

Stranton and Burbank Community

SIGNPOST



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

October 2024

Coming back to the heart of worship...

(The musings of a priest)

One of the things we are very good at is getting distracted by the things of this world, and often those distractions can get to a point of becoming all consuming. When we become so focussed on our buildings, our finances, on issues of doctrine and theology, or on one of so many other things, do we keep God at the centre of it all, or do we take our eye off Him? Do we start to lose sight of Him?

This is something I've been reflecting on for a while. As I look around at everything that is going on around us – building projects, repairs and maintenance, planning events and activities, even just the business of making church services happen – I wonder where God is in all of this. God should be at the forefront of all we do, worship central in every aspect of our lives, and prayer underpinning all of our plans, our hopes, and our dreams.

Psalm 46:10 says: “Be still and know that I am God”. Be still and know that I am God. Seven very powerful words calling us to be still so that we can draw closer to God, know more of who He is, more of what He wants for our lives, both individually in our own lives and corporately for each of us as part of the body of Christ. This was a verse I was given the last time I was able to go on retreat, before I even knew God was calling us here to Hartlepool. It's a verse that I think God wants us to hear now. A verse I think He wants us to respond to.

He wants us to be still in His presence. He wants to draw us back in to the heart of worship, because it's all about Him.

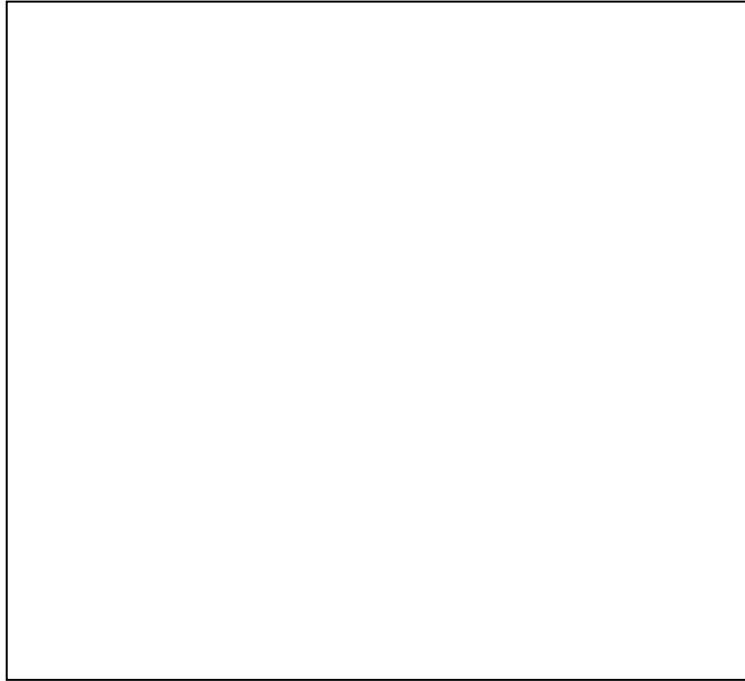
As we come to church each week, as we spend time in prayer each day, let's make sure we take the time to be still and know that He is God. Not just going through the motions of attending church, or telling God all that's on our hearts and minds. Not being worried or focussed on the everyday things that distract us from God, but being still in His presence, and allowing Him to speak to us and through us, praying into the things he places on our hearts. Allowing him to guide us back to the heart of worship, to guide us back into relationship with Him, that we might truly know that He is God – not just in our heads, but in our hearts as well.

Be still and know that He is God.

Grace and Peace,
Revd John

From the Home Front

Over the Summer months I have felt that God has not had much to say to me. So I asked myself the questions :- Am I actually not listening to God or am I not asking the questions He wants to answer? I have also made myself find the time to reflect on my daily behaviours and habits, to read more carefully my daily readings and to think and pray about what they are saying to me personally.



I have found areas of my daily life where I have become hard hearted, cynical, materially focused and judgemental. Times when I have not asked for God's guidance or acknowledged His conscience prompts. I have examined my motivations and my avoidances! What I have discovered is that I have been robbed of God's joy, it has made me confront my bad habits and misdemeanours and start to accept the challenges I have been dodging, trusting in God to give me the courage and the words. In other words to listen and be obedient ...

I am issuing a challenge to every one in church and in the wider church family to look at their own words and actions recently – could you stand in front of God and say 'They were all for your Glory God and to worship you' ? I have had to seek forgiveness and I don't think I am alone. We all need to reassess our priorities and in the words of Matt Redman's 'The Heart of Worship':

I'm sorry, Lord, for the thing I've made it
When it's all about You
It's all about You, Jesus

I'm comin' back to the heart of worship
'Cause it's all about You
It's all about You, Jesus

I'm sorry, Lord, for the thing I've made it
'Cause it's all about You
It's all about You, Jesus, yeah
All about You

You search much deeper within
Through the way things appear
You're looking into my heart, yeah

It has been hard to ask for forgiveness and to step outside my comfort zone but the results have all been positive and I feel that God's grace has flowed into these new situations enabling me to do my small part in His great plan.

So this prayer from Lectio 365 is to be my daily starting point....

Thank you, Father, for the wonder, the beauty and complexity of your creation.

Renew my soul this week to celebrate your creativity.

Thank you, Jesus, for overcoming the dreariness of sin and making everything new.

Renew me this week, I pray, to live almost as beautifully as you.

