

St. George's
Jesmond



A worshipping community: inclusive, nurturing, engaged

THE LANCE

SEPTEMBER 2025



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Editorial

Change is always with us. As the season turns towards Autumn and the skies darken after a record-breaking summer, we begin to be mindful of how things have continued to evolve.

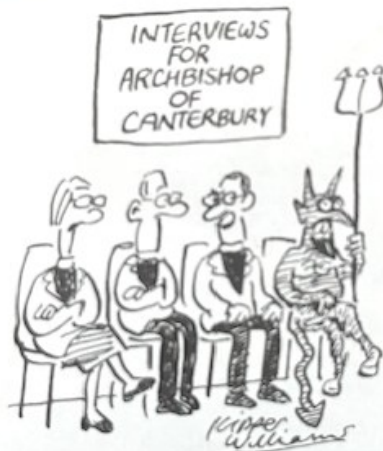
One change is that there has been a huge increase in adult baptisms in France and Italy. At the same time, infant baptisms have shrunk to tiny figures. Adults report that they are seeking the love of God, and the support and beauty of their local churches through services and community. The encouragement to pray is also seen as helpful. For some in France, the fact that they are surrounded by Muslims who practice their faith openly and without apology, has given people the example and confidence to openly embrace and practice their own Christian faith.

On a lighter note, there are now over one thousand vineyards in England and the most northerly is the Ryedale Vineyard located in Westow, North Yorkshire. Fields of sheep and cattle alongside barley and wheat have been replaced with vines, changing the landscape and requiring different skills unimaginable 50 years ago.

We will soon have a new Archbishop of Canterbury who will take our church in new directions. We include a recollection of a meeting with one candidate here. There are reviews, invitations and celebrations. With a sunny summer behind us, I am sure that we are ready for the fray.

Margaret Vane

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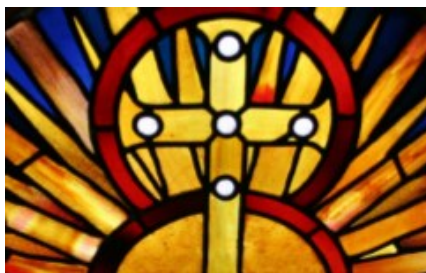


'It's diversity gone mad.'

Cartoon Printed with thanks to
The Spectator

Clergy Letter

"We believe"



Do you remember your own Baptism? Apparently, I screamed the place down. More of us remember our Confirmations – many of us can probably recall a variety of distinguished Bishops now long gone. I am reassured that, whenever people prepare to renew Baptism and Confirmation commitments, we each seem to have had unrecognisably different preparation from each other – and not always very memorable: and yet, here we are!

Some can find parts of different Creeds* challenging, and there is a fashion to move from the individual confession "I believe" to the corporate "we believe", which may "cover a multitude of sins"! The Council of Nicaea's 1700th anniversary falls this year – would they be surprised to find their recommendations used between sermon and intercessions, most weeks?

General Synod has been likened to "a body with the talents of a PCC attempting to transact the business of the Council of Nicaea" – perhaps unkind to both Synod and PCC, but a useful reminder of how important, and how difficult, it can be to hold belief together in a single text. It's been said that "a camel is a horse designed by committee", and many features of the Nicæan Creed seem to stem from translating fruitful Hebrew/Greek religious/philosophical misunderstandings into Latin.

There is a fashion now to move from longer and more complex/controversial creeds to shorter, simpler Trinitarian formulations; but we may lose something of beauty in the poetic expressions of our faith: the Gloria or Te Deum perhaps cover similar ground in more beautiful language. Are most composers' Credo's the best parts of their Mass settings? "Discuss"... I still find lines from the Creed of St Athanasius (Alexandria, 296/298-373AD), long faded from its historic relegation to Trinity Sunday, useful in Confirmation for their memorable summaries on Christ's nature:

"Perfect God and perfect Man: of a reasonable soul and human flesh subsisting... Who, although he be God and Man : yet he is not two, but one Christ; One, not by conversion of the Godhead into flesh: but by taking of the Manhood into God".

Even the beginning of the Prayer Book Catechism “What is your name? N or M” can be a fruitful jumping-off point for reflection and discussion, and charged with significance for those of us who have changed name.

I find the Revised Catechism useful in discussion because so many disagree with its final focus on “pie in the sky”, and prefer the Christian Aid motto “we believe in life before death”.

It is, of course, perfectly alright in the Church of England for many of us to be quietly unorthodox, and be not much worse for it - but the Church has been compared to a pool where “all the noise is coming from the shallow end”, and the call to go deeper into God sounds in every time and generation, however busy or bereft our lives, or however loud the outward trumpets blare.

The United Society for the Propagation of the Gospel has produced a “we believe” series for the 200th anniversary of Nicaea (on Lake Iznik, south of Istanbul), which we will use in some scheduled sessions shortly. Please hold all those preparing for Christening or Confirmation in your prayers. If you are one of them, bless you!

Dr M Toft FIMechE

Reader and Air Cadet Chaplain

There isn't a single, finite number of Christian creeds, but rather a small number of widely used 'ecumenical creeds' such as the Apostles' Creed, the Nicene Creed and the Althanasian Creed, alongside hundreds of other denominational or personal creeds or statements of foundational Christian beliefs [Ed]

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Spotlight on Scripture:

Ruth, A Summary of the Story



A woman of Israel, Naomi, married a foreigner, and at a time of famine went to live in his country.

There they had sons who grew up, but the husband died.

The sons married but did not have children of their own.

Suddenly, they too died and the women were left.

In her grief and loneliness, Naomi decided to return home, alone; and one daughter-in-law agreed to return likewise to her home.

But the other daughter-in-law, Ruth, would not leave Naomi, and in love and loyalty chose to go with her. As two of the women went home, one back to her family, and Naomi back to her land, the third woman, Ruth, went into exile with the mother-in-law who was going home.

