



NEWSTAND

THE MAGAZINE OF ST. ANDREW'S URC



Tim Cooke / January sunset in East Yorkshire

Musings — Lent discussion — 58 Society
Annual Meeting — Spring? — Family fun

Volume 92 Issue 3 — March 2026

St. Andrew's United Reformed Church

Eastfield Avenue, Monkseaton, Whitley Bay, NE25 8LU

<http://standrewsmonkseatonurc.org.uk>



monkseatonurc

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Member Editor 2026
Association for Church Editors

Musing from the Manse

Spring Renewal: A Season of Change



Over these past weeks, as I have begun my ministry at St Columba's URC, North Shields, I've been very aware that this has meant change here at St Andrew's too.

Although I remain your minister, the shape of my week looks different. My time is shared more intentionally, and some of our familiar rhythms are still settling into new patterns. I'm aware that change can feel stretching and it can raise questions. It can even feel, at times, a little unsettling. If that has been true for you, please know it has been true for me as well.

I want to say thank you. Thank you for your patience, your kindness, and your willingness to adapt. Thank you for the way so many of you quietly take responsibility, offer support, and step forward when something needs doing. In this season, I have been reminded again that the strength of this church has never rested on one person. It rests in the faithfulness of God and in the faithfulness of you, God's people here.

As we move from winter into spring (finally!), I find myself watching the light change, as the days lengthen almost imperceptibly. Beneath the soil, growth is already underway long before we see the first green shoots. Seasons do not rush - but they do turn.

Perhaps in the church this is a season not of diminishing, but of deepening. A season in which gifts long present among you have space to flourish in new ways. A season in which we discover fresh confidence in who God is calling us to be. As some people step back from roles they have held for many years and others step into new ones, this may feel different and take time to get used to.

My prayer is that we will embrace this time with trust - not clinging to what was, nor anxious about what might be, but open to what God is growing among us now.

Spring is coming. And God is still at work here.

*Blessings
Louise*

FAMILY FILM AFTERNOON



**SUNDAY 8TH MARCH
AT 3PM**

**ST ANDREW'S URC MONKSEATON
FREE ENTRY • POPCORN • SWEETS
DRINKS • PIZZA**

**CONTACT REVD LOUISE SANDERS:
louise.sanders208@gmail.com
07537 848492**

Activities Team update

More things to look forward to!



Film Club – Friday 13th March, 2.00 pm

The film this month is *The Ballad of Wallis Island* (12) and is described as “a fresh big-hearted comedy”. An eccentric lottery winner who lives alone on a remote island tries to make his fantasies come true by getting two of his favourite musicians to perform at his home.



Poetry and Plonk Evening – Saturday 21st March, 7.00 pm

These evenings provide an opportunity either to take part or just

listen to a wide variety of poems, everything from Spike Milligan to Shakespeare, while enjoying a glass of wine or soft drink. Tickets are available at £5 (to include wine/soft drinks and nibbles).

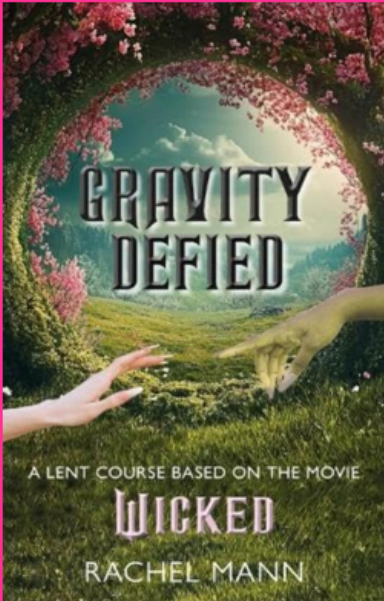
Coffee Morning with Craft Stalls – Saturday 28th March, 10.30 am – 12 noon

We're hoping lots of folk will turn up for this Coffee Morning which will have extra stalls of various crafts and will provide opportunities to buy Easter gifts. Do come along if you can to browse, meet friends and hopefully buy!

Dates for the Diary

- Jazz Evening with Maureen Hall's Rendezvous Jazz – Saturday 25th April
- Quiz Evening with Fish & Chips – Saturday 18th July
- Grainger Singers Concert – Saturday 12th September
- Church Fair – Saturday 21st November

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.

- 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



M. Accelerator / Unsplash

Rob Pullen, our February Speaker, whose subject was “Secrets of the Human Brain,” had us thoroughly engrossed in his talk. Although some animals e.g. elephants have larger brains than us, human brains have the greatest number of cells. He also said the brain is unique in the human body as it is the only organ whose cells cannot reproduce. We were asked to “raise an arm” and which arm was raised indicated whether we were left or right handed (not 100% result with our group!). The brain is in two parts both of which control many of the same senses, but there are connections between the two sides and the left side controls movement of our right side and vice versa.

