

Stranton and Burbank Community Church

SIGNPOST



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

July 2021

Dear Friends,

I am writing this letter a little early this month – just before I go on holiday for a week or so. Summer has finally arrived in the last week and I do hope that many of us are able to get some sort of break in the coming months, or at least get out to enjoy the coast or the countryside while the weather is better.

As I write some things are unknown – when we will have further restrictions lifted or when we can start congregational singing in church for example is not clear. But what is clear is that we are entering a time of change and transition. Mother Gemma has recently announced that she is leaving on 1st August and Andy and Lucy McAllister will go to Cranmer in September and other changes are likely, but not yet confirmed.

In these circumstances it would be easy to become discouraged. But an alternative approach is to look forward in faith and hope. We can do this firstly because God promises to go with us. I read again recently Exodus 33. Moses goes up to the mountain after the golden cow incident and asks, 'Who will go with me?' God says to Moses, 'My presence will go with you.' I believe God promises the same to us now. God's presence will go with us in the coming weeks and months.

As we go forward in faith and hope we can also be thankful for the many different people who are part of the ministry here, both lay and ordained, some paid but many more volunteers. Alongside this the ties we have forged as a Group Ministry are now strong. It's by working as a team across all three parishes that the ministry here will continue to flourish and grow. So then let's press forward in faith and hope trusting that God will lead us and go with us.

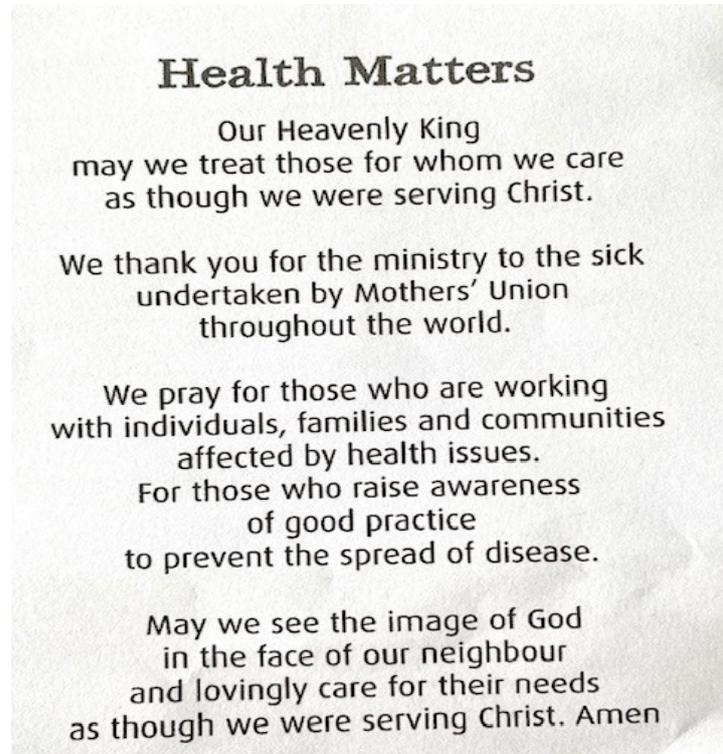
Every Blessing
Norman

Mothers Union

Recently our Prime minister, Boris Johnston, announced that the latest Lockdown Roadway restrictions would be extended by 4 weeks – due to the latest Delta variant of Covid becoming more wide-spread. So once again we wait to get back to what will be a different normality. I was beginning to get worried about the effect on our faithful MU branches here in Hartlepool when I picked up my MU prayer diary. Turning the page to see where next week's prayers were focused on, I realised it was the centre of the diary and there was a map of the world. The headline was:- "Mothers Union – 4 million members around the world." Each country had the number of MU members indicated. Do have a look at this and realise we are not left on our own. Many of these members throughout the world have always faced many difficulties in their lives and remain strong in their faith in God our Father and His Son and the Holy Spirit. Use this map to pray for one or two countries in your daily prayers, and realise that we are also being strengthened by the MU prayers from around our planet too.

As we await more news on what will be needed to restart our meetings may we look forward to restarting in the Autumn.....

Let's finish with a prayer from MU Faith in Action pocket prayers.



God bless
With love from
Ann Courtenay

From the Home Front

As restrictions have lessened we have spent a great deal of time with family and also friends over the last few weeks - meeting up and catching up. The last year has been so hard not being able to jump into the car or on a train to visit our children and grandchildren, or to call or message friends asking them round for drinks or a meal or going out for coffee, or being able to celebrate life events. I really missed time just sitting and talking or reading stories and doing things with the grandsons. That said, the increased socialising does lead to feelings of apprehension, not just the proximity to other unknown people, but also the desire not to return to a busy packed diary – rushing from one thing to another. I have enjoyed the time during lockdown when I have been able to potter around the garden, declutter the house (well try!), sit and read a book and walk outside taking in nature or chatting with neighbours in passing. The on-line services and zoom meetings were excellent for keeping in touch with God and the church family, also not having to leave the cosy house when it was cold or wet saved travelling time and encouraged participation in more events. I have found time to start and end my day with God, focussed on Him using Lectio365 and UCB daily readings, without feeling rushed.

