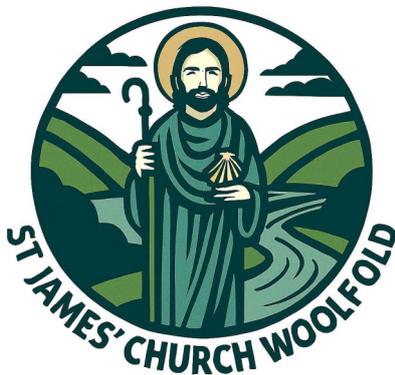


# Parish

# Magazine

## Jan/Feb 2026



We are the Anglican Parishes of St Stephen's Elton and Kirklees Valley, which is comprised of All Saints Brandlesholme and St James Woolfold. We exist to worship God in the Anglican tradition, to spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and to serve our neighbour in thought, word, and deed. We are warm, welcoming, and friendly communities in the Liberal Catholic to central tradition of the Church of England. We are proud to be the spiritual home of people of a variety of backgrounds and ages, and we love to welcome newcomers to our services and community events. We also host a variety of non Church-based activities in our buildings, and are always keen to support and welcome new community initiatives and activities.

### Our **Sunday Services:**

**All Saints 11am**

**St James 11am**

**St Stephens 9am**

We share a single Vicar, Rev. Sam Eccleston, who can be contacted on [brseclestonop@gmail.com](mailto:brseclestonop@gmail.com). We are also served by a team of very generous and able Clergy, Readers, and ALMs, to whom we are greatly indebted.

## Suggested

## Donation: 50p

[www.allsaintsandstjames.com](http://www.allsaintsandstjames.com)

[www.ststephenelton.com](http://www.ststephenelton.com)

# Vicar's Letter

In this month's magazine you will find some thoughts from myself and Fr Derek, an introduction to the curate's many pets, news from St Stephen's school, events in our parishes and at Manchester and Chester cathedrals and much more.

Every month there are thanks due to those who work so hard to contribute to the life of our churches. Of particular note are Steve for delivering another fantastic first aid course, Lynne and Tony for their work on the annual reports, Rev. Josie for her great work on the Book Club, Derek for his work on the Mosaic project, all those involved in the St Stephen's panto, which was a great success once again, and Barbara for her patience with safeguarding processes. As usual, this is not an exhaustive list.



## Habemus Archiepiscopum Cantuariensem!

As you are no doubt aware, we have a new Archbishop of Canterbury, Dame Sarah Mullaly, the first woman to ever occupy the throne of St Augustine. We don't declare it in quite the way the Catholic church declare the Pope's election, but if we were to do so, the Latin would be something like the above. And yet, in current circumstances, it feels as if, if this were to take place, it would probably be something of a muted declaration. Already, the commentariat have been in a frenzy, discussing everything from her gender to her wardrobe to her expressed or inferred theological stance to the challenges she faces as Archbishop. A lot of air-time has been allocated to those opposed to her, and their comments have not always been charitable. This is not to say that there ought not to be scrutiny of a leader of her standing, but it is somewhat difficult to believe that the response would have been quite the same were she a man. Part of the driving force behind this barrage of commentary seems to be not just the usual fixed theological positions, some of which reject her authority of the appropriateness of her appointment for well-known reasons, and the usual misogyny (she is often criticised for her sober dress sense and unfussy hair style, but how else should she dress and present herself as a senior Bishop— what would the reaction be to an Archbishop with a stylist?) but also, in the background, a kind of confusion about what an Archbishop is for, and indeed what they ought to be for. Thus, she is both lauded as a good manager and a safe pair of hands and, sometimes in the same breath, criticised as bureaucratic and managerial. The fact that she is not from same the elite academic background as many previous Archbishops is seen as both a victory for inclusion, diversity, and relevance and simultaneously a decline in standards. As the church reels from yet more disturbing revelations about abuses committed by those with charismatic authority, her comparatively reserved and careful demeanour is described as underwhelming. Questions are asked about whether she will, or can, unite the warring factions and regions of the Anglican communion, whether she has the personal presence or theological ingenuity to

# Vicar's Letter

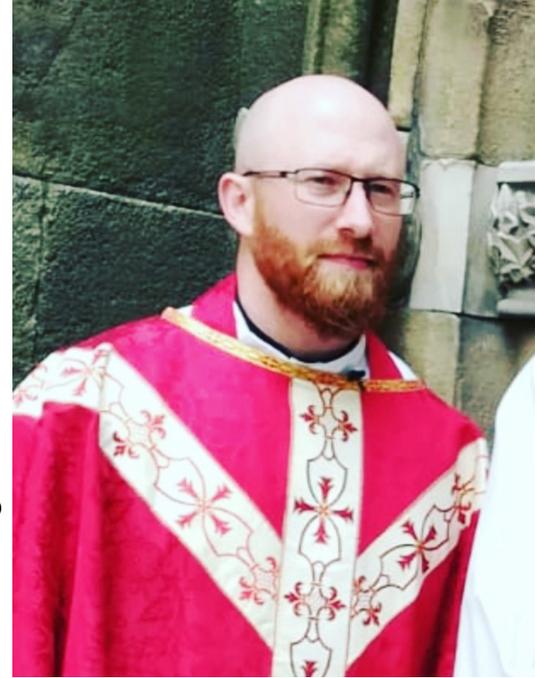
solve the various disagreements to everyone's satisfaction, or else overawe opponents with her authority.

I think that in reality, these reactions to her appointment reveal something about her and something about the rest of us, but not perhaps those things the commentariat are so intent on pointing out.

Firstly, we are revealed as Churchgoers and as a wider public, to be people intent on pinning our own sins and deficiencies, personal or institutional, on someone else. The fact is that without the goodwill and support of those who make up the church, she has no chance of achieving any of the things that her circumstances demand of her, for the very simple reason that the Archbishop of Canterbury simply does not have the power to command people in the way that the Pope, for example, does. Justin Welby was criticised towards the end of his tenure for what were felt to be dismissive responses to questions about safeguarding, in which he insisted he didn't have the power to enact certain suggested changes, or that it wasn't his role to oversee certain safeguarding processes. Unpopular as that response was, it was nevertheless truthful.

