

St. George's
Jesmond



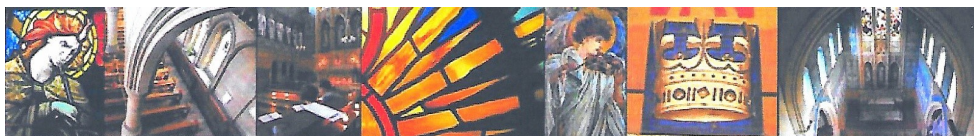
A worshipping community: inclusive, nurturing, engaged

THE LANCE

MARCH 2025



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Editorial

While we at the Lance are convinced that you can hardly live without your monthly Lance, equipment breakdown, office holidays and editorial hibernation led to the inescapable cancellation of the February issue and a promise to deliver on time for March. Here it is!

Continuing the theme of prisons and prisoners, we interview Felicity Penny, a Chaplain at Durham Prison and she shares the day-to-day experience of working in a prison, as well as reflections on the role of a Christian in this setting. The Church of England does hold services in the prison, and Felicity encourages any who would like to attend, to contact the Chaplain's Office at the prison. There is an opportunity for tea and biscuits afterwards, and a quiet chat with the prisoners. This is something an earlier writer on prison visiting in the Lance said was much appreciated by the prisoners.



The Baltic is showing an exhibition of women prisoners' work under the guidance of the charity, Koestler Art.

There is a brave and largely successful attempt at extricating the existential meanings, indeed the plot, from the Church Panto with photos, and we celebrate the coming of acceptable non-alcoholic drinks, although not much in evidence at the Panto!

We offer competitions, celebrations and an encouragement to remember the great gifts we are given as Christians. May Spring be around the corner for us all.

Margaret Vane

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Clergy Letter:

Home communion



The church where I grew up held some communion services in people's homes, often before a bible study or a discussion group. Ten or a dozen of us would take turns to host these services. This was in part a reaction to the widely used phrase "the House of God". Our vicar wanted to echo Solomon's prayer that "heaven and the highest heaven cannot contain you; how much less this house which I have built!" (1 Kings 8:27) He was keen to show that we did not lock God up for the night for security reasons, although on reflection it is an understandable temptation. Letting God loose in our world could be a greater challenge than we seek.

Faith in the incarnation is faith that Christ, the second person of the Trinity, was embodied in flesh. A tangible sign of this is the presence of Jesus in bread and wine. Our God is not a concept but an embodied person: sharing bread and wine in our own homes demonstrated that God was present in our own personal space. There was no escape from his presence. Communion at home recaptured the practice of the early church before the construction of church buildings. It was also an act of solidarity with regions where practising the Christian faith was dangerous or where no building was available.

The underlying principles that formed my early experiences of communion services at home apply to home communions for those unable to come to church for whatever reason. The God who cannot be contained in St George's can be embodied at home. If you become ill you may not be able to attend church for a while. You can livestream the service or watch it at a more convenient time later in the day, but it's not the same.

Many people who can no longer get to church receive communion at home. One of the clergy or authorised lay people arrange to visit at a convenient time. They bring bread and wine that has already been consecrated at St George's. There is a short service consisting of the confession and absolution, a reading or two, some prayers for the church and the world, the Lord's Prayer and an invitation to communion. All that is needed is a small table and a heart that is open to God. There is no need to

clean the house from top to bottom. God is already present in the untidiness of our homes and loves us as we are, even when we feel distressed that our dignity is slipping away from us.

The ministry of taking communion to people in their homes is one way in which the church says that you are still a valued member of St George's and that you matter. Sometimes people are reluctant to ask for home communion, either because they don't want to make work for someone else or because it's hard to accept the erosion of independence. Maybe it is possible to reframe such a request as an acknowledgment of our need for God. For those of us who bring communion to people it is a privilege to meet this need.

If you would like to receive communion at home, either monthly, fortnightly or just occasionally, contact Debbie or the Parish Office.

Bryan Vernon

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An Interview with a Prison Chaplain from Durham Prison

As of 2022, Durham is a reception prison for remand adult/ young male prisoners, primarily serving the courts of County Durham, Tyne and Wear, Teeside and Cumbria. It is divided into seven wingspan secure units, a segregation section and a healthcare section. The prison offers part-time education to all inmates, including courses on data input, bricklaying, woodworking, painting and decorating, waste management and gardening.



Prison chaplains play a crucial role within the UK's prisons, providing spiritual guidance, emotional support, and a sense of community to prisoners. The presence of prison chaplains is an integral aspect of the rehabilitation process, ensuring that prisoners have access to religious and moral support during their stay. Each prison establishment has a number of chaplains who work as members of a multi-faith team with all members of the prison community: staff, prisoners and other agencies.

To become a prison chaplain, you must be in a recognized faith community, either lay or ordained. You are not required to have formal qualifications in theology but have experience of pastoral and spiritual care and have held a leading role in your faith community.

Felicity Penny is a part-time Catholic Chaplain at HMP Durham, job sharing this position with Deacon Mick Wood. They serve in a male-only reception prison in the centre of Durham. She kindly agreed to answer questions about the service and to expand on her experience in this very busy prison.

WHAT IS YOUR BACKGROUND LEADING UP TO BECOMING A CHAPLAIN?

My background was in education with experience ranging from early years to higher education, mainly specializing in the management of challenging behaviour. However, I

retired from education as a Catholic head teacher in Northumberland. I was head teacher of Catholic Schools but was lucky enough to have had opportunities to teach in a range of settings from a girls public school to a secure unit for child offenders. I was fortunate because what I learnt was that despite the vastly differing contexts, we all simply need to engage with each other



with mutual respect, seeking to meet each other's needs and learn to live together. I worked with Alison Kay, the founder of The People's Kitchen in the early years at The Soup Kitchen under the bridge on Dean Street. I also served as a magistrate for over 20 years. Although I have worked in a variety of contexts, key themes from Catholic social teaching, such as promoting the common good and upholding the God-given dignity have been key principles that have guided me in paid and voluntary work.

