

April 2025 to May 2025

CONTACT

The Magazine of
St. Georges United Reformed Church
Newton Road, High Heaton



Dear friends

I am writing my last letter to you before I officially retire, to say a huge thank you to you all.

On 4th November 2022 I attended my first Elders' Meeting. I remember distinctly asking everyone who they were and to tell me a little bit about themselves so as to give me a context of how we were going to best minister together. It became evident very quickly that we were going to get along just fine.

I am so proud to have ministered with such faithful people who have an immensely strong desire to work together for the good of God and each other; to grow the church and to serve the community. It has been such a privilege sharing my time and energy with you and to watch folks develop and grow along the way. You have been a source of much blessing and joy as I have journeyed alongside you for which I'm truly grateful.

Thank you to our children and young people who have energised me; thank you to our musicians who have taught me so much and have accepted all the new worship I have introduced; thank you to all of you who sit on committees and make the sometimes tough and painful decisions that have to be made from time to time as well as the easier ones; thank you to those who arrange the flowers and make the church look especially beautiful for worship each week; thank you for those of you who brew up after worship and always ensure that friendship and fellowship continues after morning worship; thank you to the even smaller team who notice what needs to be done and just gets on doing it – for the cleaning and tidying; thank you

to those of you who have taken time out to learn new skills – for operating the sound and vision system; thank you for your faithfulness in worship and attending the study groups which have been offered during different times of the year; thank you to those of you who volunteer at Little Fishes. I am delighted that your hard work is paying off and has been recognised by the denomination in being awarded the 'Children and Youth Friendly Church' award. Let's continue looking afresh at our church's life with children, young people and families – to encourage, reflect and celebrate. Thank you to those of you who quietly and gently offer your gifts and talents, often unnoticed, for the good of the church. The last and biggest thank you is for accepting my ministry amongst you.

As I move on to a new chapter in my life, I'd like to reassure you that I will retain my church membership at St George's URC. **I will no longer be your Minister from the end of May** but I hope to join some of the vacant rotas after a period of rest and reflection.

In the meantime, please continue to pray for the Elders and Synod Pastoral Committee and the decisions they will be making as we prepare for the next stage of our journey together in the forming of our new pastorate and the calling a new Minister – exciting times! "Christ is the first and the last; his Spirit will guide us safe home: we'll praise him for all that is past and trust him for all that's to come."

With love, prayers, grateful thanks & blessings,
Liz.



Congratulations to ourselves!

At Synod meeting in March, St Georges was awarded a Certificate to confirm that the church has demonstrated a deep commitment and welcome and include children, young people and families in its life. It is officially recognised by the United Reformed Church as a Children and Youth Friendly Church.



The helpers at Little Fishes



Eyewitness Report from Togo

By Noel Amos, Fundraising Officer for Bible Society

We drive for two hours on dirt roads in the pitch black, with only the headlights of our truck to guide us. Thanks to a lack of light pollution, when we look up the sky is filled with stars. It's our first night in Togo, a sliver of a country in West Africa.

We're in rural Togo to visit Bafei Pentecostal church. It's one of the churches that, because of your kind giving through Bible a Month, have the New Testament in Kabiye, their local language. Kabiye is the second

most spoken language in Togo, so while there has been much celebration over the New Testament translation, there's still a real need for the full Bible to be translated.

Inside the church the congregation sit in the dark, their plastic chairs facing the front of the cement room. There's been a power cut, but thanks to a small power generator, the *Jesus* film plays on a large screen and lights up their smiling faces.

Sylvain Panaesse has been pastor for four years. "When I was called to be a pastor I could have gone to a church in Lome, the capital city, but I felt called to go into the forest area. There were only three congregants when I came. They were farmers who couldn't read, and I could not read Kabiye, so they were not sure about me!" Sylvain learned to read the New Testament in Kabiye then he started to evangelise.

"I went house to house and invited people to receive second hand clothes and food that had been donated from churches in the city. Locals could pick up the items at the end of the Sunday morning church service, where they would hear songs and Bible passages in Kabiye"

The local farmers who came were touched when they heard the parable of the sower for the first time. Hearing it in their mother tongue made all the difference, as they could finally understand what the story was really all about.

Sylvain's church began to grow. 130 people attend most weeks, including 60-80 children. "The Kabiye people are mostly animist, so new believers have gone through many changes. They used to drink alcohol a lot and if they had problems they would go to witch doctors. Now they don't drink as much and when they have problems, we meet to pray"

Translations can take a decade to complete. One reason your regular giving is massively important is because it means we can commit to long-term translation projects in Africa and around the world. A team of translators are now hard at work in the north of Togo translating the Old Testament into Kabiye, so hopefully the full Bible will be available by 2026.

Many of the words and ideas in the Old Testament are difficult for Sylvain to translate into Kabiye when he preaches. Some words, like "snow" don't even exist in Kabiye.

Sylvain tells us that the Bible verse which inspires him most in his work is 2 Timothy 4, 7-8. (NIV) **"I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith".**

When people receive the Bible in a language they can understand, it goes from being just a book full of information to a living message. Your kind giving is supporting translation projects like the Bamanam Bible in Mali, the Kikongo Bible in Angola and the Akawaio Old Testament in Suriname.

Bible a Month Newsletter, April 2025.

Thanks from Ali.

I just want to thank all my friends at St George's for the well-wishes and gifts I received for my birthday. I was truly spoilt and felt very loved! I appreciate our church family very much. Thanks again... Ali

Congratulations to Barbara and Stewart on reaching their Ruby Wedding Anniversary (40 years) in April. We hope that you enjoy your celebrations and wish you well as you continue your lives together. God bless you.

