Stranton and Burbank Community

SIGNPOST



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

May 2026

Thy Kingdom Come – A Call to Prayer…
(The musings of a priest)

For our Lent Course at Stranton and St Luke's this year, we ran 'The Prayer Course' from 24-7 Prayer based on Pete Greig's book 'How to Pray' (I highly recommend it!). This dovetailed in with a desire from our PCC Away Day to explore more opportunities for coming together in prayer, and that got me thinking…



Since 2016, Thy Kingdom Come has invited Christians around the world to pray for more people to come to know Jesus. What started as an invitation from the Archbishops of Canterbury and York to the Church of England, has grown into an international and ecumenical call to prayer.

This year, I want to give each of us the opportunity, to encourage each other, to engage more fully with this global ecumenical prayer movement.

It's quite simple really, every person, every household, every church is encouraged to pray each day during the 11 days between Ascension and Pentecost, in their own way – that means whatever way works for you – and as we saw during the prayer course, there are so many different ways to engage in prayer.

Thy Kingdom Come encourages each of us to pray that those who haven't yet heard the Good News of Jesus Christ, will hear it for themselves, respond to it, and choose to follow Him.

This Year, Thy Kingdom Come is all about the presence of God through his Spirit. The God who is with us in the everyday – in the joys and the sorrows of life (and everything in between) and the One who through His Holy Spirit, longs to reveal himself to those who don't yet know him.

So, throughout this time between Ascension and Pentecost, 14th to 24th May, we will be doing just that – we'll be focussing on praying for God's transformative presence, power and love at work in the lives of people and places.

Specifically, I want to encourage you during Thy Kingdom Come (and beyond) to *Pray for Five* – to pray for five people who don't yet know God, pray that God's Spirit will work in their lives, and pray that they will respond to God's call on their lives. Our hope, my hope, is that as we pray for our five people, they will encounter the very real life-changing love of God in their lives and choose to follow him.

We'll launch Thy Kingdom Come at our Ascension service at St Luke's on the 14th May, we'll bring it home as we celebrate the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost on 24th May. There'll also be an opportunity to celebrate with others from across the diocese as Sundays@6 goes on tour and we join the Pentecost Praise service at Durham Cathedral on the evening of the 24th May.

So, keep an eye out for more details to follow… and perhaps start asking God to let you know who *your* five are. You could even start praying for them now.



From The Home Front

During the Easter holidays, my other half joined me in Scotland (where I am still looking after my daughter and her boys as she recovers from a broken foot) and we took our grandsons to the Victorian Convict Prison in Peterhead, which is now a museum.

The drive through the countryside and along the coast was stunning with signs of spring and the dramatic coastline (despite the overcast day). Arriving at the prison was a stark contrast – high grey walls topped with barbed wire and austere buildings with small grilled windows, it was oppressive and depressing.

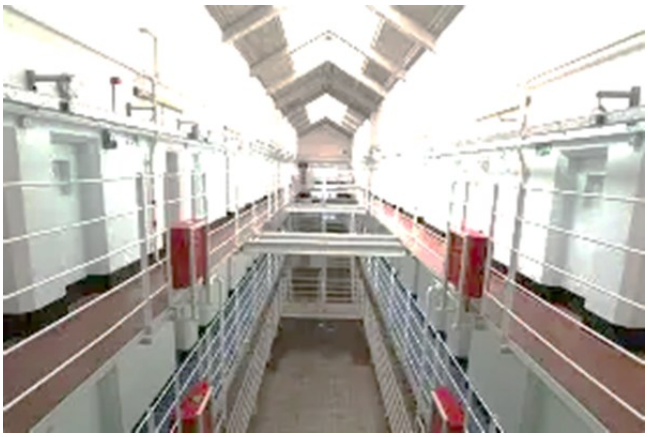
We entered into the cell blocks and quickly learnt the horrors of this place. It was built in the 1880s as a convict prison which meant that all those sent there were prisoners sentenced to hard labour. Which involved them having to work long days quarrying granite from nearby, transporting it to the neighbouring harbour where they then had to labour to ‘dress the granite’ and build the harbour, its defences and jetties. Many of the inmates came from the gangs of Glasgow. The warders used swords, guns, the cat o’ nine tails and the birch to control them, alongside solitary confinement and a hellhole called the silent cell, this was built with thick walls, a light hole in the roof and with a concrete bed - a truly awful place!

Even when hard labour ended in the 1950s it was still a cold, bare place battered by winds straight off the sea, with no view of the outside world and the barest of amenities. I did remember the riots in Peterhead Prison in the 1980s when the prisoners rioted and a warder was held hostage on the roof of the cell block for several days, until the SAS were sent in to rescue him.

To be honest the warders had it tough too – they were frequently attacked and had to be constantly alert to dangers and threats, plus during the 1980s they had to remove filthy prisoners and clean out the cells of those involved in ‘dirty protests’ where excrement covered the cells and the prisoners.



To be held there must have been horrific as violence and abuse were rife between prisoners and the conditions were miserable. Inmates must have felt overwhelmed and despairing, no hope of escape or release…



At times when the lives of some people are extremely difficult, filled with problems, pain, addiction, fear and despair, they must feel that they are in a prison, with hard labour - there is misery, and loneliness but no escape, no hope. Yet this is where HOPE steps in and the words of God and Christ burst into the lives of those who seek and listen for His voice or answer His call. God reaches into their pit of darkness to rescue all who turn to Him and ask for help. He is with us always – even if we don't realise this and think we are forgotten.