WHAT DID YOUR TRAINING AS A CHAPLAIN CONSIST OF?

Once employed, there is a national training scheme that offers courses which we are encouraged to attend. Our formation is continued by reflecting on our ministry with colleagues in the team and through peer support. While we are a group of very streetwise and experienced people, we need to be constantly discerning how we engage with the whole of the prison community. The quality of our relationships across the prison is paramount but obviously security can never be compromised.

CHAPLAINCY IS INTER-FAITH. HOW DO YOU INTERACT WITH CHAPLAINS FROM DIFFERENT FAITHS?

This is a massive strength of the chaplaincy Team in HMP Durham which is ably led by our Imam Managing Chaplain. We have chaplains from a range of faiths and none: Christian (Anglican, Catholic, Orthodox, Free-Church) Muslim, Jewish, Sikh, Buddhist, Humanist and Pagan. During our Remembrance Day Service, all members of the chaplaincy team join with prisoners reading from both sacred and secular texts. Our Sikh Chaplain wisely remarked that all Faiths are working towards the same goal: to encourage people to work together for the greater good, following the teaching of a greater power.

IN YOUR EXPERIENCE, WHAT DO THE PRISONERS VALUE MOST FROM SEEING YOU?

I think it is that I accept them as they are. I don't always know what they have done. I am simply with them. Acceptance is key to everything. All of us need to recognize and acknowledge that we are only one decision away from making a life-changing bad decision. Can you



imagine if we were all defined by the worst thing we have done! How horrendous would that be! Everyone should not be solely defined by the worst thing they have done! I have witnessed men in prison ministering to each other. One particularly vulnerable man with mental health needs, who was unkempt and regularly taking drugs, was gently washed by others in his wing. They restored at least some of his dignity.

ARE PRISONERS A SPECIAL CASE?

The prison population has a high incidence of people suffering from untreated mental health disorders which affect their behaviour. This is an obvious and massive problem. Many cannot write or read confidently. 14% of these men have, according to the figures in the Reith Lectures 2024, suffered from childhood trauma. But the biggest problem is the brokenness of these people. Often, they have only sporadically attended school, rarely experienced stable or safe home environments and, prior to custody, led incomprehensively chaotic existences. There is little structure in their lives. For me, apart from the obvious and pernicious reality of prison overcrowding, the biggest scourge is the Recall System. In the past, a prisoner released from prison into the community would be given three or more chances before being re-called back to prison. Now they have only one chance, perhaps a missed appointment or a late return to an Approved Premises, and the person finds themselves immediately recalled back to prison. The Criminal Justice System is overwhelmed by the volume of prisoners in the whole system.

WHAT CAN A PRISONER EXPECT WHEN THEY ARRIVE?

Durham is the 'Reception Prison' for the Northeast, serving all courts from the Tees Valley to the Borders, and from the Northeast Coast to Carlisle. Anyone remanded into custody from these courts will initially come through HMP Durham. Once a prisoner arrives in Durham they follow an induction process. There is a health check and a welfare

check. There is a security process; the men are searched, unauthorised items such as mobile phones are not allowed in possession and held in their property boxes, prison clothing issued. We receive up to 40 men a day following court and they all must be inducted into the prison. Then, they are classified according to the seriousness and nature of their crime.

The population here is considerable, circa 985 men, and ever changing, which presents its own problems. Alongside operational staff, there is a team of permanent 'non-operational' staff, comprising but not exclusively: health and welfare workers, people specializing in drug reduction, housing, children and family issues, and the DWP. These services have been contracted out to external agencies. As chaplains, we endeavour to signpost the men to the right service. There can be issues of serious illness or bereavement, and chaplains can support initial contact with the families. We can be asked to tell one of the men, when someone in their family has a serious illness or has died. We try to be present with them, offering support. If the man is not permitted to attend the funeral for reasons of security, we can say prayers with him in the chapel. Chaplaincy, with the consent of Security, can organize live-streaming of funerals. We are also in touch with the bereaved family on the outside and their concerns and wishes are central. Sometimes, the family does not want their family member in prison to attend. In such a situation, the family's wishes are respected.

Chaplains carry keys which open cell doors and allow us to speak with the men face to face. I must stress however that operational staff are always aware that we are on their wing and we wholly rely on them to keep us safe. There is a daily round for chaplaincy to visit prisoners in the Healthcare and the Segregation Unit. Men are placed in the Segregation Unit for committing further offences while being in prison, but in that unit, we will not open the cell door unless accompanied by at least two members of Operational Staff. If staff are unavailable, we will speak to the men through the observation panel. However, best practice is that we see them face to face. The prison officers are vigilant and protective of us at all times.

THE REITH LECTURES TALKED ABOUT FORGIVENESS AND THE OFFER TO START AGAIN SOMETIMES THROUGH FAITH. WHAT ARE YOUR VIEWS ON THIS?

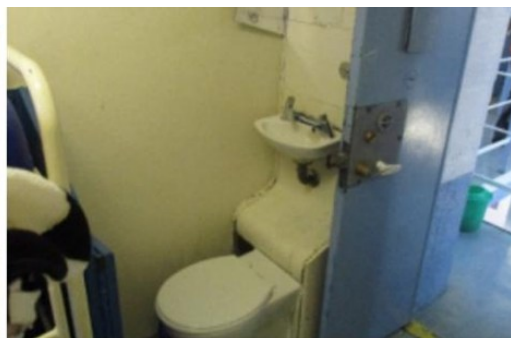
I cannot give forgiveness. That must come from God and from their victim or their family. We humans are all a messy mixture. What a chaplain can offer a prisoner is acceptance. As Christians we can talk about the structures of our faith, the Gospels and the Ten Commandments. The Iman will talk about the Hadiths. We all try to point a way

to valuing life and to living well. We have a lovely chapel built in 1819 in which services are held every week: Christian, Muslim, Sikh and when possible, Buddhist and Pagan. There are Services throughout the week for the different denominations, so there can be a Church of England service one Sunday, a Catholic or a Free Church Service, etc.. A Catholic Mass is celebrated every Friday morning by a rota of diocesan priests and attended by Catholic prisoners. Both the Church of England and Catholic bishops will lead a service over Christmas with the C of E Archdeacon visiting on Christmas Day.