Today I walked along the front at Seaton, the tide was on the ebb and the sea was very calm. I could see quite a large group of herring gulls about 200 metres out from the shore on the water. They weren't feeding, just bobbing about! As I watched more and more gulls arrived in ones or twos or threes and landed on the water to join the group. Some landed on the edges, others dropped down into the middle of the group. At times the occasional gull flew off. The group grew to about 200 gulls – just bobbing about relaxing. It just seemed as if they had taken time out to come together and take a rest. No doubt as the tide receded they would all fly off in search of food for themselves and chicks - at sea, along the front around the shops, in suburban gardens and the waste tips, or even inland to fields.

If even the birds of the air can find time to relax and unwind each day then I certainly can too. God gives us opportunities, we need to see them and use them for meeting with God and also for our health and mental wellbeing.

J.A.R.

Annual Parochial Church Meeting May 2021

The annual meeting was held in church this year, but with the option of joining the meeting via zoom link. Initially Angela Craig was thanked for her six years in office as Church Warden, particularly during the testing times of the pandemic with its effects on the workings of 'church', for her hard work ensuring the smooth running of church services, the church building with alterations, and the health and safety of the congregation including the implementation of Covid restrictions. Angela thanked her husband David and Peter, the other church warden, for their support and help during the years. Angela was presented with a bouquet of flowers by Norman.



Norman gave his Vicar's Report for this last challenging year. He also talked about the forthcoming changes with Mother Gemma to soon emigrate to Australia, Rev Clive now being able to seek a paid post within the church and Andy McAlister beginning ordinand training in September.

Rev Clive gave his Burbank Report and updated the meeting on his meeting with Bishop Sarah re his future, the winding up of Burbank Church, his Ward Jackson Chaplaincy and the ongoing outreach in Burbank area.



David Craig went through his Treasurer's Report outlining the income and spending of the church in the last twelve months. He was able to give a positive report with a hopeful ongoing budget for Stranton as it emerges from Covid restrictions. The need for a new independent auditor was discussed.



Other reports from all other groups and organisations were available online or in a paper copy.

St Matthew's Community Centre

Report April 2021

The Centre re-opened on Monday 12th April under the new guidelines which were confirmed by the Government on April 6th 2021. As you will be aware, these regulations severely restrict the activities which can take place at St Matthew's. We have informed all previous user groups of the current situation and they will decide along with our advice, when it is safe and appropriate to return to the building. We have also posted the information on the relevant Facebook pages.

Despite these restrictions, there has been significant interest from new groups who may wish to use our facilities, but most of these groups must await the next announcement on May 17th or even June 21st.

In the meantime we have been reviewing and updating our Covid-19 security measures so we will be ready to open fully when we receive the go ahead. This will be the third time we will have re-opened St Matthew's, and like you, we hope this will be the last time we undergo this rather arduous, but essential process.

We remain cautiously optimistic and look forward to the future. If you would like any more information please call me 01429 290290

Carol Laud
Secretary

The Bear Necessities Project

The Bear Necessities Project exists to support a small 8 bedded burns unit which is one of the services provided by Kilimatinde Hospital. This is a small rural mission hospital in Tanzania in East Africa and is supported by the Kilimatinde Trust (www.kilimatindetrust.org) which was started by Rev Stephen Taylor when he was Vicar at Stranton in the 1990s.

The burns' unit was opened in 2018 to improve the care and life chances of those suffering from burn injuries. Burns are a common occurrence in sub-Saharan Africa due to cooking on open fires and using gasoline lamps. Water is scarce and there is a lack of first aid treatment and delayed admission to hospital which causes the injury to be worse and sometimes fatal.



In 2018 the nearest burns' unit was 10 hours away by bus. Most burns victims couldn't survive the journey or meet the cost of treatment.

The Kilimatinde Trust in partnership with the staff of Kilimatinde Hospital set up this small unit. We visited the specialist burns' unit and worked with them to design the unit in Kilimatinde. We used operational standards, training material and care plans with permission from interburns.org. The funding for the burns unit came through the Kilimatinde Trust via individual fundraising events and a large donation from Franciscan Aid.

The treatment and care continue to improve, and the environment, nutrition, pain relief and survival rates are good. The knowledge and skills of staff working in the unit continues to grow and we are committed to continued support of training and supplementing the cost of treatment for those who can't afford it.

