



NEWSTAND

THE MAGAZINE OF ST. ANDREW'S URC



Musings — Lent discussion — 58 Society
Midweek Prayers — Yorkshire Pudding Day!

Volume 92 Issue 2 — February 2026

St. Andrew's United Reformed Church

Eastfield Avenue, Monkseaton, Whitley Bay, NE25 8LU

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monkseatonurc

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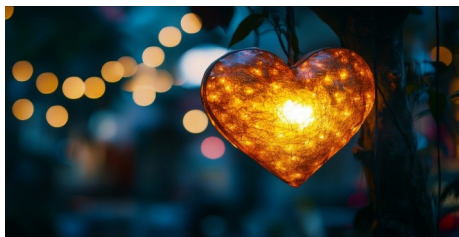
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Member Editor 2026
Association for Church Editors

Musing from the Manse

Darkness Gives Way to Light



So often January feels like the longest month of the year. The Christmas lights have been packed away, the mornings are slow to arrive, and darkness seems to linger well into the day. January 2026 seems to have been a month of grey skies, often accompanied with rain. This year, perhaps more than most, that darkness can feel heavy - not only in the short days and long nights, but in the world around us too. As tensions grow around the world it can be difficult to see anything other than darkness.

The prophet Isaiah speaks into such moments with striking honesty and hope. "The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light" (*Isaiah 9:2*). Isaiah doesn't deny the darkness; he names it. Again and again he points beyond it, reminding God's people that darkness is never the final word. God's light comes - sometimes quietly, sometimes unexpectedly - but always faithfully.

As we say goodbye to January and welcome February, the shortest month of the year, we begin to notice small changes. The days are lengthening, almost unnoticeably at first, yet if we pay attention the change is there. Light returns not all at once, but steadily, patiently, a tiny bit at the start and end of each day. It is a gentle reminder that God's promises often unfold in the same way: slowly enough that we must watch for them, but surely enough that we can trust them.

At the same time, we cannot ignore the shadows in our world - conflict, injustice,

poverty, loneliness, anxiety, and fear. Isaiah speaks of God's servant as "a light to the nations" (*Isaiah 49:6*), a calling that echoes through to us today. As followers of Christ, we are not only people who wait for the light; we are called to reflect it.

But what might this look like as we go about our lives on a daily basis? This might look like kindness offered when it would be easier to turn away, patience in strained relationships, practical care for those who are struggling, or simply being present with someone who feels forgotten. The greatest gift we can give someone is our time, and even though we all wish we had more of it, sharing it with someone else is never time wasted in my experience. Small acts of light matter because in God's hands, they shine further than we imagine. As January moves on and the light slowly grows, may we notice both the returning daylight and the opportunities God gives us to be light - right where we are, just as we are.

In the month when we celebrate love, we are reminded that light is most often seen through love. Not the grand or showy kind, but the steady, faithful love that reflects God's own heart. Isaiah speaks of a God whose compassion does not fail, whose love is strong enough to break through even the deepest darkness. In a world that can feel broken and harsh, choosing to love - generously, patiently, and courageously - is one of the clearest ways we can shine God's light into the lives of those around us.

Birthday thanks

On 90 glorious years

To the Flower Team, and all my friends at St. Andrew's Church.

First of all a very big 'thank you' for the beautiful arrangement of flowers which was delivered to me on my 90th birthday, Dec. 16th, which also coincided with the start of my slow return to feeling well again. I attended Tuesday Worship that morning and was greeted with a lovely chorus singing "Happy birthday" to me! I got lots of cards and gifts for my birthday, and my third thank you is for all the cards received from so many of you.

December the 20th was the day of my big party, all organised by my 3 children, and a surprise for me, and this was held at what my children described as 'an important and happy place' in my life for the past 24 years...St. Andrew's Church! All family members were present, plus a few friends from various parts of my life. A good time I feel sure, was had by all. First class entertainment from family members, and even party games. And I don't think many folk get their birthday cake 'piped in' on the Scottish bagpipes! (by one of my grand-daughters.) What a blessed person I am.

