

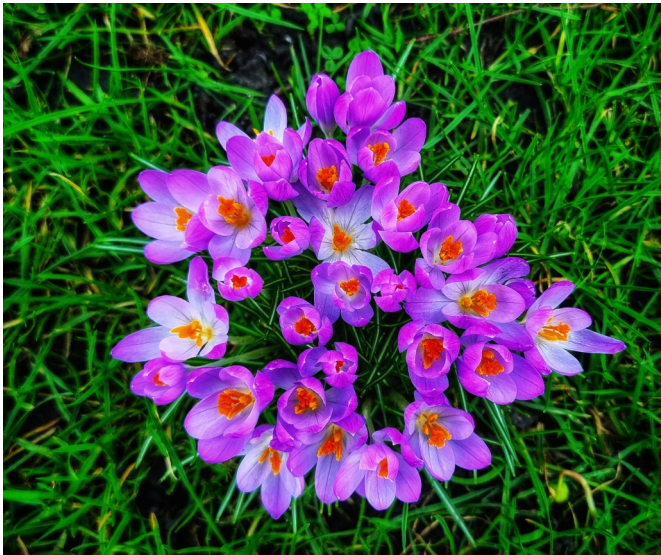
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THE LANCE

MARCH 2024



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Editorial

It is Lent. We are slowly approaching the Passion of Christ. His mother, Mary, and his friends and followers must have been in agony as they watched, helpless, as the indifferent wheels of Roman justice turned, with its inevitable ending.

I wept when I heard the news that Alexei Navalny had been murdered in the prison camp. Like millions of others, I had watched his exposé of the gold-encrusted palace Putin had built for himself in Sochi, and then the documentary following his recuperation after being poisoned. In Germany, he had returned to health, and his happy wife and children enjoyed the laughter and energy of their father once more.

Navalny had returned voluntarily to Russia, prepared to suffer. He had spoken to one of the musicians in Pussy Riot, imprisoned in a labour camp previously, and she had assured him that it was a hard life but survivable. But his fellow prisoners knew better. They watched as all the cameras in the camp were dismantled and knew that dark deeds were coming. Navalny was murdered 24 hours later.

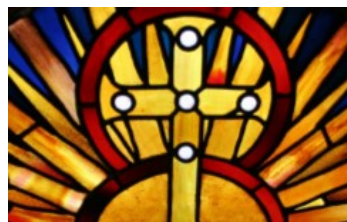
Navalny's wife and children, his friends and followers are now in an agony of suffering. The world mourns a leader who will never lead, and who offered hope to the Russian people and the world. But like the Easter story of Christ, death is not the end of the vision and hopes which these people lived by.

As reflected in our Clergy Letter, we are bowed by the terrible situation in Gaza, in Ukraine and in many other parts of the world. But we also have the hope of the Easter story before us. It shows us that martyrdom is but a moment in a greater stream of vast events which can lead to unexpected joy and liberation, as in Northern Ireland and in South Africa. This is no defeat. The Russians bravely placing red roses in Navalny's memory honour and give confidence to these hopes for us all, in all parts of the world.

Margaret Vane.

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Letter from the Clergy



Goodness, don't the months come round fast! I knew there must be a reason it was called "March!" As I write, therefore, I am about to enter the last of my six months' secondment here – and what a wonderful whirlwind of a time it has been... There will be opportunity for thank yous and farewells on Easter Day (my last Sunday) – but let me just register now, my deep gratitude for the welcome that has been shown me by the people of St George's and St Hilda's! When I was asked to come and minister amongst you, I wondered what exactly God had planned. I determined to try to be a person of hope and of joy in your midst – and you have given me so much of both in return. Thank you!

As we continue to journey through Lent, that theme of hope and joy must stay at the back of our minds as we travel with Jesus the Way of the Cross... Every Christian knows that that story has a happy ending, but for many millions around the world, a positive outcome to their sufferings is far from assured. The situation in Ukraine seems to go from bad to worse, with no end in sight. As I type, the longed-for ceasefire in Gaza is still being negotiated - but countless civilians are living in famine conditions, and the scars of this latest conflict will mark a generation of children – both Arabs and Jews – with who knows what consequences for generations to come? Meanwhile, climate change brings hardship to people, and other living creatures, in every part of our fragile planet. Their trials go more or less unremarked by the global north until it begins to affect us directly. It would be so easy to say – as I quite often hear it said – words to the effect of "the world is going to hell in a handcart"! This – in part – is the Way of the Cross...

But it's not the whole story!!

Back in the last century (yes, that's how old I am!) I lived in community in Manchester with two young South Africans – one black, and one so-called "coloured". We were all in our very early 20s, and this was just before the fall of Apartheid. We were invited to help make some banners for the inner-city church we were serving. Chris, who had grown up in a township under the harshest of regimes, had an idea to create a banner with two black arms reaching out to hold on to the bars of a window or a cage – as if a person were looking out of a prison cell, longing for freedom. The

scripture text that he wanted to illustrate was Romans 8:25 – “*If we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.*” For him, this was a prayerful expression of his fervent desire for an end to the cruelty of the Apartheid system. That very year (1990), Nelson Mandela was freed, and so began the gradual dismantling of the apartheid regime. We rejoiced with Christ and Carol as we watched him on TV, leaving the prison where he had been held captive for 27 years – and celebrated with them as we were given the opportunity to attend the great and joyful concert at Wembley Arena where they were able to see their hero in person for the first time ever. The crowd gave him a standing ovation which lasted for a full eight minutes!

Now of course, we all know that things have been far from plain sailing in South Africa’s post-apartheid history. There are no quick fixes when peoples and places have been wounded so deeply by their experiences of conflict, injustice and suffering. The anguish passes on through generations – and we must expect this to be the case in Ukraine and Russia, and in the Holy Land too. We will know from our own lives also, that the Way of the Cross can be long and weary, and seemingly endless. And yet we are taught as Christians that resurrection is God’s desire, and God’s promise. For all who suffer – a new beginning; a fresh start; an experience of healing and forgiveness that does indeed set us free.

