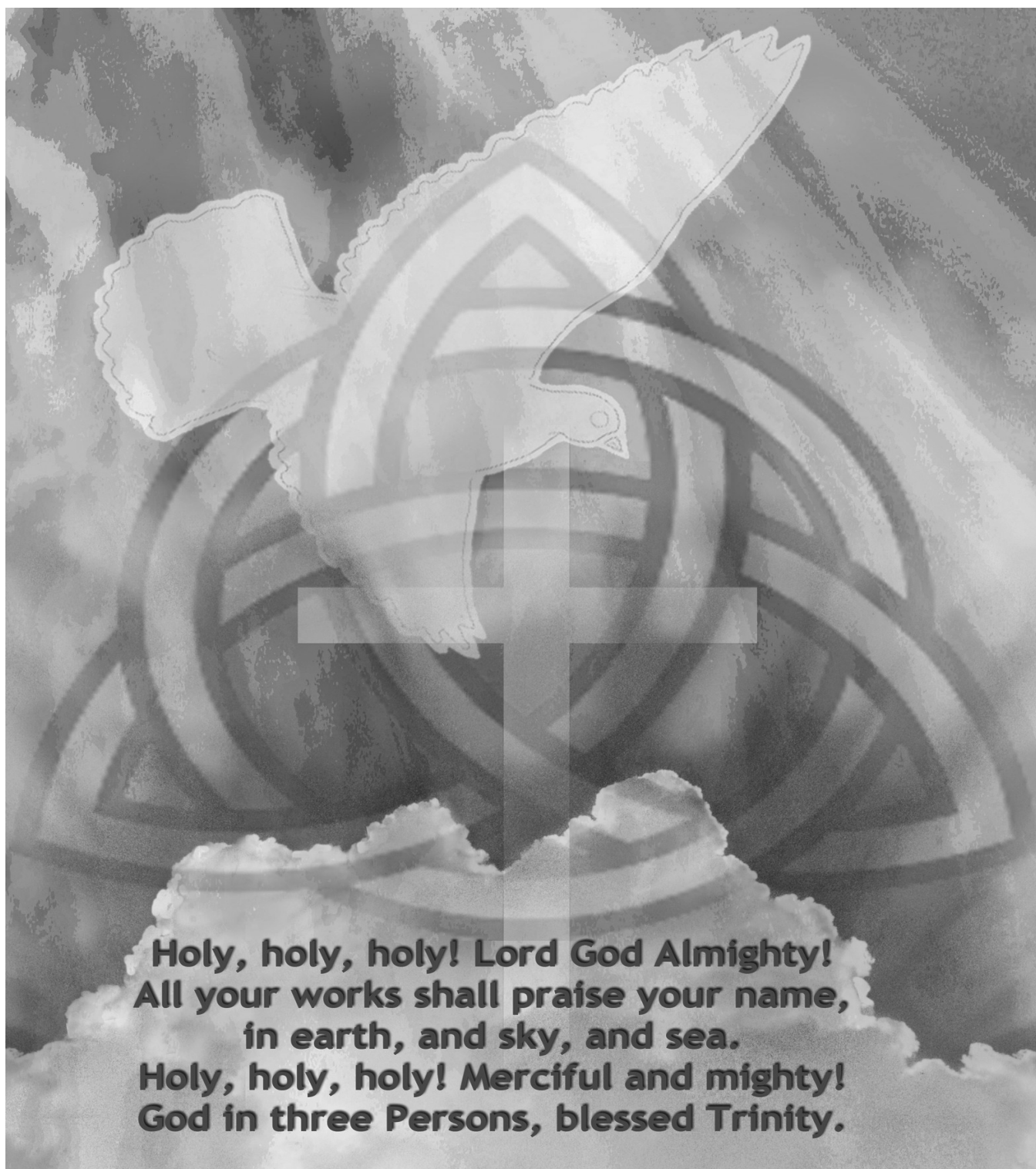


# June 2026



**Holy, holy, holy! Lord God Almighty!  
All your works shall praise your name,  
in earth, and sky, and sea.  
Holy, holy, holy! Merciful and mighty!  
God in three Persons, blessed Trinity.**

**'Subscription £8.00 - Single Issue 85p'**

## **The Parish Magazine**

***All Saints' Lanchester and St John's Burnhope***

# Parish of LANCHESTER & BURNHOPE

**Priest in Charge – The Revd Lesley Sutherland**

The Vicarage, 1, Lee Hill Court, Lanchester DH7 0QE

Tel 01207 529166 email:-reverendsutherland@gmail.com

## SERVICES AT ALL SAINTS' LANCHESTER

8.00am Every Sunday Eucharist  
(Traditional Language)

10.30am Principal Service  
(Eucharist or Service of the Word)

