

Stranton and Burbank Community

SIGNPOST



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

April 2025

Are you a sunflower?

As I write this I am buoyed up by the glorious sunshine outside my window, and the way that it lights up the plants in my garden and brings out all their colours and patterns. It has been a long winter but finally the sun is back!

This has got me thinking about something Rowan Williams said about how prayer works, and how it is like lying on a beach sunbathing. When you're lying on the beach, he argues, "something is happening, something that has nothing to do with how you feel or how hard you're trying. You're not going to get a better tan by screwing up your eyes and concentrating. You give the time, and that's it. All you have to do is turn up. And then things change, at their own pace. You simply have to be there where the light can get at you." Christians talk about repenting, which can sometimes be taken to mean beating yourself up about being an awful person and then trying through an effort of will to somehow be better, a kind of pulling yourself up by your bootstraps. But I think that the kind of repenting that Jesus would have wanted us to do is much more like what Rowan Williams says about prayer. Jesus knows that we can't change who we are on our own without outside help - after all, if we could there would have been no need for Jesus to come in the first place. He just wants us to keep turning back to God, like sunflowers turning to follow the sun. He wants us to keep lying in God's sunshine, to let his sunshine get to us and make changes in us. And God will work through anyone who is open to him - you don't have to be a Christian; you don't have to go to church (although I personally think it helps!). Maybe your version of sunbathing is walking the dog in nature, or doing some form of mindfulness, or sitting in your garden, or just a quiet cup of tea in the garden. Whether we are religious or not these times are important and help us to reboot and connect into a world which is bigger than ourselves. So next time you see the sun twinkling outside your window why not take a moment to pause and just be, or better still - get out and enjoy it!

Revd Becky



From the Home Front

You may recall last month I wrote about my 103 year old 'Aunt' who we had managed to track down as we only had her house landline number and no other contact. We were able to visit her just before she died. She was born in Hartlepool and apart from when she was in the Wrens during the war and when she retrained in Leeds she lived here until she married late in life when she and her husband both retired. She then moved to Cumbria, her husband's place of birth. She never really settled there and after her husband's death and as her health failed she hankered to return to Hartlepool. However she found the prospect of moving house overwhelming so she remained in Cumbria, but did return to Hartlepool on occasions to visit her cousin and my parents.

Since her death we have discovered so many unknowns about my Aunt's life. She seemed to have kept the people in her life in separate compartments. Rarely did they overlap and she rarely, if ever, referred to other friends. It was only towards the very end of her life (her 100th birthday celebration) that some groups of people actually met with each other, despite her efforts to keep all apart.

The follow-on to her death equated to doors opening and all the people behind them finally emerging to discover who were the other participants in her life and that in reality she had a wider circle of friends and extended family than anyone realised! My family discovered a goddaughter (whose mother had known Auntie since they attended ballet classes as children), her cousin's daughter (who we knew about from our shared Stranton past), friends and neighbours in Cumbria who we had vaguely heard about, a man in Hartlepool (his mother worked with Auntie and who she had visited throughout her life), a lady who worked with her in the library (we didn't know she had worked in the library!), church friends who had cared for her in her final years (we had met them when they had brought Auntie to our mother's funeral). Auntie ensured that few people were able to be in contact any of the others! She was a very private person.

She could so easily have died alone, she could so easily have been buried with just the undertakers in attendance. But the undertaker (who was a friend of my aunt), through those of us who had become aware of each other, managed to arrange a fitting funeral celebration in Cumbria, albeit with a eulogy restricted in information; plus a loving and personal burial ceremony here in Hartlepool. God's hand was on my Aunt even in death. Love for our Aunt pulled us all together and we were able to pool our memories and find the connections which threaded through all of our lives, through generations. A Christian faith lasting a long lifetime but touching so many others...

No Man Is an Island

No man is an island,
Entire of itself;
Every man is a piece of the continent,
A part of the main.

If a clod be washed away by the sea,
Europe is the less,
As well as if a promontory were:
As well as if a manor of thy friend's
Or of thine own were.

Any man's death diminishes me,
Because I am involved in mankind.
And therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls;
It tolls for thee.

John Donne

J.A.R.

.Maundy Thursday: What is it and how is it celebrated?



These are the Maundy coins, traditionally handed out to members of the public by the monarch on the last Thursday before Easter.

Maundy Thursday is the Thursday before Easter, believed to be the day when Jesus celebrated his final Passover with His disciples. Most notably, that Passover meal was when Jesus washed the feet of His disciples in an extraordinary display of humility. He then commanded them to do the same for each other. This year it will take place on 17th April.

What Does Maundy Thursday Mean?

Christ's "mandate" is commemorated on Maundy Thursday-"maundy" being a shortened form of mandatum (Latin), which means "command." It was on the Thursday of Christ's final week before being crucified and resurrected that He said this commandment to His disciples. Jesus and his disciples had just shared what was known as the Last Supper and He was washing their feet when he stated:

"A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another" (John 13:34).

What Was the New Commandment Given on Maundy Thursday?

