

**Stranton and Burbank Community Church**

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# **SIGNPOST**



**Rooted in God's love  
Growing together with Jesus  
Branching out in the  
Power of the Holy Spirit**

**40p**

**June 2017**

# ALL SAINTS CHURCH, STRANTON CHURCH SERVICES

## Sunday

**8.30am** Holy Communion (Book of Common Prayer)

**10.30am** Service (with children's groups for 3-14s)

**1st** Sunday of the month will be Holy Communion

**2nd** Sunday of the month will be Morning Worship

**3rd** Sunday of the month will be Holy Communion

**4th** Sunday of the month will be Lighthouse Service

**11.00am.** Morning Worship at Burbank Community Church,  
at Ward Jackson School.

**7.30pm** Youth Fellowship (14 years +)

On the Third Sunday of each month, **Messy Church** takes place at St Matthew's Community Centre at 4.00pm. This is a time for parents/ carers and children to have fun together, doing crafts and various activities, based on a bible theme.

Occasionally, (2 or 3 times a year) the congregations at Stranton and Burbank all come together for the 10.30am service, and this is followed by a bring and share meal.

## Wednesday Morning

**10.00am** Holy Communion (Book of Common Prayer)  
at St Matthew's Community Centre.

**Please note** that the next **Messy Church** will be on **18th June** and will continue to take place on the **Third Sunday of each Month**

# “Where are we now?”

Dear Friends

A question I am learning to ask more often is, ‘Where are we now?’ I find this question helpful because it enables me and us as church to be realistic about what is happening and what we are doing. We can then think about where God is leading us. Before you read on perhaps it’s worth answering the question for yourself....

Here are three of my answers:

First we are at a time of year when we affirm that God is good. We have just celebrated Easter, a time when Christians of all denominations and all across the world celebrate that God raised Jesus from the dead. The resurrection remains a cornerstone of our faith. In the resurrection we can experience hope and new life. Alleluia! But equally we are looking forward to Pentecost and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon all people. I give thanks and rejoice that God continues to be with us through his Holy Spirit, enabling us to grow more like Jesus and giving us His gifts. This year’s Pentecost service will be particularly special as we welcome Bishop Paul to the open Air service at Burbank at 11am on 4<sup>th</sup> June.

Second we are in a time of transition. The most visible transition is the situation with Nick and Bekah. Nick has now started his new job and they as a family will be leaving in the summer. However there are other transitions. A number of our older folk are no longer able to get to worship on a Sunday. Others who have played key roles are moving to pastures new. Some are joining our fellowship. Clive is yet to hear about whether he will be ordained. In the coming months there will be 3 vacancies in our deanery and we are in a period of review regarding deployment of stipendiary ministry. For the time being alongside our duties at Stranton, Andrew Craig and I will be supporting these parishes where we can.

Third God calls us to journey together. I continue to give thanks for the variety of folk who are part of our fellowship. Each person is unique, loved by God and with their particular experience, gifts and abilities. As the writer to the Hebrews puts it, ‘Let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another.’ (Hebrews 10:24,25). Let’s continue to seek God’s future for His church in this place.

Every blessing.

**Norman**

# MOTHER`S UNION

After a long spell without rain we are now feeling the benefit of refreshing showers. Gardens which needed us to keep them watered are now flourishing without our aid. The snag is that weeds have become rampant and are in danger of suffocating the tender new shoots and growth of favourite plants and flowers. Does this sound familiar? A metaphor of our Christian life? In really busy times what goes first? Our prayers become rushed, pushed to the back of the queue.

Prayer is an important part of being a Mother's Union member and we need to be informed. One way is to take 'Families First'. An excellent magazine published by MU. Subscriptions are due soon and MU members pay only £10.50 for one year. Let Ann Courtenay know if you would like to take this up. Last month we had a different meeting when Peter Sowerby came to talk to us about financial matters, planning for later in our lives now to make things easier then. Wills written years ago could cause difficulties in the future as our circumstances change, being widowed, remarriage, going into care. Peter also spoke about health problems and arranging funeral plans – toy boys were even mentioned! Many interesting questions were asked – not about the toy-boys – but about 'what ifs'. A different, but thought provoking meeting. Thanks for his patience and good humour.

Looking ahead, Jill Barrett is joining us on June 12<sup>th</sup> to tell us about The Kilimatinde Trust (which is 20 years old) and of her forthcoming visit there.

On July 10<sup>th</sup> it's 'Strawberry Tea' time once again. The unchanged price is £2 – so bring your friends and family.

Due to delays in Durham Cathedral being able to give a date for the Festival Service – June 1<sup>st</sup> at 2.00pm – we are unable to gather enough people to fill a minibus. It's unfortunate that it is half-term but I hope some of you will be able to go and enjoy the service.