Thank you, Holy Spirit, for inspiring dreams and visions, imagination and innovation.

Give me a new mind this week to perceive fresh possibilities in ordinary things.

Amen J.A.R.

Licensing of Revd Becky Reeve by Bishop Sarah On 2nd September in St Aidan's Church



A huge welcome to Revd Becky and her husband Patrick as they settle into Hartlepool, get to know the parishes and the congregations and grasp the ongoing mission work.

After three years the Central Hartlepool Group finally has its full complement of clergy once again. The licensing of the Revd Becky Reeve was the culmination of long years of patience, co-operation and trusting in God. It was a joyous occasion led by Bishop Sarah, Bishop of Jarrow and acting Bishop of Durham and the Venerable Rick Simpson, Archdeacon of Auckland. The congregation comprised of members of St Aidan's and St Columba's, St Luke's, All Saints Stranton, members of Becky and Patrick's former parishes in Derby, family and friends but also included guests from the Brougham Terrace Mosque, Churches together and St Aidan's School.

Bishop Sarah spoke of the welcome and hospitality already received by Becky and Patrick and stated that this was the bedrock for Becky to grow her ministry here. After Becky's formal presentation by Archdeacon Rick, Becky's acceptance of the post and the confirmation of her appointment by the congregation, Becky made all the legal declarations and oaths to the Monarch and the Bishop of Durham and their successors. Bishop

Sarah then formally handed the parish over and blessed Becky's calling. Becky was installed in the priest's seat, then led to the church door to receive the keys for all the churches in the Central Group. She was officially welcomed by the church officials and representatives of local churches and the local community. After prayers, led by John and Becky, representatives of the church community presented Becky with symbols of ministry covering: energising growth, engaging with children, youth and young adults, challenging poverty and caring for God's creation.

The service was followed by a time of fellowship and delicious refreshments.

The three parishes have been grateful during the last three years for the support and commitment of Reverends John Bell, Andrew Craig, Kevin Tones, Clive Hall, Tony Roach and Michelle Delves, plus the readers Linda Dott and Mary Tones and Church Wardens who have enabled services to happen every Sunday and for weekday communions to continue.



Bishop Sarah with Archdeacon Rick, Revd Becky, Revd John and the Church Wardens of St Aidan's with St Columba's, St Luke's and All Saints Stranton



Presentations and welcome



Members of the congregation enjoy a celebratory meal after the service

J.A.R.

St Matthew's
Community Centre
Elwick Road



Please come and join us

Saturday 5th October 2024

2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

*Every penny we raise means Macmillan can help more people
with cancer live life as fully as they can*



Fundraising for
MACMILLAN
CANCER SUPPORT
RIGHT THERE WITH YOU

Organised in aid of Macmillan Cancer Support, registered charity in England and Wales (261017) Scotland (SC039907) and the Isle of Man (604). Also operating in Northern Ireland

**All Saints Stranton Craft Fair
26th October
10.00am – 3.00pm
In St Matthew's Community Centre Elwick Road**

**In aid of All Saints Church Stranton 900th Anniversary
Tower Restoration Appeal**

All Saints Stranton is holding a bonanza of a craft fair to raise funds for the Church Tower Restoration Appeal to celebrate the 900th anniversary of its founding.

There will be a variety of stalls from different towns including Hartlepool. There will be one stall from each category; Bag Stall, with bags by Sue, David's Photography with many view of local areas, Canny Crafters with fantastic Jams & Chutneys, Jewellery, Christmas Quilting, Sweet Stall, and many more.

There will be drinks & food served in the small hall, so you can sit and chat, then do a little Christmas shopping from our handmade craft stalls.

**We will need help in the kitchen and with the raffle and tombola.
If you can help please contact Trish in the Church Office**

The LORD himself goes before
you and will be with you; he will
never leave you nor forsake you.
Do not be afraid; do not be
discouraged.

Deuteronomy 31:8 (NIV UK)



ARE YOU, OR SOMEONE YOU KNOW, WORRIED ABOUT LOSING THE WINTER FUEL ALLOWANCE?

TRY CONTACTING THE LOCAL ENERGY ADVICE PARTNERSHIP (LEAP)

FREE ENERGY ADVICE

A new free energy advice service is now available across Hartlepool. The LEAP service can offer advice in your home or over the telephone:-

How to check your energy bills to ensure you're not paying too much for your energy

Give you hints and tips to reduce the amount of energy you use

Advise on how to set up your heating system to keep you warm and save money

Provide access to improvement grants to keep your home warm

Provide free energy saving measures – eg low energy light bulbs, draught excluders

Arrange a free appointment to help with benefits, debt and other money problems

ARE YOU ELIGIBLE?

The LEAP service is free if you:-

Have a low income – household income of less than £31,000 per annum

Receive Housing Benefit

Receive Universal Credit

Receive an income or disability related benefit

Receive Pension Guarantee or Pension Savings Benefit

Receive Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit

TO APPLY BY PHONE CALL 0800 060 7567

TO APPLY ON LINE – applyforleap.org.uk

Do you know anyone who may be eligible? Please pass on this information.

Andrew Rogers

I Corinthians 6:9-10 : Living in Love and Faith?

David Craig uses his background in the classics to share his thoughts on why he believes the Prayers of Love and Faith are not a Salvation issue

9 Do you not know that wrongdoers will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived! Fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, male prostitutes, sodomites, 10 thieves, the greedy, drunkards, revilers, robbers – none of these will inherit the kingdom of God.