Thus, expecting Sarah Mullaly, or anyone else, to fix these issues is simply a category error, it involves misconstruing what the issues are and how the church works. They are not solely or perhaps even principally products of deficits in leadership, they are products of an organisational structure in which power is diffused rather than concentrated, and a cultural situation in which deference, the oil which sped the wheels of the church for so long, is no longer the order of the day, for better or worse. We have to learn how to behave in this new reality for the betterment of the church, and we cannot expect a single individual who does not have the power to do so to force us to fall into line. The success of her Archiepiscopate does not depend solely on her, but on how everyone else reacts to her; her eventual success cannot be judged by what we might want doing in an ideal world, but rather by what it is actually possible for her to do in the circumstances she finds herself in.

Secondly, whatever else might be true of her personally, spiritually, or politically, Sarah Mullaly is revealed as a very brave woman— there aren't many who would want the job at all, particularly at this juncture of the Church's history. She inherits the biggest missional challenge in centuries, a parish system in need of reform, a legacy of safeguarding failures. She faces the very real possibility that even if she is, in reality, extraordinarily successful, she will be castigated in the court of public opinion for failing to achieve outcomes that were simply never realistic. If she does make mistakes, and to do so would only be human, she is unlikely to receive a fair hearing, or to have explanations greeted with sympathy. As we welcome a new Archbishop, it might be worth committing as a church to not making her the sacrificial lamb for everyone else's sins; after all, we are supposed, as a group, to be against that kind of thing....



# Faith Online

There is a lot of fantastic Christian content online; it comes from Christians of different denominations, traditions, and languages, and encompasses everything from Bible Study and Theology to Christian music, architecture, and art. Every month I will aim to share some of it with you.

**Religion For Breakfast** discuss claims of revival here: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=UdsPPxaGVUs](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UdsPPxaGVUs)

**BBC Sounds** have more on talk of revival plus a discussion of church funding here: [www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/m002qrdz](https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/m002qrdz)

**Rev. Richard Coles** discusses the challenges facing the new Archbishop of Canterbury here: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=YhHMzsjqnVU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YhHMzsjqnVU)



**Britmapped** explores medieval sanctuary laws and an object linking 1000 years of English royalty at Beverly Minster here: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=H05H\\_chbBRk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H05H_chbBRk)

**BBC Global** explores a Templar Church here: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=rodBjEsdfe](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rodBjEsdfe)

**Bishop Lord Chartres** has recorded some Lenten meditations for the **Prayer Book Society** here: [www.pbs.org.uk/ash-wednesday/?utm\\_source=newsletter&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=2026-02-23&utm\\_campaign=February+newsletter+from+the+PBS](https://www.pbs.org.uk/ash-wednesday/?utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_term=2026-02-23&utm_campaign=February+newsletter+from+the+PBS)

**Bishop Robert Barron** describes how ancient Gnosticism differed from Christianity here: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=JOvVgqBpeTY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JOvVgqBpeTY)

**Weald and Downland Living Museum** discuss Candlemas in the Middle Ages here: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=wNZIDVKGOYA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wNZIDVKGOYA)

**Pope Leo** describes his spirituality here: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bg66gtqZSbw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bg66gtqZSbw)



 Leo P.P. XIV



**The Bible Project** explain the concept of wilderness in the Bible here:

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=b54d\\_GhBthl](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b54d_GhBthl)

**Anglo Saxon History** explain a 7th century artefact at Hexham Abbey here:

[www.facebook.com/share/r/1FzafuuBm6/](https://www.facebook.com/share/r/1FzafuuBm6/)

**The Church Times** reports on a renewal grant received by the Diocese of Manchester here: [link](#)

**Study Group** is typically recorded in an audio file as are sermons -if you have missed a session/service and wish to listen please contact the Vicar.

# CHURCH TIMES

# A Reflection from Fr. Derek

What is happening in the USA, land of the free?

I have been watching over the past months the demonstrations which took place in many of the cities in the USA. Residents exercising the Constitutional rights of free speech and freedom to demonstrate. I also noticed the active role churches and their ministers were taking, and witnessed the increased violence by the ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement) officials. They seem to act more like a 'rent a thug gang' than law enforcement officers.

It was in this atmosphere that a bishop recommended to his clergy that they should get their affairs in order. Episcopal Bishop Rob Hirschfeld (Diocese of New Hampshire) was speaking following the killing of Renee Good. Bishop Rob said. 'I've asked them to get their affairs in order, to make sure they have their wills written, because it may be that now is no longer the time for statements, but for us, with our bodies, to stand between the powers of this world and the most vulnerable,' ... a 'new era of martyrdom'.

The White House response to a question from NBC regarding Bishop Rob Hirschfeld's comments to clergy was 'No one should follow advice encouraging them to commit crimes. Anyone who interferes with federal law enforcement operations is committing a crime and will be held accountable to the fullest extent of the law.'

This was before the killing of the intensive care nurse Alex Pretti. He had gone to the aid of a protester who had been pushed to the ground by federal officers.

A month earlier Alex Pretti paid tribute to a Veteran following his death, he said 'Today we have to remember that freedom is not free, we have to work at it, nurture it, protect it and even sacrifice for it. May we never forget and always remember our brothers and sisters who have served so that we may enjoy the gift of freedom.'

The United States of America is far from united. The States worst affected by the actions of ICE agents are the States that did not vote for Trump. The stories about abuse of power, of wrongful detention and violence are widespread.

The killing of Renee Good and Alex Pretti are shocking and the words of Bishop Rob are stark and go to the ultimate cost of discipleship. The White House's response to Bishop Rob's words - that demonstrators will be 'held accountable to the fullest extent of the law' are what you would expect. All I can say is that President Trump and his Administration should look at the plank in their own eyes rather than the splinter in the demonstrator's eye.