Please pray for St Luke's Church MU and other town churches facing a time without their own clergy, also for the clergy who will be helping out during these vacancies.

With love – God Bless  
**Ann Courtenay**

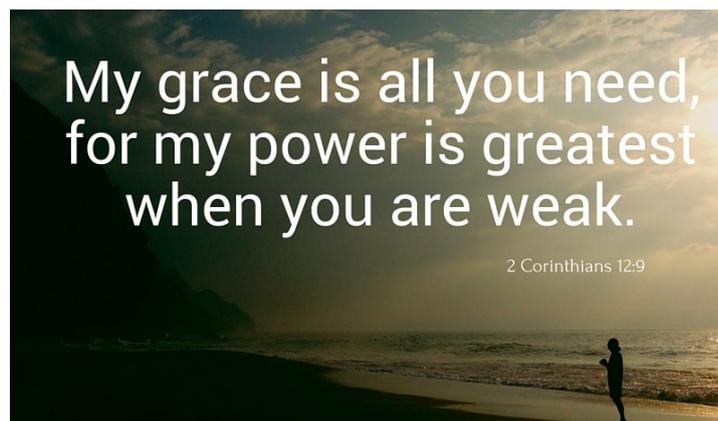
# From the Home Front

Satan is not happy if he sees that the ways of God are being victorious in the world. But he is subtle. He knows our weak spots and he just pokes them until we start to buckle. We often don't see it happening – but many pin pricks do terrible damage. Then we think we are defeated, abandoned by God, confidence gone, worthless....We forget to turn to God, give up our burdens, to speak out our fears, to admit our troubles, to acknowledge our doubts, to seek out those who will give succour, support and draw alongside to do battle with us.

Our household has been under relentless minor assaults over the past few months – family, friends, work, and finances. I knew I had reached breaking point when I found myself unable to stop crying – I needed help... Firstly as I was driving I called out to God telling Him how I felt and why. When I was awake in the dark hours of the night I asked for His help and listed all those things which I felt were drowning me. A trip to Burbank church and the Bible reading jumped off the screen, Clive's words bore into our hearts. The prayers I felt compelled to pray released a damn and as tears fell so I felt God's presence. Individual prayer gave insight into what I was feeling and the support that was around me. A sign was asked for – a sign has now been given. God is with us – He always was - I had just lost sight of Him!

Situations are not resolved but by God's grace the coping mechanisms and the trust in His divine power are growing again. We will get through all these difficulties – but not alone. I know we can't survive through our own strength only with the all-enveloping love of our Father. He's always there for everyone of us. Don't let Satan bamboozle you into thinking He's turned away and no one else cares about you - those are just lies! God will have the victory and Satan will be defeated.....

**J.A.R.**



# A fond farewell to the Moore Family



The parish came together on Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> May in a joint Communion Service to say a huge thank you to Nick and Bekah, Simeon and Francis for all they have brought to Stranton over the last three years. Their quiet gentle spirituality has touched so many. We have laughed with them and cried with them - as they became members of our family here in Stranton and found a

place in our hearts. Their roles have been very different but from Staff meetings to Messy Church, Sermons to Bonfire Parties they have been an amazing presence in our midst.

Sim and Frans have been a breath of fresh air with their openness and enthusiasm. Celebration chocolates will not be the same without the help of those bouncy boys! The congregation was brought together in prayer and love during Bekah's pregnancy and the short life and death of Phoneix. His memory and legacy will be treasured in the hearts of many.



We will miss them all greatly. Everyone pray for this new chapter in their lives for Nick's new role at Cranmer Hall, for Bekah and their new home and for good schools for Simeon and Francis. May they be blessed and continue to bless others as they follow God's path...

Presents for everyone were a great excitement. Followed by a delicious faith lunch and plenty of fellowship.

**J.A.R.**

# Welcome and Licensing of The Reverend Nicholas Moore as MA Director of Studies



Monday 8th May saw a large group of Stranton Parishioners descend on St Oswald's Church Durham where we were made to feel very welcome, to see Nick licensed by Bishop Libby Lane of Stockport and Bishop Paul of Durham. It was an august gathering with a number of other Bishops present, too many clergy to count and members of Cranmer Hall staff and students – present and past as well as supporting congregations, family and friends!

The Service was intimate and friendly and very spirit filled as we sang worship and praise hymns and songs, accompanied by a rousing music group and excellent organ playing.