Una



Activities Team update

More things to look forward to!



Coffee Morning – Saturday 7th February, 10.30 am – 12 noon

We look forward to meeting friends old and new once again for a cup of coffee/tea or soft drink plus an excellent selection of biscuits. Here's hoping the weather is better this month - at the beginning of January only a very few folk braved the snow!

Film Club – Friday 13th February, 2.00 pm

This month's film is *Downton Abbey: The Grand Finale* (PG). The film follows the Crawley family and their staff as they enter the 1930s. When Mary finds herself at the centre of a public scandal and the family faces financial trouble, the entire household grapples with the threat of social disgrace.

Play Reading Evening – Saturday 21st February, 7 pm

These evenings are proving to be both entertaining and sociable occasions, if you haven't been before why not give it a try? It's possible either to take part or just listen to a play, usually a comedy, being read while enjoying a glass of wine or soft drink. Tickets are available at £5.

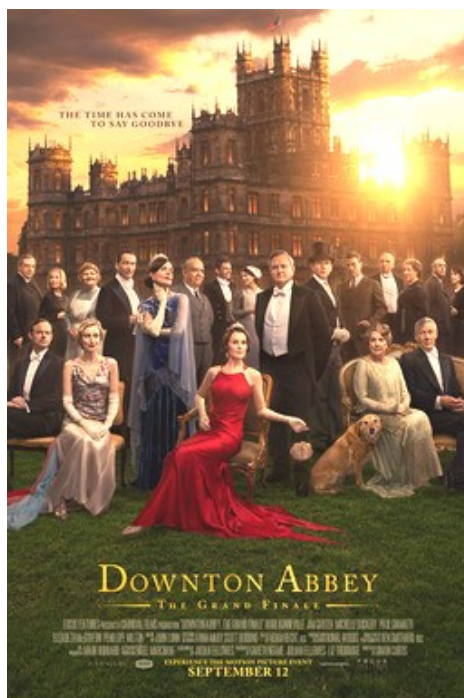
Dates for the Diary

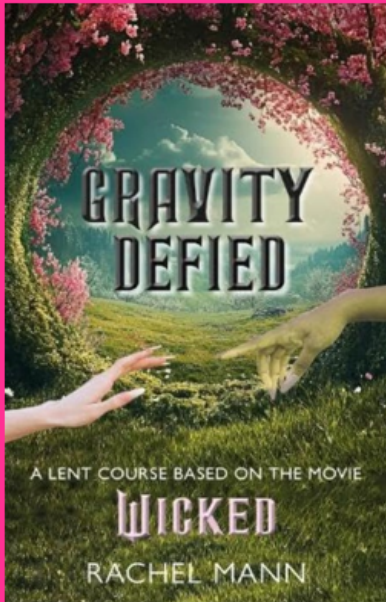
Film Club – Friday 13th March 2026

Poetry Evening – Saturday 21st March 2026

Coffee Morning with Crafts – Saturday 28th March 2026

Ann Hammond





Join us for a 5 week Lent Discussion Group

Based on the film 'Wicked', this course invites us to explore a number of themes relevant to all of us in the contemporary world. These include recognising what is good and right and standing up for it even when mocked; the temptations of success, popularity and respectability; and the importance of friendship and solidarity. The topics are considered in the context of Jesus' ministry recorded in the Gospels, the temptations and threats that he faced, and the persecution of those who followed him.

- We will be showing the film on **Sunday 15th February at 2pm**
- The course begins on **Monday 23rd February at 2pm** at St Andrew's URC and runs each following Monday – 2nd, 9th, 16th and 23rd March.
- Sessions will also be available at St Columba's URC, North Shields **on Monday evenings at 7pm** – 23rd February and each following Monday – 2nd, 9th, 16th and 23rd March.

