



NEWSLETTER OF ST GEORGE'S URC HARTLEPOOL

April-May 2026

People look for many different signs that Spring has arrived. For some it is more hours of daylight, for others bulbs beginning to flower and buds appearing on the trees. For me the delight is when lambs start appearing.

For farmers lambing means a lot of hard work, sleepless nights and perhaps some anxiety - will the lambs survive? Has the Schmallenberg Virus (or whatever the latest virus is) spread to these parts? Free of such personal worries I can enjoy seeing lambs leap around the fields, amazed that they can jump higher than their own height, and wonder at ewes who can distinguish the cry of their own lamb from the other side of a field.

Lambs also remind me of many passages in the Bible which refer to shepherd, sheep and lambs. Perhaps the best known is the 23rd Psalm, *The Lord is my Shepherd*, a reminder that God is with us throughout life. Then there are images of Jesus being the Good Shepherd prepared to lay down His life for each one of us as we remember especially on Good Friday. I'm also reminded of a verse in Isaiah 40 which says '*The Lord tends his flock like a shepherd, He gathers the lambs in his arms and carries them close to His heart*'. As shepherds are aware of the needs of each and every animal so God cares for each one of us. God knows our joy and our sorrows. If you find yourself in difficulty, be aware of God's presence and support. And enjoy the signs of spring - signs of new life all around us.



Rev Bev Hollings

Dates for your diary

April

Thursday 16 April – Elders' Meeting 2pm

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

Saturday 25 April – Fire Safety Training Course, 10am – 2pm (bring a packed lunch)

May

Sunday 10 May – Church Meeting following morning worship

Thursday 14 May – Miranda Sykes & Jim Causley concert, 7.30pm

Saturday 16 May – Spring Fayre, 9.30am-12.30pm

Saturday 23 May – Vicky Clayton concert, 7.30pm

June

Friday 5 June – Kiki Dee & Carmelo Luggeri concert, 8pm

Monday 8 June – Methodist Circuit Meeting, 7pm in the meeting room

Churches Together in Hartlepool Prayer Meetings at 8.30am

April 8 Central Estate Methodist Church

May 13 Holy Family St Joseph's RC Church

These are open meetings followed by refreshments. All are welcome to attend

Coffee Rota

Apr.	5th.	Margaret Fraser, Ray Trench.
	12th.	Madeline Bell, Barry Liddle.
	19th.	Gillian Elliston, Joan Rennie.
	26th.	Gillian Rodgers, Paul Rodgers.
May.	3rd	Gillian Cartman, Margaret Fraser.
	10th	Janet Henderson, Enid Bushnall.
	17th.	Liz Moss, Barry Liddle.
	24th.	Madeline Bell, Sheila Harrison.
	31st.	Ray Trench, Joan Rennie.
Jun.	7th	Gillian Rodgers, Paul Rodgers
	14th.	Gillian Cartman, Margaret Fraser.
	21st.	Enid Bushnall, Gillian Elliston.
	28th.	Janet Henderson, Barry Liddle.

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

The funds now stand at £65.15 Nearly there for the 199 trees!
Chris

Working more closely together – Grange Road Methodists and St George's URC

In August 2023 Grange Road members left their building and started worshipping at and with St George's. Both congregations already knew we had much in common, but nevertheless it was a time of huge adjustment for everyone as we learned more about the varying traditions in both churches.

The arrangement was formalised through an 'Ecumenical Letter of Welcome' which included some local agreements such as: including Methodist preachers on the preaching rota, who would receive offerings (Envelopes go to the different churches, all loose offering goes to St George's) and which safeguarding policy would take priority...

In Sept 2025 Grange Road asked St George's if we could make the arrangement more permanent; the URC congregation meeting agreed this could be explored. The next level of commitment would be a 'Working Together Agreement'. We would remain separately constituted churches but agree a common vision and purpose.

