

St. George's
Jesmond



A worshipping community: inclusive, nurturing, engaged

THE LANCE

JUNE 2025



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Editorial

It has been an exceptionally sunny and dry spring. And with the good weather has come opportunities for animals, plants and insects which have helped their numbers to increase in size and for their fertility to blossom. Fruit growers are now expecting a bumper crop and baby bird numbers have increased with the proliferation of insect food.

St George's offers opportunity to many clerics who pass through our doors. We have news of Allison Fenton, a former curate who has been licensed to serve in Cumbria.

Leah Vasey-Saunders, who was also a curate at St George's, has been made Bishop of Doncaster. She joins Rev. John Walker Woodhouse, later Bishop of Thetford, Rev. John Ramsbottom, later Bishop of Wakefield and Rev. Dr Nicholas Chamberlain, Bishop of Grantham who all served at St George's, before their selection for the role.

We consider biblical descriptions of Wisdom and celebrate the coming of Peace to Europe, 80 years ago, at the end of the Second World War in Europe. And there are philosophical considerations about achieving a personal goal of net zero, with its complexity and difficulty. The author comes to surprising conclusions.

We are tempted to get on our bikes and explore Northumberland. Opportunity for new beginnings is there. Ad Gefrin, mentioned in the Lance's article, the new Anglo-Saxon distillery and museum near Wooler, has just won the RIBA's North East Building of the Year Award 2025 'offering a model for holistic, sustainable rural economic development'. Would that our HUB development is as successful. An update on HUB proceedings is included.

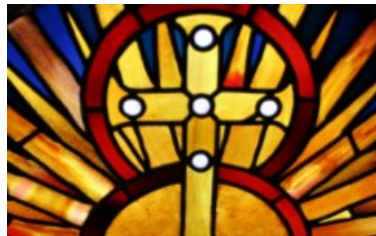
Enjoy both the sunshine and the hope and fortuity which surrounds us.

Margaret Vane

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Letter from the Clergy



The month of June is a moving on month. We leave behind Eastertide and move on to Pentecost and Trinity Sunday, Corpus Christi and then all those Sundays that are 'AFTER.....Trinity'. It a month to start looking forward to holidays, to nice weather (hopefully).

I have long memories of month of June. It was exam month at school and at university. It was testing time. It was time to prove to others that you had learnt something and could produce evidence that you knew what you were being asked and could 'prove' to unknown examiners that your brain did in fact work and that your memory could store enough of the information they needed to know. I was never sure which was worst. Re-vising and sitting the exams or waiting for the results. It may be 60 years ago this June but I still remember trembling as we stood in a queue outside the Grammar School waiting for that envelope with those A level results. So much depended on them. And then the relief that you passed enough to move on, and also to commiserate with those who had not got enough grades. In June I still have great respect for those who now face such exams.

But June moves on – there are saints to enjoy such as John the Baptist and Sts Peter, Barnabas and Boniface, and esp. for us here in the northeast, St Columba on June 9th. I have already received my first Christmas card catalogue – I say no more.....

Enjoy the month of June. I wish you well – especially if you are taking exams!!!!

Christopher Wardale

Spotlight on Scripture: The Book of Proverbs



In lieu of any guidance on where to turn the spotlight this month, I have decided to focus it around one of the readings for Trinity Sunday, especially as it is from a book of the Old Testament which we relatively rarely encounter. The reading, should you wish to review it, is from the eighth chapter of the Book of Proverbs, verses 1-4 and 22-31. It is a beautiful picture of Wisdom.

However, to start with, let's consider the Book of Proverbs itself. It is the earliest written record of Israel's Wisdom movement. Wisdom writings date back to the Egyptian Pyramid age (from about 2600 BC) and the Sumerian era in Mesopotamia (between 4000-2000 BC), but they circulated widely beyond their origins. Israel was located at a cultural and trading crossroads, and thus from early on the wisdom of the East influenced its thought. This book was the first to set it down in writing. The sages reflected on the problems of society as they encountered them – but these were problems found in various ways in all societies – so wisdom was an international movement. Sages were also more interested in individual people and their lives rather than (as the majority of the Old Testament is) being concerned with the sweep of history. Thus in the Wisdom literature as a whole there is little attention to the themes of covenant and law, priesthood and Temple, prophecy or hope for a messiah. Nevertheless, Wisdom is recognised as important within the Hebrew scriptures, alongside the law and the prophets.

King Solomon (970-931 BC) is often claimed as the author of the Book of Proverbs. He was certainly known to be hospitable to the cultural influences of Egypt and Phoenicia. He may also have collected some of the sayings and parables which form the earliest parts of the book. Many of these are essentially common-sense proverbs, for example, 6.9-11:

How long will you lie there O lazybones? When will you rise from your sleep? A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest, and poverty will come upon you like a robber, and want like an armed warrior

or 10.1:

A wise son makes a glad father, but a foolish son is a sorrow to his mother.

However, the book in its final form is thought to date from a later period, 4-500 years later. Overall, reflecting on human behaviour the sages suggest that a good life can be achieved through hard work, sobriety and forethought and that at the heart of everything in creation is a divine order which can be found by human beings through reflection.

This takes us neatly to chapter eight, which pictures Wisdom as the (female) agent of God's creation. She is described in language reminiscent of the prologue in John's Gospel, as a child of God, present with God from the beginning of creation, and rejoicing – having fun and frolicking as one translation suggests – in all that is. And she invites everything that lives to do the same.

Pauline

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VE Day celebrations; BFG; First day of the Jesmond Festival

Saturday May 3rd

After such a prolonged dry spell, the first small clouds for ages appeared in the sky above St George's on Saturday May 3rd. It was our VE Day celebrations, the BFG, and the first event of the Jesmond Festival, and all were kicked off with a raucous and joyous peel of bells from the St George's bellringers in the campanile.

The occasion was officially opened by Deputy Mayor Henry Gallagher, attended by Councillors James Coles and Peter Allen, Chris Clarke representing the Jesmond Festival and our own vicar. Marjorie Dodds, resplendent in red, rang her very appropriate ARP bell to call us to order, as town crier, and declared the event open; and its gracious organizer and proposer, Joan Grenfell, could breathe a sigh of relief. All was well.