Well, for one thing, it raised the definition of love to a new and higher standard. Jesus sacrificially met His followers' deepest need-that of new spiritual life and the forgiveness of sins. He even loved His enemies, and He calls us to show love to those who don't appear to deserve it. Just as Jesus loved sinners "to the end" (or "to the max" John 13:1) when He had nothing to gain from them, so must we. The Bible says that there was nothing attractive about sinful mankind that drew Him to love us. God loved us while we were yet *sinners* (Romans 5:8). Salvation is not only a wonderful gift that protects us from the penalty that we deserve Romans 6:23, the work of Christ also imbues new life, grants spiritual strength, and motivates godly action in those who believe:

While Scripture doesn't forbid us to commemorate days like Maundy Thursday, the main question is are we observing Christ's new command to love-especially those who deserve it least?

"Beloved, let us love one another. For love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love." (1 John 4:7-8)

Many churches observe Maundy Thursday with a Communion service and a foot-washing ceremony. These traditions help Christians reflect on the sacrifice of Jesus and his commandment for us to love and serve others.

What Does Communion Have to Do with Maundy Thursday?

Often, during communion, a pastor will read the following passage about what happened on the events of Maundy Thursday:

1 Corinthians 11:23-26: *"For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, 'This is my body, which is for you; do this in*

remembrance of me.” In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me.” For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes.”

How is Maundy Thursday celebrated?

In many countries the day is known as Holy Thursday and is a public holiday. It is a key day in the Christian calendar and marks the end of Lent, a time for reflection for Christians that follows Shrove Tuesday, or Pancake Day. Maundy Thursday is part of Holy Week and is always the last Thursday before Easter.

To celebrate Maundy Thursday, the Pope - who is the head of the Roman Catholic Church - traditionally washes and kisses the feet of 12 people - usually members of the church.



What happens on Maundy Thursday in the UK?

Maundy Thursday in the United Kingdom features the monarch offering Maundy money, also known as Royal Maundy, to selected senior citizens – one man and one woman for each year of the monarch’s age. The monarch presents each man and woman with a red and white purse during the service. The red purse traditionally contains an allowance for clothing and provisions and the white purse holds Maundy coins to match the monarch’s age.

The number of gifts he gives represents his age, so in 2025 he will give a Maundy gift to 76 men and 76 women.

In 2023, King Charles did it for the first time as the monarch with his wife, Queen Camilla. In 2024 the King wasn't able to attend public events while he had treatment for cancer, so he recorded a message that was played at the service at Worcester Cathedral. Queen Camilla was instead at the service, where she handed out Maundy money.

King Charles will attend the Maundy service at Durham Cathedral in 2025.

Many church services, particularly in many Catholic and Anglican churches, are held in the evenings. They may involve the blessing of oils used for sacraments. Services on this day usually reflect on the story of the Last Supper, which is told in the Christian bible. This day also commemorates the story of Jesus washing his disciples’ feet. Some priests or ministers may wash the feet of some congregation members in memory of this event.

Sources – BBC, timeanddate, Christianity.com

Holy Week Easter Quiz Part 1

- 1) Which city did Jesus visit?
- 2) What did Jesus ride ?
- 3) What was it a sign of?
- 4) What was waved, laid and shouted?
- 5) What had they turned into a den of robbers?
- 6) Who agreed to betray Jesus?
- 7) For how much?
- 8) Where did the Last Supper take place?
- 9) What did the bread and wine represent?
- 10) Who was the high priest?

Easter Quiz Part 2

- 11) What was the court called?
- 12) How many times did Peter deny Jesus?
- 13) Why did they have to take Jesus to the Roman Governor?
- 14) Who was the Roman Governor?
- 15) Who was the puppet king?
- 16) Who was chosen to be set free by the crowd?
- 17) How did the Governor demonstrate he knew Jesus was innocent of all the charges?
- 18) What was put on Jesus head?
- 19) Who helped Jesus carry the cross?
- 20) Who were crucified with Jesus?

Easter Quiz Part 3

- 21) When Jesus was arrested how was he betrayed?
- 22) What was the name of the Garden?
- 23) What was the name of the guard who had his ear cut off?
- 24) What did the soldiers gamble for?
- 25) What happened to the weather?
- 26) What did the Roman Centurion say about Jesus as he died?
- 27) Who provided the tomb?
- 28) What was rolled across it?
- 29) Who was the first person at the tomb on the third day?
- 30) Who was the gardener?

Cell Groups come to Hartlepool....

What is a cell group?

When I first came to faith I found myself overwhelmed with a whole new world of books of the Bible, strange churchy rituals and a new language full of words I had never heard before and didn't know what they meant. Luckily for me I went to a church with a well-established culture of cell groups, which meant that I immediately had a ready-made church family to help me navigate the strange new world I had found myself in.



there I Am in the midst

The concept of cell groups is as old as the Bible, with early Christians meeting regularly in each other's houses to share fellowship and prayer. What marks a cell group apart from a run of the mill house group is that they expect to grow and change. Groups start deliberately on the small side, so that there is space to invite new people in and to welcome people new to the church to join. This avoids the cliques which can be a danger of homegroups which stay static for many years. Once a group grows from its starting size of 6-8 people to 10-12, it splits (like a cell) into 2 new cell groups, and starts all over again.

So what do you do in a cell group?

A cell group is designed to provide you with a community within a community-giving you a group of people who walk through life with you, pray with you, support you when the going is tough and celebrate with you on the good days. Sessions start with a good chunk of time to check in and share how the week has been, and to ask for prayer. After a time of prayer the main section of the evening is spent with some kind of focus. This could be anything, from exploring different ways to pray, to learning more about the Bible, or exploring theology, or knotty questions about discipleship. We will decide how to use the time depending on the interests of the people who attend. The evening closes with more prayer and a blessing for the coming days.