So, as our Lenten journey progresses, let us hang on to that Christian hope, and the joy that accompanies it. And if the going seems tough for you at present, remember those words that meant so much to my friend Chris: “*If we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.*” May the hope and joy of the Risen Christ be yours this Eastertide! And may you know his blessing in every aspect of your life.

Pray for me, as I shall pray for you!

With love,
Canon Clare

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Spotlight on Service:

Pastoral Care

St George's congregation is good at looking after each other. Many lifelong friendships have been made there and support is readily offered in times of trouble.



A pastoral care group was set up during the incumbency of Nick Chamberlain to be the eyes and ears within the congregation, picking up any needs and keeping the clergy informed. The original aim was to have 2 team co-ordinators who met regularly with Nick to share concerns and arrange any follow up. The basic premise of this has been maintained with a team including the incumbent, other clergy and lay ministers. We continue to meet every 6 weeks or so to review any physical and spiritual needs within the congregation.



How do we do this? We keep in touch with those who are unable to attend church services, including those in places of residential care. We also respond to concerns of which we are aware, or have been made aware of, by other members of the congregation.

This response may be simply a card, text or a phone call. For others a visit may be arranged from the most appropriate member of the team. Home communion may also be offered.

Our ministry is one of being present and alongside, reaching out on behalf of the church. The ministry is not one of assuming practical tasks. We are deeply conscious of the sensitivity and confidentiality surrounding pastoral needs, and we endeavour to reflect this in the ministry we offer.



The current team is Joan Grenfell (co-ordinator), Linsley de la Hunt, Enid Pearson, Bryan Vernon, Jackie Spencer and the incumbent. If you are aware of need, please do keep us informed so no one is overlooked.

Joan and Linsley



Book Group

The next meeting of the St George's Book Group will be on Wednesday 20th March at 7.30pm in the Winskill Room.

The book chosen is: 'Winter in Madrid' by C.J.Sansom.

Anne Clark

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Pauline Pearson: celebrating her long, well-lived professional life

Even as a school leaver, Pauline was aware of the bigger picture. She was drawn to study in the North-East when she spotted a new degree course in nursing at Northumbria University, one of very few at that time. The course covered clinical work, communication skills when it was not at all common in healthcare, social policy, psychology and research methods. All skills Pauline put to great use throughout her varied career.



After two years working in A&E at the RVI, Pauline trained as a health visitor and when she qualified in 1979 worked at Denton Park Riverside Child health project. I was interested to see her publication in last year's Archives of Diseases of Childhood which reflects on the impact of that Riverside Child health project. At its core the project focused on teams of people working together caring for children.

Caring for children is something that seemed to many of us here at St George's very central to Pauline's ministry. You could see that not only when she preached on Mothering Sundays, but to some extent also on more than one Remembrance Day service.

I first knew Pauline as a lecturer in primary care nursing at Newcastle University, Department of Primary Health Care in the mid-90s. She was ordained in 2005 and worked as a self-supporting minister. In 2009, she moved to Northumbria to take up the post of Professor of Nursing and a few years later, alongside this post, she became a research and innovation director for the Faculty of Health and Life Sciences. Meanwhile, she had moved here to St George's in 2010.

Pauline's time with us is extremely memorable. But perhaps 2014 was a standout year. Few of us can forget the image of her abseiling down the tower of Ripon Cathedral to raise funds for Christian Aid. For most of us, it's absolutely terrifying even to look at the photograph.

But Pauline has been all her life nothing if not game. Game for beating the bounds. Game for the Easter walk of witness even in the pouring rain. Game for the nightmare of the white elephant stall at the church fête. And particularly tolerant in her pantomime performances. Hazel documented her roles in the Lance - Tea Urn Weeping Willow, Tiger Lily, leader of the Amazon's parsley, a French hen and Daisy Did-dyduck. You will see photographic evidence of Pauline playing Punky in a panto that seems loosely connected to Beatrix Potter, at the back of church.

Pauline did a massive amount of work supporting us during our last vacancy. We also benefitted hugely again from her support this time around in her role as Area Dean. Her committee skills are phenomenal and she has a unique combination of compassionate leadership with a focus on business outcomes.

2019 marked a major transition for Pauline. As such a team player, perhaps it was no surprise that the Bishop should ask her to serve as part of the Christ the King team ministry and take over leadership at St Columba's Church, Wideopen. It was initially a six month secondment. But in the end, her final Evensong with us was in November 2019.

Among her many, many attributes, perhaps the one Pauline has had less time to cultivate is her own poetic inner voice. Like any instinctive poet, Pauline always sees the links between the tiny things and the biggest picture - just as she did when she entered nursing all those years ago. Thank you, Louise, for looking out one special poem which had eluded me. It's from the beginning of 2019, before all this change happened in her life, and it's called 'Force a New Year'.

Thank you, Pauline, for everything you've done. There is so much that we could never have done without you.

Janet Wilson

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The Faithful Are Flocking Back

Reports of the death of the Church of England have been much exaggerated.

In the Church's darkest days, during Covid, when doors had to be sometimes closed on Government orders, attendances [usually around 500,000 weekly] fell to 272,300, but since churches have re-opened, figures have been increasing.

The Times asked for Christmas attendance figures from all the Anglican Cathedrals in England in 2023. They reported that numbers were not only up on the previous 3 years, but were, in many cases, even higher than the figures in 2019, the last Christmas before Covid.



Salisbury Cathedral had to turn 100 worshippers away from its church doors because its pews were full. Elsewhere, the Christmas Eve service at Lincoln Cathedral 'reached full capacity for the first time in several years'. Gloucester Cathedral 'unfortunately, had to turn people away from its two carol services', while Worcester Cathedral reported a 'record Christmas' for attendance. 30 out of

the 42 cathedrals provided figures to the Times. 24 saw congregations rise from 2022 to 2023. Of the 26 that provided pre-Covid data, 13 had congregations last year that were even higher than in 2019. At Canterbury Cathedral, 8,044 people attended in person over Christmas, up from 7,264 in 2019 and a further 67,746 watched live on YouTube.

There were also signs of improved attendances in local parishes. The Dean of St Albans, the Very Rev. Jo Kelly-Moore, said: 'Many Parish churches are reporting the same increases over Christmas as they too have engaged with their communities creatively. All this offers great encouragement as we welcome new people and grow back from the impact of the pandemic.'



