

St. George's
Jesmond



A worshipping community: inclusive, nurturing, engaged

THE LANCE

January 2024



photo by
Canon Clare

www.stgeorgesjesmond.org.uk



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Editorial

We seem to be doing things backwards in the present day!



For hundreds of years, Advent was a time of fasting, of meatlessness and of anticipation. The 12 days of Christmas then followed with feasting, worship and celebrations of Jesus' birth.

But now, British people reverse this order. The heady days of Christmas, and for some the Boxing Day sales, are followed by months of restrictions such as dry January, diets, and signing up for a gym membership; a kind of Lenten discipline, in time for the new beginnings promised by the New Year.

We also have offerings for the New Year, both Lenten and joyous. Following on from a recent sermon, Dr Malcolm Toft suggests resources to those who would like to access daily Bible readings, or guides to reading the Bible, or help as Malcolm says with 'faith through understanding', using on-line facilities. I find many people use these sites, which are often American, sometimes with their morning coffee, or in the evening when things are quieter. Another beginning may be to volunteer for Smarties, or children's Sunday School service. There is a Spotlight on Service piece explaining what they do.

We celebrate Christmas events like the Market and the Living Nativity and look forward to FOSG's events, the Burns Night supper and the PANTO, if you feel strong enough. Changes to our PARISH SHARE are explained and there are winning answers for the caption competition and the Christmas quiz. And there is ECO good news too.

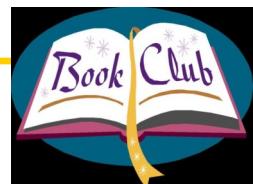
A Very Happy New Year

Margaret Vane

Book Group

Book Group will meet for its annual QUIZ set by Eric and get-together on Wednesday 17th January at 7.30pm in the Winskill Room

Anne Clark



Letter from the Clergy

Dear Friends,

Happy New Year to you all!



As we leave behind Advent and Christmas, we see in the New Year, and start to look towards the season of Lent. At last, we can start to look for bulbs coming up and signs of new life. The light we spoke about during Advent is coming to pass in nature as the lighter days start.

The church season (or more properly 'Liturgical Year') from Advent to Pentecost concentrates on the birth of Jesus and the events in his life. This accounts for half of our year. The other half of the year is known as 'Ordinary Time' which tells the stories of the People of God and through which we are encouraged to be disciples and tell the Good News. I always find it interesting how the church year is split up in this way – and it makes sense why we focus on these two distinct areas at different times. There is nothing ordinary about 'Ordinary Time', but that's maybe a piece of writing when we come to it in May!

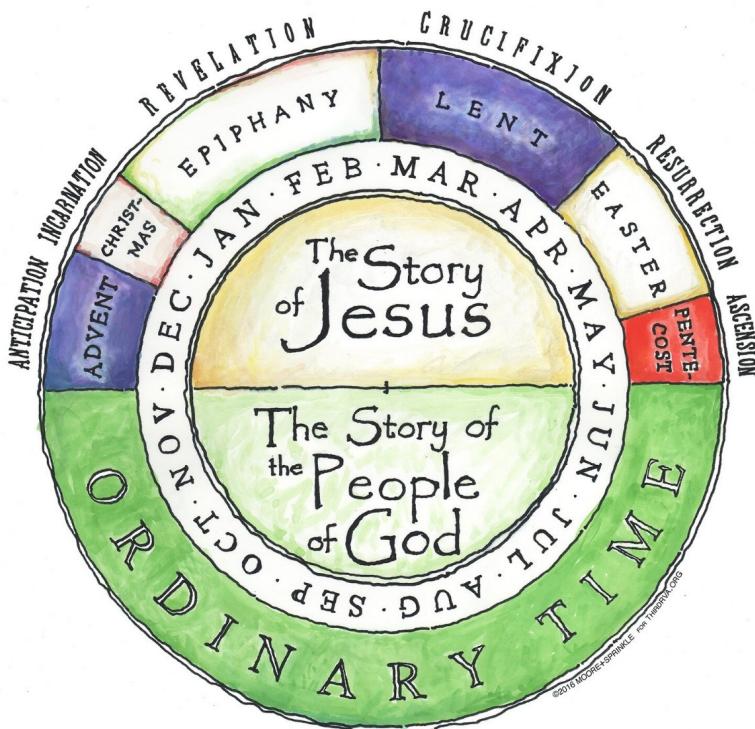
I always find New Year a mixture of emotions. Inevitably we remember those who are no longer with us for another year. Some of us like to try and have resolutions (not me I have to confess!) and some of us look forward to a fresh year with all the opportunities that may bring for us. It is like Christmas, a season of mixed feelings depending on where we are in life and what we have experienced.

Keeping our focus on all these spiritual stories of Jesus' life and ministry, we can allow ourselves to be spiritually refreshed by reflecting on Epiphany, Lent, Easter and Pentecost. Running through all these is the wind of the Holy Spirit, to support and inspire us in our own spiritual lives – helping us be the best disciples we can be.

May the wind of the Holy Spirit keep you feeling refreshed and at peace this New Year.

Many blessings

Izzy



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Structure and support, seeking the Spirit: Some thoughts on needs and resources (after a Bible Sunday sermon, 2023, in memory of William Tyndale)

Introduction

Some have kindly (and perhaps rightly!) followed up my Bible Sunday sermon with a request to “put flesh on the bones” around what structure and support is actually available to help us with our Bible. This article presents some ideas for circulation on this – thanks to the ministry team!

What are we looking for?

We may need different assistance with the Bible throughout our life. At first, some basic background may help, and practical guidance on particular word translations. Later on, we may need to go deeper, and read some more spiritual commentary. It may help us to periodically change the Bible version we read; to vary our lectionary, to alter the amount of Bible in our diet, or (especially in a long life!) to avail ourselves of scholarship which was simply unavailable (e.g. the Dead Sea Scrolls) when we were confirmed, for example. We may also need a mix of personal counsel, group discussion, reading and online resource, in different styles, depending what “works” or “clicks” for each of us.



Particular resources

On study guides, members of the ministry team variously recommend commentaries by William Barclay, Bishop Tom Wright, the Cambridge New Bible commentaries and Old Testament Library, the New Testament Theology series and New Testament Guides series, the Interpretation series of commentaries, and C.K. Barrett or William Temple for John’s Gospel in particular.