What is the point?

Being in a cell group is shown to be the best way to develop your discipleship, pray more and go deeper in your faith. It is also a great boost for morale to know that there is a group of people who have your back and are praying for you. Groups offer a way to integrate people new to the church into our communities, and to build ties and relationships across all of our churches. They are also very supportive places to develop confidence to take a first step in leadership, running part or all of a session, so they are great for supporting new vocations. Cell groups are a place that you can invite neighbours, friends, family or workmates who express an interest in faith but who might not be ready to come to a full Sunday service.

I can still remember the way my faith came alive week by week, as I met with my cell group and we explored the things I had heard about in church. I would love for as many of you to also have the experience of journeying in faith as part of a group. Our first group is likely to start on Thursday 8th May – all are welcome.

Revd. Becky

Burn Out



I'm sat on a camping chair by a stunning lake, something that Monet would have painted!

I'm dressed in my swimming costume and dry robe. It's not a warm day, neither is it freezing. More women and a scattering of men have gathered, ready to immerse themselves in cold water. I noticed a whispered hush around the lake. I'm told by my friend that this lake is assigned for quiet dipping! I sat staring not really feeling anything. Other than an exhaustion that consumes my whole body and mind.



My dear friend held my hand and with tears in her eyes said "You look broken".

I reacted immediately and said "I'm not broken I'm just a little bruised. Don't cry for me I'll be ok!" At that I strip off the heavy warm dry robe and say "I'm going in". Obviously avoiding any further awkward conversation pertaining to my state of mind!!

I tentatively walk down the old wooden steps. The cold creeps up my legs. I launch out into the lake, I gasp as the chilly of the water seeps into my skin. I think of nothing but moving my limbs. I notice the pale pink flowers pointing out of the lily pads. There's an island of

them and I swim around them. With each breast stroke my fingertips touch the edge of a pad. I hear people talking and want to tell them to "Be quiet. Don't you know this is a quiet lake?" I swim around till my body tells me that I am cold and need to leave the sacred water. I walk out and a young worker is boldly walking around the groups of people reminding them to be quiet!

My friend is now in the water so I try to get warm by putting on layers. I tell myself that I will go back in the lake so I haven't removed my soaking wet costume. I sit shivering then remember that I cannot get warm with a wet costume clinging to my skin. By the time I am fully dry and wrapping myself in a blanket lunch has been prepared in front of me. I am usually the feeder, but this act of delightful kindness makes me tear up. I sit with a plate of deliciousness on my knee and a coot starts to pad towards me. The closeness of this water bird overwhelms me with emotion. I tell myself all this emotion is the result of being tired! Then remember other soul friends telling me that I need to take time off before I am forced to! I am disappointed in myself that I haven't had a second dip. I drive back from the lake almost in a daze. I know that my body and mind are exhausted as usually I would describe in detail my day to my hubby. Instead, I flopped on the bed and closed my eyes.

After a few days I meet up with more heart holding friends, they repeated what they told me last time we met, that I need to take time off. Their

persistence and concerned looks, makes me agree with them and so I say “I’ll take a couple of weeks off “. When I sit with my husband, who I work with on a voluntarily basis and share how I am really feeling. He grasps it and says “Take all the time you need.”

For the past 18 months I had been working along side him, my vicar husband! We had moved from our lives, jobs and church where we had been living for 15 years. I threw myself into everything. Leading prayer meetings, leading worship, hosting people who wanted to come on retreats. I love people and new challenges so it didn’t feel like it was chore, until it was!

Describing burn out is not easy. I felt washed out, had brain fog and I wanted to hide from everyone. Most days I sat watching tv, or walking by the sea desperately hoping that I wouldn’t bump into anyone I knew! I felt like I had no energy for anything. I napped daily. My lakeside heart holder and truth telling friend encouraged me to take ALL the time I needed off. She also encouraged me to talk to a nurse to see if anything else was going on with my body! Resting did not come easy to me. I was brought up to do, do, do. I believed wrongly that God loved me more, when I was serving Him.

So what would my relationship with God look like if I did nothing for Him? I couldn’t go to home group or prayer meetings. I couldn’t cope with people talking. When anyone would talk to me describing anything in detail, my brain would feel like cotton wool and I could no longer compute what they were saying! My response to anyone close to me explaining anything in detail would be “You’re using too many words”. At the beginning of 2024 I had started to read the Bible through in a year. Why? I thought it’s a good Christian thing to do!! I was six months in, literally reading chunks of scripture each day. During my not doing anything period, I still wanted to tick off my readings for the day so I struggled on. One night I couldn’t sleep I felt God say to me “I want you to stop the Bible plan”. I screamed in my mind, “I’m six months in, what am I supposed to do then?”

