

## 1<sup>st</sup> -7<sup>th</sup> February 2026 CANDLEMAS – NEWSLETTER

*'Because he himself was tested by what he suffered, he is able to help those who are being tested.' (Hebrews 2:18)*

Dear friends,

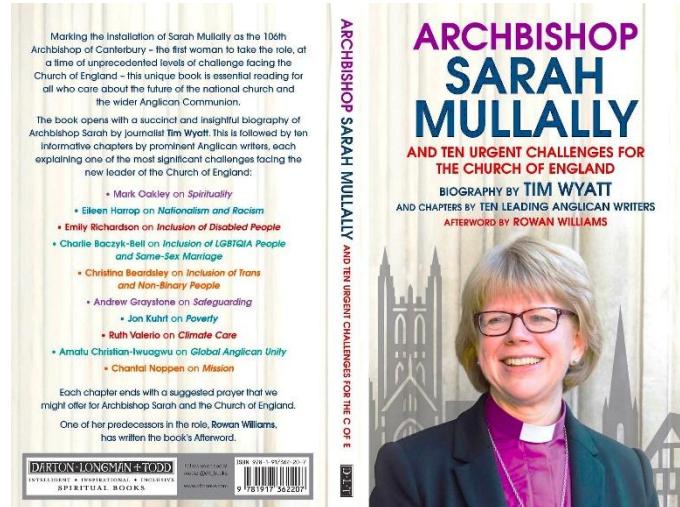
This week is an interesting reflection of our lives in the world – a bit of many things, perhaps more than we can hold in a week. It's **Candlemas on Monday, which we celebrate this Sunday**, when the testimony of the infant Jesus with his parents moves us from all manner of people being drawn to discover and worship the baby Jesus to Jesus beginning the life he had come into our world to live. It's 40 days since Christmas and his mother learns that her son is destined to affect the highs and lows of their people, and *a sword will pierce her own soul too*.

It has been a momentous week for the Church of England with the **Confirmation of our 106<sup>th</sup> Archbishop of Canterbury, The Most Reverend and Right Honourable Dame Sarah Mullally**, who legally assumes office. A book has been published in conjunction with her taking office, a chapter of which I am the author: <https://www.dltwritingforyou.com/product-page/archbishop-sarah-mullally-and-ten-urgent-challenges-for-the-church-of-england>



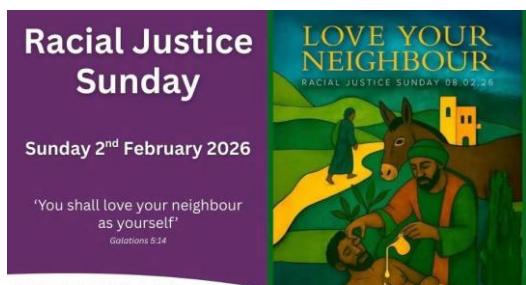
Vacancies on **Staindrop's PCC** are gradually being filled, and we look forward to **Bob and Sue of the Country Tea Shop** being part of the team soon.

We congratulate **GATHER Lead and Winston PCC Safeguarding Officer Tom Deakin**, who received his **Certificate in Theology** from Lindisfarne College of Theology this week.



**Organ Scholar Llewelyn** will be taking his Associate of the Royal College of Organists diploma exams, equivalent of a university degree. He's seeking a little support to fund his application for these exams. Here's his GoFundMe page:

[https://www.gofundme.com/f/fundraising-for-my-arco-diploma?attribution\\_id=sl%3Ac6116c12-3fd-474f-b424-c9e72a61d1d&utm\\_campaign=pd\\_ss\\_icons&utm\\_medium=customer&utm\\_source=copy\\_link&fbclid=IwVERDUAPn7m5leHRuA2FlbQlxMABzcnRjBmFwcF9pZAwzNTA2ODUIMzE3MjgAAR6OjUKyjb4sOK5yIpQipe5zJkY2ph86oKOMFI28bH1gVgMf2gFlaY4B5UxPg\\_aem\\_meoEkG-Gb4QTPBvHsLpzQ](https://www.gofundme.com/f/fundraising-for-my-arco-diploma?attribution_id=sl%3Ac6116c12-3fd-474f-b424-c9e72a61d1d&utm_campaign=pd_ss_icons&utm_medium=customer&utm_source=copy_link&fbclid=IwVERDUAPn7m5leHRuA2FlbQlxMABzcnRjBmFwcF9pZAwzNTA2ODUIMzE3MjgAAR6OjUKyjb4sOK5yIpQipe5zJkY2ph86oKOMFI28bH1gVgMf2gFlaY4B5UxPg_aem_meoEkG-Gb4QTPBvHsLpzQ)



And this is also the Churches Together in Britain's appointed **RACIAL JUSTICE SUNDAY**. Sadly, there is still injustice and racism in the Church of England corporately and across our nations of Great Britain. As a church family, and as brothers and sisters in the One Body in Christ, we know it's preposterous that anyone should be treated with less love and indignity because of their race, ethnicity, colour, and nationality. But this is a view not shared or lived by too many.