Durham Prison, as I have already said, has a particular function and so there is a large churn of population. The aim of Durham is to send those there to a 'settled' jail. These jails, like HMP Northumberland, HMP Holme House and on occasion HMP Frankland, can offer the men courses, activities and bespoke programmes to enable and support rehabilitation.

DO YOU KEEP IN CONTACT WITH THE MEN AFTER THEIR RELEASE?

No. We signpost the men to other services and communities, and with the exception of the Street Pastor we do not encourage sustained personal contact.



Inside HM Durham Prison; photos from Northern Echo with thanks

WHAT HAPPENS AT THE POINT THAT THE MEN ARE RELEASED?

We see them the week before they are released. The most important question is, 'Have you got somewhere to stay?' Some do not, and then they are sent to 'approved premises', which are often truly awful. Sometimes men are sent far away from their home area. Often a due-to-be-released prisoner will say to: 'Miss, see you next week', because re-offending and coming back into the security of prison-life is preferable to the uncertainty and danger of community life staying on the street.

HOW CAN THE COMMUNITY AND THE CHURCH HELP YOU WITH THE REALITY OF PRISON LIFE?

Community links are hugely important. Students from Durham University Catholic Society, for instance, come into the prison for weekly Mass, sharing tea and coffee with the men afterwards. Angel Tree is a charity which buys Christmas presents for the children of prisoners. Only this year it supported 30 boxes that reached prisoner families for Christmas. [St George's Parish supports this charity]. Official prison visitors also provide friendly, non-judgmental contact with the outside world.



The men are out of their cells daily depending on if they are unemployed, part time worker or full time worker. They can have a TV in the cell, but most cells are shared now. There is a kettle so the men can make tea and coffee in their cells. Prisoners eat their meals in their cells but can supplement these by ordering goods through a prison-based catalogue-type system. The men can earn small amounts of money in prison doing work [*e.g.*, gardening or warehousing], but if they have no funds there are few ways to buy treats [such as tea and coffee] or extra food. Whilst those convicted are obliged to work, anyone on remand has the choice.

If any of the men becomes depressed or suicidal, an ACCT (Assessment for Care in Custody Teamwork) is triggered. This is a concerted effort of a multi-agency team, including the chaplaincy, who try to identify mitigating factors and unite to work to improve the overall state of the prisoner and their outlook.

The Church is called to the dignity and self-worth of every person. We need to practise the discipline of trying to find the good in everyone and build on it. Pope Francis has said that every saint has a past and every sinner has a future. The Church has the vocation to promote and develop the potential of every human being, including the men in Durham Prison.

Almost Home: 70 works by women in criminal justice settings

Baltic Centre for Contemporary Art, Gateshead

19 February – 11 May 2025

Gallery opening times: Wednesday – Sunday, 10.00am to 6.00pm. Entrance Free

The show will present an array of fine art, design, writing and music from prisons, secure hospitals and probation services in the North East, all entered into the 2024 Koestler Awards for arts in the criminal justice system. The show features 70 works from the region, selected after a week The Koestler Arts team spent working with 6 women in the prison's art class.

The selected works reflect the women's viewpoint, looking outwards and forwards towards freedom and home. Many works portray movement and journeys while others depict rural landscapes, city skylines, places of worship, comfort food and pets, in recognition of what 'home' can mean to different people.



Feedback cards will be available in the space for visitors to write comments on their favourite pieces in the exhibition, which will be sent on to the artists. There will also be opportunities to purchase exhibited artwork from the Koestler Arts website.

Koestler Arts is the UK's best-known prison arts charity. We encourage people in the criminal justice system to change their lives by participating in the arts. We share their artworks with the public, so people can witness this diverse range of voices, stories and talent.



We aim to:

- Help prisoners, secure patients and detainees lead more positive lives by motivating them to participate and achieve in the arts.
- Increase public awareness and understanding of the arts by people in the criminal justice system.
- Be a dynamic, responsive organisation which achieves excellent quality and value for money.



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Friends of St George's: a correction

The date of the Friends' Dinner will be **FRIDAY 6th June 2025**.

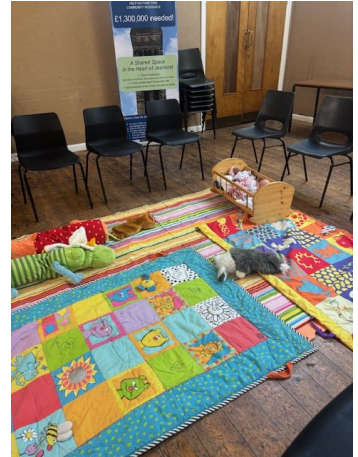
Please check your diaries and amend.

Thank you

Spotlight on Service: Little Saints, an Update

Little Saints continues to grow from strength to strength with the addition of our 'Early Years' trained retired teacher Maggie Paczek now part of the team, joining Jenny Click and myself. Maggie has introduced a very popular sandpit, a den which can be adapted to become Halloween Heaven or Santa's Special Space as the seasons change, plus a garage, a railway and numerous other delightful and creative play areas, all set up with her wonderfully infectious enthusiasm and joie de vivre.

Every Monday afternoon, Little Saints is the 'place to be' and it is so lovely that one mum has labelled us 'The Warm Hug Playgroup'. We continue to represent the nations with families from the USA, Lebanon, Serbia, Iran, Poland, China, Scotland, France and the UK. And Jenny, Maggie and I hope and pray this outreach work we are undertaking sends out a very positive message to the wider community that at St George's we are a loving, caring group of St George's worshippers providing a safe, warm, inclusive, happy space for children every Monday apart from Bank Holidays.