2nd Sunday All Together Service with St John's

5th Sunday Combined Service see dates page

3rd Sunday 3.00pm Messy Church

Wednesdays 9.45am Holy Communion

### Home Communion at Lynwood House

3rd Thursday of the month at 11.00am

## HOLY BAPTISM, WEDDINGS & FUNERALS

by arrangement with the Vicar

## SERVICES AT ST. JOHN'S, BURNHOPE

1st and 3rd Sunday 9.15am Said Eucharist

2nd Sunday All Together Service (at All Saints')

4th Sunday 9.15am Explore (informal  
exploration of a Bible passage and worship)

Café Church 6.00pm at The Community Centre  
every second Tuesday of the month

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Caroline Roxburgh

## Safeguarding Statement;

The Parish of Lanchester and Burnhope is committed to creating and maintaining a safe and nurturing environment for everyone, especially for children, young people and vulnerable adults. It has adopted and approved the Church of England policy for promoting a safer church.

This policy deals with all aspects of safeguarding children and vulnerable adults.

As we are currently recruiting a Parish Safeguarding officer and Safeguarding Team Members, to discuss any safeguarding concerns relating to All Saints Lanchester or St John's Burnhope, in the first instance please contact:-

**The Parish Priest**, Rev'd Lesley Sutherland, 01207529166, reverendsutherland@gmail.com

Concerns can also be raised with the Diocesan Safeguarding Officer,

Mrs Beth Miller – she can be contacted as follows:

Address: Cuthbert House, Stonebridge, Durham DH1 3RY - Mobile: 07968 034075

Email: beth@bethmillerisw.co.uk or beth.miller@durham.anglican.org



As God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God.

Colossians 3:12-16

It is entirely co-incidental that we meet for our review of 2025 on the feast day of Alcuin of York. You've probably never heard of him, but Alcuin was one of our own, descended from a noble Northumbrian family. Although the date and place of his birth are not known, he was probably born in the year 735 in or near York. He entered the cathedral school there as a child, continued as a Scholar and became Master. In 781, he went to Aachen as adviser to Charlemagne on religious and educational matters and as Master of the Palace School, where he established an important library. Although not a monk and in deacon's orders, in 796 he became Abbot of Tours, where he died in the year 804.

His festival might be one of those 'lesser' ones that punctuate the church year, but for us it underlines a theme that began for me at last year's APCM. We are meant to live in community, as Alcuin did throughout his life. Our recent mini sermon series, musing on what Christian community looks like, finds expression in the readings for Alcuin. If we are truly committed Christians, then Colossians 3:12-16 is our handbook. Each APCM is an exercise in applying just these criteria to the past year. Are we a compassionate people who forgive one another? Do we keep the commandment to love? Are we thankful for all that we have been gifted, rather than obsessing about scarcity? How have we gone about worship this year?

### **Worship and discipleship- growing deeper**

- In 2025 we continued a pattern of worship that includes an 8am Sunday Eucharist, a 9.15 service at Burnhope and a 10.30 Eucharist at All Saints, as well as the Wednesday 9.45 service. We introduced Explore! at Burnhope, a monthly service of the word with a congregational Bible study at its heart. Attendance at all of our services is steady, although it is gratifying that there is a marked increase in numbers for our intergenerational ALL TOGETHER services. We also offer a monthly service at Lynwood House and a monthly midweek Café Church at Burnhope community centre which are well attended;
- We continue to offer meditation, led beautifully by Sue;
- The prayer of the Julian group underpins our worship.
- It was my aspiration to introduce some Bible study groups in 2025. Sadly, my capacity was stretched to the limit, and the need for different times to meet for those who expressed an interest was just too much. Having laid down the role of Area Dean, I hope to be better placed to work on deepening discipleship this year.

## **Occasional Offices**

- We are a resource to the wider community for significant life events, and have a busy funeral and baptismal ministry.
- The few weddings we hold are wonderful, but we are in competition with the numerous one-stop wedding venues along the Beamish valley;

## **Pastoral Work**

- The demand for pastoral visits is large and still growing. It is impossible for clergy to carry out all of the pastoral visiting work, and we could not manage without the considerable assistance of the pastoral visiting team. A new team with 12 members was constituted in 2025 and began visiting on a regular basis.
- Clergy still provide chaplaincy services to Willowburn, and visit those in hospital in liaison with our hospital chaplains.

