall. His sermons against clerical vices – simony, pluralism, and moral laxity – incensed corrupt priests, who accused him of heresy in 1557.

...Continued in the November Signpost



Prayer for October

Dear Lord,

In this autumn season, when the harvest is gathered, we thank You for Your provision for us. We have so much, and yet we see terrible images of starving children on our televisions and smartphones and in our newspapers. Lord, prompt us to do what we can to change things, whether that is by writing a letter or email to someone with influence, or by contributing in some way to aid agencies.

Lord, we ask You to touch the hearts of those leaders of nations whose decisions cause such hunger and suffering.

Soften those hard hearts, Lord. Fill them with Your compassion. May there be a new harvest of love – and a kinder world. In Jesus' name,

Amen.

FROM THE REGISTERS

Funerals

27 Aug	Violet Daglish	Age 93
	Formally Houghton-le-Spring	
1 Sept	Joseph Lambton	Age 92
	Houghton-le-Spring	
4 Sept	Mary Watson	Age 84
	Houghton-le-Spring	
8 Sept	Sonia Forest	Age 93
	Houghton-le-Spring	

Baptisms

21 Sept	Mollie Jean Carlton
21 Sept	Louis Brown

Memorials

In loving memory of Dorothy Adams from her loving family. RIP

St Michael &
All Angels Parish Church

Christmas Market

Saturday November 29th 2025
from 10.00am

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Stalls, Santa's Grotto and  
refreshments, including hot turkey  
sandwiches

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Please join us

Saint for October

4th October – St Francis of Assisi - love for the Creation

St Francis (1181 - 1226) is surely one of the most attractive and best-loved of all the saints. But he began by being anything but a saint. Born the son of a wealthy cloth-merchant of Assisi, Francis' youth was spent in fast-living, parties and on fast horses as a leader of the young society of the town. Then he went to the war between Assisi and Perugia, and was taken prisoner for a year.

By the time of his release, Francis had changed. Perhaps his own suffering had awakened him to that of others. In any case, he abandoned warfare and carousing, and began to help the poor and the lepers of his area. Then one day a voice which seemed to come from the crucifix in the small, semi-derelict church of Damiano Assisi 'Go and repair my house, which you see is falling down'.

This religious experience was a vital turning point in Francis' life: Jesus Christ became very real and immediate to him. His first action was to begin repairing the church, having sold some of his father's cloth to pay for materials. His father was not amused, in fact he was furious - until Francis renounced his inheritance and even his clothes by his dramatic stripping off in the public square of the town. The Bishop of Assisi provided him with simple garments, and Francis began his new life.

His inspiration was always religious, not social, and the object of his quest was always the Crucified Christ, not Lady Poverty for her own sake. Francis rebuilt San Samiano, and then travelled as a pilgrim. His compassion for the poor and lepers became famous. Soon disciples joined him, and they set up a communal life in simple wattle and daub huts. They went on occasional preaching tours. (Not until later did they become an Order whose theologians won fame in the Universities.)

In 1219 Francis visited the Holy Land, and his illusions about the Crusaders were shattered. He went on to seek out the Sultan, and tried to convert him. Back home, he found his Order was now 5,000 strong, and growing. Francis stepped down as head, but continued to preach and was immensely popular. He died after a prolonged illness at the age of 45, and was canonised in 1228.

Francis' close rapport with the animal creation was well known. The story of his preaching to the birds has always been a favourite scene from his life. He also tamed the wolf of Gubbio. This affinity emphasises his consideration for, and sense of identity with, all elements of the physical universe, as seen in his *Canticle of the Sun*. This makes him an apt patron of nature conservation.

The 20th century witnessed a widespread revival of interest in Francis. Sadly, some films and books caricatured him as only a sentimental nature-lover or a hippie drop out from society. This ignores the real sternness of his character, and his all-pervasive love of God and identification with Christ's sufferings, which alone make sense of his life. Two ancient, and many modern English churches are dedicated to him.

Being a pastor in the Ukraine

Pastors in the Ukraine are continuing to minister to their beleaguered congregations, bringing comfort and hope into the most frightening and desperate war-torn situations.

