

Contact

August & September 2025



St. George's U. R. C.

Newton Road High Seaton

Counting our blessings

The blessings of your father are stronger than the blessings of the eternal mountains, the bounties of the everlasting hills. Genesis 49, 26 (NRSV)

Sometimes in life something happens to remind us of how much we have to celebrate- the many blessings and gifts that God so freely showers upon us. Sadly, such moments can be all too rare. More often than not, we lurch from one demand, one crisis, one responsibility to another, scarcely finding time to draw breath and reflect on the reasons we have to give thanks. If we are not careful, we end up brooding on the things we haven't got, sucked into a vicious circle of self pity, the more sorry we feel for ourselves, the more grounds there seem to be for such feelings.

We need to stop occasionally and, in the words of the old hymn, make time to "count our blessings", for when we do that, life seems very different. There is so much that is not only good, but indescribably wonderful, beautiful beyond words. The words above were concerned not with God's blessing but with Jacob's blessing to his sons, but they could speak more appropriately of all God has done for us. Make time to consider such things and, far from feeling sorry for yourself, you will realise how much reason you have to give thanks.

Ask yourself... how often do you make time to thank God for all he has given? Do you have life's joys and sorrows in their proper perspective?

Pray: Lord, I have so much to thank you for; yet all too often I take it all for granted. Instead of counting my blessings, I dwell on my frustrations. Instead of celebrating everything you have given, I brood about the things I don't have. I lose sight of the gifts that each day brings, the countless reasons I have to rejoice.

Forgive me for forgetting how fortunate I am, and help me to appreciate the wonder of all I have received from your loving hands.

Father, for all your blessings too many to number, and your goodness too wonderful for words, I give you my praise. Amen

Adapted from a reflection from Daily Prayer by Nick Fawcett.

Dear friends

May I take this opportunity to thank you all for the lovely gifts of flowers and earrings which were presented to me after my final service before retiring. A huge thank you, also, for the very generous cheque of £500. I have donated all monetary gifts to Newcastle Charity Cancer Services/Northern Centre for Cancer Care. The total raised was £1000. The charity is very close to my heart as it is based locally, at Freeman Hospital where Colin receives his ongoing treatment for prostate cancer.

I have received an automated response from Newcastle Hospitals Charity which reads: 'Thank you for your donation; we greatly value your support. Donations like yours ensure we can support Newcastle Hospitals staff, patients, our local community and invest in important medical research. Your support helps us to go further for our hospitals. With thanks and best wishes, The Newcastle Hospitals Charity Team.'

A huge thank you for all the lovely retirement and birthday cards and for the best wishes you sent with them. I treasure them and still look at them from time to time. Thank you so much for making my retirement and birthday so special. I am truly overwhelmed and grateful.

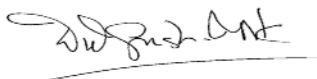
Love & prayers,
Liz

Progress Report!

The congregations of St. George's, High Heaton, St. John's Uniting Church and Stamfordham Uniting Church will be aware that their representatives have been working hard to prepare the paperwork that is needed before the search for a minister to serve the three congregations can move to the next stage in the process. We have now got to the point where the paperwork can be shared with church members after agreement between the congregational representatives and the Synod Pastoral Committee. Meetings will now be arranged (or may have taken place by the time you read this) when a Pastorate Profile and a Memorandum of Understanding will be shared with church members. These documents serve both as an advertisement to be shared with prospective ministers and an outline of how the three congregations will come together under the leadership and pastoral care of one minister.

Once church members have had the opportunity to comment and approve then the Synod Moderator can begin the task of identifying possible candidates for the post of Minister to the pastorate. When a potential candidate is identified their personal profile will be shared with the Pastorate Vacancy Committee, which is made up of representatives of the three churches. If that committee agrees, then the candidate will be invited to meet with them and, again if agreement is reached, s/he will then be invited to meet the three congregations. This will take place over a weekend, with a social event on the Saturday and worship lead by the candidate on the Sunday. This will be followed by a Joint Church Meeting which will decide whether to issue an invitation to become the minister. If s/he agrees then a date for an induction will be arranged. Some of the details will need to be agreed nearer to the time but I hope that this outline of the process is helpful.

An Interim Moderator has been appointed by the Synod Pastoral Committee to oversee the process. That person is the Revd David Grosch-Miller, a retired minister now living in Morpeth. You will see him at meetings when the pastorate is under discussion and at the occasional worship service. Hopefully his time with you will be short, which means that we have successfully called and appointed a full-time minister.



David Grosch-Miller (Interim Moderator)

Safeguarding for Everyone

“The United Reformed Church (URC) is committed to safeguarding in every area of its life and ministry. Safeguarding is the action taken to promote and protect the wellbeing and human rights of individuals. This means we will:

- Do all we can to create and maintain a safe and caring environment for all people.
- Respond promptly and effectively to any form of abuse and neglect, including reporting abuse to statutory agencies as necessary
- Seek to prevent abuse in any form from occurring.”

(The URC Safeguarding Policy Statement, General Assembly 2021)

The URC will seek to identify individuals who may pose a risk to others and take necessary actions to minimise risk while supporting these individuals in our communities when safe to do so.

The URC confirms that Safeguarding is the responsibility of everyone.