For more information please contact Revd Louise Sanders:
louise.sanders208@gmail.com Tel:07537 848492

58 Society

Recent meeting and activity report

Our December speaker, Elizabeth Finch, explained how Wallington Hall came to be owned by the Fenwicks, then the Blacketts and lastly the Trevelyan. She told how the present hall came to be built in about 1688, and the additions/adaptations various family members had made since then.

The delicious Christmas meal was well attended and members enjoyed quizzes from Catriona and John, as well as the usual Carol singing led by Patsy.

Snow caused the cancellation of our first meeting in January.

"Fraud and Scams" was the subject of the talk by Pauline Baldwin of Newcastle Building Society.

Our next talk on 2nd February is "Secrets of the Human Brain" by Robert Pullen.

The AGM takes place on 16th February. Five office bearers have agreed to remain for the coming year but Celia, our Chairman for three years, has asked for volunteers to replace her. Refreshments will be served after the meeting.

Anne Smith

Thank you to ALL contributors.

Coins, stamps and postcards — sold!

It is that time of year again when I give my donation of monies raised over the last 12 months from selling used postage stamps, old coins and picture postcards to St. Oswald's Hospice in Gosforth.

Thank you to all contributors from this Church who have helped me to raise the sum of £1660 this year.

In their acknowledgement of my

cheque, St. Oswald's reminded me that I have been involved in this fundraising for the last 30 years and in that time I have managed to raise over £ 30,000 !! A grand effort to such a worthy cause.

Once again, many thanks to you all concerned.

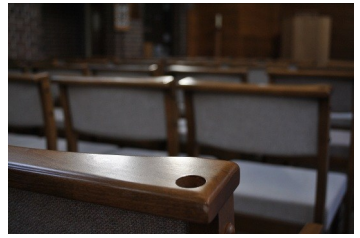
Neil Cockburn



M Accelerator / Unsplash

An invite to St. Columba's

Induction of Revd Louise Sanders



St Columba's Church has invited members and friends of St Andrew's to attend Louise's Induction as minister at St Columba's: on **Saturday 28th February 2026 at 2 pm**. The service will be followed by a buffet.

If you intend to be present will you please complete the attendance

sheet which is in the Reception Area or contact me by not later than **Wednesday 4th February**.

Ray Hammond
Church Secretary

(0191 252 3319
or email: annray@talktalk.net)

World Day of Prayer

All are welcome

The Whitley Bay service for the World Day of Prayer will be hosted this year by St Andrew's on Friday, 6th March at 2 pm. Known for many years as the 'Women's

World Day of Prayer', this year's service has been put together by the women of Nigeria, but **EVERYONE IS WELCOME – NOT JUST WOMEN**, and refreshments will be available afterwards. Please come along if you can, and enjoy fellowship with people from other local churches.



Carole Mallett and Jenny Hooper

"When you're accustomed to privilege, equality feels like oppression."
Mike Jebbett

Midweek Prayers

Coming together
in a time of quiet



Prayer of Approach

Lord God,
we come to You
to feel Your gentle touch,
guiding the way that we should go.
Lord God, we offer ourselves to You
with ever thankful hearts
for all the grace-filled gifts
that flow from Your hands . **AMEN**

Prayer of Confession and Assurance

Loving God,
we praise you for Your limitless
patience,
always forgiving us despite our failure.
Help us to be obedient to You,
to seek Your guidance,
and trust Your judgement.
Help us to learn what it means to be
Your people
and to understand how great Your
love is. **AMEN**

Assurance of Forgiveness

Gracious God,
You encompass us in
Your steadfast love and presence,
with You alongside us and peace in
our lives. **AMEN**

A Prayer for Christian Unity

Almighty God,
forgive us our failure to look outside
ourselves to the wider family to which
we belong.
We have called ourselves Your family,
but have too often been a family
divided.
Help us to recognise our unity in Christ
with all your people in every place,
and to understand that whatever
may divide us, it should never destroy
the fellowship we share.
Give us a true concern for all,
an awareness of the wider fellowship
to which we belong, and a sincere
love for Your people everywhere,
that all may see the bond in Christ
that makes us one.
We have called ourselves Your family:
help us to be a family united in the
name of Christ. **Amen**

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven, ...For
thine is the kingdom, the power and
the glory for ever and ever. **AMEN**

Prayer of Intercession

Lord, we pray for who are losing hope; for those who can see no way out of the difficulties they are facing; for those who are battling with anxiety and despair, and for those who are filled with uncertainty. May the healing love of God flow through their lives.

