



THE LANCE

February 2026



www.stgeorgesjesmond.org.uk



[Return to contents](#)

In The Lance this month: (ctrl-click to follow a link)

<u>Editorial</u>	3
<u>Clergy Letter</u>	4
<u>Letter from the Ministry Team</u>	4
<u>Spotlight on Scripture: Candlemas</u>	5
<u>Bowler hats, squad drill, and pungent profanities</u>	8
<u>Twelve go Skating! - The January Church Walk</u>	12
<u>There's Room at this Inn.....A visit to Christchurch Nativity</u>	15
<u>Letters to the Editor</u>	18
<u>Friends' Christmas Card Fan</u>	19
<u>Joan Rooney's magnificent cake</u>	20
<u>Who Stole the Ladybird's Spots?</u>	21
<u>Jane Austen and the Navy</u>	23
<u>Why Are Bible Sales Rising So Fast?</u>	30
<u>Eco Tips</u>	31
<u>Marmalade in Memory of Elizabeth</u>	32
<u>Book Group</u>	32
<u>Vera and the Christmas Flowers</u>	33
<u>Answers to the Christmas Quiz 2025</u>	34
<u>Photos of the RGS Christmas Carol Concert at St George's</u>	35
<u>Caption Competition Answer 1</u>	35
<u>Tales of Jesmond</u>	36
<u>Church Calendar</u>	37
<u>Caption Competition Answers 2-4</u>	37
<u>Who is who at St George's</u>	38
<u>The Back Page</u>	38

Editorial

This week is Candlemas. This feast was first observed in the Eastern Church and known as 'the Encounter'. In the 6th century, it began to be observed in the West and was known as the 'Feast of the Purification'. It signifies the end of the Christmas season.

In Spotlight on Scripture this month, the story told in Luke 2; 22-40, is reflected on. Baby Jesus is presented in the Jerusalem Temple and is acknowledged by the outside world as someone and something miraculous.

Countries mark this date in different manners. In Spain and parts of Latin America, the 'Dia de la Candelaria' is celebrated with festive gatherings, processions, music and eating tamales. The 'feve' or baby Jesus figure hidden in the Twelfth Night Cake is presented and dressed. In Germany, the Lichtmess Day relates how the winter will proceed. If there is sun on Lichtmess Day, the winter will last longer. This is a tradition in America, carried there by Dutch settlers and called Groundhog Day. Rooted in German folklore, people watch woodchucks [groundhogs] emerge from their burrows. If they can see their shadows, then the winter will last for another 6 weeks. No shadow means an early Spring. In Eastern Europe, the festival is called ' Hromnice' [Czech] or 'Stretenje Gospoda' [Slavic Orthodox] and focuses heavily on blessing candles for protection.

The French celebrate 'La Chandeleur' by eating crepes, often while holding a coin in hand for good fortune. And in Britain, as in many other countries, candles are brought to church to be blessed, representing Christ as the 'Light of the World', and for hope and protection.

We have Jane Austen, fan letters, a few Christmas images, and the Northumberland Fusiliers. We also remember friends we lost in 2025. There is much news of our church and its busy congregation. Happy 2026.



Margaret Vane

Letter from the Ministry Team

Dear Friends,

'On Septuagesima Sunday I preached on God making something out of nothing. There was a void and he filled it. There was darkness and he lit it. This is what creation means.' (Ronald Blythe)



As we start to think about the changing of the seasons and moving through the Church calendar, we very quickly come upon Lent. Before we quite get to Lent, I have been reflecting on the old marking of the period of 'pre-Lent'. In older times, Septuagesima was observed. It applied to the 70 days starting on Septuagesima Sunday – which this year falls on February 1st and ends the Saturday after Easter.

This marking of the season of Septuagesima I found in a lovely book I dip into at regular intervals by Ronald Blythe, called *Next to Nature, A Lifetime in the English Countryside*. Keen older Church Times readers will recognise the name from a column he wrote for 20 odd years, reflecting on his ministry as a Reader and how his faith was so embedded in the natural world and the seasons. I can recommend it; it's a very gentle reflection on what is probably now a lost time and place in a small English village.

Thinking about the time leading up to Lent, it interests me that the Church is encouraging us to prepare for it in quite a particular way. In the readings throughout February, we hear a particular set of themes which encompass: the joy we should feel at the freedom we are given, the many works of the spirit, the transfiguration, the light entering the darkness and the reminder that we need to wait patiently for the hope of what we do not yet have.

All this leads me to thinking that we are being encouraged to enter a time of celebration and joy at the gifts we have been given as Christians. God is indeed with us, the countless

times we are told through the Bible where He makes an appearance, sometimes literally, sometimes metaphorically, and always poetically and beautifully. All the readings throughout February focus on the character of Jesus, the blessings he received through the presentation in the temple and later in his life in the transfiguration. Finally in the first weeks of Lent, we hear how Jesus was tempted in the wilderness but ultimately was attended by angels. Why might we be asked to see all this just before the season of Lent?

We are hearing that before we enter a season of penitence and reflection (and can often get caught up in the bleakness of that), we also need to be reminded what glorious gifts we have been given! As we prepare ourselves for the season of Lent, this is a good reminder of the gifts we have all been given and to look forward (hopefully with patience) to the resurrection and joy that Easter brings. And hopefully a warm spring!

Blessings,

Izzy

Spotlight on Scripture: Candlemas

The word "liminal" comes from the Latin word "limen," which means **threshold**, and a **liminal space** is the uncertain transition between where you've been and where you're going physically, emotionally, or metaphorically. To be in a liminal space means **to be on the precipice of something new but not quite there yet...**



Richard Rohr, the Franciscan priest and writer on spirituality, puts it this way...

'Liminal space is an inner state and sometimes an outer situation where we can begin to think and act in new ways. It is where we are betwixt and between, having left one room or stage of life but not yet entered the next.'