He said “ Read psalm 46:9 every day. ‘Be still and know that I am God.’ I immediately deleted the bible reading plan from my phone and it was like I had been given a spiritual pass! All my life I have been told to read the bible and pray. I read that verse daily in different versions until it sunk in. Mostly I got the word over and over just ‘BE.’ I didn’t know how to do that. I felt I had to go back to basics with God and relearn what it meant to be a follower of Jesus, a child of God. I want to say that I have learnt the following, but I know that this will be something I will have to continuously relearn - I do not have to earn His love or forgiveness or acceptance. I have to just let Him love me. A burden lifted when I accepted that I needed rest and accepted medical help. For so long, I was accepting symptoms of menopause and trying to combat symptoms with natural remedies. I started taking HRT and after a month started to slowly feel more like me again. I continued not to ‘Do.’ After another month I started letting people back in. I started seeing people again. It was

nerve racking. I didn't know how to explain to anybody what I had been going through. A soul friend described me as being a ship and the ship is in dock and it needs some work on it. I took this picture and thought yes, I am in the dock and Jesus is taking the barnacles off me. Then I realised that actually my ship needed a complete overhaul.

I feel that these last few months the overhaul has been and will continue to be:

- Fear being demolished.
- Religious spirit being stripped off.
- Striving needed to go overboard and drown.
- Opinions of others needed to be scrubbed off.

I needed to remember, I was firmly anchored in Jesus. No matter what I did or did not do for Him. I realise that this burn out or deconstruction was a time of me being rebuilt. I had to relearn so many things, but through it all I realise nothing was wasted. Now as I re-launch I am learning to go slowly in the direction my captain wants me to take. I am not rushing back into doing, I am learning a lot about self-care and that it is not selfish to take rest breaks and am still learning that I don't have to say "Yes" to everybody".

Ang Hall

*St Matthew's
Community Centre
Elwick Road*



Coffee or Tea, Cake and Company

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

Saturday 5th April 2025

*A time to spend together,
meet new people, make new friends*

Communicating our Vision...

(The musings of a priest)

Over the last few months, I have been thinking about the vision for our church. Who are we, why are we here? It's something we need to understand if we are going to see growth in our church – who are we as individuals and what fires us up? Who are we as a church and where are we desperate to see change?

Key to all of this is communication. A few weeks ago, we had a chance to come together and chat about those things where we want to see change. Some were tactical, individual thoughts, others were a little bit more strategic, wider reaching thoughts.

The question now is what do we do with these things? There are some simple things we can do, and have started to do – such as introducing hymns more regularly at the 9am (you'll have to bear with us as we find the ones we know, with the words & tunes we all know, and that tie in with the readings and theme we have for any given week as well), trying to improve our sound set up, and being better at promoting events within the church and across the group.

The more complex ones take a little bit of thought but that's something we can look at. And again, along with Revd Becky and others, some of this has begun – Home/Cell Groups are in the pipeline, regular Morning Prayer will begin at the end of April, developing the links with our uniformed organisations, looking at mission with things like Prayer and a Pint (which ties in nicely with Patrick's idea of Pub Theology). We are also exploring a monthly Sunday Prayer & Praise evening, simply opportunity to come together and worship God in song, offer up our prayers, and unpack scripture in a much more informal way.

But much of this still seems to have an inward looking perspective – looking at how we change things for those who are already here... The bigger picture requires us to look beyond our own doors as well – who are we being called to reach out to, how do we encourage growth? These are things we will continue to look at, and some of it does include having to grow ourselves before we can grow our numbers – we need to have the depth of faith and understanding, in order to connect with God's vision for the wider community.

As we continue to discern what God is calling us to as a church, as a congregation, as a people with a heart and passion for the community around us, we will keep asking questions, keep searching, and keep growing in our love and knowledge of him.

The three-fold thinking of Up, In and Out that I've spoken into recently, was borne out of this thinking around our vision. We can't do any one thing on it's own – we need to look "Up" to our relationship with God, our worship and

praise of Him, and how we can develop the right feel, the right flavour, and the right space to enable this. It might mean changes, but it might just mean realigning ourselves to finding God in what we already have in front of us. We also need to look “In” to ourselves, growing our faith through study, reflection, and diligent prayer, always seeking to understand our faith at a deeper level. Home Groups, Sermon Series, and Away Days are just some of the things that might help with this. Then, when we understand who we are and our relationship with God, we can understand his desires for the community around us and turn our eyes “Outwards,” seeking to love and serve our neighbours, as we serve the kingdom of God.

Grace and peace, Revd John

Messy Easter

Sunday
13th April 2025
4:00 to 5:30

Shared Meal

Games

Singing

Bible Story

*Lots of Fun for
all the Family*

Crafts

**St Matthew's
Community Centre
Elwick Road**

Palm Sunday

**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



Victoria House

FUNERAL SERVICE

Under the personal guidance of

 Carl Mean Dip FD, MBIE	 Apolena Wilson Dip FD, MBIFD	 Andrew Evans MBIE	 Andrew Gardner Dip FD
--	--	---	---

**TELEPHONE: (01429) 234777 • 26 VICTORIA ROAD, HARTLEPOOL TS26 8DD
WWW.VICTORIAHOUSEFUNERALSERVICE.CO.UK**

BRABINER CARPETS

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

TEL: (01429) 272298



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

MOVING HOME?

Does your property need an

ENERGY PERFORMANCE CERTIFICATE?