You can donate through www.justgiving.com/thekilimatindetrust

The aim of The Bear Necessities Project is for a team of sewers to make 100 teddy bears, which will be available in October, the suggested minimum donation for a bear is £10 if you would like to keep one. Might you be interested in helping production by sewing or alternatively if you want to cut out the pattern we could complete the sewing. Anyone interested in cutting, sewing or owning a bear please send an email to jillbarrett108@gmail.com

Jill Barrett

Recipes

Impossible Pie

4 oz margarine
8 oz caster sugar
8 oz desiccated coconut
4 eggs

4 oz plain flour
½ teaspoon ground nutmeg
½ teaspoon vanilla essence
½ pint full fat milk

Heat oven to 180C Gas 4 . Lightly grease 10" pie or flan dish
Cream butter with sugar. Add coconut and eggs
Sieve flour, with nutmeg. Add vanilla essence
Fold into coconut mixture. Gradually whisk in milk.
Pour into dish and bake for 1 hour. When cooked, a knife inserted into centre should come out clean.
The mixture will have formed a pastry shell, an egg custard filling and a coconut topping!

Microwave Banana Pudding

100g butter softened, plus extra for greasing
2 ripe bananas
100g light muscovado sugar
100g SR flour
2 teaspoons cinnamon
2 eggs
2 tablespoons milk
Icing sugar to sprinkle on before serving



Put butter in 1 litre baking dish and microwave on High for 30 secs-1 minute until melted. Add 1 ½ bananas, mash into melted butter, then add the sugar, flour, cinnamon, eggs and milk. Mix well together
Slice the remaining banana over the top, then return to the microwave and cook on High for 8 minutes until cooked through and risen. Serve warm dusted with icing sugar or drizzle with a toffee sauce and add ice-cream.
((based on 800w microwave – adjust times accordingly))

Spiced lentil soup

2 chopped onions
2 chopped carrots
4 chopped sticks celery
2 crushed cloves garlic
1 tablespoon curry powder
½ tsp coriander

4oz red lentils
2 pints vegetable stock
¼ pint tomato juice
Salt and pepper
1oz creamed coconut
Chopped parsley to garnish

Fry onions, carrots, celery over low heat for 5 mins.
Stir in garlic and spices, cook 1-2 mins, add lentils, stock and tomato juice.
Cover and simmer for 20 mins.
Remove from heat and stir in coconut. Adjust seasoning. Blend if preferred. Add garnish.

Cook's Cottage, Melbourne

When you think of Australia, which famous name springs readily to mind? I suppose it all depends on your own particular interests and of course your age!

Lieutenant James Cook as we all know, landed at Botany Bay, then following the coast northwards he landed at Possession Island and claimed the territory which he had just surveyed in the name of King George III, on April 28th 1770.

This event took place towards the end of his first voyage having left England in the **Endeavour** in August 1768. His initial task was to observe the Transit of Venus in Hawaii and then, following secret instructions, to undertake extensive exploration of the Pacific area to discover and claim for England the rumoured great southern continent. On this first voyage he had spent six months charting the coastline of New Zealand before crossing the Tasman Sea to a point near the coast of Victoria which he named Hicks Point from the member of his crew who had first spotted the land. He then travelled northward to Botany Bay at the start of his homeward journey.

Cook is commemorated in many ways in Australia but perhaps the most poignant is to be found in the grounds of Fitzroy Gardens in Melbourne. It is his parents' house, better known as Cook's Cottage.

His family lived in Great Ayton in Yorkshire where his father built a stone cottage for the family in 1755, although it is probably true to say that James never actually lived there, as by the time it was built he had been a Royal Navy officer for a number of years.

Having gone through many changes of ownership over the years the cottage was once again put up for sale in 1933 by its owner, a Mrs Dixon.

On June 13th 1933 Melbourne's HERALD newspaper reported

"HISTORICAL COTTAGE TO BE SOLD" – "built by Captain Cook's father"

A local author, Hermon Gill, who had visited the cottage in Yorkshire in 1929, thought it would be appropriate for it to provide a focus for the planned Centenary in 1934 of Victoria's first settlement at Portland.

With the financial backing of the Industrialist and Philanthropist (Sir) Russell Grimwade, approaches were made to the vendors to seek to purchase and transport the cottage to Australia. Although reluctant for the cottage to be moved outside England, Grimwade's Agents managed to persuade the owner to change her mind.

The purchase was completed for the sum of £800 and the major task of surveying, and planning the move, began. The materials were marked and packed into 253 cases and 40 barrels and together with slips of Ivy from the cottage walls successfully transported to Melbourne.

In the meantime all was not well in the Victoria capital city. A major controversy had arisen as to the precise location and siting for the re-erection of the cottage. However at last a site was agreed in the picturesque Fitzroy Gardens, about a ten minute walk to the east of the city centre. The work was completed in time for the celebrations and the cottage opened to the public in 1934.

At the same time Grimwade also funded the erection of a Victoria stone obelisk from stone quarried from the site of Cook's first glimpse of the Australian coast some 280 miles east of Melbourne. The obelisk was raised in Great Ayton to mark the original site of Cook's Cottage and can still be found in the Memorial garden there.



Cook's Cottage, Fitzroy Gardens (Jeff Parsons 2008)

"Cook's Cottage Melbourne" © Jeff Parsons 2020

Moving Finger Publications

Herd Immunity Quiz

- H** Which **H** requested the head of the John the Baptist?
- E** Which **E** was Jacob's brother?
- R** Which **R** was Jacob's Mother?
- D** Which **D** did Peter bring back to life?