It can be voluntary: as in getting married, moving house or job or having a child...

or it can be involuntary: when we face illness or the death of a loved one, or a global pandemic or the threat of war. It is usually a very uncomfortable place to be, because we can feel a lack of control of the present, and insecurity over the future... but that very vulnerability and openness of liminal space brings a certain creativity, where new and exciting things can happen... where, if we are attentive, we can glimpse the Holy Spirit moving in ways we don't notice in more settled times... and transformation can take place.



When I look back over my own life, it is in these liminal spaces where my spiritual growth often happened...

The threshold of liminal space is sacred; and has been called '**God's waiting room**' a place where we learn openness and patience as we come face to face with the Divine. I believe that religion should lead us into that liminal space, church should provide the means and opportunity for us to meet with God in openness and faith.

≈∞≈

Candlemas is a perfect example of this... here we stand between the cradle and the cross, we come to the end of our celebrations of the birth of the Christ-child at Christmas, and Epiphany, where we learn more about God, about who Jesus is, and more about ourselves... and we turn towards Lent, a time of self-examination, penitence, self-denial and study, in preparation for Easter.

≈∞≈

Candlemas is also known as **the Feast of the Presentation of Jesus Christ**, According to the law in Leviticus 12, after having a baby, a woman had to be purified before being allowed to enter the temple... and she had to bring with her, an offering of a lamb, and a pigeon or dove... or 2 turtledoves, or 2 pigeons... It was also customary to take the first-born boy child to be presented in the temple in Jerusalem.

So, Mary and Joseph wrap Jesus up and go to the temple. They are met by 2 elderly prophets, Simeon, a 'devout and righteous' man who had been waiting for the relief of Israel's suffering for a long time, and Anna a widow who spent her time in the temple, worshipping with fasting and prayer.

Simeon takes Jesus in his arms and bursts into song... a song we now know as the Nunc Dimittis, declaring Jesus to be the Messiah he was waiting for, the salvation for all people, 'a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for the glory of Israel'. And Anna 'began to praise God and to speak about the child to all who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem.'

≈∞≈

Both Simeon and Anna had been in that **liminal space** for a long, long time, waiting for this child who would usher in the kingdom of God... They had faithfully served and remained hopeful as they waited, staying attentive to the Holy Spirit, and in that time of waiting, they had grown spiritually, gained wisdom and faith, and were rewarded by recognising who Jesus was when they came face to face with him.

≈∞≈

So, as we consider our liminal spaces, **on the precipice of something new but not quite there yet...** the space between the crib and the cross, and whatever other in-between place we may find ourselves in...

May we remain attentive to the Holy Spirit;

May we grow spiritually;

And when we recognise God, face to face, may we find ourselves transformed in new and exciting ways.

Rev. Debbie Loughran

Bowler hats, squad drill, and pungent profanities

The Jesmond origins of the 19th Battalion Northumberland Fusiliers (2nd Tyneside Pioneers)

Most of you will have noticed the First World War memorial plaque that hangs towards the back of the Church. If you have ever looked at it closely you might have spotted that it records not only the name and rank of those of the parish who fell in the conflict, but also the regiment or corps in which they served. You may even have noticed that that many of them – about a third, in fact – served in the Northumberland Fusiliers (NF), our local infantry regiment, whose cap badge comprises a flaming grenade and St George himself slaying a dragon.

The NF was a large regiment, which raised an impressive fifty-two battalions in WW1. This article concerns just one them – the 19th – which had a very special connection to Jesmond. It tells the story of the first exhilarating days of the Battalion, when the reality of war may have seemed a long time in the future. It was inspired by my father, Jack Burn, who recently showed me a rare book in his collections, which he rediscovered whilst sorting through some possessions. It is entitled *Historical Records of the 19th (Service) Battalion Northumberland Fusiliers [2nd Tyneside Pioneers]*, which was written in 1920 by Captain Charles Herbert Cooke MC. Despite its less-than-snappy title, it is a fascinating read!

The 19th was formed as a Pioneer Battalion. This meant that as well as being fully trained infantrymen, many of its soldiers were also skilled tradesmen, whose job was to perform non-combat tasks such as digging trenches, building roads, and laying wire, often in arduous and dangerous conditions. For this reason, the Pioneers wore the crossed rifle and pick collar badge, in addition to the normal NF cap badge.



Northumberland Fusiliers cap badge



Pioneer Battalion collar badge

The Battalion came into existence on 17th November 1914 and within a few days it had completed its recruitment of about a thousand men, enlisted from all parts of the north east region. It was on the 24th November 1914 that number 20, Osborne Avenue, a large Victorian terraced house near Jesmond cricket ground, became its official Headquarters. In the words of Captain Cooke, it is an address that "... will ever be associated with the early days of the Battalion".

How did a terraced house in a Newcastle suburb become a British Army Headquarters building? I believe that the answer lies in the identity of the Battalion's first Commanding Officer, Major Robert Temperley, a prominent citizen of Jesmond at the time and one who was instrumental in the founding of the 19th Battalion. As well as being an experienced soldier, Major Temperley was a highly successful, Cambridge educated solicitor, author, and fine arts expert, who was a partner in the Newcastle based firm Botterell Roche and Temperley (a firm that exists today, albeit under a different name). Born in 1858, he was by 1914, a well respected officer and gentleman, whose name appears in legal, military, and council documents of the day, too numerous to summarise here. In short, he was one of Jesmond's distinguished citizens, a true "pillar of society"; and I am fairly certain that he lived at 20 Osborne Avenue.

20 Osborne Avenue today (Street View image)



The early days of the Battalion were characterised by a sense of fun and enthusiasm, far removed from the trenches of France and Flanders, which the recruits would encounter soon enough. Reading the description of those days reminded me of the formation of the Home Guard in the next war, as depicted in the sitcom Dad's Army. Men from all over the region travelling daily to

Jesmond and to begin with, only parts of uniforms were available. A somewhat irregular-looking army was thus soon to be seen marching and parading along Osborne and Holly Avenues, with anything vaguely military-looking hastily pressed into service. Military headwear with civvy clothing was the order of the day, or sometimes bowler hats with khaki trousers and puttees, or in many cases civilian clothes only, apart from random items of khaki sewn on here and there. Captain Cooke describes these early outings as 'picturesque' and clearly the men could hardly wait to get their proper uniforms issued. Such was the irregularity of supply that one day a rumour went around that a parade was being called to issue the men with boots – but left ones only... (Any reader who has served in the British Army may not be entirely surprised that such a rumour started in the first place.)