The splendid air cadets paraded at the front of church and were inspected and chatted to by the Deputy Mayor while the Royal Airforce March pulsed through the air. What was going through these young people's minds as they remembered the young of 80 years ago who marched off to fight with many not returning?

The Darling Dollies sang songs from the Second World War and were sweet of song and perfect 1940's beauties in their hair rollers and overalls. They come to sing for the Friends of St George's each year and their clever harmonies and pure voices are a delight.

In the Church, two veterans from our congregation, Jack Burn and David Cheeseman were interviewed about their childhood wartime memories while a reel of photos played in the background. Helmets, caps and pretty wartime cupcakes graced a table. There were memories offered of having the school field dug up and planted with vegetables to feed the children, while the hard playground was given over to Anderson shelters to protect them from the bombs. David watched a dog fight between a British and German plane and on one occasion found his garden covered in silver metal fibres which had been fired into the air to disable the enemy's radar. Rationing of food and clothes meant their families made do and mended, bottling fruit and re-using everything. The proceedings were filmed and will be available on YouTube.

Did you want to investigate the seed balls or hover fly hatching nests on the ECO stall? Lots of information was on offer and advice on how to support our wildlife and there were things to do and build.

There was a face painter and a stall with intriguing children's activities run by Maggie P, with unhealthily but attractively multi-coloured items, and the Jesmond Festival team encouraged participation with a jolly and informed display. The Jesmond Ice Cream Company sold ice creams from their cycle, with the freezer powered by a solar panel. Very Jesmond!!



Christian Aid ran a raffle on their stall. You could win a teddy there and then buy it a cream tea in the hall from a very efficient team wielding a huge tea pot and offering cream scones. The constant flow of customers has yet to eat the kitchen dry.



For those requiring stronger refreshment, Linsley and Christine provided their inimitable PIMMS. Linsley, fresh from returning to the UK on a long flight from America, began in a seemly manner but was sold out and discombobulated by the finish!! A very popular stall.



By 5pm, we were ready for our community singing, led by the Darling Dollies and in the afternoon sunshine, there really were blue birds over the green fields of St George's.

Finally, Rev. Debbie concluded the proceedings and reminded us all of the 80 years of peace in this country since VE Day and VJ Day and how lucky and blessed we truly are.

And it never rained!

Margaret Vane



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Memories (in his own words) of St George's from Walter Spraggon, who joined St George's in 1928 and sang in the choir

N.B. Any grammatical errors are those of the author and original to the letter.

The Vicar was Bishop Wood, Mr James Preston, a wonderful man, was organist and choirmaster and the vergers were Mr Pink. The head bellringer was Mr Ferry, who also sang in the choir. Bishop Wood was an aloof and austere person. Tall, spare and habitually dressed in a black suit and gaiters, he appeared like a relic of the last century. His sermons were erudite and dull and his accent was certainly not of the north, guaranteeing forty winks in the choir stalls, if not in the pews.

One of the rented pews in the centre of the church belonged to Lady Noble, the widow of Sir Andrew Noble, who was a friend of Mitchell, the founder of the church. She was very ancient, but Sunday morning service could not start until she was in place, and I think she was the only person who arrived by chauffeur-driven car. Another pew was occupied by the Colonel. He was not a very tall man, but he had the trimmest military figure I have ever seen. His dark suit was of impeccable cut, and he wore a bowler and carried a tightly bound umbrella. On special occasions which warranted a parade of scouts and guides, the Colonel would turn up in full dress uniform of bright red and black, complete with a lacquered, spiked helmet which was held smartly in the crook of his arm. He was a figure of precision and discipline, stamping and turning and clicking his heels in the middle of a throng of more or less relaxed scouts and guides. It was comedy when viewed from the choir stalls. Then there was the Finch family. They occupied a whole pew. His personality was rather reminiscent of G K Chesterton and he cultivated his image and general shape. He affected a pince-nez retained by a black ribbon, often left to dangle and jump about on his ample corporation, and indulged in fatuous quips of sarcasm in his endeavour to emulate that famous man of letters. Commander Garrett was a modest man, and I suspect very devout. He was always alone and always to be found in one of the unrented pews at the side of the church.

There was an aura of tragedy always surrounding Mr Pink, the vergers, or should I say he never seemed to be happy. He lived with his wife and I think one daughter in the tiny cottage adjacent to the church hall. It must have been a big job to keep the church spick and span and I am sure he was not paid very much. He had to act as a

sort of major-domo at morning and evening services, and armed with a special brass emblem, which he carried at his shoulder, he had to escort the Bishop to his seat. I don't think the Bishop or the churchwardens were cheerful charlies to work for. We must have been horrible pests to Mr Pink. The Baileys were another prominent family attending the church and occupying a family pew. Father was a barrister with an exceedingly loud voice. He was a big man of great charm and he must have been awe-inspiring in court. Among his children were two daughters Molly and Honor. Molly was the cub-mistress. She was very pretty indeed and we were all in love with her. She was snapped up by a Commander Norris RN, who served on the cruiser HMS Sussex. After a magnificent wedding with a full choir of boys, and passing through an arch of drawn swords, they departed for Malta. Some couple of years later I did meet Molly pushing a pram along Osborne Road and I was allowed to view the baby. The assistant cub-mistress was Miss Bennett and I think she must have carried on. She was a very nice person and very fond of sealyham terriers. I can't remember much about the scouts but I knew a number of the guides through my sister, Mary.