Paul here in v.9 lists several types of people he regards as sinful, using two words in the original Greek text that are highly relevant, “malakoi” (the plural of “malakos”) and “arsenokoitai” (the plural of “arsenokoites”). People do not generally realise that the original languages of our Bible have no words equivalent to our English word “homosexual.” The concept of homosexuality, in the sense of a sexual orientation in the context of a caring relationship with others of the same gender, was unknown or at least not described or acknowledged in the ancient world. Instead, this I Corinthians list of perpetrators of vice includes words that describe sexual power dynamics and actions that were common in pagan male behaviour in the culture of the first century Roman Empire.

There is a contemporary non-biblical literary source that casts some light on sexual and religious practices in 1st Century Corinth: the Greek Geographer Strabo describes the city as a wealthy trading intersection for East – West sea and North - South land routes in the early Roman Empire. It was a place where races and cultures intermingled and where (as in many sea-ports) prostitution was viewed as a service for the visiting seafarers (Strabo actually makes a joke of this). But in an era when prostitution was regarded by pagan Greeks and Romans as a mostly unremarkable economic activity, Strabo makes a pointed remark about the scale of religious prostitution in the city: “And the temple of Aphrodite was so rich that it owned more than a thousand temple slaves, courtesans, whom both men and women had dedicated to the goddess. And therefore it was also on account of these women that the city was crowded with people and grew rich; for instance, the ship captains freely squandered their money, and hence the proverb, ““Not for every man is the voyage to Corinth.””

In establishing the early Churches, a concern of Paul’s was the risk that local believers could import damaging pagan practices (by a process called “syncretism”) in the adaptation of some familiar local pagan rituals into Christian worship. In other contexts, syncretism in spiritual

observance can sometimes help make the transition to faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour easier for new converts. You can see the historic effects of this process today for example in the earth and creation spirituality of the Celtic Church, in the adoption of pagan Yuletide and Roman Saturnalia symbolism into our Christmas celebrations, and in the adoption of aspects of Inca cosmology and imagery by the Roman Catholic Church in Peru including the apparent equation of the Inca mother goddess "Pachamama" with the Blessed Virgin Mary. It seems that Paul became aware of and alarmed by some converts seeking to bring across into their new faith some previous pagan fertility rites including "sacred" prostitution described by Strabo. Attempts by new converts to import pagan sexual practice and rituals into their faith community was absolutely unacceptable (because abusive and exploitative), and seems to be the reason why Paul felt the need to write so strongly.

In trying to understand the specific prohibitions Paul is listing here, our interpretation rests on two Greek words which don't translate easily into English. The first word is "malakoi", which literally means "soft" and is translated in the NRSV as "male prostitutes". During the first century, "malakos" generally referred to attributes such as laziness, degeneracy, decadence or lack of courage. In the patriarchal culture of that time, being called "soft (like a woman)" was a common insult. Romans believed that any man who was more interested in pleasure than in duty, was "woman-like" (in a bad sense). So Paul may be referring to men who were just weak or effeminate, such as those unfit for military service. In fact, the King James Version translates the word as "effeminate." But "malakoi" was also applied to male prostitutes, particularly young boys as disempowered partners in sexual acts initiated by older, powerful men. Married heterosexual men of upper class could "keep" a boy, often one who had been captured and castrated, for sexual pleasure. Paul may therefore have been referring specifically to male prostitutes rather than soft men in general, and this would certainly be appropriate in a list of sinners to be avoided. Of course, this sort of abuse would be abhorrent and intolerable to modern Christians, but either way 1 Corinthians does not refer at all to consensual relationships in same-sex couples.

The second Greek word is "arsenokoites," translated rather narrowly in NRSV as "Sodomites." Arsenokoites is a composite of two Greek words, arseno, meaning "male," and koites, meaning "bed," with the connotation of sexual intercourse. But when these two components of the word are put together, it may well refer specifically to a man who has sex with another man, or it may be referring to anyone having sex with a man

outside of marriage, including possibly a woman. It does refer to a person engaged in an immoral pagan ritual sexual act of some kind - but says nothing to make us read into it an underlying caring and lasting relationship between individuals.

This word is also extremely rare, appearing in only one other place in the Bible, (I Timothy). It is not found anywhere else in Greek literature prior to the first century, when these passages of scripture were written. It appeared in only a few writings after that, mostly in repetition of the vice list which appears in I Corinthians, without any further context to shed light on its meaning. There are a few stories in non-Biblical Greek literature that suggest the word refers to instances where one man uses superior authority, power or position to take sexual advantage of another. It is open therefore to conclude that the term refers either to forcible male-on-male sex, or to wider sexual exploitation involving prostitution. Another possible interpretation derives from the Septuagint (an early Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament), in which the two words “arseno” and “koites” are used separately in Leviticus to refer to a man lying with a man, leading to ritual uncleanness. Paul’s usage may simply be a shorthand way, in Greek, to repeat the prohibition in Leviticus 18:22, which is a specific injunction within Jewish purity laws alongside other prohibitions such as the “Kosher “rules for food.

In short, no one can be really sure what the words (that we have traditionally taken broadly to mean “homosexual”) in this scripture actually mean, but we can confidently agree that they refer to people engaged in abusive and transgressive pagan acts and observances, and also they do not in fact exclude long term stable loving relationships: the most that can be said, with certainty, is that the passage condemns sexual abuse and exploitation, a position with which all modern day Christians can readily agree.