Bible a Month: Togo

“Put on all the armour that God gives, so you can defend yourself against the devil’s tricks.” Ephesians 6,v 11. (CEV)

Togo is a small country in West Africa, sandwiched between Benin, Ghana and Burkina Faso. It has a very short coastline onto the Gulf of Guinea. It covers an area of 21,900 sq miles (the UK is 94,000 sq miles). The population is approx. 8.9 million, who speak mostly French, Kabiye, Dagomba, Ewe, and Mina languages. The literacy rate- people who can read and write- is 66%.

Bible Society of Togo was formed in 1975 and runs various programmes that focus on Bible distribution and teaching. Its vision is to make sure that everyone can engage with God’s word in their own language, in an accessible format and for an affordable price.

It’s likely that in the next year or so Kabiye- speakers in Togo will have the full bible in their language, thanks to your support. (See Eyewitness report). You also help to fund two other Togolese Old Testament translations in the Lama and Nadwm languages, as well as Faith Comes by Hearing programme, which is providing audio Bibles to Togolese people who want to listen to Scripture.

In Togo and its neighbours Ghana and Nigeria, Bible Society is also supporting young people who are engaging with Scripture; there are plans to provide 3000 Bibles to children aged 6 to 12 across the north of the country.

Prayer Pointers

- Praise God that the New Testament has been translated into Kabiye, one of Togo’s most prominent languages. Ask God to bless the churches in Togo as they tell people about the good news of Jesus that they are now able to read about in their own language.
- Pray for the translators who are working hard on the Kabiye Old Testament, that their work would soon be complete. Ask God to bless them and deepen their love for his word as they work.
- Ask God to strengthen and encourage the Bible Society team in Togo.



Dear Church friends,

Amazingly it will be 40 years on Sun 6th April since we got married.

Our children have told us that our Ruby Wedding Anniversary is worthy of marking in some way so we will be having an “Open House” afternoon for friends and family on Sat 5th April between 1.30 and 5.00.

We would like to invite members of our church family to join us to help celebrate. The plan is for folk to drop in for an hour or so during the afternoon to share drinks, nibbles and cake with us to mark the occasion.

In order to assist with catering arrangements, we’d ask you to let us know if possible by the previous Sunday (30th March) if you expect to be able to join us.

Please note, your company and good wishes are the only gifts we wish to receive.

(If you would like to give anything there will be a dish for loose change in aid of a local charity reNEw (<https://renewne.org.uk/>) on the afternoon).

Barbara and Stewart Barclay

Points to Ponder

- Don't regret growing older. It's a privilege denied to many.
- Tell someone you love them today. Because tomorrow is not promised.
- Not everyone is given the chance to grow old. So appreciate every single day of your life.
- Kindness doesn't cost a thing, yet it's the richest gift you can give.
- Be grateful for the little things, the beautiful people in your life, the ordinary moments, the unremarkable events, and the wonderful things that you get to experience. Life is not meant to be grand, it's meant to be meaningful and memorable.
- How great is it that the same God who created mountains and oceans and galaxies looked at you and thought the world needed one of you too.
- Do the right thing, even when no one is looking. It's called integrity. *Power of Positivity*
- Whatever we face, Jesus knows and understands. He hears our heart. He's with us in every way.
Our Daily Bread.
- Faithful God, help me to keep my eyes on you and walk Your path.
- Remember, being happy doesn't mean you have it all. It simply means you're happy with all that you have .
- Trust doesn't come with a refill. Once it's gone, you probably won't get it back, and if you do, it will never be the same.

VOLUNTEER DBS CERTIFICATES REGISTERED ON THE GOVERNMENT ONLINE UPDATE SYSTEM

Do you have a volunteer DBS certificate for St. George's or any other voluntary group which you have registered on the Online Update System?

If the answer is "yes" you may not be aware the annual procedure has changed. (I wasn't)

Every year you will have received an email from the Online Update System asking if you still used your DBS certificate for unpaid voluntary work. When the system was set up you were advised that if you did still use it no further action was required.

However, I recently received my annual email, but this time it said **that if I still relied on the registration, I would need to go on to the Online Update System and confirm the renewal.**

It also said that if I did not renew the registration by the date quoted it would lapse. Unfortunately, this would mean a full new DBS application would be required if I continued with unpaid voluntary work.

I was able to access the Online Update System from the email and using the registration number quoted on their email (mine started with "C" followed by 10 numbers) and my date of birth. Confirming the registration then took only a minute or so.

I don't know when this change took place, but as I had no problems last year am guessing it was likely to be in the last 12 months. Please check your own registration to confirm it is still current. If not, you will need to complete a full new DBS application to be able to continue in your voluntary post.

Dorothy Coates

Telephone No. 0191 2669221

News of the Church Family

Fiona, Sarah, Andy, Ethan and I would like to thank you all for the care and concern you have given us after we were involved in a car crash just after Christmas in Aberdeenshire.

We have really appreciated the visits, telephone calls, prayers, flowers and chocolates which all helped to make a difficult time so much more bearable.

Thankfully as the weeks go by we are all healing and getting almost back to normal.

We are all so lucky things could have been so much worse.

When non church going friends ask me why I come to St George's, my first answer is always "I go for the people, the fellowship", we should never underestimate the power of our church family.

Thank you all, **Anthony**

A bit of a quiz- Keep those brain cells working!