On 28th March representatives of St George's Elders and Grange Road Church Council met together for 4 hours, under the guidance of Lucy Cooke from the URC Synod, for initial conversations about what that vision and purpose might be. The first part of the morning, we shared what inspires us about our particular church. It soon became clear that both congregations have a strong sense of being welcoming, caring for one another, being family and that two families were gradually becoming one. We recognised that coming together had been made considerably easier because of the links held for many years and the similar styles of worship.

The group then engaged with the passage of Scripture 1 Corinthians 12 v 4-13, the gifts of the Spirit given for the Common Good. We looked at what gifts are evident in the joint congregation and how they are, or can be, used to build each other up.

After a break, having acknowledged how well the congregations had integrated as far as Sunday worship is concerned, the unity already evident, and the benefit of having taken time to allow that to become established, we turned to consideration of our local area. In small groups we considered four questions about Hartlepool:

1. Places of vulnerability
2. Gaps no one is filling
3. Where we can make a difference
4. What Hartlepool needs from a church

As responses were combined and reflected on, it was recognised that some important foundation work had been done and, now, there was more work to do around those gaps we had noticed and what, if any, we might be being led by God to fill.

The group recognised that in taking this forward we need input from everyone in the joint church family who was willing to be involved. Lucy kindly agreed to lead us in another session to which all members would be invited as we continue the conversation. You are invited!

When? **Monday 8th June,**

Time? **9.30am – 12.30pm**

Where? **St George's** (enter by rear door)

Who? **Anyone interested in shaping the future activities of the joint church.**

Margaret Goulding (written by Nick Collins)

Margaret was born in Hartlepool in September 1931, the daughter of Elsie and Wilfred Crallan. She grew up in Belk Street with her two older siblings Elsie and Walter. She had a younger sister Jean who sadly passed away at 8 months. She also lost her mam and dad at a very young age and left school at 14 to look after the family home whilst her elder sister and brother worked. She was apparently very domesticated.

Margaret started nursing training in her early twenties, and this developed into a lifelong successful career that she really enjoyed. She became a midwife covering not just Hartlepool but also Stockton and Middlesbrough and then progressed to a Health Visitor. She supported and helped hundreds, and at times her family felt like she knew most of the people in Hartlepool.

One particular evening she had gone to Middlesbrough to deliver a baby and it ended up being a late travel back to Hartlepool. She got to the transporter bridge to find it was out for maintenance. The transporter bridge has a walkway over the top and a kind workman offered to take Margaret up the stairs and over the walkway. She politely declined and found another way home.

She met Harry, the love of her life, and they got married in 1958 living in the family home in Belk Street before moving to Chatham Road then into Tynebrooke Avenue in the 60's.

Margaret and Harry were not blessed with children but were like second parents to Alison and Christine their nieces and devoted grand Aunt and Uncle to Emily, Alex, Claire and David. As a youngster Alison was a regular addition to the Goulding family on holidays with Margaret's sister-in-law and her husband and their daughter Christine.

Margaret was also devoted to Jess and Sheena her two dogs who played a huge part in her life.

Margaret enjoyed swimming especially when she was on holiday although she did get into difficulty once off the Yugoslavian coast. Harry, his sister and brother-in-law were watching her swim and realised she was not actually getting

anywhere despite her arms and legs working furiously. She had got caught in a current and her brother-in-law had to jump in and rescue her. She also loved playing golf (with Harry of course) and was always cooking and baking. She made numerous delicious Christmas cakes for family and friends over many years and would spend hours each year making chutney and soups from Harry's enormous tomato crop.

Margaret and Harry were weekly church attendees initially at St Luke's then moving to St George's where she made many friends.

Those who knew Margaret will also remember she was a great Cliff Richard fan and collected many of his albums and CDs.

Margaret and Harry loved to travel and in retirement they made the most of travelling worldwide which they particularly enjoyed. They visited New Zealand, South Africa, Hong Kong and had cruises in the Caribbean, Mediterranean and Norway to name but a few.