David Craig

Revd John is celebrating a Big Birthday this year and invites all who are able, to join him for cake after the midweek service at St Luke’s on Wednesday 2nd October. Revd John will also be bringing cake along to St Columba’s on the Thursday morning (3rd) too for those able to join him.

**Are you planning a special celebration or party
and looking for a venue?**

**Have you thought about
St Matthew's Community Centre?**

**We have 2 large halls which can accommodate up to 140 persons
as well as 1 large and 2 small kitchens for your catering needs.**

**One hall is even big enough to house a bouncy castle –
ideal for children's parties.**

**We also have our own private car park and some outdoor space if you fancy
al fresco fun for your guests.**

**If you would like further information please call:
Trish Playfor (01429 894006) or 07305 550009 during office hours,
and we will be happy to help.**

**Steven McConnell
Roofing Contractor**

37 Greta Avenue
Hartlepool
TS25 5LE

Tel: 01429 221784

Fax: 01429 281609

Mobile 07850 925183

*Member of the National
Federation of Roofing
Contractors*



THE CARPET DOCTOR
COMMERCIAL & DOMESTIC
CARPET & UPHOLSTERY CLEANING

www.thecarpetdoctor.co.uk



TELEPHONE
01642 566551
Mobile 07770 451111

**BRABINER
CARPETS**

**249 – 251 YORK ROAD
HARTLEPOOL
TS26 9AD**

TEL: (01429) 272298

Established for over 75 years



Proud to support Stranton Church News

Please get in touch with your Print requirements

- DISC TO PRESS - PC & MAC • COMPUTER TO PLATE • FULL COLOUR PRINTING
- LAMINATING • PRINT MANAGEMENT • DIGITAL COPYING & PRINTING
- FULL FINISHING SERVICE • PUBLISHING & RETAIL

10/11 LOWER CHURCH STREET HARTLEPOOL TS24 7DJ

Tel: (01429) 267849

www.atkinsonprint.co.uk • enquiries@atkinsonprint.co.uk

LET US HELP YOU GET THROUGH YOUR LOSS

We'll guide and assist you through all the funeral arrangements.

Call us 24 hours a day.

**MASON'S & MEYNELL
FUNERAL DIRECTORS
01429 862021**

**129 Park Road, Hartlepool.
TS26 9HT**



**Do you need a
Helping Hand?**

Our Stranton care team has been providing award winning quality home care since 1989.

We offer you a one to one live in care service which enables you or your loved one to remain at home with compassion and dignity.

**To find out more, call:
0808 180 1033 or visit:
www.helpinghands.co.uk**

**Keith Walker
Ophthalmic Opticians**

**28 Victoria Road, Hartlepool
Tel: 01429 275551**

Hartlepool & District Hospice

Provides free palliative care for patients.
Offers of voluntary help are always welcome ,
as are donations.

Please contact us at:

**Alice House Wells Avenue
Hartlepool. TS24 9DA
Tel: 01429 855555**



Stranton Business Centre

Accountancy, Taxation and Payroll

49 Stockton Road
Hartlepool
TS25 1TX

Telephone: 01429 280444
Email: office.admin@strantonbusiness.co.uk
www.strantonbusiness.co.uk

Joanna's Poochies Paradise

147 Elwick Road
Hartlepool
TS26 9BW

**Pet Shop
&
Dog Grooming**

01429 270056



CAN YOU HELP?

We are looking to get a team of people together to help support the Friday Drop In, part of the work of the Central Hartlepool Group's Mission Project, which is your mission project too.

This is an activity that is dear to Emma Cain's heart and we would like to ensure this continues in her absence, as she and the family recover from their car accident and grieve the loss of Sarah. The Drop In runs at St Aidan's every Friday morning from 10am to 12pm. Please, if you can help with this in any way (even if it's just for one Friday morning, or the odd hour here and there), then please get in touch with Revd John, Revd Becky or Kathrine Batty. We hope to be able to put together a rota of people who can keep this important lifeline to the community going during this time. Thank you to all who have already volunteered.

Birds Of The Air Quiz

- B** Which **B** a disciple is associated with a massacre?
- I** Which **I** book has 66 chapters and possibly three authors?
- R** Which **R** is God's covenant with Noah?
- D** Which **D** was a judge?
- S** What **S** was lost in a parable Jesus told?

- O** What **O** is a mount?
- F** What **F** was a plague?

- T** Which **T** had a gospel found in 1945?
- H** Which **H** was a prophet in reign of Darius?
- E** Which **E** lodged in Zarephath?

- A** Which **A** spoke to Nathaniel about Jesus?
- I** Which **I** was married to Rebekah?
- R** Which **R** was parted as the Hebrews left Egypt?