USA has a long history of creative ways of opposing those who abuse power, so, standing between the powers of this world and the most vulnerable is not new. USA constitution allows for peaceful demonstration. Bishop Rob is showing a responsible response to what is happening across the USA,



not just in his Diocese. It must have pained him to refer to a 'new era of martyrdom', but they are dark times in many States.

While we are thousands of miles away from the USA, there are many fellow Christians who are coming alongside their neighbours in pursuit of justice and an end to the fear that has been created by ICE agents.

The words of Alex Pretti December in 2025 sound prophetic

'... freedom is not free, we have to work at it, nurture it, protect it and even sacrifice for it.'

Let us pray for a lasting peace and justice for all who live in fear.



## News From All Saint's Ladies Club

Our February meeting was a really enjoyable one, and our visiting speaker was our very own Curate, Rev. Ellise O'Hara. Ellise came to share her 'journey' or 'testimony' with us, and what a journey she has been on! 24 ladies who heard Ellise's story were absolutely amazed at her absolute commitment to her faith and call to ministry and despite all the hurdles she has had to overcome, she survived - and thrived. Well done Ellise and thank you. Our next meeting is on Monday 9th March, and we have Jane Parsons from St Stephen's coming to talk to us about her role as a Celebrant.

We circulated our programme for 2026, which includes some really interesting speakers and events including coach trip to Chester Cathedral on 8th June to see an exhibition of 'Threads through the Bible'. This is an extraordinary display of embroidery, relating to Biblical stories including 'Threads through Creation', 'Threads through the Cross' and 'Threads through Revelation'. There are still a few seats on the coach available to book if anyone would like to join us. Another early date for your diaries if you are able to support us - we are holding a fundraising event for Bury Hospice with an afternoon of Christmas musical entertainment. We have booked the Greenmount Strummers, a local guitar and singing group for Monday 14th December at 2pm All Saints. All welcome to join us raising funds for our local Hospice. Further details nearer the time - please save the date .



# PET CORNER

Well i have shared my cadet life, my crazy running's around random cities, my Christmas tree collection, and my quirky family i can now share the pets that we have and boy is there a few!

So firstly, my oldest pet is a collie cross spaniel cross labrador he is 13 and has many issues at the moment but he has been such a great dog! I present the wonderfully broken Oscar.



Next oldest pet is Thomas a beautifully chunky labrador, he is 6 and loves food! Funny story about Thomas he once stole a pizza from the kitchen and jumped the back fence and buried it in the next doors garden, as they were mowing the lawn they found it and asked if Thomas had maybe done this, they knew Thomas because he liked to stick his head in their cat flap and steal the cat food, they didn't mind he is so cute so here we have Thomas the food stealing chunky



Next, we have Steve's pet fish, now this was originally bought with a few fish but this one eat them all and now lives alone because he can't be trusted, he is a smart fish knows when the lid is open food arrives and has started to swim near the opening for us to feed him, he also will take food from your hand so here he is Titan the fat fish !



Next up we have BB, also known as Beyonce, she is a very loud bossy Guinea Pig! She belongs to Kenzie and is really fussy, squeaks all the time for food and water when she wants it to be fresh! Kenzie often sits and argues with her and its quite funny!!

Ok Dakota is next with her pet; she has this to share ...

Potato is a very greedy Gerbil who loves to take naps and bite people he doesn't like, He loves pumpkin seeds and cucumber the most and loves to spend time either digging tunnels or zooming around his cage at ungodly hours of the night. He loved and missed his brother pocket and still leaves a space for him in bed, he is very affectionate and will eat from your hand if he likes you!!



Next up we have a gorgeous little tortoise who belongs to Diesel and he had this to say:

Oogway named after my favourite character from kung fu panda. He is very lazy, his favourite things are sleeping and eating. He is very slow as you would expect from a tortoise but if you put cucumber in front of him, he will run after it. He is very fast when motivated by food. He sits under his heat lamp to get all nice and warm.



Khaleesi brings next a message about her bunny rabbit:

She is a fluffy and adorable, loves to be pet her name is Galaxy, i named her galaxy because it suited her and i love space and the mystery of space, she loves food and veggies, she also likes to re-



lax with her sister Oreo and enjoys being outdoors.

Which brings us on to Oreo who belongs to willow who shares this: She is cute and loves being pet i named her Oreo because i love Oreos, just like i love my rabbit she is friendly and would never hurt a soul, unless you don't feed her fast enough then she will kick you, she loves veggies and being with Galaxy her sister.

Jenson brings his little hamster – Hammy he shares this little snippet of his little hammy

Hammy is a lovely hamster who likes food, i called him hammy because it rhymes with hamster and his food is also called hammy food. He will defo bite anyone who puts fingers near his cage unless you have food, but you have to be fast! He likes to use his wheel but its loud and annoys my mummy. I do not hear it i sleep through anything i love my hamster he is so cute.



Finally, to finish off the pet corner we have my very lovely bird, she is solo but is thriving. She is named Eden because she reminds me of creation. She is talkative and keeps me company in the office while i work she also brings joy and calmness to anyone who visits!

So, there we have a lovely petting farm in my house, don't ask me about the vet fees and food supply cost i may just faint! But each child has a pet that they care for themselves, it helps teach them care, love and patience and surprisingly each pet has turned out just like its owner. This house is full of children and animals and is always total chaos but i love it and i hope you have enjoyed learning about our petting zoo!! Maybe we can do a bring your pet to church day that would be brilliant chaos!!



*Ellise*

# How a conversation can change your life!

As some of you already know, in September I started a two-year course to train for Reader Ministry. Sparked by a conversation with Anne Edwards (former Curate at All Saints & now Bishop's Chaplain), in July I went to a meeting she had organised at the church where I was baptised and confirmed (was that a sign!?). The speaker was the new Director of Vocations at the Diocese, Rachel Watts, and before I left that night I had an appointment to go and talk to Rachel about "the future". I had just completed my Authorised Lay Ministry training but felt that I needed to go further and explore more of what I might be being called to do.