Margaret and Harry also played bowls, table tennis and short tennis in retirement enjoying each other's company.

When Harry passed away in 2015 Margaret never really came to terms with his loss and struggled to live alone in the house they had shared for over 40 years. She spent the last 9 years in Charlotte Grange. For many years she enjoyed weekly visits to Alison and Nick's house along with birthdays and Christmas. As her health deteriorated, she was unable to travel and was grateful for Alison's regular visits and seeing her friends Christine and Elaine. Alison spent many an hour doing jigsaws with her Auntie and playing Bingo on a Friday morning.

Margaret was a loving wife who adored Harry. She was a dear Auntie to Alison, Christine and their families. She created lots of special memories that will be remembered and treasured forever and will be greatly missed.

Paul Humberston taken from Maranny's eulogy

Today is the first time I walked through that door and Paul wasn't here to greet me, with that special smile and a hug. I am sure that his smile is something we will all miss.

Paul will be remembered by us for many different things but to recap, he was born 11 March 1949 in Hartlepool to Sid and Elsie Marie Humberston. His schooling began at Oxford Road Infant and Junior School, which was followed by Technical College. Paul became an apprentice at GEC as a tool maker before moving into the office as Industrial Engineer. Paul didn't stay in one place but as his career flourished he moved to RHM in Greatham ensuring the food lines worked as they should. He moved on to Whessoe in Darlington as a Contacts Engineer. By now you should be saying 'but I thought Paul was a computer bod not an engineer. Well when he left Whessoe he did indeed take a computer course at Hartlepool College of Further Education which led to him undertaking a teaching qualification. He then went on to teach IT at that college and this was his final job before he retired.



Paul was a choir boy at St Aiden's which was the nearest church to where he lived. However some of his friends attended St George's (Congregational Church as it was then), and Paul joined them, spending many happy hours in the youth club. He would go on to be taken into membership at St George's, become a Deacon and then an Elder (when it became part of the URC). When we think of Paul, he is always part of the dynamic duo. Margaret and Paul. They met through FYC, Fellowship of Young Congregationalists to give its full title. At that time Margaret attended Thornaby Congregational Church in Mansfield Avenue, where her Dad was minister. On Sunday 25th July 1971 they were married there- by her Dad.

Marriage was good but as they were both Elders but at different churches, Sunday meant attending two services. Margaret very quickly moved her membership to St Georges.

Their first home was in Seaton Carew, where James their first son was born, sadly he died shortly after birth. Kathryn came along next becoming the eldest child moving to Belmont Gardens in 1978., the family becoming complete with Ian's birth It is hard today to imagine Ian as being the baby of the family.

Throughout Paul's life his involvement in church life continued. He was involved with the property committee for a number of years, where his many skills came in handy helping to keep the building in a good state of repair. He was also involved with the Pilots for many years and was leader at the time they closed. I seem to remember involvement with a breakfast club. I remember the dining room being full of boxes!! He manned the church office and held positions on Synod committees. He was also very supportive of all that Margaret was involved with, both at church and synod level.

Paul had many hobbies, some of which involved taking up a lot of space - Photography, books, dvds, music and Wade Pottery. Then there were the ones which didn't take up space, Trains and train spotting, football stamp collecting, and his favourite was of course chatting to anybody but also being interested in what was going on in other people's life.

Even if he wasn't on door duty, you would usually find him standing in the church porch greeting anybody who came in with a smile.

No one who knew Paul could be in any doubt as to his faith which he shared not just by words but with the way he lived his life and cared for everyone. I finish this tribute with words that Ian wrote The man, the myth, the legend, Mr Paul Humberston, The kindest nicest and most beautiful human in the world !

Church Register

Funerals

The funeral of Mike Smith took place in St George's on Wednesday 28 January 2026.

The funeral of Margaret Goulding took place in St George's on Friday 6 February 2026.