**SERVICES ON SUNDAY 2<sup>nd</sup> February CANDLEMAS**  
9.15am Staindrop St Mary Service of the Word Worship Group

9.30am Winston St Andrew  
10.45am Gainford St Mary

Holy Communion  
Holy Communion

Rev'd Canon Eileen Harrop with Sarah Fells preaching  
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Brian celebrates his 70<sup>th</sup> birthday this week so he and Eileen will be away from Tuesday returning on Saturday.

Rev'd Canon Eileen Harrop

## NOTICES:

**Please pray for Kirsten and Matthew Coutts and the family of the Late Sam Coutts**, whose funeral will take place on Monday 16<sup>th</sup> February at 12 noon in St Mary's, Gainford. Sam was a pupil of Gainford Primary School. May he rest in peace and rise in glory.

- † **PARISHES MORNING PRAYER:** All are welcome to join our Ordinand Sarah Fells and Lay Minister in Training Peter Craig at Morning Prayer
  - **This week only both on Tuesday and Wednesday 9am at Staindrop St Mary's Church** instead of in Gainford on Tuesdays because we have been informed of a scheduled power cut on Tuesday.
- † **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 for the final session at 7-8pm, 2 Olivers Gardens, Staindrop on 3rd February.**
- † **GATHER LIFEGROUP MEETS** on 5<sup>th</sup> February in Winston at 7pm, 4 Town Farm Close (opposite the converted Chapel), learning about and from the Minor Prophets, beginning with the Prophet Joel. New members are welcome! **Please contact Sheila for information: [info@gatherchurchteesdale.com](mailto:info@gatherchurchteesdale.com)**
- † **PCCs: We still 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 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](mailto:ekgharrop@gmail.com)
  - **Staindrop St Mary's PCC** are looking for churchwardens, an administrator and treasurer. Please get in touch with our churchwarden Linda: [linda.hausmanis@gmail.com](mailto:linda.hausmanis@gmail.com)
  - **Ingleton St John's PCC** are looking for a Secretary. Please get in touch with churchwarden Judith Pressley: [pressley.j@hotmail.com](mailto:pressley.j@hotmail.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 2<sup>nd</sup> Friday 10am Scarth Hall**
  - **TEA & CHAT 3<sup>rd</sup> Mondays 2pm Winston Village Hall**
  - **Youth Saints 2<sup>nd</sup> 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**
- † **Did Christians in the Early Church read and understand the Bible in the way we do today?** Come along to the **Deanery talk on Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> February, 7.30pm in St Mary's, Barnard Castle.**



## The bible in the early church

A talk by Mr Andy Hood (PhD Student at Durham University) followed by discussion.

How were the scriptures used in the early Christian Church?  
How was the canon of scripture agreed?

**St Mary's  
Barnard Castle  
DL12 8NQ**

Wednesday  
February 11<sup>th</sup> 2026  
at 7.30pm

Refreshments.  
All Welcome.  
Donations.



**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 CANDLEMAS

Almighty and ever-living God,  
clothed in majesty,  
whose beloved Son was this day presented in  
the Temple,  
in substance of our flesh:  
grant that we may be presented to you  
with pure and clean hearts,  
by your Son Jesus Christ 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

Lord, you fulfilled the hope of Simeon and Anna,  
who lived to welcome the Messiah:  
may we, who have received these gifts beyond  
words,  
prepare to meet Christ Jesus when he comes  
to bring us to eternal life;  
for he is alive and reigns, now and for ever.  
Amen

### First Reading: Hebrews 2:14-18

Since, therefore, the children share flesh and blood, he himself likewise shared the same things, so that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by the fear of death. For it is clear that he did not come to help angels, but the descendants of Abraham. Therefore he had to become like his brothers and sisters in every respect, so that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make a sacrifice of atonement for the sins of the people. Because he himself was tested by what he suffered, he is able to help those who are being tested.

### The Gospel: Luke 2:22-40

When the time came for their purification according to the law of Moses, they brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord (as it is written in the law of the Lord, 'Every firstborn male shall be designated as holy to the Lord'), and they offered a sacrifice according to what is stated in the law of the Lord, 'a pair of turtle-doves or two young pigeons.'

Now there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon; this man was righteous and devout, looking forward to the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit rested on him. It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Messiah. Guided by the Spirit, Simeon came into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him what was customary under the law, Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying, 'Master, now you are dismissing your servant in peace,

according to your word;  
for my eyes have seen your salvation,  
which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples,  
a light for revelation to the Gentiles  
and for glory to your people Israel.'

And the child's father and mother were amazed at what was being said about him. Then Simeon blessed them and said to his mother Mary, 'This child is destined for the falling and the rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be opposed so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed—and a sword will pierce your own soul too.'

There was also a prophet, Anna the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was of a great age, having lived with her husband for seven years after her marriage, then as a widow to the age of eighty-four. She never left the temple but worshipped there with fasting and prayer night and day. At that moment she came, and began to praise God and to speak about the child to all who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem.

When they had finished everything required by the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth. The child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favour of God was upon him.