

18th – 24th January EPIPHANY 2 – NEWSLETTER
“Happy are those who make the Lord their trust” (Psalm 40:4)

Dear friends,

Canon Law permits clergy to have some flexibility with scripture readings during our services, even the principal services on Sundays. While cathedral churches and some high Anglo-Catholic services or services from the Book of Common Prayer are inclined to include all 4 readings from the lectionary for the specified Sunday (the Old Testament, Psalm, New Testament, and Gospel), many parish churches elect to read as their first reading either the Old or New Testament lesson and the Gospel passage. So, I am choosing to share here some of the Psalm for this Sunday, which isn't being read at our services. **Psalm 40** is one that was composed and written by King David. He often expresses in his Psalms, his soul, and reveals his personal relationship with God. With graphic imagery, we are drawn into the state of David's yearning, and how he is brought from a place of darkness to one of elated security in the Lord.

**¹ I waited patiently for the Lord;
he inclined to me and heard my cry.
² He drew me up from the desolate pit,
out of the miry bog,
and set my feet upon a rock,
making my steps secure.**

**³ He put a new song in my mouth,
a song of praise to our God.
Many will see and fear,
and put their trust in the Lord.**

An 18-year-old college student, formerly a pupil of Gainford Primary, didn't come up from his desolate pit and lost his life in his miry bog. We are deeply saddened that he was consumed by the darkness that overwhelmed him and that he felt unable to see the light of hope. **Our hearts and prayers go to all who knew and loved Sam**, even as we place our confidence in God whose mercy is wider and redeeming love greater than we can understand.



I share **2 photographs taken this evening of the sun setting** over the Tees in Gainford and over St John the Evangelist Church in Ingleton. May their beauty, which speaks of the shared glory of God's creation, bless us all.



The **Week of Prayer for Christian Unity** is traditionally observed from the **18th to the 25th January** – the octave between the Feast Days of St. Peter and St. Paul. Each year, churches of a particular nation are invited to prepare the Churches Together Service of Christian Unity for all churches across the whole world. **This year's service comes to us**

from the Church in Armenia, which is the first nation to have proclaimed her discipleship in Christ and declared itself a Christian nation in 301 AD, before Constantine of Rome. We are reminded each year that the Church is the Body of Christ in its diversity, alive through the breath of the Holy Spirit and with the blood of Christ, in which we share one being and common faith. At the end of the week beginning this Sunday, Churches Together in Gainford invites everyone from our 4 parishes to join in the service on Sunday 25th January at 3pm in St Mary's, Gainford.


SERVICES ON SUNDAY 18th JANUARY, 2nd in Epiphany

9.15am	Staindrop St Mary	Holy Communion	Rev'd Canon Eileen Harrop
9.30am	Winston St Andrew	Service of the Word	Peter Craig preaching and co-leading
10.45am	Gainford St Mary	Service of the Word	Sarah Fells preaching and co-leading

Rev'd Canon Eileen Harrop

An invitation from REV'D MOJI JAIYESIMI to her Licensing as Associate Priest in St Mary's, Cockerton, Darlington: Everyone is invited on Sunday 25th of January 2026 at 6.30pm
If you wish to contact Moji, please email her: mojjjay@yahoo.com

NOTICES:

- † **PARISHES MORNING PRAYER:** All are welcome to join our Ordinand Sarah Fells and Lay Minister in Training Peter Craig at Morning Prayer
- Tuesdays 9am at Gainford St Mary's Church *with exception of Tuesday 27th January when Morning Prayer will be at 8.30am at Staindrop St Mary's Church instead of in Gainford because of a special community meeting at Staindrop Academy at 9.30am*
 - Wednesdays 9am at Staindrop St Mary's Church
- † **PARISHES BIBLE STUDY 'Jesus, Light of the world, shine in our darkness'.** Our Ordinand in Training Sarah Fells and Lay Minister in Training on Placement Peter Craig are leading 4 sessions exploring the bible to learn more about this Wonderful Light- how to live in it and how to share it with others. **Come along at 7-8pm, 2 Olivers Gardens, Staindrop on 13th, 20th, 27th January and 3rd February.**
- † **GATHER LIFEGROUP RESUMES ON THURSDAY 29th JANUARY at 7pm, 2 Academy Gardens, Gainford,** learning about and from the Minor Prophets, beginning with the Prophet Joel. The 2nd meeting will be on Thursday 5th February in Winston. **Please contact Sheila for information: info@gatherchurchteesdale.com**
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- † **PCC MEETINGS: We have vacancies on our PCCs.** Our PCCs meet about 6 times a year. Being a member of a PCC is an important and valued role that does not require much time nor does it involve many tasks. PCC officers do have particular tasks and responsibilities, and they are invaluable to the running and life of our churches. **Please consider joining a PCC if you're not already a PCC member.** Email me on ekgharrop@gmail.com
- **Winston St Andrew's PCC is meeting on Monday 19th January 7pm at the Village Hall**
 - **Staindrop St Mary's PCC is meeting on Tuesday 27th January 4pm at 32 North Green, Staindrop (Linda's)**
 - Staindrop PCC will have vacancies for churchwardens and treasurer, please get in touch with our churchwarden Linda: linda.hausmanis@gmail.com
- † **Regular events and groups:** We hope you'd find a warm welcome to all our groups. We'd also welcome anyone joining our teams who prepare and help run them.
- **WARM & WELCOME (community-led) every Friday 10am Gainford Village Hall**
 - **STAINDROP COFFEE MORNING 2nd Friday 10am Scarth Hall**
 - **TEA & CHAT 3rd Mondays 2pm Winston Village Hall**
 - **Youth Saints 2nd Thursdays 6.30 – 8pm St Mary's, Gainford**
 - **PRAYER MEETING every Tuesday 12.30 – 2pm at Jen Hindhaugh's next to Gainford Primary School's gates**