Interestingly, most of the children of the fourteen families who attend regularly are boys. What is so rewarding has been to discover the mums meet up outside of the session and are mutually supportive when partners are away on business etc. etc.

It is a joy and a privilege to run Little Saints, engaging with mums, dads, grandparents and professional nannies. They keep us young and Monday afternoons are certainly never ever boring!

Christine Rowland



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It's Behind You - Thank Goodness

A short academic review of the compelling themes of the 2025 Pantomime



What do hens, an esteemed royal court, a hairdressing salon, a pie factory and a legendary Geordie food outlet have in common? Well, it's obvious, isn't it? They all feature in the latest St George's masterpiece. "The True story of Chicken Licken and Henny Penny." Billed as "A Really Cunning Pantomime" cunning it was, with more plans than Blackadder's Baldrick.

Happily, the setting of the café, run by the buxom Georgina Reggs, King's Baker, (hats off to valiant James) and sister Gertrude, our twinkly Tabitha, was a safe bet for the first scene, where Henny Penny and friends were gathered drinking cappuccinos. You can't go wrong with G Reggs, that prized Geordie institution. Nor can you beat a good old sing song of "Food Glorious food" extolling the virtues of stotties, bacon and brown sauce. Classic line. "Us Geordie's love our bait!" The audiences loved it, despite the absence of rhyming.



The rendition of "Reggs, Reggs, Georgina Reggs" to the tune of "Mud glorious Mud" was less straightforward. Not often in a pantomime do you need to consult the Chambers Dictionary on your phone, but I must admit I was momentarily stumped

by the phrase "Now let us wallow in oxymoron!" Obviously, I had come across the word before. "Oh yes I had!" As for the plot, I will try to briefly unravel it lest you lose the will to live.

The "Goodies" are Henny Penny, Chicken Licken and their vast local menagerie. Such was the clamour to join this worthy production, that Graham and Catherine had to come up with many creatively named animals such as, Floppy Hoppy, Curly Whirly, Murky Turkey and more.

Henny Penny, as Chicken Licken's mother, was Pantomime Dame. With much clucking and flapping, tangled blond wig hanging on precariously, Stephen managed to lose the padded bust, shades of Les Dawson's Ada. This went down well with the audience. Talking of wigs, Georgina Regg's shocking pink was very Vivienne Westwood, Mike's Mucky Ducky manky wig was particularly "fowl" and Alan's curly black wig (Black and White minstrel's cast off?) was "strangely attractive" and really suited him! Just a random thought Alan, your Lancashire "Calm Down" and "Bloomin Heck!" were compelling! A career as a standup comedian beckons, only you'd have to learn the words.



Hero of the piece was one General Dogsboddy, recently promoted having inadvertently foiled a plot to kill the king. (NB. Aidan, if you're looking for further job opportunities, having skills of sleuthing and the ability to learn a bizarre script, President Trump might be interested!) As a hero, General Dogsboddy had to have a lovesick admirer. Step forward the lovely Elisa who managed to become his maid, but it went no further as Georgina Reggs had her eye on him, and you can't compete with a global emporium.



Dogsbody's employer, Bossy Boots the King, Bryan, imposing in DJ, bow tie and crown looked slightly less regal in shortie pyjamas, and I worried for his knees during a dance routine and his mental state as he muttered "What is this nonsense? Who knows!" Joan, as Queen Esmerelda, managed to maintain her dignity even with hair in rollers, but she too seemed at a loss. "The plot has so many bends, that I can't keep up, I don't know about you." If the cast didn't know what was going on, heaven help the audience!



Being royalty, a retinue was required, made up of puppy dogs, a wolfhound and a seagull. All played with great enthusiasm by our rising superstars, Iris, Halle, Tilly and Isabel. (Remember, you first saw them at St George's!) Not to mention, the king's wingman, Lieutenant Parrot, played by Donald with his usual gusto. The children just loved him. Master of disguise, last week a Christingle, this week a parrot. What next Donald?

On to "The Baddies" Foxie Loxy, the villain of the piece, played roguishly by Tom Klenka with swishing bushy tail, had been sacked by the King for stealing chickens and food to meet the demands of his dysfunctional family. Wife Veronica, moaned with anguish. (Debbie, you've only been here a few months, cheer up, you'll get used to us!) and nagging mother-in-law, Harmonica, who also gave hubby Reynard and poor Bushy Tail a hard time. Rosie's convincing Eastenders accent was used most appropriately; she sounded just like Catherine Tate's nan.

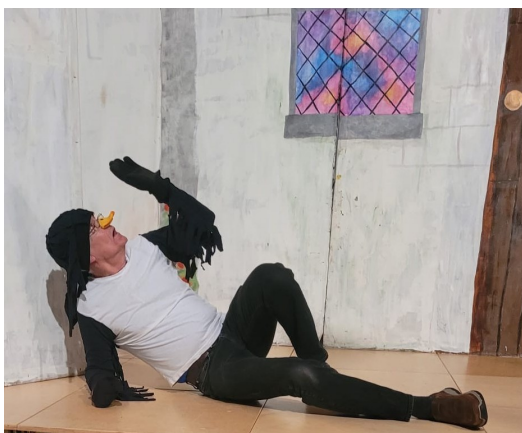


Keen to avenge his sacking by eating the entire menagerie, Foxie Loxy came up with a plan worthy of Mr Bean. He would open an animals hairdressing salon called Foxy Locksie, lure in the animals, imprison them in pies, and send them to Georgina Reggs to bake, telling the King that it was she that had stolen the chickens. It's obvious isn't it? "Oh yes, it is!"



This being a traditional tale, the sky had to fall in one way or another. Eureka! Henny Penny, under duress, told the animals that the sky was about to fall in, and the rain would ruin their hair. The flapping and panic as the animals reacted to this news caused children in the audience much hilarity. Pure Panto!