Lord, we pray for those who are longing for peace and reconciliation, and for those who find themselves trapped in the midst of war. We pray for those in positions of leadership and authority, for those making daily decisions that will impact on people's lives and for those who find their choices are limited by the demands that others lay upon them. May the cleansing love of God flow through their lives.

Lord, in a quiet space we pray for ourselves, for memories that fill us, the future that can concern us and the present that can, at times, overwhelm us.

May the amazing love of God flow through our lives.

We offer our prayers in the name of Your Son our Lord Jesus Christ. **AMEN**

Blessing

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you now and for evermore. **AMEN**

Ann Sinclair

Inspired by David Clowes *500 Prayers for the Christian Year*;

Nick Fawcett *Prayers for all Seasons*.

Retronyms

This all sounds a bit backwards

Acoustic guitars used to just be called "guitars". Then we invented electric guitars, which meant saying "guitar" wasn't clear enough, so "guitars" became "acoustic guitars". This is an example of a "retronym" consisting of a noun and a modifier that specifies the original meaning of the noun.

Many have come about due to technological advances, for example cameras used to use only film. Then came digital cameras, so we have "film cameras". Other examples include organic food, snail mail, British English, bike pedal, scripted show, outdoor rock climbing and regular coffee.

From Meriam-Webster Facebook page

Wordless

Another reflection from Tom Gordon



*"A poem should be wordless
as the flight of birds."*

Archibald MacLeish, Ars Poetica (1926)

At first reading, the quote above from the early twentieth century poet, Archibald MacLeish, makes no sense. How can a poem with words be wordless? And yet the meaning of MacLeish's affirmation came to me on a pre-Christmas music trip to Leipzig in Germany. The heart of it was a performance of J S Bach's Christmas Oratorio in Leipzig's Thomaskirche, the church where Bach was Thomaskantor (the cantor with related duties in St Thomas School) in the 1720s. The setting, music, performance and time of year combined to make it a quite wonderful experience. But the juxtaposition of two other musical events also sticks in my mind. On the Saturday evening, we were at the Opera House for the Leipzig Ballet's performance of Tchaikovsky's The Nutcracker. I'd never been to a ballet before, and I enjoyed the music and the colourful drama that unfolded before me. The following morning, my wife and I attended a service at the Nikolai Kirche (The Church of St Nicholas) where the schoolchildren, the pre-school children, and the pre-pre-school children offered a Nativity Play. The singing, enthusiasm, musicality and drama of the little ones was a joy

(greatly enhanced by the very small children as the sheep!) But it was all in German, and I didn't understand a word. A ballet on an opera stage with no words. Children in a Nativity drama where I didn't know the language. No words for me to ponder. No words for me to remember. No words at all. No words needed. In the First Letter of John in the New Testament, we have this guidance for the people of the early Church:

"Love should not be a matter of words or talk. It must be genuine and show itself in action."

When love is needed, but words aren't available, keep showing your compassion in what you do. When love is sought, and no words can be found, so much can be communicated in your actions. When love can offer healing, and no talking is possible, your love can still be real. Love without words, love without talk, love that's genuine in your actions and mine. No words? No words needed, when there was so much to share ...

A prayer for today

The poem of love that is wordless? Yes, when so much love is shown in action.

An original reflection © Tom Gordon

Also available at

<https://swallowsnestnet.wordpress.com>

Used with permission.

The Three Bears

But no sign of Goldilocks

It was a sunny morning in the big forest and the bear family was just waking up. Baby bear went downstairs and sat in the small chair at the table. He looked into his small bowl. It was empty! "Who's been eating my porridge?" he wailed.