Gardening News – Autumn

I am going to break with tradition and start this offering with wildlife, as I have some very exciting news. We have acquired a resident magpie, who is called 'Jet' and who has been visiting regularly over the summer months. His visits (I chose the name and decided it suited a male magpie rather than a female, hence his assumed male gender) take the form of tapping on the front door with his beak, followed by tapping very insistently on the glass panels on either side of the door and looking in through the glass as if demanding entry. He then struts from side to side of the door, repeating this performance until he finally gives up. Recently we have also spotted him carrying out the same performance on a neighbour's bedroom window ledge. Perhaps he just likes looking at himself and is inviting us to admire him too? It was quite disconcerting at first, as we kept thinking someone was knocking on the door, but then the mystery was solved when we caught him in the act. However, he never visits when there is someone else visiting. How does he know? Interestingly (you can judge for yourselves), on a recent visit to the Dickens Museum in London, I learned that caged birds such as ravens were popular pets in Victorian times amongst both the working class and the wealthy. In fact Dickens himself had three successive pet ravens, all called 'Grip', which used to sit on his shoulder, both in his house and on walks outside. One of them even travelled to America with him! Pet birds, including Grip, appear in several of his works. I could go on, but suspect this may be information overload. I must say, however, to any Dickens fans out there that the museum is well worth a visit – with lots of original furniture, portraits and artefacts, including the great man's desk where he wrote his many literary works, as well as letters and manuscripts.

Continuing with the wildlife theme closer to home, I recently had an unwelcome double encounter with our own wildlife. It was one of the last hot, sunny days at the end of August, so I decided to make the most of it by having my morning cup of tea (made with Carnation milk – you have to try it) in the garden. I set my cup down on the grass while I fetched a chair to sit on and, by the time I got back to my tea, a kamikaze fly had landed in it. Undeterred, later on I took my lunch out into the garden, sat down, this time under a tree (alas we don't have woodland or an orchard – this is *the* tree) and a large green incredible hulk of a caterpillar fell from *the* tree and landed on the tray that was (luckily – otherwise it would have landed on me) on my knee. I appreciate wildlife, but prefer them not to be quite so up close and personal and this definitely crossed a line.

And so, to gardening For me, the main event of summer is the roses

and, after complaining bitterly about all the rain we had in June and July, I have to admit that it seems to have done them good. They have blossomed better than ever and are still going strong now, mid-September. One of my favourite gardens to visit is Newby Hall, near Ripon, where there are roses galore, including a rose-covered pergola, which is magnificent, especially if you catch it at just the right time. Newby is also famous for its long border and its collection of Cornus (Dogwood) trees, which are covered in white or pink star-shaped flowers in Spring and early Summer, but there is an Autumn garden and a double border of dahlias and chrysanthemums, which continue to provide lots of colour at this time of year. I wish I had room for them – maybe we don't need so much grass?!

Of course, most of the gardens I visit sell plants and I rarely come away without some new plants for my garden. The only problem is I keep buying them even when I don't really have room for them. Then, when I think I have found a space, I find that it is already occupied by bulbs! This also happens with the church border and I often have to re-bury the bulbs that I inadvertently dig up.

My borders are now starting to fade, so I am trying to keep some colour going for as long as possible with pots and hanging baskets. (If you want advice on pots, though, I suggest asking our editor, who has a plethora of healthy potted plants!) Of course, they have to be watered and fed and the neighbours probably think I'm mad if they see me watering them when it has just rained, is about to rain or is actually raining, the reason being that I have plant food in the water. When it isn't raining, I enjoy my evening ritual of watering, deadheading and, of course, smelling the roses, which I am convinced have a stronger scent at night, and I have been known to sneak into the garden late at night to test this theory.

To end with, I bring you the well-known poem by Dorothy Frances Gurney*, 'God's Garden', which I am sure will make more sense than what has gone before:

“The kiss of the sun for pardon,
The song of the birds for mirth,
One is nearer God's heart in a garden
Than anywhere else on earth.”

*Another interesting(?) fact, Dorothy wrote poems and hymns, the most well-known of which is 'O Perfect Love'. Now you know.

Pam Stockton

I Still Haven't Found What I'm Looking For... (The September musings of a priest)

I recently enjoyed a couple of weeks off exploring Snowdonia and the North Wales coastline, as well as travelling across to Ireland, and as I was preparing the sermon for my first Sunday back, I was reminded of the U2 song "I still haven't found what I'm looking for". It was quite apt, because it has lines about climbing the highest mountain and scaling city walls, both of which I did in Wales. It might have taken me 24 years rather than 24 hours but I can now officially say I have completed the 3 Peaks—4 when you include Slieve Donard in Northern Ireland as well. I began just after finishing Uni with Ben Nevis, back in 2000. Slieve Donard came next in 2012, Scafell Pike in 2018, and finally Snowdon just a few weeks ago.

I've spoken before about how much I see God in the world He created—it never fails to inspire me. Perhaps that's because it gives me a glimpse of God, but I don't get to see all of Him. It helps me come to know God that little bit more, but I still don't fully understand Him.

It's one of the reasons the U2 song struck a chord with me—I keep drawing closer to God, but I still haven't found what I'm looking for. And I don't think I or any of us will, this side of the Kingdom. Even then, I'm not sure any of us will ever fully understand or know all there is to know about our God. I think there will always be something that's just out of reach, something that keeps us wanting to draw closer to Him, to keep on looking for something more. So wherever you find God in the world around you, keep searching.

Grace and Peace, **Revd John**





Boys Brigade



Harvest Festival & Bacon Butty Day

All the Sections have produced a display based on Birds of the Air and Seek ye First and these will be on display for the Harvest Service at Stranton Church on 29th September.



Before the service we were offering 'Bacon Butties Sunday' at St Matthew's Community Centre from 10.00 - 10.45am, so ALL are welcome to enjoy one! ☐

Recruiting

We need new starters in all Sections but especially in Anchor Boys (5½years to 8 years old)

We would also welcome more adult help.