Obviously, in the end they were rumbled by General Dogsbody and Georgina Reggs. There was rumpus at the salon, reminiscent of the Gunfight at OK Corral, albeit the weapons of choice were bottles of shampoo and hairspray. The animals escaped, Foxie Loxy was captured and taken to the King for due punishment. "Off with his head!" shouted the audience who by this time had had enough. But leniency prevailed and Foxie Loxy was made to swear on a Fox's Glacier Mint to behave and become a vegan. Relief all round.



The minds of some members of St George's surely work in mysterious ways and the clever scriptwriters strive not only to entertain, but also to enlighten at every opportunity. "I was hit by a bus, that made me want to cus!" Hurly Burly complained to Bushy the

hairdresser! Cue for a detailed description of the erstwhile Newcastle Trolley Bus system and its ecofriendly benefits. Point taken. Did you get that Kay?

Yes, St George's has got talent!

Much awe and respect to Rutt/Laidler/Tan/ Cappleman productions who did a great job. Hats off to the helpful people, to the pianist and prompt, and Well done to the resilient cast who kept us royally entertained. And the cake – wine intermission was a feast, so thanks too to Linsley and her crew.



We have a posse of wonderful youngsters who show great promise, and I must mention the sheer bravery of our Ukrainian friends, Markian, Yulia and Matvii who tackled this unique British tradition and were able to deliver in a foreign language. I wonder what their families back home would make of it?

And as for the audience, so crucial to success, the Mmatinee crowd excelled themselves. The children were amazing. They shouted and cheered and clapped and obviously had a jolly good time which is what it's all about.

Surely the message to our much-appreciated new vicar Debbie, applies to everyone, cast and audience alike.

"Welcome Debbie, hip-hip hooray
We all hope you're here to stay
As you join our gathered throng
We hope you feel that you belong

Disclaimer. I swear to apologise on a Fox's Glacier Mint for omissions, errors or anything inappropriate.

Maggie



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After-words about the Pantomime

Quotes from the audience

Stephen's clucking was excellent!

I'm a bit scared Mummy that Foxy's going to eat me

It's a man! (said when James was weeping)

Loved that James managed to act even whilst he was holding the script in his hands

Feedback from the kids

I really like the play and how it worked out in his speech.

It was really interesting and I had fun. I like my character.

I like the play. I learn a lot of speech and I love it.

I really enjoyed playing [my part] in the pantomime. I liked thinking about what my character would be like, what they would wear, and how they would react.

Going to dress rehearsals was fun, and I also liked seeing the show come together.

One of the best bits was learning and performing the songs.

My favourite song to sing was 'Reggs, Reggs, Georgina Reggs'.

I'm looking forward to next year's panto.

And from a Dad:

From my side, I enjoyed how they played their roles.

It's fantastic that kids have opened and developed new skills.

They have never taken part in real theatre scenes and they loved it.

From a mum:

... thanks for the panto this year, I'm always so impressed with all the work you put in to make it work, xxxx always enjoys being in it, and takes it very seriously 😊, she'd love to be in the next one.

And from the writers:

Wow, what a cast. 26!! Quantity and quality.

Fantastic audiences, thank you.

Finally, from lieutenant parrot:

Sqwaaaaaaak.

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Our Christmas HUB fund-raising results



St. George's
Community Hub

On the run up to Christmas I set a challenge that I wasn't sure could be achieved, to raise £15,000 by the end of Christmas for the HUB. I did this because that was the amount needed to enable Paul Baird, our fundraiser, to begin to apply to the bigger funding bodies; it was a watershed moment.

I hope this isn't the first time you have heard of the appeal, as I mentioned it in everything we did over the Christmas Period, in Sunday Services and in all the events we held and hosted. And I watched and listened and waited. I watched - As people caught hold of a vision and responded.

The vision

*To have the space just off the North Aisle to provide mission and ministry.....

*A room, specifically for Christian purposes – for teaching and nurturing, for Sundays and Midweeks, for young and not so young. For Smarties to start up again in a space where they can always have resources set up for them, for youth to begin to meet, for Baptism, Wedding and Funeral visits to take place in a warm and welcoming space, for Bible studies and Lent groups, for bereavement groups and much more. A space from which we can run Messy Church, a space that is Church and yet isn't the huge, grand space of St George's Nave and Chancel. A space for growth and nurture. A space that will always be available for Church use.....

*Toilets onsite for young and not so young; to be able to use the facilities without the walk across the site to the hall.

*A space for parents and the very young to take a break from the noise of the service.....

*A space where people can meet with God and one another in a less formal setting than the main body of the Church. A space of encounter.....

The response which came from every service was one of generosity – people from every event giving what they could to enable the vision to be brought about.

The result - £16,529.10 raised by the end of the Christmas period. £1529.10 more than requested and perhaps an awful lot more than your new Vicar dreamed was possible.

So, thank you. Thank you for what you have given, either as a result of this appeal or previously, financially or in the use of your time and talents. Thank you for catching hold of a vision and striving together to see it achieved.

I am so excited about this project and I long to see the building built, because I know that it will further the Christian outreach of this Church in ways that cannot be met currently.

There is still a long way to go however, financially and physically; and of course the Church extension is only a part of the bigger picture – the Church Hall, which serves both church and the wider community will also be improved in years to come.....

But the church has to come first, allowing us to provide essential facilities - like toilets, a kitchenette, and a meeting space - immediately improving accessibility and comfort for our congregation and visitors. These additions will support our ministry, events, and community outreach while the hall renovation plans can progress with minimal disruption of our current activities. Once the extension is in place, we can continue our work while focusing on rebuilding the hall for an even more welcoming, modern space in the future. This phased approach ensures we meet both present and future needs efficiently.

Exciting times ahead – may God be with us in all of them.

Rev Debbie





Christmas Appeal

£15000

Help us apply to the biggest trusts for matched grants!



£257,000
raised so far!