Good Practice 6 is the URC's only guidance document for safeguarding throughout the denomination. It provides information about the URC's arrangements and procedures for safeguarding. A copy of this document is available from the church office.

St George's has Safeguarding Officers- Judith Das and Tony Hall. Several members within the congregation have also undergone Foundation and Intermediate Training in Safeguarding issues too, and will know what to do should concerns be raised.

The Synod's Safeguarding Officer is Helen Berg and Lead Safeguarding Officer is Matt Knowles.

If you are concerned, worried or uncomfortable about something happening at St George's, please let your Elder or the Safeguarding Officer know.

BLUEFIELDS NEWS. JUNE 2025

Greetings dear family and friends. Well the rainy season has hit us with a vengeance. I thought the Saturday lunch club last week would be very sparse because of the torrents of rain. My first thoughts were 'who would want to turn out on a day like this?' But to my surprise 31 showed up. I then realised that many of these people are living rough, so they are already out in it and the weekly lunch club is a haven for them all. So despite them sitting in rather wet clothes, they enjoyed the new menu we were trying out and their games of bingo afterwards.

This is our back yard where we hold the lunch club!



Walking conditions are pretty bad in this weather and I do try to go careful, but I did manage to slip in the mud last week. I had a soft landing so didn't hurt myself, but got soaked through.

Getting our clothes dried is a problem and if wet too long, then they smell and get mould spots on them and metal items tend to go rusty. But there is a positive side to the rain and that is wells get filled up, which during the dry season have gone empty.

The man who has agreed to dig the next well for me says he needs 3 days of dry weather to get the job completed. This is still possible as the seasons seem to be so mixed up these past few years, we might even see the sun. Recently we had a freak tornado which played havoc with many peoples property. Part of the roof blew off one of our schools, so the children had to receive work sheets to complete at home. Within a week, it was safe enough for them to return to school while the repairs continued.



We've also had an earth tremor which I slept through.

Pastor Ed's house is quite strong, being made of cement, so no damage was done there. It did wake many people up through the night as their houses made a sudden move, but very little harm was done. The hurricane season lasts until about October.

We are suffering a lot of power cuts and not just because of the inclement weather. Much work is being done to repair and improve the lines. If it is a planned cut, then we are notified because these ones last anything from 5 to 21 hours. We get more unexpected ones, which can last from 5 minutes to 5 hours.

No wonder we get so many cuts!



Did you know rats love soap? When ours is getting quite small in the house, I take it to our building for the lunch club. We use smaller pieces because quite often it gets stolen! I left such a piece in a bag on one of the shelves and the following week when I went in, I thought it strange to see the bag on the floor, minus the soap.

I checked on the shelf to see if it was there, which it wasn't, but I found a brand new bar of soap, which was one of our bingo prizes, with the corner eaten away. I guess we've got the cleanest rats in Bluefields!

Our sponsored children have received their first school report and many of them are excelling in their work and gaining the title 'Student of Excellence'. We also have the slow learners, but I remind myself, if they didn't have a scholarship with us, then they probably wouldn't be studying at all. When parents come to me asking if I have any spare scholarships and I have to answer that I don't, they then start assuring me of how clever their child is. My reply is that how bright a child is doesn't depend on them receiving a scholarship, every child has the equal right to be educated. One of our students, who we have sponsored for about 15 years, will graduate from university very soon with a degree in Administration of Ports & Airports. How proud we are of Keysi for her sheer determination to succeed. She is hopeful that she will manage to find a job in Bluefields and help support her family, but realises she might have to travel further away to find employment.



Mother's Day is a big celebration here and I always like to pay a visit to the maternity home where women travel from way out communities to deliver their babies. I made up 40 bags of gifts for mother and baby and came home with only one. There were 3 sets of twins, so naturally those mothers got 2 bags each. I had been given lots of small red crochet hearts from a friend in the UK and each woman was given one. They were delighted to hold their hearts up while I took a photo. It was a lovely afternoon starting with a short devotion then a free raffle. We then gave out the packages, hearts, cartons of juice and packets of biscuits. I had the joy of holding one on the sets of twins who were 9 days old. Before we left, many women asked for prayer which ended the afternoon very appropriately.



Hopefully in my next news I will be able to show you photos of the latest well, the much needed items which have just been ordered for the dental hospital, the new swings which have eventually arrived and waiting to be fitted, having been shipped from America, of people being blessed with wellingtons and possibly the date which I will be receiving my MBE after my return home in September. I will say goodbye for now, thanking you all once again for your support in the projects I get involved with, your prayers and your interest in what I get up to and also my personal well-being.

With love from *Margaret*

Comment from Rev'd Dr Carla Grosh-Miller, Liz's Pastoral Supervisor and Member of Synod Pastoral Committee.

(as given by Carla during Liz's last Sunday service on May 25th 2025)

I know that Liz's ministry among you has been faithful, fruitful, healing and enabling. You've come to rely on her for leadership and guidance. She's been a safe pair of hands. More than that, she has loved you, and you've come to love her.

From the end of worship today, your relationship with Liz will change forever. In a few minutes you will be releasing her from her ministerial duties here. You will say that you will no longer turn to her as minister.

