

NEWSLETTER OF ST GEORGE'S URC HARTLEPOOL

February-March 2026



Dear Friends

Is it too late to wish you a Happy New Year? Probably, as there are only 11 months left to the next. Never mind, Happy New Year!

So far, 2026 hasn't had the best start for many, particularly with the international situation, so last Saturday, I and a small group went to see some old friends – the Knitted Bible- which is visiting St Hilda's on the Headland. We had a lovely warm greeting made even nicer by a lovely hot drink. I laughed a lot when a lady came up and said she'd heard that I was one of the knitters and could she touch me? I felt like royalty!

We toured the exhibition, recognising old friends and looking at the scenes which have been gradually added; I'd not seen Pentecost before. I admit, I couldn't resist tweaking the odd character and tree. One couple we spoke to had come from Whitley Bay just to see the Knitted Bible but I noticed they then went for Verrill's famous fish and chips. They'd obviously done their homework

Taking in the whole scene at St Hilda's, I was aware of our perception of time. This seems to have happened a lot recently- a combination of old age and realising that we've just entered the second quarter of the 21st century. It occurred to me that the building that St Hilda knew was built about 600 years after the happenings depicted in the later scenes of the Knitted Bible. Move forward another 600 years and the present church standing there was built. And 800 years later, here was I standing there. Something seemed to slip into place- our part in the story. Imagine what there will be in another 800 years' time. Impossible! Will Hartlepool still exist? We have no idea. But we will have been part of the story. Let's make this year's chapter a good one.

Chris



Dates for your diary

February

Thursday 26 February – Elders' Meeting 2.30pm

March

Sunday 1 March – Axum Folk Ensemble, 3pm

Sunday 8 March – The Auckland Shanty Singers, 3pm

Thursday 19 March – Campbell / Jensen concert, 7.30pm

Sunday 22 March – Church Meeting and AGM following morning worship

Wednesday 22 April – Group Elders' Meeting at St George's, Hartlepool, 10.30am

Churches Together in Hartlepool Prayer Meetings at 8.30am

February 11 Headland Baptist Church

March 11 Oxford Road Baptist Church

These are open meetings and all are welcome to attend.

Coffee Rota

Feb.	1st.	Liz Moss, Barry Liddle.
	8th.	Gillian Rodgers, Paul Rodgers.
	15th.	Gillian Cartman, Margaret Fraser.
	22nd.	Enid Bushnall, Val Rigg.
Mar.	1st.	Madeline Bell, Barry Liddle.
	8th.	Gillian Elliston, Ray Trench.
	15th.	Gillian Rodgers, Paul Rodgers.
	22nd.	Gillian Cartman, Joan Rennie.
Apr.	29th.	Enid Bushnall, Sheila Harrison.
	5th.	Margaret Fraser, Ray Trench.
	12th.	Madeline Bell, Barry Liddle.
	19th.	Gillian Elliston, Joan Rennie.
	26th.	Gillian Rodgers, Paul Rodgers.



Data Protection

To keep church records up to date and in line with GDPR requirements, if you change your address/telephone numbers/email address please let Margaret H know. Thank You.

Food Bank

Please continue to support the Food Bank as you are able in these difficult times. The box is in the hall area. Thank you.

Trees for Africa

In the last Newsletter I said buying 15 trees had exhausted the funds. Well, of course, more has come in and we now have £24.36. £90 will bring the total of the trees bought to 100. That will be a boost to families who are helped to look after the trees which bring in an income and help the environment. The picture is of a baobab tree but we also have bought mango, shea and others. Thank you.



Annual Reports

Now that Christmas is out of the way, I really do need everybody's Annual Reports. The deadline (18 January 2026), has now passed and I have only received one report to date. Please can those of you who have yet to let me have your report get it to me as soon as possible, otherwise the book of reports will look very bare. Thanks **Margaret H.**

Nominations for Elders

Nominations are now being sought for Elders. Chris E and Betty W have completed their terms of office and are willing to stand for re-election. As it is an even number year, Sandra T and Margaret H are also due for re-election.

The number of serving Elders is now small, please consider carefully whether you can either nominate somebody, or consider putting your own name forward. Please see Margaret H before Sunday 1 March 2026 with any nominations or for more information. Thank you.

Christmas thanks

2025 has perhaps not been the easiest year for Link to Hope, however it has been a joyful one nevertheless. As many of you know the retail revenue that the charity relies on has taken a hit along with many of our competitors and fellow charities. This in turn has led to much soul searching on which projects we can continue to support.