1. Who was the first prime minister of India?
2. What name is given to a triangle with three equal sides?
3. Can you name the monk who is regarded as "the inventor of champagne"?
4. In which English county is the Lizard peninsula located?
5. In which part of the body would you find the cruciate ligament?
6. What is the capital of Finland?
7. Which of the Tennis Grand Slams is played on a clay surface?
8. What was the Turkish city of Istanbul called before 1930?
9. In what US state is the city of Nashville?
10. Which is longer, a mile or a nautical mile?
11. Gary and Martin Kemp were in what band?
12. What was the name of the tower block where Del Boy lived in Only Fools and Horses?
13. Pret A Manger is a popular food chain, but what does the French name mean in English ?
14. What is the currency of Vietnam?
15. What major company is also the name of one of the longest rivers in the world?
16. What is the name of the cowboy in Toy Story?
17. Gordon Sumner is the real name of what famous British musician ?
18. Where is the smallest bone in the human body?
19. Elon Musk is the CEO of which global automotive company?
20. Which characters famous for living in part of Wimbledon released several novelty singles in the 1970's ?

Springtime letter from Allendale

Yippee!, the winter is over and spring has arrived. The gardens know that, and the birds know it too. I have plants shooting up in the greenhouse and in the garden and I can't wait to get everything planted out and watch them grow. Once everything is in bloom, Julia and I can sit outside with a glass (or few) of wine and forget about the winter rain, winds and snow. There was snow in the village until about 16 Feb and up to end February on the Pennines in the cracks and crevices where the sun never gets to shine.

We get a lot of different species of birds attracted to the many feeders I have set in the back garden. We have a feeder stuck to the patio door by suction pads and over breakfast, if we sit very still, we can see the birds close up as they eat the Mealworms. Julia has always loved owls. We have a wood carving of an owl on the front door step, we have pictures of owls and figurines of owls. About 300 metres from our backdoor, there is a wood, and late, on a dark winter night, Julia and I heard two owls hooting. Julia was in raptures at the sounds.

Some of my favourite people are farmers and I have now got used to sharing the local roads with the farm tractors pulling seemingly overloaded trailers of bales of hay, farm equipment and muck (or whatever you call it). Those farmers are for sure looking after all of us so I just settle down behind and enjoy the views as we crawl along.

At the bottom of the village square there is a working old fashioned telephone box which also doubles as library for anyone who wants to leave or take a book. I have never used it, since, as far as I have seen, all the books are novels. The last novels I read were the early fifties Biggles books (Capt W.E. Johns).

It is 8 months or so since we came to Allendale but the St George's and Heaton Churches walking club we set up is still very active. I recently drove across to meet up with the group for a Saturday walk. As I drove up the spine road(A189) I was horrified by the amount of litter lying at the road side. Julia and I have always hated litter (do you remember in the fifties we called people 'litter louts' and today I still use that term - although often a lot stronger!) The difference between the village and Newcastle with litter is astonishing. About the only time you see any litter in the village and surrounding area is after the day visitors leave. At other times you may see a few volunteers walking around looking for litter - they rarely find any.

Julia continues to deteriorate and I hope that the new drug to slow down the rate of decline will be available to all sufferers in April. It may help for a few more months.

The mention of owls above reminded me of the tale two owls. It was a really horrible stormy night with lashing rain and this male owl flew over to a female owl. He tried to woo her but she was having none of it and kept moving along the branch to get away from him. Finally he asked her, "what's the matter with you?". She replied, "it's too wet to woo"

Some serious wise words to conclude:-

' Your mind needs exercise just as much as your body does. That's why I think of jogging everyday!'

We send our love and best wishes to all at St George's. We still talk about our dear friends at St George's.

Julia and Dennis

More News of the Church Family

In early March 2025 St George's learned of the death of our oldest member, Joan Davison, who was 101. Joan was formerly of Denewell Avenue, latterly of Wordsworth house. Due to ill health Joan has not worshipped with us since before Covid and since going into care, her mind had become clouded, succumbing to dementia. Joan was looked after by one nephew, Ian, who visited her regularly from his home in Yorkshire. Sadly, Ian died three weeks before Joan in a tragic accident. He had tried to rescue his dog from flood water but both he and his dog drowned. Joan had been for many years a faithful and supportive member of St George's and there will be a memorial service at church in due course. Joan had always wanted a service of some sort at St George's after her death.



Church leaders lament cuts to international aid budget

Leaders from the Baptist, Methodist, Church of Scotland and United Reformed Church have responded to the Prime Minister's announcement concerning further cuts to the international development budget. In a statement, the leaders said:

"We deeply lament the government's stated intention to make further cuts to the UK's international development budget. This would break a manifesto promise made to people in the world's poorest communities, and have a devastating impact on lives and livelihoods across the globe. While there is a case to be made for increasing defence spending to support Ukraine in resisting Russian aggression, that shouldn't come at the cost of vital humanitarian and development programmes, which play a crucial role in promoting human security around the world.

"UK aid programmes protect women and girls from violence, provide cost-effective vaccines to babies and young children and support human rights defenders who work to prevent future conflict. Such programmes will be under threat if UK aid is further slashed by 40%.

"Our Churches have strongly encouraged and supported the UK in its commitment to international development, not only as a way of showing care to our global neighbours, but in recognition of the UK's historic and ongoing responsibilities to address the causes of global injustice, poverty, forced migration, climate change and conflict. It is a source of deep regret to see a backing away from that responsibility. A massively reduced UK aid budget would be experienced as a bitter blow by partners and communities in the global south, especially coming so soon after the devastating USAID cuts. We urge the government to rethink its decision immediately."

The Church Family

The end of May will be a sad time for St George's as we say Goodbye to Liz as *our minister*, due to retirement. Though Liz has been an Interim minister here from November 1st 2022 then from April 24 our permanent minister, we have seen such changes in our church life. Liz has given us leadership, friendship and encouragement; a huge joy has been to resume some contact with the community- particularly the school, and to

welcome folk into membership. Our worship has changed, and even though we have smaller numbers than before and during covid, God's spirit is truly working within us. Our Fellowship has strengthened. Fortunately we won't be losing Liz or Colin, as they are members here, but as we move into a Vacancy, it will be the Elders and Interim Moderator who will guide us through processes and meetings.