Daddy bear arrived at the table and sat in his big chair. He looked into his big bowl. It was also empty! "Who's been eating my porridge?" he roared.

Mummy bear put her head through the serving hatch from the kitchen and yelled, "For Pete's sake, how many times do we have to go through this? It was mummy bear who got up first. It was mummy bear who woke everyone else in the house up. It was mummy bear who unloaded the dishwasher from last night and put everything away. It was mummy bear who went out into the cold morning air to fetch the newspaper. It was mummy bear who put the cat out, cleaned the litter box and filled the cat's water and food dish. And now that you've decided to come downstairs and grace me with your presence... listen up, because I'm only going to say this one more time... I haven't made the porridge yet!

February's best known day is probably Valentines Day on 14th February, but there are some other days related to love, romance and relationships during the month:

- 8th – Propose Day
- 11th – Promise Day
- 12th – Hug Day
- 13th – Kiss Day
- 15th – Single Awareness Day
- 18th – Flirting Day
- 21st – Breakup Day

British Yorkshire Pudding Day

But does it come with gravy?



Robert Owen-Wahl / Pixabay

British Yorkshire Pudding Day, celebrated on the first Sunday of February, is a moment dedicated to one of the most iconic staples of British cuisine: the Yorkshire pudding. This annual observance honours a dish that has been part of the national culinary identity for centuries, cherished for its versatility, simplicity, and comforting presence at the heart of the traditional Sunday roast.

The origins of Yorkshire pudding reach back to the early 18th century, when cooks sought clever ways to make the most of precious ingredients. Before modern ovens, roast beef was cooked on a spit over an open fire, and a pan was placed beneath to catch the drippings. Resourceful cooks began using those rich drippings to flavour a simple batter of eggs, flour, and milk or water, creating what was first known as “dripping pudding”. This early version was served as a first course, particularly in poorer households, where it helped dull the appetite

before the more expensive meat was served sparingly.

Over time, the pudding evolved into the airy, crisp-edged, soft-centred delight recognised today. Its association with Yorkshire likely stems from the region's reputation for producing especially light and well-risen puddings, though the dish was enjoyed throughout England. By the 19th century, the name “Yorkshire pudding” had firmly taken hold, and it became an essential component of the Sunday roast tradition.

British Yorkshire Pudding Day encourages cooks of all levels to celebrate this humble yet beloved dish. Whether served with roast beef and gravy, filled with sausages as toad-in-the-hole, or reinvented in modern wraps and desserts, the Yorkshire pudding remains a symbol of British ingenuity and comfort. The day invites everyone to appreciate its history, enjoy its flavours, and keep the tradition alive.



To give me to someone I don't belong to is cowardly,
but to take me is noble.
I can be a game, but there are no winners.
What am I?

Blame

Let's get quizzical

Thanks to Charles Nove on Magic Classical for these



- What do these words have in common and suggest another to go with them:
Avocado
Agriculture
Origami
Sofa
Parasol
Umbrella
- Granny is talking to her granddaughter.
"I will always be 45 years older than your dad but now the digits in my age are the same as your dad's but reversed and the digits are two prime numbers. How old are we?"
- Two siblings live either side of a bridge. They can see everything except each other. What are they?
- How do you make the number one disappear by adding to it.
- The Sage of Magic Town is writing a book. Their publisher has given them 80 days to write 500 pages. They have so far managed 300 pages, completing 15 pages every 4 days
Can the book be completed in time?
- The Mayor of Magic Town has a birthday cake each year. The cake has the correct number of candles each year. He's calculated he has blown out 861 candles. How old is he?
- Find the pairs of words from each definition. One contains "one", the other "ten".
 - A singing voice
 - False or artificial
- The slippery politician said:
"I wasn't telling the truth when I denied arguing against scrapping the proposal"
Was he for or against the proposal?