- I** Which **I** book in the bible has 66 chapters?
- M** Which **M** a Queen of Scotland was a saint?
- M** Which **M** was married to Zipporah?
- U** Which **U** did Abraham come from?
- N** Which **N** was a disciple?
- I** Which **I** was the father of Jacob and his brother?
- T** Which **T** is referred as Didymus?
- Y** Which **Y** is a word for God?

Dear friends,

I am writing this at the end of the first week of the latest easing of lockdown restrictions; my family have been to visit, we have eaten in a restaurant, had a drink *inside* a pub and have been shopping for absolute non-essentials! I can't deny that some of this freedom is really wonderful and very, very welcome. Hugging friends and family who we've not seen for a year or more is pretty special, isn't it, and many of us have had both of our vaccines and the light at the end of a very long tunnel is beginning to shine more brightly. But I also can't help but feel that some aspects of this new phase is anxiety-inducing, and not all that welcome...

And this new easing of restrictions has got me thinking about a few things.

Firstly, in this past year or more, we have all been through a real lot – a lot of big feelings and huge changes and massive amounts of upheaval and adapting – and the cost of that is yet to be fully known...and we haven't finished counting that cost yet, not by a long way. So, we must continue to be gentle with ourselves and each other.

Secondly, there are some things we will be glad to see the back of (I can't wait for the day when I no longer have to withhold the cup at the mass, or can get rid of masks so my glasses don't steam up so annoyingly). But, inevitably, there are also some things we will miss, and it might be important to keep hold of some of those things. For some of us, that hour of daily exercise was a saving grace, and one we would do well to keep. Perhaps we spent more time chatting with family and friends on the phone, or restarted letter writing, or slowed down a bit or took up a new hobby or were grateful for our gardens or whatever it was for you. Either way, any act of gratitude that might have sprung up in a pandemic is a good one to keep hold of. And, we must continue to be gentle with ourselves and each other.

The other thing I am realising is that priorities and perspectives have changed. Things that once felt important no longer seem that way. Before lockdown I had 3 'weddings' planned, in order to accommodate all people in all places. Now, I simply long to hold Craig's hand. That's quite a shift! I guess the main thing really does become the main thing, when push comes to shove. And, we must continue to be gentle with ourselves and each other.

But, above all this, God has continued to be faithful and constant and good. Our Creator has continued to create and recreate and redeem and hold. We have been floored, but God has continued to soar. We have been fearful and locked down, and God has continued to be victorious and free and ruler of all. And we cannot lose, or fail, or fall, if we keep our eyes fixed on God. There have been so many unknowns, so much loneliness, endless days and so much uncertainty, but God remains. And, we must continue to be gentle with ourselves and each other. Just as our Lord is with us.

So, take heart, friends. God has got us.

We are not forgotten.

Keep hold of that which is good.

Give up that which has hurt or is bad.

And, continue to be gentle with yourself, and each other.

With all my love,

Mother Gemma

Alphabet of Gardening tips

I was given a little book of gardening tips "Green fingers and dirty nails", when I was in New Zealand, which I thought I would share with you over the months - J.A.R.

H

Hyssop repels fleas and beetles.

If using Hellebores (winter rose) in arrangements slit the stem and place in warm water or submerge for half an hour.

Hellebores do not like being dug up and transplanted. They like coolish climate or shade and plenty of humus rich soil.

Prune hydrangeas to their lowest pair of fat buds. These are next year's flowers

Hydrangea – pick well developed heads, remove most of the leaves.

Crush and scrape the stems, plunge in boiling water then completely submerge in a tub or bath overnight.

Hoses will last longer if draped over a clothes line to drain before winter storage.

Hoya plants flower best if they are root-bound.



Herd Immunity Quiz Answers

H Which H requested the head of the John the Baptist?	Herodias
E Which E was Jacob's brother?	Esau
R Which R was Jacob's Mother?	Rebekah
D Which D did Peter bring back to life?	Dorcas
I Which I book in the bible has 66 chapters?	Isaiah
M Which M a Queen of Scotland was a saint?	Margaret
M Which M was married to Zipporah?	Moses
U Which U did Abraham come from?	Ur
N Which N was a disciple?	Nathaniel
I Which I was the father of Jacob and his brother?	Isaac
T Which T is referred as Didymus?	Thomas
Y Which Y is a word for God?	Yahweh

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Update on Andy & Rose Roberts

Dear friends,

Once again we want to thank each and every one of you for your support over the past 12 years as CMS mission partners. It has been a privilege to pioneer a dream that God placed on our hearts of seeing vulnerable, abandoned children cared for by forever families. Over the years, Revive's work has grown and evolved, we've been able to train local leaders and see them running the ministry and expanding into other areas. Whilst it would be "easy" and pretty comfortable to hang around, supporting and overseeing the ministry here, God is always propelling us onwards. For a while now we've been praying and asking God 'what is next?'... and we feel him leading us into a new phase of ministry, to step out once again of our comfort zone, "cross the lake" for him and let Revive thrive under local leadership.