Officers and budding NCOs – the latter wearing ribbon armbands as a mark of their authority – paraded separately on Jesmond cricket ground, although the groundsman's view of the arrangement is not reported. They would then put their new leadership skills to the test with the rest of the men on "Newton Road Field", which was possibly the area now known as Paddy Freeman Park. There was even the formation of an impromptu Battalion band, attracting anyone of a more musical disposition. Days were filled with PT and tactical training, squad drills and route marches, the latter taking in the sights of Benton, Gosforth, The Great North Road, and High Heaton. Also, the massed ranks of enthusiastic recruits crossing Armstrong Bridge onto Newton Road became a common and popular sight to the local population.

Armstrong Bridge (opened 1878)

The chaotic nature of some of the first drills was legendary, but what the recruits lacked in ability was more than made up for by their keenness and willingness to learn.



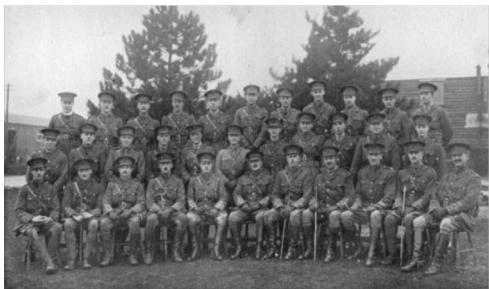
More importantly, the men were getting to know each other and bonds were forming amongst themselves and with their officers. A genuine esprit de corps was developing, which would stand them in good stead in the tough years ahead.

In December 1914, the training regime stepped up a gear. In particular, a number of Regular Army instructors were drafted in from nearby Fenham Barracks and there was a marked improvement in the quality of their squad drills. More trained officers also joined the Battalion. Christmas 1914 saw the entire Battalion treated to a variety performance at the Newcastle Hippodrome, which was located on Northumberland Road in the city. Furthermore, each man was presented with either a pipe or walking-out cane, which must have given them a certain debonair quality, especially as most were now fully – and proudly – equipped with good quality uniforms. A highlight of this time was a march to Newcastle Quayside, where they were inspected by the Chamber of Commerce.

The Battalion's final full day in Jesmond was 12th January 1915. A route march was undertaken with the usual gusto, before the men paraded in Osborne Avenue and Holly Avenue, awaiting orders for their forthcoming move. Minutes turned into half an hour, half an hour into an hour, an hour into an hour and a half... They were trained soldiers now and their discipline held but, as Captain Cooke notes, the air was beginning to buzz with "strange murmurings" and "pungent profanity". Mercifully he spares us the exact nature of these. However, finally the orders came through: the Battalion was to move to permanent billets in Morpeth the following day. The days of the soldierly commute were over and, two days later, Major Temperley handed over command to Major L.E. Fawcus.

**Officers of the Battalion, 1915. Lieut.
Cooke is 7th from the left in the middle
row**

The 19th Battalion would ultimately see action in many of the bloodiest battles on the



Western Front, including the Somme, Arras, and Passchendaele. According to the records of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission, 278 men lost their lives – 15 officers and 263 other ranks – and many more were wounded.

Jesmond can today be justifiably proud of its very own Pioneer Battalion, and of the courage and sacrifice it displayed in the “war to end all wars”.

Kevin Burn

Twelve go Skating! - The January Church Walk

Throwing caution to the winds, twelve hardy souls assembled on a very cold icy January morning outside St George’s church. Alison and Peter’s planned walk was to St Nicholas Cathedral and back via the High Level and Swing bridges and surely the ice on pavements in town should have melted? Well not so. We are all too aware that at our age, we don’t just trip over, we “take a fall”, break something, visit the dreaded A&E, and descend into an inevitable decline. Bearing this in mind, we “walked gingerly” shouting ice warnings and grasping handrails where possible and each other when all else failed.



It was a pleasant route, down Osborne Road, cutting through past Brandling Park where the sun shone and the snow glistened on an idyllic winter scene. Through the underpass, back to stark reality, sleeping bags and evidence of a rough sleeper. Whatever view you take, it’s sobering and disturbing in this cruel winter weather. We slithered down to St Thomas’s church where we stopped for a photo. So far, so good, still intact. Down John Dobson Street, right past the Central Library, passing a very new impressive building to

house "The Ministry" presumably for those not working from home? Momentarily, five of our men went missing, unable to walk, talk and navigate at the same time. They soon caught up with us as we surveyed the shambles that is Northumberland Street. Just how long can it take to pave a traffic free area? They need an organised gaffer on the job. Any suggestions?

As we passed Grey's Monument, we were serenaded by a lone talented busker, braving the elements, obviously a hardy local. Grey Street, as ever, was awesome to behold and best appreciated going down rather than up. It's an aerobic exercise if you start at the bottom of Dean Street. Note, folk looking intensely in the window of the Mountain Shop Centre halfway up the hill are not rugged climbers looking for crampons, they are the likes of me, drawing breath! We turned the corner into Mosley Street, and then the final hurdle, staying upright on the icy square in front of cathedral. We were ready for sanctuary as we entered the warmth of St Nicholas Cathedral.



The original Norman parish church, founded in 1091, was destroyed by fire in 1216 and the current building was completed in 1350. The Lantern Tower was completed in the 1448 and the whole building was restored in 1777. Named after St Nicholas, patron saint of sailors and boats, for hundreds of years the lantern spire was a main navigation point for ships using the River Tyne. A sort of spiritual lighthouse. I had forgotten most of this, but I did remember at school, learning that when the Scots invaded in 1640, and threatened to bombard the tower, the mayor, Sir John Marley saved the Lantern Tower by putting his Scottish prisoners in it. A cunning plan.