The two women alone in Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, were without security and income.

So, the story of one woman, Naomi, turns into the story of another, as Ruth went out to earn a living for the two of them.

She gleaned – the job of poverty – made easier by the kindness of a relative by marriage, who accepted the foreigner. But for security after the harvest more initiative was needed.

She went to meet Naomi's kinsman, Boaz, at night, in danger, to ask for more.

He went to the men's gathering by the city gate, to bargain by the men's laws and customs, for land and for Ruth. He bargained well and became the redeemer, marrying Ruth, the foreign woman.

Their marriage was blessed with a son. "And the women of the neighbourhood gave him a name, saying, 'A son has been born to Ruth.'" Ruth was the great-grandmother of David.

Thoughts

If you have read the book of Judges, you will know that it is made up of harsh stories of harsh times. After Judges comes another story – a book on its own – headed with a woman's name. It starts 'in the time of the Judges', but it is a somewhat more pleasant story than many in that book, albeit not without some darker undertones as

I will explore later.

Ruth's story is a love story which can be looked at in a sentimental fashion (and has been!), but I think it's too tough to be read sentimentally.

Probably the most famous words in the story are words of love:

'Where you go, I will go;
where you lodge, I will lodge;
your people shall be my people,
and your God my God.
Where you die, I will die –
there I will be buried.'



Here is the origin of 'till death us do part'.....

This is a story of great love, friendship and loyalty expressed through Ruth's willingness to stay with Naomi; holding on to a woman who's not such good company; often bitter, sad and grieving; which we know can be hard for carers and friends.

We can celebrate in Ruth's story the generosity that goes beyond duty; the love that is warmer than obligation.

Our reflection on the story of Ruth is meant to help us look at our own lives, so I wonder:

who are those who strive to stay in touch with us when we are not as concerned about being in touch?

in a world where much changes, who are those who stay with us?

In the busyness of our daily lives, do we recognise this?

When we feel that everything in our world is divided and going wrong, can we look for love, loyalty and friendship to celebrate, particularly among people who are differ-

ent from one another?

However, not everything in the story of Ruth is light and gladness.....

So, what else is going on in this story not far below the surface?

There is insecurity underlying this story - poverty - the inability to earn one's food - where should the women turn?

For Ruth, though she is staying with a friend and relative, there is surely, too, the pain of exile. There is the insecurity of being 'foreign'; the pain of being a stranger.

There is also the threat to Ruth as a woman:

She needs protection from the young men harvesting – the threat is obvious;

She needs protection for the risk she took in going to Boaz – it must not be known that she's been at the threshing floor. What might have been the outcome of that encounter?

All of this is in the patriarchal context of the time. So, the first question Boaz asks is not 'Who is that woman?' but 'Whose is that woman'? 'Who does that young woman belong to?' (NRSV). And that means 'What man does she belong to?'

The darker tones to this story are also recognisable in our world...

The experience of exile, becoming a refugee because of famine, bereavement and the resultant poverty and insecurity in society that results.

The insecurity of having no place, for some of having no land....

The hatred of the foreigner, the stranger – both explicit and more subtle.

The risk of torture and sexual violence in conflict situations, where war is the present or recent past reality.

The fears / threats / risks for those living in poverty, and for many women, including and maybe especially at this time, trans-women.

The story of Ruth leads us to look at the joys of life but also at the pains; it calls us to hear the pain of exile / insecurity / threat.

The story calls us to recognise, repent, pray and act for change.

In the story of God's people, here is the stranger, the one who has lived on the edge, the poor, the woman, one who is different – and she is explicitly brought in to the people where she shows love and loyalty, tenderness and courage.

And that thread is echoed in the Gospels, in the ministry of Jesus. The Gospel message is that those who were once outside can and should be brought in, to share the feast of God's grace and goodness; and to share what they have with others.

Ruth's story shows what the Gospel is about, I encourage you to go and read it.

Rev Debbie Loughran

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The Nicene Creed Re-Examined

1700 years ago, the Council of Nicaea, now in present-day Türkiye, agreed the wording of what we now refer to as the Nicene Creed. It was the first attempt to reach consensus in the Church through an assembly representing all of Christendom, and to affirm the Christian faith in the triune God.

Used in the majority of our Eucharistic services, the Nicene Creed serves as a unifying symbol for Christians, providing a common understanding of core beliefs and helping to distinguish Christian faith from other belief systems.

So, what is it all about? What is it we are saying when we say it? What do we believe?

If you want to explore the answer to these questions, join us at St Hilda's Church on 24th September and every Wednesday following, from 7.30pm, for an hour of wondering, chatting and drinking tea/coffee.

If you are wanting to be confirmed this year this is the course for you also - so please do come along.....

Rev Debbie Loughran



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Liz and I, Walking for Maggie's

A few years ago, Liz 'took me under her wing' and encouraged me to join in various activities at St George's. Having discovered that we had both trained at St Hild's College in Durham, she reckoned that I was safe to be let loose and I will be forever grateful that she encouraged me to get involved with the children of St George's.

Although ten years ahead of me at college we both remembered members of staff and being a staid C Of E. institution 'manned' by some fearsome spinsters, not much had changed. The awesome Principal, Miss Joachim, clad in bulletproof tweed, Vice Principal Miss Diggle and her golden labrador, reminiscent of Queen Elizabeth and her corgis, fearsome Miss Smailes, who maintained: "I might be old, girls, but I've had my moments!" and, after Liz's time, the chain-smoking Matron, Mrs Pritchard, who, in sick bay, kept a gas ring lit all night to light her fag, and who assumed that if you were unwell, you must be pregnant!



In the summer of 2024, on a nostalgic visit to Durham, Liz and I visited Durham Cathedral to see the Peace Doves. By chance, we bumped into a former college lecturer, Lilian Groves. In her nineties, she was still working as a Cathedral guide with an unsurpassed wealth of knowledge. These Hild's women were certainly made of stern stuff, as Liz has demonstrated throughout her battle with cancer.

