

April 2026 to May 2026

CELESTIAL

**The Magazine of
St. George's United Reformed Church
Newton Road, High Heaton**



Go and tell See Matthew 28, vs 1-10.

Matthew's account of the first Easter Sunday morning is very dramatic. An earthquake, a dazzling angel and guards falling to the ground like dead men. If Easter Day was televised in the style of a *Doctor Who* episode you might imagine they would choose Matthew's version of events.

Matthew is a skilled writer and his account clearly grabs the attention. How much of what he describes actually happened is a matter of great scholarly debate. It is possible that there was an earthquake that morning and many legitimately believe this literal happening as earthquakes do happen in that region. However, whether we have a literal or metaphorical view we do know that something truly groundbreaking happened that day. Once again God has broken into human history in a dramatic, groundbreaking way. Jesus, who was crucified, dead and buried, is alive. That is the news given by the angel messenger. Like the petrified guards and the wondering women we might not know exactly how the resurrection happened but we can know, like the women, the glorious truth of Easter Day: that Jesus is risen. For the two Marys, they had the extra privilege of meeting the risen Jesus in physical form. We do not have that privilege but we can learn from what they did.

First, they 'took hold' of Jesus. If you've ever been separated from someone you love or have not expected to see again you will know what it feels like to take hold of that person, wanting to physically hold on to them for proof of their existence. Matthew tells us that the two Marys were in a confused state of 'fear and great joy'. When life's events shake us, we are wise if, like the women, we in faith take hold of Jesus and listen for his voice saying 'Don't be afraid'.

Having taken hold of Jesus they 'worshipped him'. Their relationship with him is renewed. After the sombre season of Lent, Easter is a season for renewed hopeful, joyful, celebratory worship. This is a sign of knowledge and belief in the risen Lord.

Then, having been reassured again by Jesus with the wonderful recurring phrase 'Do not be afraid', the two Marys are told by Jesus to 'go and tell':

- to go and tell their testimony;
- to go and tell the good news that Jesus is risen and all that means;
- to go and tell others that they too can see him again.

This is a commissioning by Jesus of their roles as disciples and evangelists.

So this Easter let us respond as those women did: let us take hold of Jesus, let us hear his words to 'not be afraid', let us worship him and know deeply the truth of the resurrection. And let us go and tell others this powerful good news.

From Roots Worship Material March/April 2026.

Church Growth



St George's Mission Prayer.

God of mission, who alone brings growth to your Church, send your Holy Spirit to give vision to our planning, wisdom to our actions, joy to our worship, and power to our witness. Help our church to grow

in numbers, in spiritual commitment to you, and in service to our local community, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen



Why are cocoa prices rising?

Have you been wondering why the cost of your favourite chocolate bar has been going up- while still getting smaller? you're not imagining it. It has been reported that Easter eggs this year are smaller and more expensive than previous years, as the price of cocoa has driven a new wave of shrinkflation.

The cost of chocolate is going up but the money is rarely going back into the hands of the producers. Hear from a Fairtrade cocoa farmer- Assata Doumbia Kone.

Assata Doumbia Koné - Female leader in Cocoa

The cocoa sector is still dominated by men: only 25 percent of the cocoa plantations in Ivory Coast are owned by women. Accordingly, Assata didn't have it easy at first.

"When I started working when I inherited the field from my uncle, it was really not easy," she says. "Even the family and the community in which I lived looked after me because a woman cannot master the challenge at any time." Today, Assata even leads the ECAM cooperative with 2,300 producers as chairwoman and actively advocates for the women in their industry. *"We have shown that we can make it to women. So I feel happy,"* she sums up. Many will have tried the cocoa from Assatas Plantage before: their cocoa beans are in Fairtrade chocolate.

Agriculture in times of climate change

Assata started in 2003, when she inherited a field from her uncle. Since then, she has been growing cocoa and is an employer for several workers who harvest the valuable cocoa beans with machetes on the plantation every day. Let's ask Assata about her biggest challenge: *"Having a very good production on a very small area"*. Assata is working on agroforestry, which is a sustainable cultivation method that enables small farmers such as Assata to grow other products in addition to cocoa on a small cultivation area.

Agroforestry is becoming increasingly important in times of climate change. Many Fairtrade producers in countries of the global south continue to develop in this cultivation method to increase the food security of families and prevent further deforestation.

What more would Assata Doumbia do? *"We need to improve our way of working. We have been working with machetes, dabas and similar devices for a long time. We would like to have devices that make our hard work easier,"* she says.

Without a doubt, climate change and the associated changes for people and the environment is the biggest challenge in agriculture. Assata also reports on how people in Cote d'Ivoire are already suffering from the consequences of climate change. *"In early 2017, we had a large drought on our plantations, where we lost almost half of our production"*. The difficulties refer to cocoa cultivation, but also to the cultivation of vegetables, which serves for their own diet. *"We are forced to buy expensive food in the shops in the city,"* Assata reports.

The price of a good life as a cocoa producer

One of the most important topics for cocoa producers such as Assata is the cocoa price. This is being negotiated on the commodity exchanges of the world market – far from the people who toiled on the plantations for the cocoa tea. Due to the large price fluctuations and the associated risk of poverty in the fields, the two most important countries of cocoa production, Ghana and Cote d'Ivoire, have introduced a minimum price. This is redefined twice a year. *"We are grateful for all the efforts the government has, and we want to accompany it so that the income remains stable,"* says Assata.