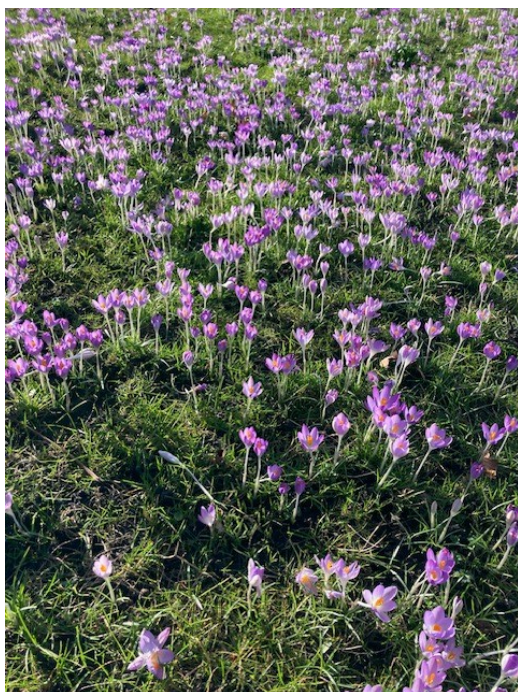
Have your say:

How would you use the Community Hub?

See overleaf for: Contacts; More Information; Donations.



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Blistering Beautiful

“Letters
Column”



Firstly, I am very grateful to Enid for dealing with rubbish on the church green and for collecting non-standard items for recycling.

In December’s issue Enid explained the dilemma of continuing to collect medicine blister packs when it might result in Superdrug adding to their profits rather than them making a charitable donation. In my opinion it is important to recycle as much as possible so, if Enid still thinks it is worth her efforts, I would prefer the collection to continue. If it does, I know Enid would ask everyone not to put the packs in bags.

Best wishes,

Jackie Spencer

I am absolutely for the idea of recycling blister packs, whether a donation goes to Marie Curie or not.

Far better than putting all of that plastic and aluminium into landfill or an incinerator. For context, medicine blister packs are not typically recyclable because they cost more to collect and recycle than the resulting recycled materials are worth. Having done a little Googling, I think some money does go to Marie Curie, but the story is quite complicated:

- Enid takes the packs collected at church to a Superdrug pharmacy.
- Superdrug don’t do the work themselves – they ship the collected blister packs to a specialist recycler, TerraCycle.
- TerraCycle shred the packs into fine pieces in specialised recycling centres, so that the plastic can be separated from the aluminium. The metal goes into secondary metals manufacturing (like garden fencing) and the plastic into plastic blends for things like plastic pipes.
- TerraCycle does award ‘TerraCycle points’ for collected waste – which can be redeemed as a monetary donation to a school, charity or non-profit of Superdrug’s choice. But the payment is made by Terracycle.

It is possible for an individual to collect and send their blister packs to TerraCycle

directly, but they would have to pay for the 'Zero Waste' collection bags and take them to one of the >5,000 InPost Lockers nationwide. By contract, the Superdrug programme is free to members of the public, because Superdrug is funding the costs of collecting and the logistics of sending the packs to TerraCycle.

Thank you Enid for this initiative and helping us all reduce the waste we create!

Kay Plumley



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A Thank You and a Plea

Many folk at St George's will be aware that the end of 2024 was a challenging time for me, and for Ian. I had an 'abnormal' result from the bowel cancer screening test that I was sent in the post in October. It was a complete shock as I'd had no symptoms. After further investigations I had to undergo a major operation in early December to remove a tumour and 60% of my colon.

Awaiting results was particularly hard. My anxiety resulted in me finding communicating, even praying, difficult. While recovering from the surgery I had to wait for the biopsy results. Thankfully, just before Christmas I was told that I would need no further treatment. My consultant surgeon and specialist nurse were clearly delighted to be able to give good news. I was very fortunate that my tumour was caught early, which is the aim of the screening programme.

During this period, I have been blessed with wonderful support from my family and my friends, many from St George's – too many to thank individually. In fact, I am grateful for a lot of things:

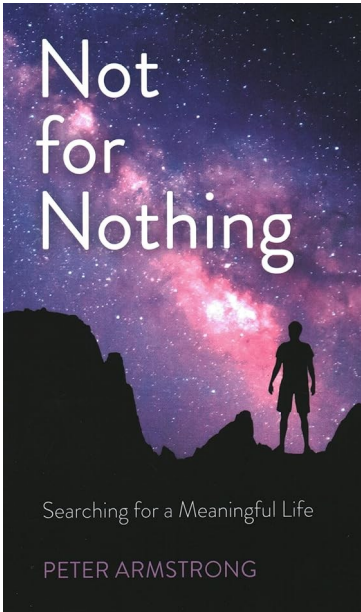
- patience and understanding regarding communications, including spiritual guidance;
- prayers and good wishes;
- encouragement to stay positive from those who have had a similar experience;
- those who kindly covered my turn on rotas;
- and of course the skill and care of the colorectal team at the RVI.

Now I'm well on the road to recovery from the operation. I feel I owe it to the colorectal team to encourage everyone to take advantage of cancer screening, so please don't ignore those envelopes.

With my thanks,
Jackie Spencer

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Producer of 'The Sea of Faith' to speak in Newcastle



The Progressive Christianity Network, Newcastle is delighted to announce that Peter Armstrong, television and radio producer, including the 6-part series 'The Sea of Faith', will be speaking on Tuesday, 13th May, 2025, 7pm, at Brunswick Methodist Church, off Northumberland Street, Newcastle.

Peter will be speaking about his book, 'Not for Nothing: Searching for a Meaningful Life'. The book was first published in 2020 by Christian Alternative Books. The author studied philosophy and theology at Oxford. He worked for 20 years in BBC religious television and 30 years as an independent filmmaker. Awards include a Bafta Lifetime Achievement Award in 2004. As well as producing 'The Sea of Faith' series he was co-author of 'Who was Jesus?' with Don Cupitt and worked on the television programmes 'Everyman' and 'Heart of the Matter'.

Today Peter is co-founder, with his wife Anuradha, of EmpathyMedia.org combining the power of empathy and the power of media to help bring about a fairer, greener world.