However, on a positive note, we know along with our supporters, we are continuing to impact thousands of lives on a daily basis.

Link to Hope supporters helped send 25,281 gifts of joy to Eastern Europe this year. We had an amazing Shoebox Delivery Trip out to Bulgaria. Shoe boxes are delivered in the festive season. In some regions of Eastern Europe, Christmas is celebrated on January 7th so many will have been delivered for then.

We will be doing it all over again this year, so please start thinking about next Christmas now! Ed.

Thank you also for the gifts in the manger for the Seafarers. They are much appreciated.



Churches' heartfelt Christmas gift to children in care

Kind-hearted churchgoers have brought some early festive cheer to children in Hartlepool Borough Council's care with a very generous gift.

Members and friends of St George's United Reformed Church and Grange Road Methodist Church – who worship together - have donated £400 of Amazon gift vouchers to the Council's Fostering Team.

Ray Trench, a member of the congregation, has been a foster carer for the Council for six years, while his wife Tracy has fostered for over 20 years. He said: "I came from a very happy home, but sadly that is not the case for some children. "The foster care that children receive in Hartlepool is brilliant, helping give them the loving, stable start they need in life, and this is just a small token from us to say we appreciate what the Council does for the young people."

Councillor Melanie Morley, Chair of the Council's Children's Services Committee, said: "This is an absolutely wonderful gift and our heartfelt thanks go to the members and friends of St George's United Reformed Church and Grange Road Methodist Church for their kindness. "The Council has over 300 children in its care, in fostering placements and residential homes, some of whom come to us with nothing.

"This very generous gift will help us to buy the children in our care the things they need and to get some little treats for them. It will mean so much."

There are lots of children in Hartlepool who urgently need safe and caring foster homes. To find out more about fostering with Hartlepool Borough Council, visit www.fosterwithnortheast.org.uk



This is the photo and the write up that appeared in the Social Services Newsletter. The managers and counsellor were very appreciative of our gift. The young man who is seen holding the vouchers was himself fostered and surprised my wife by turning up on our doorstep having come home (i.e. to our house) to stay for a few days having travelled from The Wesleyan South Dakota University where he is completing his degree supported by Hartlepool Social Services.
Ray Tench

John Michael Smith (Mike)

Mike was born on 2nd July 1957 in Hartlepool to John and Muriel, the only boy of their 3 children. He enjoyed many things as a child, many of them lasted for all his life. He was a whiz at quizzes and enjoyed family games of Trivial Pursuit where his knowledge of film, tv and music was second to none – and he knew all sorts of trivia too. He was much in demand as a team member in any quiz

He loved being a scout and was a stalwart at darts at youth club where he could add up the scores faster than anyone else. Mike attended Grange Rd Methodists all his life and served as 2nd steward for a few years and was also on the church council. He was a regular attendee at St George's after the two congregations started worshipping together. If he missed a Sunday, it was probably because he was on a trip to attend a concert, or a gig, something he loved and I was always amazed at the famous musicians he saw.

His niece remembers his room looking like a record shop when he lived with his mother as there were so many cassettes etc in there. Mike always had trouble with his hearing but in 2021 he went totally deaf. For someone who loved sound so much this was devastating but Mike carried on stoically using pencil and paper. The following year he had a hearing implant and, when it was turned on, it was back to the concerts, cinema and festivals. He was looking forward to some of the concerts at St George's; he was certainly a regular at the recent ones.

Mike's sudden death was a shock, but his family take comfort in that they had a wonderful family Christmas with him visiting them. There was a trip to the theatre, church and a pantomime, all of them his favourite things. We will all remember Mike and miss his enthusiasm and enjoyment of life.

Do you need a Bear Hug?

Many of you will have heard of the Kilimatinde Trust which works in Tanzania supporting the hospital and school. You may remember several members at Stranton support it and have visited. Jill, one of the people who has helped out there and raises funds, has made quite a few bears. They use various materials, much with an African influence and are very cuddly- and safe!

If you would like one, please let me know as I have some living with me as they threatened to take over Jill's house. They can be had for a donation. You will see ours- George- sitting by the jam in the hall area.

Chris



Church Register

Funerals

The funeral of Joan Metcalfe took place in St George's on Thursday 4 December 2025.

Baptisms

Sunday 25 January 2026 – Hugo Arthur Payne, son of Alexis and Tom, was baptised.

Sunday 25 January 2026 – Jude Sebastian Robson Mincher, son of Anna and Simon, was baptised.