If the price set by the government is below the Fairtrade minimum price, Fairtrade pays the producers the difference. However, more must happen to make a good life possible for the producers and workers in the cocoa industry. Currently, only around one third of cocoa harvests from Fairtrade cooperatives are also sold under Fairtrade conditions. The rest of their harvest must sell at a lower price through the conventional market. To change this, the demand for Fairtrade chocolate must continue to grow.

Fairtrade premium enables joint projects

The Fairtrade premium has already been able to invest Assata in favour of the Community. With the money, the community has built schools among other schools and improved roads to facilitate the routes to the plantation.

The rising price of cocoa is putting real pressure on the farmers behind the chocolate we all love- but when you choose Fairtrade, you're helping give them a stronger future.

Thank you for standing with them- it genuinely makes a difference.

Fairtrade Foundation Press Release, Feb 2026.

Heaton Churches Together Retreat on June 20th

The churches in Heaton (Heaton Churches Together) are planning a day retreat at Holy Island on Saturday June 20th 2026. Plans are still in hand but it is envisaged that 2 buses will leave Heaton at 8.45 am and will arrive on Holy Island between 10.30 and 11 am. Our base for the day is St Aidens church and we will be welcomed by Fr Shaun O'Neill, with prayers and a brief reflection. Other details so far:-

11.45am Walk and Reflection
1pm Packed lunch
1.45 pm Prayer and Reflection
2.15pm Walk and Reflection
4pm Worship
4.30 pm Leave the island
5pm Fish and Chips at Seahouses
7.15 pm Arrive back in Heaton.

The cost towards the travel is £15 per person. Heaton Churches Together will make up the rest of the cost. You will need also the means to buy fish and chips at Seahouses on the way home.

Some people will be unable to walk much and there will be places to sit and take in the beautiful scenery.

Watch the weekly notices, for further details.



Heaton Festival

Some of you have been asking about the Heaton Festival which is due to happen this year. It is a biennial event and was last held in 2024. Heaton Churches Together, at their last meeting, have decided that they are not able to run the Festival this year, but hope to be back in 2027. We will update you as we are able and when things develop. Thank you for your continuing prayers and support for this community event.

DJB

News of the Church Family

St George's was sad to learn that in January this year, the High Heaton Townswomens Guild met for the last time. The Guild has been meeting regularly at St Georges for some years now –from before 2000, - and has seen a decline in numbers due to various circumstances. It is understood that the remaining members will continue to meet socially and we wish them well.

At the beginning of February, St George's was delighted to receive into church membership by Affirmation of Faith, two former members of St Cuthberts LEP. (Sadly, St Cuthbert's closed in August 2025). The service of welcome for Gail and Jennifer was conducted by Rev'd Liz Jewitt.

"Thank you to the good folk of St George's URC for hosting the World Day of Prayer service in March." . It raised £139.50. *Val Ingoe, World Day of Prayer Committee*

From Marie Curie Hospice. Dear St George's U.R.C. congregation: "Thank you for your kind donation of £242.68 in memory of Judith Das. Please accept our sincere condolences at this time. We are so grateful to you for supporting Marie Curie at what may be a difficult time. Everyone experiences grief differently, but we hope you may find some comfort in knowing that your support will make a huge difference. " (Letter is on notice board in vestibule.)

St George's send their Congratulations and Best wishes to Liz and Tony, who celebrate special "0" birthdays in May. We wish you well and trust that you will enjoy your special days. God bless you.

Congratulations too to Irene and Ray Ewart, who celebrate their 40th wedding anniversary in April.

We pray for the children and young people who attend and take part in the activities of our uniformed organisations, experiencing new and exciting challenges each week and for the volunteers and leaders who give up their time to support these young people and the work of the organisations. We thank you for the opportunity of people coming together to learn from each other, to develop skills for life, to serve local communities, to engage and support young people in their personal development and making a positive contribution to society while exploring beliefs and acting with care, respect, integrity and cooperation. *Adam, URC minister and scout leader.*

Many of our church members will remember Rev'd John Durrell, a retired URC minister who preached at St George's on many occasions. Sadly, John died on February 22nd, after a long illness. We send our condolences and prayers to Hillian, his wife, and his family.

St George's was sad to learn that Rev'd Ken Harris, retired URC minister and husband of Rev'd Margaret Harris (nee Johnson) died suddenly on 28th February. Ken and Margaret married at St George's on 12th August 2014, with the then Moderator, Rev'd Lis Mullen, officiating. Margaret has been and continues to be a good friend to St George's, preaching here many times. After their marriage, Ken and Margaret shared worship.

And finally.....Thank you. I would like to thank all my dear friends at St George's for their kind wishes and cards for my 90th birthday. It's been a privilege be part of such a wonderful family for so many of my 90 years and I have been truly blessed. I first came to St George's in 1947 when I joined the Girl Guides and thank God for His guiding hand on me ever since. Thank you all so very much. Moira

An Offertory Prayer

In the light of day, we bring our gifts to God; gifts of time, talent and treasure. We give to make a difference through the relief of suffering and poverty and through the advancement of Christianity. Our gifts, by themselves, might not make a huge difference but, together, are agents of the coming Kingdom. We give in a variety of ways through offering a listening ear or a supportive shoulder to cry on, through practical efforts in a range of good causes and, of course, with our money. In church we give through the plate, sometimes using the little envelopes, through filling in Gift Aid forms, through a wide variety of fund raising activities and through giving directly to the bank. We give to make a difference, we give to be a blessing to others in response to the blessings we have, ourselves, received. And so we give thanks for all that is given:
God of every good gift, you bless us that we might be a blessing to others; bless our gifts that, through them, the light of your loving kindness might be experienced in the shadows of our world. Amen



Christian Aid Week 10-16 May 2026.