Then call Andrew Rogers at
Energy Education North
On 07831 314375

energy.education@btconnect.com

Holy Week Easter Quiz Part 1 Answers

- | | | |
|-----|---|--|
| 1) | Which city did Jesus visit? | Jerusalem |
| 2) | What did Jesus ride? | Donkey |
| 3) | What was it a sign of? | A king entering a city in peace |
| 4) | What was waived, laid and shouted ? | Palm branches, cloaks and Hosanna |
| 5) | What had they turned into a den of robbers? | The Temple |
| 6) | Who agreed to betray Jesus? | Judas Iscariot |
| 7) | For how much? | 30 pieces of silver |
| 8) | Where did the Last Supper take place? | The Upper Room |
| 9) | What did the bread and wine represent? | Christ's Body and Blood |
| 10) | Who was the high priest? | Caiaphas |

Easter Quiz Part 2 Answers

- | | | |
|-----|---|--|
| 11) | What was the court called? | Sanhedrin |
| 12) | How many times did Peter deny Jesus? | 3 |
| 13) | Why did they have to take Jesus to the Roman Governor? | Only he could sentence Jesus to death |
| 14) | Who was the Roman Governor? | Pontius Pilate |
| 15) | Who was the puppet king? | Herod |
| 16) | Who was chosen to be set free by the crowd? | Barabbas |
| 17) | How did the Governor demonstrate he knew Jesus was innocent of all the charges? | Publicly washed his hands |
| 18) | What was put on Jesus head? | Crown of thorns |
| 19) | Who helped Jesus carry the cross? | Simon of Cyrene |
| 20) | Who were crucified with Jesus? | 2 robbers/thieves/criminals |

Easter Quiz Part 3 Answers

- | | | |
|-----|--|--------------------------------------|
| 21) | When Jesus was arrested how was he betrayed? | With a kiss |
| 22) | What was the name of the Garden? | Gethsemane |
| 23) | What was the name of the guard who had his ear cut off? | Malchus |
| 24) | What did the soldiers gamble for? | Jesus' robe |
| 25) | What happened to the weather? | It got stormy |
| 26) | What did the Roman Centurion say about Jesus as he died? | That Jesus was the son of God |
| 27) | Who provided the tomb? | Joseph of Arimathea |
| 28) | What was rolled across it? | A large stone |
| 29) | Who was the first person at the tomb on the third day? | Mary Magdalene |
| 30) | Who was the gardener? | The risen Jesus |

Ward Jackson CE Primary Update

World Book Day 6th March

What an amazing World Book Day we have had! The costumes were fantastic, worship was wonderful, the lunch was delicious, the activities had our creativity flowing and spending time with our family made the day extra special. 📖
We can't wait for next year! 📖

#wardjacksonway



The staff are all dressed to impress.

Commonwealth 2025

It was a pleasure to be able to contribute to the Hartlepool Borough Council Commonwealth celebration this morning with both School Councillors and Worship Councillors in attendance.

Great work representing school everybody!

#wardjacksonway



Norlina class had a wonderful time visiting our friends at Charlotte Grange Care Home 🏠. Our children have the biggest, most caring hearts and are an absolute credit to school and their families!



Today we welcomed residents from Elwick Grange Care Home as part of an Intergenerational Project from Care UK.

With the aim of bridging the gap between generations, the residents brought along some recyclable materials along with seeds and began a gardening project with some of our students!

It was a pleasure to have you visit us in school and the children were really thankful for letting them be a part of the project.



Down at the farm today with some of our Norlina children.

We have been exploring all about farm animals this week and we were so grateful to meet sheep, lambs, pigs, goats, cows, llama & so much more! Not to forget our windy, wet tractor ride too – what an experience! 🚜

#wardjacksonway



Gardening News – Spring

Well, Spring has sprung and at the time of writing the snowdrops have been and gone and the crocuses, daffodils, tulips, hyacinths and primroses are currently strutting their stuff. I missed the annual opening of the grounds of Greatham Hospital of God this year, which gives visitors the opportunity to enjoy the swathes of snowdrops there, but, for anyone who enjoys a good show of daffodils, I recommend Wynard Gardens, where the grounds will soon be full of daffodils. There are several different varieties, which means they flower at slightly different times and so keep going for longer. You need to stop for a visit to the shop, coffee bar or restaurant, because they don't like people using the estate roads as a cut through, but this is not a hardship as there is a very tempting range of cakes, among other things, in the coffee bar. I am afraid this is at the forefront of my mind as I write, having just come back from there and having sadly (I am still trying to offload the effects of Christmas cake) succumbed to a large piece of 'oaty plum' cake. I don't go there just for the cake, however, as, in addition to the daffodils, the walled gardens are also well worth a visit, though more so in the summer months. I have never seen as many planted daffodils as there are at Wynyard, though there are even more wild daffodils to be seen at Farndale in the Yorkshire Dales. However, if daffodils don't float your boat, forget-me-nots will be next, followed by bluebells in May. There must surely be something for everyone on the spring flower spectrum.

In my own garden, I have just planted some primroses and hellebores in pots at the front of the house, which was a gentle introduction to the coming gardening season. This usually gets serious around Easter. There are bushes to prune, fences to paint, decking to clean and that's not including weeding, general tidying up and planting (pots, baskets, borders), ... a gardener's work is never done!

I have recently visited Stratford-on-Avon, which had to include (yet another) visit to Shakespeare's house, where the great man was born, grew up and lived with his own family. It is amazing to think that you are walking on the same stone floors and climbing the same stairs that the family used in their everyday life. Behind the house, there is a walled garden, which is planted with traditional flowers of the time including spring flowers, roses, honeysuckle, violets, poppies and pansies as well as herbs such as lavender, rosemary and thyme, which were used for healing purposes, all surrounded by low box hedging. Many of these flowers are mentioned in his plays and poems.