Liz's job will be to rest, relax and retire. The common wisdom is that newly retired ministers do no preaching or ministerial-type work for six months to a year, to focus on themselves, attending to their wellbeing and health and that of their families, and discover parts of themselves that may have been lost during a busy ministry. Early retirement is about recovery and discovery.

Your job will be to stop thinking of her as your minister, to not check what she thinks about something the church is considering, to not assume that she's going to do something for the church. This will be tricky as she will continue in membership here and you will be in vacancy. The time between ministers in a church is a time for the church to discover who you are without Liz and what you can do on your own. She needs to recede so that you will be able to embrace a new minister in the future.

She will still be the loving, wise person she is....so you will be tempted to rely on her and she will be tempted to do what she can for you. You will have to remind her: it's her job to rest, relax and retire. It's your job to let her go so you can be ready for a new start, a new relationship with a new minister.

I thank God for the ministry that Liz has shared with you; and with Liz and with all of you, I entrust St George's and the new pastorate into God's good hands. Thanks be to God for the good gifts of grace that abound.

Prayer- led by Rev'd Carla Grosch-Miller

Gracious and loving God, we give you thanks for remembered times when Liz and St George's together have shared the life of faith. We thank you for the moments shared with Liz in worship, in learning, in singing group, in laughter, in tears, in prayer and in service. We pray that Liz will be aware of your guidance as she moves into retirement.

We pray that your Holy Spirit continues to influence St George's United Reformed Church and Northern Synod. Be with us in our time of celebration and our release. Bless the insights we have received by your grace during this mutual covenant, now ending. We pray for wisdom, healing, and abundant new life. We move forward confidently with renewed energy and vision; in Christ we pray. Amen

Out of the mouths of babes

A very new teacher of the infants class was about to tell a Bible story. Applying principles so recently learned at training college, she began.

"Now can anybody tell me who Matthew was?" Nobody could.

"Well then, someone tell me who Mark was". Nobody could.

The teacher was patience itself. "Someone, I'm sure can tell me who Peter was?"

The classroom was silent till a tiny voice piped up, "Please miss, I think he was a rabbit!"

A family were out shopping at the local supermarket and their young son Ben wandered off. An assistant asked him if he was lost. He promptly replied, "No, but my mummy is"

A three year old was taken to church for the first time. Getting impatient while waiting for the service to start, he turned to his mother and said, "what time does Jesus get here?"

More Tales from Allendale

A full year has passed since we moved across to Allendale and, as I have written before, a downside was leaving the many friends we have in and around Newcastle. When Julia and I came across for Liz's celebrations. it was so lovely to meet up with our friends at St George's. Allendale is within the 2nd largest of all AONB's The winter was a lot different from NCL but now that the summer is here the area abounds with so many wonderful bucolic vistas of hills, trees and flowers. If you make a point of coming across one day I will take you for a drive around the local area and the North Pennines. Allendale is 273 metres ASL and will always be cooler than urban areas but even I did not expect to have frost in the garden on May 23rd. When I saw the overnight forecast I had to scramble to get my plants covered, but even so, I still lost a few. As Julia is a 'coldy' I actually had to light the log fire on June 6th, as did many of our neighbours. There were two power cuts that night and the next day. The area is indeed lovely and joy to live in but, believe it or not, we both miss being able to get in the car and drive to the coast for a walk along the beach or the promenades eating an ice cream (or three.) There is evidence of a prehistoric settlement close to the village, although I have not visited it. In some ways it is still present today as is apparent when singing hymns in church. My two favourite hymns, 'What a Friend We Have In Jesus' and 'How Great Thou Art' seems to lose their impact on me when played to the beat of Steptoe and Son. I have written once before about the few shops in Allendale, The local Co-op, butcher, Post office and the Chemist and just how gloriously old fashioned and so friendly they are. Nothing is a bother to the assistants in any of these shops. With Julia taking a few meds (and I with my BP tablet) they all needed re-ordering at different times which necessitated an almost weekly walk (all of 6 minutes!) to the chemist to collect them. I mentioned this once to the chemist and she said, "just leave it with me and I'll sort it" which she did. Now I collect everything only once per month. The butcher will supply you with any quantity required; one sausage or six prime sirloin steaks. The Post Office keeps my morning for me paper under the counter and it is on the counter before I reach it. That is if

they are not talking to Mrs Goodbody about some other matter. Then I have to wait; nothing stops the chatter. We both like eating eggs and there are several roadside vending cabinets where you can buy very fresh eggs for £1 a box. I love the local honey, which I buy a lot. I have always wanted to keep bees, but Julia has never been happy about that. However, I came as close as I have ever been when, last week, I was offered a couple of hives for free. I pondered, but turned them down. The dementia club, which started up in the hamlet of Sinderhope about 3 miles from us, is still going. Although there is a local need, (so I am told) there are still only few members but it remains a very friendly gathering to which I take Julia every Monday. Julia still attends the zumber class and with the help of the other ladies she manages (just) to maintain the routine. The ladies want me to join in the routines but I declined that. I did go with Julia when she attended the large Killingworth zumber class, but after two sessions I quit. A sole guy dancing with 50 ladies was disquieting and dangerous! There are two farms about 15 minutes walk from our house and last week there was a locally organised sheepdog trial at one of the farms. I just love watching those dogs at work. (Julia used to record the TV dog trials for me when I was away) but would you believe it? - I missed them because I had to take Julia to an appointment.