In the UK, the second week of May is known as Christian Aid Week. It is a week dedicated to raising funds and awareness for humanitarian efforts and long term developmental support for poor communities world wide. One of the areas needing most help is Gaza.

After two years of conflict, the humanitarian situation in Gaza remains catastrophic. People need life-saving supplies now. The flow of aid into Gaza must be stepped up. More than anything, people need the ceasefire to hold, and a chance to heal. People are hungry, displaced and without access to healthcare. There has been some improvement following the ceasefire agreement of October 2025, but it falls short of the scale of humanitarian need, with the entire population of Gaza still facing acute food insecurity.

- At least 69,795 people have tragically died.
- More than 1.4 million people face extreme hunger.
- Over 175,500 have been injured.
- Only 18 out of 36 hospitals in Gaza are functioning, with limited capacity.
- 90% of Gaza's 2.1million population has been displaced.

A massive scale-up of humanitarian aid is urgently needed. People must have a sustained and unimpeded flow of life-saving supplies to survive and rebuild.

How to help Gaza

If you are in the UK, the best and quickest way to help support people in Gaza and affected areas like the West Bank is to donate to the Gaza Crisis appeal. Your donation helps fund the lifesaving work of the Palestine Red Crescent Society and The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), who have been on the ground since conflict escalated and continue to save lives, distribute aid and give hope.

The Palestine Red Crescent Society has:

- 1,400 active responders in Gaza.
- Established 35 medical points/clinics since the start of the crisis.
- Reached around 491,000 people with mental health & psychosocial support.
- Provided more than 26,000 people with rehabilitation support.
- Supported over 1.3 million people with health and disease prevention sessions.
- Reached 400,000 with unexploded ordnance awareness.
- Distributed over 15,000 tents.
- Set up four water purification stations as well as mobile toilets.
- Distributed 14 million litres of bottled water, as well as hygiene and dignity kits.

A story from Gaza:

Amr works for the Palestine Red Crescent in Gaza. He walks more than 10 kilometres a day, to the office and home and to try and buy essentials for his family. "It's becoming harder every day to meet even the most basic needs," Amr said in a text.

He has lost friends and family, including his brother and brother-in-law. People in Gaza want the world to know about the situation they face, Amr said.

"Gaza is a place where you can see a doctor who lost his family while saving others, families living in cemeteries, a boy who lost his entire family, a little girl asking for her mother who was killed," he said.

Despite exhaustion and heartache, Amr's focus is on his hope for peace: "For my children to sit at a school desk again, for us to rebuild our shattered lives. But I also know that, after all we have endured, we need a chance to heal."

While reaching people with vital aid and food is the immediate priority, the longer-term needs in Gaza will be immense. When the people of Gaza begin to rebuild their lives, Christian Aid will be there to support them every step of the way.

How we help Gaza through neutrality, humanity and impartiality

We are a charity organisation that stands for humanity, neutrality and impartiality in times of crisis. Our aim is to relieve suffering with compassion and dignity, helping anyone in need, wherever they are. Our neutrality allows us to access communities, gain trust, and to get help where it's needed most.

Decisions on when and where we provide support to those suffering are based on where the need is greatest. We are not here to take sides. We are not here to measure one life against another. We are here to relieve suffering – and we will continue to do all we can.

Extracts from the Christian Aid Website (Written before the Iran/Middle East War)

Did you know?

Below are some Eponymous words. That is, words relating to or being the person after whom a discovery, invention, place is named or thought to be named.

1. Saxophone: from Adolphe Sax, the Belgian instrument maker.
2. Boysenberry: from Rudolph Boysen, a horticulturalist.
3. Cardigan: from the 7th Earl of Cardigan, who led the charge of the Light Brigade.
4. Praline: from Cesar de Pleassis Praslin, who popularised the almond confection.
5. Silhouette: from Etienne de Silhouette, a French finance minister known for austerity (and cheap shadow portraits)
6. Sandwich: named after the 4th Earl of Sandwich, who ate meat between bread to avoid leaving the card table.
7. Boycott: from Captain Charles Boycott, an English land agent ostracised by Irish tenants.
8. Nicotine: from Jean Nocot, who introduced tobacco to France.
9. Teddy Bear: from Theodore "Teddy" Roosevelt after he refused to shoot a bear cub.
10. Fahrenheit: from Daniel Gabriel Fahrenheit, creator of the temperature scale.
11. Shrapnel: from Henry Shrapnel, a British artillery officer who invented shell casings.
12. Maudlin: From Mary Magdalene, often depicted weeping (associated with tearfulness).
13. Sadistic: From Maquis de Sade, infamous for writings about cruelty and pleasure.
14. Tantalise: from Tantalus, of Greek mythology, eternally tempted with unreachable food and drink.
15. Chauvinism: From Nicholas Chauvin, a fictional exaggerated French soldier known for extreme patriotism.

St George's Day- April 23rd



Saint George is a legendary figure known for his bravery, martyrdom, and the famous tale of slaying a dragon, making him one of the most venerated saints in Christianity.

Saint George is believed to have been born around 280 AD in Cappadocia, in what is now Turkey. He was a Roman soldier who served in the army during the reign of Emperor Diocletian. Known for his virtuous behaviour and military prowess, George quickly rose through the ranks to become a tribune, commanding a regiment of soldiers. However, he converted to Christianity and openly opposed the persecution of Christians initiated by Diocletian, which ultimately led to his martyrdom around 303 AD.