Bishop Paul's wife had made those being licensed - Nick, Reverend Dr Philip Plyming as Warden of Cranmer Hall and Reverend Dr Liz Kent as Director of the Wesley Study Centre - beautiful stained glass crucifixes. The legalities were interspersed with laughter and humour, then girded in prayer.

Following the service refreshments were served in Leech Hall, St John's College. This was an excellent opportunity to catch up with friends and acquaintances including Sam, Pete and Kirsten our recent Ordinands in training, Mark, Bishop of Berwick, Jim Francis who ran the Living Theology Today Course for many years and many clergy known to members of Stranton.

Blessings, love and prayers as Nick settles into his new post.



**J.A.R.**

# Visit from St John's School Tanzania by Festo and Grace



Grace asked us to pray for the harvest and possible famine in Tanzania. We are asked that the harvest is sufficient and that food prices are affordable for all.

Festo asked us to pray about the need for finances to build a dormitory for the students who will now be able to study for A-Levels at St John's School.

We were delighted to hear that Festo and Grace are now officially CMS link partners.

It was good to learn more about St John's at the Prayer and Praise meeting on 9<sup>th</sup> May – bringing us upto date with what has been happening at St John's School and their prayers and plans for the future.



# Prayers for Clive

Norman prayed in church for Clive as he prepares to go forward to the National Selection Panel for Ordination on May 15th-17<sup>th</sup> in Cambridge.



Burbank Church and the community of Stranton Parish, plus many friends and family have been surrounding Clive in prayer since he was informed that he would be going to Panel.

We pray that God is with him throughout the three days leading and guiding and that he knows God's peace in his heart as he awaits the decision of Panel.

**J.A.R.**

## Trash or Treasure Stall.

Trish and the Social team are running a stall at the Boys' Brigade Fair 10<sup>th</sup> June. Trish needs donations of bottles of any kind (alcohol, pop, water, bubble bath, bubbles and sauces), bars of soap, washing up liquid, toys for children to win, chocolate ,anything you can think of as long as they are new. We also need things you wouldn't like to win, (trash) and any old gift bags of any size. In aid of the Harvest Ceilidh on 7<sup>th</sup> October. If you can help, contact Trish on 01429 894006.





# **The First Mark of Generosity**

by **frontlinefaithful**

*“There’s a real spirit of generosity out there. “*

## **Bishop Mark on Churches and North East Foodbanks**

***I’m trying to understand what being generous actually means, and to identify the “marks of a generous church”? Are there certain things that generous people and generous churches hold dear? What’s the approach? So I’m interviewing people called Mark about generosity and church.***

*My first Mark of Generosity is called Mark Bryant. He’s the Bishop of Jarrow. I think he’s been looking forward to this interview since I first suggested it a mere 10 weeks ago. Yes, that’s how long it takes to secure a meeting with the Bishop of Jarrow. He’s a very busy man. But what does a busy bishop do and think and how did he get there in the first place? Before delving into generosity, I want to get to know Mark the person, priest and bishop.*

**Bishop, how did you end up as a priest?** I grew up in a vicarage, my Dad was a vicar and he was doing pioneer ministry and church planting in the very early 1960s on a post-war housing estate. My Dad clearly enjoyed being a vicar. It gave him fulfilment. He clearly made a difference to people’s lives and I grew up thinking *“Hey, I think I’d quite like to do that.”* I’ve been ordained for 41 years and I can honestly say I’ve never regretted it.

**And have you always wanted to wear purple and funny hats?** No. No absolutely not. When I signed up what I really wanted to do was to be a parish priest, working in the community and the whole bishop thing, in a way, comes as a bit of a surprise. Suddenly you discover you’re going to be one.

**Was it quite daunting?** I remember that +Tom Wright phoned me up and he said, *“I want you to come and work with me and be Bishop of Jarrow.”* I clearly remember that my final words were *“I think I need to go away and get my head around this!”*

It’s very strange because when you’re training to be a vicar, you train for three years. You go through a big selection process with the diocese. But when you become a bishop, somebody rings you up, and in three or four months you’re a bishop. So it’s quite strange.

**Bishop, I’ve never seen you outside of a work context. What do you wear at home? Are you a onesie and slippers man or do you always wear your collar, just in case?** I absolutely do not always wear my dog collar. It depends what I’m doing. If I’m doing nothing I just wear a hoodie and jeans.

**I can't imagine that bishop!** I'm often in my hoodie. I was recently given a new one from the Children's Council. I have a very old threadbare hoodie that I've had forever and it's much loved and makes me feel very warm and secure. I always wear it when I'm on retreat.

**What's the best thing about being a bishop?** Every day is different and you get to meet the most extraordinary people. Both people who have big responsibilities, and also people for whom life is just rather complicated. You never know who you're going to meet each day. I could be talking on the same day to the Lord Lieutenant- the Queen's representative in the area- then talking to somebody who's in recovery from drink and drugs.