Most of us hadn't been in the cathedral since it was updated. Pews have been replaced by rows of chairs arranged around a square so that the congregation are facing each other and there is a modern altar shaped like a boat, an acknowledgement of the

shipbuilding industry of Tyneside. Apparently, the Sunday congregation feel more comfortable with this arrangement, which is interesting.

The call for coffee was pressing, and we headed for the café which is part of The Oswin Project. This project mentors, trains and employs ex-prisoners, giving them work experience and offering them a much needed second chance. The staff were friendly and efficient; the choice of scones and cakes was good. Scones didn't quite get top marks, but there again, St George's boasts scone makers of Cordon Bleu standards.

After coffee, some decided to head for home and the rest of us made for the High Level Bridge. I always enjoy walking across Stephenson's masterpiece, a train rumbling overhead. It has the feel of a fortification, so solid and reliable. By contrast, the Tyne Bridge, undergoing major surgery, looked somewhat worn and "bandaged". Beyond it, the "youthful" Millenium Bridge reflected perfectly in the still waters of the Tyne. We carefully negotiated the slide down to cross the Swing Bridge which looked a tad sad and in need of some TLC. Back on the Quayside, renowned for its many bars and vibrant night life, I was reminded of the angst of teenage daughters and Friday nights in town. Time flies and they now know what I went through. Nemesis! As we waited for the Q3 bus, a chap in shorts was spotted. Which brought the conversation round to the hardiness of postmen. Sure-footed on ice, they seem not to feel the cold as they skilfully manage spring loaded letter boxes, spiked with bristles. At least three of our group had holiday jobs on the Post, one dare devil on a bike was said to hang onto her dad's car for a tow up a hill. (Names are withheld.) I remember that we had a bike riding postman in Manchester. This Benny Hill lookalike, had a penchant for reading everyone's post. My friend sent me a holiday postcard. "I hope your postman likes this card!" was the message!

As we boarded the bus, I'm sure that Alison and Peter drew a sigh of relief. All safe and sound, no A&E and no one went missing. Until a stop on Osborne Road. Mary got off, Geoff didn't. Mary didn't notice, Geoff didn't notice. Peter, ever vigilant, did notice, averted mishap and earned himself a safeguarding gold star!

Maggie Paczek

There's Room at this Inn.....A visit to Christchurch Nativity

I opened an email from Linsley, whoopee. Not another rota, but an invitation.

As many of you will know, Linsley is a governor at Christ Church school, Shieldfield and she asked if I would like to go with her to the Nativity Play.

Absolutely! I've always had a yen to see inside Christ Church school building as for many years my mum taught there. She left in 1946 to marry my dad who was curate at Christ Church where they were married and I was christened. Also, any children's production that I personally have no responsibility for, is a real treat and I was most impressed that it was on the last morning of term. Now that's commitment! Most schools have "got the Nativity over with" the week before so that frazzled staff can relax and stop worrying that Mary, Joseph or heaven help us, the narrator might fall foul of the latest liturgy.

Linsley and I joined the morning playground bustle, and I noted that the staff were already outside ready to welcome the children and parents. It was obvious entering Christ Church, that for the community, this was more than just a school, it was a haven for families and the sort of child-centred setting where children are nurtured. There was a cheery greeting from a welcoming secretary and I noted immediately plastic boxes of school uniform that parents could easily access. We were directed into the hall where we had reserved front seats which, being a back pew lurker, was an awesome experience. I was able to see close up the bright smiles of Mary and Joseph, the pirouettes of the angels and the beguiling antics of the inevitable little fidgeter. Watching the faces of children as they sing gives you hope for the future.

The wonderful thing about Christ Church is its readiness to welcome children of all nationalities, some from troubled areas of the world, and most speaking different languages. The families pouring into the hall with babies and toddlers looked very much

at home. It was truly a gathering of the United Nations amassed together in a small hall on Tyneside.

The children led by their teachers, filed in quietly, one or two clutching comfort toys. A reminder that some have had suffered traumas that no child should ever experience and, as in other settings, many have Special Educational Needs. For this reason, we were asked not to applaud out loud but do clapping gestures, which made sense.

Nativity plays, like children, are uniquely unpredictable. Etched in my teacher memory, little Syd, aged three, on the stage happily building a tower of bricks using the blocks that the children had been sitting on. "You can tell that Syd is enjoying this!" I quipped lamely to the sympathetic audience.

Happily, no such incidents at Christ Church Nativity. Suffice to say, the children shone! They played musical instruments, they sang and they danced with happy abandonment. One over enthusiastic little chap needed a restraining adult hand round his ankle to prevent him from catapulting off the stage. I must mention that the costumes, carefully amassed over the years, were stunning. The kings' costumes were rich and colourful and there was not a striped tea towel shepherd's head dress to be found. Maybe they could knock up adult sizes for St George's Living Nativity?

The children managed their lines beautifully. It's easy to forget that English is a foreign language to most of them and what's more, many were born with other faiths. Attending Christ Church, the parents integrate and are happy to take part in celebrating Christmas. The performance ended appropriately, with us all singing "We wish you a merry Christmas!"

After the performance, Linsley took me for a quick look round the school. A class teacher popped her head round the door and asked us into her classroom. Lots of beaming faces. "We are a team, aren't we?" the teacher asked the children. There followed an enthusiastic response. She explained that we helped to support Christ Church school then

asked the children to say "Thank You" to us in their own language. How good was that! To the family of St George's from the family that is Christ Church.

Our contribution of uniform is much appreciated, and I feel that it is so important to support a school where care, kindness, concern and compassion are valued. The staff, led by an inspirational head, are totally committed to the welfare of the children, going above and beyond to support families, some of whom have known fear and insecurity that we could only imagine.

At Christ Church School, there is room at the inn, for everyone. For me, this was the beginning of Christmas and an experience I will cherish.

(Ps Hope mum and dad were silently clapping!)

Maggie Paczek

BOLDON FARMHOUSE PANTRY

Creative and imaginative catering, a truly personal service and team work is our recipe for success. Whatever is needed to ensure your event is both memorable and enjoyable, we can recommend florists, wine merchants, marquee hire... all the practicalities taken care of! All our menus are freshly prepared and depending upon the style and location of your event, your food will either be delivered to the venue or prepared in situ. We will ensure your event is both memorable and enjoyable.