So says Transform Europe Network, a Christian ministry which serves alongside indigenous Christians in Eastern Europe and the Balkans. In a recent report, it gives an update from one of its partners on the ground:

“Pastor Evgeniy serves in the war-torn Kherson region of southeastern Ukraine. Since 2022, he and a small group of volunteers have brought food, comfort, and hope to people living amid the destruction.

“Evgeniy and his team recently came to a village that had been shelled. One family’s home was reduced to rubble, and their vital documents were buried. The team arrived in bright, civilian clothing, deliberately chosen to identify them as volunteers, not military. As they began to pull back the rubble, they remained calm, focussing on their priority to help the family escape.

“40 minutes later, the volunteers heard and saw a reconnaissance drone circling above them. They couldn’t tell who it belonged to, but its presence was ominous. Then came a different sound — sharper, lower, and closer. A small military drone was heading straight for them. In a moment that could only be described as divine intervention, the drone clipped a tree branch and crashed to the ground next to the team’s car.

“The team cautiously approached the drone, still twitching and sparking. Minutes later, a second drone appeared. It aimed for the fallen drone, possibly to trigger an explosion by striking the first. But it too missed its target—crashing about six meters from the car, hitting a nearby concrete wall rather than the group. No one was injured.

“But the volunteers knew then that they were under attack. They gathered their tools, helped the family into the vehicle, and drove away. Just seconds after they left, a third drone struck — right where their car had been parked moments before. The resulting explosion could have easily taken their lives. But once again, by what they all believe was God’s hand, they were spared.

“Reflecting on the events, Pastor Evgeniy was asked if he ever felt hatred or the desire for revenge. His answer was quiet, but unshakable *‘No. I just understand. I understand the pain. I understand the fear. But if we don’t bring light into this darkness, who will?’*

“For Evgeniy, war is not a reason to harden the heart—it’s a call to deeper compassion. Even as drones fly overhead and homes crumble, he continues his ministry, bringing food, prayer, and humanity into places others flee from. This is what faith looks like in the ruins. It looks like a small group in bright vests, carrying hope into danger. It looks like a pastor who chooses grace over vengeance. And it looks like a God who protects, even when the bombs fall close.”

Since the talks involving the US and a possible ceasefire, the local leaders testify that instead of de-escalation, they’ve experienced a significant rise in attacks and shelling.

Transform Europe Network (TEN) asks Christians in the UK:

Please pray for pastors and church teams, exhausted by serving many people on the frontline.

Pray for those who are confused, discouraged and angry, even with each other. Pray for healing and comfort from the Holy Spirit. Churches in Ukraine do all they can to reconcile local people, but it is getting harder and harder.

Mothers are afraid that their teenage sons will be taken away for conscription, which has become increasingly aggressive. This also causes men to run away from home and so many families are fractured and deeply stressed as the war grinds on.

More details at: <https://ten-uk.org>

Plastic carrier bags

This year marks ten years since England introduced the 5p charge for single-use plastic carrier bags. The charge has had a dramatic effect – with a reduction of 98% in sales.

In 2014, 7.6 billion single-use plastic bags were sold in the UK. By 2023, 133 million single-use bags had been sold in the major supermarkets. The average person in the UK now buys only about two single-use plastic bags per year.