## **Schools and Children- growing younger**

- We regularly visit and deliver collective worship in our schools. Both the EP and Burnhope Primary schools bring KS 1 and 2 children to church as part of the RE curriculum, and for the great feasts of the church.
- I continue to be ex officio and vice-chair of the governors of the EP School. Both school and church were hit hard by the death of Margaret Matthews in the autumn of 2025, although we were able to collaborate to deliver a truly fitting funeral for her that reflected her commitment to both communities. Rachel Dowdeswell stepped into the vacancy left by Margaret and has embraced the role of Foundation Governor with responsibility for the school's SEND provision. The finding of OFSTED that the school's Christian ethos 'shines through' is rooted in our work and witness, and in the relationship of church with school. Rev'd Abbey's retirement left our last Foundation Governor spot vacant, and we continue to discern who might be called to further contribute to the life of the school.
- The collaborative relationship between the church, Burnhope school and the community centre continues to grow and thrive, and a small but mighty team of volunteers works in the kitchen and hall on the community centre's holiday club days. In 2025 we built on our growing partnership in delivering 12 holiday club sessions throughout the summer holidays, serving over 600 two course hot meals to some of the poorest and most vulnerable families in our communities. Holiday club also extended to half term and Christmas holidays, with a memorable visit by Santa to the last club of the year.
- The same cross-border team- with a couple of additions- continues to deliver our Open the Book sessions in Burnhope School, and is much appreciated by the children.
- Messy Church was revisioned by the Messy team in 2025, including an offering of a taster 'Mini-Mess' to two whole year groups from the EP school. After the relaunch, Messy goes from strength to strength, attracting an average child attendance of 30. Our only limitation is the physical space and geography of the church and Chapter House, and the volunteer-heavy nature of Messy Church itself. We are beginning to see some crossover between Messy church and the ALL TOGETHER Sunday morning service, and are wondering how we might begin a group for our older children.
- 2025 saw our Sunday School capitalise on firm foundations, led by Caroline and Janet. Sunday school numbers are regularly between 10 and 16, bucking the national trend which is still for declining attendance of children in church. We are thankful that our Sundays are enlivened by the laughter of children, and look forward to building further on the success of the Sunday School as part of our PCC objectives.

## **Missional Projects-growth, responding to poverty**

- Our Warm Space Wednesday lunch club, led by Pauline Hall and our combined volunteer team, continues to grow and to provide vital social links for isolated elderly people in Burnhope. We are always looking to recruit more volunteers
- At Christmas 2025 we again took part in the Big Christmas Lunch at Burnhope, feeding and entertaining people who would otherwise have been alone for Christmas;
- Publicity is more and more important in engaging those who do not normally come to church. With the separation of the two parishes in July 2025, we undertook a review of the Parish Magazine, including a large-sample survey of its readership. Whilst doing so, publication of the magazine was suspended, and we covered events with a free 'News from the Pews' sheet. Michael Knowles very kindly offered to join the production team, and the Magazine Committee did vital work in analysing the replies to the survey and agreeing on a renewed and refreshed approach to local content. We hope that the 'new' magazine will continue to be a valued and useful tool for mission and for maintaining the vital connections we have with our surrounding communities, and we are very grateful to the distributors who took out the surveys, chased results and communicated the new subscription price of the magazine to subscribers.
- Our A Church Near You page now functions as our website. It is a useful adjunct to other media, but I suspect that we could probably use it more fruitfully. Steps will be taken to re-assess its potential and widen its use.
- Our Facebook pages are vital in advertising services and events to the wider community, and we take full advantage of our link with the new Lanchester Deanery Facebook page to reach as widely as possible.
- Brenda Craddock is much missed as our reporter for the Village Voice. The magazine survey made it clear that you would like more engagement in the village magazine, but I am afraid I cannot take on that task. We have appealed for a volunteer reporter previously without success; will someone come forward now?

## **Safeguarding**

- Safeguarding is of vital importance to us as a community engaged in living out our faith; we are called to love our neighbour as ourselves, to serve the last and the least, and to protect those who are the most vulnerable. We have rigorous structures in place to ensure the safety of all, and place the highest priority on acting appropriately should a safeguarding incident take place.
- As we search for a Parish Safeguarding Officer, the PCC has taken steps to restructure our approach to covering the many responsibilities inherent in the role. I continue to oversee use of the Parish Dashboard. Margaret Walters has taken on the co-ordination of safeguarding training and recordkeeping in relation thereto. Sue Smith continues to make her considerable experience available. A further advertisement for a PSO has been published in the Magazine and interest has been expressed in an application by a very suitable candidate.
- The PCC has adopted the Diocesan Safeguarding Policy and Safeguarding is a regular agenda item at PCC meetings. Training is up to date; the PCC engages in Safer Recruitment processes; we are engaging with the Safeguarding Parish Dashboards.

## **Ecumenical Working**

- We continue to discern a new understanding of ecumenical working in our context.

## **Stewardship and Finance**

- The cost of living crisis is still overshadowing our finances, exacerbated by worldwide economic pressures. Energy is low, families have disproportionately less disposable income and costs have risen in line with or over the inflation rate. The economic climate for churches and charities in general is now very challenging. Yet, despite the general climate, we managed to fulfil our guided pledge in 2025, largely by means of careful management of resources. Unfortunately, finance is not likely to become any easier in the year ahead.
- We are monitoring expenditure as we move forward, are actively applying for (and securing) grants for mission, and the events staged by the Social and Fundraising group and the 100 Club continue to make a much-needed contribution to our finances.
- The subsidised digital giving device was increasingly utilised in 2025, and began to be a reasonably reliable method of making donations. It is especially useful for the occasional offices, where the demographic is a reliance on cards rather than cash.
- We are indebted to our treasurer, Michael, who deals with keeping us on an even financial keel with persistence, humour and grace.