It is not all rosiness. Attendances fell drastically during Covid as set out above. In 2021, the figures had recovered to 509,000 but only reached 549,000 by 2022. An early analysis of figures for Oxfordshire show that they are still down by 16% on 2019 attendance. However, the Dean of Lichfield, the Right Rev. Jan McFarlane, said 'Our volunteer chaplains are reporting many conversations with visitors looking for some sense and meaning in a world which feels increasingly insecure and frightening.' Asked whether this could lead to a reversal of fortunes for attendances, she said: 'As a church we believe in resurrection.'

And what of St George's? Noticeably large numbers attended the Christmas Eve of Carols, the midnight service and the Christmas morning service compared with previous years. Amazingly, the retiring collection at the Christmas Eve carol service totalled over £1,000. Checking with the Church Wardens, who are required to tally attendance, numbers have been gradually growing at Sunday services, as many of us have noticed and welcomed. In January and February of this year, attendance continued to grow at the Sunday morning family service.



March Caption Competition

courtesy of Hilary Cullingford

Suggested captions to: mmvane31@gmail.com



The Friday Sing and Socialise Group - Quite a History!

The popular Sing and Socialise Group which runs most Fridays from 11.00 – 12.00 in St George's Church Hall reports that its numbers are expanding.

Laura Reavley, the Community Musician, who leads the group, is pleased that word has spread, [partly due to the support offered by Jesmond Library], and that the group goes from strength to strength.



The singing group, along with other activities, was originally founded by Jesmond Dementia Action Alliance in 2015 and run by various Jesmond residents [including Felicity Mendelson who was a councillor at the time, and Joan Grenfell who represented St George's]. Not only did the Alliance offer singing, but also dance, gardening and fitness. Dementia Friends delivered awareness sessions to local groups and businesses, and developed an information section in Jesmond Library which is still there. Funding was got from various sources.

The group was disbanded after lockdown in 2021 but wanted to continue some of the activities with the funding left over, and the sessions re-started in January 2023. From September 2023, Sing and Socialise came under the umbrella of the Jesmond Library/ Elders Council Wellbeing project and Anne Burton managed to secure funding until Christmas 2023 from the Home Instead Charity. The Charles Hayward Charity will fund sessions in 2024.

The sessions are not charged for and the timing of the singing coincides well with St George's Friday Café.

Laura Reavley is central to the success of the sessions. Felicity Mendelson said 'The continuing success of the group is really down to Laura Reavley, who has been with us from the very first session. She is not only a very talented musician and singer but has such an engaging and warm personality - she makes everyone feel welcome and

fosters a real friendliness amongst the attendees every week.'

And it works! A recent attendee was keen to tell the Lance what an impact it had had on her life. Elaine said 'When I came to Jesmond [during Covid], I knew no-one. After lockdown was lifted, I came to the Friday Café and the Singing Group. Everyone was so welcoming and I haven't missed a week since,'

Sing & Socialise



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The Darling Dollies: An Annual Feast of Joy and Tunefulness

Friends Of St George's events always have a fun element, and the popular yearly visit of the all-singing Darling Dollies was no exception. FSG's Chair, Barbara Peacock, was responsible for all arrangements prior to the event, but could not attend on the day, so Linsley and Mike de la Hunt picked up the reins for a grand show, enjoyed by a large crowd.



The three Darling Dollies harmonized their way through classic songs from the 1940's, 1950's and even a couple from the 1960's. From subjects like innocent attraction to the angst of unrequited love and general wistfulness, the songs poured forth. They were never too anguished and often with a decidedly upbeat rhythm. From 'Sisters' to 'Who's Sorry Now?', the three singers, in their authentic tight 1940's skirts and pin curls, charmed the audience.

Beamish Outdoor Museum now has a 1950's village and the Darling Dollies have performed there recently. They went back to their repertoire and learnt a number of new songs from the 1950's for this performance.

And then there was cake! Mysteriously, as Linsley commented, a large array of cakes, buns and sandwiches quietly appeared, donated by supporters, and the hall filled with the contented sounds of an audience contemplating a plate of their favourite things!

It was during the interval that Paul Tay-



lor launched the FSG Easter Raffle, to be drawn at the FSG Annual General Meeting. Indeed, three prizes are on offer.

The second set was full of toe-tapping tunes and soon the back row was dancing, children twirling and babies smiling. The tuneful, modest, and unself-conscious music of this era accentuated the positive and left the audience smiling. As the Darling Dol-lies sang, 'Little Things Mean A Lot'.



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

Confession, I have never been to a St George's pantomime, and I didn't know what I was missing! So here it is, a view from a novice!

In "Up Pompeii" Frankie Howard started with "The Prologue". I will start at the Grand Finale with the entire cast singing, "Did you follow the plot, follow the plot and if you didn't whyever not?" (tune of 'If I'd known you were coming, I'd have baked a cake'.) Now I'm a bit slow on the uptake, I need to watch Miss Marple twice before I 'get it', so I struggled a bit. Was this important? Did it matter? Absolutely not!

This is what I did get! There were three groups, 'The Royal Entourage of sad Prince Edward', who was told that he needed a wife. Secondly, 'The Newcastle Contingent', led by Emperor BearPig, plus various family members and Geordie Boy. And last but not least 'The Scottish Visitors', consisting of the lovesick Princess Nell looking for a suitable beau supported by her attendants, the Three Peas.

First on, Emperor BearPig, alias Rutt, obviously the Baddie, attired menacingly in black. He was gruesomely picking his bare feet, blistered from travelling. Not that he got much sympathy from his priggish sisters, Hoity and Toity, who gave him a hard time! Rosie Hoity had the snooty air of a Downtown Dowager and Joan's Toity smacked a bit of Jane Austen's Mrs Bennet with that delightful poke bonnet. Joan's quip "I'm doing a Meghan curtsey" was greeted with such enthusiasm, that she forgot the next line and thus began some great banter with the prompter, "Thought we'd done that bit?"! Shall I keep going?" "Yup, that'd be nice"! Whoopee! The audience roared and lapped it up. More! More!