Now, in my opinion, and I am sure I am not alone, the most professional, most accomplished, and most compassionate man among the leaders at St George's in those days was "Jimmy" Preston. We could never dare to address him as "Jimmy", but he knew that among ourselves he was "Jimmy". One could only join the choir via an audition, and you were chucked out very promptly as soon as Jimmy's acute ear detected that your voice was breaking. He would suggest you return for an audition when your voice had settled down and gained some maturity. There were about two dozen boys in the choir and I suppose about twenty men. We attended choir practice every Monday and Friday evening, but the men only came on Fridays. The practices were held in the church hall and Jimmy provided all the accompaniment on a piano. A huge cupboard held all the music and this was distributed by two senior boys, who were designated librarians. We retained our respective sides at choir practice, Cantoris and Decani, so we used two rows of chairs for the boys and two for the men. Yes, we practised sitting and we would go through the entire morning and evening services. Every evening service included an anthem and we had to practise this to perfection before we were allowed to go home. We also had a long term project like the Passion for Easter and the Messiah to deal with, and this was included in our practices for weeks. Through this process I for one grew to love sacred music of the great composers. I am very grateful to Jimmy for that.

I am very grateful Choirboys were paid! Every quarter there was a pay-day! Probation-

ers received 2/6d, full members 5/- and librarians 7/6d. That was a wild night and Jimmy was never so popular. Every summer there was a choir treat when Jimmy would take all the boys to some interesting place like Durham or Hexham for the day. One of the men would often go along to help him and at least on one occasion he used the assistance of the curate, Mr "Daddy" Harper. Jimmy was a great travelling companion and always had games to play on the train and a special surprise on arrival.

When the Depression started to knock the church finances about, the Bishop, no doubt advised by his churchwardens, decided to stop paying the choirboys and cut out their annual treat. I was a librarian at that time, and unknown to Jimmy and the Vicar, I was sorting out some music in the choir vestry. Thus I overheard a very heated discussion going on in the clergy vestry. Loudly and clearly with some heat, Jimmy was telling the Bishop all about the choir treat and "pay." I made myself scarce as soon as I judged the discussion was coming to an end, but not before I judged that our little privileges were safe. As it transpired they were. Jimmy was a very loyal person.

In the summer we would be playing on the church green as we waited for Jimmy to turn up for choir practice. He would arrive on time and as soon as he reached the door of the hall he would turn and with two fingers in his mouth, issue a very loud whistle. He was expert at this and I don't think any of us could match him. We had to assemble in the choir vestry about fifteen minutes before the service was due to begin, for we had to change into cassock and surplice. Also the organ had to be turned on, which was done by opening a large valve at the compressor. This was a job for one of the librarians. This accomplished, Jimmy would retire to his console and play soft music as the congregation assembled. Meanwhile the choir vestry had come to resemble a locker room full of penguins. This was especially true at Easter and Christmas, for then the surplices had been laundered and stiffly starched. I never heard of the cassocks being cleaned and the one very capacious pocket they included was always rather sticky due to the rubbish we used to secretly consume during the sermon. As a matter of fact a great deal of the hubbub in the vestry was due to the trade being carried out, mainly in very sticky toffee and miniature comics, palliatives against the extra boredom induced by the sermon. More enterprising behaviour developing in the choir stalls during the sermon was checked by a swift thump in the back by one of the men who sat behind us.

At the appointed time, and if Lady Noble was installed, we would assemble in double file at the vestry door leading into the church. Jimmy would have been signalled, and he would be ready to play the music of the first hymn. The double file of choir and clergy

would stretch right back to the clergy vestry. I am not certain of the order, but I am sure that we boys led, followed by the men, then the curates, who were followed by Mr Pink, who wore a special cassock for the occasion, and finally the Bishop. We processed up the side aisle and down the nave to the chancel where we found our stalls. The curates found their own seats and Mr Pink found one for the Bishop, and after bowing he departed, with his brass emblem at the slope over his shoulder. The musical part of the service was always enjoyable, the more so because we had a proprietary interest in it. Very often, after evensong, there would be an organ recital lasting about an hour. Jimmy was an acclaimed master of the console. James Preston fulfilled all the qualifications required of a gentleman and I could never forget him.

I was extremely lucky to find this very interesting view of past worship

at St George's. I think you will enjoy reading it!

Barbara Peacock



A Little Wartime Memory

I was born in 1941 and have only 1 war memory.

On VE day 1945, when I was 4, I was in my pedal car in the garden when my mother, Joan, née Wear, put a Union Jack (in those days) out of the downstairs loo window.



After the war, I can remember watching a celebratory march-past in front of the Royal Station Hotel of naval personnel including my father, David, who had been captain of a MTB, a motor torpedo boat.

C'est tout!

Christopher Souter

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An ANZAC service at St George's

St George's was honoured to host a commemoration of the 110th Australia and New Zealand Army Corps (ANZAC) Day, which remembers all those who gave their lives in the brutal Gallipoli campaign of 1915.

Traditionally marked by a dawn service on 25th April (the time of the first landings), our event was on Sunday 27th April. While it is unusual to single out a specific campaign from one war for remembrance, Gallipoli has come to represent a grim "coming of age" for Australia and New Zealand, and a testament to the strong bonds of the Commonwealth.

ANZAC Day has particular personal connections for key staff in the local RAF Association and RAF Air Cadets who organised and led the service, some wearing rosemary, the traditional herb of remembrance. We were proud to welcome our Lord Mayor and Deputy Lord Lieutenant, as well as representatives from our nearest RAF base, Boulmer in Northumberland. Cadets from all three Services laid crosses as the Roll of Honour was read. The commemoration builds on a moving service held for many years at Chevington cemetery in Northumberland, which contains ANZAC graves from the Second World War for nearby RAF Acklington (now HMP Northumberland).

Malcolm Toft, Reader

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Church Book Group

The next meeting of the Church Book Group is on Wednesday 18 June at 7.30pm in the Winskill room.

The book is Down Cemetery Road by Mick Herron, a local writer.

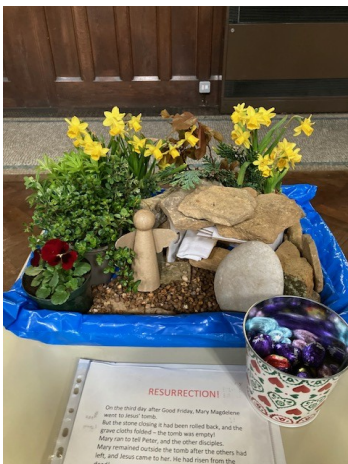
There will be refreshments available.