Liz was born with an enviable positivity which was a great blessing, and she saw all good things as coming from God. On Midsummer's Day, I sent to my friends a breathtaking photo of the 4.30 am sunrise at Cullercoats Bay. Lots of wows and then true to form, came Liz's reply from her hospital bed: "The heavens are telling the Glory of God. The wonders of his works display the firmament...." And a Wow!

A couple of days earlier, a young member of staff had taken Liz in her wheelchair out into the sunshine and then across to the Maggie's Centre. She was thrilled to bump into the elusively busy Head of Centre, Karen, who has supported her throughout. Another happy coincidence?

And so, to supporting Maggie's.... I had already signed up for the Coastal Crawl Fundraiser and wishing to fundraise for her 88th birthday and Liz jumped at the idea of making it a joint venture. Division of labour. Liz's charismatic oomph and my legs. Perfect!

Having done the walk the year before, I was looking forward to the event and the sea is my happy place in all weathers. It was a beautiful evening, and as we gathered at the Spanish City in Whitley Bay, there was a real buzz. Nothing like a steel band to get you going and though on my own, I felt part of the crowd. An avid people watcher, it was a feast for the eyes. All ages, shapes and sizes united by that great leveller, cancer, and all wearing the Maggie's vividly orange T Shirt which, though eye catching, doesn't exactly flatter! However, it was carried off with aplomb by a group of glamorous girls weighed down by eyelashes like brushes, who hydrated with regular swigs of lager. Bless them, they were remembering a young friend in their own special way. Everyone had their own reason for being there, but all wanted to contribute so that others could benefit from the support from Maggie's as we had.

As we set off, looking out over the sea, Liz was constantly on my mind, and I'm sure she would have had some relevant biblical quotes. As I passed the lifeboat station at Cullercoats Bay, my swimming place, all I could come up with was "For those in peril on the sea" which, after attending church regularly for seven decades, was rather pathetic!

A "reflective moment" was planned at St George's and a very welcome break. Most folk went into this beautiful church to light candles. There's nothing like a brush with mortality to make you aware of your vulnerability and the need for help from above. A group of singers added to the atmosphere of calm and tranquillity. After lighting a candle for Liz, I went and sat outside eagerly accepting a free tub of ice cream. It seemed suddenly a bit surreal, to be on my own, scoffing ice cream, at such a poignant time. What followed was a Liz-"Power-from-on-High" moment. A chirpy little chap called Bobby, aged 10, bounded across the churchyard and joined me. We compared ice creams, I



had salted caramel, he had chocolate mint. Seeing Liz's photo on my backpack he asked if I was walking for "that lady!" and what was her name. I told him it was "Elizabeth", a lovely lady who was a great friend to me and to lots of people. Bobby told me he was with his uncle, walking for his aunty, who had died of cancer. He'd come up on the train, that there was no sea where he lived, and wasn't it great up here? and he'd be back again next year, and he had lots of friends too! End of a joyous encounter that could have been lifted from an episode of Vera.

We set off towards Tynemouth and I chatted to various groups as I passed by. Notably, no one talked about what they'd gone through: they were just so grateful to have had such excellent treatment and care and recalled acts of kindness that went way beyond duty which is what Liz and I both experienced.

As we drew level with the newly revamped Tynemouth Castle Hotel, a posse of youngsters broke away and flashed across the road heading for a sneaky drink. Alas, the bright orange Tee shirts were hardly designed for covert activities.

It being a Friday night, Tynemouth High Street was revving up nicely, a coastal version of Osborne Road. We passed the Priory, then a welcome slope down and hilly climb up to enjoy the spectacular view between the piers which we tend to take for granted. On the last lap to North Shields as we approached the Fish Quay we were accompanied by seagulls. Now I must admit to finding their cry haunting, rather than screeching, maybe to do with The Scarlet Pimpernel's evocative call-sign "the cry of the seamew thrice repeated"



Liz loved watching birds, and we spent happy times looking out over our garden where we have a variety of species, a few mice and a persistent squirrel whose circus antics to get food are worthy of an Olympic medal. Our favourite, what else, the good old English robin, bringer of comfort and cheer. As we passed by the pubs on the Fish Quay, Friday night revellers were beginning to spill out on to the pavement which enhanced our fund by £1.45 thrust into my hand. "Here pet. Yer doing a grand job!" What a friendly lot we are up here!

The finishing line was at the Salt Market Social where we received our medals. Free pizzas were on offer but to be honest, I was ready for home and a glass of wine to toast Liz and me. As I walked back to the car, I bumped into Bobby. "We did it!" He said and grinning from ear to ear.

The next morning, I popped up to Liz's ward at the Freeman and dropped off the Maggie's medal and a finish line photo. Coming out, I fortuitously bumped into Liz's daughter Kate, bearing coffees, so we were able to have a quick chat. I just know that Liz would have said that that was meant to be!

We will all miss Liz so much at St George's. Her faith, generosity and kindness touched the lives of many. It is fitting that in the last days of her life, she raised £1,256.55 for a favourite place, Maggie's Centre. I will be forever grateful for her positivity and friendship.

A favourite quote that Liz used with collections for Working with Children North East.
"What you do for the least of my brothers and sisters....."

Maggie Paczek



More Jokes From Bristol...

Robin: "Why are pharmacists the most trusted members of the community?"

Grace: "I don't know, Robin, do tell me!"

Robin: "Because they are pillars of the community!"

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Denewell Avenue Celebrates

Whilst Denewell Avenue (High Heaton) does not come within St George's Boundary, it is merely a 15-minute walk as the crow flies, with the church tower and campanile rising up over the Dene to the west of the street.

And, as with many members on the electoral roll who reside outside the Parish boundary, whilst living there for 25 plus years, St George's has been part of the life and upbringing of one particular family.