**You're about to be marooned on a desert island and you can pack 3 books, what are they? (The Bible is a given)** Would I need anything else? I might take the diaries of an American monk called Thomas Merton who's been quite a big influence on me. It would be good to get to know more about him.

**You can take three characters from the Bible. Who would you take with you and why?** Does that include Jesus? **Yes.** Yes, ok it'd be quite good to take Jesus! I'd like to take Mary. The more I think about Mary the more intrigued I am. What she goes through, first of all a) you're going to have a baby and it isn't through the man you're going to marry. Then b) like all mums, having to let go of him, and let him do his stuff, which she might not always be quite sure is very wise. Then c) just that complete desolating moment at the end when she meets him on the journey to Calvary... No mother ought to have to go through that. And yet we know many, many mothers in all sorts of different countries and contexts go through something very similar.

*There's a pause and the weight of what Bishop Mark has just said seems to hang in the room. Being a priest, I suppose he has had to comfort many parents who have lost their children. After a time his face lights up. He's thought of a third.*

Zacchaeus. Because I really want to know what the conversation was when Jesus went to have tea with him. It was clearly an extraordinary conversation for it to change Zacchaeus' life, but the Bible doesn't tell us what happened. I want to ask *"What did you say to him? What happened?"*

**Generosity then Bishop. When you were growing up, what was your family's approach to charitable giving?** I know they took it seriously but they didn't talk about it. My father was one of the first people to talk from the pulpit about Christian stewardship as we understand it today. Meaning, what

you put on the plate needs to be generous and realistic. Not just sort of a nominal coin. He was ahead of his time. He took charitable giving very seriously and I suspect most of what they gave went to the church.

**Where do you see generosity in our churches?** We've had foodbanks right across the North East now for about 4 or 5 years and I understand last Christmas in Gateshead, we had the most generous collections ever, and I think this is extraordinary. Because people will tell you they get compassion fatigue, but there is no evidence of this here. This is just extraordinary generosity right across the community. In fact Gateshead had to call in extra volunteers just to sort out all the stuff that came into the warehouse over Christmas. There's a real spirit of generosity out there.

**Have any other stories really touched you?** One woman I knew was a lone parent with 3 kids and was on benefits. She talked to me about becoming a Christian and about giving. The way she did it might not have been entirely conventional, but she went to the post office, as you did in those days to get your benefits, and she took a tenth of her benefits income, and she put it to the back of her purse and she said to God *"If that's still there on Sunday, you get it."* And every Sunday it was still there and God got it. And I thought, you know, here's a woman for whom life's really, really complicated and with really limited money and she believes her faith requires her to do that. And God honoured and blessed that.

**Why do you think clergy dislike preaching about giving generously?** I think in our culture we're embarrassed of talking about money. I think we know we may be making some people in the congregation feel uncomfortable. And most vicars don't like making people feel uncomfortable because, like most humans, we want to be loved. We know people may not always receive it very positively. Whatever you say can be interpreted very differently.

I think what we have to do when we talk about money is to give people a vision, and to say "we want you to support **this**".

In my last job in Coventry there were two Archdeaconries; one which was inner city and tough, and the other that was more affluent. The richer one was heavily subsidising the one in the north. From time to time I'd go and tell stories of the challenging things happening in some of the other communities. Once people heard these stories they understood the need better and they gave more.

In our diocese, we have to talk about the way in which we enable there to be clergy in all communities. We are the only profession who are living and working 24 hours a day in the most challenging areas in our country. And I

think that's something we should be really, really proud of, and should want to support. We need to give a vision and tell stories and share what's really exciting and ask *"Don't you want to be part of this?"*

**Do you have an example of how they work in communities?** Some months back I was in a place and I had a man in tears after a confirmation telling me how the confirmation classes had completely changed and transformed his life. And that happened because we had a really good parish priest in that community, which couldn't begin to imagine paying for a vicar's stipend. People for whom life is really difficult are being supported and that can only happen when other people are generous with what they give. This was in East Durham.

**What do you find easiest to give? Your time, your skills or your money?** I find that question really difficult. Looking back there are times in my life when I've found it difficult to give up my money. I've always been committed to giving generously but I know that my money, if I'm not careful, provides me with a security, and I feel I need to hold on to that security. Talents are easy to give generously of because you enjoy what you're doing. Time is pressured, I'd love to be able to give more of it. I think I'm getting better at it.