Last date for articles for the June/July 2025 issue of Contact

The last date for articles is Wednesday 21st May. Just give or send your articles to Bob Renton (bob@bobrenton.co.uk) or Dorothy Barker (dorothy@btinternet.com) If you prefer to post an article then please phone Dorothy B for the address on 01670 716087.

Distribution continues to be mostly by email but printed copies are always available in church for those who prefer that. The magazine is also on the website at www.stgeorgesurc.church

Remember this is YOUR magazine and we are interested in hearing what you are interested in or have been doing. Perhaps some holiday stories? Family stories?

DJB

Cocoa crisis: Climate change threat to chocolate

Cocoa prices have risen 400% in recent years. Chocolatiers feeling the heat: “It’s a nightmare, I don’t think any business involved in chocolate has avoided this impact, and it’s all down to climate change.” – Andy Soden, Kernow Chocolate



- In 2024, human-caused climate change added 6 weeks’ worth of days above 32°C in 71% of cacao-producing areas across Côte d’Ivoire, Ghana, Cameroon, and Nigeria – temperatures too hot for cocoa growing.
- Christian Aid is warning chocolate and the livelihoods that depend on it are at risk and is calling for action to cut emissions and target climate finance going to cocoa growers to help them adapt.

A new report by Christian Aid shows rising temperatures and erratic rainfall has hammered cocoa harvests in Ghana and Côte d’Ivoire, where more than 50% of global cocoa is grown. This has slashed the availability of cocoa on global markets, seeing prices soar and around the world to record highs in recent years – and the size of chocolate bars shrink.

The report, *Cocoa crisis: How chocolate is feeling the bite of climate change*, coincides with new data from research group Climate Central which shows that over the past decade climate change added at least three weeks above 32°C (89.6°F) annually during the main cacao crop season (October-March) in Côte d’Ivoire and Ghana. Such temperatures are above the optimal temperature range for cacao trees.

In 2024 alone, human-caused climate change added six weeks’ worth of days above 32°C in 71% of cacao-producing areas across Côte d’Ivoire, Ghana, Cameroon, and Nigeria. According to the charity’s study, this year’s cocoa shortage follows a similar crash in production last year which saw cocoa prices rise 400% to \$12,218 a ton after droughts, floods and climate-related diseases hit cocoa farmers last year. On 18 December 2024, a new record was set at \$12,605 per ton and prices have remained stubbornly high ever since.

The cocoa shortage started in 2023, after unexpectedly heavy rainfall during Ghana’s dry season. Total precipitation in West Africa was more than double the 30-year average for the time

of year and the wet conditions caused plants to rot with black pod disease. This was followed by severe drought in 2024. The UN said that Ghana’s 2024 drought affected more than 1 million people, and resulted in terrible crop losses and record-high food prices.

Osai Ojigbo, Director of Policy and Public Campaigns of Christian Aid, is calling for action to cut emissions and targeted climate finance for cocoa growers. She said:

“Growing cocoa is a vital livelihood for many of the poorest people around the world and human caused climate change is putting that under serious threat. Chocolate is one of the many products that connects consumers in the global north with growers in the global south. Likewise, climate change, driven largely by the greenhouse gas emissions of the global north is causing havoc around the world with cocoa farmers bearing the brunt. We need to see emissions cut, and targeted climate finance going to cocoa growers to help them adapt.”

Andy Soden, Kernow Chocolate, said:

“Global cocoa production has been impacted for the about last four years due to a rapidly changing climate, and also El Nino and La Nina effects. The layman’s version of this essentially is they are getting the wrong weather at the wrong point in the growing and harvest cycle, which is massively reducing output. Low supply and high global demand have inflated market prices globally from a relatively stable market price to upwards of £10,000 a tonne.

“For a small manufacturer, this has the potential to put us out of business long term as our wholesale price for 2025 is very close to passing our retail price of 2023. Such is the rapid inflation of the base price. Larger companies can manipulate recipes to remove cocoa products (substituting cocoa butter for dried cream etc) or alter pack sizes. As a small business, making everything by hand, this kind of workaround just isn’t an option, so we have no option but increase pricing and hope that the product remains saleable.

“It’s a nightmare, I don’t think any business involved in chocolate has avoided this impact, and it’s all down to climate change.”

Alexander Carnwath, Head of Public Affairs at the Fairtrade Foundation, added:

“Environmental sustainability across the cocoa supply chain cannot be achieved without social and economic sustainability. Where cocoa producers are bound by trading relationships that require them to sell below the cost of production,

they may be forced to resort to unsustainable practices. The ability of producers to earn a living income, through higher prices for their produce, is a key enabler as well as a precondition for ensuring effective climate action. The payment of higher prices by businesses must be accompanied by greater action by governments, especially those in rich countries.

“At Fairtrade we believe that the UK’s economic growth is inseparable from trade that benefits farmers across the world. We hear every day from farmers who tell us that international trade is still not fair. In the Trade Strategy due to be published in Spring 2025, the UK government has the power to drive change. It can do this by ensuring coherence between its trade, development, and climate policies.

“The UK government must carefully craft its approach to trade in a way that supports businesses and the livelihoods of the millions of small-holder farmers in low-income countries. This is what will deliver sustainability in our food supply chains.”

Amelia Pop Chocoj, a 24 year-old cocoa grower in Guatemala, added:

“My plantations have been dying due to the lack of water, and in terms of how it’s affecting me, there is no food for my family. The cocoa trees are dying, which are usually very resilient. I’m actually not worried that it ‘may’ happen (climate related crop loss) it’s happening already.”

Aurelia Pop Xo, a 53 year old cocoa grower in Guatemala, said:

“Climate change has been killing our crops. This means there is no income because we cannot sell anything.