## **Deanery Synod and Deanery Plan**

- A new incumbent for St Thomas and St James was licensed and inducted in July 2025. Since then, the Deanery has also welcomed a new incumbent for Stanley St Andrew's, and advertised unsuccessfully for a team rector for the west side of the deanery.
- Synod continues to meet to implement the next phases of the deanery plan, which envisages a sharing of expertise and a closer working together across the deanery as a whole.

## **The Life of The Church**

- All Saints and Saint Johns' remain vibrant communities with much to offer.
- Both churches have active MU branches.
- All Saints Church Wives group continues to meet and enjoy fellowship.
- Floral decorations contribute to our sacred spaces.
- The music of the bells calls us to prayer and is much appreciated by the village, and we have new ringers in the tower learning their craft.
- We have a generous heart for those in need, and still collect items for the Consett Foodbank; we support local charities including the Village Bus.

All of the activities and outreach we offer depend on the generosity and willingness of our volunteers. They- YOU- are the glue that holds all things together, and they -YOU- deserve huge thanks for their commitment and enthusiasm. The Kingdom of God cannot grow without faithful sowers of the seed. Now is the time to re-assess our individual and collective contributions against St Paul's advice to his fledgling church in Colossae and to step forward together in peace, clothed in mutual love, walking together with hope, and building true community.

This is the invitation;

Will you join us?

Easter blessings!

*Lesley*

# NEWS FROM THE CHURCHES

## Mothers Union Lanchester



Our next meeting will be on Tuesday 9th June in the Chapter House at 2:00pm. This will be our 'musical afternoon' and we will be entertained by 'Fool's Gold'. If you wish to join us, come as a visitor and share tea, biscuits and chatter afterwards, we look forward to seeing you there.

**Margaret Brown (Branch Leader)**

## Mothers Union St John's



St John's MU will meet on Monday, 1st June at 2.00pm. If you would like to join us, please get in touch.

No speaker this month as we will be making our arrangements for our Strawberry Supper with raffle and bingo; which this year is Monday, 6 July 7.00pm at Burnhope Community Centre. Hope you can join us.

**Pauline Hall (Branch Secretary)**

## Church Wives

June is our final month for speakers, and we have just one on the 11th of June. We welcome Kevin Roddam who will be talking about his numerous journeys to Ukraine delivering supplies that have been donated from charities. Our meeting on the 25th is our summer meal out when we will be eating at the New Board Inn in Langley Park.

Please do join us if you would like to hear the talk from Kevin Roddam. We meet for 7pm in the Chapter House,

**Deanna Leyland**

## King Jesus Hath A Garden

(This poem is a Christmas Carol with a Dutch tune, harmonised by Charles wood. Words are translated by GR Woodward).

King Jesus hath a garden full of diverse flowers,  
Where I go colouring poses gay, all times and hours.

The Lily, white in blossom there, is Chastity,  
The Violet with sweet perfume dash-Humility.

The bonny Damask Rose is known as Patience,  
The blithe and thrifty Marigold, Obedience.

The Crown Imperial bloometh too, in yonder place.  
Tis Charity, of stock divine, the flower of grace.

Yet made the brave, the bravest prize of all may claim,  
The star of Bethlehem-Jesus-blessed be his name!

Ah! Jesu my Lord, my heal and wheel, my bliss complete,  
Make thou my heart thy garden-plot fair, trim and neat.

That I may hear this musick clear, harp, dulcimer, lute,  
With cymbal, trump and tymbal, and the tender, soothing flute.

Submitted by **Audrey Newton**

## **From The Wardens**

As ever, the Wardens continue to support Lesley in her ministry between the two churches and beyond.

As we reported last month the Church sadly remains closed during the day as we are still one of several locations of the village being subjected to anti-social behavior. The police and council are aware. We are aware that restricted access to the church is not ideal but the safety and security of the building and of our church family is paramount. We constantly review the situation and look forward to having the church freely open at the soonest opportunity. Should anyone wish to access the church please contact any of the wardens who will be pleased to make arrangements.

May saw a wonderful concert at All Saints by the Mastersingers which was a great success, and we hope to arrange a return visit. Our next Concert will feature Gareth Davies Jones 'A Troubadours Journey on Saturday 20th June. Look out for information.

Whilst preparing for the concert we were disappointed to find that the good tablecloths used in the Chapter House for events had been put back in the cupboard without being washed, several badly stained and some with dried food still on them. Pauline Hall had to take more than 15 to wash, some twice, which is unacceptable. We must ask that anyone who uses the facility of the Chapter House, whether external organizations or our own people and uses the good tablecloths, must take responsibility for ensuring the cloths are put away clean and, if stained ensuring they are washed.