A generosity of time if you're a priest may be about giving somebody a lot of your time because they need it. Being present, being with them, not worrying about all the other pressures. Recently in the papers they said in our country half a million people over the age of 60 spend each day alone with absolutely no contact with anyone. And they say half a million more don't see or speak to anyone for five days in a row each week. There's clearly a real call to be generous with our time for those who need it most. For clergy that may be about giving time to people who need it.

**What would you do if you won the lottery?** I really hope I don't because it would be a complete and utter nightmare. I can think of one or two charities I'd be very pleased to write cheques out to. I'm really interested in the area of youth homelessness. I'm quite involved with Depaul UK youth homeless charity. *(Bishop Mark is wearing the charity's pin on his jacket)* They do incredible work. They have incredible staff. If I won the lottery they could expect a decent cheque from me. I know and trust them and I know they'd make the best use of it.

**What's your favourite Bible passage relating to generosity?** Probably the story of the prodigal son. I think it's really the story of the generous father. I think that it is just lovely. The dad has been so hurt and so messed around and it's not just that he welcomes the lad back but he is outrageous in his

generosity. Giving him the clothes, the jewels, the party. The significant thing about it is that it symbolises a real welcome. An extraordinary story of generosity.

**OK finally let's do a Quick Fire round. Just go with your gut instinct.**

1. **Hands in the air or Book of Common Prayer?** *Book of Common Prayer*
2. **Who suits a mitre best, you or +Paul?** *Bishop Paul*
3. **Beer or wine?** *Wine*
4. **Flowers or chocolate?** *Flowers*
5. **Spring or Autumn?** *Autumn*
6. **Radio 4 or Radio 2?** *Radio 4*
7. **Strictly Come Dancing or Bake Off?** *Bake Off*
8. **4 days in Ikea or 4 hours with Donald Trump?** *4 Days in Ikea*
9. **Batman or Spiderman?** *Batman*
10. **Twitter or Facebook?** *Twitter*
11. **Camping or glamping?** *Camping*
12. **The Magpies or the Black Cats?** *Pass*

*It's time for me to leave and head back to Durham. Bishop Mark's perspective has given me much food for thought and I'm grateful for his openness and candid answers (apart from the football question). He's clearly a person who gives generosity a lot of thought. As I'm gathering my bits and bobs and he's helping me on with my coat, I have one final question:*

**Bishop, how do we become more generous human beings?** For me this is not simply about how much money I put on the plate or how much time I give. It's about seeing the world with the eyes of God. Because God, like the father in The Prodigal Son, always looks at the world with generous eye. For me it's a spiritual challenge. How do I become more of the sort of human being God wants me to be? That's my Christian perspective. When Jesus talks about us being born again, being a new creature, a new creation it's how I become the sort of person for whom generosity is part of my DNA.

***And what better way to end the interview***

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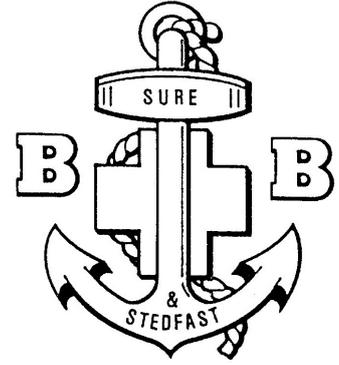
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# Boys Brigade News



**Summer Activities** – hopefully as you read this Summer will have started to kick in!

The Anchor Boys are visiting Rossmere Centre, Stranton Church, The Wacky Warehouse and Seaton Beach.

The Juniors have trips planned to Crimdon, Seaton, The Blue Lagoon, Stranton Church and [tea@hart](mailto:tea@hart).

The Company lads have activities including visits to Castle Eden, BBQ, Seaton tennis courts, plus all the build up to camp at Birch Scout Centre Yorkshire!

## Fund Raising

We are holding our Summer Fayre at St Matthew's Community Centre on **Saturday June 10<sup>th</sup> from 09.30 – 12noon**

– where there will be cakes, bric a brac, garden things, books, toy and tombola stalls – and where you will find bargains galore!!

If you would like to find out more about our activities - look us up on facebook – just put:

**4<sup>th</sup> Hartlepool Boys Brigade** and you will find our page.

**George Bainbridge**

## St Matthew's Community Centre Stranton's Centre Your Centre

The North Side project has now reached the stage where we are collecting quotes from various building companies. Once this process is complete we can then start to apply for grants – here's hoping for a successful appeal!!!

# Ward Jackson CE Primary

## Golden Time Gardening Club



This half term, one of the Golden Time activities is gardening club. We had a look around our outside areas, and decided that we needed to add a splash of colour, so helped the Early Years plant sunflowers. We also thought our Quad area might be a good place to grow vegetables, so we've planted potatoes, tomatoes, onions and lettuces. We'll be planting more in the weeks to come, and hopefully, we'll be able to share our produce with the whole school before the summer holidays.