“What is happening is that my planation has been dying. So what has been happening, is death. Death to my crops. The few cocoa trees I had, didn’t develop enough, so we couldn’t use them. The same thing happened to the banana crops, they are dying off. The trees are folding down and dying. The crops have been dying. In the past there was a prediction that this would happen in the future, but it has come earlier and this is because we are not taking care of our motherland, our ecosystems, and this is very worrying for our kids and especially for our grandkids.”

Gemma Whitaker, Whitakers Chocolates, said:“At Whitakers Chocolates, we recognise that climate change poses a very real threat to cocoa growers worldwide, from rising temperatures to unpredictable weather that impacts harvests. As chocolate makers, we’re deeply committed to safeguarding the future of cocoa by supporting more sustainable farming methods, reducing our own carbon footprint, and collaborating closely with our growers and suppliers. That’s why at Whitakers, we support Fairtrade cocoa, ensuring farmers receive fair prices and promoting a secure future for chocolate production. We believe urgent action on climate change is essential to protect both the livelihoods of cocoa farmers and the heritage of chocolate for generations to come.”
Christian Aid Press release, February 2025.



SYNOD ON TOUR

This is your opportunity to be part of a conversation where every voice matters. Let’s talk, let’s listen, and let’s learn from each other. Together, we can build stronger connections, share our hopes and challenges, and discover new ways to support and inspire one another.

Come along to a church near you and help share the future we’re building together. Each session will begin with a short act of worship (10.30 am and 1pm). Members of Synod Committees and Synod staff will be on hand for conversations and Q & A.

Drinks and snacks will be available.

The nearest Synod on Tour to High Heaton is on **10th May in St James’s URC**, Northumberland Road, Newcastle upon Tyne . Alternatively you may wish to go to Hartlepool, Hexham, Sunderland, Morpeth, Alnwick, or Darlington URC churches, on other dates. !

Northern Synod Prayers

Please join in prayer with others in the synod for the churches and people mentioned below.

April

- 6th The work of Rev'd David Haslam, Forces Chaplain RAF Boulmer. North East Industrial Mission (NIM). Fiona Usher.
- 13th Pastoral Committee, all members; Convenor Rev'd Kate Hackett.
- 20th EASTER SUNDAY. World Earth day (22nd) Giving thanks for Green Apostle Charles Jolly.
- 27th Giving thanks for all retired ministers and those recently retired: Rev'd Joan Grindrod-Helm, Alison Dalton CRCW. For those who will be retiring this year; Rev'd Dr Trevor Jamison and Rev'd Liz Jewitt.

May

- 4th Synod on Tour (10th) St James's Newcastle.
- 11th Christian Aid Week. Pray for all working on our behalf across the world. Commitment for Life.
- 18th St John's Wideopen, St George's High Heaton and Stamfordham as they explore a partnership. Giving thanks for Rev'd Colin Barrick. Superintendent Rev'd Tim Woolley.
- 25th Children's, youth and Families Committee. Convenor Rev'd Julian Sanders; Field workers Hannah Middleton, John Stephenson. Youth Pioneers Angela Feather, Tony Harbottle-Noppen and Irene Frith. Synod on Tour (31st) Hartlepool.

June

- 1st World Environment Day (5th June). Climate change and our response.
- 8th Horsley, Bellingham, Wark; Minister Rev'd Roberta Ritson. Superintendent Rev'd Marie Beard.

How fortunate St. George's has been to have Liz Jewitt as our Minister .

Extraordinary circumstances can lead to extraordinary outcomes when Liz came to us as Interim Minister on the first of November 2022. Synod recognised the difficulties we as a Church were undergoing and sent Liz to us on a six month rolling contract, to be reviewed twice a year. When our former Minister formally retired at the end of January 2024 Liz was then officially appointed as our Minister on a 50 percent basis.

Liz was a minister in Burnley from 2007 till 2021, when she and Colin returned to their native North East. Before her call to ministry Liz was for many years involved in nursery work. Her rapport with children is clearly shown at St. George's. Little Fishes is a great success and Liz has forged a strong relationship with Craggside School. Her inclusive, all- age services are indeed memorable . Who can forget Football Sunday, with Liz wearing football gear under her cassock?

We have gained so much under her tutelage. Members have been encouraged produce handicrafts reflecting the Church's seasons. Music has flourished, in particular with the singing group, and new hymns have been introduced. Our spiritual life has been encouraged in study sessions, and she has empowered members to take the lead at times.

Liz's kindness and good humour are clearly seen in her dealings with the congregation, but we must also thank her for the skill and rigour of her preaching. She will be a hard act to follow.

We wish Liz a happy and peaceful retirement .

AM

More things you need to know- and some you don't !

- Glass takes one million years to decompose, which means it never wears out and can be recycled an infinite amount of times.
- Gold is the only metal that doesn't rust, even if its buried in the ground for thousands of years.
- Your tongue is the only muscle in your body that is attached at only one end.
- Zero is the only number that cannot be represented by Roman numerals.
- Kites were used in the American Civil War to deliver letters and newspapers.
- Peanut oil is used for cooking in submarines because it doesn't smoke unless its heated above 450 F.
- The letter J does not appear anywhere on the periodic table of the elements.
- "In my many years I have come to a conclusion.....that one useless man is a shame, and three or more useless men is a government.

John Adams

- "If you don't read the newspaper you are uninformed; if you do read the newspaper, you are misinformed"

Mark Twain.