There was 'Life event' held in the village hall (I think as a pre-amble for an Alfa course)which was organised by the local churches. Anyone was free to attend and 62 people attended. It was a very successful gathering which will spur the organisers on to do even more. Weather permitting, I still play bowls on the green and although I have won several 'ends' my skill level has a long way to go. If my flying experience was as good as my bowling I would have ended up being dug out of a hillside. I can only play if one or other of my daughters is available and can sit with Julia. But with the warmer evenings I am sure I can take Julia down to sit and watch. Take care all. I am kept up to-date with the news from St George's from various sources. You are all in our prayers. We send our love and best wishes to everyone of you.

Julia and Dennis (SBBF)

Bible a Month: Iran

“The Lord is righteous in all he does, merciful in all his acts. He is near to those who call to him, who call to him with sincerity”. Psalm 145, vs 17-18. (GNB)

Iran is a country in the Middle East, between the Caspian Sea and the Persian Gulf. It has borders with Turkmenistan, Azerbaijan, Armenia, Turkey, Iraq, Pakistan and Afghanistan. It covers an area of 636,000 sq miles (the UK is 94,058), and has a population of 88 million. The official language is Persian Farsi, but there are many others. The literacy rate, people who can read and write, is 88%

It is a criminal offence in Iran to convert from Islam to Christianity. The intended effect is to confine Christianity to the traditional churches of Iran’s ethnic minorities, like the Armenians and Assyrians. It isn’t working. The country’s rapidly growing evangelical churches, illegally holding services in Farsi, are packed. Here at home, the charity Welcome Churches, a Bible Society partner that now has more than 1300 member congregations, has been working since 2018 to see every refugee welcomed by a church. Many are Iranian migrants who have fled persecution. Others are non believers looking for a community to belong to. Many give their lives to Jesus.

“We work with churches and detention centres to make sure that Bibles are supplied, free of charge, to those who need them” says Bible Society’s Chantelle Baker.

Prayer Pointers

- Pray for the underground churches in Iran, that the eyes of the authorities will not see them, and that they will continue to flourish.
 - Ask God to encourage the team of Bible Society workers as they strive to get a million Bibles into Iran in the coming years.
 - Pray for Iranians who have fled Iran. As refugees they’re extremely vulnerable and could be returned to Iran at any time. Pray that exile is an opportunity for them, both to build a new life and to find God.
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Mission Possible: A million Bibles for Iran

By Nahid Sepehrifard, of the Bible Society.

Iran is one of the toughest places on earth to follow Jesus, but the underground church movement is vibrant and growing. Bible worker Nahid is aiming to get a million Bibles into Iran over the coming years, and she needs your prayerful support to achieve this.

Nahid is Iranian but can’t go to Iran because Bible Society was expelled in 1990, so she works wherever in the world she and her laptop happen to be.

Historically, the population of Iran is overwhelmingly Islamic, but things got very difficult for Christians when the pro-Western monarchy was replaced with a clerical dictatorship in 1979. Bible Society in Iran, then led by Nahid’s father, struggled through the 1980’s.

“My father wanted to print Bibles in Iran” Nahid says. “He was not allowed. The new authorities were offended by the claim that Jesus is the Son of God. They wanted that removed. My father would not allow that. He fought and he won. He was able to print Bibles in Iran until February 1990, when everything stopped”

Pressure increased on churches that held services in Farsi, Iran’s main language. One by one, the pastors were killed. Despite this, there are now hundreds of thousands of Christians in Iran and some estimate a million or more.

“Even the Government admits that Christianity is growing. Persecution has made the Church stronger. When life is good, you can forget God. But pain draws you to God. Many young Iranians want to know Jesus” says Nahid.

Nahid dreams of returning to Iran to give out one million Bibles freely. “It won’t be soon, but we know it will happen. We’ve got to be ready”. For now, Nahid and her small team have a thriving ministry among Iranians who live outside of Iran, and have a livestream on social media that takes prayer requests.

Nahid thanks Bible Society supporters for their regular giving and support of her ministry.

A bit of a Quiz to keep those brain cells going over the summer!

1. Who was inaugurated as Vice President of the United States on January 20th 2025?
2. How many dots are there on a pair of dice?
3. What was the name of Phileas Fogg's valet in the Jules Verne classic, Around the World in Eighty Days?
4. What is the capital of Peru?
5. What river flows through Paris?
6. Within 10 years either side, when was Marmite invented?
7. What African country was formerly known as Abyssinia?
8. What is the worlds biggest island?
9. What does BMW stand for in English?
10. What did the crocodile swallow in Peter Pan?
11. Which ship did Charles Darwin sail on which led to his theory of evolution?
12. How many signs are there in the Zodiac?
13. Which country is the largest producer of vanilla?
14. What is the name of the town in which the Flintstones live?
15. Which actress won her first Oscar for "Kramer vs Kramer"?
16. Blueberries are native to which continent ?
17. Which is the only bird that can fly backwards?
18. What is the name of Dorothy's dog in "The Wizard of Oz" ?
19. In which English city was the band Oasis formed?
20. Which French Patisserie means" lightning" in French?