Within a few weeks I had had four interviews, was accepted for Reader Training and was at Blackburn Cathedral for the Induction Eucharist along with others from Chester, Blackburn, Carlisle and Manchester Dioceses all starting at Emmanuel Theological College mid-September. It was quite a shock to the system to go back to college after more than forty years, especially when I realised that I would be writing essays for the first time since June 1982!

As students are drawn from all over the northwest there are a number of training centres and I go to Didsbury on Thursday evenings. I could have gone to Blackburn on Tuesday but the thought of the Grane Road mid-winter put me off. The course is split with one subject module each term, taught over ten weeks. We began with an Introduction to Theology, and this term are studying the New Testament- how and why it was written, who for, why it contains the Gospels and Letters that it does. Then how to look more deeply into the links and references within passages, why certain words were used in the original Greek of the Gospels and the differences between how the Evangelists treat subjects and events.

I have found it has opened up so much about myself and my faith which I had not acknowledged. It has taught me a huge amount about things that I knew something about but would not have known how to articulate and we're only a quarter of the way through. In addition to the weekly teaching there is a weekend residential each year and four Saturday Formation Days. The weekend in Swanick was spent with all the college's students, coming from many traditions and included Ordinands, Readers, Master's, Degree and Children's Ministry students. We studied, worshipped, socialised and got to know each other. Gathering in the chapel is at the heart of the weekend, and worshipping together was a highlight (including Fr. Tom "conducting" the Psalm because he doesn't think that people pause for long enough!). It has been an exciting and challenging few months and I am really looking forward to what comes next. Which leads me into my next subject- the APCM and PCC.

In Kirklees Valley we have set the date for this year's Annual Parochial Church Meeting, Sunday 10th May at St. James' after a joint service. As usual there will be various reports and the election of churchwardens & PCC members for the upcoming year. For the last few years there have been people who have stayed on the PCC for "an extra year" because we have been short of volunteers coming forward.

Please consider and pray about whether you would be willing to joining the PCC. We are no longer in an Interregnum, we now have an Incumbent, and he is very good at keeping meetings on track and reasonably short! We also have only had one Churchwarden this year, yours truly. Even with Ann still doing most of the things she did as warden at St. James' and having Lynne as a Deputy Warden, it has been hard to juggle things along with the college work I have taken on. This doesn't mean that I am standing down, you don't get rid of me that quickly, but it would be much easier if we had at least two of the three vacant Churchwarden posts filled. And think, the more people who come forward the less work there will be for each to do!

So please think and pray about that too. If you have any questions, ask a PCC member, Sam or me. Why not step forward as Churchwarden or PCC member and have your say in how the Parish of Kirklees Valley moves forward.

People of St. Stephen's, I am going to be bold and say (and I did ask Carol if I could!) that this probably applies to you too, so please consider and pray about how you can be part of the future of your parish too.

*Sue Stonestreet*

## **Walk of Witness 2026**

Our curate Ellise has been heavily involved in organising this years' Good Friday walk of witness. It would be great if a few people from our parishes could join her on the day as a witness to the Christian presence in our town. Please see Ellise for details

**Call for Volunteers – Good Friday Walk of Witness (3 April)** We are inviting **volunteers to help take part in and support our Good Friday Walk of Witness on 3 April.** This is a powerful opportunity to share the story of Good Friday together in our community, and we would love your help

### **Reading & Drama Roles Needed**

**Narrators** – x 4 people **Pilate** – x 1 person **Jesus** – x 1 person **Crowd** – x 4 people

**Criminals** – x 2 people **Soldiers / Centurion** – x 2 people

#### **Support Roles**

**Stewards** – to help guide the walk and support participants along the route **First Aiders** – to ensure everyone's safety

**Musicians** are needed for **Rock/Kay Gardens**

We would also love to know if **the URC organist could join us again this year**

Whether you enjoy reading, acting, helping behind the scenes, offering practical care, or sharing music, **there is a role for everyone.**

**To volunteer or to find out more, please contact**

**Rev Craig Giles at [revcraiggiles2@outlook.com](mailto:revcraiggiles2@outlook.com)**



**WCCM**  
IN THE UK

## WCCM Quiet Day

The WCCM are holding a quiet day on the 14th of March at All Saints Church, starting at 10am. Ideal for those who

enjoyed the contemplation group at St Stephens. Those interested please contact Joanne Cain on [c4lmly.wccm@gmail.com](mailto:c4lmly.wccm@gmail.com)

## Electoral Roll Officer

St Stephen's currently needs a new Electoral Roll Officer. The electoral roll is the list of names and addresses of a church's membership. Every person listed on the roll is eligible to attend the Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM). The Officer effectively manages the roll, making sure it is accurate and kept according to data protection rules. Those interested to see the wardens or clergy.

## Be Open on Breastfeeding

All Saints folks may have noticed a new sticker in the window— pictured right. The sticker makes it clear to women visiting our building that they are welcome to breastfeed their babies without having to go and sit in the ladies or outside somewhere.

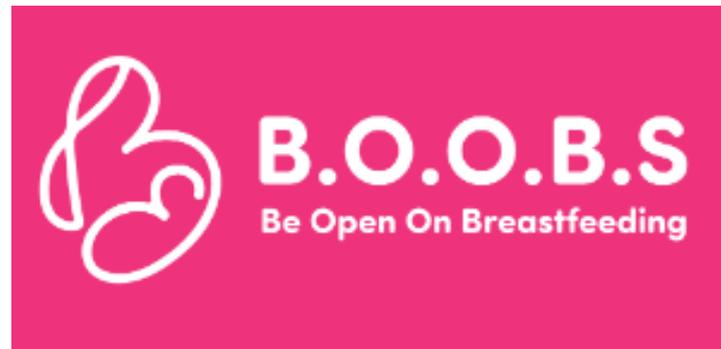
This is about recognising both how vital and valued breastfeeding and motherhood are, and making mums welcome in our community. This is particularly important as we try to rebuild our network with local families. In welcoming breastfeeding women into our church, we are in good company. Pope Francis himself repeatedly insisted during his Pontificate that breastfeeding women be allowed to remain in services he was leading in the Sistine chapel. Below is what Be Open on Breastfeeding say about themselves.