On a relatively warm and dry late June Saturday morning the residents busily started setting up for a street party in order to celebrate 100 years of the street coming into existence.

Following formal road closure, and bins and tape shutting off the street to vehicles (it didn't stop an Amazon driver!), at 1.00pm people gathered with their tables and chairs, and food was taken to a gazebo for all to share. The Met Office app had

advised of white cloud and sunny spells all day, the apple app of the occasional light shower. At 1.10pm the clouds had darkened and the heavens opened.....

We weren't going to let the weather dampen our resolve or our spirits, and whilst cover was taken for a while (by some), umbrellas were plentiful. This set the pattern for the afternoon but the street showed its resolve and festivities and camaraderie ensued, with new friendships made as residents that weren't immediate neighbours introduced themselves.



Of course, by early evening the weather improved and the next day was naturally, glorious!

The Avenue's Background

The original land went from moorland pasture to enclosed farm land and three generations of the Freeman family worked the land from their farmhouse called High Heaton.

The land was sold to Lord Armstrong in 1868. In 1919 with a chronic need of housing (sounds familiar) following the Great War the City Council negotiated with the Armstrong estate to purchase 127 acres for municipal housing. With no agreement over fees, the land was compulsory purchased for an amount ruled by the District Valuer.

However, due to an economic downturn, government subsidies upon which the authority had based its business plan were shelved and the plans put on hold.

Criticism was raised at the council for delays as the housing shortage became ever greater. The council could not afford to build the proposed houses so in order to achieve some progress 25 acres to the North West of the whole site were recommended for private enterprise development. So, in 1924 the High Heaton Housing Estate came into being and the public were invited to apply to purchase sites.

Ultimately the street and estate came into being because the City Council could not afford to immediately build the 1500 council houses planned. If they had found the funds just a year or two earlier, it is unlikely that a crucial council meeting would have been held in September 1923 which voted to allow a private estate to be built.



1927 aerial view showing the completed High Heaton Estate and part of the Council-built estate.

The street is blessed with a line of trees (hence Avenue). They originate from a boundary demarcation between two of the original large farm fields. Whilst they were supposed to be preserved, they were felled before building work began, with new replacements planted. Originals were retained on the South of the school site (now Heaton Academy) and formed the boundary between the girls' and boys' playing fields, likely removed when the school was rebuilt in 2004.

We are blessed to have found Denewell Avenue and been able to afford to get a mortgage (unlike so many youngsters now). Little did we know at the time we would go on to build an extension to the property, raise our family there, see them spread their wings and fly, and now find ourselves enjoying a quieter space with the garden especially having adapted from family life!

The great sense of friendship and community in the street is so valuable to so many residents. In many ways it is akin to that of St George's, and in a time of such social media, intensity of screens, and the business of life, this was a special moment (despite the weather!) for so many residents of Denewell to come together and celebrate past, present and future – a century of neighbourhood.



As many residents have commented, there are few people that leave once they have arrived! Whilst never knowing what might be around the corner, we may well find ourselves part of that collective.

Derek Nicholson

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Gulnar Eleanor Francis-Dehqani: the first Bishop of Loughborough

Travel does indeed broaden the mind. In a nod to the story of Jon Davies's meeting with Bob Dylan in the USA, many years ago, I want to share my experience of meeting an Iranian Christian who lives, as he refers to it, as an asylum seeker in Staffordshire. He had an awesome story to tell of his own life in Iran and of an event that he will be preaching at that will be of such poignancy, to him and the person at the heart of it.



On the 30th November 2017, Gulnar Eleanor Francis-Dehqani, known as Guli, will be consecrated as the first Bishop of Loughborough. The service will be held at Canterbury Cathedral, and the Archbishop of Canterbury will preside. The preacher will be Iraj Mottahedeh, the retired President Bishop of the Episcopal Church in Jerusalem and the Middle East (2000–2002).

A mutual friend took me to meet Bishop Iraj and his wife, Minoo, at their home in Staffordshire. Bishop Iraj was an engaging storyteller. On learning that I was a medical doctor, he told me of his Jewish grandfather who was a herbalist, “a doctor in his own way,” and was much loved and respected by his Muslim neighbours. Bishop Iraj was born in Isfahan, Iran, and converted to Christianity as a young man and trained in India for the priesthood. He rose to become Assistant Bishop and later succeeded Bishop Hassan Dehqani-Tafti, Guli's father, as Anglican Bishop in Iran in 1986.

There was an attempt on Bishop Hassan's life by the Iranian Revolutionary Guards in 1979, while he was in bed. His wife, Margaret, who was lying beside him, instinctively put her hand out to protect her husband and was shot in the hand. The family believes it was this that saved her husband's life. In another twist to the story, Margaret's father, Guli's maternal grandfather, was Bishop William Thompson, who preceded Bishop Hassan as Anglican Bishop in Iran. Bishop Thompson celebrated the marriage of Bishop Iraj and Minoo, the couple recalled fondly.

In 1980, Guli's brother, Bahram, aged 24, was murdered by the Iranian Revolutionary Guards for no other reason than his religion. His father, Bishop Hassan, was out of the country at the time on church business. Because of the threat to his life, too, he was advised to stay away, and it fell to Bishop Iraj to conduct Bahram's funeral.

Thus, on the 30th of November 2017, the consecration of Guli as the first Bishop of Loughborough will be an important marker in the life of Iraj and Guli and their families. Having suffered as a result of the hatred and violence unleashed in the name of Islam, Guli's consecration and Iraj's preaching symbolise some inspired decision-making by the Church of England. For all of us, I hope, it will be an acknowledgement of the suffering of the Iranian Christians. It is also, I believe, a strong message of support to all the women of Iran by acknowledging that one of them can also be a leader in her own right.