The Vicarage telephone landline is down. Please use my mobile number 07976676098 if you need to get in touch by phone. Thanks.

Rev'd Canon Eileen Harrop

COLLECT for the EPIPHANY 2

Almighty God,
in Christ you make all things new:
transform the poverty of our nature by the
riches of your grace,
and in the renewal of our lives
make known your heavenly glory;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. Amen

POST-COMMUNION PRAYER

God of glory,
you nourish us with your Word
who is the bread of life:
fill us with your Holy Spirit
that through us the light of your glory
may shine in all the world.
We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ our
Lord. Amen

The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

The origins of the **Armenian Apostolic Church** are deeply rooted in the teachings of the **Apostles Thaddeus and Bartholomew**, who evangelized in Armenia as early as the 1st century AD. Throughout Armenia's turbulent history, the Armenian Apostolic Church has been vital to the survival and resilience of its people. It has provided continuity and stability amid persecution, forced migrations, and genocide.

The Scripture passage for our reflection and guidance in prayer for this week is **Ephesians 4:1-13**

I, therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beg you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace: there is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all.

But each of us was given grace according to the measure of Christ's gift. Therefore, it is said, "When he ascended on high, he made captivity itself a captive; he gave gifts to his people."

(When it says, "He ascended," what does it mean but that he had also descended into the lower parts of the earth? He who descended is the same one who ascended far above all the heavens, so that he might fill all things.)

He himself granted that some are apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the Body of Christ, until all of us come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ.

Prayer

God of light, you have called us out of darkness into your light.
May our response to your call lead us to actively seek reconciliation
and share your light in the world. Amen.

First Reading (Epiphany 2): Isaiah 49:1-9

¹ Listen to me, O coastlands,
pay attention, you peoples from far
away!
The Lord called me before I was born,
while I was in my mother's womb he
named me.
² He made my mouth like a sharp sword,
in the shadow of his hand he hid me;
he made me a polished arrow,
in his quiver he hid me away.
³ And he said to me, 'You are my servant,
Israel, in whom I will be glorified.'
⁴ But I said, 'I have laboured in vain,
I have spent my strength for nothing
and vanity;
yet surely my cause is with the Lord,
and my reward with my God.'
⁵ And now the Lord says,
who formed me in the womb to be his
servant,
to bring Jacob back to him,
and that Israel might be gathered to
him,

for I am honoured in the sight of
the Lord,
and my God has become my
strength—
⁶ he says,
'It is too light a thing that you should be
my servant
to raise up the tribes of Jacob
and to restore the survivors of Israel;
I will give you as a light to the nations,
that my salvation may reach to the
end of the earth.'
⁷ Thus says the Lord,
the Redeemer of Israel and his Holy
One,
to one deeply despised, abhorred by the
nations,
the slave of rulers,
'Kings shall see and stand up,
princes, and they shall prostrate
themselves,
because of the Lord, who is faithful,
the Holy One of Israel, who has
chosen you.'

The Gospel (Epiphany 2): John 1:29-42

²⁹ The next day he saw Jesus coming towards him and declared, 'Here is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! ³⁰ This is he of whom I said, "After me comes a man who ranks ahead of me because he was before me." ³¹ I myself did not know him; but I came baptizing with water for this reason, that he might be revealed to Israel.'

³² And John testified, 'I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it remained on him. ³³ I myself did not know him, but the one who sent me to baptize with water said to me, "He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain is the one who baptizes with the Holy Spirit." ³⁴ And I myself have seen and have testified that this is the Son of God.'

³⁵ The next day John again was standing with two of his disciples, ³⁶ and as he watched Jesus walk by, he exclaimed, 'Look, here is the Lamb of God!' ³⁷ The two disciples heard him say this, and they followed Jesus.

³⁸ When Jesus turned and saw them following, he said to them, 'What are you looking for?' They said to him, 'Rabbi' (which translated means Teacher), 'where are you staying?' ³⁹ He said to them, 'Come and see.' They came and saw where he was staying, and they remained with him that day. It was about four o'clock in the afternoon. ⁴⁰ One of the two who heard John speak and followed him was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. ⁴¹ He first found his brother Simon and said to him, 'We have found the Messiah' (which is translated Anointed). ⁴² He brought Simon to Jesus, who looked at him and said, 'You are Simon son of John. You are to be called Cephas' (which is translated Peter).