Much of work around St Johns in the month has revolved around preparations for the Burnhope Gala.

This year the Church buildings fall due to have our statutory Quinquennial Inspections; contact has been made to our Architect to arrange a date to carry these out.

Works carried out this month at All Saints include the Annual Roof Alarm inspection and servicing.

For The Wardens

## **Rob Matthews for the Churchwardens**

### **MUSIC FOR A SUMMER EVENING- ST ANDREW'S OPERATIC SOCIETY**

This is an evening of choral works from the classics, from musicals, shows, film and pop.

Stately choral works with hauntingly beautiful numbers and quiet reflective pieces:

there are jolly tunes and mighty choruses:

music to reflect with and songs to click the fingers to and get the feet tapping.

So come along and join us as we provide 'comedy tonight', while 'dreaming a little dream', and 'catching a falling star':

we will try to provide 'what the world needs now' by 'making music', and 'bringing sunshine' to the 'Rhythm of Life'.

There is a Shepherd and a Fair Lady ..... to name a few.

Let us entertain you with music from A to Z; from Abba, Karl Jenkins, Mozart, Lerner and Lowe, Sondheim and Sullivan.

A wide ranging mix of music – something for everyone



*Music for a  
Summer Evening*

Choral Music from past to  
present, from sacred to swing!

7.30pm July 3rd

All Saints Parish Church

Lanchester

Tickets £10 including  
refreshments

Available on the door, from  
Social Committee members  
or ring

01207 529166



## ASCENSION AND MARGARET OF CORTONA

*"After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight....".*

On Thursday we celebrated the feast of the Ascension – Christ’s ascending bodily into heaven. Next to the doctrine of the Trinity, the ascension is one of those aspects of Christian faith it’s hard to get our heads around. Today we know that heaven is not “up-there”, and the notion of Christ physically ascending into the sky strikes us as odd.

Back in the Middle Ages, this was less of a problem – the medieval theologians believed that heaven was a physical place quite literally “up-there”. However, this belief still caused headaches for theologians when it came to the ascension. The reason for this was the medieval view of the cosmos itself. For the medievals, the world stood at the centre of the universe and was enveloped by a series of giant transparent celestial spheres to which the stars and planets were attached. The outermost sphere – which the medieval consensus believed was several million miles above the earth, was where God and the angels dwelled – they called this the empyrean heaven. The problem was this: the spheres surrounding the world were solid, like glass. The ascension thus caused the theologians a problem. After all, if the spheres are solid, then, as Christ ascended, he would have banged his head off each of the spheres or had to smash through them!

The solution? Well, the medieval theologians came up with an ingenious idea- they claimed that each sphere had its own little trapdoor and that as Christ ascended, an angel opened it for him! Simple!

It gets even stranger! Roger Bacon – a professor at Oxford during the 1270 and 1280s – tried to work out the speed at which Christ ascended to heaven. He proposed, by calculating the distance between the earth and the empyrean heaven, that Christ took off from the Mount of Olives, at the speed of 63,456 miles per hour and it took him 31. 52 hrs to reach heaven!

Only an Oxford theologian could come up with something as strange as that!

Indeed, when we hear stuff like this, we can see that angels comments to the disciples in the reading from Acts which we have just heard - “Men of Galilee....why do you stand here looking into the sky? – is a subtle form of humour. The angels are having a joke at the expense of the disciples: If we try to understand ascension by looking at the skies, we miss the point!

Yesterday, was the feast day of one of my favourite saints: St. Margaret of Cortona. Margaret is not that well known today, but she deserves to be. She often is called the “second Magdalene” – and this I think gives you an idea of what she was like. She was no stranger to sin – indeed she no stranger to anyone! Margaret was born in 1247, in Cortona, in Tuscany Italy, not far from Assisi, where St. Francis of Assisi had died only 20 years earlier. To say that Margaret’s life was colourful is an understatement.

From what we are told, she was born into a very poor family, but her early childhood was a happy one. When Margaret entered her teens though her mother died, sending her life into tailspin. Making things worse, the woman who Margaret’s father took as his next wife, was very cruel and this set the teenager on the path to rebellion. At seventeen, she fell in love with a young knight – the heir to a great estate and fortune. Much to the scandal of her parents, and everyone in Cortona, Margaret ran away and shacked up the knight. He had wanted to marry her but could not because his parents were absolutely horrified at the match and threatened to disinherit him if he did.

Margaret irritated her would-be in-laws terribly: she splashed the cash on fine wines, expensive clothes, and parties. Worst of all though, she got herself pregnant – a big no-no given her and her beloved were not married! Despite the scandal, Margaret and the knight were happy, and they clearly loved their little boy.

When the child was about eight, tragedy struck – one day, when the young knight had gone out hunting, his hounds returned without him. Alarmed by this, Margaret went looking for him and she found him murdered in the forest – most likely, by his younger brother, who now became the heir to the great estate. All very Italian Mafioso!