- They all end in the tonic sol fa scale words, so words like basmati or spaghetti will be next.
- 72 and 27
- Eyes
- Add a G and it will be gone.
- No, because they've already been writing for 80 days: 300 pages at 15 pages every 4 days is 80 days.
- 6, 41
- Bartone / Tenor & Erroneous or dishonest / Pretend
- For

Questions of faith for Lent

What does it mean to you?

The meaning of Christian faith is explained by St Paul in his letter to the Hebrews, when he wrote: 'Faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see'. He explains the certainty of what we do not see as being the belief in the existence of God who is invisible to human eyes, although, of course, we can all, whoever we are, wherever we are, and whatever the time is - and all this without a phone - personally communicate with God through prayer. And it is through prayer that we can build our faith, that is our belief in the invisible God. But on the other hand, it is our faith that encourages us to pray. It's a perfect, which came first, chicken or egg? situation. The two go hand-in-hand and are inseparable. We cannot have faith without praying, and we cannot pray without faith.

There can be no doubt that our personal belief in God, our faith, is intimately linked with our personal prayers to him. And as Jesus once said to his disciples, 'Whatever you ask in prayer, you will receive, if you have faith.'

But faith is not just about those big moments, in fact it is not about any single moment, it is about our ongoing relationship with God and our obedience to him every moment of our lives. As individuals and as church families we are called by Jesus to use the gifts that we have been blessed with, and this means being sure of what we want to achieve, continuing to pray for it and by stepping out in faith, and to use God's gifts to us both wisely, and to seek new and exciting ways to use what we have, in order to reach out to everyone - the young and old, families and the lonely, the fit, the disabled and the sick, the dying and the bereaved - and in doing so we can show them God's love and what it means to have their own faith in him through prayer.

Faith is hard to learn because we can only learn as much as we allow ourselves to have. A good starting place is to ask ourselves two questions: How would I respond to what Jesus asked his disciples, 'Where is your faith?', and secondly, how much faith am I prepared to allow into my life?



From the Book of Remembrance — February

Remembering those who have gone before us

February

Peter Mallett

Sylvia Sadler Laws

Leslie C. Heighton

Fred Philipson Dodsworth

Beatrice Mary Dodsworth

Kenneth Roy Dodsworth

Margaret McDonald Waugh

Elsie Isobel Russell

William Mackay Adamson

George Duncan Winton

Norma Ridley

Helen Doo

John Grant Scrafton

Shirley Gibbon

Edith Corby

During a great storm, a doctor in a rural area was called to go several miles into the country to visit a sick child. It was late in the day and the weather was bad, with snow falling so quickly that he could hardly see the road. He was worried he might not get to his destination. He reached a remote house and the owner telephoned to the next house along the road, asking them to ensure that a light was on outside the house. When the doctor reached that house, the owner did the same and eventually the doctor arrived at the house where he was needed.

Is not this a picture of the Christian life? By the way we live, we can each let our light of faith shine so that others can find Jesus who is the Light of the World.

John Farrow (via Association for Church Editors)

March Newstand

The next edition of Newstand will be out on 22nd February.

Please have contributions to Tim **by 16th February**

Prayer Diary and Lectionary

*Weekly prayers from the URC
and lectionary readings*



1	Assembly Executive (6 th – 8 th). Remembering Churches: Wooler and St James's, Alnwick; CRCW: Fliss Barker. St Mark's, Amble, after the retirement of Revd Alison Mills.	Micah 6:1-8 Psalm 15 1 Corinthians 1:18-31 Matthew 5:1-12
8	Racial Justice Sunday – celebrating the image of God in all people. Advocate: Pat Poinen.	Isaiah 58:1-9a (9b-12) Psalm 112:1-9 (10) 1 Corinthians 2:1-12 (13-16)
15	St Andrew's, Glanton; Longframlington and Rothbury. Minister: Revd Ed Butlin.	Exodus 24:12-18 Psalm 2 or Psalm 99 2 Peter 1:16-21
22	The Trust: Secretary, Mr Willie Duncan and Treasurer, Mr Gordon Wanless and all trustees. The work of the North East District Council.	Genesis 2:15-17; 3:1-7 Psalm 32 Romans 5:12-19 Matthew 4:1-11