*Be Open on Breastfeeding was set up as a project of Visit from the Stork in 2014 as B.O.O.B.S (Be open on Breastfeeding Salford) with the aim to empower women to be open about their breastfeeding experiences and inspire others to breastfeed for longer.*

*In 2020 we expanded into Bury Borough with B.O.O.B.S in Bury and in 2024 we rebranded as Be Open on Breastfeeding Support to merge the two sister projects together.*

*In 2026 we are run by the same close knit team of staff, with even more volunteers, who are all passionate about breastfeeding and supporting parents on their journey.*

More information can be found here: [www.breastfeedinginsalford.org.uk](http://www.breastfeedinginsalford.org.uk)



John 13:34 'Love one another, as I have loved you'



St Stephen's  
CE Primary School

# NEWSLETTER

19: FRIDAY 30th JANUARY 2026

Learning, loving and growing; together as God's children



Well done!

A message from  
Bridget Phillipson



Dear Sally,

Congratulations to you and your team on the excellent outcomes the disadvantaged pupils at St Stephen's Church of England Primary School achieved at the end of the 2024/25 academic year. Your school's performance places it among the very best nationally, and this is a significant achievement.

This success reflects the dedication of your staff and the hard work of your pupils. It shows what can be achieved when ambition and commitment come together. Thank you for everything you do to give children the best possible opportunities to succeed.

Your school's achievements demonstrate what is possible, and I hope you will continue to share your experience and best practice with others. Even the strongest schools can go further. We encourage you to lead the way as a system leader - sharing effective practice, championing networks, supporting collaboration, and helping raise standards across the sector.

There are real opportunities available for you to support improvement for a wider group of pupils including through:

- engaging actively with your region's RISE networks and partnering with nearby schools and trusts;
- contributing to regional roundtables and professional communities to spread the approaches that are working in your context; and
- sustaining excellence by continuing to focus on disadvantaged pupils

Please pass on my thanks and congratulations to your staff and pupils. I look forward to working with you as we strive together to raise standards for all.

Your sincerely,

Bridget Phillipson  
Secretary of State for Education

Last week we welcomed James Frith MP to school who spent time learning more about our school and the wonderful children in it. He visited some classes, engaged in thoughtful conversations with our children about what inclusion means at St Stephen's, and met with representatives from our Pupil Parliament and our dedicated Wellbeing Warriors team.

Our pupils spoke confidently about our school and trust values, as well as current topics affecting young people today – including recent discussions around social media use for under-16s and how we keep each other safe online.



We're growing....

Sycamore Trust  
Grow together, Learn forever

On 1<sup>st</sup> February 2026 we welcome Christ Church Ainsworth CE Primary School to our Sycamore family.

John 13:34 'Love one another, as I have loved you'



St Stephen's  
CE Primary School

## School Places Available

To enquire about a place, or book a personal tour, please call 0161 764 1132

or email [ststephens@thesycamoretrust.co.uk](mailto:ststephens@thesycamoretrust.co.uk)



Sycamore Trust  
Grow together, Learn forever

Our school vision is about celebrating the uniqueness of every individual, inspiring a life long love of learning and experiencing life in all its fullness.



"St. Stephen's welcomes, nurtures and supports all children enabling them to flourish."

SIAMS Inspection, November 2023



FAITH, FRIENDS, FUN



# St Stephen's Sunday School

## All Welcome

Weekly during the main service

Speak to Leanne or the Vicar



# 0-5

# Baby and Toddler Group

EVERY WEDNESDAY

9:30AM-11:30AM

ALL SAINTS CHURCH

HEBBURN DRIVE, BURY, BL8 1ED

ALL WELCOME

FREE TO ATTEND



**BIBLE STUDY  
GROUP**

**BOOK OF  
ECCLESIASTES**

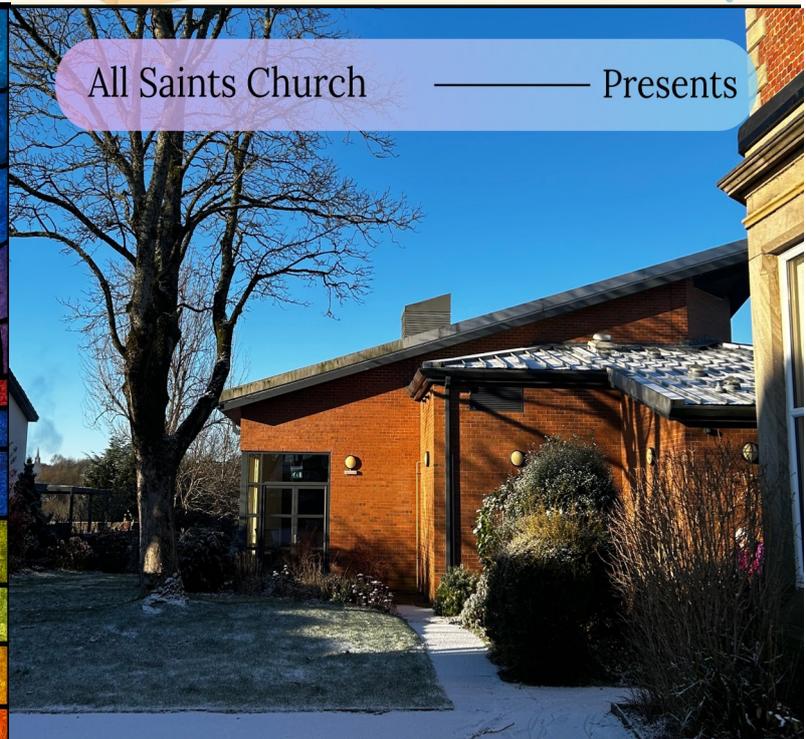
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**WEDNESDAYS  
1:30PM**

**ALL SAINTS  
CHURCH**

All Saints Church

Presents



# Parish Quiet Day

28th March 2026 10am

Hebburn Drive, Brandlesholme,  
Bury BL8 1ED

[www.allsaintsandstjames.com](http://www.allsaintsandstjames.com)

# The Lord's Prayer with Archbishop Steven Cottrell

Come along for a special evening of prayer and reflection at Manchester Cathedral on Thursday 19th March, led by the Archbishop of York.