Please contact George Bainbridge 07816445829 if you have any questions

Plans for the New Boys Brigade Sessions

These include the Harvest Festival, Remembrance Day Display, Band, ensuring our new structure of NCO's works, our world famous Christmas Fayre on Saturday 30th November - you know the one with BARGAINS GALORE!!!! and a Christmas Carol Service at Stranton Church on Friday December 13th.

Longer term there is also planning for Camp next year but at the time of writing no venue has yet been booked.

If you want to see us in action why not visit our page book page?

George Bainbridge

Emphasis slowly moves to helping poor people feed themselves by conquering debt through budgeting

A DELAYED SURPRISE awaited 28 guests of an away-day planned by Hartlepool Foodbank trustees – and you could feel the room in the Hospital of God admin block sit up straight when it popped up on screen. It was, at first sight, merely a set of statistics explaining the background effect of the first year’s work of West View Advice & Resource Centre, an outreach partner of the town foodbank.

But when the conference representatives of a dozen other help agencies heard presenter Katherine Parker describe the value of the work with local people and put a price on savings the centre had made for them in 12 months, the room was abuzz.

Katherine modestly excused introducing statistics to the report and told her audience: “Sorry, I’m a stats person!”

But the conference cheered her on as she demonstrated how the resource centre’s work helping local people cope with debt and struggle with the idea of a weekly budget had translated into far more than £100,000 in savings for families and individuals in the community.

There were other benefits to show as well.

The stats and talk became a topic in break-out groups and over lunch – a major success of the Foodbank’s wider thinking about debt and how to work at eliminating real poverty in the town.

The project – part of the national Trussell Trust whose target is to end hunger by working with communities – is challenging itself to help end the need for foodbanks.

The five-year development plan, started in 2022, is about half-way through its mission to empower Hartlepool people to meet their own needs and no longer have to use foodbanks. It amounts to making foodbanks redundant by eliminating the need for them – helping families to support themselves.

Foodbank staff and trustees work with Hartlepool Food Council, which it helped establish, to work with partners in town and is, the project believes, an aim to share with the rest of the North East and the nation.

Among the Wednesday, September 18th away-day audience in Greatham’s Hospital of God charity were Redcar Foodbank, several other food providers, community kitchens and innovative ventures helping families to afford putting meals on the table. Hartlepool Churches Together, who set up the foodbank 10 years ago, were also represented. Four Catholic churches are listed among 21 member churches.

One of them is a Community Shop, sponsored by and sited at Oxford Road Baptist Church. Two inspiring advocates encouraged conference members to join: "It's for everyone," Violet and Colin urged. A £5 bag of groceries and £5 membership fee helps support the venture, make foodstuff affordable for less well-off shoppers and reinforces their personal dignity and respect.

A donation now and again further helps underpin running costs of the shop. The church has committed to raising £37,000 to maintain the enterprise.

The away day also enabled Foodbank chairman of trustees the Revd Dr Andrew Craig, project co-ordinator Lisa Lavender and deputy Hilary Sowden to outline the rewards and challenges of the service – increasing number of weekly food parcels the centre provides, the contest of buying food to meet demand as supporters' food donations have declined, and managing the warehouse and service points with greater attendances.

They were supported by Trussell's regional co-ordinator Abi Knowles, who worked at the Hartlepool project before taking on wider responsibilities in 2023. As part of her presentation, Abi introduced the new branding for Trussell which has dropped the word Trust from its name and launched a simpler logo.

John Bailey

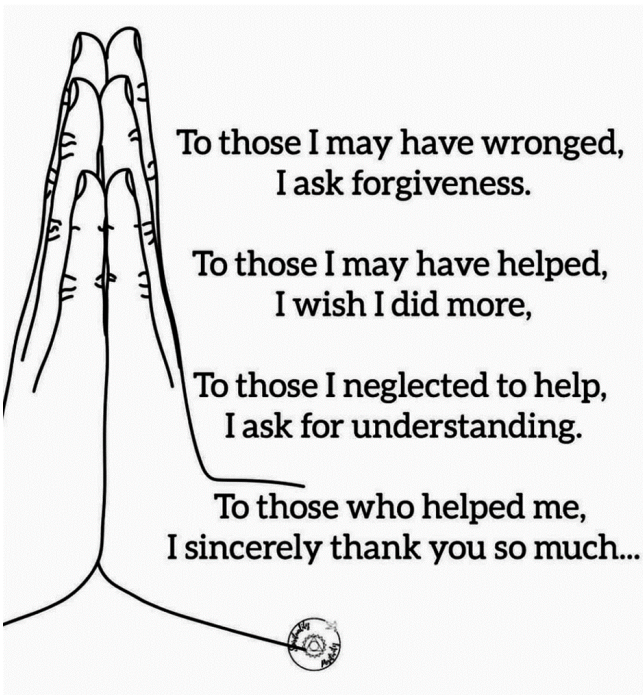
by permission of *Northern Cross and John Bailey*