### Banana Splits for all!

On Wednesday, our Y2 children followed complex instructions to make banana splits and applied some excellent grammar knowledge in the process. Next week they will be writing their own instructions and we are really looking forward to reading them as they have shared lots of fantastic ideas already.



Please pray for the Ward Jackson School Community in the coming months. Jan Brough the Head is retiring after many years of devoted service to the children and families of the Burbank area. A new Headteacher David Ackers starts in post in September, he is presently Deputy Head. There will also be a number of new teachers appointed. The school is closely linked to Stranton Church with Governors and staff from our congregation and we need to cover the school and people who work in the school with our prayers, as change is something many children, and adults, find difficult. Since the school's Ofsted inspection last September everyone involved with the school feels under tremendous pressure and are having to meet increasing targets and demands on their time and energy in order to improve progress and meet exacting government requirements. They need covering and surrounding with our prayers.

# Mary Baines' Recipes

**Brillo Pork** (Mary found this recipe on a packet of Brillo scouring pads!)

1 tablesp olive oil

15g butter

675g pork pieces

2 medium onion chopped

2 eating apples chopped

1 teasp dried sage

1 tablesp plain flour

¼ pint Crème Fraiche

1 teasp gravy salt

¾ pint chicken stock

optional – glug of Calvados or

replace ¼ pint stock with cider.

Melt the oil & butter together in pan & cook pork until brown, stirring well to stop sticking.

Turn down heat & add onion and one of the apples. Continue heating & stirring until cooked.

Sprinkle the flour & gravy salt over the mixture and stir it in.

Add the stock, a little at a time. Stir after each addition until it thickens, before adding more.

Add sage & season to taste.

Pour into a casserole dish with cover & cook at gas 3 or 175C for 1 ½ hours.

Add second apple & cook for further ½ hour.

Just before serving, swirl the crème fraiche through the mixture and if desired add Calvados.

## Baked Bananas

4 large bananas

25g butter

juice of half lemon

25g dark brown sugar

optional – chopped Mars Bars or rum



Grease ovenproof dish

Peel bananas & slice lengthwise, then crosswise (4 quarters)

Lay banana slices in the greased dish & sprinkle with lemon juice

Dot the bananas with butter

Optional – sprinkle with chopped Mars Bar or drizzle with rum

Place in oven at 190C gas 5 for 20 minutes (or until chocolate melted)

Serve with vanilla ice cream or crème fraiche.

## ***20 things Youth for Christ Support Worker does:***

***Angela Hall is the worker attached to the Youth for Christ Teams here in Teesside. The work she organises, supervises and oversees for the American exchange students is varied !***

1. Coaching girls football at Dyke House School
2. Strength and conditioning coaching at Dyke house School
3. Girl's Bible Study at Oxford Road Baptist Church
4. Two Oxford Road Baptist Church Youth Groups
5. Coaching Girls football in Middlesbrough
6. Lindsey also plays for Middlesbrough Ladies
7. Classroom support at Ward Jackson CE Primary
8. Lunchtime club at St Hild's CE Comprehensive
9. Helping out at Matts Mates
10. Be Free weekly
11. YF on Sundays & on trips
12. Golden hour at Ward Jackson CE Primary - coaching football
13. Sunday Club in Stranton
14. Mentoring Young People
15. Detached Youth worker at local park
16. Meeting with other Youth for Christ workers in Hartlepool
17. Meeting and worshipping with Teesside YfC workers and leaders.
18. Running special courses when needed
19. Worshipping with local churches
20. Generally mucking in and helping in the churches where they are based and getting to know the British Culture and way of life...



# The Gospel in a Nutshell

**Precis (definition):** a concise summary of the essential facts or statements of a book, article, or other text; an abstract.

**Question:** If asked how would you summarise the message of the Bible in fewer than two hundred words?

**Answer:** You don't need to. The Bible is quite able to summarise itself in less than a dozen verses.

**Gen 1:27** So God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.

**Isaiah 59:2** But your iniquities have separated you from God; your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He will not hear.

**Rom 3:22** There is no difference, for all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.

**Heb 9:27** Man is destined to die once, and after that face judgement.

**Rom 14:12** So then, each of us will give an account of himself to God.

**Rom 5:8** But God demonstrates His own love for us in this: while we were sinners, Christ died for us.

**1 Pet 3:18** For Christ died for sins once and for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God.

**John 3: 16-17** For God loved the world so much that He gave His one and only Son, that whosoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through Him.