This inspiring gathering will focus on the Lord's Prayer, bringing together people from across our diocese to explore its meaning in our lives today. To book please follow the Eventbrite link here: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/lords-prayer-evening-with-archbishop-of-york-tickets-1980082308487#location>



## JOIN US FOR TWO EVENTS TO MARK **INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY 2026**

### **Shakers, Rule Breakers, History Makers** Women of Manchester Cathedral Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> March 2pm

Alongside our exhibition (20<sup>th</sup> Feb - 9<sup>th</sup> March), join us to hear more about the lives of some incredible women associated with the Cathedral. Historical archives and stories will be shared about Ann Lee, subject of a new Hollywood film 'The Testament of Ann Lee', Margaret Traherne, stained glass pioneer and creator of our Flame Window, and many more. There will be contributions via video from our friends at The People's History Museum



### **Which Women? Whose Experience?** Diversity and Women's Experiences in Feminist Theologies Monday 9<sup>th</sup> March, 7pm

Dr Faith Van Horne will lead a theological conversation. Faith received her PhD in Theology and Religion from the University of Birmingham. Her work explores the intersections of Pentecostal and feminist theologies, embodied spiritual praxis as a theological resource, and the lived consequences of Christian doctrine



Free to attend, no need to book  
[canon.missioner@manchestercathedral.org](mailto:canon.missioner@manchestercathedral.org)

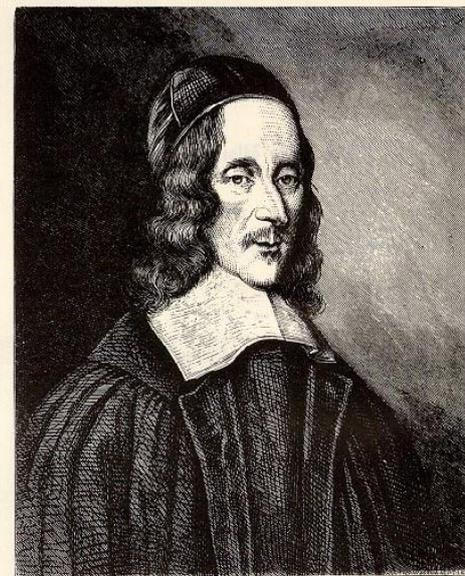


## Poem of the Month

In study group recently we were discussing the fact that there is a little known Anglican sphere of high-culture, encompassing the work of Musicians like Tallis and Byrd, novelists like Jane Austen or the Bronte sisters, and poets, including people like George Herbert and William Wordsworth. Obviously, sharing a novel or a piece of music is perhaps not best fitted to the magazine format, but it is perfectly possible to share poetry, so this is what we will do here each month. The poems will be by Christian, usually Anglican, poets, writing reflectively about life and faith. This weeks poem is one I have shared in study group, but it bears repeating, George Herbert's Prayer (I)

*Prayer the church's banquet, angel's age,  
God's breath in man returning to his birth,  
The soul in paraphrase, heart in pilgrimage,  
The Christian plummet sounding heav'n and earth  
Engine against th' Almighty, sinner's tow'r,  
Reversed thunder, Christ-side-piercing spear,  
The six-days world transposing in an hour,  
A kind of tune, which all things hear and fear;  
Softness, and peace, and joy, and love, and bliss,  
Exalted manna, gladness of the best,  
Heaven in ordinary, man well drest,  
The milky way, the bird of Paradise,  
Church-bells beyond the stars heard, the soul's blood,  
The land of spices; something understood.*

George Herbert 1593-1633



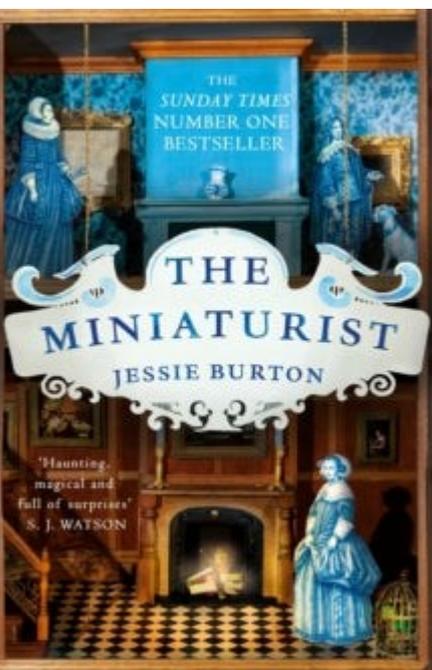
## All Saints First Aid Course

Our thanks to Steve for organising a really enjoyable and informative— a great time was had by all and lots was learned. A particularly

amusing element of the course was the demonstration of the Heimlich manoeuvre on the clergy, which involved donning a specially constructed vest that coughed out a choking hazard at the appropriate moment. Yet another thing that never comes up at Theological College!

## All Saints Book Club

The new chosen text for the All Saints Book Club is 'The Miniaturist' by Jesse Burton. See Rev. Josie for further details.



## Reflection on the Book of Ruth Chapter I Naomi and Ruth's walk to Bethlehem

Welcome to the first of four reflections inspired by the book of Ruth. Ruth is a story of Naomi and her husband leaving the ancestral home due to famine, searching for a new home in Moab then of family tragedy and returning to the town they left. In the reflections we both reflect on the stories and how we can understand them in the light of today's events.

Firstly, I suggest you read through the whole book of Ruth in one sitting if possible, it sets the scene for our time of reflection. It is not a long book; it is a good story and a good read.