The funeral of Betty Wolfe took place in St Hilda's on Tuesday 3 February 2026.

The funeral of Paul Humberston took place in St George's on Monday 16 March 2026.

Baptisms

Sunday 1 March 2026 – Eseosa Victor Efosa-Igbinosa, son of Harriet and Efosa, had his Naming and Dedication Ceremony and was baptised during worship.

Link to Hope Shoe box Appeal 2026

Donations are needed if we are to send 100 shoeboxes again this year!



WE NEED SHOEBOXES

Hats, Gloves, Scarves so keep knitting!

Tooth brushes and toothpaste Shampoo (max 400ml)

Small games, travel size draughts, dominoes, playing cards

Small toys, yoyo, skipping rope, small cars

Colouring pads. Crayons

Sewing kit, DIY tool, tape measure

Solar powered calculator

Please leave donations at church or give to a member of the Hobbies group

Donations of money are also needed to cover the cost of sending the boxes and enable us to buy some items. A coffee afternoon will be held later in the year to raise funds. Watch for the date.

Gillian Elliston

GENERAL KNOWLEDGE QUIZ

EASTER

1 Who plays Hannah Brown in 1948 American Musical film "Easter Parade" ?

2 Easter Island belongs to which country ?

3 The Saturday before Palm Sunday is named after which biblical character ?

4 Which Russian jeweller is famed for designing elaborate jewel-encrusted eggs ?

5 On which Christian holy day are hot cross buns eaten ?

6 Nick Easter is a former professional in which sport?

7 At Easter ,the British monarch distributes small silver coins known as what ?

8 Where is the most famous Easter parade held ?

9 The idea of Easter bunny originated in 1700's in which country – 1)Russia 2)United States 3) Germany 4) Great Britain

10 Who wrote the popular Easter hymn "Christ the Lord is risen today"

11 When was Cadburys company started in Birmingham ? 1824/1860/1888

12 Which prisoner was released instead of Jesus ?

13 Why are there 11 balls of marzipan on a traditional simnel cake, eaten at Easter ?

14 Which flower is associated with Easter ?

15 Who wrote “ The Tale of Peter Rabbit “ ?

ANSWERS

1 Judy Garland 2 Chile 3 Lazarus Saturday 4 Faberge 5 Good Friday

6 Rugby 7 Maundy Money 8 5th Avenue New York 9 Germany

10 Charles Wesley 11 1824 12 Barabbas 13 Represent Jesus and the apostles (minus Judas) 14 Lily 15 Beatrix Potter

Venue

After a very successful concert on 19th March with the wonderful Ashley Campbell, we are all buzzing and looking forward to the next concert on Thursday 14th May featuring Jim Causley and Miranda Sykes. Tickets as usual from Enid, the CAB, the Record Shop in Osborne Road and online. All of the concert information will be printed somewhere in the newsletter. All of us who work tirelessly to put on the concerts really want to encourage you to come along and support them. There are so many ways that we can spread the Good News and the first step is just welcoming people into our lives and our spiritual house. With the concerts we see that opening our doors to welcome people into the church who wouldn't normally step foot into our place of worship and sanctuary is a great witness. So many people have said how 'at home' they feel in St George's. See our Facebook reviews.

Please tell your friends about our concerts and about our fellowship in St George's. Pick up some flyers from church and pass them on.

Property

What shall we do with the area at the north end of the church that used to be the Cornerstone coffee shop? We want your suggestions but in the meantime, we are pushing on with a refurbishment to make the place usable and more welcoming. We are painting the walls (can you help with a bit of glossing)? and have ordered a new carpet to make it feel a bit warmer but we need some inspiration for using the area once the basics are done. Have a chat with your friends, at the Thursday meeting, in the pews, over coffee or just when you are meeting with your friends and come back and give us some suggestions as to what we can do in that area. We promise to listen to even the craziest ideas.