February Rotas

*Please remember to swap
if you are not able to cover
your duty*



ELDERS:	Vestry: Joan Blanchfield Reception: Margaret Varley Communion: Carole Mallett	
STEWARDS:	Vestibule: Rhoda Lee, Finance: Joy Campbell	
Sunday 1st	Organ: Helen Storey	Prayers: Ann Hammond
	Readers: Joan Blanchfield/Val Taylor	
Tuesday 3rd	Prayers: Carole Mallett	
Sunday 8th	Organ: Helen	Prayers: Andrew Cooke
	Readers: Chris Hales/Susan Clark	
Tuesday 10th	Prayers: Andrew Cooke	
Sunday 15th	Organ: Helen	Prayers: Hazel Hall
	Readers: Ray Hammond/Jenny Hooper	
Tuesday 17th	Prayers: Sandra Pine	
Sunday 22nd	Organ: Alex	Prayers: Sandra Pine
	Readers: Kevin Ames/ Sandra Pine	
Tuesday 24th	Prayers: Carole Moore	

Church Register

DEATHS

GRIMSHAW	Rita, aged 81 years, on 23rd December 2025.
BRAVEY	Susan Jean, aged 81 years, on 31st December 2025. Service at St Andrew's on 22nd January, followed by interment at Whitley Bay, conducted by Revd Louise Sanders.

Church Calendar for February

Midweek Worship: Tuesday 10 am followed by Open Door Coffee Morning.

Open Door Coffee Morning: Thursday 10.30 am - Noon.

Songs & Stories (for those age 0 - 4 years): Friday 9.30 am (during term-time)

Sunday	1	Communion Service; Revd Louise Sanders	11.00 am
		Evening Worship; Revd Louise Sanders	6.30 pm
Monday	2	Fifty Eight Society	7.30 pm
Saturday	7	Coffee Morning	10.30 am
Sunday	8	Morning Worship; Dr Ann Sinclair	11.00 am
Tuesday	10	Executive Team Meeting	10.30 am
Friday	13	Film Club – Downton Abbey – The Grand Finale	2.00 pm
Sunday	15	Let's Sing; Mandy Watson	10.00 am
		Prayer Group; Mandy Watson	10.30 am
		Morning Worship; Revd Louise Sanders	11.00 am
		Showing of film 'Wicked' in Main Hall	2.00 pm
Monday	16	Fifty Eight Society	7.30 pm
Tuesday	17	Finance Team Meeting	10.30 am
Saturday	21	Play Reading Evening	7.00 pm
Sunday	22	Communion Service; Mrs Valerie Taylor	9.30 am
		Morning Worship; Dr Ann Sinclair	11.00 am
Monday	23	Lent Discussion Group at St Andrew's	2.00 pm
Saturday	28	Induction of Revd Louise Sanders to St Columba's URC	2.00 pm

MARCH 2026

Sunday	1	Communion Service; Revd Louise Sanders	11.00 am
		Evening Worship; Revd Louise Sanders	6.30 pm
Monday	2	Lent Discussion Group at St Andrew's	2.00 pm
		Fifty Eight Society	7.30 pm
Friday	6	Lent Service followed by soup and roll	12.30 pm
		WORLD DAY OF PRAYER SERVICE AT ST AN- DREW'S – ALL WELCOME	2.00 pm
Saturday	7	Fifty Eight Society Coffee Morning	10.30 am

Pause in this moment

A place for
prayers,
thoughts
and poems

What Money Can't Buy

It can buy a house
but not a home.
It can buy a bed
but not sleep.
It can buy a clock
but not time.
It can buy you a book
but not knowledge.
It can buy you a position
but not respect.
It can buy you medicine
but not health.
It can buy you blood
but not life.
It can buy you sex
but not love.
So you see, money isn't everything.
And it often causes pain and suffering.

*Source Unknown
from Bursting at the Seams by Killy John
and Alie Stibbe*