For reading the Bible in general, useful guides include Keen’s The Word of a Humble

God, and SPCK's Exploring the Old Testament (ditto for the New). Nicolson's Power and Glory gives beautiful background to the King James Authorised Version.

Our Diocese has a fantastic resource in the North East Religious Resources Centre at Church House, North Shields. Membership starts at £16.50 for OAP/Students and is free up to age 18 – and for ministers! The library is huge and includes loads of resources for young people, DVDs and a good theological library; details here: <https://www.resourcescentreonline.co.uk/>

Websites such as <https://www.dailyscripture.net/daily-meditation/> can be good, though it can be hard to avoid America! This particular site has what some may consider a reasonable quantity of reading, and is distinctive in including commentary from the Early Fathers of the Church.

Our Sunday lectionary comes from the Revised Common Lectionary (RCL) of the Worldwide Council of Churches. Anglican yearbooks are used as indices in our vestry, and the series also includes daily readings: <https://lectionary.library.vanderbilt.edu/daily.php?year=A> which have merit in dovetailing somewhat with our Sunday readings.

Reading within worship, daily Morning/Evening Prayer has various options: <https://www.churchofengland.org/prayer-and-worship/join-us-service-daily-prayer>. From a modern “smart” telephone, this can be read through the free CofE Daily Prayer App, where one can readily read morning, evening, or night prayer oneself, or play the service on an audio function: there is often a choir singing the anthems and psalms.



If one seeks a single, short daily Office with relatively little Scripture reading, then many Air Cadets have found the night service of Compline helpful (within the above website), and this is used by the ministry team to conclude each meeting. The beautiful setting of Psalm 121 ("I will lift up mine eyes") used at Her late Majesty's burial, and

very fitting for Compline, was written by Walford Davies, founder of the RAF School of Music.

There is an Anglican commentary series which supports our daily lectionary, which is a good fit:

<https://www.chpublishing.co.uk/features/reflections>

The online encyclopaedia Wikipedia contains useful general information on each book of the Bible, and it is possible to “disappear down the rabbit hole” of immense detail on, for example, the Suffering Servant of Isaiah 53.

Closing comments

There is no “one size fits all” approach, and we may need to vary our approach over a lifetime. A mix of paper, online, group and individual discussion is often helpful. “Try before you buy” is a good maxim for religious books, though loans from ministers should always be returned!

Our reading can be most fruitful when prayed about – the Lectio Divina approach (mindful of space here, perhaps look it up!) is helpful in promoting thoughtful, reflective reading. We also need to often read each passage in context, reading “fore and aft” of each a little, checking parallels (e.g. between Kings and Chronicles, or different Gospels) and setz im leben, “setting in life” each passage – who is being addressed, by whom, where, when and why?

Let us not read simply to satisfy curiosity but, as Bishop Andrewes commends from Mary Magdalene, “ask Christ to help us find Him”: St Anselm advised an attitude of “faith seeking understanding” (fides quaerens intellectes). In the prayer of St Richard of Chichester:

O most merciful redeemer,
friend and brother,
may I know thee more clearly,
love thee more dearly,
and follow thee more nearly,
day by day.
Amen.



Dr M Toft FIMechE, Reader

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Parish Share: A Developing Approach

In common with all parishes in the Diocese of Newcastle, St. George's Church makes an annual payment of Parish Share.

In the booklet 'Parish Share Explained' published by the Diocese in September 2022 it is stated that Parish Share is used to further mission and ministry in each and every parish by helping to fund the cost of ministry. The cost of ministry is the expenditure needed to provide parish ministry which includes support costs, both local (diocesan) and national (wider church). It supports the ministry we receive today [clergy costs] and the ministry the parish will receive in future from those currently in training and those in the process of discerning their future ministry.

The booklet goes on to explain how, whilst it's a fact that some parishes are better off than others, many are able to meet the full cost of ministry through their contribution to Parish Share, although some are only able to meet their ministry costs with the help of others. With each other to share the load, through the parish share system of mutual support, those who can afford to give more are asked to do so, in order that all may receive according to need.

In 2022, offers of payments from all deaneries in the Diocese amounted to around £4 million. Of this £740,00 (18.6%) came from Newcastle Central, of which St. George's contributed £100,000 or 13.5%, second only to Gosforth All Saints. Prior to the reduction in Share to £100,000, referred to below, St. George's had been the largest contributor in the Newcastle Central Deanery.

It was stated in 2019 that the current Diocesan Formula for calculating Parish Share was based on a combination of income, attendance and clergy 'points'. For this purpose, income excluded items such as Parochial Church Fees, Legacies and Grants. The Share calculation based on that has barely altered since then, except that the calculated Share had increased by 2.7% in 2018, with further voluntary increases by St. George's of 1% in 2019 and 2% in 2020, together totalling £3,340 p.a. This brought St. George's Parish Share to £113,542, per annum.

In 2019, the Deanery Finance Officer had stated that it was the policy of the Deanery that all parishes should be expected to pay a minimum of 56% of declared income. In common with several other parishes, St. George's paid 73% although it is not clear

what drove the calculation in the formula to increase the Share for St. George's from 56% to 73%.

Over the 8 years to 2022, there was a financial deficit for St. George's in every year except 2019. As a registered charity, the PCC is required to maintain Financial Reserves in accordance with its Reserves Policy and by the end of 2022 free reserves amounted to £60,442 after receipt of a generous legacy that year of £28,380. This left only £32,062 remaining from ongoing activities.

The purpose of the Reserves Policy is to address the maintenance of sufficient money in the General Fund to cover ongoing activities and essential services. Guidance recommends that reserves in the General Fund should be at least equivalent to 3 months' payments on general activities. In 2022 payments on these unrestricted activities were £205,870 (including £100,00 Parish Share), implying we needed a minimum level of reserves in excess of £50,000, compared to the actuality of £32,000 referred to above.

The existing formula is outdated and untenable and any formula that top-slices income, without recognising the need to pay operational costs, is fundamentally flawed. Any indications that the Parish Share will be reviewed have not borne fruit, with the result that the 'baseline' set by the Diocese still substantially exceeds the Parish's ability to pay.