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

Visit to Sierra Leone



In February Christian Aid's Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Patrick Watt, travelled to Sierra Leone to see Christian Aid's programme first-hand and spend time with partners, funders, and political and religious leaders in the country. Here Patrick shares his reflection on the trip.

It was 18 years since I'd last visited, while working for another organisation, and much had changed – a lot of it for the better. The most visible scars from the brutal civil war have gone; the road network has improved, and civil society is vibrant and effective. On the flip side, both in Freetown and in travelling to Pujehun district and Bo, in the southeast of the country, it was clear that environmental pressures are rising from a combination of climate change and local degradation, with deforestation a growing problem for both rural and urban communities. For a country heavily dependent on food and fuel imports, COVID and the war in Ukraine is hitting Sierra Leonean's economy hard.

Christian Aid has been working in Pujehun, which is one of the most rural, least densely populated, and poorest districts of Sierra Leone, for over twenty years. Aside from some diamond mining, the economy is almost entirely agricultural. The land is verdant and productive, but the storage and distribution infrastructure to get products to market is minimal, and access to credit and market information is often lacking.

I spent a day in Pujehun, meeting Christian Aid partners SEND and RADA, and local government in the district offices. I also visited one of the 20 villages where we've supported the creation of Village Savings and Loans Associations (VSLAs). The Women's Empowerment and Leadership project (WEEL) project in Pujehun and Kailahun districts is designed to strengthen women's economic and social roles, given the close connection between gender inequality and poverty. The current project only started in May 2022, and although it builds on prior work with VSLAs in the area, it's still too early to draw any substantial conclusions from this latest iteration of the work.

However, two things particularly struck me. Firstly, significant non-financial benefits appear to be flowing from our work in setting up the savings union in Pujehun. It was striking to hear from the women involved in the savings union and the staff in the partner organisation about the project's more comprehensive benefits. Women in the two communities we visited told us they have increased confidence and access to information and can better participate in markets. We were told this has resulted as much from access to mobile technology, as we are partnering with a private mobile phone company with national coverage, as from the skills gained from community organising and the running of the VSLAs, and the added financial security provided by the savings union - although the introduction of mobile banking does appear to make savings easier to manage and less vulnerable to theft. These less immediately quantifiable benefits need to be captured in the ongoing learning and evaluation of the project, alongside progress against the baseline for savings and mobile phone usage.

The integrated approach to the project – which links to efforts to boost women's political participation in local government and health-seeking behaviour- also plays a part in these broader social benefits. I met with a local woman, Mary Selous, the first woman in a culturally conservative and predominantly Muslim district to be elected to the council due to the programme we're supporting. She described how new women councillors had changed dynamics in the district, put issues that significantly matter to women up the agenda, and increased transparency and political participation. These political changes may have played a role in the reduction in maternal and child deaths reported by the district medical officer in Pujehun town. The effects of increased political participation by women on community perceptions of the effectiveness of local governance need to be tracked systematically over time across the project sites – and measured against the situation in communities not reached by our work.

The other thing I took away from the visit was the need for further investment in advocacy to improve market access for communities participating in the savings union. I was told that the transport and communications infrastructure in the district has improved, and it was clear that much work has been done recently on the road network. This has the potential to lower the cost of getting goods to market and the cost of inputs for farmers and small businesses. However, I suspect more work is needed to create a more robust enabling environment for SMEs and smallholder farmers, support economic diversification and progress up the value chain for women participating in the savings schemes. These are areas that colleagues in Sierra Leone are keen to explore as they look to scale up the WEEL project and provide better evidence of its impact.

Reflections on the visit

Overall, I left Sierra Leone encouraged by the reports of positive impact in our work, both in Pujehun and in the other parts of the country in which we work, impressed by the quality of our partners and their broad and deep links with communities, and inspired by how our programme is working to fully integrate our strategic approach to poverty, power, and prophetic voice. With deep cuts to UK aid for Sierra Leone in recent years, this work is more reliant than ever on private donations and new funding sources. Fortunately, we're seeing new funders who are buying into the focus and ambition of our work and want to follow the programme's story as it develops

Northern Synod prayers

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

August

- 3rd Mission Projects: Redcar Missional house overseen by Red's Dr Sue walker. Grindon community church, John and Katie Whiteoak. The work at the Keld Centre and chair of the Management group.
- 10th St Andrew's LEP Benton; Rev'd Helen White
- 17th Safeguarding Officers, Matt Knowles, Helen Berg, Carrie Kaunda, and admin support Paula Kitson.
- 24th Work of CRCW's Ann Honey and Fliss Barker
- 31st Church of the Good Shepherd, Battle Hill, served by Rev'd Julie Mooney.
St Cuthberts LEP, Heaton.

September

- 7th Mission and Discipleship Committee, all its members and Convenor Rev'd Sally Bateman.
- 14th Robert Stewart Memorial URC, Fenham.
- 21st International Day of Peace. Fairtrade Fortnight (22nd-5th October), giving thanks for all those who work towards equity and fair pay for all.
- 28th St Columba's, North Shields. Minister Rev'd Dr Trevor Jamison.

October

- 5th Preparation for Synod Meeting (11th Oct). World Homeless Day (10th October).
- 12th Waddington Street URC, Durham, Bethel Chester-le-Street, Cromer Avenue Low Fell and Denewell Avenue Gateshead: Minister Rev'd Marcus Hargis. St Andrew's Dawson Street Crook LEP; Ministers Rev'd Christopher Humble and Rev'd Marcus Hargis.