Anne Clark

A Child's Easter at St George's

[Many apologies for failing to include this in the May edition.]

Easter Friday saw children come to the church to make an Easter Garden and Tomb, led by Alison M and the team. The children created crosses and used these 'making experiences' to bring them closer to the reality of the crucifixion.



The new English Camino

The English Camino is not to be confused with the English route of the Camino de Santiago in Spain, a pilgrim route to the shrine of St James in Santiago de Compostela in north-west Spain. Santiago is the Spanish name for Saint James, and the original pilgrimage was created to honour St James, one of the apostles of Jesus and known as James the Great. It is believed to be his burial place.

The Confraternity of St James has created a new pilgrimage route in honour of St James. It begins amid the majestic ruins of Reading Abbey, the centre of the St James cult in England in the Middle Ages. It runs to Southampton, a port from which pilgrims would have embarked on their outward journey to Santiago. It is a route through rural Hampshire.



The route passes through the heart of the ancient kingdom of Wessex and runs for about 70 miles. It passes canals and rivers and follows the Roman Road from the Roman City of Silchester via the medieval wall paintings at Bramley, and then to Basingstoke. From here, you walk to Winchester Cathedral, an historic place of pilgrimage where it is possible to partake of 'the Wayfarer's Dole' [bread and ale] at the Hospital

of St Cross before the final push for Southampton. Here, pilgrims visit the Southampton Holy Water Conduit and Cenotaph.

Some pilgrims then set off for Spain to continue their pilgrimage. Buen Camino!

Margaret Vane

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A Walk in the Woods Near You

Little known and often driven by Gosforth Nature Reserve is a small relatively untouched jewel on the outskirts of the city. It is a hundred years since the Natural History Society of Northumbria (NHSN) took over the management of the reserve and it was a fitting May Parish Walk to celebrate this occasion. The walk was led by Maggie Wakely, a longtime volunteer and park enthusiast and we were grateful to have her insights on the wildlife as we progressed along the paths which bisect the park.

The NHSN was one of the first natural history societies to become associated with a nature reserve.

Beginning life as a bird sanctuary in 1924 it was designated as a safe place for birds and wildfowl migrating or nesting on the site in early spring through summer, protecting them from shooting.

Originally an area of lowland heath it was cultivated from medieval times using the ridge and furrow method. The land was acquired by the Brandling family in the 16th century and was developed over the next three hundred years using the funds from developing coal mines. It was transformed throughout the 18th and 19th century with the building of a country house, a lake created for fishing and boating and trees

planted across the parkland. But due to poor financial management the Brandling estate was sold in 1862 and resold in 1880 to the High Gosforth Park Company.

Under the new company the land became a Victorian pleasure garden with a racecourse, shooting competitions, boating and fishing on the lake in summer and skating in win-



ter. The land on which the reserve sits was leased from High Gosforth Park in 1924 and has been managed by the NHSN as tenants since 1947.

The NHSN is a membership organisation, and the site is protected by its management and volunteers to maintain its Local Wildlife Site status given due to the presence of the wide range of woodland birds, bats and invertebrates including dragon flies and butterflies which inhabit the site. The southern section around the lake was designated a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) in 1970 but in 1981 the lake was drained to protect the racecourse causing the loss of birds and migrating visitors. The lake area has benefited from extensive work over the past 20 years to reestablish it as a habitat for birds and wildlife and is surrounded by reed beds and strategically located bird hides. The reserve is home today to 1,600 types of wildflowers and animals.

During the walk we had a mystical visit by a single Roe Deer, we looked for otters and were accosted by ducks and geese as they managed their broods across our path to the lakeside but no bitterns among the reed beds. But it is clear, whilst the Park remains a haven for birdlife and wildlife, Maggie explained that the numbers and range of bird visitors are much reduced due the pressure of development and climate change across the city and the UK.

'We broke into little groups, wandering at will by the lake through the woods or park, listening to the call of the cuckoo, the song of the blackbirds or the cry of wildfowl, enjoying the sunshine and when evening came it called us to our various routes back to Newcastle'

Address to the Tyneside Naturalists Field Club by the President about an outing to the Park in 1895.

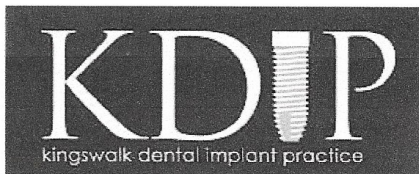
There is a warm welcome for you if you want to visit this magical place.

Paul Taylor



Church Walks Programme

10th May 2025	Lorna and Paul Taylor – Gosforth Park
7th June 2025	Geoff and Mary White – Seahouses to Bamburgh
5th July 2025	Anne and John Clarke - Blanchland
August 2025	NO WALK
6th September 2025	Caroline and Graham Field
4th October 2025	Margaret Baron
8th November 2025	Ian and Jackie Spencer
December 2025	NO WALK
10th January 2026	Alison and Peter Mattinson
7th February 2026	Neville Walker
7th March 2026	Monica Ogden



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There's nothing between Edinburgh and Newcastle - is there?

Well, depends what you mean by nothing. No shopping malls, high streets or department stores, true. Very few towns, villages or even hamlets, true. Even fewer cars, phew. But of grouse, plover, kestrels and curlew, there are plenty and wow, what scenery. Especially when seen from a bicycle, of course...

Setting off from Edinburgh late one Sunday evening, the first twenty three miles took me to Gifford. Planning to get to the Tweeddale Arms well before the restaurant closed, I was only slightly worried by a phone call telling me that the chef was about to go home when I was still twenty miles away. I pleaded for them to keep something back for me, but the young girl at the other end did not have the authority to do so. Eventually she agreed to talk to her boss and phone me back. A pie and chips would be put aside. I didn't ask what sort. No mention was made of starters or puddings, which is just as well, because, when I got there, I was given the tastiest and biggest beef and ale pie I have ever seen, with some really tasty mash and two veg. A pudding I would not have been able to consume. Retiring to the bar, the locals insisted that I join them at the bar rather than snooze in the corner, pretending to read a book. Not that I understood a word they said, but they were extremely friendly, and were wearing Newcastle United shirts, so at least I felt at home.