The Month Ahead.....October

1	Wed	10.00 am	Drop-in (Hub, Newbottle Street)
2	Thur	10.00 am	Drop-in (Hub, Newbottle Street)
		10.00 am	Holy Communion (in Church)
		6.00 pm	Choir Practice (Choir Vestry)
3	Fri	9.30 am	Stay & Play (Kepier Hall, until 11.15 am)
		9.30 am	Community Food Store (Kepier Hall, until 12 noon)
		2.00 pm	Cake & Chat (Hub, Newbottle Street)
		6.00 pm	Receptions for Opening Ceremony
4	Sat	10.00 am	Feast Coffee Morning (in Church)
		11.00 am	Drop-in (Hub, Newbottle Street)
5	Sun	Feast Sunday	
		8.30 am	Holy Communion (in Church)
		10.30 am	Civic Service (in Church & Facebook)
		12.00 noon	Lunch (Kepier)
		6.00 pm	Community Hymn Singing (in Church)
6	Mon	10.00 am	Drop-in (Hub, Newbottle Street)
		4.00 pm	Community Food Store (Kepier Hall, until 6.00 pm)
		6.00 pm	Vestry hour (call Parish Office for appointment)
7	Tues	10.00 am	Drop-in (Hub, Newbottle Street)
		1.15 pm	'Light' – Drop In Bereavement Group (The Hub, Newbottle Street)
		3.30 pm	Tuesday Treat (Hub, Newbottle Street)
8	Wed	10.00 am	Drop-in (Hub, Newbottle Street)
9	Thur	10.00 am	Holy Communion (in Church)
		10.00 am	Drop-in (Hub, Newbottle Street)
		7.00 pm	Houghton Brass Band Concert (in Church)
10	Fri	9.30 am	Stay & Play (Kepier Hall, until 11.15 am)
		9.30 am	Community Food Store (Kepier Hall, until 12 noon)
		2.00 pm	Cake & Chat (Hub, Newbottle Street)
		7.00 pm	Ceilidh with The Seaham Music Academy Ceilidh Band (in Church)
11	Sat	7.00 pm	The Magic of Music Concert with Herrington School, The Gilpin Singers & The Rector (in Church)
12	Sun	St Francis Sunday	
		8.30 am	Holy Communion (in Church)
		10.00 am	Pet Service (Service of the Word - in Church & Facebook)
		6.00 pm	Celtic Eucharist (in Church)
13	Mon	10.00 am	Drop-in (Hub, Newbottle Street)
		4.00 pm	Community Food Store (Kepier Hall, until 6.00 pm)
		6.00 pm	Vestry hour (call Parish Office for appointment)
14	Tues	10.00 am	Drop-in (Hub, Newbottle Street)
		3.30 pm	Tuesday Treat (Hub, Newbottle Street)

15	Wed	10.00 am	Drop-in (Hub, Newbottle Street)
16	Thur	10.00 am	Holy Communion (in Church)
		10.00 am	Drop-in (Hub, Newbottle Street)
		6.00 pm	Choir Practice (Choir Vestry)
17	Fri	9.30 am	Stay & Play (Kepier Hall, until 11.15 am)
		9.30 am	Community Food Store (Kepier Hall, until 12 noon)
		2.00 pm	Cake & Chat (Hub, Newbottle Street)
19	Sun	Harvest Festival	
		8.30 am	Holy Communion (in Church)
		10.00 am	All In Communion (in Church & Facebook)
		6.00 pm	Choral Harvest Service (in Church)
20	Mon	10.00 am	Drop-in (Hub, Newbottle Street)
		2.00 pm	Mothers' Union (Kepier)
		4.00 pm	Community Food Store (Kepier Hall, until 6.00 pm)
		6.00 pm	Vestry hour (call Parish Office for appointment)
21	Tues	10.00 am	Drop-in (Hub, Newbottle Street)
		3.30 pm	Tuesday Treat (Hub, Newbottle Street)
		7.00 pm	Holy Communion (Hub, Newbottle Street)
		7.30 pm	PCC (Hub, Newbottle Street)
22	Wed	10.00 am	Drop-in (Hub, Newbottle Street)
23	Thur	10.00 am	Holy Communion (in Church)
		10.00 am	Drop-in (Hub, Newbottle Street)
		6.00 pm	Choir Practice (Choir Vestry)
24	Fri	9.30 am	Stay & Play (Kepier Hall, until 11.15 am)
		9.30 am	Community Food Store (Kepier Hall, until 12 noon)
		2.00 pm	Cake & Chat (Hub, Newbottle Street)
		2.00 pm	Drop-in (Hub, Newbottle Street)
25	Sat	11.00 am	Wedding
26	Sun	Bible Sunday	
		8.30 am	Holy Communion (in Church)
		10.00 am	Holy Communion (in Church & Facebook)
		6.00 pm	Service of Light (in Church)
27	Mon	10.00 am	Drop-in (Hub, Newbottle Street)
		4.00 pm	Community Food Store (Kepier Hall, until 6.00 pm)
		6.00 pm	Vestry hour (call Parish Office for appointment)
28	Tues	10.00 am	Drop-in (Hub, Newbottle Street)
		3.30 pm	Tuesday Treat (Hub, Newbottle Street)
29	Wed	10.00 am	Drop-in (Hub, Newbottle Street)
30	Thur	10.00 am	Holy Communion (in Church)
		10.00 am	Drop-in (Hub, Newbottle Street)
		6.00 pm	Choir Practice (Choir Vestry)
31	Fri	9.30 am	Stay & Play (Kepier Hall, until 11.15 am)
		9.30 am	Community Food Store (Kepier Hall, until 12 noon)
		2.00 pm	Cake & Chat (Hub, Newbottle Street)