Find us at:

Westray, 26 Akenside Terrace,
Jesmond. Tel 281 6025
enquiries@boldonfarmhousepantry.co.uk



Kingswalk dental implant practice

**Lesley K Cave,
BDS, DGDP, RCS (Eng)
& Associates**

Teeth for Life

**Kingswalk Dental Practice
50 Leazes Park Road
Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 4PG**

**Telephone: 0191 2220725
www.kingswalkdental.co.uk**

**RE: Donation from The Parish Church of St. George, Jesmond.**

Dear St Georges,

I would like to thank you for your kind donation of £1000.00 received by PROPS today which was such a generous surprise.

I believe one of our fabulous carers made a recommendation to you to help our charity after receiving some support and I have contacted our lovely friend directly with thanks.

Your generous donation will be spent in support of our Newcastle carers and our services based in Fenham Library, making a difference to families who are impacted by someone else's substance misuse.

Thank you so much!

Yours Faithfully

Helen Thompson

Helen Thompson
Chief Executive Officer

Dear Hazel and team



I am writing to thank you very much for choosing The Recruitment Junction as a beneficiary of your charitable support and for the cheque that arrived today.

Your donation is very generous and will have a huge impact on the people we work with, and in particular being able to support them with vital purchases needed for them to start and sustain work. Over the last few weeks this has included:

Food parcel

Birth certificate

Duvet and bed

Work safety boots and trousers

Travel card to get to work before payday

Interview clothes to look the part and increase confidence

CSCS online training, test and card to start work on a building site

With grateful thanks

Jo

Friends' Christmas Card Fan

In January I received a letter from an artist cousin in Vancouver in response to the Christmas card I sent her. She says:

'The reason for my letter is to say how much I liked and was almost astonished by the altar mosaic in St. George's church and feel much regret that I never saw it in person, though the image on your sent Christmas card was placed in our house, along with others where I could easily see and admire the image, which expressed the power of the concept of positive/negative in visual imagery. I rarely go online to research... I was able to find the church's interior with some mosaics but I couldn't find the particular one on the card.'



Congratulations to the Friends for producing a well-received card. I hope this feedback will encourage them to produce another winning image next year. In the meantime, perhaps more mosaic photos could appear on the website?

Sue King

Joan Rooney's magnificent cake



We clean your oven.....
so you don't have to.



Call today to have your
oven, hob, extractor or
Aga professionally cleaned

Colin MacMillan contact details
Tel. 0191 906 6692 Mob. 07888 169798
E mail colinmacmillan@ovenwizards.com
www.ovenwizards.com

FRIDAY CAFÉ

IN THE WINSKELL
ROOM EACH FRIDAY
FROM 10-12NOON.

FRIDAY SINGING
STARTS AT 11:00

WELCOME TO
EVERYONE.

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

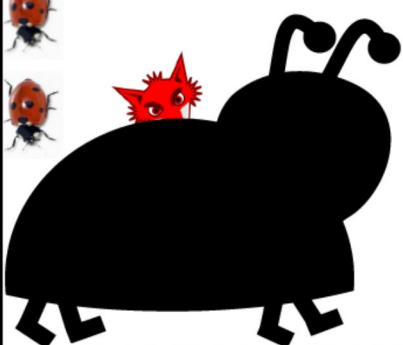
**Friday 6th Feb 7.30 pm
Saturday 7th Feb 3 pm &
7.30 pm.**

St George's Pantomime:

Who Stole the Ladybird's Spots?

**St George's Church
Hall, Jesmond**

**Tickets: £5.00 from
the Office or on the
door, includes
interval refreshments**





WS.HARRISON

SERVING THE COMMUNITY FOR GENERATIONS



Funeral Directors • Memorial Consultants

We're here for you anytime. Whatever your wishes or budget, we can provide a funeral to suit you.

157 Salters Road, Gosforth, Newcastle upon Tyne NE3 4HJ

0191 2858376 | newcastle@wsharrison.co.uk

wsharrison.co.uk

Jane Austen and the Navy

It used to be complained that Jane Austen wrote her six famous novels without any mention of the French Revolution, the Napoleonic Wars or any of the great events of her lifetime and therefore could not be considered a 'serious' novelist. But it would be Jane's unique contribution, in the words of Lucy Worsley, 'to illustrate the effect of these seismic events indirectly, as they played out in the tiny details of the everyday life of ordinary people. She made the political into the personal'.



For nearly all of Jane Austen's adult life, Britain was at war with France. The Napoleonic wars, 1803-1815, saw the increasing dominance of the British navy and led to the Royal Navy controlling most of the key maritime trade routes and enjoying unchallenged maritime power for the rest of the 19th century. There were numerous invasion scares during the wars and it often seemed a very real threat, just as in the Second World War. The poets Wordsworth and Coleridge, taking one of their customary evening walks along the Somerset coastline, were reported as possible French spies. It is natural to assume a level of fear among the general populace, many of whom would of course have members of the family away fighting.

Jane was ambivalent about the French. Lucy Worsley even detects some subtle anti-French feeling in the novels, pointing to the unpleasant Mr Hurst in *Pride and Prejudice* who likes French cookery, and the deceitful Frank Churchill in *Emma* who sprinkles his conversation with French words. Austen seems not to have had much time for the Army – her depictions of the militia in *Pride and Prejudice* are scarcely flattering, although her brother Henry joined the militia, a sort of Home Guard, while regular soldiers were mostly deployed in the colonies. There was a general enthusiasm for joining up in defence of the country in 1793, after France declared her whole nation should sign up, which infected

the home front too. Jane Austen acquired a military style cockade of egret feathers from the Nile delta to wear on a turban, and borrowed a fez to wear to a ball in 1799 to celebrate Nelson's victory at the Battle of the Nile. But the war also meant that she was unfortunate enough to come to maturity at a time of a massive drought of marriageable men, a situation which infuses all her novels just as it does much women's fiction from post 1918.