"I contend that for a nation to try to tax itself into prosperity is like a man standing in a bucket and trying to lift himself up by the handle"

Winston Churchill

Answers to the quiz

1. Nehru
2. Equilateral
3. Dom Perignon who was a benedictine monk at Hautvilliers Abbey in France.
4. Cornwall
5. The knee
6. Helsinki
7. The French Open
8. Constantinople
9. Tennessee
10. A nautical mile, which is 1.15 miles.
11. Spandau Ballet
12. Nelson Mandela house
13. Ready to Eat.
14. Vietnamese Dong
15. Amazon
16. Woody
17. Sting
18. The Ear
19. Tesla
20. The Wombles (of Wimbledon Common)

With thanks to LIVERNews.

PAUL TRACY'S SECOND FAREWELL PERFORMANCE



Another great evening on the 22nd March when Paul Tracey (Norman) entertained us with his music of the 60's and 70's. He also remembered most of the words and those he forgot the audience willingly helped out. The hall was full (approximately 70) with some travelling vast distances (Allendale and Wideopen) Everyone enjoying the music and dancing of yesteryear and some with moves never seen in years or even abandoned there walking sticks to join in.

The food tables were overflowing as usual with proceeds raised going to Martha and Mary Community café on Chillingham Road.

We would like to thank all those who helped set up the hall and clear away at the end of a very really enjoyable evening with a big thank you to Norman.

Visit to India

Our good friend Judith, Elder of St George's and Worship Leader, has just returned from visiting friends and relatives in India



Judith with her brother in law and friend Kitty

Judith has brought an Anniversary Special book which marks 150 years of the Leprosy Mission- and includes information of the Purulia Leprosy Home and Hospital, where husband Anil was Superintendent, and they both lived for around 30 years.



Judith with the Mercy Home patients in Bankura

The current Superintendent Dr Famkima Darlong writes this of Purulia.....

“As we celebrate 150 years of the service of the Leprosy Mission Trust India, we acknowledge God's faithfulness and the commitment of many people who have contributed in so many ways. Mission work is about faith, commitment, and dedication. It

is challenging and daunting many times, but we draw our strength and power from the Lord and from each other's presence and fellowship. I personally would like to thank the Lord, all the staff, past and present, the community, the patients and all well wishers of the Hospital who have been a part of this journey.

Since 1882, the Leprosy Mission Home and Hospital, Purulia has continued as a leprosy-focused unit, providing comprehensive care in the diagnosis and management of leprosy and its complications, reconstructive surgery, prosthetics and orthotics, footwear and research. Also offered is dermatology, ophthalmology, general medicine orthopedics, general surgery, dentistry and general physiotherapy. With a team of dedicated and committed staff, the work will go on until we achieve our vision.”

Our Vision: People affected by leprosy living with dignity in a transformed, inclusive society that has overcome leprosy.

Our Mission: We work with individuals and communities disadvantaged by leprosy, irrespective of caste, creed and religion, by addressing their physical, mental, social and spiritual needs to uphold human dignity and eradicate leprosy.

Our Values: Being like Jesus means that our lives will be influenced by His life and teachings, which will reflect in our work/activities.

(Just one case study from the Anniversary book.)

Journey of Resilience by Mitan Mahato.

When I was 10 years old, I had a patch on my left foot and went to the Governmental hospital. I was diagnosed with leprosy and started on MDT (Multi Drug Therapy). On the 5th month of MDT, I developed a reaction and was admitted at The Leprosy Mission hospital, Purulia. I was very sad and discouraged, as I had to stop attending classes and my friends started ignoring me. The only support I got was from my parents and brother who visited me frequently in the hospital. The hospital staff also gave me comfort and hope during those lonely and difficult times as a small boy. As a boy I would lie down on my bed and wondered about my studies and future.

Once the Social Worker of the hospital spoke to me about the school and hostel run by the hospital. Since I come from lower middle class, we also had financial constraint. After I was discharged from the hospital, I got admitted at the school and stayed in the hostel.

Life at the hostel was better as there were many young boys like me. As we all lived, studied and played together that would give us joy and happiness. Each one of us had our own problems. I was given free books, uniforms, and education.

After leaving school I underwent training in Dressing at the Purulia hospital for 9 months, then worked as Ward Aid for 10 years. In 2010 I got married. In 2015 I was transferred to TLM (The Leprosy Mission) Champa and after 4 years, I had the privilege of coming back to The Leprosy Mission, Purulia.

I am blessed with a family, 2 children and a secure job. I received mental and physical support a job, and above all love from the Leprosy Mission. Looking back, once I was a discouraged person with not much hope; today I feel confident, feel blessed and look to the future with so many hopes and dreams.




- A chap just said to me, “I bet you don’t know how to play scrabble”. I said, “Well, that’s your word against mine”
- How do baby dragons blow out their birthday candles?
- Is it wrong that only one company makes the game Monopoly ?

- Artificial intelligence is no match for natural stupidity.
- Egotist: Someone who is usually me-deep in conversation.
- Handkerchief: Cold storage.
- Toothache: the pain that drives you to extraction.
- Wrinkles: something other people have, similar to my character lines.
- I spent the first 8 years of life wanting to be a bin man cos I thought they only worked on a Thursday. That’s the only day they did our bins (a rubbish joke!!)
- A white horse walks into a pub called the White Horse, and asks for a pint of lager, which the landlord promptly presents. Landlord then says, “Funny thing really, but did you know that our pub is named after you?” The white horse, with a puzzled look on his face says, “What, Eric?”
- My wife was going through her wardrobe and she said, “Look at this, it still fits me after 25 years”. I said, “Its a scarf”.
- I was in the six-item express checkout at the supermarket, quietly fuming. Completely ignoring the sign, the woman ahead of me had slipped into the check-out queue, pushing a trolley piled high with groceries. Imagine my delight when the cashier beckoned the woman to come forward, looked into the cart, and asked sweetly, “So, which six items would you like to buy?!”