Those magnificent men in their flying machine...

It was 125 years ago, on 20th October 1900, that the American aviation pioneers the Wright Brothers made their first untethered glider flight at Kill Devil Hills in North Carolina.

This was a key moment in the history of aviation, although their first powered flight of a heavier-than-air aircraft came three years later, on 17th December 1903, also at Kill Devil Hills, which is near Kitty Hawk.

Orville and Wilbur Wright, who lived in Dayton, Ohio – more than 600 miles from Kitty Hawk – were the sons of a bishop in the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, and were both named after clergymen.

However, they became inventive mechanics and owned a bicycle shop at a time when cycling was becoming safer and popular. They chose the Kitty Hawk area for flight attempts, based on advice from the US Weather Bureau.

There had been many unpowered glider flights in Europe before, and the Wrights, who were in their thirties, were particularly impressed by the successful German pioneer Otto Lilienthal, who had been killed in 1896.

The Wrights' big leap forward, however, was a system of three-axis controls that made fixed-wing powered flight possible. It enabled the pilot to steer the aircraft and maintain its equilibrium. It remains standard on aircraft today.

Flying changed the world for us all. It had long been a dream, dating back at least as far as the Greek legend of Icarus and Daedalus, and including kite-flying in China and ballooning in 18th-century France, with the Montgolfier brothers.

A small piece of the Wright Flyer is now on Mars – a piece of cloth attached to a small but active reconnaissance helicopter called *Ingenuity*.

Sunday Morning Reverie

~By Marie Henderson~

I come to church each Sunday
And hope to be uplifted.

But if the preachers boring
I find my thoughts have drifted.

Did I turn the oven down?
Have I closed the bathroom "winder?"
Am I being burgled now?
Is my lovely roast a cinder?

~

Stop, concentrate, and listen
What a funny word, begat,
I wonder who that couple are.
What a really gorgeous hat.

Stop fidgeting and shuffling,
Get on my knees and pray,
Oh Lord please do forgive me
For my wandering thoughts today.

~

Pray for a nice soft cushion
To put upon the pews
So that during a long service
My rear would not feel bruised
When the preacher gives his sermon
He would get my full attention,
Cos I wouldn't have so many aches,
In parts I dare not mention.

We invite you to *'An audience with'* artist **Ray Lonsdale**

Come to hear Ray talk about
his 'journey as an artist, what
inspires him to create, and
his current legal battle over
'plagiarism in art'.



Saturday 25th October,
2.30pm (doors open 2.00pm).
Kepier Hall,
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87p

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

North East finance team supervisor fleeced firm out of £375,000 over 11 years and spent it all

William Sharp, 72, of Houghton-le-Spring, has been jailed after his 11-year fraud was discovered following his retirement.

A crooked finance team supervisor who fiddled invoices pocketed more than £375,000 which he splashed out on himself and his family. William Sharp worked his way up to a trusted position in the company, which he abused over and over again in a fraud spanning 11 years.

A court heard Sharp had worked in the finance team at Connor Solutions, based in Houghton-le-Spring, since 2011. After getting promoted to account supervisor, he had increased responsibilities which meant he was allowed to process invoices. The company processed up to 2,000 invoices a month, the court heard.

He retired in 2023 on a salary of £32,000 but after he left the company, there was an internal investigation after a discrepancy was noticed by a supplier. The probe revealed a series of fraudulent invoices between September 2012 and August 2023. Newcastle Crown Court heard there had been 95 fraudulent payments totalling £375,667. They had been created by Sharp using his work username.