Constantly nagged by his two sisters, Emperor BearPig needed two cheerleaders to back him up. Enter Little Hoity and Little Toity to gales of laughter. Little Donald Hoity peered out from the curtain of his black rat's tail wig, and within minutes he had

managed to lose his kilt, giving a new slant to "Donald where's yer troosers?" The audience went wild and flushed with success, Gaze became Glazed and lost the plot. "I forgot; I've got a line in that!" More hilarity.



Then there was that lovely James lad, Prince BarelyPiglet. I know he was meant to be just as bad as his dad, but he's such a canny lad despite his naff dress sense. (Was reminded of those dreadful early morning photos of certain politicians who, at election times, go running in shorts and leggings in order to prove they are fit to rule the country!) He tried so hard to do "soppy" and he got us all wailing! Oh yes, he did!

As did that splendid Geordie Boy, grieving so loudly at having lost his dad in tragic circumstances, described so poignantly in the eloquent script. "One day he had too much of that Newcastle Broon and was run over by a lawnmower when he fell doon!" (Anyone affected by these events can talk to Sue Vernon or a helpline!)

Fatherless maybe, but not friendless. Every lad needs a best mate "to gan doon" the Bigg Market. Bob had Terry in the Likely Lads, and Geordie Boy had the faithful Feckless. Subtitles were needed at times as Feckless's broad Geordie accent was at times incomprehensible, but that is as it should be. (Had a toothless Geordie window cleaner,



who one time complained "About them boards!" he was referring to "birds", I rest my case!) Along with Faithful Feckless, Geordie Boy, alias Pia, had brought along her own pals, a youthful fan club, whose enthusiasm was infectious. Hope she paid them well!

The entrance of Geordie's mam, Redoubtable Dame Tom as Gertrude Cookalot, BearPig's cook, brought the house down! Sporting strident pink hair, striped tights, big boobs, he had a booming voice, and was a canny guitar player to boot! He manfully manoeuvred the guitar strap around his appendages and waving his ample butt, was as adept as Dolly Parton! So that's the Geordie lot sorted!



Now for the Royal Entourage. Great thumbs up for young Iris who gave her all as the eligible young Prince Edward and performed some great dance moves. The reluctant bridegroom, young Edward, supported by The Regent and his two pages was alas, hounded by his evil Stepmother Queen Catherine Parr. Enter Canon Clare at her most imperious! Beautifully bumptious in Vivienne Westwood inspired costume, (it is rumoured that 'curtains' were involved.?) St George's own Queen of Soul belted out "Hit the Road Jack!" with such gusto she could probably be heard down Osborne Road! Of such impeccable taste, she stipulated that any future bride of Edward's must have an account at Jules B! Needless to say, "Stinking Noo Caastle" did not impress Queen Catherine with its "Ruinous Castle!" (Just wait till you get to Sunderland! pet!) These words were delivered with such venom I did wonder if her Scottish blood was up? Perchance Clare, in days of yore, we have raided your borders?



And now we come to the Scottish Visitors. Every panto needs a pretty Princess. Step forward the sweet Prin-



cess Nell of the Gwynn Dynasty. None other than the lovely Eleanor of melodious voice and tasteful costume, it being Jesmond, less Disney, more Ophelia thankfully. You have heard of the Three Degrees? Well Princess Nell was attended by The Three Peas, Sweet, Garden and Mushy.



Sweet Pea, alias Mike, had aspired to look like "The Hulk" with green frizzy wig and tights but unfortunately with

those legs was more like The Jolly Green Giant from the sweetcorn tin! Garden Pea and Mushy Pea, being the enthusiastic youngest members of the cast, still had some sparkle left and got the audience going with their ditty about pressed pea pods which in the end went Pop! (By the by, I think I forgot to mention that at some point along the way, Prince Edward swapped places with Georgie Boy just to confuse the issue!) Little wonder that Princess Nell wailed "Oh dear who should I marry now?" To the tune of "Oh dear what can the matter be! The atmosphere was enhanced thanks to

the younger, savvy members of the audience who know how to swiftly operate torches on their phones!



I'm not entirely sure how Princess Nell made up her mind but it all ended 'Happily Ever After'. Prince Edward got his bride, Princess Nell. Georgie Boy married Mushy Pea, and not sure who married who after that!

The sign 'ARE YOU STILL HERE?' was posted after the Interval. If you are still with me. Well Done! You have reached the Grand Finale, the cast and exhausted audience in a communal sing song: "If we'd known you were coming, we'd have learned our lines...", and other such corkers, again to the Bake a Cake tune. There was a stand-



ing ovation from audience members who still had the energy to get up and Oscars all round for the Dramatis Personi and other Helpful People. A mention to Christopher whose efforts on the ivories were not in vane! And hats off to Graham Rutt, he of the devious mind, Jesmond's own Richard Curtis. Not to mention Catherine Laidler, she of the original ideas and best joke-writing.

Must mention the Refreshments... "Blessed be the Cake Makers". Bake-Off standard as per usual. Practice makes perfect, and let's face it, we get plenty of practice!! All in all, a triumph. St George's at its best. All ages, all talents and a great community event.



And finally the verdict 5 ***** Love it Actually!

Maggie Paczek

(It also raised nearly £1500 for church funds, Ed)



The Panto - What the Cast Said

Playing Prince Edward in St. George's pantomime was such an exciting experience! I liked going to rehearsals and practicing with all the cast and working with people of different ages. It was also nice to see people from last year's panto again and meet the new members who had joined. It was fun seeing which character everyone would play this year!

My favourite scene was when we all sang 'The Lambton Worm' because it involved all the cast singing and dancing on stage.