Setting off the next morning, the heat haze melted away as the sun rose high in the sky, and I discovered the hard way that the Lammermuir hills are steeper when cycled north to south than south to north. Either that, or I was getting older. Never, surely? Wikipedia reliably informed me that "The Lammermuirs are a range of hills in southern Scotland, forming a natural boundary between East Lothian and the Borders. The name *Lammermuir* comes from the Old English *lambra mōr*, meaning 'moorland of the lambs' ". Hah, so lowland Scotland is English after all? Well, it was, back when Northumbria stretched from the Humber to the Forth and its kings were the high kings of England. Before that it was Pictish... oh never mind, it was all a very, very long time ago. But hills with names like Mainslaughter Law and Wrunk Law betray a Saxon heritage, as hlaw is the Olde English name for hill or burial ground, as in Pelaw, Tow Law and many other places nearer to home.

Longformacus (pronounced Long-**forma**cus) came and went (now where did that name come from?) and coffee and a chocolate thing were acquired in Duns, where there is a confusing choice of cafes. Wedderburn Castle (now an elegant wedding venue) and Norham Castle (now an elegant ruin), bore testimony to a disharmonious past. Then the first surprise: Duddo stone circle, known as Duddo Four-stones on the OS map, despite their being five standing stones. They certainly knew how and where to build their monuments 4000 years ago. The panoramic views are just stunning, even in a heat haze.



Skip forward 3,500 years and you get Etal and Ford castles, just to remind you to Keep the Scots Out. Then back a bit to Ad Gefrin, mentioned by Bede in his Ecclesiastical History of the English People of 731 as the summer palace of the kings of Northumbria and therefore high kings of England: Edwin and Oswald. The name originated in the Brittonic words *gevr* 'goats' and *brinn* 'hill'. Thus the name once meant 'hill of the goats'. They live

here wild, and are believed to be amongst the purest remaining descendants of neolithic domestic herds, introduced by early farmers as far back as six thousand years ago. Having never been crossbred with any modern breed of goat, they remain distinctly unique. Local stories suggest the goats could be descendants of those once owned by the monks of Holy Island, before being liberated from their chapel near Memmerkirk to live life out in the wilds. Others believe the goats were owned by the early settlers and farmers in this region but were set loose once more desirable livestock became readily available. Perhaps the Romans left them behind. Who knows? Bede mentions Ad Gefrin as the spot where Bishop Paulinus baptised converts in the River Glen in 627 AD. No one knew its exact location until 1949, when an archaeology professor taking aerial photos spotted crop marks. Nearly destroyed by a quarry, until someone stopped it, excavations in the 1950s and 1960s revealed a huge com-

plex of great timber halls of more than 26 metres in length. There were kitchens, a timber grandstand, a weaving shed and a 'Great Enclosure' to pen in cattle or horses. All that then disappeared without superficial trace, and barely a mention in our history books.



Opposite it was the main reason for the ride: Yeavinger Bell, where I had planned to walk to the summit, provided I got there by three p.m. However, just as Yeavinger Bell started to loom above me, the brushing noise that had been happening with every revolution of my front wheel for several miles, and which I had assumed was something in the mudguard brushing my tyre, or a stone lodged in the tyre tread, became so loud that I had to stop and check. I was rather surprised, to say the least, to find a tyre and inner tube that had been happily in situ for three months and 500 miles that was now free from the wheel rim and bulging out, catching the fork with every revolution. To my

even greater surprise, deflating the inner and ensuring the tyre was properly on the rims solved the problem, so I did not need to stop for a lengthy puncture repair, and I was only two minutes late for my deadline for climbing the hill. Naturally, I rounded the time the way I wanted to (down) and set off. The views made the four mile walk worth it.

"If you are lucky you might see one of the goats" said the guidebook. Might? Here, just 100 yards into the walk, were two wild goats blocking the path, while they happily debated which one of them was king. What if they turned on me? Periodically nonchalantly turning aside to nibble the gorse (is this a macho male goat thing?), they seemed more scared of me than I was of them. Just. After all, if I was wrong and they did turn on me (was I wearing the equivalent colour to a red rag to a bull?), there was no-one anywhere near to save me! Luckily, after escorting me along for half a mile, they disappeared, horns locked, down into the valley beside me. They were replaced by the red heads of grouse popping up amongst the undergrowth. Shouldn't the



plural be grice, I mused, clearly affected by the unusual April heat. Up and up I went, gradually circling the hill before climbing the last section to the summit, glad I had brought my walking poles.

Wow. Yeavingering Bell soars over 300 metres above the valley where I had parked the bike. What a view. Indescribable, the pictures do not do it justice. Maybe I need that posh camera after all. As for the history of the place, well, on the way down, I suddenly realised that the piles of stone were not random from a quarry: they were the ramparts of an Iron Age fort that encircles the hill, a tribal centre of the Votadini, called in Brythonic and Old Welsh Din Gefron, from which the name apparently stems.



The hillfort encloses an area of approximately 12 acres and is enclosed by a stone wall, upwards of 3.0 m thick, having four entrances, one of which is defended by a guard-house. Within this area is an inner fort, excavated out of the rock, measuring 4.0 m across. On the sides of the hill, and in a high valley between the Bell and the next hill, called Whitelaw, there are many remains of stone huts, some in groups with their own ramparts, and others isolated. Barrows are numerous. The buildings of the hillfort would have been bright pink when first constructed, being made from local andesite. This stone is pink when quarried and turns, after a few years' exposure to the elements, to a dull grey.



I returned to the bike and cycled on to Wooler, my mind blown by what I had seen. Here I rested overnight at the Tankerville Arms, the only pub I have ever been in where, after serving me my main course, the only member of staff around announced that she was closing the bar when it was only 9:15. Just as well that I was once again sated and had had enough to eat thanks to a huge starter and main course! Nothing between Edinburgh and Newcastle? You

must be joking! All this, and the huge areas of medieval ridge and furrows and WWII pillboxes were still to come. Like all English dialects, the Geordie dialect traces back to the Old English spoken by Anglo-Saxon settlers, initially employed by the ancient Brythons to fight Pictish invaders after the end of Roman rule in Britain in the 5th century. It also has heavy Norse influences. Like the dialect, the area still contains evidence of them all.