Ukraine: As war enters fourth year the humanitarian crisis remains as urgent as ever

Three years after Russian forces invaded Ukraine, people continue to bear the devastating impact, as seen through their lost lives, lost limbs, and lost homes.

The 2022 invasion marked a dramatic escalation of an international armed [conflict](#) that began in 2014. Today, the resulting medical humanitarian needs are clearer than ever. Ukraine's medical services are increasingly strained, with frequent attacks on hospitals, ambulances and medical structures.

Since 2022, Médecins Sans Frontières / Doctors Without Borders (MSF) has seen more patients with war-related trauma in need of rehabilitation, including post-amputation physiotherapy. The number of patients requiring treatment for post-traumatic stress disorder has also risen.

In areas close to the frontlines, daily shelling means that some of the most vulnerable, including older people and people with [chronic conditions](#), have extremely limited access to medical care.

How is MSF helping people in Ukraine?

MSF runs an early rehabilitation project with centres in Cherkasy and Odesa, where people receive early post-operative physiotherapy, [mental health](#) support and nursing care following violent trauma. From 2023 to 2024, there was a 10 percent increase in the number of patients requiring post-operative care for leg amputations.

The need for mental health support in Ukraine is also significant. In 2024, half of all patients in the project were diagnosed with either post-traumatic stress disorder or depression.

In addition to centres in Cherkasy and Odesa, MSF has established a project focused on post-traumatic stress disorder in Vinnytsia.

In response to strikes, MSF operates ambulances, transferring patients from overburdened hospitals near the frontline to medical facilities with greater capacity in central and western Ukraine. Over the past three years, MSF ambulances have transferred more than 25,000 people, more than half of whom had injuries caused by violent trauma.

Ukraine today

Today, Ukraine's healthcare system faces immense pressure, balancing emergency

responses with the ongoing needs of patients affected by the war. For three years, drone and missile attacks have been a daily occurrence, in some cases striking cities more than 620 miles from the frontline.

Medical facilities and systems have been forced to adapt to treat people in bunkers or basements, and deal with frequent power cuts from attacks on energy infrastructure.

In 2024, MSF mobile clinic and ambulance teams working near the frontlines saw a significant increase in referrals for patients with chronic diseases such as cardiovascular issues, diabetes, and cancer. In 2023, these cases accounted for 24 percent of all referrals, rising to 33 percent in 2024.

However, regular shelling and strikes mean that the access of MSF's teams is not guaranteed. Many of those living with chronic conditions are older, and less mobile. In some areas, people have begun living in their basements or in bunkers, due to the intense shelling.

"For some of the most vulnerable people, relocating isn't an option," says Thomas Marchese, head of MSF in Ukraine.

"Not everyone is able to leave their homes and start their life again, but the continued fighting means that these people are frequently cut off from medical care, just as MSF medical teams are sometimes unable to travel to certain areas due to ongoing shelling."

More support is needed

As the war in Ukraine enters its fourth year, MSF's teams are witnessing the medical humanitarian crisis deepen every day.

The strength of the Ukrainian health system in the face of extreme violence is clear, but the need for sustained medical care and mental health support is greater than ever. The country's infrastructure has sustained staggering damage, with hospitals coming under direct attack.

Even if the war were to end tomorrow, the long-term effects on people – physical and psychological – will linger for years to come. Hundreds of thousands of people will require ongoing care, rehabilitation, and therapy for trauma long after the last bomb falls.

MSF continues to work in Ukraine, close to the frontlines and further afield, but more support is required.

From the MSF News Blog online

Lectionary Readings 6.4.2025 to 8.06.2025

- 06-Apr-25 Isaiah 43 vs 16-21, Psalm 126, Philippians 3 vs 4b-14, St. John 12 vs 1-8
13-Apr-25 Palm: Luke 19 vs 28-40, Psalm 118 vs 1-2, 19-29
Passion: Isaiah 50 vs 4-9a, Psalm 31 vs 9-16, Philippians 2 vs 5-11,
Luke 22 vs 14- Ch23vs, 56 OR Luke 23 vs 1-49
17-Apr-25 Exodus 12 vs 1-14, Psalm 116 vs 1-2, 12-19, 1 Corinthians 11 vs 23-26,
St. John 13 vs 1-17, 31b-35
18-Apr-25 Isaiah 52 vs 13 - ch 53 vs 12, Psalm 22, Hebrews 10 vs 16-25 OR
Hebrews 4 vs 14-16, ch 5 vs 7-9, St. John Ch18 vs 1 to Chap19 vs 42
20-Apr-25 Acts 10 vs 34-43 (or Isaiah 65 vs 17-25), Psalm 118 vs 1-2, 14-24,
1Corinthians 15 vs 19-26, (or Acts 10 vs 34-43) St John 20 vs 1-18
(or St. Luke 24 vs 1-12)
27-Apr-25 Acts 5 vs 27-32, Psalm 118 vs 14-29 (or Psalm 150, or
2 Kings 7 vs 1-16) Psalm 2, Revelation 1 vs 4-8 or St John 20 vs 19-31
04-May-25 Acts 9 vs 1-6 (7-20) Psalm 30 (or Isaiah 61 vs 1-3), Psalm 90 vs 13-17,
Revelation 5 vs 11-14, St. John 21 vs 1-19
11-May-25 Acts 9 vs 36-43, Psalm 23 (or Isaiah 53 vs 1-6) Psalm 114,
Revelation 7 vs 9-17, St John 10 vs 22-30
18-May-25 Acts 11 vs 1-18, Psalm 148,(or Leviticus 19 vs 9-18), Psalm 24 vs 1-6,
Revelation 21 vs 1-6, St. John 13 vs 31-35
25-May-25 Acts 16 vs 9-15, Psalm 67 (or Deuteronomy 34 vs 1-12),
Psalm 109 vs 21-31,
Revelation 21 vs 10, & vs 22 to chapter 22 vs 5, St John 14 vs 23-29
(or St John 5 vs 1-9) 29-May-25 Acts 1 vs 1-11, Psalm 47 or 93,
(or Daniel 7 vs 9-14), Psalm 113,
Ephesians 1 vs 15-23, Luke 24 vs 44-53
01-Jun-25 Acts 16 vs 16-34, Psalm 97 (or 2Kings 2 vs 1-15), Psalm 2,
Revelation 22 vs 12-14,
16-17, 20-21, St John 17 vs 20-26
08-Jun-25 Acts 2 vs 1-21, (or Genesis 11 vs 1-9), Psalm 104 vs 24-34, 35b,
Romans 8 vs 14-17, or Acts 2 vs 1-21, St John 14 vs 8-17 (25-27)