Progressive Christianity Network, Newcastle was founded 13 years ago for open discussion and attracts people from several denominations and none to their monthly meetings. It is affiliated to Progressive Christianity Britain which is part of an international network of progressive Christian organisations. Further information about PCN can be found on www.pcnbritain.org.uk

Admission to the talk costs £8 and tickets can be bought through the PCN website or at the door. Light refreshments are included and will be served from 6.30pm. All welcome.

For more details, please contact liz.temple@pcnbritain.org.uk

A Revolution in Our Drinks and in Our Behaviour is at the Door

You might have thought that there was little choice if you wanted a non-alcoholic drink in a bar. You could choose a mineral water or a coke or insipid elderflower spritzes, and there is sometimes that pressure, especially for men it seems, that one was missing out, indeed turning one's back on the company.

Not any longer.

The growth in the sale of non-alcoholic drinks in this country, indeed the world, has been staggering. They are now worth £380 million pounds per year from a very low start, and the 'Lo and No Movement' has gained a following and been noticed. There are non-alcohol sections in some bars and pubs. The 'Sober Inclusion' movement is trying to challenge the stigma associated with refusing an alcoholic drink and claim that fun and companionship can be had just as well without alcohol. Sommeliers are taking courses in what tempting drinks they can offer to clients not keen on alcohol. Cocktail masterclasses are being held in various cities to educate cocktail makers in the huge diversity of products that can now go into mocktails from fruit juices, to herbs, teas and kombucha.



It has been estimated that over 50 million people joined 'dry January' in 2025. They had a number of reasons ranging from hoping to experience better sleep, saving money, health reasons and staying sober for the next day's work. And there is now another popular technique for cutting down alcohol consumption, but staying to the party... zebra striping. In this instance, drinkers alternate between an alcoholic drink and a non-alcoholic drink. It has been estimated that a quarter of young people already practice this, and since young people are the biggest users of pubs and clubs, this behaviour change is having a profound effect on the industry. These movements are making us all more mindful of our drinking habits and stress that it is not com-



pulsory to always drink alcohol, or a good idea, and that one will no longer be sneered at or laughed at if one chooses something soft.

The cost of these drinks is somewhat contentious. Tax or alcohol duty is levied on a drink containing alcohol according to its ABV rate [alcohol by volume] on a sliding scale together with a further charge of 20% VAT.

Soft drinks [less than 1.2 % alcohol

per volume] are charged at 5% VAT. And yet there is only a small difference between these two beverages in the pub, shop or club. A bottle of gin can cost £35 - £40 where a bottle of non- alcoholic Sipsmith gin costs around the same. Brewers point to the difficulty of production, the smallness of the batches compared to the alcoholic versions of the drink, and the fact that they need to use more ingredients in the low alcohol versions to make them palatable as reasons for their high price point. How is the alcohol removed? There are three ways. Firstly distillation, secondly reverse osmosis using a filter which removes alcohol molecules after a traditional brewing method, and finally, the use of 'limit fermentation ' where yeasts are stopped from producing alcohol at various points in production. All are difficult to achieve and reverse osmosis requires expensive equipment. The brewer must be particularly skilled because ' alcohol hides a multitude of sins ' and often for the beer to taste delicious, every aspect of the brewing process must be perfect.

The Bristol Beer Factory produces a non- alcoholic beer called Clearhead. They use the reverse osmosis technique which means that the beer is brewed conventionally and then subject to a filtering process. Clearhead now accounts for 20% of production much to the surprise of the company. In 2012, they experienced the usual Christmas rush and big sales of beer generally, and found that January was completely dead with virtually no sales. In January 2024 however, they continued to sell well and even sold more non-alcoholic beer than alcoholic beer. The company have projected that, in 10 years, 50% of all beer made by the firm will be alcohol-free. Their beer prices are instructive. A pint of traditional lager is £6.30 and a pint of the alcohol-free version is £5.60.

Along with a growing interest in new non-alcoholic brands comes the creation of



awards and competitions. The first wholly non-alcohol- based drinks award scheme is now three years old and judged annually. While this trend originally grew in northern Europe and America, it has spread to southern Europe, Asia, Thailand and the Middle East. Judges are having to acquire new skills and invent new terminology. There is a new confidence and while some consider the holy grail to be palatable non-alcoholic wines, others are experimenting with botanicals, fruits, teas and herbs and creating exciting and original elixirs which claim to have the intensity and pleasure of the greatest alcohol-based drinks. This may become 'a third way of drinking.'

Another factor is that there are wealthy countries where alcohol is prohibited on religious grounds. The Middle East is now showing a strong demand for these non-alcoholic beverages. They do not produce them themselves but import from producer countries. Sales are particularly strong at sporting events where interesting new alternatives are offered, especially to the young.

CAMRA's research wing has found that up to 75% of people want to moderate their intake of alcohol. They have become more aware of the physical and mental impact of drinking on their well-being. The young also want to socialise in public without having to drink alcohol. The sale of Guinness Zero was so strong at Christmas, some pubs ran dry. While the stigma of preferring a non-alcoholic drink remains in some circles, often male, with the advent of zebra striping, delicious alternative mocktails and alcohol-free beers, there is now real choice and an exciting world of new drinks to explore.

Margaret Vane



Alcohol Free Amaretto Sour

Ingredients

100ml pineapple juice

50ml lemon juice

i/2 egg white

10ml syrup [from cocktail cherries]

A few drops of almond extract



Method - using a cocktail shaker or a blender

Add all ingredients together and using a cocktail shaker or a blender, whizz at high speed until the liquid begins to increase in volume. Add ice, pour into pretty glasses and garnish with a cocktail cherry.

St George's Repairs



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Going Green and Saving Money... what's not to like?

St George's continues to think creatively about its energy bills and its green credentials and this month, the replacing of the light bulbs in our candelabra in church, will do just that.

Electro Genius Ltd, Middleborough are the electro contractors who have replaced our conventional bulbs with new LED bulbs. They will give a better quality of light. They also use much less

electricity thus saving both our energy expenditure but also helping our carbon footprint, because we use less energy.