We become survivors when we seek Christ because of God's GRACE and LOVE. When we lay our faults and misdemeanours at the foot of the cross, our sins are not only forgiven but also forgotten by God - erased, gone forever. We are no longer overwhelmed but saved by Christ for eternal life.
But those of us who do believe in a loving saviour can help those who need to know God - as Revd John tells us in his Musings of a priest article:

"to Pray for Five – to pray for five people who don't yet know God, pray that God's Spirit will work in their lives, and pray that they will respond to God's call on their lives. Our hope, my hope, is that as we pray for our five people, they will encounter the very real life-changing love of God in their lives and choose to follow him."

In May **you** can be a prayer missionary and leave God and Christ to complete all the details!

J.A.R.

.

Easter assembly at Throston Primary School

The St Luke's 'Open the Book' team continues to enjoy visiting Jesmond Gardens Primary and Throston Primary each month to share Bible stories with the pupils and staff. The team have a great time inviting pupils and staff to take part in these times of Collective Worship which bring Bible stories alive through storytelling.

The team were once again invited be a part of the Throston Primary end of term Easter assembly. It was great to be able to join the team for this assembly! We shared the story of Good Friday and Easter Day from 'The Lion storyteller Bible'. In between the two stories the school sang some beautiful Easter songs which we enjoyed joining in with.

One of the new teachers portrayed Jesus in our two stories. He was a great sport and very much deserved the Easter egg we gave him as a thank you! And it was a joy to have three pupils take on the roles of the women at the tomb. We finished our time together with an Easter reflection and prayer time before the pupils sang another song.

The team really look forward to visiting the schools again next term! If you're interested in finding out more about 'Open the Book', feel free to chat to me or one of the team about it. We'd love to tell you more!

Revd Claire









Bishop Sarah installed as Bishop of Ely April 2026

Last night several of us from Durham joined Bishop Sarah as she was confirmed as the new Bishop of Ely at a service in London, led by the Archbishop of Canterbury Sarah Mullally. We keep Bishop Sarah in our prayers as she begins this new and exciting chapter in her ministry in the Diocese of Ely, and celebrate the wisdom and leadership she has given us in her seven years in Durham 💜🙏



Sunday@6 April 19th - Stranton was blessed:

Wonderful to have The Revd Dr Nick Moore with us last night at Sundays@6!

Thanks so much Nick for unpacking the Ascension for us.

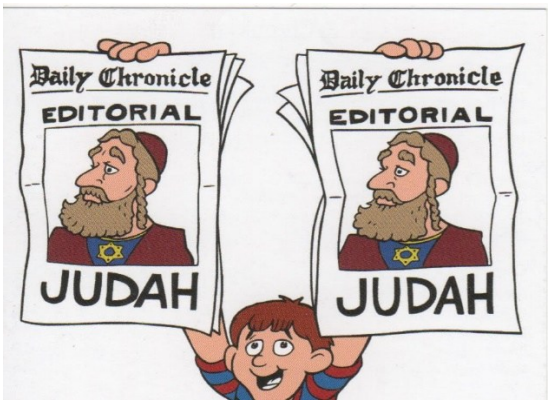
It was lovely to see a familiar face at Stranton and for God to bless our time with your preaching.