I'm already counting down the days until the next pantomime, which will be:



*The True Story of Chicken Licken
+ Henny Penny*



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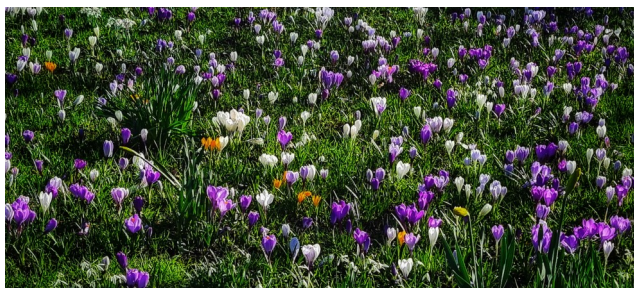
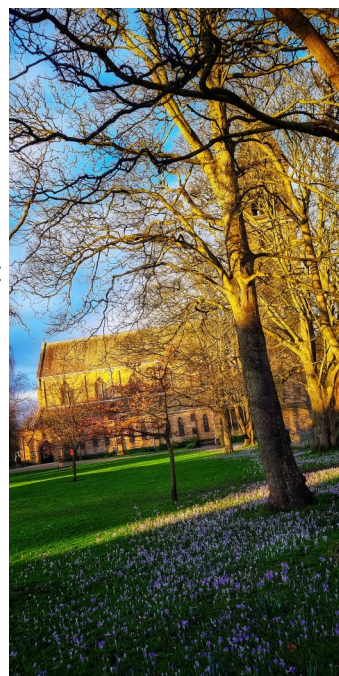
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Our Purple Crocuses: An Origin Story

Every year, a swathe of lilac crocuses erupt on either side of the Green and this year, and as their purple swirls magnificently once more, the Lance has asked how they got there.

Various older members of the church remember their arrival. The planting occurred in the time of Canon Rev. Frank Dexter when he approached Dame Catherine Cookson and together they decided to enhance the Green by planting spring flowers, funded by the Catherine Cookson Trust. Cyril and Patricia Winskill were involved in the scheme and a distinctive lilac, slender-flowered crocus was selected and a planting scheme agreed. Irene Shaw remembers:

‘Yes, the crocuses were planted with Sunday Knights during one of their Sunday evening sessions. (or possibly after church one Sunday. I don’t quite remember) I bet it was more than 20 years ago. Harry will be 40 this year, and I feel sure he was one of the planters, as were Neil Murray and Barney. They were planted randomly with a view to them naturalising and spreading over the years. I can’t remember how many we planted in the first place, but not more than a couple of hundred. (Sunday Knights got bored pretty quickly!).



The result?
Pure magic every Spring!!

**Photos by Nigel Russell-
Sewell**

What or Who is 'A Rocha'?

Anyone speak Portuguese? A Rocha literally means 'The rock' and is the name of a charity which supports Christian conservation projects. The first one they ever did was in Portugal – thus the choice of language for the name. The charity has since grown internationally. In 2001 they founded A Rocha UK, which last year donated over £1,000,000 to conservation work here.



So what has this charity got to do with St. George's?

A Rocha run an Eco Church programme, which (in their words) supports churches in engaging in deliberate and on-going action to care for nature practically on church premises, in the community and by using their voice. Literally thousands of churches have signed up to the programme – particularly URC, Methodist and Anglican.

The Programme involves completing an on-line survey, with questions in 5 areas:

Worship and teaching

Management of church buildings

Management of church land

Community & global engagement

Lifestyle



Depending on how many points you score, you can work through Bronze, Silver and Gold levels. In the meantime, most churches in the Diocese of Newcastle are signed up and many have reached Bronze. It is not too hard to achieve bronze in all categories: St. George's signed up for the programme back in 2021 and we achieved Bronze in May 2022. We are very proud to have been awarded Silver in summer 2023 – that took more effort.

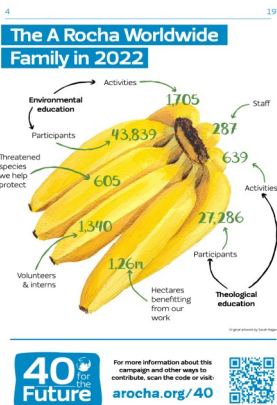
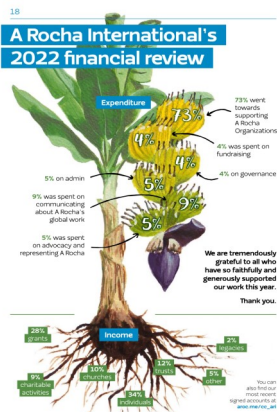
What has been the impact? You have probably noticed that praying for Creation has become a regular feature of the intercessions and of our worship more generally. It has been quite fun going on a journey with the congregation with sessions

on recycling, energy saving and sustainable eating at coffee after church. I hope you managed to catch the February 25th presentation on getting out of fossil fuels to heat the church! That will be a major challenge for St. George's, just as it is for each of us at home.



We have various initiatives on our land too – for example bird boxes in the trees, a rather battered bug hotel out the back and a grant application in to create a wild flower area. We have done quite a lot with our community too: Newcastle City Council funded an energy audit of the hall which led to changes to insulation and the heating system. And we regularly have eco activities at our various community events. If you have a desire to care for God's creation, why not join the Eco group and make a difference!

Kay Plumley



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St George's Church Hall: A Brighter Future!



St. George's
Community Hub

Following the approval of the PCC to provide funding for roof-light refurbishment to the main hall room, a full specification and working details were drawn up by the project architect and submitted for approval to the City Planners before Christmas.

The details were duly approved at the end of January, and having undertaken a competitive tender process for formal quotations in advance, a contractor was duly appointed to undertake the works. As the planners approved a standard Velux roof light rather than a bespoke unit, pleasingly the lowest tender afforded for the full replacement of all three main hall roof lights in one operation within the agreed budget.

The work was actioned and the contractor was able to undertake and complete in a very swift time. Despite the best efforts of someone onsite, who tried to steal some of the contractor's plant and equipment from one of their vans in broad daylight, the job went well, with minimal disruption to hall users. (Please be vigilant when in and around the site if we have magpies lurking).

From a design perspective, whilst the new roof lights are standard (albeit large) units, the planners advised that the Astragals, forming part of the original roof lights, must be duplicated in the design of the new glazed units, so the same vertical bead lines are still evident.

These works represent the very beginning of the redevelopment and upgrading of the hall and based on comments so far received from members of the congregation to various parties, they appear to have been well received.

The new roof light units provide: -

- A much clearer window opening providing enhanced natural light into the hall



- Double glazed components, therefore improving the eco-credentials of the Hall (every little helps)
- Electronic controls allowing for opening and closing from ground level, and thus affording fresh air and natural ventilation as and when required.