It was also found that when another employee had been lined up to replace Sharp ahead of him retiring, he would wait until that person was on annual leave to make fraudulent payments to an account for which he was a card holder.

Rachel Butt, prosecuting, said: "The defendant was spoken to and confirmed he had spent all the money supplementing his income, taking his family on luxury holidays, providing money to his sister when her house was in negative equity and paying off his debts of £26,000."

Sharp, 72, of Ellesmere Close, Houghton-le-Spring, pleaded guilty to fraud by false representation between 2012 and 2023 and was jailed for two and a half years. He also faces Proceeds of Crime Act proceedings.

Judge Carolyn Scott told him: "It was an egregious breach of trust, in my judgement, over a significant period of time. There can be no dispute that you breached your position and it was committed over a sustained period of time.

"It is apparent, notwithstanding the success of the business, your offending would have impacted the company. There was a time when the company had to cut

costs and make people redundant. I've no doubt you stealing cash from them would have contributed to that. There were clearly a range of factors which led to the company having to take difficult decisions but there was at the very least some impact. Your offending was only discovered by mistake after you had retired. If it had not been discovered by another employee I'm confident this is something you would have kept to yourself. I do have sympathy for your family and how they will be affected but the sentence I have to pass today is something you've brought on yourself and your family. In the circumstances, a sentence of that length is simply unavoidable."

Jessica Slaughter, defending, said: "The defendant is of previous good character and he has worked throughout his life. He can't understand how he succumbed to temptation and he is incredibly remorseful about that."

Miss Slaughter said Sharp and his wife pay a mortgage on their £75,000 flat using their pensions and said his imprisonment would severely impact his wife. She told the court: "She would lose her home, she would lose her husband and also her carer."

NatWest, Lloyds, Halifax and Santander to close 162 branches including in North East

Five branches in the North East, including sites in Northumberland and County Durham, are among those set to shut across the country.

More than 160 bank branches are set to close across the UK over the coming months, including five in the North East. NatWest, Lloyds, Halifax and Santander customers will be among those affected.

NatWest has confirmed 52 of its branches will shut, while Halifax will close 42 sites and Lloyds will shut 40. Santander has 19 sites scheduled for closure, and Bank of Scotland has nine.

The majority of high street banks have been closing branches due to more people using online banking. However, charities have raised concerns that this could mean vulnerable people will be left without access to essential banking services. This comes as the Co-operative Bank recently announced plans to reduce opening hours across 40 of its branches from next year, as reported by Chronicle Live.

Banks and building societies have closed 6,522 branches since January 2015, equating to 53 closures every month, according to Which? data. If your local branch is closing, you can do some basic cash or counter services at your nearest Post Office - for example, if you need to pay in cash and cheques, make withdrawals and check your balance.

Some banks also now run pop-up branches or vans, but you'll need to check online to see when one is due to visit your town. The full list of upcoming closures is given on line, including sites in Northumberland and County Durham.

*Hebrew Calendar – Feasts & Festivals***The Month of TISHREI in the Jewish Year 5786 (2025)**Sunset September 22nd until sunset October 23rd

The names of the months in the Hebrew Calendar are derived from the Akkadian language of the Babylonian era. Tishrei stems from the word 'beginning'. The tradition associated with the first day of this month is that Adam and Eve were created on this day.

The Month of Tishrei (Month 7) is now commonly considered to be the Jewish New Year. In the Bible, the New Year was celebrated in Nissan (Month 1) in the Springtime, but the emphasis has changed over time.

Rosh Hashanah Tishrei 1 – 2 (Sunset 22nd September to sunset on the 24th.)

This is the Festival of the Jewish New Year. It also celebrates the beginning of the universe and mankind. Rosh Hashanah involves lighting candles in the evenings, festive meals every day and night, and the sounding of the shofar (ram's horn). Also, lots of synagogue time and prayers using a special holiday prayer book called a Machzor. On the first afternoon of this festival, people take part in a ceremony where they 'cast their sins' into running water. *Micah 7:19 "He will take us back in love; He will cover up our iniquities. You will cast all their sins into the depths of the sea".*

The main themes of the festival are:

- God's kingship.
- Prayers that ask that he remember us for good.
- Hearing the Shofar. There are many and various reasons this is considered necessary and hearing the Shofar is seen as a very important command.