#cranmerhall #ascension #praise #worship

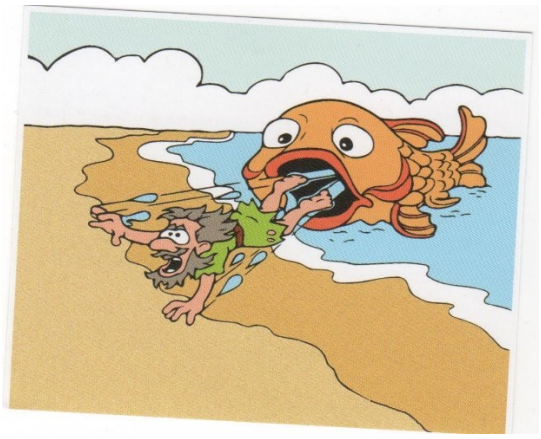


Guess the Books of the Bible

1



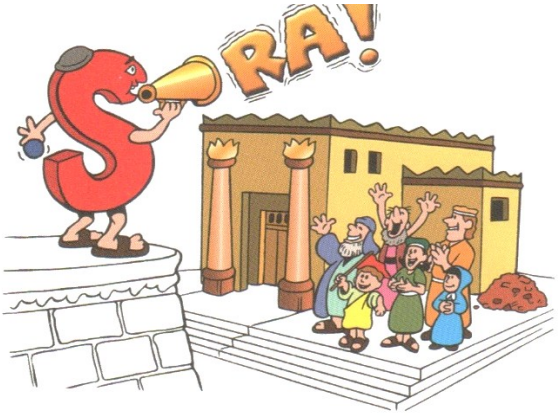
2



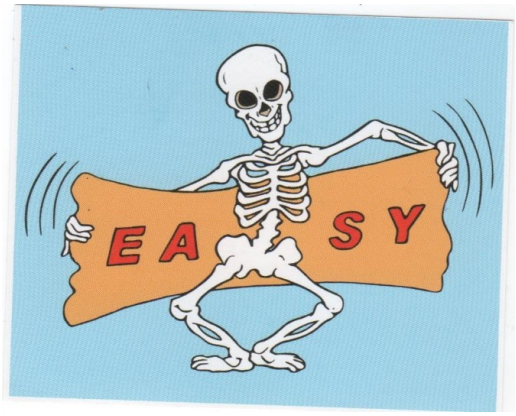
3



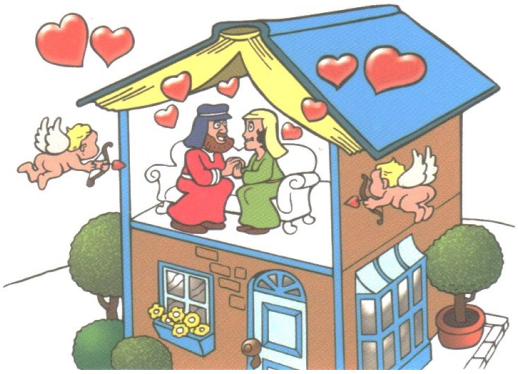
4



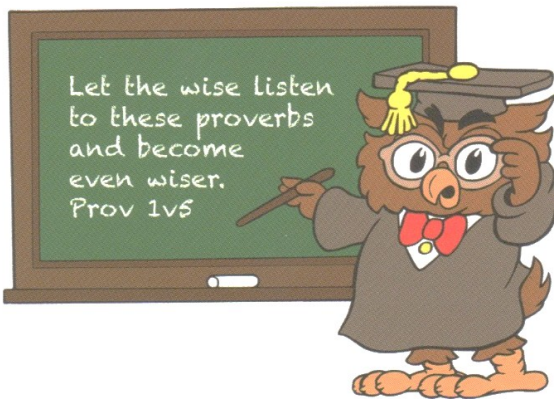
5



6



7

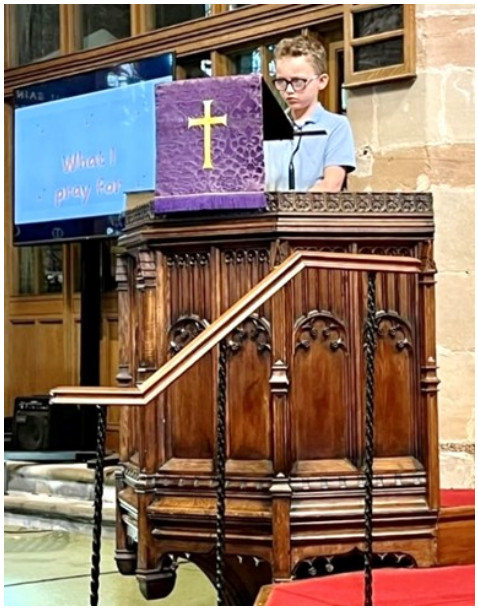


Ward Jackson CE Primary Update

As we come to the end of another fantastic term, we are so proud of everything our children have achieved. Our Easter service was a wonderful way to come together as a school community and celebrate this special time of year.

A huge thank you to our amazing staff, supportive families, and of course our incredible children for all their hard work and enthusiasm this term.

Wishing you all a happy, restful, and well deserved Easter holiday! 🌼🐣













900th ANNIVERSARY

FUTURE EVENTS

6 JUNE — **COMMUNITY FUN DAY**
Ward Jackson CofE Primary School
10AM-3PM

4 JULY — **BEER AND HYMNS IN CHURCH**
5PM

11 JULY — **ABSEIL CHURCH TOWER**
HISTORY EXHIBITION IN CHURCH
10AM-4PM

17 JULY — **COMMUNITY CHOIR CONCERT IN CHURCH**
7PM

MORE INFO: 01429 894006, admin@stranton-church.org.uk
www.stranton-church.org.uk
Find us on Facebook: allsaintsstranton

Messy CHURCH

St Matthew's Community Centre at 4-5.30pm

Crafts — Sunday May 10th

Sunday June 14th

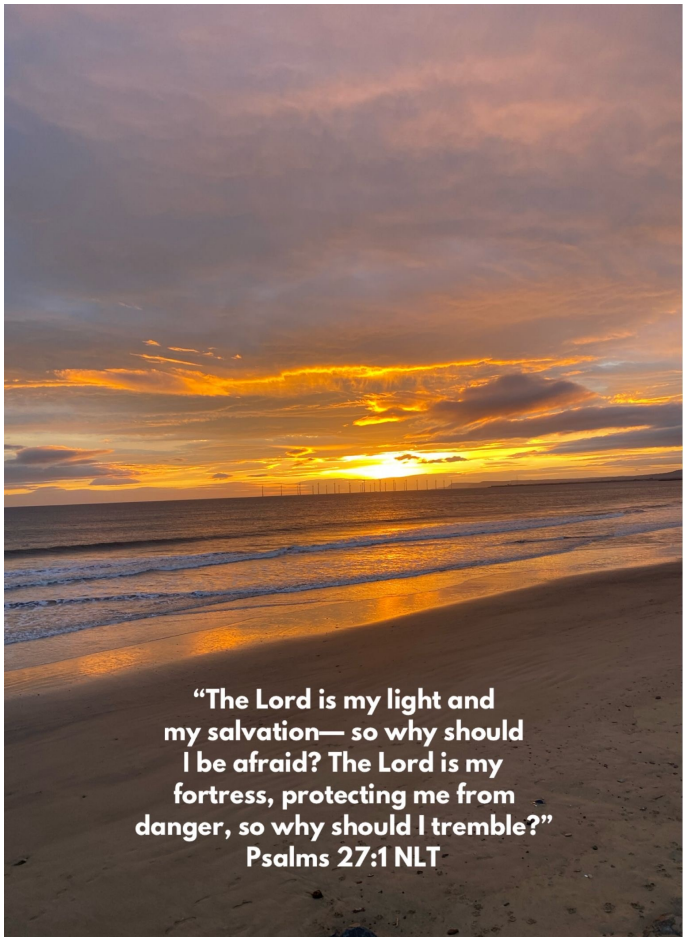
Games — Sunday July 12th

Bible Story

Food

For more information contact
Mary Tones on 07972 342890
See our Facebook page: Stranton Messy Church

Lots of Fun for the whole Family



Shepherding God, help us to be more
aware of your presence with us.
As we move through life,
may we live and move in you.
Help us at each stage of our journey to
recognise your road and staff, comforting us.
Amen.