To make ends meet, in 2022 Share was reduced by £13,542 as, without it, the finances of St. George's would have been in a very parlous state. That was not enough and the deficit continued into 2022, so the PCC resolved to reduce share for 2023 to £90,000, with the purpose of rebuilding its Reserves, over time, to a level that is consistent with the Policy.

The lion's share of the PCC's income comes from the generosity of parishioners who contribute through planned giving, plus tax recovered through gift aid, together totalling around £100,000 per annum. Income from other activities like hire of the Hall and fundraising events is showing signs of improvement after Covid so the PCC's intentions to restore reserves are on track. Maintenance of Parish Share at a realistic level compared to declared income, is pivotal to that.

Michael L. Ranson, Treasurer

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St George's Living Nativity

Following on from the Living Nativity in previous years, a cast of mainly young folk donned costumes, clutched their lines and strode out with a charming donkey, to enact the Nativity story through the streets of Jesmond. The journey was announced to the world by Jesmond's Town Crier and commenced under the energetic leadership of Canon Clare, who was also the narrator.



From bus stop to street corner, the story was unfolded episodically and carols sung. The Three Wise Men followed the rather windswept star from the Green, down St George's Terrace, until led to the shuttered doors of Jules B and Watch Traders and Company, where the Inn Keeper offered 'no room at the inn' for Mary and Joseph.

Along the way, as the story unfolded and characters stepped forward, like King Herod [Rev. Ollie], we gathered groups of little children and their bemused parents, who walked with us. Shop keepers came out of their shops to watch, a smile on their faces, and Christmas shoppers paused in their tasks to step outside the earthly clamour of Christmas chores to watch and wonder, especially at the donkey.





On returning to St George's, we were thankful that there were hot mince pies, tea and mulled wine, a welcome end to a successful and joyful community event in our Parish.

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Pope Francis Allows Priests to Bless Same-Sex Couples

The Pope has pursued a policy for some years of trying to make the Catholic Church more appealing, in keeping with his 'pastoral vision' of 'broadening' its basis and welcoming all.

On Monday 18th December, a document was issued allowing priests to bless same-sex couples, a significant advance for LGBT people in the Roman Catholic Church.

The declaration, however, stated that the blessing could not be part of any regular Church rituals or related to civil unions or marriages, and would be agreed on a case-by-case basis. Blessings ask God to look favourably on a person or couple being blessed. While the same-sex relationship will still be considered 'sinful', the Pope has allowed the couple to be blessed which is a softening of tone. In 2021, the Pope had said that priests could not bless same-sex marriages because God cannot 'bless sin'.

Cardinal Fernandez, the Prefect of the Church, stated that the church continued to view marriage as only between a man and a woman, and there would be no change in the position on this.

Bishops in other countries have previously allowed priests to bless same-sex couples, though the position of the church authorities had remained unclear. It is clearer now.

Spotlight on Service: Smarties

"What happens to our children and young people after the Gospel when they disappear into the vestry?" I hear you ask!

At every 09:30 Sunday morning service during term time, children and young people over 4 years old are invited to SMARTIES in the vestry. This is a 15 minute session of child friendly discussion and activities based on



Bible readings, led by two DBS checked members of the congregation. If you get a bit fidgety during the sermon and you are not a grownup – SMARTIES is for YOU! SMARTIES is part of St George's mission to make church a welcoming, fun and educational experience for the next generation and to develop the diversity of our congregation.



“At the root of it all, it’s all about encouraging children to come to church and helping them to get to know one another, as well as nurturing and growing their faith.”



St George used to have two children's groups: Smarties for those above 8 years old and Sunday School (in the hall) for younger children. At the moment we have not had any very young children regularly attending church services. We are also very short of volunteers, so we currently can't cater for them, but have extended the age range of Smarties as far down as we reasonably can.

At each session, 2 volunteers are required – one person to plan and lead the session and one to support. At present the volunteers consist of Lucy, Lana, Kay and Hilary.

If CYP [children and young people] managed to get Sunday Knights off the ground again, it would be brilliant to have guest people coming in to lead a session and share their experience etc. But we need someone to take the lead on Sunday Knights.....

Please let anyone of the CYP know if you are interested in coming on the rota.

Children and Young People

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The St George's Christmas Market seen from the Middleton Room

Typically, "The Bleak Mid-Winter" chose to arrive just in time for St George's Christmas Market in early December.

Snow had fallen, 'Snow on Snow', and we shivered and slithered our way to the Church Hall which is marginally warmer than Newcastle Central Station! Luckily, we are a tough lot at St George's, thermal underwear is the norm and there is nothing like a bit of manic activity to get the red corpuscles moving. Volunteering for Children's Activities, stuck up with glue, glitter and cotton wool for three hours, I had enough inner warmth to heat Kielder Water, thus, alas, I never actually made it into the main hall.



Now there is nothing like a group of excited, enthusiastic, young children to get the Christmas Spirit going! The Junior Choir set the tone, dressed in festive jumpers, they sang their little hearts out, no expense spared, all verses included! Our lead singer was performing elsewhere so sadly, there was "No-Elle!" and unlike some of us, she knows ALL the words!

The Children's Activities were set up in the hitherto rather dour Middleton Room which now buzzed with excitement and was as popular as Fenwick's Window. Smiling Mrs Claus in her sparkly grotto, exuded warmth as she gave out Festive goody bags. There was letter writing to Santa, the chance to make Christmas trees, Santas and Elves. Not forget-



ting the bran tub which was a novelty to a generation more accustomed to raking through ball pools at soft play!

The major attraction was Canon Clare's Biscuit Decoration Production Line! Without doubt, she must take the prize for efficiency and cheerful endurance. (Greggs might be interested?) Familiar as I am with clouds of powdery icing sugar and glutinous baking sessions with nursery children, I had baulked at the idea of mass icing for three hours in a carpeted room with no water. Oh, Ye of Little Faith! Not a sticky blob was there to be found and what's more, Canon Clare, clad in black, emerged spotless at the end of the session. (A hint here, for you at home, try lemon juice instead of water and if you want precision cut Christmas themed biscuits, ask Rhoda!)



It is always a joy to watch children creating their own masterpieces. There's a spontaneity, boldness, and lack of fear which we can lose when we get older. Not to mention the lovely chit chat that goes on alongside.