Derek Nicholson

HUB Steering Group



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**Articles etc. for The
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no later than the 15th of
each month**

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mmvane31@gmail.com

Thank you, Margaret.



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FRIDAY CAFÉ.

**IN THE WINSKELL ROOM
EACH FRIDAY FROM 10-
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?**

Working with Children North East

On Sunday, February 11th, at beginning of the 9.30 service, the contents of **Box 12** were on the chancel steps, together with four large bags of items forwarded to us from another charity. At the offertory, Canon Clare blessed the gifts and prayed these words:



'Generous God, Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer,
at your table we present these gifts,
this bread and this wine,
symbol of the work you have given us to do
and of your call to us to be generous t
o those who are in want.
Use them and use us in the service of your world
and to the glory of your Name. Amen'



What was delivered?

Knitting: 3 blankets and 1 DARE Bear

Purchased items: 6 packs of larger sized nappies, a bag of children's toothbrushes and female sanitary products, 3 multipacks of children's socks, 2 packs of polo shirts, 2 lightweight children's showerproof hooded jackets, 3 packs of long sleeved tops, 2 packs of boys underwear, 1 pair of trousers 1 jumper and 4 tops.

And 4 large bags of nappies, formula, baby food, toilet-ries and sanitary products surplus to the needs of the People's Kitchen.

May I add my grateful thanks to those of Alex Kirkpatrick and others who work for CNE at the Cowgate Family Centre, for the generosity of those who filled Box 12 not just with much needed items but with the hope for the future for those who will receive our gifts. Those of you who have seen photographs in the Lance of previous deliveries will notice that this time everything is still inside all the large bags. This is because the large area with tables has now been transformed into Cafe Hope. At 1.00pm on February 12th, all the cafe tables were full - mostly mothers with their babies and children, relaxing and building new friendships, following a morning early years play session. There was warmth, good food, chatter, sharing and laughter.

This was a snapshot of CNE at work! Please keep supporting CNE, especially during this time of Lent. (Hand knitted jumpers/sweaters/cardigans/blankets are very popular with the mums.) What to buy? The Wish Lists are at the back of church and on the website. Why? So that God will use us in the service of His world and to the glory of His Name.

Elizabeth Rhodes

"What you do for the least of my brothers and sisters"



[Home](#) / [Cafe Hope](#)

Cafe Hope



Serving hot breakfasts, lunchtime favourites and top-quality coffee Cafe Hope Cowgate is a place for families and people from the local community to enjoy affordable meals in a friendly space. Based at our Cowgate Centre site, its profits help keep our life-changing services accessible to babies, children, young people and their families.

The space is growing to be thriving space for people of all ages from the local community to come for affordable, nutritious food, as well as helping connecting people with the Centre's diverse services, from family activities, youth groups and support for parents and carers.

Opening hours: 08:30am – 14:00pm, Monday to Friday

Where: Cowgate Centre, Houghton Avenue, Newcastle upon Tyne, United Kingdom

[View the full menu >](#)

[Stay up to date with Cafe Hope Cowgate on their Facebook >](#)

Want to get involved?

If you would like to support our work by volunteering at Cafe Hope Cowgate, register your interest via our volunteer form.

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The Town Moor to Receive More Trees!

If you have ever strolled across the Town Moor recently, and rued the ugly monoculture of grass, and the paucity of wildlife, then there is good news for you. There are active plans to plant trees by the North East Community Forest Team in the 1,503 square kilometres which their remit covers, a large area from Newcastle, to Tyneside, Gateshead and Sunderland.



During this year's National Tree Week, the North East Community Forest team, along with the Sheriff and Deputy Lord Mayor, Councillor Veronica Dunn and other representatives from Newcastle City Council and the Freeman of Newcastle launched the latest tree planting programme on the Town Moor.

This ambitious project, which pays homage to the Queen's Green Canopy: Plant a Tree for the Jubilee, will increase the tree population on Town Moor land by a total of 411 trees and 2,875 hedgerow plants, over 10 Town Moors by the end of the 2023 planting season (31 March 2024).

It is planned to undertake many more tree planting projects on the Town Moors in the future.

David Wilson, Chair of the Freeman of Newcastle upon Tyne said: "I am delighted to be partnering with the North East Community Forest to grow Newcastle's urban forest on our latest planting project. Improving the city's green spaces is a key priority for the Freeman and is vital for the health and wellbeing of the people who use them both now and into the future."

Recently, it has come to be understood that trees greatly benefit the people living around them by having a positive impact on their mental health and wellbeing, reducing stress and encouraging outdoor exercise. Air quality is improved. Wildlife has more cover and food and the whole biosphere becomes more complex and healthy. Trees, at a stroke, improve environmental quality and amenity and, of course, are consumers of carbon and water.

Funding for the project is being provided via the North East Community Forest Trees for Climate grant with in-kind contributions provided by the Freeman. The tree planting across the 7 Town Moor sites this season will be a mix of urban greenspace planting, woodland pasture, and fruit trees and all trees planted will be recognised as part of The Queens Green Canopy.

In the 19th century, only 5% of England was covered in woodland. It is now 12% and growing. And death rates from air pollution have halved since the 1990's, partly due to increased coverage of woodland.

Margaret Vane



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"Letters Column"



We are writing to express our gratitude for your donation, on behalf of St. George's Church, for £200 to Newcastle West End Foodbank.

Our charity strives to provide food for people who are unable to afford food for themselves or their families. The increased cost of living has resulted in more people using our services. We have responded by opening additional centres across the city. We now have distribution centres in Heaton, Byker, Benwell, Lemington, Newbiggin Hall and the Bede Church on the West Road.

Financial and physical donations enable the Foodbank to provide food parcels and support to those in need every week, with nearly half of the people to benefit from our food parcels being children, living in low-income households who would otherwise go hungry. Our work is made possible by the generosity of people who provide us with the donations that help us to sustain our services.

We supplement our food distribution support with welfare services through our Pathways Team, who are trained to help clients with a range of issues including debt, housing, fuel and benefits. We are truly grateful for your support.