Sylvia Dahabra

(With thanks to Bishop Iraj for allowing me to re-tell his story)

October 2017

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EVANS OF JESMOND OPTICIANS

WILLIAM R. MCCALL BSC HONS
GOC 01-15082

28 ACORN ROAD, JESMOND
NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE, NE2 2DJ
TELEPHONE: 0191 281 4145

Becoming Luke Emmanuel:

A Naming Ceremony

If you can cast your mind back to 8th June, you may recall our Pentecost Eucharist, full of different languages and signs of the Holy Spirit at work among us. That service also included my naming ceremony, something which was perhaps unfamiliar. Aware that I didn't have an opportunity at the time to explain what it was all about, this seems a good forum to do so belatedly.



Back in the summer of 1971, a mother was given the happy news, "it's a girl!", and three months later the baby's parents took her to be baptised with the names Isabel Anne. They surrounded her with love and care, nourishing her body, mind and spirit with all they knew to be good for her. She soon started toddling around and discovering the world, developing her personality and making her opinions known. Of course, she quickly realised that people could be men or women, boys or girls. Her family was her prototype: Mummy, Daddy, older brother, younger sister. She was sensitive and imaginative, acting out stories for hours with her Playmobil figures. The doctors were men and the nurses were women. It was all very organised. But she always wore trousers, and she tried to persuade her brother to play football with her. She started school and made a friend, Stuart. The other children in her class who interested her were Paul, Kurt and Matthew. Well, that was OK, she could be a tomboy. And this she remained, not quite fitting the expectations of being a girl, for years and years and years.

Much, much later she started to meet people who had reflected on their gender and discovered that it did not align with the label they had been given at birth. She met men who had been assigned female at birth, and women who had been assigned male at birth, and eventually she met people who didn't feel that they fitted into either of the traditional gender categories. That was intriguing, because nei-

ther did she, when she really thought about it. She pondered a long time over this, because it's fine to be female without being feminine, isn't it? Of course it is! It's fine to express your gender identity in whatever way feels right to you. But if it doesn't correspond with your inner sense of who you are, there will always be a disconnect and a struggle to be fully yourself. And so, at last dismantling the structures embedded so systematically so many decades before, she, that is I, finally came to a new understanding of my gender as non-binary: not a man, not a woman.

The next challenge was to decide how I would live as a non-binary person. For some people, very little needs to change: perhaps just the choice of which box to tick on the diversity questions of surveys. I wanted more of an obvious transition, so that I could connect more strongly with my new gender identity and be recognised in it more easily. Some small changes in my wardrobe and personal style, which will no doubt continue to evolve over time, may not have been particularly striking. Changing my pronouns to "they/them" (rather than "she/her") was a significant step, but one which from my own experience I knew to be challenging for other people to implement. It is also one of which I shouldn't be particularly aware, since these pronouns will only be used when people are talking *about* me rather than *to* me! So, by far the biggest way of embedding my new gender identity was to change my name.

I am grateful to my parents for the names they gave me, and I do not wish to reject those names in any way. However, with great care I have chosen new names which reflect fully who I have grown to be. I considered any number of possibilities which wouldn't indicate a specific gender, such as Alex, Kim or Courtney, but none of them had meaning for me. Despite the confusion which could be caused, it was two traditionally male names which felt right. Luke is a name which I identified with strongly as a young child, and so a sign to me of my enduring, if long-hidden, sense of identity as not-a-girl. I am happy also to be associated with St Luke, and with the Gospel which bears his name and includes such compelling parables as the Prodigal Son and the Good Samaritan. Emmanuel, "God with us," reflects my desire to be constantly aware of God's intimate presence in the whole of creation and to make that presence visible in my own small way.

Believing, as I do, that God has led me along this journey, it was essential to me that I should receive my new names in a faith context. I feel immensely privileged to be part of a church where this was not just possible but celebrated with joy! Debbie and I worked together to create a ceremony which would be theologically sound and

deeply meaningful. It took place at the altar, representing Christ in our midst. Debbie started by pronouncing the names I was given at baptism, in recognition that I came to the ceremony as that person. She then asked me my name, and I responded "My name is Luke Emmanuel." This marked the transition from the old to the new. Debbie next invited me to renew my baptismal vows, connecting me with the baby whose parents and godparents made them on my behalf. Doing so, I placed my Christian faith at the very heart of the whole ceremony, turning away from all that is counter to good, and turning to Christ as the one who gives me life and gives it to the full. On the altar stood two earthenware jugs, made of clay as the first human was made of clay. One was full of water, and the other empty. Debbie blessed the water, evoking images of the power of water throughout the history of salvation. She then poured some of it from the full jug to the empty one, "as a sign that you are who you are and always have been." In turn, I poured some more of the water to the second jug, while saying my new name. In this way I marked the continuity of my being, as well as its new expression. Finally, Janet, as a most worthy representative of our faith community, poured the rest of the water while welcoming me with my new name. The permanence of my baptism was represented through the movement of all the water from one container to another, the two jugs symbols of the old and new way it has been made manifest in me. Debbie then used the water to mark my forehead with the sign of the cross, welcoming me, Luke Emmanuel, fully into the community of faith. After a resounding round of applause, I carried the jug through the congregation and poured the water into the font, from where it was used to sprinkle everyone, thus again linking my faith journey with that of the parish community.

I hope this will have given you some insight into the meaning of my naming ceremony. It was certainly one of the most significant and deeply joyful occasions of my life, and I am delighting in becoming more and more Luke Emmanuel. Thank you for accompanying me on this journey, and for all your support in the future!

Luke Emmanuel Hill

August 2025





The Davies Family

Jean and Jon Davies celebrated their Diamond Wedding on 25th May 2025 at Jesmond Dene House



Ruby Wedding Celebrations

It was very special to share our Ruby Wedding Anniversary with you. We have been members of St George's all our married life. It has played a big part and still does in our lives.

Thank you to all our family and church friends who support us.

Thank you, Debbie, for giving us a meaningful blessing for our marriage and our lives to come.