Yom Kippur Tishrei 10 – 11 (Sunset 1st October to sunset on the 2nd).

No work is done on this day, which is also known as The Day of Atonement. People aim to gather in the synagogue for 25 hours of fasting, prayer and inspiration. The Psalms are used extensively and the last prayer is "Hear O Israel, God is our Lord, God is one". Then the congregation sings a joyous song and the shofar is blasted with a final proclamation of "Next Year in Jerusalem".

This is the most solemn and important day of the year, also with an undercurrent of joy, having confidence God will forgive as we repent, and a hope for the coming year of health and happiness.

This is the only day that the High Priest is allowed to enter the Holy of Holies.

Leviticus 16:29 "This shall be a statute to you forever." God ordained this particular day as a permanent thing, and some Christians still celebrate Yom Kippur (and other Jewish festivals).

Sukkot (Shelter) Tishrei 15 – 21 (In 2025 from sunset 6th October to sunset on the 13th).

This festival is also known as the Feast of Tabernacles or Booths. It lasts a week, celebrating harvest and remembering the protection God gave them when they left Egypt. The idea is to dwell in temporary huts although most people now just eat meals in them, and not as many sleep in them as in the past. The feast ends with a special service in the synagogue and a celebratory meal.

Many scholars think that Jesus was born during the Feast of Sukkot. They determine this from the time John the Baptist's father was approached by an angel while he was doing his rotational duty in the temple. They can time that duty, and given that Jesus was six months younger than John, they come to the date of this feast for Jesus' birth. Some Christians speculate that he will also return during this Feast.



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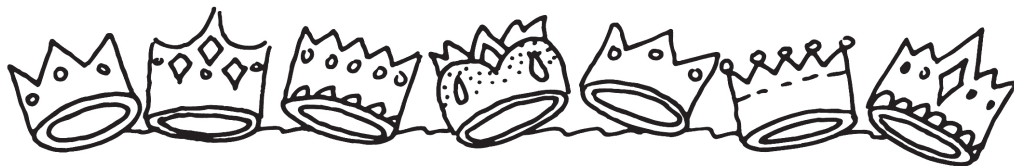
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Is there a spiritual revival going on among our young people?

A leading Roman Catholic professor of Pastoral Theology at the University of Vienna thinks that this may well be so. For the Revd Paul Zulehner says that while Church is still losing young people, it is also gaining them.

“We’re clearly witnessing a protest against mainstream secularisation, as groups of youngsters yearn for re-spiritualisation or re-enchantment. Many are looking for meaning beyond material success, when such perceptions have become enfeebled in our pluralistic societies.”

Professor Zulehner was speaking to the *Church Times* after the recent Roman Catholic Church’s *Jubilee of Youth*, which attracted a million-strong gathering in Rome, led by Pope Leo XIV.

Meanwhile, in Britain, Youth for Christ, an international evangelical youth ministry, has reported that weekly church attendance by young people had doubled from four to eight percent in five years. YFC said that half of young people were now declaring a belief in God, and 96 per cent express an openness to “supernatural experience”.

The report also said that the number of younger people claiming to pray regularly had also increased sharply, although it is still small. 65 per cent said that they now viewed churches “positively”, compared with just eight per cent in 2020 — defying “every prediction about declining religious engagement”.

Professor Zulehner added that while many young people are sceptical about institutional Churches, they have found a “medium and language” through social media for sharing their religious interests.

He told *Church Times*: “Gospel influences are at work through Instagram, TikTok, and the networks today’s youngsters rely on, which may ultimately prove as important in finding followers for Christ as the Church’s leaders and traditions.”

Send your love with these flowers

A flower used by Victorians when they wanted to send a 'hidden message' of love is making a big comeback.

It is the aster. It's popularity in bouquets has quadrupled in two years. Sales at Tesco alone have soared by nearly 350 per cent.