I wish we could have bottled the happy atmosphere. It was good that, alongside fund raising, St George's was able to provide some much-needed festive cheer for so many children and families in the community.

Maggie Paczek



The Christmas Market: Editor's Note

The Christmas Market raised some £4,300 which was an unexpectedly high figure, considering the effects of the icy weather on the day and the financial crisis experienced by many people, so a great result.

This year, the Lance has reported the experience of the Market from the perspective of the Children's Room [see above] but one element needs to be amplified and that is the RAFFLE!

Julian Plumley, after his triumph at the Summer Fair, again took on the arduous task of collecting in prizes, printing tickets and persuading people to buy them. He also had to track down the winners, especially difficult when their writing was illegible or they were not members of the congregation and unknown. Little persuasion was needed, however, when people set eyes on the first prize, donated by Mrs Pauline Magnay and what a prize it was!!!



The raffle tables may have groaned with the prizes. The first prize, however, was box upon box of biscuits, jars of preserves, many bottles of wine and spirits, sides of salmon, pieces of beef, chocolates, Christmas decorations, Christmas crackers and much, much more. Julian had to drive the prize to the winner's house as it was physically impossible to carry it away from the Market!! It took three trips! And the raffle money raised (£2,021) contributed greatly to the grand total, in fact it dominated the total!



So, very many thanks to Pauline and the Magnay family for such a generous and amazing gift. And thank you, Julian, for all your hard work in putting it all together so successfully.

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Church Walk, December: A Tale of Two Chapels

The December walk, which was delayed by a week to avoid the Christmas Market, had eleven participants. The walk took place after several weeks of heavy rain, and further heavy rain was forecast from lunchtime onwards, so we decided to take a chance with the weather, but modify the route to avoid a flooded path and particularly muddy areas. The five mile route started at St George's and ended at the Northern Rugby Club.



walk along the road to South Gosforth, before continuing up Hunters Road and over the Metro to Garden Village. We then went along about a mile of little known bridleway to Whitebridge Park, before making the second diversion through the estate to avoid a completely submerged section. After regaining the bridleway, we turned into Melton Park to see the ruins of the c12th century North Gosforth Chapel in the middle of the houses. The walk concluded with coffee and snacks in the Northern Clubhouse, just as the forecast rain arrived. We returned to Jesmond on the Q3.

We walked along Reid Park Road before pausing at the ruins of St Mary's Chapel, the oldest church building in Newcastle. It was then down into the Dene, where the river was in flood and the waterfall looked spectacular. The first deviation was to leave the Dene at Craghall Dene, and



As ever, everybody seemed to enjoy the company.

Ian Spencer

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A Special Story about Helio

Once upon a time, there lived in Maputo, formerly Lourenco Marques, in Mozambique, down just east of South Africa, a law student called Helio Cumbi.

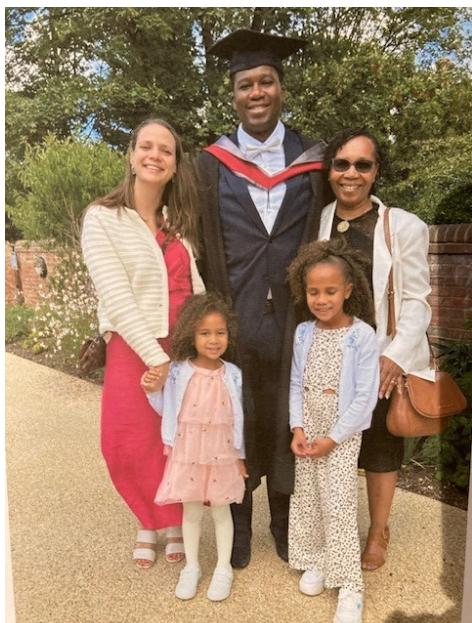
I came by him in an amazing way. Watching the Cenotaph November war march-past in London, I noticed the ambassadors stepping forward to place their wreaths at the foot of the column. One of these was the Mozambican ambassador.

Just a moment! Mozambique was surely Portuguese? No longer. It is in the British Commonwealth now. I spotted this 20 years ago when supplying spare parts to overseas customers with power stations or ships installed or built by UK suppliers. With this new nugget of information, I enrolled on a UK Trade Mission to Mozambique to find an agent out there to eke out leads and customers needing UK spares.

We were introduced to the Professor of Electrical Engineering at Maputo University, one Manual CUMBI, by the UK High Commissioner who was Laura Kuenssberg's sister. We, [my wife Erica was with me], met the Prof in our hotel, who told us he has been to Bradford University and knew of Newcastle because his son, HELIO, had plumped for Newcastle University because it had a good basketball team! So, it happened that we met HELIO the next day, and told him he could use our house as a base if he needed to.

And so he came to Newcastle and read Law. In the holidays he came and worked for Souter Trading, doing enquiries, quotes and orders for UK spares from customers around the world. He slept and ate with us, and was a most enjoyable guest. He did an extra year after selling books door-to-door one vacation in the US, phoning us from there asking ' if I could stay with you guys when I come back 'cos I need to do another year'.

He did just that, and prior to his graduation



he asked us if we would be his parents in the UK and come and witness his graduation. We felt very honoured to be asked to this, and duly walked up the main walkway of the university and met him there. We were very white against his blackness, so that many eyebrows were raised when he announced 'Ah, here come my parents, now!'.

He went back to Maputo and we kept in touch. Subsequently, he met Filipa, a local Portuguese graduate, fell in love and asked us if we could come to their wedding. Such invitations come so seldom we flew out to Maputo via Johannesburg, the last leg being in a small 40-seater prop-driven aircraft. The wedding took place up-country in a seaside hotel in Inhambane, a further short flight away. We had to circle the small airfield twice while they removed a dog from the airstrip!

The wedding itself was outdoors, close to the swimming pool, where the Prof, tall, suited and wearing a Stetson, looked an imposing sight. Dress was very smart, with fellow-students in immaculate western fashions predominantly. This was some 9 years ago, and the family has now expanded with two daughters, Ndzia 7 and Milani 5.

Along the way, Helio has built up an entrepreneurial background, investing in Pay-pal type machinery for South Africans and receiving a call from the Malawi Business Development Minister in the country next door, asking him to set up a legal medicinal cannabis farm together which he has accepted.