It is to this end that I have humbly accepted CMS' offer to become their next Director of International Mission from September 2021 and am passionate about taking all that we've learnt over the past years and applying it on a larger scale. It will be an honour to partner with our People in Mission, and partners around the globe, in God's restorative and transformational mission, alongside shaping, directing and implementing CMS' vision and strategy. This also does come with a heavy heart as it will mean transitioning back to the UK to take up the role from September onwards. One of the issues with international marriages is that one side of the family always gets the tough end of the deal...

After 17 years of being connected with Latin America, from being a SAMS short term volunteer, a SAMS missionary and then finally a CMS mission partner, the continent, people and culture have shaped who I am today. I look forward to bringing this experience with me to the new role (even with a bit of Latin American flair!) and, even as my vision of God's work in the world expands to include other areas, Latin America, and especially Brazil, will always be in my heart (the three Brazilians in my family make it hard for me to forget it!).

We will remain involved in Revive's work as part of the UK board of trustees and are excited to see the local leaders, supported by other CMS People in Mission, take the ministry forward.

Please do be praying for us as we spend the next few months transitioning well from Revive and Brazil, pray especially for a home and school around Oxford and for Rose who will be leaving her country, family and home to cross the lake for the gospel.



We hope that you will all continue to support us as we transition into this new role with CMS, we've valued it so much over the years and will depend on it for the years to come.

Thanks again, **Andy, Rose, Sofia and Júlia**

Update on Paton Family

“All good things come to an end” as Thomson holiday reps dutifully inform holidaymakers and an inner voice says to me: “What about eternal life in Jesus?” That’s good and it doesn’t end? I prefer to think of things in terms of seasons, or as the writer of Ecclesiastes terms them: “A time to... this and that.” We have had a long season here: sixteen years is a fair chunk out of a life, particularly when I had really sensed a calling to a different part of the world and at the back of mind at least, set out for here, thinking it might possibly be a stepping-stone place. It didn’t turn out that way. I recently trawled through past emails to when the possibility of doing this work first surfaced. Those of you who have followed our journey from earliest days will know how troubled and unpromising its beginnings were.

Indeed, it pained me to read those early email exchanges and how some of my early apprehension turned out to be justified. I found myself asking God, why it had had to be so difficult. Why it took around five painful years for me to eventually be doing the work I had felt called to out here. We probably wouldn’t have begun our journey back then had we known just how difficult it would be. And yet, we can testify to the Lord’s goodness through it all, so many channels of blessing through the times of heartache so that the smouldering wick wasn’t snuffed out but was kept glowing until better times began to happen. Things are so much better now, both for the church we serve here and in the wider work we are involved with, for example the “hospital” ministry. Yes, God is good and although we have not seen massive breakthroughs, we sense God’s hand working in innumerable small things and that really helps us, as we transition from here.

Having sensed God’s calling to serve abroad in a cross-cultural setting, returning to the UK is hard to contemplate. I am in my mid-fifties and the sense that time’s up on what I perceived at the time, as a teenager, to be a lifetime’s calling, is a struggle to process. However, I have an elderly mother, living on her own and an elderly father and am an “only child”, so I feel the time has perhaps come to move closer to them than halfway around the world. Right now, that need is not urgent but I do not want to wait until it becomes so. Our oldest daughter Anna celebrates her eighteenth birthday in a week’s time. She is hopefully, in these uncertain times of pandemic, returning to the UK to begin university, all things going well. Having lived almost her whole life in south east Asia, Katherine in particular is keen that we are with her as a family to support her as she makes the considerable adjustments to life in a country she knows to an extent but has spent little time living in. We then have our other three “furlough babies”, spaced roughly three years apart to consider: aged 15, 12 and 9. Returning to a foreign field longer-term is not likely to happen soon, once we do make landfall in Blighty. This makes me feel sad and that’s probably true for all of us to an extent, although the children are accustomed to losing their friends for the same reason, so it comes as no great surprise to them.

What makes things infinitely more bearable is the fact that God holds together the bigger picture stuff, as well as the details: what about our pets? We know we are in safe hands and we also can look back with thankful hearts at what has happened here over the past sixteen years. There's a lot to be grateful for. Our future is in the safest of safe hands whatever and wherever that is.

It is good however that what we have begun looks set to continue, after we've gone. The church has been interviewing for a new pastor and we are hopeful that someone from CMS (UK) will be able to continue where we have left off, if this is God's will for them.