Lectionary Readings 3rd August to 12th October 2025

where readings match the Sunday readings for URC diary they are shown in bold

- 03-Aug-25 Hosea 11 vs 1-11, Psalm 107 vs 1-9, 43 (or Ecclesiastes 1 vs 2, 12-14 and chap 2 vs 18-23) Psalm 49 vs 1-12, Colossians 3 vs 1-11, **Luke 12 vs 13-21**
- 10-Aug-25 Isaiah 1 vs 1, 10-20, Psalm 50 vs 1-8, 22-23, (or Genesis 15 vs 1-6) Psalm 33 vs 12-22, Hebrews 11 vs 1-3, 8-16, **Luke 12 vs 32-40**
- 17-Aug-25 Isaiah 5 vs 1-7, Psalm 80 vs 1-2, 8-19, (or Jeremiah 23 vs 23-29), Psalm 82, Hebrews 11 vs 29 to ch 12 v 2, **Luke 12 vs 49-56**
- 24-Aug-25 Jeremiah 1 vs 4-10, Psalm 71 vs 1-6, (or Isaiah 58 9b-14) Psalm 103 vs 1-8, Hebrews 12 vs 18-29, Luke 13 vs 10-17
- 31-Aug-25 Jeremiah 2 vs 4-13, Psalm 81 v 1, vs 10-16, (or Proverbs 25 vs 6-7) Psalm 112, Hebrews 13 vs 1-8, 15-16, **Luke 14 v 1 vs 7-14**
- 07-Sep-25 Jeremiah 18 vs 1-11, Psalm 139 vs 1-6, 13-18 (or Deuteronomy 30 vs 15-20) Psalm 1, Philemon 1-21, **Luke 14 vs 25-33**
- 14-Sep-25 Jeremiah 4 vs 11-12, 22-28, Psalm 14 (or Exodus 32 vs 7-14), Psalm 51 vs 1-10, 1Timothy 1 vs 12-17, Luke 15 vs 1-10
- 21-Sep-25 Jeremiah 8 vs 18 to ch 9 vs 1, Psalm 79 vs 1-9 (or Amos 8 vs 4-7), Psalm 113, 1Timothy 2 vs 1-7, Luke 16 vs 1-13
- 28-Sep-25 Jeremiah 32 vs 1-3a, 6-15, Psalm 91 vs 1-6, 14-16 (or Amos 6 vs 1a, 4-7), Psalm 146, 1Timothy 6 vs 6-19, **Luke 16 vs 19-31**
- 05-Oct-25 Lamentations 1 vs 1-6, Lamentations 3 vs 19-26 (or Psalm 137), Or Habakkuk 1 vs 1-4, ch 2 1-4), Psalm 37 vs 1-9, 2Timothy 1 vs 1-14, **Luke 17 vs 5-10**
- 12-Oct-25 Jeremiah 29 vs 1, 4-7, Psalm 66 vs 1-12 (or 2 Kings 5 vs 1-3, 7-15c) Psalm 111, 2 Timothy 2 vs 8-15, **Luke 17 vs 11-19**

News of the Church Family

Our grateful thanks go to Alison Hall aided by Tony and Babs Hall, who arranged our summer social event- Afternoon Tea on Saturday 14th June. It was a lovely afternoon, and so good to share fellowship and food together.

In our last Contact we learned of the arrival of Colin and Karen's grandson on May 11th. We now have a lovely photo of baby Edward Thomas Colin Kemp.

(Photo used with permission)



We are also pleased to learn of the safe arrival of Robin Stephen Cadwallader Lewis - they both managed to get home from the RVI for just under a day before Robin's jaundice required them to go up to Cramlington overnight. He was born on 11 July and weighed 8lb 10oz and Clara is enjoying her new role as big sister.

St George's is delighted to learn of Ellie Hutton's success in her recent exams; Ellie is now a qualified dentist.

Our love and congratulations go to Liz and Colin as they celebrate their special Wedding Anniversary in August.

If you go down to the woods today.... towards the end of term St George's was delighted to host two Teddy Bears Picnics, one for the 60 reception children of a nearby school and the other for our Little Fishes group. A great time was had by all !! Thanks to all our helpers.

Several of our members have been unwell recently and we remember them in our prayers. *We ask for healing for all who are sick in body or mind. We ask for comfort for those who are grieving. We ask for guidance and support for all those who are struggling in any way.*

Our thoughts and prayers are with Deborah Ward whose mother passed away in June.

Thank you to our Elders who are leading worship more often these days. Please be patient with us- we appreciate your support and encouragement. *If anyone would like to help at any of these services please speak to one of the Elders.*

Answers to Quiz from page 8

- | | |
|---|-------------------|
| 1. J D Vance | 12.12 |
| 2. 21 on each, therefore $21 \times 2 = 42$. | 13. Madagascar |
| 3. Passepartout | 14. Bedrock |
| 4. Lima | 15. Meryl Streep |
| 5. The Seine | 16. North America |
| 6. 1902 | 17. Hummingbird |
| 7. Ethiopia | 18. Toto |
| 8. Greenland | 19. Manchester |
| 9. Bavarian Motor Works | 20. Éclair |
| 10. An alarm clock | |
| 11. HMS Beagle | |

With thanks to LIVERNEWS, the Liver Patient Support Newsletter

Smile !