**Chris Holloway in Lossiemouth Baptist Church magazine.**

# **STRANTON TODDLER GROUP**

The Toddler group continues to thrive in St Matthew's Hall. I run the group on Tuesdays and Clare and Lynn run it on Fridays, both from 9-11 am. Clare and Lynn have been involved for many, many years and I am grateful to them for their ideas and support. We draw in many families from the local community. We had 70 children and their accompanying adults at the Christmas party. The children enjoy small toys, puzzles and crafts in the small hall and we have a baby area for mums with tiny ones. The children love the space in the large hall where they have fun on bikes, scooters, slides and see-saws etc. We received a council grant during the last year and we were able to buy some new larger toys. The group is a good place for those caring for small children to meet one another, play with their children and encourage them to share and to learn new skills. There is also plenty of opportunity for Christian adults to share God's love and care.

I am very grateful to those who come to help on a Tuesday, both in the setting up and the preparing and serving of snacks.

**Julie Shave**

## **MESSY CHURCH**

Messy Church continues to meet monthly on the third Sunday from 4-5.30 pm in St Matthew's Hall. Baptism families are always invited and others are drawn in through other contacts: eg Toddler Group.

A small group of us meet together each month to plan our activities. We begin our sessions with table top games and colouring, and once everyone has arrived, we have a bible story, song and prayer. Then the children choose from the 6 crafts/games linked with the theme, enjoying as many as they can fit into the 30-40 minutes available.

After this we enjoy tea together, when there is more time to chat with each other. It's great to see whole families learning, worshipping, playing and eating together. Our friendships with the families who come regularly is growing and giving us more opportunities to get alongside them and share our faith.

Several of our families have been coming for a few years now and it was great to see two of those families baptised over the last year in our Sunday morning service and also to see some families coming regularly to the Lighthouse Service and others to Christmas services and special events throughout the year.

One or two of our team have moved on to other things and we are pleased to see others coming in to help. We are so thankful for everyone in the team and their commitment to this important work. It is a privilege to share the love of God and our prayer is that many, both adults and children, will come to faith.

**Julie Shave**

# BEFREE

In September, returning to Befree were myself, David and Elliott. The leadership team also welcomed Lindsay from the YFC team. We average approx 12 members a week with a nice balance of male and female members. Our aim as a group is to provide a fun, safe environment for young people to learn more about Christianity and develop their own faith and belief system. It is important for us as leaders to be there as a source of guidance and encouragement for the kids.

We have managed to implement and maintain a good structure to the evening each week. Having time at the start of the evening for everyone to catch up on the previous week and play games before moving on to an engaging and interactive bible study lasting approx 45 minutes. From September to January our bible study time was spent learning about Jesus in the New Testament with particular focus on parables and miracle stories. After Christmas to the present day, we looked back to the Old Testament. Working through it chronologically, learning about key characters. So far we've learnt about Adam and Eve, Noah, and are currently learning about Abraham. Since September we've had a fantastic group of kids who have shown such enthusiasm to learn and develop their knowledge and faith. We've found that they love to learn stories, themes and characters from the bible through drama and acting with the group producing some Oscar-worthy performances particularly with their modern day versions of some parable stories, with the Good Samaritan being my particular favourite.

As some of you are aware, David and I will be leaving Be Free at Easter. This wasn't an easy decision for us to reach. We have both cherished our time with Be Free and will miss the kids terribly. Elliott will be leaving at the end of the year as he goes off to university and the group will also say good bye to Lindsey in the summer. Looking ahead we are hopeful that whoever takes over the leadership team with support and interaction from the church, will be able to continue and maintain a certain level of pastoral care and show true passion for the kids' development of faith, that we feel we have offered to the best of our ability during the last 2 years. Be Free are truly an amazing group of kids and we as the leadership team feel lucky, blessed and so thankful to have met them and watched them grow into a fantastic group of young Christians of whom the church should be incredibly proud.

**Amy Playfor**

# CELEBRATE!

**June  
HAPPY BIRTHDAY!  
to**



Peter Anderson  
Paul Anderson  
Emma Craig  
Tim Craig  
Millie Dobbin  
Mike Dodds  
Bill Greenwood  
Pam Harkness  
Simon Jennett  
Tim Jennett  
Frances London  
Doug Macaskill  
Kelly Spoor  
Kevin Tones  
Pat Vaughan  
Stan Vaughan

**Congratulations  
on your  
Wedding Anniversary**

Ann & Andrew  
Cuthbert



If you have something to celebrate we would love to share it - email  
[admin@stranton-church.org.uk](mailto:admin@stranton-church.org.uk)  
or phone 864006.

All entries to be in by the 16th of the month.