Because Margaret and the knight were not married, his parents took great delight in turfing her out of her stately home, along with the little boy, who they refused to acknowledge as legitimate.

What happened next is very moving yet beautiful:

Homeless and without any money, Margaret returned to Cortona with her little boy, yet no one would house or help them, including her own family. Not surprisingly, Margaret, scarred by layers of trauma, became very poorly, mentally, and her behaviour started to cause people to talk. Thankfully, the Franciscans in Cortona saw her and her child living on the streets and found her shelter. Not long after this, Margaret underwent a profound religious conversion, feeling a call to imitate St Francis and live a life of love and humility.

While she never really recovered from her mental breakdown, she nonetheless fulfilled her vocation faithfully: she cared for lepers; she founded a hospice and tended the sick and the dying; she gave herself over to a life of prayer and simplicity. Indeed, so we are told, Margaret worked many miracles. Her reputation was completely transfigured – people looked beyond her colourful past and saw her instead as their friend and mentor. Indeed, Margaret's reputation for holiness and wisdom was such that several powerful bishops sought out Margaret in her later years for spiritual and political guidance.

What though does Margaret have to do with the ascension? Well, nothing, at least if we – like the men of Galilee and the Oxford professors – view the ascension at a purely physical level. If we take a step back though, and look at the ascension for what it signifies at a spiritual and theological level the connection comes into view:

When Christ ascended into heaven, he did not do so airbrushed of the wounds of the cross. No, he ascended with his wounds, albeit healed and made beautiful through love. Something similar is true of Margaret – even when hailed as a living saint, she carried with her all the wounds, traumas, and rejections which she had suffered, yet, through God's love, these were transfigured and out of them she brought forth acts of great love and compassion.

Pain and suffering were remade – lifted up if you will – into something very beautiful. If that is not what the ascension is about then I don't know what is. God loves us because of the wounds we carry, both mental and physical, not despite them.

Moreover, those wounds, transformed and transfigured by God's love, are the means whereby we point to heaven.

“Men of Galilee why do you stand here looking into the sky?”

# DATES FOR THE DIARY

## REGULAR GROUPS AND ACTIVITIES

### Weekly

Tuesday 11.00am Meditation 1 Deanery Cottages  
Tuesday 7.00pm Compline on Zoom, Margaret and Adrian

### Other monthly meetings in Lanchester

1st Monday 2.00pm Julian Prayers  
2nd Tuesday 2.00pm Mothers Union  
2nd and 4th Thursday 7.00pm Church Wives  
3rd Thursday 11.00am Eucharist Lynwood House

### Other monthly meetings in Burnhope

1st Monday 2.00 Mothers Union  
2nd Tuesday of the month Café Church 6.00pm at The Community Centre

## EXTRA SERVICES

### Deanery Confirmations with Frank White

St Ives Leadgate, 11th June at 7pm

### Bishop's Visitation

#### Swearing in our Church Wardens

at Durham Cathedral 14th June at 2.30pm

### Dates for the Diary - Social

Summer Coffee Morning Wednesday 17th June at 10.30 am

### Tickets from Margaret Brown

### Concert Gareth Davies-Jones

Saturday 20th June at 7pm

**Tickets from website or from members of Social Committee**

### Burnhope Garden Party.

### Advanced Notice for 27 June 10am to 4pm Yonside, Holmside Lane.

Plant sale, Tea, Coffee and Cakes.

Donations of any raffle prizes or plants for sale, would be gratefully received.

***All proceeds split equally between Willow Burn Hospice and St John's Church.***



## LANCHESTER E.P (Cont.) PRIMARY SCHOOL



This month we held another communion service and it was lovely to welcome parents again as well. The Worship Leaders were involved giving the wine to everyone and they do take their responsibilities so seriously. We had a large number of children receiving communion again but what was equally lovely was the increased number of children who wanted to receive a blessing. Most children took part in some way and there was such a special atmosphere again. Huge thanks must go to Revd Lesley for making this happen.

Revd Lesley is also starting some confirmation classes next week with some of our older children who wanted to take that next step in their spiritual lives. We are looking forward to the confirmation service at Leadgate and hope that some of you may be able to join us as well.

I would like to say what a wonderful difference foundation governors make to the life of our school. Margaret Matthews was a great asset and I know she would greatly approve of her replacement – Mrs Rachael Dowdeswell. Rachael has very quickly become an integral part of our school. She joins us every Thursday supporting in school and has been a great support and challenge to Mr McLoughlin, our SENDCo, in her role as link governor. Thank you so much Rachael for giving up so much of your time so willingly in order to help support and challenge our school.

The month of April was a very positive one for our whole school community when we found out that some of our parents had put the school forward for two different awards. We had a virtual visit from two judges for the Pearson Primary School of the Year – Making a Difference. We also received an email from TES that we are one of only eight primary schools nationally to be shortlisted as a finalist for their Primary School of the Year Award. As a result, we are attending the Awards Ceremony in The Grosvenor Hotel in Park Lane, London in the middle of June.