The old fitting used a 26 watt bulb. The new fitting uses an 8 watt bulb. The savings are significant. There are 70 bulbs in total.



Caption Competition

Answers to the editor by 25th April please



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FRIDAY CAFÉ.

IN THE WINSKELL ROOM
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12NOON.
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AT 11:00

WELCOME TO EVERYONE.

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

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

Send to:

mmvane31@gmail.com

Thank you, Margaret.



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Recycling Update

St Oswald's Hospice have been in touch recently, to inform that £1930 was raised in 2024, from all donations of used stamps and coins, from St George's and elsewhere.

From the charity, Recycle4Charity, I learnt recently that we continue to make small donations to the RSPB, and that we help to keep nearly 400,000kg of used ink cartridges out of landfill sites.

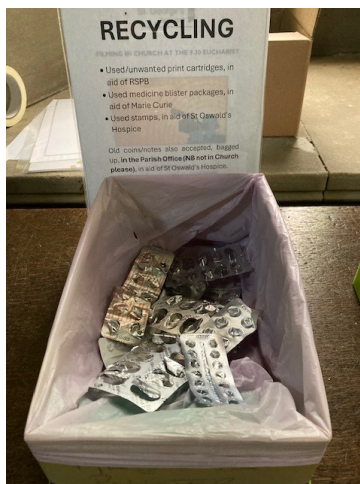
Regarding the collection of medicine blister packages, noting the encouraging correspondence from Kay Plumley and Jackie Spencer (v.i.), I have continued the collection, despite my reservations about the exact amount donated by Superdrug towards Marie Curie. What might help would be if the entire congregation were to write to Superdrug individually, and inundate them with a request to reinstate a specific donation, linked to recycling! (ref. Lance, December 2024, p 17).

I am very grateful indeed to Paddy Berson, who assists in delivering the packaging to Superdrug in Northumberland St.

My optician tells me that they will accept old spectacles (NO cases please), for receipt by the local Lions group, who collect and donate them for global distribution. I would therefore propose to begin this collection at Easter time.

Any further recycling ideas gratefully received!

Enid Pearson



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Grace Pearson - PhD Celebration

On 21st January 2025, Grace graduated with her PhD from the University of Bristol, at the Wills Memorial Building, supported by her family, friends and colleagues.



Her thesis was entitled:

“Transforming undergraduate education in geriatric medicine: towards an understanding of best educational practice”

and it was dedicated to Carl: “For my

father - Professor Carl Pearson. A fellow clinical academic, educator and generalist. Much loved and sorely missed.”

It was indeed, a truly wonderful celebration of her achievement.

Enid Pearson

EVANS OF JESMOND OPTICIANS

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GOC 01-15082

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The February Parish Walk - Out for a Stroll



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Friends of St George's - What is it All About?



Friends of St George's
JESMOND

The Friends of St George's Jesmond was founded, as a charity, in 2008, appropriately on St George's Day, April 23rd.

What is its purpose?

St George's Church is a Grade 1 listed building and arguably one of the finest churches in the area. It is renowned for its wonderful interior - the mosaics, stained glass and woodwork in the Arts and Craft style and for its wonderful musical tradition. The Friends was formed (a) to ensure the building is cared for and conserved and (b) to put on events for the benefit of the community, set as we are in the very heart of Jesmond. Drive up Osborne Road and the Italianate campanile stands out in front of you, day and night, thanks to the generously donated lighting scheme.

The Committee:

The members of the Friends Committee are a mix of congregation and community members:

Barbara Peacock (Chair)

Joan Trinder (Treasurer)

Paul Taylor and Sue Melbourne (Minutes)

Mike de la Hunt

Dorothy Gregory

Hilary Pitkethly

Sarah Mercer

Every penny of the money we make from events, donations and membership fees goes to St George's. We gave £10,000 to support the restoration of the West Window, £33,000 for urgent tower repairs, £1,296 to restore some of the tessera and we are saving to make a contribution when the East Window needs restoration and for bringing the Church and Church Hall up to date to meet present day needs and expectations.

What do we need?

We need to attract some new committee members from both the community and the

congregation, and we also need to attract new members. Some people join because they attend St George's and see it as 'their church'; others join because they are passionate about the buildings and grounds. It doesn't matter why one joins - it just matters that you do. Membership is set at £10 per person per year and has been held at that amount since 2008. Some of the events we put on are reduced for members, as a bonus and a thank you for your support.

Please, if you have not already joined, consider doing so. You could also encourage friends and neighbours to become members. The more people we have to support us, the more work we can do for us and for the community, of which we are an integral part.

Finally, our logo is at the head of this article. Can you work out why we chose it? You will need to go into the church to find out!

Barbara Peacock

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We all enjoyed it. Oh yes we did!

Church of England Calendar

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

Understanding the Calendar:

Principal Feasts and other Principal

Holy Days.

Festivals.

Other Sundays & Lesser Festivals.

Commemorations

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Perth Cathedral



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 0191 281 1628

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

Enid Pearson 285 0958

enid@stgeorgesjesmond.org.uk

Janet Wilson 07766 297359

janet@stgeorgesjesmond.org.uk

Parish Safeguarding Officer

Dr Sue Vernon 281 3861 / 07411099690

suejvernon@icloud.com

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 Parish Office, which is open Monday to Friday, 9.45 am to 12.45 pm.

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

tel: 0191 281 1659

email: Rev_debbie@hotmail.com

FIND OUT MORE ABOUT ST GEORGE'S CHURCH

Website: www.stgeorgesjesmond.org.uk

Facebook: St-Georges-Church-Jesmond

Twitter: @stgeorgejesmond

Livestreaming of services

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

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

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



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Welcome to St. George's Church Jesmond

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

Facebook: St-Georges-Church-Jesmond

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

SUNDAY SERVICES

08.00 Holy Communion
09.30 PARISH COMMUNION with
Sunday School / Smarties (age 4-16)
Children's corner available in church
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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To arrange a subscription to THE LANCE, please ring the Parish Office on 2811659

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