News of People



Please pray for our members and friends who may be unwell. Also keep our other friends and members, including the families of Paul Humberston, Rev Ken Harris and Rev John Durell who died recently, in your prayers as they mourn their loss.

FLOWER DONORS

April 5	Mr and Mrs A Ord
April 12	Miss M Rodgers
April 19	Mrs M Watson
April 26	Mr N Simpson
May 3	Mrs M Fraser
May 10	Mr F Whittaker
May 17	Mrs E Welsh
May 24	Mr N Simpson
May 31	Miss B Claxton

		Stewards.	Keys
Apr.	2nd	Liz Moss, Alan Woodhall	Nick Simpson.
	3rd.	Gillian Elliston, Alan Woodhall.	Liz Moss.
	5th.	Pam Branfoot, Sandra Hindmarch.	Alan Woodhall.
	12th	Gillian Elliston, Liz Moss.	Nick Simpson
	19th.	Pam Branfoot, Alan Woodhall.	Liz Moss
May.	26th.	Pam Branfoot, Sandra Hindmarch	Alan Woodhall.
	3rd.	Liz Moss, Gillian Elliston.	Nick Simpson.
	10th.	Pam Branfoot, Alan Woodhall.	Liz Moss.
	17th.	Sandra Hindmarch, Pam Branfoot.	Alan Woodhall.
	24th.	Liz Moss, Gillian Elliston.	Nick Simpson.
	31st.	Pam Branfoot, Alan Woodhall.	Liz Moss.
Jun.	7th	Sandra Hindmarch, Pam Branfoot.	Alan Woodhall.
	14th.	Liz Moss, Gillian Elliston.	Nick Simpson.
	21st.	Alan Woodhall, Pam Branfoot.	Liz Moss.
	28th.	Pam Branfoot, Sandra Hindmarch.	Alan Woodhall.

Saturday 16th May 2026 – Spring Fayre, 9.30 am – 12.30pm

This is the first of our fayres for 2026 and an opportunity to open our doors to our community and raise funds for our church. We would be grateful for donations for the raffle, tombola and lucky dip bags which could be passed on or left in the black box at the back of the church any time. A small quantity of bric-a-brac has been retained; the remainder has been donated to local charity shops. If you have good quality, small items, which could be donated just before the fayre, as we are hoping to have a stall. Please do not leave any items in the coffee shop area or outside the coffee shop door as this area has been cleared and decorated. Sweet or

savoury donations for the bakery stall would be very welcome on the morning of the fayre.

As we do not have sufficient church stalls, we are again looking for people to rent stalls. We charge £10. If you know of anyone who would like to rent a stall, please give them my details (rivendell-15@ntlworld.com / 07811 312403).

We will be setting up for the fayre on the afternoon of Friday 15th May from 2 pm. Any help would be very much appreciated.

Gillian R

Worship in St George's

April

2 nd	7pm	Rev Bev Hollings, Maundy Thursday, Communion
3 rd	10.30am	Rev John Elliston, Good Friday
5 th	10.30am	Rev Bev Hollings, Easter Sunday, Communion
12 th	10.30am	Rev Colin Jackson
19 th	10.30am	Mrs Maranny Jones
26 th	10.30am	Mrs Chris Eddowes, a Baptism will follow this service

May

3 rd	10.30am	Ms Jan Harper, Communion
10 th	10.30am	Mrs Judith Winn, Church Meeting follows this service
17 th	10.30am	Rev Bev Hollings, a Baptism will follow this service
24 th	10.30am	Mr John Kidd, a Baptism will follow this service
31 st	10.30am	The Worship Team (BC)

June

7 th	10.30am	Mrs Chris Eddowes, Communion
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Communion Rota

April Easter Day

Gillian Elliston

Ray Trench

May

Sandra Twist

May Ord

June

Alan Woodhall

Betty Woodhall

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

Church Office

Anyone who would like photocopies doing please contact Gillian Elliston

Newsletter Editor

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Copy for next newsletter by May 31st please