Graham Rutt

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H U B News update



St. George's
Community Hub

We're delighted to share some wonderful news with you about the Community Hub fundraising campaign and the future of the church hall.

Over the years, our church hall has become a central hub for the community - home to Little Saints, Tai Chi, musical groups, Friday Café, Cubs, Beavers, and so many others. Spaces that welcome hundreds of people each week. But as we all know, time has taken its toll, and the hall is in real need of renewal.

That's why we're launching the next phase of the Community Hub fundraising campaign for a full renovation and transformation of the church hall - and it all began at the **Church Summer Fete on May 31st.**

The vision shared by church and community is to create an inclusive, accessible and flexible space designed for the 21st century—somewhere that's as welcoming as it is functional. Planned improvements include:

- Modern, smart interior design

- Improved sound isolation to allow multiple groups to meet in comfort

- Upgraded flooring and lighting

- Increasing the size of the underused upstairs area and installing a straight staircase to access it

- WiFi and modern IT

- Enhanced facilities (kitchen, toilets etc) to support a wider range of activities

This transformation will allow St. George's to continue loving and serving our community not just today, but for generations to come. We want the space to be a resource for everyone, regardless of budget - extending an open hand to groups across the community. We hope you'll drop by the Community Hub stall during the Summer Fete on May 31st to hear more, share ideas, and help us take the first step on this exciting journey.

We are so grateful to The Friends of St. George's, who have recently donated a super-generous £15,000 to the community hub, bringing the total raised so far to over £320,000. Thanks to all the support, we are now approaching the largest trusts and

foundations for match funding for the first phase of the work (meeting room and ancillary rooms to the church). If you would like to get involved, there are so many ways to help. Whether you can give time, talent, prayer, or financial support, every contribution makes a difference.

You might consider signing up to Give as you Live (*using this [link](#)*) or Easyfundraising (*using this [link](#)*) to raise money at no cost to yourself when you shop online. Companies are particularly generous when you use a comparison site to buy major purchases like insurance or a holiday. Please consider making a donation via the St. George's website (*click [here](#)*) or in person at the Community Hub stall at the Summer Fete or at the Parish Office. Come to the next fund raising events and combine your generosity with a fun evening out. The next dates for 2025 are on the website (*click [here](#)*).

We would love help with our fundraising events – do join the Fundraising Team to help with everything from set-up to refreshments and publicity.

All of these will help to shape the future of loving, serving and giving to our community.

With love and blessings,

Community Hub Steering Team

communityhub@stgeorgesjesmond.org.uk

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Off the Grid or Just Less On It?

Living off the grid carries a certain mystique. It suggests resilience, competence, and independence—a deliberate choice to opt out of the systems most people rely on daily. In uncertain times marked by energy crises, climate change, and rising utility costs, the idea of cutting the cord has never sounded more appealing. There's something empowering about the idea of producing your own electricity, collecting your own water, and managing your own waste. It feels like taking back control.

For some, off-grid living is about freedom. It evokes a kind of modern-day pioneer,

where your existence is supported by your skills and your tools, not by contracts with multinational utility companies. Others see it as a way to reduce their environmental impact - to live in closer harmony with nature, use fewer resources, and leave a lighter footprint on the earth.



There's also the idea of anonymity. In popular culture, being "off the grid" is often synonymous with disappearing. Jason Bourne-style figures, burner phones, hidden cabins in the woods—people who cannot be tracked because they don't rely on the systems that track us. That notion holds a certain appeal in today's hyper-connected, data-driven world.

And, of course, for the environmentally conscious, off-grid living is often seen as the ultimate green lifestyle. What better way to reduce your carbon footprint than to stop depending on fossil fuel-driven power plants, treated water piped in from far away, and waste systems that are out of sight and often out of mind?

But romantic notions aside, what does off-grid living really mean? And is it the right choice for most people?

In this article, we'll take "off the grid" to mean not just disconnected from the electrical grid, but also from the wider system of piped utilities: gas, water, sewage. It's a holistic shift in how you live—a move away from the infrastructure that underpins modern life.

In some parts of the world, living off-grid isn't a lifestyle choice—it's just reality. In rural areas of Africa, Asia, or Latin America, many communities lack access to centralized power, clean water, or sewer systems. People cook with charcoal or LPG, gather water from rivers or wells, and use composting or pit toilets. These systems are often more labour-intensive, more expensive per unit of utility, and less convenient—but they're also sometimes more sustainable and, crucially, built around local resources and needs.

Even in wealthier countries, there are niche communities and individuals who've embraced this approach. The Isle of Eigg in Scotland, for example, runs entirely on renewable energy through a community-owned off-grid system combining wind, solar, and hydroelectric power. It's a remarkable feat of local resilience and technical ingenuity.

Other examples include canal boat dwellers in the UK, who use solar panels for electricity, solid fuel for heating, and manage water and waste in creative ways. Tiny home communities, van lifers, and eco-villages also often function with a mix of off-grid and minimal-grid systems.

But these examples, while inspiring, are not easy to replicate at scale. For most people living in urban or suburban areas, going fully off-grid is a major technical and financial challenge. Creating a fully self-sufficient system requires planning, investment, and a high degree of redundancy. After all, what happens during a week of cloud and calm winds? You'll need battery storage, backup generators, or the discipline to drastically reduce consumption during lean periods. That kind of lifestyle may appeal to some, but it's not for everyone.

There's also the matter of cost. Off-grid systems often come with high upfront expenses - solar panels, inverters, water filtration, composting toilets, and battery banks are not cheap. While these investments can pay off over time, they can also take years to break even, especially if you're still connected to the grid for backup purposes and paying fixed charges regardless of your usage.