And job-wise? Being a lawyer, he was quickly snapped up by the UK High Commission to promote the encouragement of UK firms setting up in Mozambique. His involvement soon attracted the attention of Exxon who head-hunted him to be their senior advisor to the Mozambiquan Government. This has now followed his being called up to the Exxon offices in Washington DC this year.

With all this going on, it seems a wonder that he has been able to do a 2-year distance MBA with Oxford University and pass with flying colours. He came on July 25th last year to collect his award at Oxford, then bringing his wife, Filipa, mother Marta, and the 2 girls up to Newcastle for 2 nights to visit us. How kind.

Wonderful! We took 7 of us to Holy Island, ate crab sandwiches in a friend's house and went round the castle. HELIO dined 7 of us at home and at Victor's next to the

Malmaison Hotel where they were staying. It was a superb meal and a fitting climax to their visit. The 2 girls are at the French school in Maputo and will attend the same school in Washington DC, being taught French there too. They, therefore will speak Portuguese, French and English already. Helio starts in September.

He knows I have him marked down as his country's future Foreign Minister. We'll see!!

Christopher Souter

Answer to the Christmas Caption Competition - 1

Caught at Last:
The Dolly Sisters.
NOW
Behind Bars.

Brent Swinburne



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Victorian Churches Torn Down to Stop Vandalism

In 2021, according to the National Churches Trust Charity, 350 Church of England churches were reported to be at risk of being closed or demolished before 2026.

The example of the demolition of the 179 year-old St John's Church, Werneth, Greater Manchester, is a case in point. Oldham Council demolished the building citing concerns that it could become a target for vandals and be a blight on the area.



The church was built in 1844 and consecrated in 1845 but had been unused since the 1980s. The Victorian Society criticised the decision as wasteful and said that historic elements like the font and the stained glass windows had been lost forever. The building was unlisted. The Society favoured repurposing the building. 'This is a local council that has made a decision that sets a bad example to others - demolishing an unlisted heritage building rather than reusing it' said James Hughes, a senior conservation advisor with the Society.

Oldham Council said that not appointing a contractor to knock the building down would have left it with the responsibility for the holding costs associated with a derelict and structurally unsafe property.



**St George's are Pleased to Announce The
Event of the Year:
The World Premiere of a New Rutt / Laidler /
Hatt / Cappleman / Tan play:**

*The Prince,
the Pauper,
the Princess,
and the Peas*



Set in 1547, this play tells the story of two young boys who were born on the same day and are identical in appearance: Geordie Boy, a pauper, and Edward VI of England, son of Henry VIII and Jane Seymour...

Performances:

Friday 9th February 7.30 pm, Saturday 10th February 3 pm, and 7.30 pm.

St George's Church Hall, St George's Close, Jesmond. NE2 2TF

tel: 0191 281 1659 or 07422693727

panto@stgeorgesjesmond.org.uk

**Tickets priced £5.00 from the Office, any cast member or on the door.
Includes interval refreshments.**

***Patrons are warned that is a condition of entry that they whoop, interject,
laugh immoderately, and ENJOY THEMSELVES whether they like it or not.***

Hark! Joy to the Red Squirrel: A Nutty Conservation Success Story

'Twas the night before Christmas, and all through the wood, the red squirrels were settling down in anticipation of the holiday. It had been a long and difficult year, but their perseverance had paid off - their numbers had stabilised in the area, and for the first time in many years, the local conservation efforts had been a resounding success; the red squirrel population was on the rise again.



The Red Squirrel

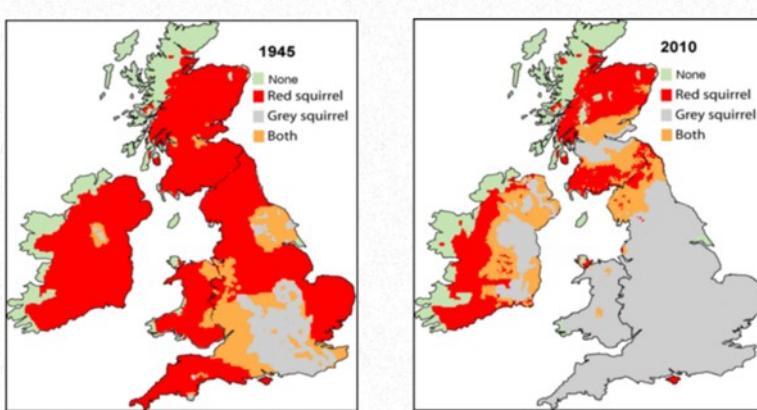
With their distinctive russet fur, tufted ears and bushy tail, the UK's native squirrel species is a charming sight. For the last 10,000 years, Spring and Autumn were the perfect time to go on a nature park walk and see them as they foraged nuts to cache for the long winter months high up in the tree canopy. Red Squirrels are most often found in coniferous woods, feasting on pinecones, spring shoots, and hazelnuts. If you happen to be a walk and find what looks like an apple core, then a red squirrel has most likely been nearby.

Once they were as many 3.5 million strong, that is, until the introduction of the grey squirrel from North America in 1870. They caused our red squirrel population to dramatically recede, disappearing from great swathes of the country. The total UK population is now thought to be as low as 120,000 animals, of which more than three quarters are found in Scotland. Now, in England, red squirrels can only be found thriving on the Isle of Wight and Brownsea Island, where there are no greys, on the Formby coast, parts of Anglesey, and in the extensive remote pine forests of Northumberland and the Lake District.

The Challenges

Greys begin annual foraging earlier than the reds; they can also digest acorns, a highly calorific seed that contains high amounts of tannins, a compound not easily digested by the reds. This leads to greys growing faster and larger than red squirrels;

they outcompete red squirrels for food and space. Grey squirrels also transmit disease; the squirrel pox virus is harmless to grey squirrels, but fatal to red squirrels. Once a grey squirrel population establishes itself, red squirrels usually disappear from the area within 15 years.