Although we will no longer be requiring support once our six months grace period is over, other mission partners will. We are immeasurably grateful to all of the churches and individuals who have supported us down through the years and despite our being less than stellar in terms of frequency of communication via link letters, we have very much valued all you have invested in what God is doing here through prayer, financial giving and in other expressions of your love for God and for us through the relationship we have had down the years. Our prayer is that there will have been mutual blessing through your connections with us and with the work that God is doing, a long way from your own doorsteps. Thanks for going that second and five thousandth mile in remembering needs and helping seize opportunities in making Jesus known and encouraging your brothers and sisters in Christ in a place off the beaten track and regarded as being of little consequence by most. Our prayer for you is that you keep going with this and indeed do even more, as the Lord enables you. That's it for now. Looking forward to actually visiting you, rather than virtually doing so, in / after the summer when God-willing we plan to return to the UK.

Love, prayers and gratitude,

Tony, Katherine, Anna, Innes, Euan and Eilidh Paton





BB Summer Session



Anchor Boys - have started to learn how to skip and are progressing well. The best on going total of 14 continuing steps has been set, but hopefully like all sporting records it can be beaten.

On our last night we are holding a Superheroes Night with the Boys dressing up as their favourite hero.

Juniors & Company - Both Sections have benefitted greatly by using the St Matthew's car park sports area. They have played football, American Football, rounders, non -stop cricket, three balls in a bucket and potted sports, also hockey and basketball.

In the cricket the leaders learnt that if you place the wicket near the Elwick Road end you soon lose a lot of soft balls!

Session Review

Leaders - we have managed to recruit a helper at Anchor Boys and all leaders have served in their allotted sessions and gained a unique experience via the pandemic that will improve our programme in the years to follow.

Anchors - eventually we have built up our numbers to ten Boys and this will a good starting block in September.

Juniors - has been well attended and by the end of the session we had 16 very regular members attending.

Company - We have kept all the Lads from the previous session and look forward re-introducing uniform in September.

In summary we have tended to thrive rather than just survive (Boris will pinch that one!!) and we will be raring to go in September.

Date for Your Diary **November 27th Christmas Fayre** - you know the score the one with bargains galore!!!

George Bainbridge

Sunday Club News!

Our face-to-face Sunday Club sessions will be continuing on a fortnightly basis. We are taking precautions to keep it safe for those attending. If you have any questions, please feel free to speak to me. The Sunday Club will only be able to have children attend who are five years old and above for safety reasons. Here are the following dates planned for our Sunday Club sessions:

4th July – The Sneaky Snake

This week we will be looking at the story of Adam and Eve being tricked by a very sneaky snake to ignore God's rules.

18th July – Noah's Ark

This week we will be looking at the story of Noah's Ark and thinking about God looks after those who stay faithful.

Please remember that if you wish to attend the Sunday Club then you need to complete a consent form which can be collected from the welcome desk.

Online Sunday Club

Thank you to everyone who is watching and enjoying our videos so far. Our weekly videos will continue until the end of August and new ones will be available every Sunday at 2pm. All of the previous videos are still available to watch on our website or Facebook page.

What's coming up:

27th June – The Wise King

This week will look at David's son Solomon who was a wise king who praised God.

4th July – God Watches Over the Elijah

This week we will look at the prophet Elijah and how God protects and watches over him.

11th July – Fire From Heaven

This week we will look at the prophet Elijah and our fun activity includes building a paper mache volcano!

18th July – The Brave Queen

This week we will be looking at the Queen Esther who was very brave.

25th July – The Fiery Furnace

This week we will be looking at the story of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego keeping their faith in God.

1st August – Daniel and the Lions

This week we will be looking at how Daniel kept faith in God and was protected by him.

Enjoy, **Kate** Stranton Sunday Club Leader

Communities of Hope : Volunteering Opportunities

Please find below a list of some of our activities, which we'd love to invite you to volunteer with!

Jess: 07597 308751

Jo: 07597 308748

Homeless Outreach (around the town centre) Fridays 2.30 – 4pm. This person must have an evangelistic heart as we pray with everyone we meet, and this ministry is very much about sharing the hope of Christ with people. Contact Jo.

Pop-up café (outside St. Matthew's Community Centre) Fridays 10-12pm. We need volunteers who are happy to engage with the Burn Valley community, people who like to have a chat, especially about Jesus!! We'd also appreciate any offers of baking (cakes/brownies/cookies etc.) Contact Jo.

Prayer spaces in schools (differing primary schools in the parishes) Usually Wednesday afternoons/Monday mornings. This is creative prayer with 5-11 year olds, both indoors and out, it's super fun and rewarding. Volunteers would need to consent to a DBS check taking place. Contact Jess.

Emotional Literacy sessions in schools (differing primary schools in the parishes) Days/times during which we go into school will vary depending on their availability. We use a secular emotional literacy programme but deliver this alongside the introduction of prayer as a coping mechanism and to help build resilience. Volunteers in this setting would need to be confident in a classroom environment and consent to a DBS check taking place. Contact Jess.

Hope café, breakfast club (The Blacksmiths Arms, Stranton) Wednesdays 9-10.30am. This is a post-school run free breakfast club for parents/carers/individuals. We'd like volunteers who can help on a practical level, serving food/drinks, but also in a relational sense, building relationships with those who attend. Contact Jess.