Thank you, Vera and Alexis for producing such amazing red flower arrangements for the occasion.



We had a wonderful day and a real celebration of 40 years of marriage!

Alison and Peter Mattisson

Sam and Sophie

The Congregation and the Lance congratulate Sam and Sophie Parker on their wedding on Easter Sunday 20th April 2025 at St George's Jesmond...



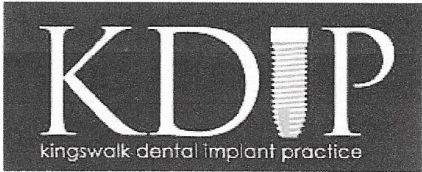
... and later at Beamish Hall

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Open Letter: Theology and Religious Studies in Higher Education

Many of the students across England and Wales who are receiving their A-level results this week will be looking forward to going on to higher education in September.

However, many HE institutions are reducing staffing levels and ceasing to offer some courses, in an attempt to balance their budgets at a time of financial pressure. This results in a narrowing of the opportunities available to these young people as they take their studies forward.

One of the subject areas that is being hit hardest by these reductions is Theology and Religious Studies. There will soon be only 21 HE institutions in England and Wales that offer an undergraduate degree in Theology and Religious Studies. For comparison, 90 run undergraduate degree courses in History, 80 in Music and 101 in Sociology.

This impacts on student choice, but it also has adverse effects for society. Theology plays a crucial role in the intellectual, ethical and cultural development of communities. It equips people with the tools to engage more thoughtfully with global cultures and traditions and to engage deeply with complex sacred texts. It provides space for interfaith dialogue in an environment where people from different backgrounds (including the non-religious, because Theology and Religious Studies is by no means the preserve of believers), and creates room for students to explore issues of belief together. In an increasingly polarised world, it helps us understand other points of view.

Theological education often leads people into service-oriented careers where they contribute to social cohesion and moral leadership, and strengthen civil society. One such career is teaching. But there are already too few qualified entrants to RE teaching. 51% of RE lessons are taught by teachers whose main specialism is in another subject, and in the 2024–25 academic year, only 20% of new entrants to RE Initial Teacher Training had a degree in Theology and Religious Studies.

Beyond service-oriented careers, Theology & Religious Studies also develops skills in

the careful analysis of evidence (ideal for careers in law or criminology), or the art of persuasion and storytelling (ideal for careers in politics, journalism or screenwriting).

The future looks increasingly complex, diverse and pluralistic; local, national and global changes require us to wrestle with moral, ethical and spiritual challenges and ideas well. We owe it to the citizens of tomorrow to equip them with the tools to navigate this future and live together better. We can think of few better tools within our education system than Theology & Religious Studies.

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FOR SOMEWHERE TO EN-
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CAKE/BISCUITS IN THE
COMPANY OF OTHERS
AND IN A WELCOMING
ENVIRONMENT, WHY NOT
MAKE FRIDAY CAFÉ
WHAT YOU DO?**

**Articles etc. for The
Lance to be received
no later than the 15th of
each month**

Send to:

mmvane31@gmail.com

Thank you, Margaret.

Church Walk - July 2025

On 5th July, the St George's walking group had an expedition to Blanchland and a trek over the moors.

For those not familiar with the name, Blanchland is a village on the Northumberland and County Durham border, which grew out of the foundation of an abbey in 1165. The estate was bought by the Bishop of Durham, Nathaniel Lord Crewe in 1708, and on his death in 1721, Blanchland became part of a charitable trust established by his

Will. The village is set between the Derwent reservoir and the moorland fells of the North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The Blanchland we see today is the result of an 18th Century residential development that grew out of the ruined abbey buildings.



John Wesley preached in Blanchland in 1747, observing that much of the local population were more welcoming than his experience in other areas, as noted by Rev Debbie in sermon on 6th July!.

Wesley reports:

" I stood in the churchyard, under one side of the building, upon a large tombstone round which, while I was at prayers, all the congregation kneeled down on the grass. They were all gathered out of the lead mines from all parts; many from Allendale, six miles off. A row of little children sat under the opposite wall, all quiet and still. The whole congregation drank in every word with such earnestness in their looks, I would not but hope that God will make this wilderness sing for joy".

We set off from the car park in a north-westerly direction up the valley of the Shildon Burn, a tributary of the River Derwent. The road was a well surfaced farm track, formerly a drove road, which serves the various small holdings and dwellings scattered around. The first notable feature was Shildon engine house, built into the steep val-



Shildon Engine House

engine had a relatively short life; the cost of supplying coal to the remote area became too expensive and the engine was closed down.



Pennypie House Farm

ley side. The engine house was built around 1805 to house a Cornish pumping engine which kept a network of underground lead mines operating smoothly. Prior to this time, lead was mined by digging a 10m shaft, however, there was no ventilation or way to remove water from the pit, so each pit was quickly exhausted. The en-

Following the track to the top of the valley, about 1.5 miles from Blanchland, we reached Pennypie House, so called because when this route was a drove road and cattle drovers could stop here and rest and buy a pie for an old penny.



After Pennypie House, crossing the burn, we headed south along a bridleway over open moorland. This is the high point of the walk, affording views for miles over the Derwent valley. Curlews can frequently be seen and heard in the area.

After a mile or so the track

starts to descend with increasing steepness, eventually reaching the valley bottom and River Derwent at Baybridge. From here there are alternative ways back into Blanchland, either along the River path, the road, or in our case, a more direct route over the fields to the car park.

In all, a very pleasant walk of two hours in ideal weather conditions, followed by a visit to the village tea room the White Monk, which itself is worth a visit.