Saint George was executed for his faith and his martyrdom became a symbol of courage and conviction. His remains were taken to Lydda, (now Lod, Israel), where a church was built in his honour. His veneration began in the 5th century, and he became one of the most popular saints in medieval Europe. He is recognised as the patron saint of several countries, including England, Portugal, Ethiopia, Georgia, Greece, Lithuania, Palestine, Russia. He is also Patron saint of Malta and Gozo.

The legend of Saint George and the Dragon

The most famous legend associated with Saint George is the tale of slaying a dragon. According to the story, a dragon terrorised a city, demanding sacrifices from the townspeople. To appease the beast, they offered it livestock and eventually resorted to sacrificing young maidens. When the king's daughter was chosen as the next sacrifice, Saint George intervened. He fought the dragon, ultimately slaying it and saving the princess. In gratitude, the townspeople converted to Christianity.

This legend, while not part of the earliest accounts of Saint George, became popular in the Middle Ages and is often depicted in art, showing him as a knight in shining armour. The story symbolises the triumph of good over evil and has inspired countless works of art and literature throughout the centuries.

Saint George's legacy extends beyond his story; he is a symbol of chivalry and protection. His image has been used in various national flags and emblems, most notably the red cross on a white background, which is associated with England. His story has also been invoked in literature and speeches, including Shakespeare's "Henry V" where he is called upon for courage in battle.

In summary, Saint George's story is one of valour, faith and the enduring struggle against evil, making him a beloved figure in Christian tradition and beyond. His life and legend continue to inspire people around the world.

From articles freely available on the Internet.

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: £60 Minor Hall: £45
Meeting room: £25 Church: £65

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

Large Hall: £85 Minor Hall: £55
Meeting Room: £30 Church: £110

If you would like to book any of the above, or require further information, please telephone Mr Harry Fawcitt, 07351 050480. 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.

Eyewitness Report from Kazakhstan.

Vladimir is a chaplain at a Christian rehabilitation centre in Almaty, Kazakhstan, but he wasn't always a follower of Jesus. From the age of 6, he was a gang member and has spent 28 years of his life in prison for gang-related crimes.

After his last release from jail, he said a group of plainclothes policemen planted drugs in his home. On top of this, his wife had died and his children had rejected him.

Even though Vladimir wasn't a believer, and felt like he had nothing left to live for, he asked God to give him one final chance. He wanted to say goodbye to his elderly mum. "My mother and grandmother were believers, and they would pray for me" he said. Vladimir prayed and fasted and miraculously the prosecutor said he could go free. In that moment, he remembered a Christian he had met in jail who had also been a gang member and had told him that God loved him. Vladimir fell on his knees, where he had gang tattoos with words stating he would never bow to anyone, and he bowed to God. "God changed me and I wanted to serve him" he says.

Mark 5.19 came to his mind. "Go home to your own people and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how he has had mercy on you"

Vladimir began to work with ex-criminals in a Christian rehabilitation centre in 2012, and today he offers Bibles and resources to the men in the centre for free because they've been paid for by you.

Your support is helping to provide God's word to Christian rehabilitation centres across the country. Viktor Grishkp leads the Kazakhstan Bible Society team. He is pastor of a small church and lives next door to it. There are some Kazakh language Bibles around.

In 2015, a few years after Viktor began leading the Bible Society team, the Kazakh government issued a law that limited preaching and sharing spiritual literature outside of registered religious buildings, like churches, synagogues and mosques. To register a building, communities have to provide 500 signatures- in many small villages this is impossible. Laws like these in China have forced believers to create the underground church, with members meeting illegally in house groups.

While legislation tries to suffocate Bible mission, your support is giving it oxygen. Viktor says, "By God's grace, we are the main source of the spread of the gospel and spiritual literature in the country"

Viktor and his team are working on a new translation of the Kazakh Bible, and continuing to resource churches, schools and children. Aslan is a man whose life has been changed by their ministry. During Aslan's 40 years as a drug addict, he tried to end his life several times. But when he came to the rehabilitation centre, he was given a Bible. He was at his lowest, having lost his family and his home, but when he read about the sacrifice Jesus made for him, he was compelled by love and became a Christian.

N.B. The vibrant, colourful city of Almaty is the largest city in Kazakhstan. Your regular giving supports the Bible team based in Almaty as they strive to spread the gospel throughout the entire country.

From Bible a Month Prayer letter, Feb/Mar/Apr 2026.

Bible a Month: Kazakhstan

“Let us try to know the Lord. He will come to us as surely as the day dawns, as surely as the spring rains that water the earth” Hosea 6, 3 (GNB)

Kazakhstan is a country in central Asia. It has a short coastline on the Caspian Sea and land borders with Russia, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, and China. It covers an area of 1.055 000 sq miles- the UK is 94,000. The population is 20.2 million and the main languages are Kazakh, Russian and English. The literacy rate- people who can read and write- is 99%.

Kazakhstan, the ninth largest country in the world by land area, used to be part of the Soviet Union. The effects of that time are still seen and felt, whether in the vast green spaces scattered throughout the cities or the prominent use of the Russian language alongside Kazakh and English.

Islam is the dominant religion, with over 69% of the population identifying as Muslim. The Christian population is 17%. Thanks to your support via Bible Society, the gospel is reaching people of all different religions and backgrounds that call Kazakhstan home. The new translation of the Kazakh Bible will mean more people can read the Scriptures in their first language; large print Bibles help elderly people; there are new childrens Bibles too.

Along with the Christian rehab centres, your regular support from Bible a Month is having a huge impact in Central Asia.