Open Skies Forest Church (St. Aidan's Primary School nature garden) Last Sunday of every month, 3pm. We would like volunteers to help with welcoming, leading/reading, manning prayer stations, general helping with setting up tidying away. Our first Forest Church session will be on 30th May and monthly thereafter. Contact Jess.

Equally, we'd love to see you just turn up and say hi/eat yummy food at either the Pop-up café or Breakfast Club or join us in worship at Open Skies Forest church. As always, our strength and success in any of these activities comes only from God, so can we could ask for your continued prayers in all of this.

Words from God for the Church

Clergy in Stranton have been encouraging members of the congregation who feel that God has given words or pictures, to share these in Church for all to hear. This is a really nerve-racking experience for many - their hearts race, they may shake or doubt themselves. But with encouragement, and often confirmation by the words of others, more are now speaking out. Here we share some of those words – they may be spoken to speak directly into **your** life or situation.....

23rd May - Pentecost Sunday

- * MD: We are always rushing - ease off, Sunday is a day of rest and refreshing. Don't think about things which make you anxious – leave them until Monday.
- * A: Feels the Holy Spirit gives her happiness and moves her to cry often – she doesn't understand why.
- * JW: The gift of the Holy Spirit is not to be taken lightly. It is a gift of the Lord. Holy, Holy, Holy.
- * Rev CH: Was given words spoken in a tongue. He asked for an interpretation.
- * Rev GW: when you move, God will speak, you need to have a willingness to let God fill your mouth. (interpretation) “Do you know how big I am? Do you know what I can do? Are you aware of the possibilities that are there for you? The possibilities I will give you if you just move. To sit and do nothing and wait – it never comes. Allow Him to move you in ways you have never expected before, that you may be blessed. Know that He has spoken to you.”
- * Rev CH: confirmed that as he spoke in tongues he interpreted that God had said “My children do you know how big I am?”

30th June

- * Rev MD: We serve a God of relational, not rational – of love, not of the law. We must realise how small and meagre we are in order for God to become bigger – The Father, The Son and The Holy Spirit.
- * Rev NS: Words prompted from Romans 8 – there is no condemnation in Jesus Christ. Do not be caught up in sin or guilt. Do not condemn yourselves – Christ tells us of a spirit of adoption, of love - not of fear. Jesus Christ says “I forgive you, I give you life, I love you with everything.”

Lessons from Wild Swimming

I decided in my 50th year I would attempt new things!!

A lovely friend from work told me that she swims in the sea and I had thought I want to give this wild swimming a try!

Jane said "I'll add you to our Brass Monkey Group chat then whenever you want to come I'll come with you."

I was told all I needed was a swimming costume, swimming gloves, swimming socks and a towel. The day of my first dip came, it was a cold March evening and I was really nervous. My stomach was churning as I anticipated what emerging my body in freezing cold water would feel like!

The Brass Monkey swimmers welcomed me with smiles and told me all their names which I promptly forgot as my mind was raging as I looked at the waves!

Jane walked with me straight into the water reminding me to keep breathing. I walked slowly in and the ice cold water hit my skin the shock of it made me gasp. I knew I needed to keep walking forward and not walk back out.

The others around me cheered me on

"You're doing great lass"

"Get your shoulders in"

"Wow you're doing amazing"

When the cold waves hit my body I felt like I was having a panic attack until I started to control my breathing.

Then I was swimming, the cold water made my body tingle, I felt alert and alive!

I lasted 8 minutes and everyone in the group congratulated me on staying in that long for my first dip!

Now I go once or twice a week and my body has adjusted to the cold.

Often the sea roars at you and the waves knock you off your feet.

Life knocks you down, but we always have to keep getting back up!

Other times when I go to the Headland the water is like a lake and it's so peaceful.

Clive and I went to Scotland and swam in two lochs. Now that is just the most beautiful experience ever! Surrounded by God's magnificent creation, swimming in clean fresh water, I felt so close to my Creator.

Wild swimming has taught me so much.

It's taught me how much we need a community of people around us.

You never wild swim alone, you always need someone to be there with you.

God has not created us to be alone, the Brass Monkey Group is an amazing bunch of people. They all have their story to tell of why they have started wild swimming. They all have different personalities and gifts. There's the encouragers, the jokers, the activists, the time keepers, the inspirers, the welcomers and the story sharers. Everyone is equal, no one is more important than the other. No one is left out - all are included.

God tells us to love one another and accept each other.

Romans ch 15:7

'Accept one another, then just as Christ accepted you in order to bring praise to God.'