But living in Hampshire just across the Channel from France, it was the Navy that really engaged Jane's admiration and interest and this was demonstrated most clearly in Mansfield Park and Persuasion. In Mansfield Park, the heroine Fanny Price is the eldest daughter of an impoverished naval family in Portsmouth. On her visit home, late in the novel, she is appalled by the dirt, slovenliness and drunkenness she sees. But the poverty was at least partly due to the system of pay whereby naval men on shore must exist on half pay until they are assigned to a ship. This became an important political issue and resulted in 1814 in a new peacetime pay scale. Only promotion could bring increased prospects but this often depended, as so often even today, on who you knew. Fanny's beloved brother William despairs of being promoted from midshipman after seven years because of his lack of connections. It is Henry Crawford's appeal to his admiral uncle which gets William made up to lieutenant – and at the same time places Fanny under an intolerable obligation to an unwanted suitor. Through Fanny we experience the anxiety of having a close relation away at sea at a time when communications were extremely limited and slow.

Persuasion is set in 1814 at the temporary end of the war. Of course, the characters did not know it was temporary! As they saw it, "this peace will be turning all our rich Naval officers ashore. They will be wanting a home. Many a noble fortune has been made during the war". To our eyes, there is something unpleasant about the idea of 'prize money' – commanding officers shared large bonuses for the number of ships captured and by extension men killed. For a novelist though, it provides a sudden influx of marriage prospects into a settled community at home. While Mrs Croft has remained with her husband Admiral Croft throughout his 15 years service, both at sea and on land, and

declares that 'the happiest part of my life has been spent on a ship', more common must have been the lot of poor Captain Benwick, who had to put off marriage through lack of funds while waiting for promotion, but, by the time it came, his fiancée had died. And even more common must have been the sight of men like Captain Harville, returned from the war but with significant injuries. The novel's hero, Captain Wentworth, had been made a commander following the battle of San Domingo and returned to Somerset, a rich man, and now thought a worthy suitor of Anne Elliot, having been rejected seven years earlier. Meanwhile, Henrietta and Louisa Musgrove are enthusiastic admirers of the navy – 'sailors have more worth and warmth than any other set of men in England' – in spite of their mother's continuing grief for her midshipman son lost at sea.



The Victory at drydock in Portsmouth Harbour

The only dissenting voice about the excellence of the navy in *Persuasion* is Sir Walter Elliot and he disapproves of sailors purely for snobbish reasons because it allowed men, not of noble birth, to prosper and because life at sea made their complexions unattractive. We are very clearly intended to laugh at, and disapprove of, Sir Walter. It may be significant that Anne Elliot's first speech in the novel is in praise of the navy. "The navy, I think, who have done so much for us, have at least an equal claim with any other set of men, for all the comforts and all the privileges which any home can give. Sailors work hard enough for their comforts, we must all allow."

The descriptions in *Mansfield Park*, and even more in *Persuasion*, of the adventures, dangers, triumphs and disasters which were part of a naval career, owed much to Jane Austen's two sailor brothers, Charles and Frank. Their father was a clergyman and it was traditional for younger sons of a cleric to enter the Navy. Francis, her older brother, and Charles, the younger, both enrolled at the Royal Naval Academy in Portsmouth at the age

of 12. They received a comprehensive training which included navigation, shipbuilding, maritime law and meteorology, as well as politics and diplomacy as these skills might be demanded at farflung corners of the globe. In the Navy of the time, progression through the ranks was automatic and not dependent on merit or ability, but getting onto the next step demanded patronage, hence many, like William Price, languishing as midshipmen for many years.

Frank Austen was a star pupil and after leaving the academy at age 14 he was rapidly promoted to midshipman within a year and then gained an immediate commission (possibly due to family connections via his brother James' wife). He was posted by Nelson to the Canopus and accompanied the famous Victory across the Atlantic and back in search of French and Spanish ships before joining the blockade of Cadiz. Frank missed the great victory at Trafalgar in 1805 by accident - Nelson had sent him to Gibraltar for supplies – which was a lifelong disappointment to him. Because he had no leverage or connections with Nelson's replacement, our own Admiral Collingwood, he missed out on prize money and this forced him to postpone his marriage. But the following year he did gain recognition at the battle of San Domingo, a fact celebrated by Jane by giving Captain Wentworth a similar triumph. Over the next three decades, Frank was regularly promoted until his last posting at the age of 71 as Commander in Chief of the North America and West India Station. In 1848, he came home to Portsmouth and ended up as Admiral of the Fleet in 1863 at the age of 89, which is pretty extraordinary. Frank was remembered as a quietly spoken, serious man with a strong sense of duty.

Charles, by contrast, seems to have been easy going, cheerful and enthusiastic. The depiction of the two most sympathetic sailors in Austen's novels – William Price and Frederick Wentworth – may have been an amalgamation of her brothers' best qualities. Charles was one of those junior officers who won prize money, for his part in capturing a French privateer in 1801 in the Mediterranean. Second Lieutenant Charles Austen left his frigate Endymion in an open boat with just four men and despite a fierce gale boarded the French ship, Le Scipio, and held it until reinforcements arrived next day. He was

awarded £30 in prize money and spent some of it on two amber crosses with gold chains for his sisters, Jane and Cassandra. This incident surely inspired William Price's gift of an amber cross to Fanny, just as Fanny's feelings on the return of William from the West Indies after five years – 'watching in the hall, in the lobby, on the stairs, for the first sounds of the carriage which was to bring her a brother' – must have arisen from Jane's feelings on a similar occasion. And one can easily imagine the Austen family gathered round gasping at the naval exploits Charles and Frank recounted, just like the Bertrams when William returned.



Charles was made Commander following the capture of Le Scipio and then spent seven years patrolling the Eastern seaboard of North America. Following Napoleon's escape from Elba, Charles was sent to aid the blockade of Brindisi and to suppress piracy off Greece. His ship – a 32 gun frigate – was wrecked and he struggled to find another command, forced to stay at home with his growing family on half pay. Eventually he rose to the rank of rear admiral in 1842 and commanded the British expedition during the second Anglo-Burmese war. He died of cholera on board ship in the Irawaddy in Burma in 1852.

