



CROSSWAYS

A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER FOR ST PAUL'S AND WHITWORTH

The power of stories

By Revd Lee Earl

WHAT springs to mind when you hear the words “football” or “The World Cup”? Excitement? Boredom? Nausea? Perhaps, like me, you’ve been following the 2026 World Cup with great enthusiasm. Or perhaps you’ve given it little thought at all. You may even be thinking, “Please don’t mention it!”

Whatever your view, it’s hard to deny football’s power to captivate people, as millions around the world find themselves glued to their screens, longing for that magical moment when their nation’s team scores the winning goal and moves one step closer to lifting the trophy.

Interestingly, the Bible uses sporting image-

ry to describe the Christian life. In fact, the Apostle Paul was particularly fond of athletic metaphors. For example, he speaks about a “goal” - though sadly not in the context of the beautiful game! Writing to the Philippians, he says: “I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.” (Philippians 3:14)

Here, Paul pictures the Christian life as a race, with a finish line ahead. There is purpose, direction, and a goal far greater than we can possibly imagine. And so, like Paul, we are called not to lose sight of that goal, but to live our lives in light of it.

Still, when we hear phrases like “press on” and “determination,” we



An AI generated image of a penalty shoot-out

can sometimes imagine the Christian life as being primarily a matter of striving and effort - as though it were 99% perspiration and 1% inspiration. And if we’re not careful, the Christian life can start to feel more about our effort than Christ’s grace - an impossible burden.

I was recently watching the series *Dear England*, a drama which follows Gareth Southgate’s leadership of the England squad. At the beginning, Southgate inherits a

team fractured by big egos, crushed by disappointment, and paralysed by the pressure of bringing football home. In his first meeting with the players, he talks about the power of stories. Although England’s World Cup victory in 1966 is a wonderful story, he suggests it has also become a crushing burden - a story that makes the players feel that every time they step onto the pitch they must somehow relive that moment or fail.

So Southgate chal-

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PARISH

CHURCH

SERVICES

ST PAUL’S CHURCH

Sundays: 10.30am Holy Communion (‘All Together’ non-communion on first Sunday)
(*live-streamed at www.facebook.com/stpaulsspennymoor*)

Wednesdays: 9.30am Holy Communion **Fridays: 10am** Play Church (term-time only)

WHITWORTH CHURCH

Sundays: 9am Holy Communion

CLERGY

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The power of stories

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lenges them to step back and embrace a longer-term vision - one that allows them to enjoy the journey without being weighed down by the past. And as Christians, when we succumb to the pressure to perform, we too can lose sight of the bigger picture - the bigger story of which we are already a part. But thankfully, the story we live in as Christians is very different. For unlike the England team, we are not left uncertain about how the story ends. In Christ, the decisive victory has already been won through his life, death, and resurrection. So when Paul says, "I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus," he is not describing a desperate attempt to secure victory. Rather, he is describing a life lived in response to a victory al-

ready won. So whether we feel like champions or failures, we can be assured that in Christ Jesus we are "more than conquerors through him who loved us." (Romans 8:37 And it is that reality which fuels our hearts as we run the race set before us, pressing on towards the ultimate prize - Christ himself.

But this is not a solo race. Like the England squad, we need one another. We are part of Christ's body, joined together by his Spirit, called to encourage and strengthen one another as we journey towards the goal he has set before all of us. It is for that reason that we can run together, side by side, with renewed focus and determination — but also with a profound sense of joy for the journey, knowing that because we belong to Christ, his victory belongs to us. Amen.

Churchwardens sworn into office



OUR churchwardens have formally taken office for the 2026-2027 year after being sworn in during special services. Christopher Luke and Samuel Thumaty (pictured above), churchwardens at St Paul's, attended the Bishop's Visitation at Durham Cathedral, where the new Bishop of Durham, the Rt Revd Rick Simpson admitted them into office alongside other wardens from across the Diocese. Whitworth's churchwarden Kath Hall, attended a service at St John's Kirk Merrington where she was sworn in by the interim Area Dean for the Auckland Archdeaconry, the Revd Barbara Hilton.

Grow at St Paul's gardening space



A HUGE thank you to Edward, David, Shirley and the other volunteers who continue to keep the Grow at St Paul's garden looking fantastic!

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Mothers' Union Festival Service

Words by Pauline Storey

Photo by Barbara Hardy

REPRESENTATIVES from the St Paul's branch recently attended the Mothers' Union Festival Service in Durham Cathedral.