As Shakespeare became more successful as a writer, spending much of his time in London, he had a new house built in Stratford, aptly called 'New Place'. Unfortunately, the house has not survived, but Elizabethan-style gardens have been planted on the site and there is an aged mulberry tree which is said to have been grown from a tree planted by Shakespeare.

This reminded me of a visit to Glastonbury, where there is a thorn tree which is linked to Joseph of Arimathea, who is said to have planted his staff in the ground, which then grew into what is known as the Glastonbury Thorn.

Unlike ordinary hawthorns, this tree flowers twice a year, in winter and in spring. Alas, I am not privy to what Joseph of Arimathea was doing in England at the time, but that is the legend.

The thing I find fascinating about trees, especially old ones, is that, like wise old men and women, they have lived through many years of history and I can imagine them wisely holding on to the secrets and knowledge of things they have witnessed in their long lifetime. I have seen old giant redwood trees (or, to give them their official name, giant sequoias) in Scotland, but in California the oldest known giant redwoods are estimated to be around 3,200 years old. To go one better, however, there is a pine tree, aptly named Methuselah, residing in eastern California which is considered to be “the oldest known, non-cloned, living organism on Earth”, having notched up, “according to tree-ring data 4,853 years old”. (!!)

This reminds me of the older plants in my garden that have special meaning because of their connection with friends and family who over the years have gifted them to us. These connections become more poignant when the giver is no longer with us, with the plants serving as a permanent reminder of happy memories. We have white irises in our front garden which my grandfather grew in his garden over 60 years ago. I have recently potted some pieces of the tuber from which they grow for a friend, so they are now bedding in in a garden in Darlington. Similarly, there are bluebells and forget-me-nots growing in another friend’s garden in Manchester which started life in our garden on the Fens Estate. We have several plants that came with us when we moved from there and the first plant we ever planted in our current home is a hydrangea which appeared overnight some 40 years ago in that garden, planted in the early hours by my father-in-law, while we were blissfully unaware in our beds. The only time I have regretted transplanting was when, as a younger, more naïve gardener, I decided to transplant ivy from a pot, given to me by a friend as a present for our new home, into the garden. Many years later (no longer young and less naïve), I am still trying to rid myself of it.

So, to conclude ... I am hoping that, unlike last year, the garden will soon be dry enough for me to walk on so that I can start pruning, painting, cleaning, weeding, tidying up and (the best bit) planting. In the mean time I am trying to finish jobs that need doing in the house before it all starts and enjoying the spring flowers while they last.

Pam Stockton

PS Whilst conducting my usual comprehensive research, I discovered that there is such a thing as a prayer garden. This obviously needs investigating. However, suspecting that I might well have overwhelmed the reader with enough information for one day, you will be relieved to know that I am going to defer exploration of this subject until next time. So, for now, you don’t know (unless, of course, you do!).

The Hush of Heaven

Heaven is a place of tranquillity and reverence.
The atmosphere is one of expectation and fulfilment.

When worship is sung, the sound is that of the most beautiful bird song, or a babbling brook.

Other times the sound is like a rushing, powerful waterfall.

There's a hush, it's not an awkward silence but a delightful sense of overwhelming peace.

Everyone goes about the King's business with a sense of respect and awe.

No one rushes in heaven; there's an urgency but never a panic.

Everyone knows their position and authority that God has assigned to them.

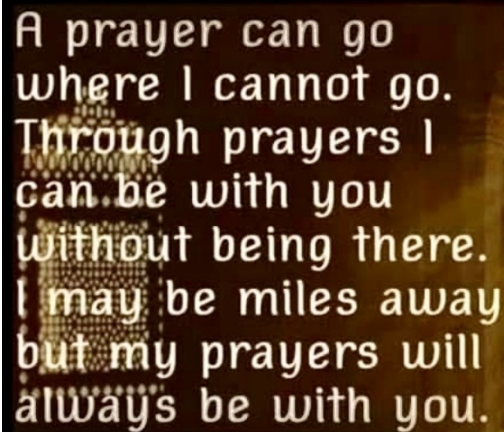
When angels are sent into battle, they stand as one. Purposefully and strong. There is no fear or mutterings of wonder about what could happen.

They only have an indescribable sense of peace and assurance that they will win.

May I carry the hush of heaven with me wherever I go on earth.

"Manifest your kingdom realm, and cause your every purpose to be fulfilled on earth, just as it is in heaven." Matthew 6:10 TPT

Ang Hall



A prayer can go
where I cannot go.
Through prayers I
can be with you
without being there.
I may be miles away
but my prayers will
always be with you.



Spiritual Meditation

The Way in.