Prayer Pointers



- Thank God that the message of the Bible is spreading throughout this Muslim-majority country, despite barriers. Pray that restrictions will loosen so that the gospel can be shared freely.
- Ask God to protect the 3 million-plus Christians in Kazakhstan who can face opposition. Pray that they will boldly share the gospel as the Spirit leads them.
- Bless the Bible Society team as they encourage desperate people who need the healing love of Jesus. Pray that God will strengthen and empower all Bible workers in this vast nation.

From Bible a Month Newsletter Feb/Mar/Apr 2026



Northern Synod Prayers

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

April

5th Easter Sunday rejoicing in the risen Christ, a time of hope and possibility.

12th St Andrew's Monkseaton and St Columba's North Shields. Minister Rev'd Louise Sanders

19th Giving thanks for creation and those who care for it. (World Earth Day is Apr 22nd). Celebrating our Synod Environmental Group, alongside our Green Apostle Charles Jolly.

26th Churches: Guisborough; St Andrew's Nunthorpe and Marton; St Columba's Billingham; St George's Hartlepool; St Andrew's Mission, Thornaby; St Andrew & St George Stockton. CRCW Ann Honey.

In Redcar- the new LEP Redcar House of worship and its minister, Rev'd Mark Hubbard.

May

3rd Synod on Tour (9th). Stockton Road, Sunderland.

10th Christian Aid Week (10-16 May). Prayers for global justice and generosity. Commitment for Life Advocate, Maranny Jones.

17th St Johns Wideopen; St George's High Heaton and Stamfordham exploring ministry. Interim Moderator Rev'd David Grossch-Miller. Superintendent Rev'd Tim Woolley.

24th Pentecost Sunday, the joy of receiving the Holy Spirit. Synod on Tour (30th) at St George's Morpeth.

31st Trinity Sunday, the wonder of three in one. Children's, Youth and Families Committee. Convenor Rev'd Julian Sanders: Field Workers Hannah Middleton; John Stephenson. Youth Pioneers- Angela Feather, Irene Frith, and Tony Harbottle- Noppen and the Youth Ops Team.

June

7th World Environment Day (5 June). Stewarding God's creation with care and courage. Synod on Tour (13th) at St James's Alnwick.

14th Horsely. Bellingham and Wark. Minister Rev'd Roberta Ritson. Superintendent Rev'd Marie Beard.

The Church Magazine, Contact.

This is produced every two months and distributed mostly by email, though some copies are printed for those unable to access online. It is also available to read on our St George's web page. When we have visitors in church, it is so useful to give them a copy of our magazine to read when they go home, so that they remember us. Every time an issue is due, an appeal is made for articles, but its very rare for anything to materialise. Only 3 people regularly contribute- and I thank those folk for this. Equally, there is little feedback about the current issues.

Bearing in mind recent changes in church life, which involve additional tasks for the Elders I am now not able to continue to seek and prepare articles ready for printing. I am therefore asking if anyone will be able to take this on- There must be some wordsmiths out there.? I'd be happy to explain how things currently work, but that does not mean they have to be done in the same way. I pass the various typed articles onto Bob R, who works his magic with setting up and ordering the pages, sometimes including illustrations if

appropriate. Bob makes it all into a magazine and then it is printed on the church's colour copier- around 15 copies. After that the Webmaster puts the new edition onto the website, and I send out the email copies as an attachment. Contact editor is an appointment of Church Meeting- each "term of office" lasting 3 years (renewable).

If there are no volunteers to help, sadly, after the 65 plus years that I **know** it has existed, Contact, our church magazine, will cease to be produced. Those of a similar vintage to me will remember that there used to be a children's page, written by "Aunty Nell". It had a story, a prayer, and perhaps some little snippet of information which children appreciated, or a picture to colour. I looked forward to that enormously. It was ages before I found out who Aunty Nell was – she was Helen Atkinson, a lovely gentle, caring, Christian lady who had been a member and Elder for years.

Rotas which are necessary for the smooth running of the church, will be available to those involved.

Dorothy B

A Bit of a Quiz to keep those brain cells working.

1. Which German city is located at the confluence of the Rhine and Moselle rivers?
2. Which country joined the Euro on January 1st 2023? Bonus point if you know what was its original currency .
3. What UK record was set at Coningsby ?
4. Which word meaning an extended period of uncertainty was named as the UK word of the year in 2022 ?
5. What is the largest island in the Caribbean?
6. What name is given to the most common book classification in libraries?
7. Which river dwelling, highly coloured British bird has the scientific name *Alcedo Atthis* ?
8. Who played Rubeus Hagrid in the Harry Potter films?
9. What measurement is one fourth of a pint?
10. What fruit is the clear brandy called Kirsch made from?
11. On which road is the famous Harrods store located?
12. What clothing material is produced from the Flax plant?
13. From which board game was Mrs White removed in 2016?
14. How many years are celebrated by a cotton anniversary?
15. What is the capital of the Seychelles?
16. In the Old Testament, the Decalogue is more commonly known as what?