Birds Of The Air Quiz Answers

B	Which B a disciple is associated with a massacre?	Bartholemew
I	Which I book has 66 chapters and possibly three authors?	Isaiah
R	Which R is God's covenant with Noah?	Rainbow?
D	Which D was a judge?	Deborah
S	What S was lost in a parable Jesus told?	Sheep
O	What O is a mount?	Olives
F	What F was a plague?	frogs
T	Which T had a gospel found in 1945?	Thomas
H	Which H was a prophet in reign of Darius?	Haggai
E	Which E lodged in Zarephath?	Elijah
A	Which A spoke to Nathaniel about Jesus?	Andrew
I	Which I was married to Rebakah?	Isaac
R	Which R was parted as the Hebrews left Egypt?	Red Sea

Ward Jackson Update

Tugboats and Norlina class had so much fun exploring the beach this afternoon. They discussed coastal features, hunted for rocks and applied their pre learning to look for things that can only be found at the beach. A super fun filled learning experience for all! 🌈



When I go

When I go
don't learn to live without me
just learn to live with my love in
a different way.
And if you need to see me close
your eyes
or look in your shadow when the
sun shines
I'm there.
Sit with me in the quiet and you
will know that I did not leave.
There is no leaving when a soul is
blended with another.
When I go
don't learn to live without me
just learn to look for me in the
moments.
I will be there.

-Donna Ashworth, from 'LOSS'

Musical Solace and Memories

How many of you can recall Peter Skellern and his musical entertainments on the telly, radio and records. He had that unusual style and combination of writing his songs and music for vocal, piano and quite often a Brass Band accompaniment. I think he made his first impact with his song “You’re a Lady”, with the now defunct Hanwell Band as his backing.



Over the past few months I have looked a little more closely at his career and found that just before his death, from an inoperable brain tumour, in 2017, he was ordained as a Priest in the Anglican Church, by special dispensation of the Archbishop of Canterbury. He had for many years been involved in his local church in Cornwall.

One of my late wife Jane’s favourite singers was Alexander Armstrong and on one of his CDs we found Peter Skellern’s “Hymn Song”, which was played as a reflective item at her funeral service. (Upon a different shore Tracks 13 and 14)

The hymn tune St Clement (The Day Thou Gavest) is used with both a Brass Band and choral backing, with the soloist accompanied on the piano to a counter melody.

When like some ember I gradually fade out and die
Who’s going to stand there and cry?
Which one of my friends, will know where the book
Ends: will know how to say goodbye?

Quite poignant and thought provoking words for that sad occasion.

So where does this fit with this piece about “solace and memories?”

Back in the days of Covid lockdown I spent some time in writing on all sorts of topics, mainly for our newsletter at Weston Methodist Church. One of these was a form of Desert Island discs, which I circulated to a few friends, with my choices and a request for theirs. Sadly the response was not great and I received only a couple of replies.

As an exercise it was interesting and I guess if it were to be repeated today the choices might be a little or even totally different.

I think the choice of music depends a great deal, not only of pleasant memories, but also a reflection of a particular set of circumstances prevailing at the time of choosing and writing about them. Hence my

particular interest in Peter Skellern, not only for the words of his songs but also his musical input in the choice of accompaniment. Perhaps there is one piece which is particularly relevant and comforting. It is an anthem “Rest in Peace (and rise in Glory)”. This was commissioned by the BBC for the Songs of Praise Remembrance Day service of 2001, “to commemorate not only the dead of two World Wars and all other conflicts, but also the victims of the September 11th atrocities in America”.

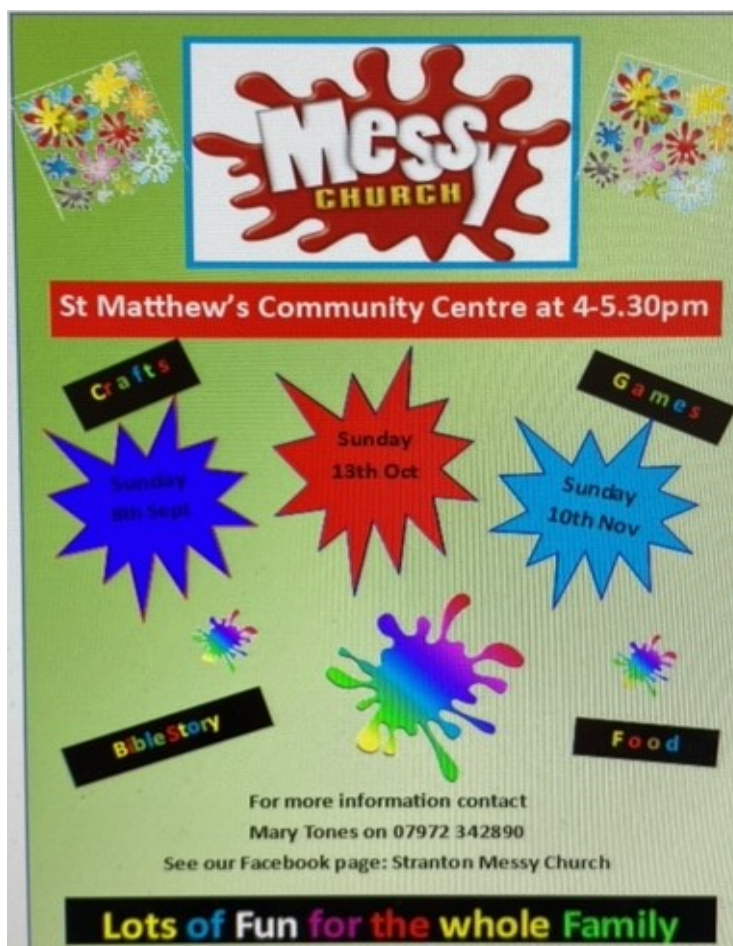
Though the title comes from the Anglican Liturgy, the God to whom this anthem is addressed is not just a Christian God but the creator of all things and all mankind. Its purpose is to help with grieving, both private and public.