Red and grey squirrel distribution in the British Isles in 1945 and 2010.
Copyright Craig Shuttleworth/RSST

Red and grey squirrels distribution in the British Isles in 1945 and 2010. © Craig Shuttleworth/RSST

The red squirrels' limited habitable space is further fragmented by habitat loss, contributing to the red squirrel's decline. This occurs when areas of woodland are destroyed or become separated by development and changing land-use. Red squirrels are isolated to areas not very suited to sustaining their population. Unfortunately, without conservation management, red squirrels could become extinct in England. However, thanks to the growing numbers of volunteers joining conservation programmes and partnerships like the Northumberland Wildlife Trust, or Red Squirrel Northern England, red squirrel number may finally be starting to recover.

The Success

The Cramlington & District Red Squirrel Group are one such organisation celebrating their recent success in preserving and increasing the population of the native red squirrel in Southeast Northumberland.

Formed in 2014 by five dedicated volunteers, the group have grown to over 40 voluntary members who dedicate over 2080 hours a year to monitoring red squirrel movements and an additional 2340 hours to trapping. This amounts to an impressive 4420 volunteer hours each year dedicated to Red Squirrel conservation.

The group have implemented a proactive approach to their conservation efforts, cultivating and managing a grey squirrel free zone covering Blyth, Cramlington, Seaton Delaval, Seaton Sluice, Seghill, and New Hartley. This has resulted in a small but healthy population of red squirrels migrating, surviving, and thriving in the area, and even growing their population.

Some of the recovery strategies used were, including but not limited to: monitoring red squirrel numbers by building over 200 monitoring stations, installing rope bridges over roads to help prevent red squirrel deaths from road accidents and reduce habitat fragmentation, installing camera traps to track red squirrels' movements, and planting trees (such as Scot's Pine or Hazel) that encourage red squirrel foraging and discourage grey squirrels (who prefer seeds from deciduous plants like oak trees).



A Red Squirrel using a rope bridge over a road in Cramlington.

sters and have developed a red squirrel walk for members the public to enjoy and learn more about our native squirrel species.

What you can do to help

First, only encourage red squirrels to visit your garden if you live in a grey squirrel-free area. Grey squirrels can transmit the squirrel pox virus either directly or through both species visiting the same feeding stations, so preventing the two species from interacting is important.

If you live in or near a red squirrel-inhabited area, you can supplement their foraging by installing a feeding station in the tree canopy, containing a wide variety of nuts and seeds. Red squirrels primarily eat seeds, but will also eat fruits, tree shoots, fungi, and lichen. A wide variety of nuts and seeds is ideal, but hazelnuts, sweet chestnuts, sunflower seeds, and pine nuts are best. Place your feeding areas on or near

trees; red squirrels are often hunted by cats, so discouraging red squirrels from crossing open ground to reach food is vital. Fruits such as apples and carrots can also be used to add some vitamins to their diet.

Another good way to help the red squirrels in your garden is to plant shrubs or trees that will provide a natural food source. A wide range of plants can be planted that will benefit red squirrels, including brambles, raspberry, dog rose, guelder rose, wild cherry, bird cherry, bullace and crab apple. Thorny plants can also double as a cat deterrent, helping reduce predation.

Finally, you can help keep track of the UK's red squirrel population by reporting any sightings, whether in your garden or further afield, or donating to your local red squirrel conservation charities.

Happy New Year!



Editor's Note

Other communities and organisations have a more aggressively reactive attitude to the devastating presence of grey squirrels. Even King Charles has called for the culling of grey squirrels.

The Penrith and District Red Squirrel Group was constituted to improve the chances of keeping red squirrels in Cumbria by controlling grey squirrel numbers. They set up cameras monitoring woodland, and if they find greys, they can be tracked and disposed of. One of their great worries is squirrel pox [parapoxivirus] which was introduced by the greys and has killed so many reds who do not have immunity from the disease, unlike the greys. Greys also kill and eat fledglings and bird's eggs [as do reds] and researchers have found that they have a marked impact, particularly, on the number of blackbirds, collared doves, green woodpeckers, long-tailed tits and jays.

Squirrel meat is now appearing on chef's menus. Even the House of Lords serves squirrel pate from time to time.

Are These Your Clothes Left at Church?

(Note: left unclaimed they might make a bow in a Pantomime near you soon...)



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FRIDAY CAFÉ.

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12NOON.
FRIDAY SINGING STARTS
AT 11:00

WELCOME TO EVERYONE.

IF YOU ARE LOOKING
FOR SOMEWHERE TO EN-
JOY TEA/COFFEE/
CAKE/BISCUITS IN THE
COMPANY OF OTHERS
AND IN A WELCOMING
ENVIRONMENT, WHY NOT
MAKE FRIDAY CAFÉ
WHAT YOU DO?

Articles etc. for The
Lance to be received
no later than the 15th of
each month
Send to:
mmvane31@gmail.com
Thank you, Margaret.



Madam,

I write to sing, as loud as this tenor can, the praises of the St George's choir and its Director, Drew Cantrill-Fenwick.

This past Sunday night, Dec 17th, they sang for two and a quarter hours, rehearsing and performing at the Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols, to a most appreciative congregation of 35 souls. It was truly magnificent, and brought tears to my eyes. Pieces by Todd, Goldschmidt, Rutter. Praetorius and Ord were performed with balance and much sonorous conviction, under the masterly direction of Drew.

How lucky we are to have the whole choir and Director. Long may they continue and prosper. I look forward officially to learning the broadcast date of our Songs of Praise recording.

Yours faithfully,

Christopher Souter.

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Christmas Quiz Answers

1.	Jamie Oliver	8.	Hariett Harman
2.	Monica Galetti	9.	Chris Rock
3.	Alison Hammond	10.	Owen Wilson
4.	Krishnan Guru-Murthy	11.	Alan Ayckbourn
5.	Rory McIlroy	12.	Hollie Arnold
6.	Penny Mordant	13.	Christopher Lambert
7.	Victoria Pendleton	14.	Danny de Vitio

Mr Dickens in Newcastle

Dr Chris Goulding fascinated and entertained a large crowd for this SGCH fund-raiser, with readings and commentary on Dickens' association with Newcastle.

Dickens's visitations here and in America, to read from his works, sprung from the lack of copyright rules in America, where his novels were reproduced without reference, or indeed payment, to their author. Like pop stars today, he was driven to give live performances so that he could be sure of payment.