*Explanatory Note: The 'days of the Judges' were the period after the death of Joshua and when the Israelites had moved from following the way that Joshua had established. It was an unsettled period toward the end of seventy years of Philistine rule. The Judges were the leaders of Israel.*

The opening words of Ruth paint a tragic and painful story of a family being torn apart by death. It is bleak and dark but within this awful situation there is still hope. The hope, however, has a cost but a cost worth paying. Naomi, Ruth's mother in law, wishes to find a way forward after a long period of pain and uncertainty, she wishes to find a new normal way of life. Naomi plans to leave her two widowed daughters in law in their homeland and return alone to Israel but Ruth insists that she will return with her mother-in-law. She is emphatic:

'... Ruth said,  
'Do not press me to leave you or to turn back from following you!  
Where you go, I will go; where you lodge, I will lodge;  
your people shall be my people, and your God my God.  
Where you die, I will die— there will I be buried. (Ruth 1:16-17)

Naomi and Ruth set off back to Moab, modern day Jordan, a journey in the region of 50 miles/80KM. Their journey was risky, potentially dangerous with uncertainties, yet they embarked on this journey in search of this new normal way of life hopefully and with a deep and shared love. The love between Naomi and Ruth is a heart-warming story but it also has a challenge.

Let us sit comfortably, perhaps with a favourite drink and pause for our time of prayerful reflection:

As they set off let us be mindful this journey was not the most sensible thing for two lone women to be undertaking through rough terrain with the potential to be robbed. What was going through their minds, what question were they asking each other or just thinking? Were there long silences?



## Reflection on the Book of Ruth Chapter 1

### Naomi and Ruth's walk to Bethlehem

Did Naomi gaze lovingly at Ruth in gratitude, did Ruth acknowledge that gaze with a smile? Let us ponder those questions in our imagination and picture their long walk together.

As we journey through unsettled times let us journey along the path before us in hopeful love let us say:

Lord, as we journey may we recognize that your glory shine through the world and that wherever we are, wherever we go, you are there you are our fellow traveler.  
Lord, sometimes on our journey our faith has faltered, times when we have found it difficult, times when we have more questions than answers, times when we forgot you are our fellow traveller. Lord, you sent your Spirit to warm our hearts, to challenge and encourage us may power shine through us. Lord, we pray for those whose journey has become a struggle where anxiety, depression or loneliness or is overwhelming them.  
Lord, we pray for those who struggle alone with grief at the death of a loved one and no longer have a companion to share their journey.

Below are the words of Sydney Carter's hymn 'One More Step Along The World I Go.'  
If you use YouTube, you can find a link to the song below. An alert the advertisements that appear on YouTube are random.

One More Step Along the Way I Go  
One More Step Along The World I Go  
From The Old Things To The New Keep Me Travelling Along With You.  
And It's From The Old I Travel To The New, Keep Me Travelling Along With You

Round The Corner Of The World, I Turn  
More And More About The World, I Learn And  
The New Things That I See, You'll Be Looking At Along With Me.  
And It's From The Old I Travel To The New, Keep Me Travelling Along With You

As I Travel Through The Bad And Good,  
Keep Me Travelling The Way I Should  
Where I See No Way To Go You'll Be Telling Me The Way I Know.  
And It's From The Old I Travel To The New, Keep Me Travelling Along With You

Give Me Courage When The World Is Rough  
Keep Me Loving Though The World Is Tough  
Leap And Sing In All I Do



## Reflection on the Book of Ruth Chapter 1 Naomi and Ruth's walk to Bethlehem

Keep Me Travelling Along With You.  
And It's From The Old I Travel To The New,  
Keep Me Travelling Along With You

You Are Older Than The World Can Be  
You Are Younger Than The Life In Me  
Ever Old And Ever New  
Keep Me Travelling Along With You.  
And It's From The Old I Travel To The New,  
Keep Me Travelling Along With You [2]

 YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7w2WhUJHalo>

### Prayerful thoughts to close this reflection.

Loving Lord, on each day's journey, may we walk with you.

may we reveal your love to those whom we meet.

And may we experience the joy of drawing closer to you,

God's peace go with you,

God's joy uplift you,

God's love be in what you do and say.

God's strength empower you,

God's truth grow in you

And guide your steps as you walk His way.

God's peace go with us,

God's joy uplift us,

God's love be in what we do and say.

God's strength empower us,

God's truth grow in us

And guide our steps as we walk His way.

P Arnold/S Crowley 2004

Fr Derek

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**EASTER  
EGG  
BINGO**

**7PM FRIDAY  
27TH MARCH  
ST STEPHEN'S CHURCH  
ELTON**

**£5 ADULTS  
£2 CHILDREN**

The poster features colorful Easter eggs and decorative elements. The text is arranged in a festive, multi-colored font. The event details are clearly stated in bold, block letters.



**ST. STEPHEN'S CHURCH**  
**Irish Night**  
SATURDAY 21ST MARCH, 7:00PM  
IN THE CENTENARY ROOM

MUSIC PROVIDED BY  
MOONDANCE AND FRIENDS  
& IRISH DANCING PERFORMED  
BY AONTACHT

TICKETS £10 (including supper)  
See Val & Barbara in church or  
call 07933 986785

Bring your own drinks & nibbles

**See you there!**

The poster is decorated with a green background, a leprechaun hat, and Irish flags. It includes photos of people at the event and a leprechaun illustration.

## Parish Information

### Pastoral Teams

Visiting those who are infirm and providing home communion. If you would like to receive home communion, or join the team please contact the Vicar or:

#### **All Saints**

Mark Cresswell  
Lynne Williamson

#### **St James**

Ann Redding

#### **St Stephens**

Celia Dutton

### Study Group



### Regular Events/Groups

**Mon: Community Café** Brandlesholme Community Ctr. 11am-1pm, **Ladies Club** 2nd Mon of Month 2.00pm St Francis House

**Wed:** St Stephen's (Centenary Room) **Midweekers** 1.30pm weekly, **Mothers' Union** 1st Weds of the Month 7.00pm, **Games evening** 7.30 pm 2nd Weds of the month, **Prayer meeting** 7pm 4th Weds of the month.