Hire of Halls, Rooms and Church

Our premises are available for letting as follows:-

Regular Hires, based on a maximum 3 hour session:-

Large Hall: £50 Minor Hall: £35

Meeting room: £20 Church: £50

One-off hires, based on a maximum 3 hour session:-

Large Hall: £70 Minor Hall: £45

Meeting Room: £25 Church: £90

If you would like to book any of the above, or require further information, please telephone Mr Harry Fawcitt, 0191 240 3129. If any church members wish to hire the halls for private functions (at 50% discount), please check in the church diary first to make sure your date is free, then contact Harry to confirm booking. This avoids double bookings. A Hiring agreement will need to be signed – as required by Synod. There is no fee for church-related activities but in some cases a Hiring Agreement may have to be completed.

Church Diary



April

- | | | |
|------------------|----------|---|
| 1 st | 12.30 pm | Lent Lunch at Heaton Baptist Church (with St Teresa's) |
| 2 nd | 7.00 pm | Lent Bible Study |
| 6 th | 10.30 am | Worship will be led by our minister,
Rev'd Liz Jewitt. Holy Communion. |
| 9 th | 7.00 pm | Lent Bible study |
| 13 th | 10.30 am | Palm Sunday. Worship will be led by Sharon Cowey,
one of our Worship Team. |
| 16 th | 7.00 pm | Lent Bible Study |
| 17 th | 7.00 pm | Maundy Thursday service |
| 18 th | 10.30 am | Good Friday service.
Procession of Witness (Heaton Churches Together) . |
| 20 th | 6.30 am | Dawn Service in Heaton Park. |
| | 10.30 am | EASTER DAY . Worship will be led by our minister,
Rev'd Liz Jewitt.
Easter Day communion. |
| 23 rd | 7.00 pm | CHURCH MEETING. |
| 27 th | 10.30 am | Worship will be led by Mrs Alison Moodie, URC
accredited Lay Preacher. |

May

- | | | |
|------------------|----------|---|
| 4 th | 10.30 am | Worship will be led by our minister, Rev'd Liz Jewitt.
Holy Communion. |
| 10 th | | Drop in sessions – Synod on tour. (see article or poster) |
| 11 th | 10.30 am | Worship will be led by Angela MacKenzie, one of our Worship
Team. |
| 18 th | 10.30 am | Worship will be led by our minister, Rev'd Liz Jewitt. |
| 21 st | 7.00 pm | Elders Meeting |
| 21 st | | LAST DAY for items for the next Contact, (June/July) |
| 25 th | 10.30 am | Preacher tba |
| 31 st | | Retirement of Rev'd Liz Jewitt.
St George's now in Vacancy. |

June

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|-----------------|----------|--|
| 1 st | 10.30 am | Worship will be led by Dr Ann Sinclair, URC
Accredited Lay Preacher and Synod's Lay Preaching Advocate. |
|-----------------|----------|--|

April	6th	13th	20th	27th	
Duty Elder	Judith Das	Miss Hall	Mr Hall	Mrs Kane	
Door Stewards	Dorothy Coates & Alison Wilson	Babs & Tony Hall	Lesley Cadwallader & Judith Das	Sharon Cowey & Renee Croft	
Communion Stewards	Val Kane & Harry Fawcitt				
Flower Arranger	Clare Hutton	Dorothy Barker	Sandra Nossiter	Ivy Renton	
Flower Donations	Barbara Barclay	Dorothy Barker	No donor	Rob Hailes	
Tea after worship	Ivy Renton & Judith Das	Babs & Tony Hall	Dorothy Coates & Val Kane	Clare & John Hutton	
Screens Set up	Alison Hall	Bob Renton	Alison Hall	Bob Renton	
Screens operate	Alison Hall	Bob Renton	Harry Fawcitt	Anthony Armstrong	
May	4th	11th	18th	25th	June 1st
Duty Elder	Mrs Barker	Mrs Cowey	Mrs Das	Miss Hall	Mr Hall
Door Stewards	Anthony Armstrong & Audrey Matfin	Harry Fawcitt & Rob Hailes	Ivy & Bob Renton	Dorothy Coates & Alison Wilson	Babs & Tony Hall
Communion Stewards	Dorothy C & Tony Hall				
Flower Arrangers	Clare Hutton	Dorothy Barker	Sandra Nossiter	Ivy Renton	Clare Hutton
Flower Donations	Margaret Dixon	Angela MacKenzie	No donor	Liz Jewitt	No donor
Tea after worship	Ivy Renton & Judith Das	Babs & Tony Hall	Dorothy Coates & Val Kane	Clare & John Hutton	Ivy Renton & Judith Das
Screens Set up	Alison Hall	Bob Renton	Alison Hall	Bob Renton	Alison Hall
Screens operate	Alison Hall	Bob Renton	Harry Fawcitt	Anthony Armstrong	Alison Hall