We learnt that Dickens was well travelled, especially for the mid-Victorian age in which he lived and worked, traveling all over Europe and living in France and Italy for a time. Always attracted to acting as a profession, he acted in many plays with his friends, and it was this skill which made the public readings he gave of his works, so dramatic and mesmerizing. He met the later love of his life, Ellen Ternan, at the Newcastle Theatre Royal and lived with her for the rest of his life, cruelly sending his wife away with only their youngest child and keeping the remaining 9 children at his family home in Gad's Hill, looked after by his wife's sister.



Dickens's early experiences of poverty informed his journalism and later his novels with a concern for the poor and disadvantaged, and became campaigning instruments throughout the Victorian age. He was an extraordinary man and Chris Goulding's scholarship and lively readings proved as entertaining as if we were in his presence.



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BURNS' NIGHT SUPPER



A night of haggis, traditional toast from Dr. Chris Goulding, live music from Canon Clare Maclaren & Dr. Emily Frier, quiz and raffle

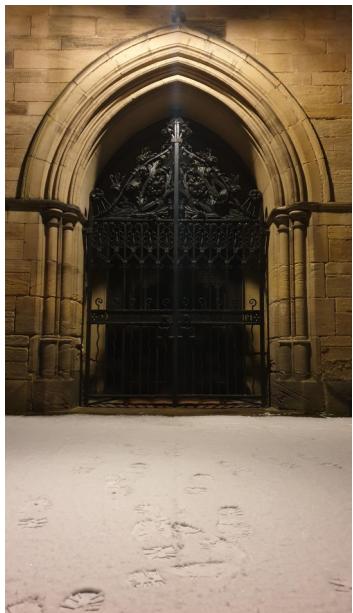
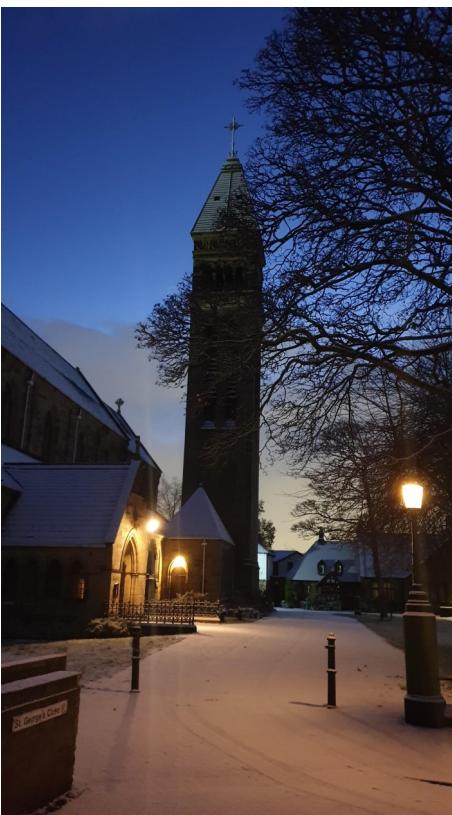


St. George's Church Hall
Saturday 20 January, 7.00 for 7.30 pm

Limited tickets: £20 from the Church Office or
[**https://tickets.myiknowchurch.co.uk/gb/NDA3OS0z/t**](https://tickets.myiknowchurch.co.uk/gb/NDA3OS0z/t)
Bring your own bottle or buy on the night

If possible, wear a tartan accessory

Photos of the Church by Nigel Russell-Sewell





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Answer to the Christmas Caption Competition - 2

You're certainly not a celebrity and you're not getting out of there unless you agree to be Church Wardens

Richard Pickersgill



Friends of St. George's

We are starting 2024 with an old favourite - The Darling Dollies, singing songs of the 40s and 50s, with the most delicious tea as an added extra. The date is Saturday 3rd February at 3pm in the Church Hall. Tickets will soon be available from either Jonathan in the Parish Office or from Barbara Peacock. The price is £10 for non-members of The Friends, and an amazing £8 for Friends.

Also we are holding a raffle, with generous helpings of wine spirits and chocolates as prizes. The raffle will be launched at the Darling Dollies event, and after that tickets can be bought from either Jonathan or from members of the FOSG committee. Tickets are only £1 each. The raffle will be drawn at the Friends AGM on Tuesday 23rd April (St George's Day - how appropriate), starting at 6pm in church. Our AGM is a 'gentle' short meeting followed by informal drinks and a chance to chat - and perhaps a little music!

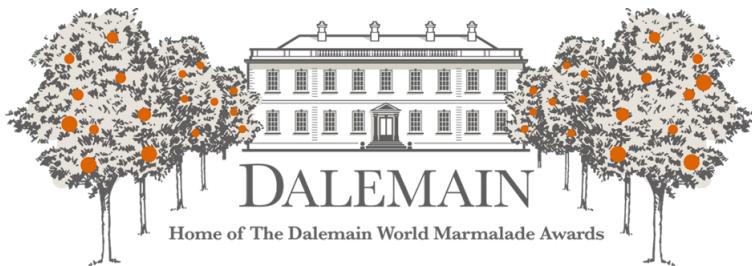
Friday 7th June at 7pm brings our Annual Dinner in the Church Hall, traditionally starting with drinks and canapés on the Green in warm, summer sunshine. You will enjoy! Invite friends to fill a table (about 8 people per table) for a happy evening. You don't have to be a member of The Friends to come. All are welcome.

We are trialling a new 'event' on the four Sundays in July (7th, 14th, 21st and 28th). We have a wonderful Church Green and we are offering tea and cake on the Green from 2-4pm on those dates. Just come along - the sun will be shining - and there will be some gentle live music to get everybody tapping their feet. Should the weather be against us we have booked the Church Hall as a precaution!!!

Other events are being finalised - Newcastle Concert Band, and an afternoon entertainment from 'The Singers' in addition to their annual Christmas Concert for us in December, Felling Male Voice Choir - so much to look forward to!

Remember it is only £10 per person per annum to join the Friends and help to support the iconic Grade 1 listed building that is St George's and to enjoy attending friendly and welcoming community events

Barbara Peacock



Dalemain's Famous Marmalade Festival

will take place on Saturday 20th April 2024 in Cumbria.

If you would like to enter your marmalade in any of the 15 categories, you can bring it to the Church Office, which is a North East collection point.

There are now daughter festivals in Australia, Japan and Senegal celebrating this glorious foodstuff.

Last date for drop-off is Wednesday 24th January.