And ironically, going off-grid doesn't always guarantee a lower environmental impact. Manufacturing, transporting, and eventually disposing of batteries and solar panels has its own carbon footprint. A poorly designed or overbuilt system might end up being more wasteful than simply using less from the grid.

So where does that leave the rest of us?

The smarter approach for most people might not be to live completely off-grid, but to be more mindful of how we interact with the grid. We don't need to sever ties—we just need to be less dependent.

This could mean generating part of your own electricity with rooftop solar. Even if you're still connected to the grid, solar can significantly reduce your reliance on external power and help lower your bills. If your home isn't suitable for panels, consider joining a local energy cooperative or community solar program.



It could also mean reducing your water usage—installing low-flow fixtures, fixing leaks, and using greywater systems for irrigation. Collecting rainwater for gardening is simple and legal in many places. Composting toilets or water-efficient appliances can also make a big difference, especially in areas prone to drought.

Heating and cooling are major energy users in most homes, but good insulation, better windows, and passive solar design can dramatically reduce the need for external energy. In many cases, small changes - like setting the thermostat a few degrees lower or using heavy curtains—can lead to substantial savings.

More broadly, we can think of resilience in two key ways:

Cost resilience - protecting ourselves from price shocks by reducing how much we use in the first place.

Supply resilience - being able to weather interruptions by having some independent capacity (like solar panels or rainwater storage) and habits that reduce waste.

Ultimately, the greenest, most resilient thing most of us can do is simply use less. Less electricity, less water, less heating and cooling, less waste. That doesn't mean living uncomfortably or giving things up entirely - it means being thoughtful about what we consume and how.

You don't have to disappear into the woods to make a difference. You can stay in

your home, stay connected, and still live with a lighter footprint. Because being “off the grid” doesn’t have to mean cutting the cord - it can simply mean not leaning on it so heavily.

In the end, we may not all be able - or willing - to go fully off-grid. But we can all be *less on it*. And that’s a goal worth aiming for.

Dr Daniel Davies

Cilrheol Farm, Bannau Brycheiniog, Wales

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All at Sea?

Mary and I were lucky enough to enjoy an 8 night cruise which bridged Easter. The cruise operator, Fred Olsen, presented a programme including having (retired) Bishop John Hayden on board to conduct, amongst other duties, non- denominational, Easter services.



On Good Friday, the Bishop led a thoughtful gathering under the heading of ‘Addressing The Cross’ and I considered a turnout of around 75 people to be encouraging, given that the passenger list was just over 1,000.

However, that was well beaten when the communion service on Easter Sunday was attended by very nearly 300 and was held in the ship’s theatre without any prayer or hymn books, the words for both being projected onto a large screen. There was no O.T. or Epistle readings, only readings from the Gospel, and the Bishop’s excellent sermon, based on the road to Emmaus, was short, being akin to pieces on the BBC’s ‘Thought For The Day’. However, there were 3 well known hymns which were sung enthusiastically. The wafers were pre dunked which I have not come across before!

Despite being a full communion, would you believe that this joyous service was over after only 40 minutes? It can be done.

Geoff White



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Why a Mobile Library in Tynemouth?

It has been a rocky road for the library in Tynemouth. Five years ago the library on Front Street closed, just before the pandemic. There were plans to demolish it and create a HUB with the Newcastle Building Society, but no sooner had the library closed when Covid struck.

Not to be defeated, the librarians started an 'at home' service. People would order a book by telephone. It was delivered by volunteers who often carted bags of books all round Tynemouth. By this method most customers eventually were accommodated and the service survived through the whole pandemic period, supported by the stalwart volunteers.



After Covid, another service swung into operation. The Mobile Library bus began parking at the top of Front Street, by the Priory, and delivering books on a Monday and Friday, on a fortnightly circuit. It does so still until the new building works are complete.



What are the most popular books taken out? Well, it depends how old you are! Older folks prefer large print and crime, particularly the ladies. Middle aged folk enjoy a mixture but particularly focus on fiction. The young like picture books.

The library bus also calls at care homes, sheltered accommodation and at children's nurseries serving a section of the population who have more difficulty getting to the actual building. The librarian said 'Many people think there is no need in a town but there really is a need even in urban settings. There are lonely people in care homes and elsewhere and many others who enjoy this service.' Another example of British pluck and kindness.

Walking Through Time: A Glimpse of Jesmond's Rich Heritage

On a fresh spring day, a group of curious walkers, a baby, a friendly Labrador, and Jesmond United Reformed Church's Minister, Rev. Ryan Sirmons (on his bike), gathered at the towering campanile of St George's Church. We were about to embark on a journey - not just across Jesmond, but through layers of its architectural, industrial, musical, and literary past.

This walk was a preview of something exciting coming to Jesmond in 2026: a new self-guided heritage trail between St George's and Jesmond URC, developed by 'Discover Jesmond 1888', a volunteer-run initiative dedicated to restoring our churches' historic T. C. Lewis pipe organs and celebrating the area's cultural legacy. Supported by the National Lottery Heritage Fund, the project will feature QR codes, online content, and visual markers to bring local history to life.



With only 90 minutes, we could only scratch the surface. But what a surface it was!

St George's Church: Grandeur and Generosity

Our walk began at St George's, a monument to late-Victorian ambition. Designed by Thomas Spence and bankrolled by the Scottish shipbuilder Charles Mitchell, the church boasts an opulent Arts & Crafts interior, including carvings by Ralph Hedley and one of the finest pipe organs in the country.

We shared stories of two organists who once brought this instrument to life: James Moody Preston, a friend to Holst and Ravel, and Frederick Peacock, who served faithfully for 58 years and became beloved by the congregation.

Sanderson Road: Suburban Dystopia

On a quiet Jesmond street in 1916, Russian writer Yevgeny Zamyatin (naval engineer and literary rebel) began his vision of the dystopian novel 'We', a precursor to Orwell's '1984'. In his novella 'The Islanders', Zamyatin gently poked fun at top-hatted church-

goers and the prim facades of Jesmond's homes.