- I am a person who wants to do a lot of things, trapped in a body that doesn't.
- I'm a kid at heart and a senior citizen at knees and back.
- At a couples counselling meeting, the speaker mentioned that couples are so disconnected that 85% of husbands don't even know their wives favourite flower. Mick turned to his wife and whispered, "It's self raising, isn't it?"
- I just heard a major oil company is starting to make renewable fuel out of insect urine. I think its BP.
- After 15 years of sterling service, my clothes horse has broken. It's the end of an airer.
- My wife is leaving me because of my obsession with Astronomy. What planet is she on?
- I went to visit a psychic. When I knocked on the door, she yelled "Who is it?" so I left.
- Diana Dors' daughter Erin kept her maiden name after marriage.
- I'm busy reading a book about School Truancy. It's by Marcus Absent.
- My wife asked me if I'd seen the dog bowl. To be honest, I didn't even know he played cricket.

Lesser known Knights of the Round Table

The knight who was afraid to fight: Sir Render

The knight no one believed: Sir Real

The knight too big to sit at the table: Sir Round

The knight who designed the table: Sir Cumference

The undercover knight: Sir Veillance

The knight who was not killed in battle: Sir Vivor

The knight who exceeded expectations: Sir Passed

The knight who showed up unexpectedly: Sir Prize.

The knight who overcame obstacles: Sir Mount

The knight who funded the kingdom: Sir Tax

The knight who kept the maps up to date: Sir Veyor

The knight who stood in for the king: Sir Rogate

The knight with a fragile ego: Sir Amic

The knight who wasn't needed: Sir Perfluous

The knight who liked to dance: Sir Prance A Lot.

With thanks to LIVERNEWS, the Liver Patient Support Newsletter, (LIVERNORTH).

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, 01912039931. 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

August

- 3rd 10.30 am Worship will be led by Peter Waugh.
10th 10.30 am The service will be led by Harry Fawcitt, one of our Worship Leaders.
Communion
17th 10.30 am Worship will be led by the Elders
24th 10.30 am Worship will be led by Rev'd Peter Moth, retired URC minister.
(31st 10.30 am Songs of Praise) tbc

September

- 7th 10.30 am The service will be led by Sharon Cowey, one of our Worship Leaders.
Holy Communion (DB)
10th 7.00 pm Heaton Churches Together meet at Martha and Mary's.
14th 10.30am Worship will be led by Lucy Cooke, Synod's Learning and Development Officer
17th 7.00 pm Elders meet in the minor hall.
21st 10.30 am Worship will be led by Rev'd Liz Jewitt, retired URC minister.
28th 10.30 am Worship will be led by the Elders

October

- 5th 10.30 am Worship will be led by Rev'd Liz Jewitt, retired URC minister.
12th 10.30 am Worship will be led by Mr Tim Rogers, URC accredited Lay Preacher

Church Meeting on Sunday October 19th 2025 at 11.30 am (after worship)

Though it is a while till the October Church meeting, when we elect officials to assist with the running of the church, please would you pray for the positions which will need to be filled. If God puts a name into your prayers please approach that person and encourage them to pray about it too. We know that people have numerous gifts to offer and share.

The following people are eligible for re-election if they so wish: the posts are also **open to other interested individuals**. If you want to find out what a job entails please ask Tony or Dorothy B.

There is no set number of Elders but ideally we would like to add to the numbers. If you think someone can be an Elder please speak initially to Tony or myself. Any new Elders will need to have a DBS check carried out to comply with our current Safeguarding Policy. This can be done by either Dorothy Coates or Dorothy Barker who are our church verifiers and who will explain the process. For volunteers, the DBS (Disclosure and Barring) is free. Also in accordance with our Safeguarding Policy, a Safe Recruitment Process will apply in the recruitment of volunteers who undertake work with vulnerable adults, children and/or young people.

The length of appointments is in brackets and current post holders are listed.

- Church Secretary (3 years): Dorothy Barker
- Assistant Church Secretary (3 years): Tony Hall.

These appointments are on the recommendation of Elders.

Contact Editor (2 years): Bob Renton and Dorothy Barker (in the absence of other volunteer!s)

Elders (3 years): Sharon Cowey, Tony Hall, Babs Hall, Alison Hall.

Freewill Offering Organiser (FWO) (2 years) Anthony Armstrong

Property Committee Convenor (3 years) : Anthony Armstrong

Property Committee (2 years). Steven Cowey, Val Kane, Harry Fawcitt. (1 vacancy)

Flower Fund (2 years) : Lesley Cadwallader.

Cradle Roll organiser (2 years). Babs Hall

Web Master (2 years). Alan Barker

We also need extra musicians, (not just for keyboard/piano), and computer operators (training will be given);

Volunteers are still needed as Door Stewards, coffee/tea makers, flower arrangers- see Tony or Dorothy B. The tasks of running the church need to be shared, and we cannot rely on the few all the time.

DJB

CHRISTMAS CAKES

I am taking orders for Christmas Cakes (un-iced). As in previous years, all profits will go to Church funds.