Jane was in constant correspondence with both brothers, and, when they were not away at sea, she visited them and their families and met many other naval acquaintances. She also lived with Frank and his wife Mary in Southampton from 1806 to 1809, so it is not surprising that *Persuasion* is so full of the sea.

During the writing of *Mansfield Park*, Jane wrote to Frank asking for information about naval vessels and asking for permission to use the names of ships in which he and his brother had served. There are four ships in the novel with Austen connections – the Elephant, which Frank commanded in the Baltic, the Canopus, the Endymion and the Cleopatra in which Charles sailed home in 1811. The names would have added real authenticity for the first readers because they were still in active service when the novel was published.

Mansfield Park includes an interesting sidelight on the navy. The anti-heroine Mary Crawford grew up in the household of her uncle, the corrupt and venal Admiral Crawford, who never actually appears in the novel. Mary describes the milieu: "Certainly, my home at my uncle's brought me acquainted with a circle of admirals. Of Rears and Vices, I saw enough. Now, do not be suspecting me of a pun, I entreat". It is hard to reconcile the usual view of the modest and genteel Austen with this salacious joke. However, in the Royal Navy sodomy was a capital offence and some men, including officers, were indeed court martialled and hanged. In 1798, men on Frank Austen's ship, the London, were flogged for 'insolence, mutiny and the unnatural crime of sodomy' – the sentence recorded in the ship's log. So, it is not at all surprising that Jane should have been aware of such practices.

Although Jane lived in the naval town of Southampton for two years and took a close interest in the progress of the war, as is known from her letters, it was Portsmouth that she chose for her description of a busy dockyard. She concentrated mainly on the negative aspects of poverty, drunkenness and dirt surrounding the Price home. Her elder brothers, James and Edward, particularly admired these scenes in their responses to Mansfield Park, but her sailor brothers, Charles and Frank, by contrast did not mention them.

Chatham Naval Docks in the 19th century

Paula Byrne in 'The Real Jane Austen' speculates that Charles and Frank might have been offended by this portrayal of the



Navy, and that Jane made a deliberate effort to atone for it by painting a kinder 'and more respectful' portrait in Persuasion. There are no unflattering depictions of sailors and in

Captain Wentworth, she created her most deserving hero. He has risen in society, not through inheritance, but by hard work, courage and enterprise – a self-made man.

Jane Austen was also helped in her descriptions of naval life by another brother Henry. As a banker and military agent (after his youthful employment in the militia), he had a network of contacts who gave him insights into naval administration, facts and gossip which, as an enthusiastic promoter of her novels, he passed on to his sister. He also negotiated the promotion of Charles by labyrinthine means, inspiring the plotline of William Price's leg up from Admiral Crawford.

Charles' wife Fanny also contributed to Jane's understanding of naval life by providing the female point of view. She was a supportive and rational partner and is thought by some to be depicted in the character of Mrs Croft in *Persuasion* who declares 'The happiest part of my life has been spent on board a ship,' but also 'We none of us expect to be in smooth water all our days'.

Anne Elliot, as all heroines must, captures her man, and yet she is not without her worries. "The dread of a future war was all that could dim her sunshine. She gloried in being a sailor's wife, but she must pay the tax of quick alarm for belonging to that profession".

Jane Austen can be seen, through her descriptions of the navy in *Mansfield Park* and *Persuasion*, to be doing what is recommended to new authors – 'writing about what she knows' – not only in the domestic sphere but also about matters and events of national significance.

Anne Burton

References: Jane Austen at Home by Lucy Worsley; The Real Jane Austen by Paula Byrne



Vice Admiral Sir Edward Pellew. Naval uniforms were introduced in 1748

Why Are Bible Sales Rising So Fast?

Is Gen Z born [1997 – 2012] leading a religious revival?

Sales of Bibles have rocketed in the last few years. There has been a significant surge in sales since 2019, reaching a peak in the UK of £6,300,000 worth in 2025. [The figures were £2,600,000 in 2019]. This is very encouraging for both Christian publishers and for Christian leaders.



Sales between 2008 and 2020 were pretty much flat. The event which seems to have triggered this growing interest in Christianity and spirituality is Covid. Publishers have suggested that during lock down, and facing a world epidemic, people had time to reconsider the purpose and meaning in their lives and to reach out for texts and rules of living which they had not considered before.

Interestingly, easy and assessable versions have been rejected and most of the sales are of traditional texts, such as the English Standard version, often reworkings of the King James Bible. Gen Z wants to be challenged, for things to be difficult to read. They find this a positive factor.

There is also a trend for young people from all walks of life, to broadcast this interest. Footballers, Love Island contestants, Christian writers like Lamorna Ash, and some of Stephen Yaxley Lennon (Tommy Robinson)'s followers, for example, are quoting from the Bible, saying it offers them strength, love and stability. Reading is less devotional. Relationships can be close and personal. People will follow up celebrities or turn to the Bible in their spare time. They post videos about their experience and their close relationship with God and Jesus. Young Christians on Instagram talk of the help, support and structure that readings give them. It is a matter of trust too.

Another factor they report is that, going to school with young people of different faiths, who practice their faiths as a natural part of their lives, has led to questioning about the spiritual background of their own families. Young people are less likely to be forced to go to church now and do not have the 'Christian immunity' which many young people of previous generations developed. Bible reading is no longer seen as aberrant by some, but as a source of strength and guidance.

Margaret Vane



Readers, from now on, every month, the Church ECO GROUP have kindly said that they will offer a monthly ECO tip. Read on.....

Eco Tips



St George's Eco Group plans to provide regular "Eco Tips" - promoting ways in which we can look after God's earth, appreciate the natural environment around us and do what we can do to safeguard its future. These will be suggestions for very small changes you might be able to

make or small actions you might be able to take, and not all of them will be suitable for everyone. Please read them carefully however, and consider if the suggestion is feasible for you. Small actions will not change the world, but they will help us to feel better as well as having some small impact if enough of us do them.