GENERAL KNOWLEDGE QUIZ

- 1 What do the 5 Olympic rings represent ?
- 2 What is the best-selling board game in the world ?
- 3 How many noses do slugs have ?
- 4 When was the first paperback book published?
- 5 What is largest planet in the solar system?
- 6 Pentheraphobia is fear of what ?
- 7 How many teaspoons are there in a tablespoon?
- 8 What is the only bird that can swim but can't fly?
- 9 On which river does Rome stand?
- 10 Which city is capital of Cuba ?
- 11 What nationality was the composer Frederick Chopin?
- 12 What is world's best-selling perfume?
- 13 In a hit song of 1939 where was the washing going to be hung out?
- 14 What colour is a Harrods carrier bag?
- 15 Which of Henry V's wives was mother to Queen Elizabeth 1?
- 16 What is most mentioned animal in the Bible ?
- 17 A cricket umpire holds both arms straight up to indicate what ?
- 18 The Monument in London commemorates what?
- 19 Who wrote " All I need to make a comedy is a park ,a policeman and a pretty girl"?
- 20 Who or what is " the old lady of Threadneedle St" ?

ANSWERS (don't cheat!)

- | | | |
|-----------------------|------------------------|---------------------|
| 1 The five continents | 2 Monopoly | 3 Four |
| 4 1935 | 5 Jupiter | 6 The mother in law |
| 7 3 | 8 Penguin | 9 The Tiber |
| 10 Havana | 11 Polish | 12 Chanel No 5 |
| 13 Zeigfield line | 14 Green | 15 Anne Boleyn |
| 16 Sheep | 17 6 runs | 18 Fire of London |
| 19 Charlie Chaplin | 20 The Bank of England | |

Property Committee Report

None of us like to see trees cut down, but when the council planted the tree near to the door outside St George's we all held our breaths and wondered how long it would take till the roots and the leaves caused damage to the church. That time is now and the tree is coming down later this year. The leaves are blocking the gutters and the roots are damaging the drains. The time is right and the council have agreed to do this work asap. They will be planting another tree elsewhere to compensate for the loss of the St George's tree.

We are investigating having all of the gutters around the church cleaned out. Quotes are on the way. This is a big job as some of the guttering is very high up and quite awkward to get to but we need to have this done.

We are once again looking for quotes for the refurbishment of the toilets but can't find tradesman to give us quotes pending grant applications. If anyone knows anyone please get in touch.

We are currently working towards clearing the old Coffee Shop area of the bric-a-brac and books. If you can help with either sorting things out, or taking a bag of goods to a charity shop, please have a word with me or Gillian.

If you know of anything that needs to be done, please let us know and we will look into it, and if you are any good with a bit of DIY, then we need you!

St George's Venue Report

2026 has a very full programme of concerts already arranged. If you plan to come, and why not, please get your tickets as soon as possible. See Enid or me. We are grateful to all of our sponsors and to all of our supporters, but please support us in little ways by taking flyers and posters and passing them on to your friends, families and neighbours OUTSIDE of the church family. These are the people that we need to come and support our events.

Remember the Venue is helping to keep the church going and we are having a lot of fun along the way, meeting lots of nice people and helping in the community of Hartlepool where we can use our profits as part of the ongoing mission of the church.

Thank you to all those who do support us at events. If you can help, please speak up. Elsewhere in the newsletter you will find a list of the upcoming concerts.
Paul Rodgers

Dates for your diary

Spring Fayre: Saturday 16 th May 9.30 – 12.30 pm
Christmas Fayre: Saturday 21 November 11 am – 2 pm
Please note the timing of these events.

If you would like to have a stall to sell goods to raise funds for the church or know of someone who would like to rent a stall, please get in touch.

Gillian Rodgers

Vacancies

We're a bit short of stewards and help is always appreciated on the coffee rota. I've been producing the Newsletter since last century! Any offers to take over?

Chris



2026 programme

Axum Folk Ensemble <i>8 piece folk group from Northumberland</i> £6.50 Sunday, 1 st March 2026 at 2.30pm
Auckland Shanty Singers <i>The history of the railways, Shanty style.</i> £6.50 Sunday, 8 th March 2026 at 2.30pm
Ashley Campbell <i>Daughter of country legend Glen Campbell</i> £22.00 Thursday 19 th March 2026 at 7.30pm
Miranda Sykes and Jim Causley <i>Brilliant folk duo</i> £16.00 Thursday, 14 th May 2026 at 7.30pm
Vicky Clayton <i>Former member of Fairport Convention</i> £15.00 Saturday, 23 rd May 2026 at 7.30pm
Kiki Dee and Carmelo Luggeri <i>Pop legends live in Hartlepool</i> £22.00 Friday, 5 th June 2026 at 8.00pm
The Cobweb Orchestra <i>Local orchestra in a matinee concert</i> £6.00 Sunday, 12 July 2026 at 2.30pm
The Tannahill Weavers <i>Traditional Scottish folk band</i> £18.00 Thursday, 3 rd September 2026 at 7.30pm
Bob Fox and Stu Luckley <i>Folk duo, back together after 40 years</i> <small>with support from Geoff Rodgers</small> £18.00 Friday, 13 th November 2026 at 7.30pm