A 6 inch square cake will cost £12.00. and an 8 inch square cake will be £22.00.

The last day to order Christmas Cakes will be Sunday 26th October.

Audrey Matfin.

Tel:- 2662008 Email:- matfinbell@outlook.com



CONTACT Magazine

Most of our Contact magazines are now sent out directly to members via email but there are still costs involved in their production, and in the printing of copies. Paper, ink, copier costs and so on. If you would like to give a donation towards these costs- which will be much appreciated- please use one of the envelopes which are at the back of church, labelled Contact Donation, and place your gift into the Offering plate or box.

Thank you.

It would be lovely to receive more articles from our members!

DJB

Tuesday 15th July 2025

Good morning,

I just wanted to say a huge thank you again to you and all of your volunteers at St George's for the fantastic end of year celebration yesterday! The children had a brilliant time and your generosity and kindness are truly appreciated.

Thank you for all of the visits this academic year; the children have learned so much and it's been lovely to bring our community together.

We look forward to seeing you again after the summer. I'll be sure to send some writing across too!

Best wishes,

Emily Carroll

EYFS Lead

Cragside Primary School

Points to Ponder

- Nobody has it easy. Everybody has issues. Life happens. You never know what people are going through. So pause before you start judging, mocking or criticising others. Everyone is fighting their own battle.
The Old Words

- You can't change someone who does not see an issue with their actions. You can only change how you react to them.
- Give me a quiet life. One where I can hear the trees rustling in the wind, raindrops on the windows, pages of a good book being turned, coffee being brewed, and the heartbeats of the ones I love.

Positive Lives

- Sometimes you just have to stay silent because no words can explain how you feel.

Still Moments

- Sometimes your circle decreases in size, but increases in value. LIFE is not about the quantity of friends you have. It is about the quality of friends you have.
- Breaking someone's trust is like crumpling a perfect piece of paper. You can smooth it over, but its never going to be the same again.
Still Moments

- The most beautiful things in life are not things. They are people and places and memories and pictures. They're feelings and moments and smiles and laughter. *Enlighten your mind.*

- Sometimes you have to let go of the picture of what you thought life would be like and learn to find joy in the story you are actually living.
Spirituality.org

- Time is the only currency you spend without ever knowing your balance. Use it wisely.
- Thank you to the special people in my life who have listened without judgement, helped without conditions, understood with empathy, and loved me no matter what.
- I am thankful for all those difficult people in my life; they have shown me exactly who I do not want to be.

- Your journey is not the same as mine, and my journey is not yours, but if we meet on a certain path, may we encourage one another.

- Life has a funny way of teaching us. It will create a deep sadness so we know how to truly understand happiness. It will create chaos in our lives, so that we may appreciate the peaceful times. And it will take away those we love, so that we truly understand what their presence meant to us.

Still Moments.

- Time decides who you meet in life, your heart decides who you want in your life, and your behaviour decides who stays in your life. *Still Moments*
- Some days the memories still knock the wind out of me.

The above are all freely available on the Internet and are acknowledged where possible.

August	3rd	10th	17th	24th	31st
Duty Elder	Dorothy Barker	Sharon Cowey	Dorothy Barker	Alison Hall	Val Kane
Door Stewards	Lesley Cadwallader & a.n.other	Babs & Tony Hall	Harry Fawcitt & Rob Hailes	Sharon Cowey & Renee Croft	Dorothy Coates & Maureen Collier
Communion Stewards		Sharon Cowey & Tony Hall			
Flower Arranger	Sandra Nossiter	Dorothy Barker	Ivy Renton	Clare Hutton	Dorothy Barker
Flower Donations	Audrey Matfin	Dorothy Barker		Liz Jewitt	
Tea after worship	Babs & Tony Hall	Dorothy Coates & Val Kane	Clare & John Hutton	Ivy Renton & Maureen Collier	Babs & Tony Hall
Screens Set up	Bob Renton	Alison Hall	Bob Renton	Alison Hall	Bob Renton
Screens operate	Bob Renton	Alison Hall	Anthony Armstrong	Harry Fawcitt	Bob Renton
Sept	7th	14th	21st	28th	Oct 5th
Duty Elder	Dorothy Barker	Babs Hall	Tony Hall	Sharon Cowey	Dorothy Barker
Door Stewards	Ivy & Bob Renton	Lesley Cadwallader & a.n.other	Anthony Armstrong & Audrey Matfin	Harry Fawcitt & Rob Hailes	Sharon Cowey & Renee Croft
Communion Stewards	Val Kane & Dorothy C				Tony Hall & Alison Hall
Flower Arrangers	Sandra Nossiter	Ivy Renton	Clare Hutton	Dorothy Barker	Sandra Nossiter
Flower Donations	Anthony/Fiona Armstrong			Angela MacKenzie	Denise Fawcitt
Tea after worship	Dorothy Coates & Val Kane	Clare & John Hutton	Ivy Renton & Maureen Collier	Babs & Tony Hall	Dorothy Coates & Val Kane
Screens Set up	Alison Hall	Bob Renton	Alison Hall	Bob Renton	Alison Hall
Screens operate	Harry Fawcitt	Anthony Armstrong	Alison Hall	Bob Renton	Harry Fawcitt