We are very touched that our parents think highly enough of us to nominate us for such prestigious awards. It was also a very positive afternoon with the judges for the Pearson award. We do not expect to progress any further with the awards – but it is lovely to have been nominated as finalists!

*Jane Davis* (Head Teacher)

Lanchester EP Primary School.

Follow us on X (formerly known as Twitter): @LanchesterEP

**Contributions to the Church Magazine are always welcome.  
The copy deadline for the July/August 2026 issue is  
Thursday 11th June**

Please check 'A Church Near You' website for up to date information on events and special services.  
When asked for location use Lanchester or Burnhope.

## St John's Church - Thanksgiving and Celebration

The year 1926 stands as a pivotal moment in British history, particularly for the mining communities of County Durham. The Miners' Gala held at Burnhope that year became a symbol of resilience, unity, and hope during a period marked by hardship and industrial struggle. Over the weekend of 15, 16, 17 May the centenary of this remarkable event was commemorated, providing an opportunity to reflect upon its historical significance and enduring legacy.

The Miners' Gala at Burnhope was held against the backdrop of the General Strike, a nationwide industrial action that lasted nine days in May 1926. Miners were at the forefront of this movement, protesting wage reductions and deteriorating working conditions. County Durham, renowned for its coalfields, saw its communities rally together in solidarity. A J Cook, Miners Federation Secretary, spoke for 90 minutes at the 1926 Gala and is remembered for the phrase 'Not a penny off the pay, not a second on the day'. The Burnhope Gala, typically a festive celebration, became an act of defiance and hope amidst adversity.



Instead of its traditional venue in Durham, Burnhope hosted the Miners' Gala as the city authorities had banned public gatherings due to the strike. Despite the restrictions, thousands of miners and their families marched to Burnhope, carrying union banners, brass bands, and messages of unity. The event was not only a demonstration of collective strength but also a celebration of community spirit, with speeches, music, and camaraderie echoing across the village. It was noted that an estimated 40,000 people attended in 1926.

The Centenary Celebrations in 2026 did not capture those numbers, but none the less I would imagine the same incredible atmosphere, memories being made now as then.

St John's as most of you know was built on the contributions from the miner's wages. The little church on the hill hosted 2 services in commemoration of the 1926 miner's gala. On Friday morning, we welcomed the Dean of Durham, the Very Reverend Dr Philip Plyming, Luke Akehurst MP, Cllr Alison Grey. We also welcomed the children from Burnhope School who had paraded from the school to St John's supported by their community and school banner. The Dean in his sermon spoke about remembering, how we remember through our own experiences and remembering through learning and being part of something special. He went on to say no one in Church today was at the 1926 Burnhope Gala, but by being part of the celebrations in 2026 we will remember the hardships endured by miners, the sacrifices and achievements of those who stood together in challenging times. The Dean also brought with him and we were privileged to see the miners' lamp from the Cathedral. Normally this traditional miners' safety lamp hangs above the Book of Remembrance in Durham Cathedral listing many miners of County Durham who have lost their lives in mining accidents. The school children were asked what they liked about Burnhope, the consensus of opinion from the children was Helen's Top Shop! The Dean then blessed the banners. The Dean was led out by the school children carrying small banners depicting every decade from 1920 to present day.

On the Sunday afternoon St John's hosted a service of Thanksgiving and Celebration to mark the Centenary of Burnhope hosting the Durham Miners Gala. We welcomed the Acting Bishop of Durham, The Right Reverend Frank White, and the dignitaries who attended at the Friday service.



On the Sunday afternoon St John's hosted a service of Thanksgiving and Celebration to mark the Centenary of Burnhope hosting the Durham Miners Gala. We welcomed the Acting Bishop of Durham, The Right Reverend Frank White, and the dignitaries who attended at the Friday service. Thanks to the collective work of the Flower Club in Burnhope the floral arrangements on the windowsills and the pedestals, the loan of the many miners' lamps, made a lovely and fitting display. Doreen Park read from the Prophecy of Isaiah and Luke Akehurst MP read a passage from St. Matthew's Gospel. A poignant and reflective part of the Centenary Service was Psalm 130 set to the tune 'Gresford', The Miners' Hymn and the music; Be Thou My Vision played on both violin and piano. A lovely and fitting end to what had been a successful weekend.

The centenary of the Burnhope Miners' Gala on Saturday was marked with a series of events, including processions, musical performances, and historical exhibitions, stalls and funfairs. Descendants of the original marchers, residents, and labour historians gathered to pay tribute to those who endured the hardships of 1926. The commemorative activities highlighted the importance of preserving the stories and values of the mining community for future generations.