What Is Ascension Day and Why Do Christians Celebrate It?

Ascension Day celebrates Christ's exaltation. While on earth, he was a servant. Now in heaven, he is the ruler and Lord of all. By entering heaven as the representative of mankind, he completed the work of our salvation and guarantees the eventual glorification of all who love Him.



The Christian holiday of Ascension Day (14th May this year), also known as the Feast of the Ascension, celebrates when Jesus ascended to heaven. This feast day is one of the ecumenical feasts of Christian churches, along with the celebrations of the Passion, Easter, and Pentecost. Ascension Day is generally observed on a Thursday, the fortieth day after Easter.
"No one has ascended into heaven except He who descended from heaven, the Son of Man." ~ John 3:13

When Did Jesus Ascend into Heaven?
Dan Graves explains where the Bible mentions Jesus' ascension and the once-in-a-while event we call Holy Thursday:
Forty days from the day he rose from the grave, Jesus ascended into heaven. Here is how Luke described the event:
Therefore, when they [the disciples and the risen Christ] had come together, they asked Him saying, "Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?"
And He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority. But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and to the end of the earth.
"Now when he had spoken these things, while they watched, He was taken up and a cloud received Him out of their sight..." (Acts 1: 4-9 New King James Version).

Traditions of Ascension Day
Because the date of Easter varies from year to year, the celebration of the Ascension moves with it. It always falls on the fortieth day from Easter and, since Easter always falls on a Sunday, Ascension Day always falls on a Thursday; it is frequently called "Holy Thursday."

Ascension Day celebrates Christ's exaltation. While on earth, He was a
Now in heaven, He is the ruler and Lord of all. By entering heaven as the representative of mankind, He completed the work of our salvation and guaranteed the eventual glorification of all who love Him.

Just as Jesus went up in the clouds, He will return the same way. Again Luke described the scene:

"And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold two men stood by them in white apparel, who also said, 'Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven.'"

What Does Jesus' Ascension Tell Us about Jesus' Humanity?

Randy Alcorn discusses how the ascension highlights the way in which Jesus was fully God and fully human:

One remarkable thing about the ascension is that it affirms Christ's physical body went into Heaven following his resurrection. This is what the creeds call his "self-same body," stating that likewise our self-same bodies will be restored in our resurrection. Some Christians imagine that Christ shed himself of his humanity and returned to being a completely spiritual being when he went back to Heaven. But this is false. The ascension creates a paradigm shift. The truth is not that Jesus became a baby at Christmas, and then 33 years later came the resurrection and ascension and then he stopped being a man. The resurrection demonstrates the incarnation is not temporary. But still, it could be wondered if having defeated death in the resurrection, when it came time to going back to Heaven, Christ might have said, "time's up, no sense in being a man any more" and shed himself of a body and retake the form (or lack of form) inherent in being the second member of the Trinity.

He could have "dissolved" or "disappeared," but instead, he physically ascended to a place from which he will physically return to earth in the same physical body. So, Jesus became a man (first coming, incarnation), defeated death and assumed his eternal body as a man (resurrection) and went back to Heaven as a man (ascension) and will return as a man (second coming; and as our first fruits raising our self-same bodies as bodies like his). He will reign over the New Earth as the God-man. He has become a permanent member of the human race.

So if you're ever wished you could walk the earth with Jesus, like his disciples did, good news...if you know Him, you will. You will have a new (raised) body, and it will be a New (raised) Earth, but it will really be you, it will really be Jesus, and it will really be Earth. No sin, no death, no curse. I will be me without all the bad parts, and the Earth will be Earth without all the bad parts.
Christianity.com Editorial Staff
Christianity.com

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





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

Dignity
CARING FUNERAL SERVICES



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



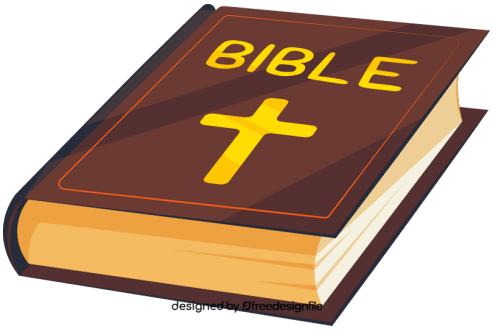
Saturday

St Luke's
Parish Centre
Tunstall Avenue, TS26 8NF
Tel: 756826
Bedding, Perennial,
Shrubs and
Vegetable plants
REFRESHMENTS ETC.

23rd May 10.00-12.00

Answers to Bible Books Quiz

1. 2 Chronicles
2. Jonah
3. Romans
4. Ezra
5. Ezkiel
6. Ruth
7. Proverbs



St Matthew's
Community Centre
Elwick Road

Coffee Cake Company

Coffee or Tea, Cake and Company

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

Saturday 2nd May 2026

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

Gardening News – Spring

At the end of my winter article, I hoped that by the time I wrote this one it wouldn't be "wet, dark, freezing cold and blowing a gale." Mid-April, we are now enjoying lighter nights and generally drier and warmer weather, though I am finding that the wet winter has seen off several of my plants and, of course, there is always a gale when you live next to the North Sea!