John & Anne Clark

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***QUESTION:* WHAT IS A MOST ENGAGING WAY TO SPEND A SUNDAY AFTERNOON IN SUMMER?**



***ANSWER:* HAVING TEA, UNLIMITED CAKE AND PIMM'S (NOT AS UNLIMITED AS THE CAKE) ON ST GEORGE'S GREEN.**

Sunday afternoons in late July and August can be quite hard to fill, as many activities have closed for the summer. Spending a couple of hours or so with people from our area and beyond, was a very welcome initiative from the Friends of St George's. People could enjoy the wonderful green space given to us by our benefactor, Charles Mitchell, and relax and chat. That, basically was the plan - and very successful it turned out to be.

Last year we did it for four Sundays - this year we increased it to five Sundays and the 2026, Sundays are already in the diary: July 19th, July 26th, August 2nd, August 9th and August 16th from 2.30 - 4.30 pm.

All moneys go towards keeping the Grade 1 listed St George's Church in pristine condition. So put the dates for next year in your diary - and just turn up - you will not be disappointed.

Barbara Peacock

Image by catalyststuff on Freepik



The Hub Concert: Sax on the Tyne, The Tyneside Mandolin Orchestra, and Citrus

There is little better than a concert on a fine summer's evening.

St George's Community Hub team offered the first of a number of monthly fund-raising events on July 9th in church. What was particularly special was that all three groups of musicians had a strong link to the church. Both the saxophone group and the mandolin players rehearse in the church hall and this was an opportunity for us to hear their music, and for them to help raise money towards improving the facilities they use.

Toe tapping, huge tunes came from the rich assortment of saxophones led by Laura Reavley, community musician and teacher, who runs the Friday morning Singing Group. Lots of swing. Lots of energy as the sound filled the vastness of the church. Wartime tunes, folk tunes and ballads all lent themselves to the ensemble, and people clapped and sang along.



Beautiful harmonies typified the Tyneside Mandolin Orchestra with mellifluous arrangements of amongst others, classic film scores [Marconi] and folk songs. This was a more peaceful and contemplative sound. Tom Cronin led the players and we were treated to a vocalist, Jazzy Lemon, singing as she sashayed up the aisle. Again, more community singing and engagement as the audience joined in.


The final set was given to the band, Citrus, led by our own chorister, Emily Adams, as singer and guitarist. Citrus have been going for about two years, and are doing very well, having released various songs, including their latest single, 'Overdrawn', [this partly funded by local grants encouraging local musicians]. The pink-haired drummer was quite something, and fresh from Glastonbury, and two guitarists completed the band. It was a professional and musical set and may they continue to gather momentum as they gig this summer.



There was, of course, refreshments and a raffle and, on this summer evening, even ice cream, courtesy of the Jesmond Ice Cream Company. The event raised a splendid £1,155.00, with much gratitude to Laura Reavely, who encouraged so many people to attend. The money goes towards upgrading the very facilities we love and, judging by the number of audience members who had to dart out to use our facilities in the Hall, they will be very welcome.

Margaret Vane

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LOOSE LADIES


People's Theatre Wednesday 1st October 7.30pm.

"Home, I'm Darling" – a comedy about gender roles, rebellion and cake and the quest to be the perfect 1950's housewife.

£16/£13.50 concessions.

If you would like to go, please speak to Alison Mattinson or via The Office.

[Border Photos](#) by Unknown Author are licensed under [CC BY-SA](#)



The Power of Pro Bono

Pro bono publico meaning 'for the public good' involves free services provided to those in need of legal advice or representation. Examples of pro bono work range widely from Inquests to Charity work, housing issues, civil rights, asylum seekers and Tribunal work.

A notable early pro bono case in the UK was the case of *Somerset v Stewart* (1772). James Somerset was a slave who escaped from his master, Charles Stewart, while in Britain. He was captured and held on a ship in the Thames, bound for Jamaica. In the case, Charles Stewart claimed to have a property right over James Somerset, who was represented by a team of pro bono lawyers including, Francis Hargreaves. James Somerset was successfully freed under Writ of Habeas Corpus. This case not only changed James Somerset's life, but set a precedent that slavery was not supported by English law, showing how pro bono work can influence not only individuals but change society at large.

Pro bono work has continued to impact the lives of individuals, who without it, may not have access to justice. The cost of legal fees and sometimes the risk of having to pay a defendant's costs (if a claimant loses) often deters people from pursuing claims. The complexity of legal procedures and the prospect of lengthy, stressful litigation can also deter people from seeking justice. In 2010 Lord Bingham expanded the principles of the rule of law to include eight key principles, one of which was that the law must be accessible and so far, as possible, intelligible, clear and predictable. Lord Bingham defines the principle of the rule of law as follows: 'The core of the existing principle is that all persons and authorities within the state, whether public or private, should be bound by and entitled to the benefit of laws publicly made, taking effect (generally) in the future and publicly administered in the courts.' Pro bono work plays a huge role in allowing people to access legal advice and justice, it helps to uphold the rule of law by allowing people to assert their rights.

Pro bono work is carried out by many lawyers across the UK, and is encouraged by the Law Society, the body governing solicitors. Some recent cases include the Grenfell Tower Enquiry, Ukraine Refugee Support and the Windrush Cases. The Solicitor's Regulation Authority ("**SRA**") Code of Conduct highlights the importance of acting in the interest of the public and the SRA itself encourages lawyers to carry out pro bono work.

Pro bono work is not only being carried out in the UK, but also in other countries, such as the United States. In the United States, the American Bar Association Model Rule 6.1 provides that, 'Every lawyer has a professional responsibility to provide legal services to those unable to pay', although this rule is not mandatory, Many State Bars have adopted the rule or a variation of it. Lawyers are in a unique position where they are able to help those who are vulnerable or disadvantaged and it is encouraging to see pro bono work being promoted within the profession.

Some key topics in the United States involving pro bono work include, immigration and asylum following the ongoing changes to the US immigration policy, legal battles over abortion access, and reproductive healthcare, following changes in state laws, as well as work involving representing prisoners on death row.