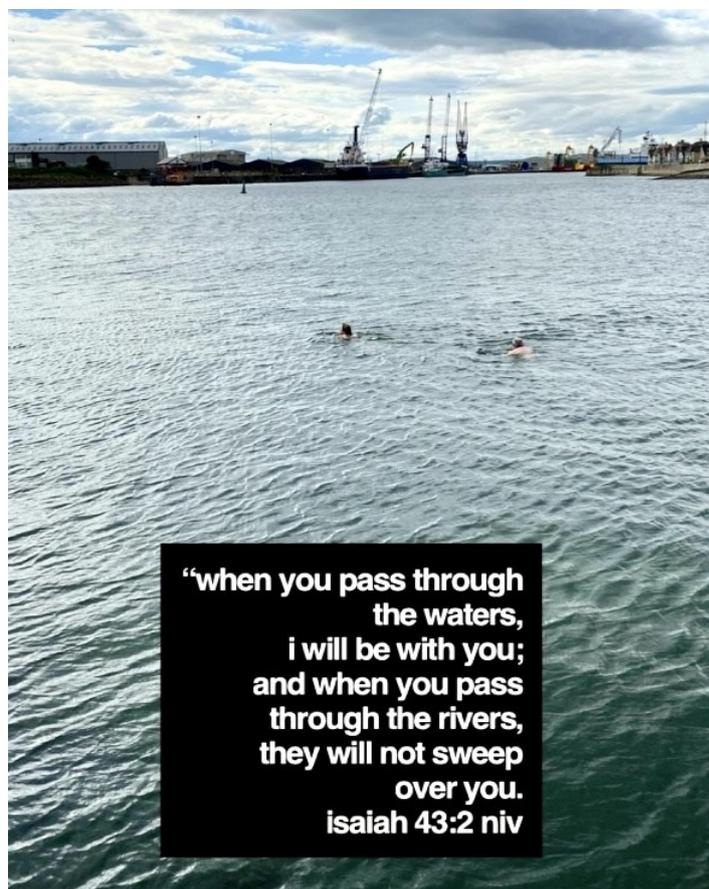
We may all not have the same opinions or beliefs or the same political preferences, but we can still accept one another.

God accepts us as we are, we are a small part in his amazing family.

Let's show up for each other, include one another, encourage one another and enjoy each other's company!

Ang Hall

Ang & Clive wild swimming



CELEBRATE!

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

to

July

Maureen Anderson
Faith Barton
Ronnie Barton
Josh Bruce
Barbara Butcher
Jean Connell
Natalie Proffitt
Mary Robinson
Norman Shave
Max Spoons
Jenny Tones
Geoffrey Webster
Diana Wanduragala



Congratulations to

Sylvia and Ken Shepherd
on their

Golden Wedding Anniversary

Happy Wedding Anniversary
to

Julie and Norman Shave
Elspeth and Andrew Craig
Faith and Adam Barton

Congratulations to

Charlotte Gleeson and Alex Preston
on their recent engagement

If you have something to celebrate we would love to share it - email
admin@stranton-church.org.uk
or phone 864006.

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

Congratulations to Ray (Rachel) Wilson and Paul Clark
On the blessing of their wedding on
Saturday 5th June 2021
Which was attended by some on line due to restrictions.



Birds of a Feather

The fledglings in my garden (mainly starlings and sparrows) are now taking over! They are pushing each other and even much larger adults out of their way to get at the variety of mixed seeds, fat balls, peanut butter (not salty, especially for birds!), peanuts (finely chopped to prevent choking), dried mealworms (some soaked so the chicks don't choke!) and much more. The bird baths empty quickly - what with the drinking and the bathing - the wood pigeons just love to sit in the baths and completely ignore the others. What I have to watch for is the herring gull who is now accompanied by a large chick - the other birds disappear when they appear, and also when the jackdaw and magpies are around too. The swifts just carry on with their flights collecting the insects they need for their chicks.

It's all go keeping up with the bird life here in Seaton, but I don't appreciate the bird that keeps taking newly planted seedlings out of flower pots!

Ann Courtenay

Dates for the Diary

Services continue on Sundays at Stranton

9.00am Holy Communion

11.00am Morning Worship

Covid restrictions remain in place at the time of writing

Sunday Club will meet on 4th and 20th July

Other Meetings and events

Tuesday 6th July 7.30pm Standing Committee (venue etc tbc)

Tuesday 20th July 7.30pm PCC (venue etc tbc)

Tuesday 27th July 7.15pm Group Council (St Aidan's Church)

Sunday 1st August Mother Gemma's final Sunday



Who's Who

Church Office St Matthew's Community Centre

Arncliffe Gardens TS26 9JF

Administrator Trish Playfor "Tues- Fri, 9.00 to 11.00am" 07305 550009E-Mail: admin@stranton-church.org.ukWeb Site: www.stranton-church.org.uk**Vicar**

Revd Norman Shave 34A Westbourne Road 233609

E-Mail: nshave1@btinternet.com**Curate**

Revd Michelle Delves 40 Browning Avenue 723461

Burbank Community Church Worker & Curate

Revd Clive Hall 10 Clarkson Court 278504

Readers

Mary Tones 40a Blakelock Road 265625

Churches Together in HartlepoolSecretary Susan Atkinson,
St Mary's RC

Church Wardens	Peter Anderson	22 Thetford Road	871266
	Rohan Wanduragala	62 Clifton Avenue	223751
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.