We have progressed through the winter and spring flowers – snowdrops, crocuses, hyacinths, primroses, daffodils and others. As we know from Ecclesiastes, "There is a time for everything" and every plant has its season. The few daffodils that are left are mostly past their best and somewhat bedraggled – not a good look for a daffodil – but we can currently enjoy tulips, forget-me-nots and bluebells. We have spanish Bluebells in our back garden, which always flower earlier than the english bluebells in our front garden and come in pink and white too (why?). The spanish ones were donated by a friend from his own garden and the english ones were gifted to us by my brother-in-law, who made a bulk order and gave us half. Ours have flourished and spread, but unfortunately the ones he planted in his own garden were much less robust and did not do well! Last year I dug up some of the spanish bluebells in our garden to donate to a friend and hers are now multiplying in her garden in Manchester. I am about to do the same for a friend who lives in Darlington. Gardening can be expensive, but some of the best performing plants are free!

A major decision now has to be made about the timing of our annual visit to the bluebell woods near Swainby – if too early, they won't be fully out and, if too late, they will be past their best and not the vivid blue that is the mark of a bluebell in its prime. Of course, it's illegal to pick flowers such as bluebells in the wild, though you sometimes see people doing just that, usually (I suppose) through ignorance. It isn't a good idea to pick flowers that have been planted in public spaces either, of course, but I did once see two little girls picking armfuls of daffodils in Vicarage Gardens on Mother's Day – I assumed that their mothers were going to be the lucky recipients!

I am looking forward to seeing our lily of the valley flowering, usually in late April and May. They do have a tendency to spread and are getting a bit too big for their boots as they are taking over in some parts of the garden, growing not just in beds but through pebbles and between paving stones and even in the hallowed grass! I am trying to curb their enthusiasm, but I love their beautiful, white, bell-shaped flowers peeping out shyly between the leaves and they have the most amazing perfume. Lily of the valley is one of the few flowers that I cut, so that I can enjoy their perfume inside and out – it hits you as soon as you get anywhere near them.

I am waiting to see which plants have made it through the winter, especially some new ones that were planted last year and so are particularly vulnerable. I keep gazing wistfully at the spot where I planted two alstroemerias, for the first time, last year, but so far there's no sign of them, so I fear they are no more. I've had the same problem with hellebores in the past, so have taken to planting them in pots, which seems to be working better. Maybe I will have to do the same with alstroemerias.

Our pigeon friend is still a daily visitor and has taken to canoodling with his mate on the fence at the back of our garden. Apart from this new turn of events, he seems to spend most of his time looking for food. We are still feeding the birds at the

moment, but the RSPB are now advising people to “feed seasonally, feed safely”, ie not to feed garden birds via bird feeders from the beginning of May until the end of October. This is because there has been a decline in some garden birds due to “a highly contagious disease which can spread where birds gather in large numbers such as bird feeders”. The pigeons have their own bowl, so I’m not sure where we stand with that. They certainly won’t be happy if we stop, but I suppose they have to grow up and become independent some time.

As a by-product of feeding the birds, I have unwittingly been growing wheat, which is growing for the second year running beneath our bird feeder, apparently from seeds dropped there by the birds. I am, however, nipping it in the bud as I don’t want to be overrun with wheat. I’ve seen ‘Clarkson’s Farm’ – it wouldn’t be financially viable!

The end is nigh (don’t panic!), but I can’t finish without mentioning the many varieties of blossom on the trees which are short-lived but beautiful at this time of year, with flowers ranging from white, through palest pink to dark pink. Orange blossom, being white (again, why?!), is not so common but has a lovely perfume. To add to the confusion, “Ne’er cast a clout till May is out” refers not to the month of May, but to the blossom of the Hawthorn tree (also known as the May tree) and just to clarify further, in case anyone is unfamiliar with this saying, ‘clout’ refers not to physical abuse, but to items of clothing!

Now that that is all sorted, I think it is time to take my leave, so, as we stand on the cusp of the gardening season, and maybe thinking of all those jobs that are going to need doing, here’s something to liven you up and encourage you for what lies ahead:

“Gardening adds years to your life and life to your years” or to put it differently, as explained by my good friend Google, “Gardening significantly boosts longevity and quality of life by reducing stress, improving cardiovascular health and offering purposeful physical activity. It enhances mental well-being through engagement with nature, potentially lowering cortisol levels, and fosters a sense of accomplishment. It is considered a top longevity exercise.”

If you enjoy looking at plants, but don’t feel the urge or are not able to get your hands dirty, how about Mr Wordsworth’s tribute to the daffodils in his famous poem:

“For oft, when on my couch I lie
In vacant or in pensive mood,
They flash upon that inward eye
Which is the bliss of solitude;
And then my heart with pleasure fills,
And dances with the daffodils.”

So, whether you’re raring to get busy in your garden or just sitting thinking about it, enjoy the spring flowers and this little bit of respite before the demands of the summer gardening season take over.

Pam Stockton

Boys Brigade

Holy Week
On Palm Sunday we held a Bacon Butty Breakfast at St Matthew's Community Centre and then travelled down to Church for a family service where our Boys received their Palm Crosses. The NCOs took part in a dramatic reading of the Passion Story from St Matthew's Gospel.

The Junior and Anchor Boys took part in Easter Eggheads (Monday to Thursday nights) with the NCOs helping to support the games, crafts and the general running of the night.