Eco Tip for February 2026

When you run hot tap water, why not collect the initial cold flow of water for watering indoor plants and other uses? You could keep a handy bottle near the sink, for example an old fruit juice bottle.

Marmalade in Memory of Elizabeth

Every winter Elizabeth Rhodes (who sadly died last August) made jars and jars of delicious Seville orange marmalade which she sold to raise money for various charities. I think charities such as WERS, Children Northeast and The People's Kitchen benefitted from her kindness.

This year I thought that I would try making marmalade myself in memory of Elizabeth Rhodes. My marmalade is a family recipe made with Seville oranges, sweet oranges and lemons. Since the beginning of January, I have made 60 jars of marmalade.

Thank you to everyone who has given me empty jam jars to use and to those of you who have purchased a jar or two of marmalade. I hope it tastes as delicious as Elizabeth's did.

As both Elizabeth and myself had been long standing members of St George's choir, I have decided to sell my marmalade to raise money for the St George's Organ Restoration Fund. If you would like to donate to this good cause and have a jar of marmalade, please contact myself or Jonathan in the Parish Office. Thank you.

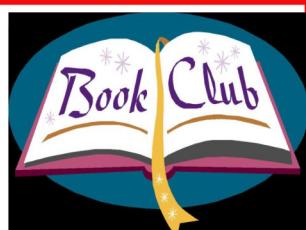
Alison Mattinson



St George's Book Group

The next meeting will be held on 25 February at 7.30pm in the church hall

The book chosen is 'My Father's House' by Joseph O'Connor.
Anne Clark



Vera and the Christmas flowers



The advent wreath (above left). The flower people (above right)

More jokes from Bristol

Christmas is over. Cinderella goes to Boots to pick up her photos. They're late.

Cinderella sighs: "One day my prints will come"

Answers to the Christmas Quiz 2025

1. What is a 'smoking Bishop'? Answer: A type of mulled wine or punch.
2. What is Father Christmas called in Germany? Answer: Der Weihnachtsmann.
3. What was the business on Acorn Road before Waitrose came? Answer: A filling station and garage called Osborne Garage.
4. What were Victorian mince pies made from? Answer: Minced beef, dried fruit, suet, spices, peel and alcohol.
5. What is the most recorded Christmas song in history? Answer: Silent Night.
6. What was the name of the supermarket before Tesco's on Acorn Road? Answer: Laws Stores.
7. In what year was the Queen's Christmas speech first televised? Answer: 1957.
8. How many spirits appeared to Scrooge in a Christmas Carol? Answer: Four: the spirits of Christmas past, present and future, and Jacob Marley.
9. What is the name of a male turkey? Answer: Gobbler [USA] or Stag [UK].
10. Which country first decorated Christmas trees? Answer: Riga, Latvia in 1510.
11. Which King was crowned on Christmas Day? Answer: William the Conqueror.
12. Where does the word 'Winter' come from? Answer: From the Germanic 'wintar', which in turn is derived from the root 'wed' meaning 'wet' or 'water'.
13. Which popular Christmas beverage is also called 'milk punch'? Answer: Eggnog.
14. What Hollywood actor played six roles in The Polar Express? Answer: Tom Hanks.
15. How many times does the number 1 appear on an Advent calendar with 24 doors? Answer: 13 times

The winner is **Luke Hill** and the runner up is **Barbara Peacock**. Please collect your prizes from the Church office. Congratulations!!

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

2811659 Articles for publication to: mmvane31@gmail.com by 15th of every month

Photos of the RGS Christmas Carol Concert at St George's



Photos by Mike Burton,
Head of Digital Media
RGS

Caption Competition Answer 1

'What do you mean Treasure Island was last year?'

Richard Pickersgill



TALES OF JESMOND

Michael Gatherer, former police officer and public speaker

**Amusing stories from the past:
Murders, indiscretions, weird
and wonderful events**

DATE: Wednesday 25th February, 19:30.

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

TICKETS: £5 each on the door.
All proceeds to charity.

Refreshments available



Church of England Calendar February 2026

- 1 Brigid, Abbess of Kildare, c.525
- 2 **The Presentation of Christ in the Temple (Candlemas)**
- 3 Anskar, Archbishop of Hamburg, Missionary in Denmark and Sweden, 865
- 4 Gilbert of Sempringham, Founder of the Gilbertine Order, 1189
- 6 The Martyrs of Japan, 1597
- 10 Scholastica, sister of Benedict, Abbess of Plombariola, c.543
- 14 Cyril and Methodius, Missionaries to the Slavs, 869 and 885
- 14 Valentine, Martyr at Rome, c.269
- 15 Sigfrid, Bishop, Apostle of Sweden, 1045
- 15 Thomas Bray, Priest, Founder of the SPCK and the SPG, 1730
- 17 Janani Luwum, Archbishop of Uganda, Martyr, 1977
- 23 Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna, Martyr, c.155
- 27 George Herbert, Priest, Poet, 1633

Understanding the Calendar:

Principal Feasts and other Principal Holy Days. Festivals.

Other Sundays & Lesser Festivals.

Commemorations in italics

Caption Competition Answers

2-4

Peter does enjoy Little Saints toddler group every week!

A new recruit for the Church Panto?!

Even the Church Panto has rejected this budding actor!

The Mattinson family



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

Parish Secretary

Jonathan Richards 281 1659

communityhub@stgeorgesjesmond.org.uk

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>

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**

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. **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); Choral Evensong

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

Website: [www.stgeorgesjesmond.org.uk](http://stgeorgesjesmond.org.uk)
Facebook: St-Georges-Church-Jesmond
Instagram: [stgeorgesjesmond](https://www.instagram.com/stgeorgesjesmond/)

Thomas N. Miller Auctioneers & Valuers

celebrating 120 years 1902 - 2022

Algernon Road, Newcastle upon Tyne NE6 2UN



Weekly Antiques & Collectors Auction.
From full house clearances to single items sold.
Probate valuations. Storage facilities.

www.millersauctioneers.co.uk

0191 265 8080

info@millersauctioneers.co.uk

