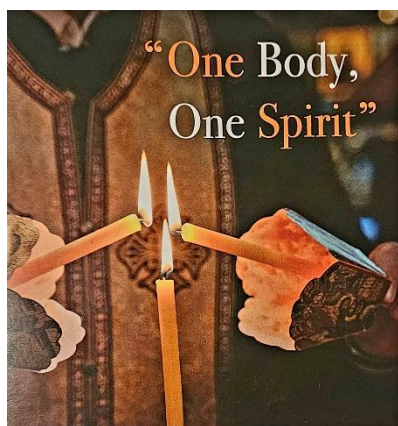
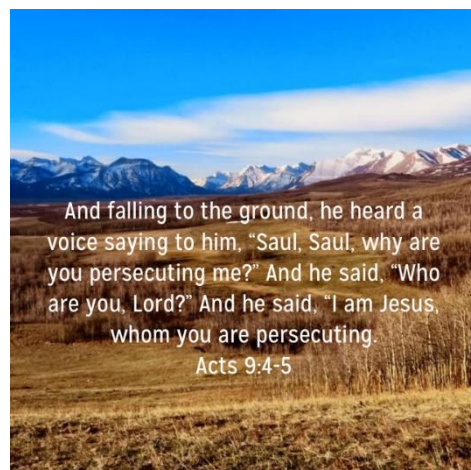


25th – 31st January EPIPHANY 3 The Conversion of Paul – NEWSLETTER

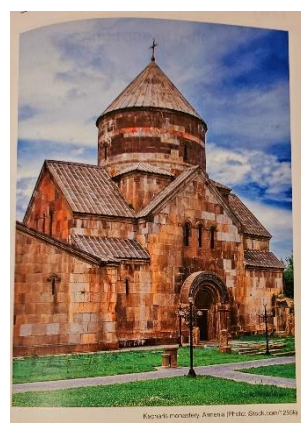
“Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord... fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, ‘Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?’” (Acts 9:1,4)

Dear friends,

I am often asked why I believe in Jesus Christ – in God who loved us so much that He came among us to deliver us from the sin of the world. My reality involves Paul-like experiences, when it had been undeniable that God came to me. When you’ve met someone, had a conversation with them, shared experiences and been in their company, their reality is just not deniable. It is interesting, and a rather human situation, that Saul set out to persecute and bring death to Jesus’ followers when he had not even met Jesus nor his followers. So, Jesus had to cause Saul to meet him, to ask: *“Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me. I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting.”*



This Sunday concludes The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. It is bookended by the Feast of the Confession of Peter and the Conversion of Paul. Peter, invited and appointed by Jesus to lay the foundation of the Church, and Paul, the first Missionary called to serve Christ to the Gentiles, were as chalk and cheese. Their personalities, backgrounds, and callings were distinct and different. They reflect the diversity of Christ’s followers, traditions, and expressions of Church.



This week we are reminded that **we belong to one body in Christ in one Spirit regardless of our institutional allegiance and forms of worship.**



We are also encouraged to open our minds to the legacy and longevity of Christian faithfulness. **This year’s service comes to us from the Church in Armenia, the first nation to have proclaimed her discipleship in Christ.** It’s extraordinary that Christians in more denominations, more churches than we know around the world, will be worshipping with the same orders of service developed for us by the Armenian Church.

And sharing the honour this week is **Warm Welcome Spaces**. In Winston, our warm welcome space is named ‘Tea and Chat’; in Staindrop, it’s simply ‘Coffee Morning’; and in Gainford, this weekly Friday space is called ‘Warm and Welcome’! This is a ministry of hospitality, companionship, and friendship, living out the Good News of Jesus Christ, which is as anointed as any authorised, licensed, and ordained ministry.

SERVICES ON SUNDAY 25th JANUARY, 3rd in Epiphany/The Conversion of Paul

9.15am	Staindrop St Mary	Holy Communion	Rev’d Canon Eileen Harrop with Peter Craig preaching
9.30am	Winston St Andrew	Holy Communion	Rev’d David Spokes
10.45am	Gainford St Mary	Holy Communion	Rev’d David Spokes
11am	Ingleton St John	Holy Communion	Rev’d Canon Eileen Harrop with Peter Craig preaching

**3pm Churches Together in Gainford at St Mary
Service of Christian Unity**

Rev’d Canon Eileen Harrop

REV'D MOJI JAIYESIMI is being licensed as Associate Priest in St Mary's, Cockerton, Darlington: Everyone is invited on Sunday 25th of January 2026 at 6.30pm.

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 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**
- † **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
- **Staindrop St Mary's PCC is meeting on Tuesday 27th January 4pm at 32 North Green, Staindrop (Linda's).** We 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**
- † **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 11th 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 11th 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 the EPIPHANY 3
(Winston & Gainford)**

Almighty God,
whose Son revealed in signs and miracles
the wonder of your saving presence:
renew your people with your heavenly grace,
and in all our weakness
sustain us by your mighty power;
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

Almighty Father,
whose Son our Saviour Jesus Christ is the light
of the world:
may your people,
illuminated by your word and sacraments,
shine with the radiance of his glory,
that he may be known, worshipped, and obeyed
to the ends of the earth;
for he is alive and reigns, now and for ever.
Amen

First Reading (Epiphany 3): Isaiah 9:1-4

But there will be no gloom for those who were in anguish. In the former time he brought into contempt the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the latter time he will make glorious the way of the sea, the land beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the nations.

The people who walked in darkness
have seen a great light;
those who lived in a land of deep darkness—
on them light has shined.

You have multiplied the nation,
you have increased its joy;
they rejoice before you
as with joy at the harvest,
as people exult when dividing plunder.

For the yoke of their burden,
and the bar across their shoulders,
the rod of their oppressor,
you have broken as on the day of Midian.

The Gospel (Epiphany 3): Matthew 4:12-23

Now when Jesus heard that John had been arrested, he withdrew to Galilee. He left Nazareth and made his home in Capernaum by the lake, in the territory of Zebulun and Naphtali, so that what had been spoken through the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled:

‘Land of Zebulun, land of Naphtali,
on the road by the sea, across the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles—
the people who sat in darkness
have seen a great light,
and for those who sat in the region and shadow of death
light has dawned.’

From that time Jesus began to proclaim, ‘Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.’
As he walked by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the lake—for they were fishermen. And he said to them, ‘Follow me, and I will make you fish for people.’ Immediately they left their nets and followed him. As he went from there, he saw two other brothers, James son of Zebedee and his brother John, in the boat with their father Zebedee, mending their nets, and he called them. Immediately they left the boat and their father, and followed him.

Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and curing every disease and every sickness among the people.