In the lead up to our Open Night our devotions are based on the Armour of God.
Our **Open Night** will be held on Friday 15th May at 7.15pm in St Matthew's Community Centre.

Each section will put on a Boys Brigade activity and at the end of the evening they will receive a badge or a Boys Brigade item.
We will also find out who is the Junior Boy of the Year and who is the Company Champion.

Promotions from the Juniors to the Company and NCO promotions will also be one of the highlights of Open Night.

Our Inspecting guests will include Revd John Bell (Our Chaplain) and Mrs Rebecca Bell. At the time of writing our other guest has not been confirmed.

Summer Activities
The Anchor Boys will be visiting Seaton and touring Stranton Church plus they will have a Superheroes night at St Matthew's Community Centre.

The Juniors will be visiting Jump 360, Crimdon Dene, the Blue Lagoon plus touring Stranton and looking at its gravestones, followed by a visit to McDonalds and hopefully we will have a Nerf Gun battle at St Matthew's Community Centre.

The Company will be BBQing at the Blue Lagoon, swimming, visiting Castle Eden Dene and enjoying the build up to our Camp at Bonaly Scout Centre near Edinburgh.

SUMMER FAYRE
We are holding the Summer Fayre on Saturday 20th June from 9.30 -12noon at St Matthew's Community Centre Elwick Rd.
Admission is £1.00 (which includes a drink).
We are now collecting for Bric a Brac for the Fayre and any Tombola prizes would be greatly appreciated.

To keep up with updates of all our activities please visit our Facebook page.

George Bainbridge 07816 445829

What Is Pentecost and Where Did It Come From?

Jesus' followers were gathered together for Pentecost, and the Holy Spirit "*filled the whole house where they were sitting*". "*All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them*" (Acts 2).



What is the Origin of Pentecost?
Pentecost was the celebration of the beginning of the early weeks of harvest. In Palestine, there were two harvests each year. The early harvest came during the months of May and June; the final harvest came in the Fall. Pentecost was the celebration of the beginning of the early wheat harvest, which meant that Pentecost always fell sometime during the middle of the month of May or sometimes in early June.

Why Is Pentecost Important to Christianity?
Modern Christians observe Pentecost as a holiday, not to celebrate a wheat harvest, but to remember when the Holy Spirit invaded the Church.

1. On Pentecost Sunday (24th May this year), the Holy Spirit filled the Church with power and added 3,000 new believers. The account in Act 2 reports that, after Jesus ascended into heaven, Jesus' followers were gathered together for the Feast of Harvest (aka Pentecost), and the Holy Spirit "*filled the whole house where they were sitting*". "*All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them*".
This strange occurrence drew a large crowd, and Peter stood up to speak to them about repentance and the gospel of Christ). By the end of the day that the Holy Spirit came, the Church grew by 3,000 people). This is why Christians still celebrate Pentecost.

John Gill expresses the significance in his commentary:
"Through this baptism of the Holy Ghost and fire, the apostles became more knowing, and had a greater understanding of the mysteries of the Gospel, and were more qualified to preach it to people of all nations and languages."

2. The Holy Spirit was prophesied in the Old Testament and promised by Jesus. Jesus promised the Holy Spirit in John 14:26, who would be the Helper for his people.

"*But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you."*

This New Testament event is also significant because it fulfills an Old Testament prophecy in Joel 2:28-29:

"*And afterward, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days."*

The Significance of Pentecost Today
Phillip Nation

The significance of Pentecost to the church is something that we need to walk through carefully, and we shouldn't ignore, because Pentecost was a Jewish celebration. And so in our modern day of the New Testament church, we don't celebrate Pentecost in the way that the Old Testament Hebrews did.

But Pentecost was the moment in history after Christ had ascended. And he had promised during the gospel narratives, during his earthly ministry, that he would leave, but that he would send the comforter, he would send the holy spirit. And it was at that moment in Pentecost where the spirit came, and he empowered the early believers, specifically the apostles that were left, and Peter, who is almost a comedic personality in the gospel narratives.

He is the one who constantly puts his foot in his mouth, constantly is having to be corrected by Jesus, but is in the inner circle. And because of grace and mercy, he is chosen to be the one who stands up in front of this throng, probably thousands, maybe tens of thousands of people to proclaim the gospel, there in the midst of a Hebrew celebration that was intended to remind the Hebrews of how God had always protected them.

And here Peter stands up and says, "And let me tell you about the Messiah, who is the eternal protection for all of humanity. Let me tell you who he is." And so Pentecost becomes this marker in history to really what many people would say, "And that's the moment that church is born."

That is when thousands come into the faith. And it goes from this little sect of believers who followed a Jewish rabbi from Nazareth who died and rose again, and suddenly the church breaks forth into the culture. Suddenly it is that unstoppable force that no one can really deny any longer. Pentecost has taken on a new significance for us. It, at one point, is just a historical memory. Now it is the living reality of the moment that the spirit of God seemingly burst forth.
Christianity.com Editorial Staff
Christianity.com

Sutton Veny and the Anzacs

No, not the name of some long forgotten pop group!
This brief note tells of a link between a Wiltshire village, set in the Wylye Valley to the south west of Salisbury Plain and the Australian Forces of the First World War. The Australian and New Zealand Army Corps – ANZAC.

I was aware of the location as it was on “my patch” when working briefly for the West Wiltshire Council, but it came more into prominence with me following our last visit to see family in Australia in 2019.
Inevitably our first stop on any visit to a new location was at the local Tourist Information Centre, and it was here that I chanced upon a book extolling the virtues and history of ANZAC Biscuits. This had been researched and written by Allison Reynolds, a culinary historian whose family originated from the area around Sutton Veny before emigrating to Australia. She had maintained some contact with the Sutton Veny School.