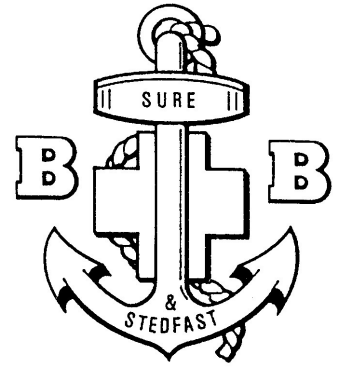
- Wellbeing
- De-Stress
- Find Hope
- Find Meaning

The Way, the Truth and the Life

When: Mondays 7pm to 8pm or Fridays 2pm to 3pm **Text 07712 150 190**
Cost: Free or donation Coffee tea and biscuits **for more details**
Where: St Columba's Centre Dryden Road. TE25 4HZ



BB



Map Making and Other Activities

Our Anchors and Juniors have been making and having fun with Treasure Island maps. Other crafts have included Mother's Day cards, Roman Centurions, Balancing Men plus a dot to dot of Jesus Calming the Storm.

Company Lads have almost mastered some very hard advanced drill moves, they have attempted logical quizzes and taken part in general discussions about the BB.

All three Sections have enjoyed various games.

New Starters - We still have room for new members in ALL Sections.

Future Events

Easter Eggheads 7th - 11th April 6.00 - 7.15pm at St Matthew's CC

Our Open Night is Friday May 16th

The Summer Fayre will be on Saturday June 28th

The great St Matthew's Tidy Up is on Saturday July 12th.

Our Summer Camp takes place from July 21st to July 26th.

George Bainbridge
07816445829

Our Juniors had very 'balanced' programme on Monday Night.



Spiritual Oasis
Come out of the desert of life and rest.
Drop in, chill out with coffee, tea, biscuits and toast.
St Columba's, Dryden Rd. TS25 4HZ
Wednesdays 8:30am to 2pm
All are welcome Free or donations accepted

The Crowd



I was there when they waived palm branches
Also putting their clothes on the dusty ground
For a king entering a city in a sign of peace
On a donkey borrowed from a stable nearby
As sounds of hosannas echoed in the sky.

I was there on a cold Thursday night.
A scared Galilean was also present,
Stood near to a roasting red hot fire,
Who when accused of knowing the Man
He turned into a heart broken crying denier.

I was there on that that Friday Morning
Ready to vote in a traditional referendum.
A choice between a murderer or a king?
Did you guess which one would win?
The Governor seemed rather concerned
He washed his hands, we all wondered why
Whilst we were constantly shouting 'Crucify'!

I'd planned to see it right to the end
As I walked up to Golgotha's skull hill.
Three men were up for public execution
Robbers and the Man leading a love revolution,
But the weather changed quickly that day
So I left and went on life's way.

Addendum

Forty days later I was in another Jerusalem throng
Being spoken to by a guy I seemed to know or have met.
Eventually I recalled him as the denier by the fire
For this man was now so very brave and driven.
I wondered what had caused this dramatic character change
For now I'm convinced the Man has risen.

George Bainbridge

A hymn for Holy Week

I have recently been given a number of hymnals to add to my overcrowded bookshelves and I often “take five” (minutes, not books) and have a browse through the hymns and songs.

It fascinates me to see how and when, and by whom they were written and perhaps more interestingly from my point of view, who composed the tunes.

One which I had not come across before was **King of my life**.

You may not have heard of this one as I can find no trace of it in any Methodist Hymn Book, either Primitive or Wesleyan or the more recent collections. I did find it however in a hymn collection by “Praise Trust” (2000).

The words are by Jennie Evelyn Hussey (1874-1958). She was born in Henniker, New Hampshire and suffered severe rheumatism from an early age. As well as poetry and hymns she also wrote stories and articles for magazines. Her hymn writing totalled around 30. She was a member of The Society of Friends.

The music was written by William James Kirkpatrick (1838-1921). He was born in County Tyrone, Ireland and his parents almost immediately set sail for the United States, leaving William in Ireland, until he was considered old enough to travel across the Atlantic.

His parents settled in Duncannon (Pennsylvania).

William studied music in Philadelphia and was a proficient performer of flute, fife, cello, organ and violin.

He is credited with many hymn tunes including **Away in a Manger** and **Will Your Anchor Hold?** In conjunction with John R Sweeny, he published over 1000 Gospel songs in 49 books and was responsible for the composition of over 100 works of music.

At various times he was involved in the musical life of the Ebenezer Methodist Episcopal Church and the Grace Methodist Episcopal Church

The tune for this hymn goes under a number of different names, for example **Kirkpatrick**, **Duncannon**, **Lest I forget** (the words of the first line of the chorus) and **Lead me to Calvary (Salvation Army 107 Tune Book)** (the words of the last line of the chorus) and as far as I have been able to ascertain is the only one used for these words.

The hymn as far as I have been able to discover has been featured in over 100 Hymnals.

Verse 1 and Chorus

King of my life, I crown thee now, Thine shall the Glory be,
Lest I forget Thy thorn-crowned brow, Lead me to Calvary.

chorus

Lest I forget Gethsemane, Lest I forget Thine agony
Lest I forget Thy love for me
Lead me to Calvary.

Jeff Parsons

The Wonder of His Grace

You have probably gathered by now that I am always on the lookout for new songs or hymns from whatever source. I was recently trawling through Facebook and came across this one. Again it is from the Salvation Army stable and has been around for quite some time, yet had escaped my notice.

Three verses expressing the mystery of God's grace and his eternal presence to us in our times of need; his boundless love for us all beyond our comprehension. These words interspersed in a chorus with an expression of the vastness and boundless love for us all.

It was written by an Australian S A Officer, Howard Davies, around 1967 when he was serving in the small Australian bush town of Broadford, Victoria. He says.....