Smile



- Just met this chap at the local hospital. He injured himself playing hide and seek, he's in ICU.
- Railway thief arrested again by Police. He's got a track record of these crimes.
- My wife is fed up with me over my obsession with sausages. I said to her, "How about I take you away for a few days to take our minds off this problem? She agreed. A nice few days in Cumberland and Lincolnshire should do the trick"

More Smiles

- How do so many people get simple sayings wrong? Answers on the back of a coast-guard please. Tanks in advance.
- I accidentally rubbed ketchup in my eyes. Now I have Heinzsight.
- The biggest joke on humankind is that computers have started asking humans to prove that they are not robots.
- If you boil a funny bone it becomes a laughing stock. Now that's humerus.
- Did you know that world champion cyclist Chris Hoy's sister Landa is a navigating officer in the Royal Navy? Not many people know that.
- My local bank branch is closing. I went in and I asked what I should do and they told me I need to go online but will need a nap. Went home, had a 20 minute nap. Didn't work. Bank still closing.
- Its custom that everyone in my local neighbourhood wears sweaters that are just a size too small for them. We are a tight knit community.
- I've just been in B & Q and asked the bloke, "what gets rid of grime and stains?" . He said, "ammonia cleaner". I said "sorry mate, I thought you worked here"
- Congrats to Hugh Zappritti-Boyden on his new role as head of the National Parrott Owners Association.
- Going up the A1 and my wife says, "you'd better flash that truck driver in front of us , tell him he's losing his load" . I said, "Pet, it's a council gritter"
- Every time we try to eat healthily, along comes Easter, summer, holidays, Friday or Tuesday, Christmas- and ruins it for us.

With grateful thanks to LIVErNEWS, the Liver Patient Support Newsletter.

Lectionary readings 2nd April to 7th June 2026

Where readings match URC diary they are highlighted

02-Apr-26	Maundy Thursday	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
03-Apr-26	Good Friday	Isaiah 52 vs 13-ch 53 vs 12, Psalm 22, Hebrews 10 vs 16-25, (or Hebrews 4 vs 14-16, Hebrews 5 vs 7-9), St John 18 vs 1- ch 19, vs 42
05-Apr-26	Easter Day	Acts 10 v 34-43 or Jeremiah 31 v 1-6, Psalm 118 v 1-2, 14-2 Colossians 3 v 1-4 or Acts 10 vs 34-43, St. John 20 v 1-18 or Matthew 28 1-10
12-Apr-26	Second Sunday of Easter	Acts 2 v 14a, 22-32, Psalm 16 (OR Exodus 15 v 1-11,) Psalm 111, 1 Peter 1 vs 3-9, St. John 20 vs 19-31
19-Apr-26	Third Sunday of Easter	Acts 2 v 14a, 36-41, Psalm 116 vs 1-4, 12-19, (or Isaiah 51 vs 1-6,) Psalm 34 vs 1-10, 1 Peter 1 vs 17-23, Luke 24 vs 13-35
26-Apr-26	Fourth Sunday of Easter	Acts 2 v 42-47, Psalm 23 (OR Ezekiel 34 vs 7-15) Psalm 100, 1 Peter 2 vs 19-25, St. John 10 vs 1-10
03-May-26	Fifth Sunday of Easter	Acts 7 vs 55-60, Psalm 31 vs 1-5, 15-16 or Proverbs 4 vs 10 18) Psalm 119 vs 9-32, 1 Peter 2 vs 2-10, St. John 14 vs 1-14
10-May-26	Sixth Sunday of Easter	Acts 17 vs 22-31, Psalm 66 vs 8-20 (or Ezekiel 43 vs 1-7a) Psalm 115, 1 Peter 3 vs 13-22, St. John 14 vs 15-21
17-May-26	Seventh Sunday of Easter	Acts 1 vs 6-14 , Psalm 68 vs 1-10, 32-35 (or Isaiah 45 vs 1-7, Psalm 21 vs 1-7, 1 Peter 4 vs 12-14, to ch 5 vs 6-11, St. John 17 vs 1-11
24-May-26	Day of Pentecost	Acts 2 vs 1-21 (or Numbers 11 vs 24-30), Psalm 104 vs 24-34, 35b, 1Corinthians 12 vs 3b-13 (or Acts 2 vs 1-21), St. John 20 vs 19-23 or St. John 7 vs 37 -39
31-May-26	Trinity Sunday	Genesis 1 vs 1-2, 4a, Psalm 8, 2Corinthians 13 vs 11-13, Matthew 28 vs 16-20
07-Jun-26	Sunday between June 5 and June 11	Genesis 12 vs 1-9, Psalm 33 vs 1-12 (or Hosea 5 v15 to Ch6 vs 6, Psalm 50 vs 7-15, Romans 4 vs 13-25, Matthew 9 v 9-13, 18-26

Answers- (to quiz)

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|---|----------------------------|
| 1. Koblenz | 9. Gill |
| 2. Croatia. Currency was the KUNA. | 10. Cherries |
| 3. Highest recorded temperature in UK at 40.3 C | 11. Brompton Road (87-135) |
| 4. Permacrisis | 12. Linen |
| 5. Cuba | 13. Cluedo |
| 6. Dewey decimal | 14. 2 nd |
| 7. King fisher | 15. Victoria |
| 8. Robbie Coltrane | 16. The Ten Commandments |

Hello to our friends in St George's.

It is now mid-March and at the end of a dreary and very wet winter the snow eventually made a presence around the North Pennines, which meant of course, that we had our share. As I write it is snowing now. However, spring seems to have appeared this week with the trees showing their buds and the early plants just peeping through. I love the springtime; my greenhouse is filling with seedlings with the longer days I can get into the garden and put the summer flowering plants in. At the rear of our house, there is an area I call the ponderosa (remember the TV cowboy series) which I leave wild, ostensibly so the local fauna can live undisturbed by me, although in reality, it is just too much for me to tackle. I had to cut down a well-established tree; which I hated to do, but I was concerned that it would be future danger. However, I have created a small area which will be my 'wild garden' with wildflowers and grasses for the pollinators and bugs. I have made a very 'des res' rustic hedgehog house, because we do get hedgehogs in the garden, but sadly it has not been occupied.