Salisbury Plain had been used for military activities for many years and during the Great War Sutton Veny Camp had provided temporary accommodation to upwards of 30,000 men at various stages, and at one time part of the camp had been used for German prisoners of war. Today there is very little evidence of this vast army village. However there is still a very visible and poignant reminder.

Part of the camp was devoted to hutted, rather than tented, accommodation for soldiers recovering from injuries suffered at the battle front, mainly France. Sadly, towards the end of 1918 an influenza epidemic struck and nearly 200 patients including some medical staff died. They are buried in the churchyard to the side and rear of St John the Evangelist Church and is managed by the War Graves Commission.
Inside the church there is a side chapel dedicated to the ANZACs with a scroll of honour and the names of all the soldiers buried in the churchyard and taking pride of place a carved memorial in the shape of the regimental badge.

St John the Evangelist is not the original parish church building; that was St Leonard’s, set lower down in the valley and which had suffered serious structural problems.

In 1868 a new church was built on the current site. Designed by J L Pearson the well known Gothic Revival architect who was subsequently responsible for the design of Truro Cathedral and St John's in Brisbane.
I took the attached photographs on a visit to Sutton Veny on the day before ANZAC Day, when it was quiet and peaceful and there were plenty of spaces to park. An ANZAC Service is held every year at the church on ANZAC Day.

I sat in the peaceful surroundings and soaked up the atmosphere of this lovely building thinking of those who had gone before and had not made it home back to the Antipodes.

And a quiet walk around the peace and tranquillity of the WGC churchyard with all those memories it holds for so many families.
Jeff Parson@2025



St John the Evangelist, Sutton Veny



Australian Commonwealth Military Force badge



Commonwealth War Grave Cemetery, Sutton Veny.

4th Hartlepool Boys' Brigade
30m ·

🚨 We're Recruiting! Join 4th Hartlepool Boys' Brigade 🚨

Is your child in School Years 2–3? We'd love them to be part of our amazing group! 🙌

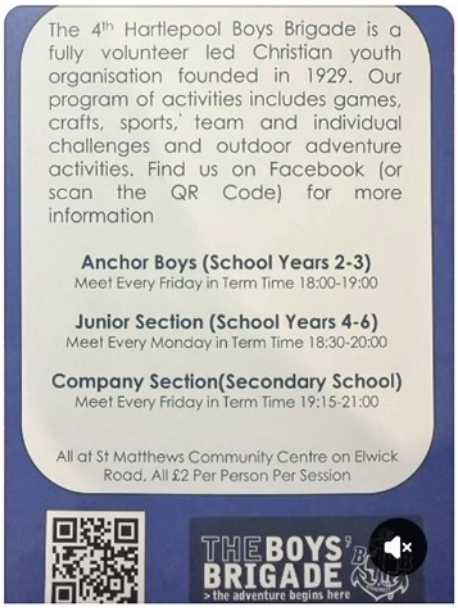
📅 When: Every Friday (term time)🕰️ Time: 6:00pm – 7:00pm

At Anchors, your child will enjoy:
⭐ Fun team-building games🎨 Creative craft activities🍳 Simple cooking sessions💪 Confidence & self-esteem building⚽ Exciting sports challenges...and so much more!

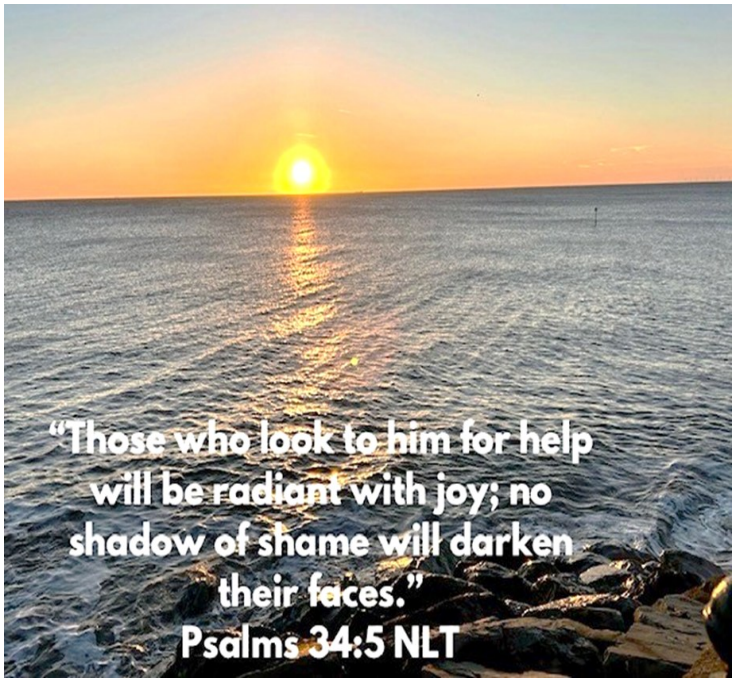
It's a great place to make friends, build confidence, and have fun in a safe, welcoming environment 💙