The 1926 Miners' Gala at Burnhope remains a touchstone for British labour history. It symbolises the courage and determination of working-class communities in the face of adversity. The centenary celebrations served as a reminder of the importance of solidarity, the power of collective action, and the need to safeguard workers' rights. Today, Burnhope stands not only as a village with a proud mining past but as a beacon for those who seek social justice and communal unity.

### Pauline Hall, Churchwarden



## I REMEMBER FILMING AT DURHAM.

Following my first experience of film companies at the Cathedral, in 1997 the film Elizabeth was made, key interior scenes were shot at Durham Cathedral and exterior scenes at Raby Castle. The Nave of the Cathedral represented the Whitehall Palace interior, while Raby Castle provided the backdrop for the spectacular river pageant.



The Nave featured extensively as the royal palace where Elizabeth holds court and walks with her council. The Chapter House was transformed into a Palace state room for intimate council scenes. The film starred Cate Blanchett as Elizabeth, Geoffrey Rush as Walsingham and Joseph Feinnes as Robert Dudley. Christopher Eccleston returned to Durham playing Thomas Howard 3rd Duke of Norfolk. (He played Jude the last time). All were present at Durham filming.

Durham Cathedral was chosen for its distinct Romanesque architecture, providing the grand cold and imposing atmosphere of the Tudor court despite actual Tudor palaces being made of wood and being less stark.

As the film was being shot in the Cathedral Nave from ground level and several shots from the upper levels, all of the pews had to be taken out of the Nave and discreetly relocated around the Cathedral. This left a completely empty Nave, which was then spectacularly lit for the shots; quite eerie, but beautiful, quite different without the modern pews.

As you may imagine the filming attracted great interest from our visitors. Crowd control was imperative and quite complex as we still had to ensure that the public could still circumnavigate the building without being too put out. The film company were allowed to work as long as they worked around the daily worship routine of the Cathedral; Morning Prayer, Evensong and other occasional offices had to be without compromise accommodated. Sometimes this didn't go down too well with the producer, but the rules were ours. All in all, it was an enjoyable experience for me; interesting and definitely not as stressful as my previous experience and I still enjoy watching that film.

**Rob Matthews**

## Parish Register - Lanchester & St John's

### Baptisms;

Jonas Gates	26/04/2026
Hugh Morrison-Coatsworth	17/05/2026
Myles Wanley	24/05/2026
Mia Olivia Clayton	31/05/2026

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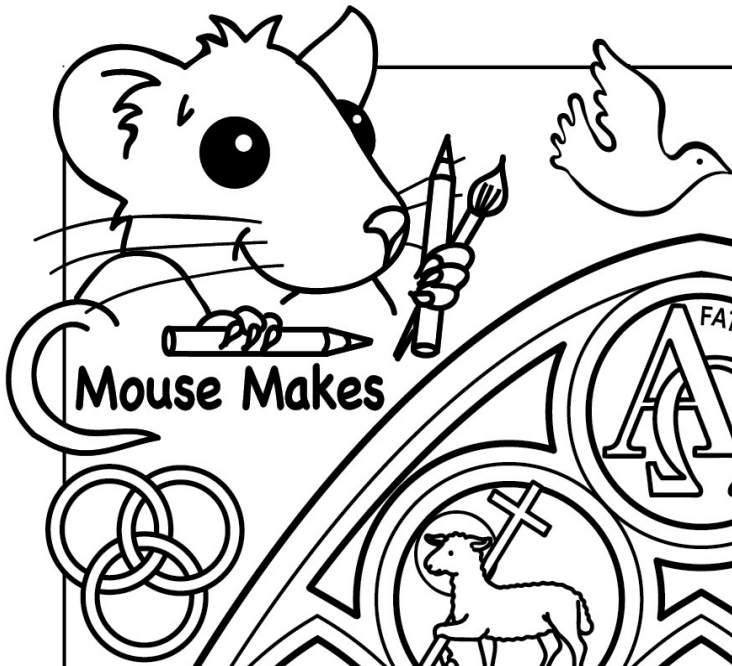
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"May the grace of the Lord  
**JESUS CHRIST** and the  
 love of **GOD** and the  
 fellowship of the  
**HOLY SPIRIT** be  
 with you all."

2 Corinthians  
 13:14

V	O	V
H I W	I S D	U D E
V E N L R	J Y I A M	T R U T H
S L A E P L G	A C G O D J M	T H A H S R I
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E M E W O R D	M E L O R D J	U L F L I F E
P B R E A D W	I A B B A G E	P O W Y N D R
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E E M C G J Y	H O Y R F E T	D B E P B V C
R M E H O E K	T R A H A T Y	V W T I R E O
D M I R S S T	Y G H O I E F	O I E R E F M
S A V I O U R	V S W L A R A	C T R I A I F
P N E S N S U	O H E Y E N T	A N N T T R O
O U N T L O T	J E H O V A H	T E A C H E R
M E S S I A H	I K I N G L E	E S L G I F T
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