And no wonder: asters are vivid, fast-growing British flowers with a good vase life. They come in blue, purple, pink, dark pink, red and white – all with a bright yellow centre. They originally came from Japan and are related to dahlias and chrysanthemums.

The Victorians believed that asters symbolised love, patience, wisdom, elegance and grace. That made asters a sure winner for bearing discreet messages of affection.

More than five million were grown in the UK this year, so there must be a lot of love about!

Younger drivers and older drivers

Drivers aged 17 to 24 are twice as likely to be killed or seriously injured as those aged over 70. So says recent data from the Department for Transport.

But there has also been a rise in the likelihood of serious accidents involving drivers aged 86 or over.

Police data reveals that older drivers are more likely to cause accidents by failing to look properly. Young drivers who cause accidents are often found to be drunk or high on drugs.

Meanwhile, the Government is preparing to introduce compulsory eye tests for the over-70s. This has been greeted with relief by driving agencies.

One commented that it is "totally inadequate" that drivers aged over 70 "can self-certify that they can see." He remembered a case where it was found that an older driver who caused a death had self-certified his eyesight as being fine, when he could barely see his own steering wheel.

The Poppy Appeal – could you help by giving some time this autumn?

The 2025 Poppy Appeal will be launched this month. The Poppy is a powerful symbol worn by people right across the UK to commemorate the sacrifices of our Armed Forces and to show support to those still serving today.

The Royal British Legion was first set up to help those returning from the First World War. Almost a century on, they're still helping today's Service people, veterans, and their families coping with bereavement, living with disability or finding employment.

However, the Poppy Appeal would not be able to continue without the dedication of the teams of volunteers who stand in the streets, shops and supermarkets. Each town and village has their own Poppy Appeal Organiser - also a volunteer - who runs these teams, arranges for cover, drops off and collects the boxes.

The Poppy Appeal is always grateful for the work of these dedicated people, but the volunteers say they proud to be selling Poppies to show support for those who sacrificed their lives for us.

If you want to volunteer, or if you would like a visit from a local volunteer who can speak to your community/church group, please go to: <https://www.britishlegion.org.uk/get-involved/volunteer>.

Time to make your Will!

Been putting off writing or updating your Will? Next month the charity Will Aid's 'Make a Will Month' will offer you the opportunity to put your affairs in order, secure your loved one's future and give to charities helping those in need.

Participating solicitors are inviting people to contact them to book appointments for November, when they will prepare basic Wills without charging their normal fee. All that they will ask in return is that clients consider making a voluntary donation to Will Aid. The suggested donation is just £120 for a single Will, or £200 for a pair of mirror Wills.

The money raised is shared by nine UK charities: namely ActionAid, Age UK,

British Red Cross, Christian Aid, Crisis, NSPCC, SCIAF (Scotland) and Trocaire (N. Ireland).

As many as half of all UK adults in the UK don't have a Will. They have not made any legally valid provision for what they would like to happen after their death. This can lead to a great deal of stress and uncertainty, as well as financial hardship, for those left behind.

Even if you have a Will, it is important to keep it up to date. Experts recommend routinely reviewing a Will every three to five years, and making a new Will as soon as significant family changes occur.

More details at <https://www.willaid.org.uk/register>. Please book early as solicitors tend to fill their appointments very quickly.

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MEMORIALS

We hope this system will help us to meet requests for memorials more efficiently.

Should you wish for a loved one to be remembered on their anniversary in the weekly prayers read during the Sunday services, please complete the slip opposite.

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.

MEMORIAL REQUEST

Name of person to be remembered:

.....

Request made by:

.....

.....

.....

Date for memorial:

Sunday,

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St Michael and All Angels Church



Houghton Feast

Day	Date	Time	Event
Fri	3 October	7.00pm	Feast Opening
Sat	4 October	10.00am	Coffee Morning
Sun	5 October	10.30am 6.00pm	Civic Service Community Hymn Singing
Thur	9 October	7.00pm	Houghton Brass Band Concert
Fri	10 October	7.00pm	Ceilidh
Sat	11 October	7.00pm	The Magic of Music