You may recall that last year I photographed a deer which was eating the flowers in the front garden. This year I have bought an electronic deer scarer which I hope will prevent them from doing so this year. We do get Pheasants on the front lawn, but they are no bother. The birds also know it is spring and we do like to hear their singing; some have started building nests. I have five feeders hanging around the garden area, in which I put meal worms, nuts, seeds etc and don't the birds know it? Last year we had Nuthatches, Blackbirds, Robins, Chaffinches, Starlings (and few others which I could not identify) and of course the ever-present sparrows and tits and, unusually, I had a Peregrine falcon perched on the fence. My daughter lives only a short walk from us, her house backs directly onto a wood. Woodpeckers and owls frequent her garden trees. We hear the owls, but they don't seem to come closer than the wood behind us. I have an anecdote about owls. I have mentioned before that Julia is just dotty about owls. One time, when we were at the Allenheads Heritage weekly gathering, I looked out of the window and saw, high up in the trees, what I believed to be a long-eared owl. I called Julia over and she was enthralled. Other members came over and just

smiled, it was, they told me, a plastic replica of a long-eared owl which someone had attached to the branch some years ago. Ah well, it would have been nice if it were real. There are red squirrels in the area but in the time we have lived here, I have only caught sight of one.

I was shopping in the small local Co-op recently and amongst other items I bought two large bags of potting compost (which were stored outside) and when I had checked out everything one of the teenage assistants said, "I'll come with you and carry the heavy bags for you". That was very nice and I thanked her but declined the offer. Am I really looking that old?

But I have to say that all the local youths are nice and very polite, how very refreshing to witness this and live peacefully and stress free amongst these lovely people. For those who like fast food meals (which I abhor) the nearest fast-food place is about 6 miles from Allendale at Haydon Bridge and it is a good old fish and chip shop.

After that, the nearest is in Hexham or Haltwhistle. However, twice a month, a wood fired pizza van turns up in the village and does steady trade from 17.30 until about 20.30. Also, about once a month, a mobile Thai food van parks in the Catton (about 2 miles from us) pub car park and prepares Thai food to order which can be taken home or eaten in the pub with some local Allendale beer.

The local Methodist circuit churches meet once a month in the community centre in the hamlet of Sinderhope and we hold a combined service after which there is a mini feast. Much too much food. It is to this centre that Julia and I are going soon. A local farmer and volunteer ladies, put on a meal for about 50 people to which local elderly folk are invited. We are going because all the members of the dementia club are invited.

I am sorry to tell you that Julia continues to deteriorate, which is in line with this dreadful disease, but physically she is fine. She sleeps such a lot now, and, if I don't wake her up she will sleep until 10.30 having retired to bed at 21.30 or 22.00. This again is synonymous with the disease. There are lots of lovely field and track walks around the area which Julia and I do together, but I now must ensure that there are no climbs as she cannot now manage anything but level track. I continue to take her to the zumber session in the village and the other ladies look after her, they all tell me that she does manage

very well. It is an hour session, and I sneak off to the café for a coffee and to read the newspaper, which is the only time we are separated. I take her out to dementia clubs and other gatherings which we both enjoy, and, once a week, we go to one of the two village pubs for a drink and a natter. As the beginning of spring is in sight I hope to get back into playing green bowls, I never thought that I could take the pace of the game, but I do

really enjoy it and was surprised when, on my first season, I got to the semi-final (and lost!) It is the only activity I do for 2 hours without Julia, and, as my one of my daughters stays with Julia, I can relax a little. I stay connected with St George's through the prayer chain and the weekly notices which DB sends to me. I hope to get across and share your service soon.
Julia and Dennis (SBBF)

GIFT AID AND GIFT AID SMALL CASH DONATIONS SCHEME.

PLEASE DON'T IGNORE THIS ARTICLE AS BEING BORING AND NOT ONE THAT PROBABLY DOESN'T APPLY TO YOU!!

TO THOSE WHO PAY INCOME TAX.

It's that time of year again when I ask you to think about helping St. George's financially without any additional cost to you. I **encourage any of our members or friends** who donates to St. George's, pays income tax and does NOT gift aid their donations **to complete a gift aid form**. If personal circumstances change and a donor ceases to pay tax, or no longer pays sufficient tax for us to claim, the gift aid declaration can be cancelled. For this reason, we normally only make an annual claim in May or early June to allow our donors time to check whether or not they still pays sufficient income tax to cover **all** gift aid donations he/she has made to any charity.

It is likely that most of our members will by now be aware whether or not they have paid income tax for the tax year which will end on 5th April 2026.

I will be making the claim for St. George's sometime around mid to late May 2026

Anyone who has gift aided their offerings/donations and has ceased to pay sufficient income tax should contact me by the 10th May 2026 to ensure I do not make a claim on their donations for the tax year ended 5th April 2026

TO THOSE WHO ARE NOT TAX PAYERS.

If you do not pay tax but would still like to help the Church reclaim under the Gift Aid Small Cash Donations scheme please make your offerings in **CASH** amounts of up to £30.00 per week preferably in the Free Will Offering envelopes. These can be supplied by Anthony Armstrong. If you are not able to attend Church every week please put your donations in your Free Will Offering envelopes and bring them when you are able to come. We can claim for donations of cash in the offering plate but only up to £30 per person per week which is why the Free Will Offering envelopes are best.

Unfortunately, we cannot claim for non-tax payers who pay directly into the bank account or donate by cheque.

