

Dear friends,

Last Sunday, our churches celebrated the Feast of Candlemas, which signalled the end of the season of Epiphany. It occurred to me that Jesus himself as a baby and as an infant with his earthly parents Mary and Joseph had not actually done anything for each person or groups of persons to be drawn to him as God incarnate. From Advent, at Christmas and Christmastide, The Epiphany and through to Candlemas, it was God the Father who stirred and sent the angels, gave the exceptional light of the star, and spoke to specific individuals to reveal himself – the king, redeemer and saviour of the world, in Jesus. **From this Sunday, we begin to see Jesus as the One who reveals the Good News and salvation by his earthly life, the One whose life we are invited to embrace and to follow.** Therefore, for a couple of weeks we journey with Jesus in ‘Ordinary Time’ before Lent begins with Ash Wednesday on the 18th of February. I came across this prayer that speaks into this transitory period – a post-Candlemas reflection:

A Candlemas Prayer of the In-Between

God of thresholds and thin places,
on this feast we stand between what has been
and what is still unfolding.

We hold a candle.
We look at a child.
And we dare to say:
this fragile life is the light of the world.

Here, in the Temple
where earth brushes heaven,
where creation reaches toward its maker,
where sacrifice names both sin and salvation
you meet us in the in-between.

Between birth and death,
between promise and fulfilment,
between youth and age,
between the life newly given
and the life already offered.

Bless those who live in these crossings:
the young discerning who they are called to be,

the old who carry hope with tired bodies,
those who know the world’s cost
and still choose faithfulness.

Teach us to trust our vocation
not as certainty, but as obedience
to follow the light we are given
through shadows we do not yet understand.

And when we fear the waiting,
the fragility, the unfinishedness of it all,
remind us that this is where you dwell:
not only in arrival,
but in the holy space between.

Send us from this place
to carry your light across the thresholds of our world
from silence into justice,
from fear into courage,
from the Temple into the streets.

God of light and shadow,
hold us as we stand between.
Amen

**This Sunday, Gainford St Mary celebrates LOVE –
the end of next week being Valentine’s Day.**

Thank you for your kind wishes to Brian on his 70th birthday too – love does often mean making time to celebrate together and I’m glad we’ve been able to.

SERVICES ON SUNDAY 8th February

9.15am	Staindrop St Mary	Holy Communion
9.30am	Winston St Andrew	Service of the Word
10.45am	Gainford St Mary	Service of the Word
11am	Ingleton St John	Holy Communion



Celebrating LOVE

St Mary’s Gainford Sunday 8th of February

Service of the Word Celebrating LOVE led by Sarah Fells With St Mary’s Band

Rev’d Canon Eileen Harrop with Peter Craig preaching
Graham Young and Chrissie Barnett
Lay Leaders with Sarah Fells and the Worship Band
Rev’d Canon Eileen Harrop with Peter Craig preaching

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 16th 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.

† **Please pray for the family of THE LATE TOM ALDERSON**, husband of the late Rev'd Maureen Alderson, formerly Parish Priest of Gainford and Winston, whose funeral will be on 20th February 2026, details next week.

† Last week, I shared an appeal from our young **organist Llewellyn Blezard-Greenwell** for support on his GoFundMe page to help him finance his Associate of the Royal College of Organists diploma (ARCO) examination. Here is the link again if you'd like to support him: https://www.gofundme.com/f/fundraising-for-my-arco-diploma?attribution_id=sl%3Ac6116c12-3fdd-474f-b424-c9e72a61d1ad&utm_campaign=pd_ss_icons&utm_medium=customer&utm_source=copy_link&fbclid=IwVERDUAPn7m5leHRuA2FlbQlxMABzcnRjBmFwcF9pZAwzNTA2ODU1MzE3MjgAAR6OJUKvjb4sOK5y1pQipe5zlkY2ph86oKOMFI28bH1gVgMf2gFlaY4B5UxPg_aem_meoEKg-Gb4QTPBvHsLpz3Q

† **PARISHES MORNING PRAYER:** All are welcome to join our **Ordinand Sarah Fells and Lay Minister in Training Peter Craig** at Morning Prayer at 9am on Tuesdays at Gainford St Mary and Wednesdays at Staindrop St Mary

† **GATHER LIFEGROUP MEETS** on Thursday 19th February – Sheila Jones leading – in **Gainford 2 Academy Gardens** at 7pm learning about and from the Minor Prophets, beginning with the Prophet Joel. New members are welcome! **Please contact Sheila for information: 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 ekharrop@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
- **Ingleton St John's PCC** are looking for a Secretary. Please get in touch with churchwarden Judith Pressley: 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 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 2nd Sunday before LENT

Almighty God,
you show to those who are in error the light of
your truth,
that they may return to the way of
righteousness:
grant to all those who are admitted
into the fellowship of Christ's religion,
that they may reject those things
that are contrary to their profession,
and follow all such things as are agreeable to the
same;
through our Lord Jesus Christ,
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 God,
you see that we have no power of ourselves to help
ourselves:
keep us both outwardly in our bodies,
and inwardly in our souls;
that we may be defended from all adversities
which may happen to the body,
and from all evil thoughts which may assault and hurt
the soul;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

First Reading: Romans 8:18-25

I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory about to be revealed to us. For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God; for the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and will obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. We know that the whole creation has been groaning in labour pains until now; and not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly while we wait for adoption, the redemption of our bodies. For in hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what is seen? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.

The Gospel: Matthew 6:25-34

'Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air; they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? And can any of you by worrying add a single hour to your span of life? And why do you worry about clothing?

Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you—you of little faith?

Therefore do not worry, saying, "What will we eat?" or "What will we drink?" or "What will we wear?" For it is the Gentiles who strive for all these things; and indeed your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

'So do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring worries of its own. Today's trouble is enough for today.