For all who need comfort, for all those who mourn, all those whom we cherish will be reborn..... And Lord keep them safe in your embrace, and fill their souls with your good grace, for now they can see you face to face, where they rest in Peace and rise in Glory.

(Available on BBC Songs of Praise CD WMEF 0069-2)

**Jeff Parsons © in conversation with J Cornelius Starbuck
September 2024**

Editor – I had never heard the Peter Skellern piece -look it up on Google, it is lovely)



CELEBRATE!

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

October

Daniel Bell
Seeley Bruce
Mia Bruce
Kat Bruce
Rob Butler
Lydia Boyd
Ewan Craig
Autumn Farrow
James Harker
Rebekah Grosvenor
Georgina Parvin Guerreiro
Joan Hill
Ken Shepherd
Will Spoor
Pam Stockton
Asher Thornhill
Gehan Wanduragala
Jean Waller



.....
50th Birthday
Wishes
Revd John Bell
.....

.....
Wedding Anniversary
Peter & Maureen Anderson
Duncan & Trish Playfor
.....

If you have something to celebrate we would love to share it - email
admin@stranton-church.org.uk
or phone 894006.

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

Dates for the Diary

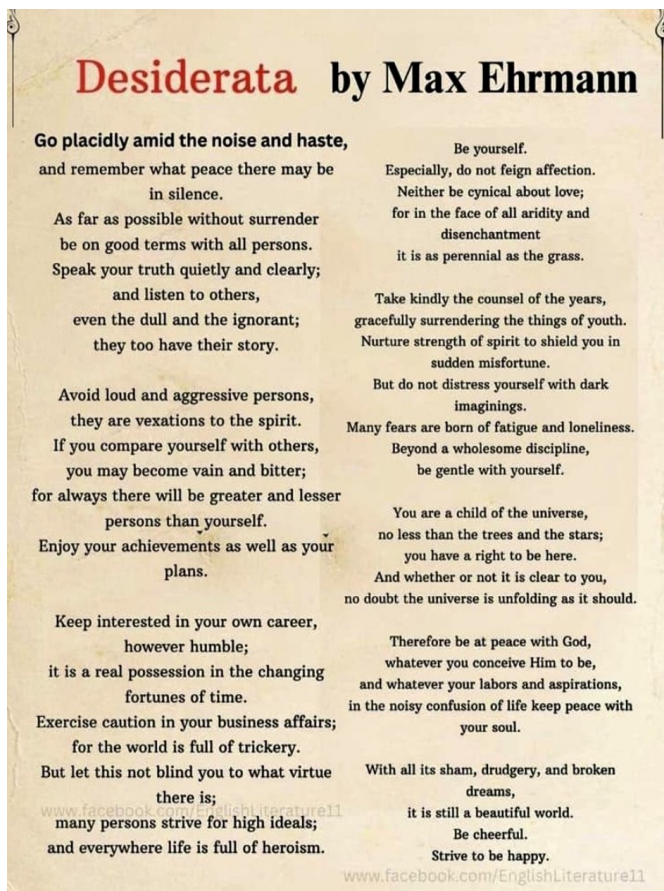
Diary Dates

October

Sat 5 th	Macmillan Coffee, Cake & Company St Matthew's CC	2.00-4.00pm
Sat 13 th	Messy Church St Matthew's CC	4.00-5.30pm
Sun 20 th	St Luke's Patronal Service, Joint Morning Service	9.30am
Sat 26 th	Craft Fair St Matthew's CC	10.00am – 3.00pm

November

Sat 2 nd	All Souls service	St Luke's	6.00pm
Sun 3 rd	All Saints service	St Aidan's	3.00pm
		Stranton	4.00pm
Sun 10 th	Remembrance Day	Stranton	11.00am



Zach W. Lambert
@ZachWLambert

There are two kinds of
"everyone is welcome"
churches:

1. Everyone is welcome to conform to the church's image of what a Christian looks like.
2. Everyone is welcome to fully embody the unique image God created them to be.

Run away from the first and run toward the second.

Who's Who

Church Office	St Matthew's Community Centre Arncliffe Gardens TS26 9JF
Administrator	Trish Playfor "Tues- Fri, 9.00 to 11.00am" 01429 894006 or 07305 550009 E-Mail: admin@stranton-church.org.uk Web Site: www.stranton-church.org.uk
To contact clergy by E-mail	E-Mail: clergy@stranton-church.org.uk

Priest in Charge 34A Westbourne Road 07512 481115
Revd. John Bell
Email: revdjohnbell@stranton-church.org.uk

Reader
Mary Tones 40a Blakelock Road 07972 342890

St Aidan's & Columba's Church

Priest in Charge
Revd. Becky Reeve 5 Tunstall Avenue 01429 617358
Email: revbeckystaidanandcolumba@gmail.com

Churches Together in Hartlepool

Secretary Susan Atkinson,
St Mary's RC

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

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 Ken Shepherd 251 Park Road 268007

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

St Matthew's Booking Trish Playfor Church Office 894006

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