# Dates for the Diary

## Dates for June and early July

### June

Thurs 1 <sup>st</sup>	Prayer Walk with Bishop Paul, Social at the Bellevue Social Club with the Seatones and Bishop Paul	6.30pm
Fri 2 <sup>nd</sup>	Prayer Walk with Bishop Paul PMC in Durham	
Sat 3 <sup>rd</sup>	PMC in Durham	
Sun 4 <sup>th</sup>	Burbank Open Air Bp Paul, Confirmation St Hilda's,	11am, Park in Burbank Street 6pm.
Mon 5 <sup>th</sup>	Messy Church Planning, Buildings & Finance,	7.30pm The Vicarage 7.30pm The Vicarage
Mon 12 <sup>th</sup>	Lighthouse Planning,	7.30pm
Tues 13 <sup>th</sup>	Prayer & Praise,	7.30pm Fulthorpe Chapel
Sun 18 <sup>th</sup>	Messy Church,	4.00pm St Matthew's
Tues 20 <sup>th</sup>	New Beginnings,	7.30pm Fulthorpe Chapel

### July

Mon 3 <sup>rd</sup>	Standing Committee,	7.30pm, The Vicarage
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### Prayer walk with Bishop Paul

On Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> June and Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> June Bishop Paul will be in Hartlepool, praying for the deanery and meeting and greeting a variety of people. On Thursday he will be walking from St Oswald's Community Garden, Dyke house to Rossmere Park via Newburn Bridge and Seaton Carew. On Friday he will be walking from the Headland to Ward Jackson Park via Central Estate, Westview and Throston.

### Possible joining points on Thursday are:

8.30am Morning Prayers at St Oswald's Community Gdns

*The morning will include the Mosque, Football ground and Civic Centre*

11.15am Walk from Civic Centre through Middleton Grange Shopping Centre

2.15pm Meet Bp Paul at Newburn Bridge – walk along seafront

3.00pm Buy Bp Paul an Ice cream at the Van in Seaton

3.45pm Walk with Bishop Paul from Seaton to Rossmere Park

4.30pm Gather in Rossmere Park, Closing prayers for the day

***Look out for more details if you would like to join him on Friday.***

## Sidespersons

	8.30am	10.30am
4 June	B Butcher	No Service
11 June	P Thompson	D Greenwood B Greenwood
18th June	M Hutchinson	R Anderson P Anderson
25 June	I Walker	A Craig F Endean



## Weddings

1st April	Jordan Thornhill & Chloe Greenwood
6 May	Raymond Ball & Jenna Davies



## Baptisms

30th April	Gracie Bartleson Archie Bartleson Kady Watt
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# Who's Who

<b>Church Office</b>	St Matthew's Community Centre Arncliffe Gardens TS26 9JF	
<b>Administrator</b>	Trish Playfor E-Mail: <a href="mailto:admin@stranton-church.org.uk">admin@stranton-church.org.uk</a> Web Site: <a href="http://www.stranton-church.org.uk">www.stranton-church.org.uk</a>	01429 894006

## Vicar

Revd Norman Shave 34A Westbourne Road 233609  
E-Mail: [nshave1@btinternet.com](mailto:nshave1@btinternet.com)

## Associate Minister

Revd Andrew Craig 25 Egerton Road 422461

## Burbank Community Church Worker

Clive Hall 10 Clarkson Court 278504

## Readers

Alan Robertson 2 Northbrook Court 276926  
Mary Tones 40a Blakelock Road 265625

## Churches Together in Hartlepool

Chair Revd Richard Hetherington,  
Oxford Road Baptist

Secretary Susan Atkinson,  
St Mary's RC

## Authorised Pastoral Assistants

Patricia Vaughan 144 Elwick Road 429178

## Church Wardens

Peter Anderson 22 Thetford Road 871266  
Angela Craig 57 Claremont Drive 234279

## Music Group

Julie Shave 34A Westbourne Road 233609

## PCC Secretary

Maureen Anderson 22 Thetford Road 871266

## Treasurer

David Craig 57 Claremont Drive 234279

## Asst. Treasurer

Maureen Anderson 22 Thetford Road 871266

## Loyalty Treasurer

Peter Anderson 22 Thetford Road 871266

## Notice Sheet

The Office (Notices by the preceding Wednesday)

## Signpost Editorial

Jacqui Rogers 19 Trentbrooke Avenue 265527

## Signpost Advertising

Maureen Anderson 22 Thetford Road 871266

## Signpost Subscription

Maureen Anderson 22 Thetford Road 871266

## St Matthew's Booking

Trish Playfor Church Office 894006

***Magazine articles to the parish office by 16th of every month.***