The service, during the organisation's 150th anniversary year was a tremendous occasion and the Cathedral staff and volunteers pulled out all the stops to make it such a memorable event. Highlights included seeing so many Mothers' Union banners from branches across the diocese being paraded which was an emotional sight.

Throughout this anniversary year members

are being encouraged to join a fundraising challenge which can range from sponsored walks, cake sales to afternoon teas. Members are also raising funds by filling empty Smarties' tubes with coins. All donations will go towards supporting the Mothers' Union's work internationally as well as across the UK.

At St Paul's there will be an Overseas Coffee Morning on Saturday 19th September, so pop the date in your diary now! The event will support projects to empower women around the world by providing education courses and giving prac-



Members of the St Paul's branch of the Mothers' Union at Durham Cathedral

tical help through small grants for those who are raising crops for their community.

The St Paul's branch will close for the summer break on Monday 13th July with an afternoon tea at the St Paul's Centre. Members are wished a safe and happy break and the next meeting will

take place on Monday 14th September, 2pm at St Paul's Church.

One other date for your diary is that Mary Sumner Day, the Mother's Union founder will be marked with Evening at Durham Cathedral on Sunday 9th August at 3:30pm and all are welcome to attend.



The Bishop of Durham knocks on the Cathedral door three times with his pastoral staff to request entry (Photo: Durham Diocese)

New Bishop of Durham installed during special service

A PACKED Durham Cathedral witnessed the Rt Revd Rick Simpson installed as the new Bishop of Durham in early June. The service brought together civic leaders, local politicians, visiting bishops, and representatives from churches across the Diocese of Durham. Bishop Rick, who previously was Archdeacon of Auckland, was announced as the next Bishop of Durham in February. Led by the Dean of Durham, the service began with Bishop Rick knocking at the North door of the Cathedral to be formally welcomed in where he made a Declaration of Ascent and then installed in his cathedra, his seat in the Cathedral. The service is available on Durham Cathedral's YouTube channel. (Words: Durham Diocese)

<p>CLEMS SPENNYMOOR</p> <p>16 Clyde Tce Spennymoor 815451</p>	<p>ADVERTISE IN THIS SPACE FOR JUST £10 PER YEAR!</p> <p>Email us at: office@stpaulsspennymoor.co.uk</p>	<p>Derek Taylor and Son Est. 1972 Corgi Reg. Gas Services</p> <p>Tel. 814982</p>	<p>Wedding/Family Celebrations at the Town Hall in Spennymoor "for Ramside quality at Town Hall prices"</p> <p>01388 815276</p> <p>www.parishes.durham.gov.uk/spennymoor enquiries@spennymoortowncouncil.gov.uk</p>
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FOR YOUR PRAYERS

For newly ordained deacons and priests serving across the Diocese and wider Church of England.



For the Spennymoor Churches' Holiday Club in late July, including the volunteers and children attending.

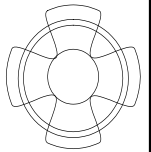
For all those affected by the devastating earthquake in Venezuela.

PRAYER FOR JULY

Lord Jesus Christ, we thank you for all the benefits that you have won for us; for all the pains and insults that you have borne for us. Most merciful redeemer, friend and brother, may we know you more clearly, love you more dearly, and follow you more nearly, day by day.
Amen

Source: The Church of England

Parish Registers



HOLY BAPTISM

St Paul's
28th June Archer George McLean

Whitworth
28th June Maddison Wardle
28th June Theo Thompson
28th June Amaya Lily Thompson

CHRISTIAN FUNERALS

Durham Crematorium
4th June Yvonne Towland
5th June Stephen Martin

St Paul's
23rd June Brian Derbyshire

(Please bring cash on the evening)



Spennymoor Churches
Holiday Club

**YOUTH
SPRAY PAINT
WORKSHOP**

DATE: TUESDAY 28TH JULY 2026
TIME: 7-9PM
VENUE: TRINITY METHODIST CHURCH, SPENNYMOOR
AGE: 12-18
(THOSE FINISHING Y7 TO THOSE FINISHING Y13)

Booking Required!



stpaulsspennymoor.co.uk/events



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**Presents our Summer Concert
"Spring into Summer"**

**Friday 10th July
St. Paul's Church,
Spennymoor
7.00pm**

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