If you require any further information, need to check whether you have given an ongoing declaration, or require a gift aid declaration form please speak to me either at Church, by sending me an email at alhall23@yahoo.co.uk.

Your support for the Gift Aid Scheme forms a significant part of the income of St. George's and is much appreciated by the whole congregation. (last year we claimed a total of £5506.01 through the Gift Aid and Small Donations Scheme).

Thank you
Alison Hall

Points to Ponder

- You can't change the past, but you can ruin the present by living in the past and worrying about the future.
- A praying friend is the best kind of friend.
- Many people will walk in and out of your life. But only true friends leave footprints in your heart.
- Everything is super important until you are sick. Then you realise there was only ever one thing that was important. Your health. Because at the end of the day, health is not everything; but without health, everything is nothing .
- Next time you're feeling low, remember this: you're alive, that alone is a gift. You can breathe, move, see, drink clean water, eat a meal, and rest under a safe roof. There is always something in your life that's worth gratitude.
- Sometimes happiness looks like:- staying at home, minding your own peace, eating homemade food, gently saying No, and enjoying your own company.
- If it's not yours, don't take it. If it's not right, don't do it. If it's not true, don't say it. If you don't know, be quiet.
- Not everyone is given the chance to grow old. So appreciate every single day of your life.
- Be still. God knows you're exhausted. He knows you're doing your best. He knows you don't have all the answers about the future. But He sees you. He sees that you haven't given up. He has a plan for you and He will make a way.
- Pretending you are okay with a situation that is actually breaking your heart is the worst feeling ever.
- What's done is done, what's gone is gone. One of the best life lessons is learning how to let go and move on. Its okay to look back at your memories but never let the past stop you from moving forward.
Buddha's teaching
- A bad mood is never an excuse to use cruel words. Never. Moods pass, but cruel words wound the soul.

Inspiration Cabin

- There's so much power in believing that everything will work out even when you don't know how or when. You just have to believe that it will.

All the above quotes are freely available on the Internet.

Church Diary

April

2nd 7.00 pm Maundy Thursday service led by Rev'd Liz Jewitt

3rd 10.30 am Good Friday service led by Rev'd Liz Jewitt.

Walk of Witness- Heaton Churches Together. Service in Hadrian Square at 11 am.

5th 6.30 am EASTER SUNDAY. Dawn Service in Heaton Park

10.30 am Worship led by Rev'd Liz Jewitt, to include Holy Communion

12th 10.30 am Worship will be led by Rev'd Yvonne Tracey, retired URC minister

19th 10.30 am Worship will be led by Mrs Alison Moodie, URC Accredited Lay Preacher

19th 11.30 am (approx.) CHURCH MEETING

26th 10.30 am Worship led by the Elders/Members

May

3rd 10.30 am Worship will be led by Mrs Margaret Harrison, Methodist Local Preacher.

10th 10.30 am Worship will be led by Harry Fawcitt, one of our Worship Leaders.

10th -16 th Christian Aid Week

17th 10.30 am Worship will be led by Rev'd Liz Jewitt

20th 7.30 pm Heaton Churches Together meet at Martha and Mary's.

24th 10.30 am PENTECOST. Worship led by the Elders/Members

31st 10.30 am Worship will be led by June Holmes

June

7th 10.30 am Worship will be led by Mr Peter Waugh. Holy Communion

14th 10.30 am Worship to be led by Sharon Cowey, one of our Worship Leaders

	April 5th	12th	19th	26th	May 3rd
Duty Elder	Val Kane	Dorothy Barker	Sharon Cowey	Val Kane	Mr Hall
Door Stewards	EASTER Audrey Matfin Harry Fawcitt	Sharon Cowey & Renee Croft	Dorothy Coates & Maureen Collier	Harry Fawcitt & Rob Hailes	Lesley Cadwallader & Jennifer Cunningham
Communion Stewards	Angela MacKenzie & Harry Fawcitt				Sharon Cowey & Val Kane
Flower Arranger	Dorothy Barker	Jennifer Cunningham	Clare Hutton	Ivy Renton	Dorothy Barker
Flower Donations	Dorothy Barker	No donor	No donor	No donor	Rob Hailes
Tea after worship	Dorothy Coates & Lesley Cadwallader	Val Kane & Jennifer Cunningham	Clare & John Hutton	Ivy Renton & Maureen Collier	Tony Hall
Screens Set up	Alison Hall	Bob Renton	Alison Hall	Bob Renton	Alison Hall
Screens operate	Alison Hall	Bob Renton	Harry Fawcitt	tbc	Alison Hall
	May 10th	May 17th	May 24th	May 31st	June 7th
Duty Elder	Mrs Barker	Mrs Cowey	Mrs Kane	Mrs Barker	Mr Hall
Door Stewards	Tony Hall	Audrey Matfin Harry Fawcitt	Ivy & Bob Renton	Harry Fawcitt & Rob Hailes	Dorothy Coates & Maureen Collier
Communion Stewards					Dorothy C & Angela MacKenzie
Flower Arrangers	Jennifer Cunningham	Clare Hutton	Ivy Renton	Dorothy Barker	Jennifer Cunningham
Flower Donations	No donor	Angela MacKenzie	No donor	No donor	Joy Ibabao
Tea after worship	Dorothy Coates & Lesley Cadwallader	Val Kane & Jennifer Cunningham	Clare & John Hutton	Ivy Renton & Maureen Collier	Tony Hall
Screens Set up	Bob Renton	Alison Hall	Bob Renton	Alison Hall	Bob Renton
Screens operate	Bob Renton	Harry Fawcitt	tbc	Alison Hall	Bob Renton