**Thurs: Prayer Group** 4th Thurs of month All Saints Church 10am **Arts and Crafts** Group weekly 2pm St Francis House

### Children's Activities and Uniformed Organisations

**Messy Church:** 1st Sunday of the month 10am St Francis House **St Stephen's Junior Church:** every Sunday **Toddler Group:** Wednesdays 9.30 All Saints

**Beavers:** Mon 5.45 **Cubs/Scouts:** Mon 6:45 St Stephen's School **Rainbows:** Wednesdays 5.45pm St Stephen's School  
Thursdays 4.30 St James' Centre **Brownies:** Wednesdays 6.45pm St Stephen's School

**Drama Group:** Thursdays 7pm at St Stephen's School



# March Rota

01.03.26		Pres	Preach	Deacon	Colour	Purple	
	AS	11 S. Eccleston			Readings	Genesis 12:1-4a John 3:1-17	
	SS	9 S. Eccleston		E. O'Hara			
	SJ	11 E. O'Hara	E. O'Hara				
08.01.26	AS	11 J. Partridge			Colour	Purple	
	SS	S. Ec- 9 cleston	E. O'Hara		Readings	Exodus 17:1-7 John 4:5-42	
		6 E. O'Hara	J Walk		Evensong		
	SJ	11 S. Eccleston		E. O'Hara			
15.03.26	AS	11 D. Akker			Colour	Purple	Mothering Sunday Parade SS
	SS	S. Ec- 9 cleston	E. O'Hara	E. O'Hara	Readings	1 Samuel 1: 20-end John 19:25-27	
	SJ	S. Ec- 11 cleston	F. Nuttall	E. O'Hara			
22.03.26	AS	11 G. Joyce	E. O'Hara		Colour	Purple	
	SS	9 S. Eccleston		E. O'Hara	Readings	Ezekiel 37:1-14 John 11:1-45	
	SJ	11 S. Stonestreet					
29.03.26	AS	11 S. Eccleston			Colour	Red	Palm Sunday
	SS	9 S. Eccleston			Readings	On Sheet	
	SJ	11 E. O'Hara	E. O'Hara				

# Holy Week Rota

Holy Week		2025 Rota		2026 Rota		Leading	Preaching
30.03.26	SS	7pm	Compline			T. Parsons	
31.03.26	SS	7pm	Compline			E. O'Hara	
01.04.26	SS	7pm	Compline			S. Eccleston	
	SJ	1.30pm	Prayer at the Cross			E. O'Hara	
02.04.26	SS	7pm	Maundy Thursday Colour White	Readings	Exodus 12:1-4,11-14 John 13:1-17, 31b-35	S. Eccleston	E. O'Hara
	AS	1.30pm	Hour at the Cross			S. Eccleston	
03.04.26	AS	2PM	Good Friday liturgy			D. Akker	
04.04.26	SS	5PM	Vigil			S. Eccleston	

# April Rota

05.04.26		Pres	Preach	Deacon	Colour	Gold/white	Easter Sunday
	AS	11 S. Eccleston			Readings	Acts 10:34-43 Matthew 28:1-10	
	SS	9 S. Eccleston		E. O'Hara			
	SJ	11 E. O'Hara	E. O'Hara				
12.04.26	AS	11 J. Partridge			Colour	White	
					Readings	Acts 2:14a, 36-41	
	SS	S. Ec- 9 cleston	E. O'Hara			Luke 24:13-35	
		S. Ec- 6 cleston	E. O'Hara		Evensong		
	SJ	11 S. Eccleston		E. O'Hara			
19.04.26	AS	11 D. Akker			Colour	White	
					Readings	Acts 2:42-end	
	SS	S. Ec- 9 cleston	E. O'Hara	E. O'Hara		John 10:1-10	
	SJ	S. Ec- 11 cleston	F. Nuttall	E. O'Hara			
26.04.26	AS	11 G. Joyce	E. O'Hara		Colour	White	
					Readings	Acts 7:55-end	
	SS	9 S. Eccleston		E. O'Hara		John 14:1-14	
	SJ	11 S. Stonestreet					

## **Contact Details**

**Vicar: Fr. S. Eccleston O.P. brseclestonop@gmail.com 07851121800**

### **All Saints' Contacts:**

Warden: Sue Stonestreet 07763 147598

Art and Craft Group: Joyce Abraham 0161 764 2247

Bible Study: The Vicar

Pastoral Visiting: Mark Cresswell 07521087791 Lynne Williamson 07722 624847

Choir: Stuart McArthur 07821 287018

Messy Church: Deirdre Watson 07733 008078

Prayer Group: Joyce Abraham 0161 764 2247 Lynne Williamson 07722 624847

St Francis' Ladies Club: Lynne Williamson 07722 624847

Room Hire at All Saints/St Francis: [allsaints.kirkleesvalley@gmail.com](mailto:allsaints.kirkleesvalley@gmail.com) 07368 460378

Website: [www.achurchnearyou.com/church/16034/](http://www.achurchnearyou.com/church/16034/)

[www.allsaintsandstjames.com](http://www.allsaintsandstjames.com)

<https://www.facebook.com/allsaintsbury>

### **St James' Contacts:**

Mothers' Union Ann Redding 0781 112 9355

Room hire at St James' Centre Ann Redding 0781 112 9355

Website: [www.achurchnearyou.com/church/16046/](http://www.achurchnearyou.com/church/16046/)

[www.allsaintsandstjames.com](http://www.allsaintsandstjames.com)

### **St Stephen's Contacts:**

Warden: Carol Heyes 07354902873

Email: [ststephenelton@gmail.com](mailto:ststephenelton@gmail.com)

News sheet/rotas: Tony Parsons [tony.parsons67@gmail.com](mailto:tony.parsons67@gmail.com)

Christian Meditation: David McKenna 07442 534860

Reader Emeritus: Celia Dutton 0161 764 0583

Room Hire: Keith Hughes [hughes\\_k4@sky.com](mailto:hughes_k4@sky.com)

Website [www.ststephenelton.com](http://www.ststephenelton.com)

<https://www.facebook.com/people/St-Stephens-Church-Elton/61575109828589/>