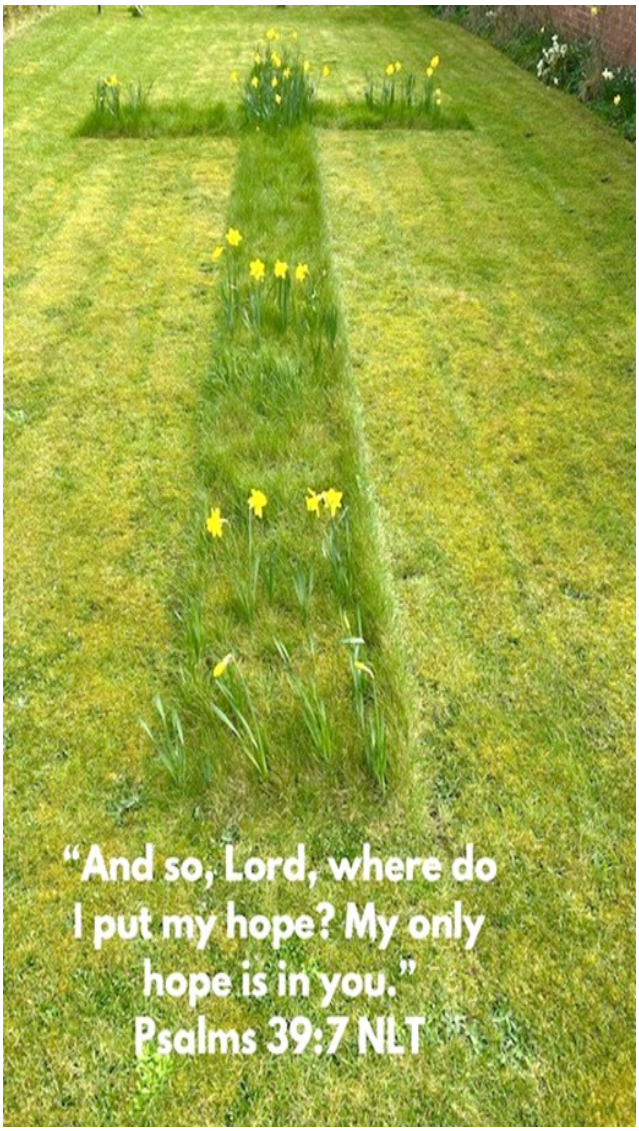
📩 Get in touch to find out more or to sign up! We are here to help.

#Hartlepool #4thBoysBrigade #Anchors #KidsActivities #AfterSchoolFun











Prayer of Intercession

for the Third Sunday of Easter

Holy One,
you meet us on the way.
Receive our prayers for the world you love.

Where people are crushed by violence, propaganda,
or the abuse of power,
bring protection, truth, and courage that interrupts harm.

Where households are stretched thin
by rising costs, insecure work, or unstable housing,
bring fairness in policy,
and mutual care in neighbourhoods and communities.

Where people carry grief that is unseen,
or feel stuck in the long aftermath of loss,
bring tenderness, patience, and companions who stay.

Where churches have caused harm through exclusion or control,
turn us towards accountability, humble learning, and spacious welcome.

Where the earth groans under extraction and neglect,
strengthen those defending land, water, and future generations,
and reshape our habits towards care.

Hold these prayers, spoken and unspoken,
and form us into witnesses of your life.

from Priming the Lectionary

CELEBRATE!

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!
to

May

Ronke Akinyele
Marjorie Ash
Barbara Busby
Sarah Cartwright
Elspeth Craig
Eve Coils
Andrew Rogers
Michael Thompson
Kath Weimer
Rachel West





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 2nd	Coffee & Cake	St Matthew's CC	2.00-4.00pm
Sun 10th	Messy Church	St Matthew's CC	4.00-5.30pm
Thurs 14th	Ascension Day	St Luke's	7.00pm
Sun 17th	APCM	Stranton	12.30pm
Sat 23rd	Plant Sale	St Lukes	10 - 12.00pm
Sun 24th	Pentecost	Stranton	11.00am
Sun 24th	Sunday@6 on Tour Durham Cathedral		



900th Celebrations Dates for your Diary

Medieval Re-enactment & Fun Day 6th June Ward Jackson CE School Grounds 10.00-3.00pm

Rev Claire's Priesting Saturday 27th June 4.00pm Durham Cathedral
Celebration BBQ Sunday 28th June - The Vicarage, at 12.30pm 34A Westbourne Road

'Beer & Hymns' Saturday 4th July 5.00pm Stranton Church
Tower Abseil & Past Memories 11th July 10.00am-4.00pm Stranton Church
Hartlepool Community Choir Friday 17th July 7.00pm Stranton Church

Quarter Peal	August	Details to be confirmed
Beach Party/Church Walk?	August	Details to be confirmed
Harvest Supper & Quiz	September	Details to be confirmed
Light Party	October	Details to be confirmed
Final Celebrations & Service with Bishop	November	Details to be confirmed

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:	r**evdjohnbell@stranton-church.org.uk**	
Curate		
Revd Claire Mead	(Stranton & St Luke's)	07598 070481
Email:	**curate@stranton-church.org.uk**	
	Usual day off – Friday	
Reader		
Mary Tones	40a Blakelock Road	07972 342890
Hayley Liversidge	hayey@hartlepoolcch.coh.org.uk	07712 008772
St Aidan's & Columba's Church		
Priest in Charge		
Revd. Becky Reeve	5 Tunstall Avenue	01429 671358
Email:	**revbeckystaidanandcolumba@gmail.com**	
Safeguarding:	Jacqui Rogers (Stranton Parish Safeguarding Officer)	
Email:	**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	07899 897444
	Peter Anderson 22 Thetford Road	871266
PCC Secretary	Maureen Anderson 22 Thetford Road	871266
Treasurer	David Craig 57 Claremont Drive Contact Stanton Office	894006
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.