An example of a current American pro bono project is the 'Death Penalty Representation Project'. The Death Penalty Representation Project is the American Bar Association's project focusing on improving the quality and availability of legal representation for those facing possible death sentences. Whilst reading about The Death Penalty Project, I came across Melanie E. Bates' (Special Counsel, ABA Section of Civil Rights and Social Justice) article on the execution of Marcellus Williams. Marcellus Williams was executed by the State of



Missouri in September 2024 after more than 20 years on Death Row. According to Melanie's article, there was no forensic evidence linking him to the murder of a newspaper reporter who was found dead in his home in 1998. Prior to Marcellus' execution, his attorney, Tricia Rojo Bushnell, working for the Innocence Project, a project that works to 'free the innocent, prevent wrongful convictions, and create fair, compassionate, and equitable systems of justice for everyone' stated, "The victim's family opposes his execution. Jurors, who originally sentenced him to death, now oppose his execution. The prosecutor's office that convicted and sentenced him to death has now admitted they were wrong and zealously fought to undo the conviction." Marcellus was executed anyway. Was Marcellus wrongly sentenced? The consequences of

wrongly sentencing someone to death row are huge and that is why projects such as The Death Penalty Representation Project and the Innocence Project are essential to ensuring that everyone, often people who cannot afford representation, has access to legal representation.

As a solicitor degree apprentice working at Stephenson Harwood in London, I am grateful to have had the opportunity to get involved with pro bono work. I have had the chance to get to know some of the charities involved in such important work and learn more about what they do and how they can help those in need.

One of the charities I have volunteered for is eyeWitness to atrocities ("**eyeWitness**"), where I have mainly been assisting with reviewing footage captured in the West Bank. EyeWitness uses technology to document mass atrocity crimes providing crucial evidence for their cases. They work closely with both their documentation teams recording footage, and the investigators and lawyers using the footage for justice. By using technology, more frontline footage can be captured and as a result, perpetrators of international crimes can be held accountable. The eyeWitness app is used by human rights defenders around the world. Footage has contributed to investigations and analyses conducted by the United Nations, International Criminal Court, European War Crimes Unit, domestic courts and international police forces.

A further charity I have recently started my training for is 'Not Beyond Redemption' ("**NBR**"). NBR provide mothers in prison with free family law advice and representation to protect their relationships with their children. EyeWitness and NBR are just a couple of examples of the many important charities that strive continuously to support, maintain, and defend what is fair, right, and lawful.

Written by:

Amelia Rose Lewis – Solicitor Degree Apprentice

(These are my own views and not those of Stephenson Harwood LLP).

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Loose Ladies Rides Again

Loose Ladies took advantage of the August 'Restaurant Week' and enjoyed tapas at El Coto in Newcastle. A jolly time had by all!

Christine Rowland



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All Night Crystal Reiki Gong Bath

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A Gong bath is an ancient type of sound therapy, but with no swimming or getting wet involved. The term bath relates to being immersed in sound waves. Three highly skilled, and experienced facilitators are hosting this special event, Jules Buchanan, Michael Fothergill and Jane Mason will each hold space from the beginning of the session until the sun rises the following morning. The sun will have set before you arrive at our venue at St. George's Church Hall, but you will be welcomed by the adjacent floodlit church and the resonating sound of the church bells.

Price from £16.76

Full details at www.space4gongs.uk



Church of England Calendar September 2025

September

- 1 *Giles of Provence, Hermit, c.710*
- 2 *The Martyrs of Papua New Guinea, 1901 and 1942*
- 3 Gregory the Great, Bishop of Rome, Teacher of the Faith, 604
- 4 *Birinus, Bishop of Dorchester (Oxon), Apostle of Wessex, 650*
- 6 *Allen Gardiner, Missionary, Founder of the South American Mission Society, 1851*
- 8 The Birth of the Blessed Virgin Mary
- 8 *Accession of King Charles III*
- 9 *Charles Fuge Lowder, Priest, 1880*
- 13 John Chrysostom, Bishop of Constantinople, Teacher of the Faith, 407
- 14 **Holy Cross Day**
- 15 Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage, Martyr, 258
- 16 Ninian, Bishop of Galloway, Apostle of the Picts, c.432
- 16 *Edward Bouverie Pusey, Priest, Tractarian, 1882*
- 17 Hildegard, Abbess of Bingen, Visionary, 1179
- 19 *Theodore of Tarsus, Archbishop of Canterbury, 690*
- 20 John Coleridge Patteson, First Bishop of Melanesia, and his Companions, Martyrs, 1871
- 21 **Matthew, Apostle and Evangelist**
- 25 Lancelot Andrewes, Bishop of Winchester, Spiritual Writer, 1626
- 25 *Sergei of Radonezh, Russian Monastic Reformer, Teacher of the Faith, 1392*
- 26 *Wilson Carlile, Founder of the Church Army, 1942*
- 27 Vincent de Paul, Founder of the Congregation of the Mission (Lazarists), 1660
- 29 **Michael and All Angels**
- 30 *Jerome, Translator of the Scriptures, Teacher of the Faith, 420*

Understanding the Calendar:

Principal Feasts and other Principal Holy Days.

Other Sundays & Lesser Festivals.

Festivals.

Commemorations

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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.

Vicar

Rev. Debbie Loughran 07776 922580

Rev_debbie@hotmail.com

Reader and Anna Chaplain

Mrs Joan Grenfell

grenfelljoan@yahoo.com

Reader & Air Cadet Chaplain

Dr Malcolm Toft

depchap.dnl@rafac.mod.gov.uk

Churchwardens

Janet Wilson 07766 297359

janet@stgeorgesjesmond.org.uk

Parish Safeguarding Officer

Graham Rutt 07555943390

safeguarding@stgeorgesjesmond.org.uk

Director of Music

Drew Cantrill-Fenwick

music@stgeorgesjesmond.org.uk

Bell Tower Captain

John Markham

bells@stgeorgesjesmond.org.uk

Publicity

Margaret Vane and Hazel Jones-Lee

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 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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