Emily Blunt

Newcastle West End Foodbank

Dear Sir/Madam

We would like to thank you for your very kind Donation of £200 to Dementia Matters, this was very much appreciated, thank you very much for thinking of us as a nominated charity.

Kind regards,

Debbie Clarke , Receptionist



Dear Friends at St George's Church,

Thank you so much for your kind gift of £200.00 to strengthen your persecuted church family around the world who are risking it all to follow Jesus. Thanks to your prayers and support, our brothers and sisters know they are not alone and can stand strong in their faith.

This includes a group of more than 400 church leaders, following training in evangelism, discipleship and mission. It was held at a centre recently set up in a country in Latin America by Open Doors local partners, with the aim of equipping leaders who are serving amidst persecution.

"I am very grateful to the brothers and sisters who made this course possible and who brought this material to us," says Pastor Gabriela*. "It is a huge encouragement to continue multiplying the church and carrying out the Great Commission to which we've been called. Thanks so much to all of you who have made this possible. We continue praying for you."

May the Lord fill you with His Spirit and surround you with His love.

Your sister in Christ,

Henrietta Blyth

CEO, Open Doors UK and Ireland

*Name changed for security reasons

Notes of 'Thanks' to the PCC and the Congregation

Chris Lincoln (Jesmond Street Pastors) writes: "Thank you so much for the gift, it is really appreciated and enables us to purchase more stock of foil blankets, first aid kit etc."

Angela Abrahams (Transforming Communities Together Tyne to Tweed) writes: "On behalf of the Trustees and Staff I am writing to thank everyone at St George's for their generous donation of £200 towards our work. Your continued support is much appreciated"

Lab-Grown Diamonds: a HUGE disrupter?

It can be a heart-stopping moment when, casually, one overhears a remark which could have huge ramifications.

And, so it was when I overheard a remark that nearly half of the world's new diamonds were man-made, grown in the lab.



These artificial diamonds are the result of decades of research to create gem-quality diamonds for jewellery. It has been a long story. In 1797, it was discovered that diamonds consisted of pure carbon and this started the race to create the world's first artificial stone. All through the 19th century, scientists attempted to recreate diamonds but it was not until the 1940's, that a more successful approach developed. Research was postponed during the war, but in 1954, General Electric [GE] created 'Project Superpressure' where scientists were able to experiment with various methods, varying temperature and pressure, in its treatment of carbon.



Ultimately, GE used a high-pressure belt press which subjected small seed crystals to temperatures of 1,600 degrees C and pressure of 100,000 atm. In this device, they dissolved graphite, another mineral made of pure carbon, with other metals and the resulting small diamonds broke their metal instruments and

measured 10 on the Mohs scale of hardness. Success. The scientists Herbert Strong and Howard Tracy Hall were credited with their creation.

At first these lab-made diamonds were tiny and too small for gem use. They were incorporated into industrial processes instead. Nevertheless, by 1971 GE had created a gem-quality, man-made diamond by using a tube to add heat and pressure to the process by which the graphite seed in the centre, grew into a diamond.

The diamonds of 1971 had problems. They were yellow in colour and often had



inclusions and poor clarity. By removing the excess nitrogen from the process, colourless, flawless diamonds were produced. Within a few years, scientists in Russia, the United States and China made it possible to create diamonds in laboratories which exceeded natural diamonds in carat [size], colour

and clarity. Slowly, these gems made it onto the diamond market. To the naked eye, they are indistinguishable from the real thing and that is their huge disrupting effect as they are about 30%-40% cheaper to produce.

GE developed a less expensive process called HPHT as time went on, and this in turn was replaced by the present process called 'Chemical Vapour Deposition' [CVD] where carbon gas heats a diamond seed in a chamber, causing the carbon to stick to the seed and grow into a larger diamond, giving more control to the quality of the stone. This is also less costly than previous processes.

The first patent for CVD diamonds was issued in the 1950's but it took until the 1980's to produce large, gem-quality stones, originally a very slow process as only one seed could undergo CVD at a time. Now dozens can undergo CVD at once but it is a trade-secret as to how many.

Why is this a disrupter? Lab diamonds are associated with the popular concept of 'ethical sourcing' on a number of fronts. The scandal of 'blood diamonds' from Sierra Leone, illuminated a world in which young men, often in Africa, were exploited in dangerous conditions for little pay. Further, proceeds from the diamond sales were used to buy arms and war material for rebel groups, some of them conducting extremely violent campaigns against civilians.



People also became more aware of the destruction diamond mines caused to land-

De Beer's World's largest diamond mine



scape by dynamiting large areas. Pollution of water courses also resulted from sifting huge amounts of earth to retrieve the diamonds. One carat of diamonds disturbs about 100 square feet of land and generates nearly 6,000 pounds of mineral waste. A lab-made diamond disturbs 0.07 square feet of land and produces approx. 1 pound of mineral waste. Ethical considerations influence people's buying decisions.

And there is the question of cost. Lab diamonds, as already stated, cost between 30-40% less than natural diamonds, and since they are practically indistinguishable, this fact is a huge disruptive influence on the natural diamond market. Most diamonds in engagement rings bought this year will be man-made diamonds.

Diamonds are big business. De Beers had sales of \$3.63 billion in 2023. However, sales generally are on the slide at present due to the economic downturn [particularly in India which is a huge market], geopolitical tensions and the rise of lab-grown diamonds 'clouding the outlook'. Units have switched from cutting natural stones to polishing lab-grown stones. Manufacturers' stockpiles of polished stones have accumulated, even as prices have declined across most sizes of stone.

And there is the question of the diamond miners. India, a huge market, with over a million miners, and 5 million employed indirectly, has requested a slowing of mining activity. De Beers employs 8,000 miners in Botswana, 6,200 in South Africa and 1,260 in Canada and 4,540 in Namibia. These are relatively well-paid and skillful jobs in areas of the world with high unemployment [50% of people in South Africa are unemployed] and dependent on selling natural stones.



With this potential profit possible, fraudsters have moved in. They buy old diamond rings and substitute man-made diamonds and then resell the rings. There are only 2 machines in this country capable of telling the difference, for a fee, and who is pre-

pared to pay for this? Man-made diamonds can be dyed and there is now a market for artificial emeralds and rubies which are not what they seem.