St Hilda's Church: Faith and Sacrifice in Paint

Inside St Hilda's Church hangs a powerful war memorial in the form of a triptych by Francis Henry Newbery, director of the Glasgow School of Art and a close associate of the Glasgow Boys. At its heart stands the Virgin and Child, surrounded by saints, workers, and soldiers - a miner, an engineer, a sailor, a fishwife - connecting global sacrifice with local life.



St Andrew's Cemetery: Resting Places of Cultural Giants

Among the trees and headstones of St Andrew's Cemetery lie three notable figures:

- W. L. Newcombe, architect of Jesmond URC and the famous Crown Posada pub.
- James Horsley, a local poet whose songs, written in the Geordie dialect, captured the heart of working-class Newcastle.
- Ralph Hedley, painter, wood-carver, and chronicler of Tyneside life, whose detailed depictions offer a window into the region's transformation during industrialisation.



Haldane & Eslington Terrace: Literary Footsteps

Instead of heading straight to our destination, we diverted past the former homes of two 20th-century literary figures:

- Catherine Cookson, born into poverty in South Shields, who became one of Britain's best-loved novelists - and a generous local philanthropist.
- Winifred Watson, author of *Miss Pettigrew Lives for a Day*, who brought pre-war Jesmond's gentility to life in fiction.



Eslington Terrace & the Arts and Crafts Legacy

This elegant row, along with neighbouring terraces, is a showcase of the Arts & Crafts movement. It once housed Newcastle's professional class, including John Meade Falkner, author of the classic novel 'Moonfleet'.

Brandling Village: From Coal to Class

Originally laid out in the 1820s for mine workers, Brandling Village evolved into a middle-class enclave by the late 19th century. Landowner Charles John Brandling played a key role in its early development and in backing innovations in rail and mining.

Lambton Road: Music and Memory

This quiet street was once home to Charles Sanford Terry, noted historian and Bach scholar, and friend of Elgar. Nearby lived Edgar Bainton, composer and former principal of the Newcastle Conservatory of Music, best known today for his anthem 'And I saw a new heaven'.

Royal Grammar School: Minds That Changed the World

The RGS, now a landmark in Jesmond, has produced giants like Lord Armstrong, industrialist and inventor, and Dr Thomas Addison, pioneering physician.

Jesmond Synagogue: A House of Faith and Art

Built in 1914-15 by Jewish architect Marcus Kenneth Glass, the now-converted Jesmond Synagogue on Eskdale Terrace is a gem of early 20th-century design, blending

Byzantine and Art Deco influences.

Jesmond United Reformed Church: Reflection and Remembrance

Our final stop was Jesmond URC, where Dr Robert Shiel welcomed us with stories of the church's war memorial and the families it commemorates. Inside stands another magnificent T. C. Lewis organ and a collection of stained glass windows by leading artists, including Morris & Co.

Looking Ahead

Our walk was just a taste of Jesmond's extraordinary past. When the 'Discover Jesmond 1888' heritage trail launches in 2026, residents and visitors alike will be able to explore these stories for themselves.

In the meantime, you can relive the journey with our Spotify playlist, curated by Drew to match each stop with music inspired by the places and people we encountered:

<https://open.spotify.com/playlist/0WmSUwFl4aMGtPJifNKYgT?si=69b44a80e4024bcf>

Thank you to everyone who joined us. We look forward to walking these paths together again - this time with history in your pocket and music in your ears.

DC-F, HC

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News of Rev. Allison Fenton

On May 14th, Allison Fenton was licensed as Priest in Charge of the Inglewood benefice in Carlisle Diocese.

She has been working in theological education for most of her ministry but is excited to be returning to parish ministry. This is her on the day of her licensing with Acting Bishop (and Bishop-elect) of Carlisle, Rob Saner-Haigh, and Bishop Anne Hollinghurst, principal of The Queen's Foundation in Birmingham.



Church of England Calendar June 2025

1	Justin, Martyr at Rome, c.165
3	<i>The Martyrs of Uganda, 1885-7 and 1977</i>
4	<i>Petroc, Abbot of Padstow, 6th century</i>
5	Boniface (Wynfrith) of Crediton, Bishop, Apostle of Germany, Martyr, 754
6	<i>Ini Kopuria, Founder of the Melanesian Brotherhood, 1945</i>
8	Thomas Ken, Bishop of Bath and Wells, Nonjuror, Hymn Writer, 1711
9	Columba, Abbot of Iona, Missionary, 597 <i>Ephrem of Syria, Deacon, Hymn Writer, Teacher of the Faith, 373</i>
11	Barnabas the Apostle
14	<i>Richard Baxter, Puritan Divine, 1691</i>
15	<i>Evelyn Underhill, Spiritual Writer, 1941</i>
16	Richard, Bishop of Chichester, 1253 <i>Joseph Butler, Bishop of Durham, Philosopher, 1752</i>
17	<i>Samuel and Henrietta Barnett, Social Reformers, 1913 and 1936</i>
18	<i>Bernard Mizeki, Apostle of the MaShona, Martyr, 1896</i>
19	<i>Sundar Singh of India, Sadhu (holy man), Evangelist, Teacher of the Faith, 1929</i>
22	Alban, first Martyr of Britain, c.250
23	Etheldreda, Abbess of Ely, c.678
24	The Birth of John the Baptist
27	<i>Cyril, Bishop of Alexandria, Teacher of the Faith, 444</i>
28	Irenæus, Bishop of Lyons, Teacher of the Faith, c.200
29	Peter and Paul, Apostles

Understanding the Calendar:

Principal Feasts and other Principal Holy Days.

Other Sundays & Lesser Festivals.

Festivals.

Commemorations



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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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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 vicar, Rev. Debbie Loughran, 07776 922580
email: Rev_debbie@hotmail.com

FIND OUT MORE ABOUT ST GEORGE'S CHURCH

Website: www.stgeorgesjesmond.org.uk

Facebook: St-Georges-Church-Jesmond

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>

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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

Instagram stgeorgesjesmond **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

18.00 Taize (2nd Sunday of month)

18.00 Choral Evensong (3rd Sunday)

WEEKDAY SERVICES

08.45 Thursday: 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](#)

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