"The inspiration for the song came through seeing the beauty of the Australian night sky with the stars so clear- the thought from Psalm 8 coming to mind "When I consider Your Heavens, the work of Your fingers, the moon, and the stars, which you have set in place, what is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him?" Epitomised here in the words of the chorus"

Higher than the stars that reach eternity
Broader than the boundaries of endless space
Is the boundless love of God that pardoned me
O, the wonder of his Grace.

This also resonated with me in memories of the occasions when visiting our family in the rural area around Bega in southern New South Wales. We would sit on the veranda looking up at the clear night skies, unpolluted by light sources from the scattered settlements, in much the same way as the writer, and perhaps hoping to spot in the south western skies the Crux constellation, probably better known as The Southern Cross.

The words and music can be found in the SA Tune Book (2015 Edition) at no. 873 or you may like to tune in to you tube for recordings by SA Songsters, or bands or even as a piano solo.

Jeff Parsons © in discussion with J Cornelius Starbuck 2025

Genocide is biblical.
Loving your enemy is biblical.
But only one is Christlike.
Slavery is biblical.
Chainbreaking is biblical.
But only one is Christlike.
Patriarchy is biblical.
Counter-cultural elevation of women is biblical.
But only one is Christlike.
Retributive violence is biblical.
Grace-filled restoration is biblical.
But only one is Christlike.
Segregation is biblical.
Unity is biblical.
But only one is Christlike.
Christ transforms, not the Bible. Be wary of those who know one but not the other.

Jordan Harrell



CELEBRATE!

HAPPY BIRTHDAY! to

December

Rachel Cartwright
Paul Cartwright
Abigail Craig
Andrew Craig
Allison Grosvenor
Rebekah Hart
Kate Lawson
Linda Parvin
Alan Robertson
David Robertson



Wedding Anniversary

Ruth & Gavin Smith
Chloe & Jordan Thornhill

Congratulations
to Jen & James
on the birth of Leo James on Feb
13th weighing 8lbs 12oz
And to grandparents Mary & Kevin
Tones
on a memorable 37th Wedding
Anniversary 'gift'

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

Sat 5 th	Cuppa, Cake & Conversation	St Matthew's	2.00-4.00pm
Mon 7 th – Fri 11 th	Easter Eggheads	St Matthew's CC	6.00-7.15pm
Holy Week			
Sun 13 th	Palm Sunday	Stranton	9.00 & 11.00am
	Messy Easter	St Matthew's CC	4.00-5.30pm
Mon 14 th	Compline	Venue TBC	7.30pm
Tues 15 th	Compline	Venue TBC	7.30pm
Wed 16 th	Spiritual Meditation	St Columba's	6.00pm
	Compline	Venue TBC	7.30pm
Maundy Thurs	Service	St Luke's	7.00pm
	Mass	St Aidan's	7.00pm
Good Friday	Family Service	St Luke's	10.00am
	Reflection	Stranton	12 to 2.00pm
	Hour at the Cross	Stranton	2.00-3.00pm
Sat 19 th	Prayer & Reflection	St Luke's	10.00-12.00pm
	Prayer & Reflection	Stranton	1.00-3.00pm
	Vigil	St Aidan's	7.00pm
Easter Sunday	Easter Communion	Stranton	9.00am
	Easter Family Communion	Stranton	11.00am
Tues 22 nd – 25 th	HAF Holiday Club	St Matthew's CC	10.00-2.00pm
Tues 22 nd Wed 23 rd	NO Midweek services		
May			
Sun 18 th	One Sunday Service Stranton followed by APCM		10.00am

Electoral Roll

Our Electoral Roll is undergoing a full revision this year, meaning everyone's name comes off the existing one. Forms will be out shortly. Please make sure you pick one up if you want to be on the new roll.

Central Hartlepool Group Mission Project

Monday Meditation	St Columba's Mon	7.00pm to 8.00pm
Stranton Toddlers (Term Time Only)	St Matthew's Tues	9.00am to 11.00am
Spiritual Oasis Drop-In Cafe	St Columba's Wed	8.30am to 2.00pm
Friday Drop-In Cafe	St Aidan's Fri	10.00am to 12.00pm
Friday Meditation	St Columba's Fri	2.00pm to 3.00pm
The Fireplace	St Luke's Fri	3.30pm

The Fireplace

Fridays at 3:30pm in St Luke's Rooms

Help Build a Fireplace: Our Mission Project has started a new faith based activity which started on Friday 7th March. The Fireplace is for young families offering crafts, hospitality, and on the last Friday of the month, a community cinema. We would love your help and invite you to join us by praying for The Fireplace and helping us raise funds in imaginative ways – perhaps you could donate towards The Fireplace or take up a sponsored event (e.g. walks, swims, silences, even parachute jumps!)

Easter Eggheads

Easter Eggheads is for Girls & Boys from 5 – 11years (Year 6)
and tells the story of the first Easter
via games, movies, crafts, songs, quizzes, chats and lots of FUN.
It is from Monday April 7th - Friday 11th April
at St Matthew's Community Centre Elwick Rd from 6.00 - 7.15pm All Welcome

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

Safeguarding: Jacqui Rogers (Stranton Parish Safeguarding Officer)
safeguarding@stranton-church.org.uk 07749 163606

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.