But is it all bad news? Fashioning diamonds, natural and man-made, must continue to go on. The Indian diamond cutting and polishing industry alone yielded \$18.69 billion in 2021. The Russian firm Alrosa, sells \$4 billion worth of diamonds every year even as the G7 try to cut off their supplies and nullify their revenue. The desire is always there. But will the young learn to ask about the provenance of their stones, as they do their vegetables?

Margaret Vane



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Size ; Height ; 21inches/ 53cms

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Depth ; 9inches/ 22cms

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098 600



The February Church Walk

Extraordinary Bird Sightings on a recent walk along the Tyne - An extract from an unattributed report.

A walk organised by the St George's Parish Walking group recently took place along the right bank of the River Tyne.

The walking group, which included many avid bird watchers, began their walk at the Swing Bridge and followed the bankside to the imposing Dunstan coal staithes. It was a bright and clear sunny day with good opportunities for viewing the bird life along the riverside. The sights and sounds of the river with bird and animal life echoing along the riverside. An active group of waders and sea-birds fed at the river's edge and in the mudflats around the staithes.

In many of the northeast's rivers, natural lakes and ponds, bitterns, or to use their Latin name *Botaurus stellaris*, shyly hide away and boom among the reed beds. There is no such camouflage along this part of the river and bird life was exposed to view. So early in the pre-spring season we were surprised and delighted to view groups of the bittern's nearest, but mute relative, *Botaurus aurantius conis immobilis*, their broad necks reaching towards the sky. Silent in their deep brown winter plumage, quite different from their bright orange body capped by a white throat ring in summer, we were able to observe and capture on film the truly magnificent Cone Bird.

Paul Taylor



a bittern



The Children's Society's Work with Young Refugees

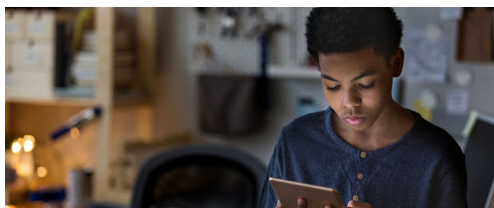


St George's has had a relationship with the Christian charity, the Children's Society, for many years and their representative, Monica Ogden, has held bridge afternoons and other fund-raising events over the years. In February, the Children's Society boxes were collected in at church and their contents passed to the Society.

Monica would like to draw the congregation's attention to one aspect of the Society's work, that with young refugees and migrants, often travelling alone.

The Society first started working with young refugees fleeing persecution in the 1930's. They helped and housed child refugees escaping Nazi threats and in the present day, work with children and young people facing similar danger and trauma.

'As well as facing the hardship of being in a strange new country with no money or support, these young people also often have significant mental health issues related to the terrible events they have witnessed.'



Warsan Shire, born 1988, was one such refugee. Through the Refugee and Migrant Services, refugees like Warsan were given the services of a project manager who could offer legal advice, negotiate the system of shared accom-

modation, often with older people, and find education, training and language skills opportunities. 'When I came to the Children's Society, I made lots of friends and I have now lots of friends' said Warsan.

One problem is that young people often look older than they are, and without documentation, they are placed in adult hostels without supervision. They are vulnerable and need safe places to stay and on-going support. The



Children's Society helps hundreds of young people in these circumstances every year. 92% of refugees and migrants said that their lives got better overall, with the interventions.

'We listen. We support. We act. Because no child should feel alone.'

There will be a Children's Society Bridge Afternoon fund-raiser on Friday April 26th. Please contact Monica Ogden for further information



Diocese of Durham

The Church of England from the Tyne to the Tees and the Dales to the Sea, blessing our communities in Jesus' name for the transformation of us all



Invitation

You are invited to the licensing of
The Reverend Canon Clare MacLaren
as
Provost of Sunderland Minster
by
The Right Reverend Sarah Clark
Bishop of Jarrow
on
Sunday 14th April 2024 at 3:30pm
at
Sunderland Minster
High Street West, Sunderland
Followed by refreshments.

If you would like to attend please RSVP the office:

office@stgeorgesjesmond.org.uk

Church of England Calendar March 2024

1	David, Bishop of Menevia, Patron of Wales, c.601
2	Chad, Bishop of Lichfield, Missionary, 672
7	Perpetua, Felicity and their Companions, Martyrs at Carthage, 203
8	Edward King, Bishop of Lincoln, 1910 <i>Felix, Bishop, Apostle to the East Angles, 647</i> <i>Geoffrey Studdert Kennedy, Priest, Poet, 1929</i>
17	Patrick, Bishop, Missionary, Patron of Ireland, c.460
18	<i>Cyril, Bishop of Jerusalem, Teacher of the Faith, 386</i>
19	Joseph of Nazareth
20	Cuthbert, Bishop of Lindisfarne, Missionary, 687
21	Thomas Cranmer, Archbishop of Canterbury, Reformation Martyr, 1556
24	<i>Walter Hilton of Thurgarton, Augustinian Canon, Mystic, 1396</i> <i>Paul Couturier, Priest, Ecumenist, 1953</i> <i>Oscar Romero, Archbishop of San Salvador, Martyr, 1980</i>
25	The Annunciation of Our Lord to the Blessed Virgin Mary
26	<i>Harriet Monsell, Founder of the Community of St John the Baptist, 1883</i>
31	<i>John Donne, Priest, Poet, 1631</i>

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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.

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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

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publicity@stgeorgesjesmond.org.uk

Community Hub

communityhub@stgeorgesjesmond.org.uk

Parish Secretary

Jonathan Richards 281 1659

office@stgeorgesjesmond.org.uk

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/>

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCCuPrChpepxs6Jo-PfLvwJw/featured>

Music at St George's

Music at St George's has a long and proud tradition, which is about to be recognised in a most special way. St George's Choir have been invited to sing

Choral Eucharist @ Durham Cathedral on Monday 8th April, 17:30.

This is an honour and a privilege.

It is good to be back singing at this level after all the challenges we have faced since Covid changed the world.

Thanks, Drew for driving this renaissance.

Hope to see many of you there.

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](#)



The cast celebrate the end of the thirty-first St George's and St Hilda's pantomime

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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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