St George's Venue is in St George's United Reformed Church, Park Road, Hartlepool, TS26 9HP

Advance tickets available from:-

- Citizens Advice in Park Road, Hartlepool, TS26 9HP
- Northern Rocks Vintage Vinyl at Kiwi Trading in Osborne Road, Hartlepool, TS26 9JP, at concerts and from Venue friends.

Advance tickets are not subject to booking fees.

<https://www.ticketsource.co.uk/st-georges-venue>

On-line ticket link



Enid has tickets each Sunday. She'll be pleased to sell you some!

News of People



Please pray for our members and friends who may be unwell including, Rose, Paul H and Margaret H. Also keep our other friends and members, including the families of Mike Smith, Margaret Goulding and Betty Woolfe who died recently, in your prayers as they mourn their loss.

FLOWER DONORS

February 1	Mrs W Parkinson
February 8	Mrs P Branfoot
February 15	Mrs M Daniel
February 22	Mr F Whittaker
March 1	Miss M Rodgers
March 8	Mrs K Bosworth
March 15	
March 22	Mr and Mrs A Woodhall
March 29	Mrs C Eddowes
April 5	Mr and Mrs A Ord



Any help offered with deliveries gratefully received

Stewards.

Feb.	1st.	Sandra Hindmarch, Alan Woodhall.
	8th.	Pam Branfoot, Paul Humberston.
	15th.	Gillian Elliston, Pam Branfoot.
	22nd.	Liz Moss, Alan Woodhall.
Mar.	1st.	Pam Branfoot, Paul Humberston.
	8th.	Liz Moss, Pam Branfoot.
	15th.	Sandra Hindmarch, Gillian Elliston.
	22nd.	Alan Woodhall, Paul Humberston.
	29th.	Pam Branfoot, Liz Moss.
Apr.	2nd.	Sandra Hindmarch, Liz Moss.
	3rd.	Gillian Elliston, Alan Woodhall.
	5th.	Pam Branfoot, Paul Humberston.
	12th.	Sandra Hindmarch, Liz Moss.
	19th.	Pam Branfoot, Alan Woodhall.
	26th.	Gillian Elliston, Paul Humberston.

Keys

Paul Humberston.
Liz Moss.
Alan Woodhall.
Paul Humberston.
Liz Moss.
Alan Woodhall.
Paul Humberston.
Liz Moss.
Alan Woodhall.
Paul Humberston.
Liz Moss.
Alan Woodhall.

Worship in St George's

February

1	10.30am	Mrs Maranny Jones, Communion
8	10.30am	Rev Bev Hollings
15	10.30am	Mr John Kidd
22	10.30am	The Worship Team (GE)

March

1	10.30am	Mrs Chris Eddowes, Communion
8	10.30am	Methodist Preacher (TBC)
15	10.30am	Mr Andy Lie, Mother's Day
22	10.30am	Mr Andrew Tinkler, Church Meeting & AGM
29	10.30am	Rev David Whiting, Palm Sunday

April

2	7pm	Rev Bev Hollings, Maundy Thursday, Communion
3	10.30am	Rev John Elliston, Good Friday
5	10.30am	Rev Bev Hollings, Easter Sunday, Communion



Communion Rota

March

Betty Woodhall Alan Woodhall

April Easter Day

Gillian Elliston Ray Trench

St George's Regular Activities

Sun 10.30am Family Worship
 Mon 6.00pm Beavers
 6.30pm Cub Scouts
 7.0pm Scouts
 Thur 10am Hobbies Club

Church Officers

CHURCH SECRETARY

Mrs M Humberston 25 Belmont
 Gdns TS26 9LS tel 425847

CHURCH TREASURER

Mrs Sandra Twist, 17, Granville
 Ave tel 273447

HALL BOOKINGS STEWARD

Contact Mrs M Humberston

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Copy for next edition by Sun 29th March please