Please have the paperwork completed with the entry fee when you drop off the jars.

GOOD LUCK!

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Church of England Calendar January 2024

1	The Naming and Circumcision of Jesus
2	Basil the Great and Gregory of Nazianzus, Bishops, Teachers of the Faith, 379 and 389 <i>Seraphim, Monk of Sarov, Spiritual Guide, 1833</i> <i>Vedanayagam Samuel Azariah, Bishop in South India, Evangelist, 1945</i>
6	The Epiphany
10	<i>William Laud, Archbishop of Canterbury, 1645</i>
11	<i>Mary Slessor, Missionary in West Africa, 1915</i>
12	Aelred of Hexham, Abbot of Rievaulx, 1167 <i>Benedict Biscop, Abbot of Wearmouth, Scholar, 689</i>
13	Hilary, Bishop of Poitiers, Teacher of the Faith, 367 <i>Kentigern (Mungo), Missionary Bishop in Strathclyde and Cumbria, 603</i> <i>George Fox, Founder of the Society of Friends (the Quakers), 1691</i>
17	Antony of Egypt, Hermit, Abbot, 356 <i>Charles Gore, Bishop, Founder of the Community of the Resurrection, 1932</i>
18-25	<i>Week of Prayer for Christian Unity</i>
18	<i>Amy Carmichael, Founder of the Dohnavur Fellowship, spiritual writer, 1951</i>
19	Wulfstan, Bishop of Worcester, 1095
20	<i>Richard Rolle of Hampole, Spiritual Writer, 1349</i>
21	Agnes, Child Martyr at Rome, 304
22	<i>Vincent of Saragossa, Deacon, first Martyr of Spain, 304</i>
24	Francis de Sales, Bishop of Geneva, Teacher of the Faith, 1622
25	The Conversion of Paul
26	Timothy and Titus, Companions of Paul
28	Thomas Aquinas, Priest, Philosopher, Teacher of the Faith, 1274
30	Charles, King and Martyr, 1649
31	<i>John Bosco, Priest, Founder of the Salesian Teaching Order, 1888</i>

'Principal Feasts' and other 'Principal Holy Days' in **Red Bold**, 'Festivals' in **Red** and 'Commemorations' in *italics*.

The Diocese of Newcastle upon Tyne Parish of St George, Jesmond

We are a Church of England (Anglican) church in the Diocese of Newcastle with an inclusive, catholic tradition of Christian worship. We welcome all in Christ's name.

Interim Minister

Canon Clare MacLaren 07952 760168

clare@stgeorgesjesmond.org

Assistant Curate

The Revd Ollie Dempsey 281 7162

ollie@stgeorgesjesmond.org

Reader and Anna Chaplain

Mrs Joan Grenfell

grenfelljoan@yahoo.com

Reader & Air Cadet Chaplain

Dr Malcolm Toft

depchap.dnl@rafac.mod.gov.uk

Churchwardens

Enid Pearson 285 0958

enid@stgeorgesjesmond.org

Janet Wilson 07766 297359

janet@stgeorgesjesmond.org

Parish Safeguarding Officer

Dr Sue Vernon 281 3861 / 07411099690

suejvernon@icloud.com

Director of Music

Drew Cantrill-Fenwick

music@stgeorgesjesmond.org

Organist Emeritus

Mr Frederick Peacock BEM 2814755

choir@stgeorgesjesmond.org

Bell Tower Captain

Geoff White 285 1405

bells@stgeorgesjesmond.org

Publicity

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publicity@stgeorgesjesmond.org

Community Hub

communityhub@stgeorgesjesmond.org

Parish Secretary

Jonathan Richards 281 1659

office@stgeorgesjesmond.org

PASTORAL CARE

Any pastoral concerns or commendations should be made to Joan Grenfell or a member of the clergy.

ENQUIRIES CONCERNING BAPTISMS MARRIAGES FUNERALS

Initial enquiries should be directed to the Parish Office, which is open Monday to Friday, 9.45 am to 12.45 pm.

address: St George's Close, Jesmond, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE2 2TF

tel: 0191 281 1659

email: office@stgeorgesjesmond.org.uk

FIND OUT MORE ABOUT ST GEORGE'S CHURCH

Website: www.stgeorgesjesmond.org.uk

Facebook: St-Georges-Church-Jesmond

Twitter: @stgeorgejesmond

Livestreaming of services

Please note that we livestream the 9.30 communion service. You can watch the service [here](#) while it is being broadcast live. If you'd like to watch the recording after the service has finished, please go to our [YouTube channel](#) (it may take a couple of hours after the stream has finished for the video to appear).

<https://stgeorgesjesmond.org.uk/sunday-worship/>

More Jokes from Bristol and a Plea for Stamps

Grace: "What do you call a Frenchman in sandals?"

Robin: "Philippe Phloppe!"

Please remember to bring your used stamps after Christmas, in aid of St Oswald's Hospice. They can be left in the box at the back of Church or posted into the Parish Office. Thanks!

Enid Pearson

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Welcome to St. George's Church Jesmond

We are a Church of England (Anglican) church, part of Jesmond life since 1888, with a congregation from the locality, the city and the region. We aim to be friendly, diverse and to welcome all in Christ's name. Our worship is inclusive and in the catholic tradition, with high quality music. If you are new to this area, or would like to find out more, please get in touch. www.stgeorgesjesmond.org.uk

Facebook: St-Georges-Church-Jesmond

Twitter: @stgeorgejesmond **email:** office@stgeorgesjesmond.org.uk

SUNDAY SERVICES

08.00 Holy Communion
09.30 PARISH COMMUNION with Sunday School / Smarties (age 4-16)
Children's corner available in church
11.30 Holy Communion (1st Sunday of month)
18.00 Taize (2nd Sunday of month)
18.00 Choral Evensong (3rd Sunday)

WEEKDAY SERVICES

08.45 Daily: Morning Prayer
09.30 Thursday: Holy Communion
Saints' Days as announced

Livestreaming of services. You can watch the 09:30 service live [here](#), or later on our [YouTube channel](#)



Edward Burne-Jones - The Adoration of the Magi

To arrange a subscription to THE LANCE, please ring the Parish Office on 2811659

Articles for publication to:
mmvane31@gmail.com
by 15th of every month

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Friends of St George's
JESMOND