Details of the AGM held on Monday 16th February will be included in the next edition of the Church magazine.

We have two talks in March. The first on 2nd March is by David Selby who will speak about “The Power Of Evil”. On 16th March the arranged talk by Sophie Kirkcup has had to be cancelled. Instead we shall hear “A Visit To Tuscany” by Carole Moore, the talk that was cancelled on a very icy Monday in January.

Our Annual Coffee Morning is on Saturday 7th March, 10.30am to 12 noon. There is a cake stall and offers of help would be welcome. Financial contributions, towards the cost of ingredients, and homemade cakes and biscuits brought on the day, would be greatly appreciated. Please come and join us and bring a friend.

Our final meeting of the 2025/2026 season is on 30th March when we will have the usual buffet (cost £15) and quizzes.

Anne Smith

“

Build yourself a strong box, fashion each part with care, and when it's as strong as your hand can make it, put all your troubles in there.

Put all sense of your failure, each bitter cup of your quaff, lock all your heartaches within it...

Then sit on the lid and laugh.

Anon

Annual Church meeting

Sunday 15th March 2026 after the service and during coffee.



This is the meeting at which the various officers and Teams that run the church on a day to day basis are elected.

Details of the current Teams and their membership are posted up in the church vestibule on the notice-board adjacent to the Flower Room door, along with all official lists, duty rotas etc.

Notices seeking nominations of people to serve as officers or on the Teams will be posted up shortly on the church notice-board in the Reception Area and the Agenda and the Annual Report will be circulated by email or by your Elder nearer the day.

Ray Hammond
Church Secretary

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

“

Swallowing angry words before you say them is better than having to eat them afterwards.

Midweek Prayers

Coming together in a time of quiet

Ann is away to Scottish College this week, so please hold her in your prayers.

In place of the usual Midweek Prayers she offers this shorter contribution.

Intercessions

Tender God,
Your love is unconditional.
Wider, deeper and truer than we can ever fully know.
For those of us who find it hard to accept ourselves,
hear our prayer.

[Hold a moment of stillness]

Compassionate God,
for those of us who feel stretched and tired
and whose lives are strained and stressed,
hear our prayer.

Merciful God,
for those of us holding onto life by our fingertips, or whose grip upon life is fragile, hear our prayer.

(Hold a moment of stillness)

Healing God,
for those of us whose illness makes us vulnerable, or leaves us isolated,
hear our prayer.



Patrick Fore / Unsplash

(Hold a moment of stillness)

Loving God,
for those of us whose journey is chaotic or find ourselves in turmoil,
hear our prayer.

(Hold a moment of stillness)

Caring God,
for those of us whose calling is to journey with and care for others,
hear our prayer.

(Hold a moment of stillness)

Eternal God,
in Your infinite mercy
hear our prayers.
Amen

Daily Devotions

If you need a time of prayer any day of the week, including Sunday services, consider signing up to receive the URC Daily Devotions. You can read them directly on the church website, or sign-up to receive them from the URC Church House team via email. Follow this link to the church website for more details:

<https://standrewsm Monkseatonurc.org.uk/daily-devotions/>

Not quite the first sign of Spring!

February Fair Maids or Candlemas Bells

Snowdrops appearing in our gardens or churchyards and along the verges are not the first sign of Spring, but they are a sign that the year has turned. Many snowdrops found in churchyards and monastic sites have been planted as a symbol of purity and hope.

The first known cultivation of snowdrops in the UK was recorded in 1597 and, while it is thought that it was pilgrims who brought this beautiful flower to our shores, it was the Victorians who enthusiastically planted them in churchyards and cemeteries.

Snowdrops go by over 30 different local names including dew drops, eve's tear and February Fair Maids. They are also known as Candlemas bells.



Caring for God's Acre

In the Middle Ages Candlemas (held on the 2nd of February) was the day when everyone in the parish brought their candles to church to be blessed by the priest to ward off evil spirits. After a procession, and the blessing, the candles were all lit and set before the statue of the Virgin Mary. The snowdrop was the flower gathered to decorate the church at that time, so took on the name of that ancient tradition.

From Caring for God's Acre, the conservation charity for Burial Grounds across the UK: Protecting Wildlife - Preserving Heritage - Involving People

<https://www.caringforgodsacre.org.uk/>

“

Christ is the morning star
Who when the night of this world is past
Brings to his saints
The promise of the light of life
And opens everlasting day.

*Inscription near tomb of the Venerable Bede,
Durham Cathedral*

Smiles

Another reflection from Tom Gordon



Filip Mroz / Unsplash

“Smiles are the foundation of beauty.”

*Edgar Rice Burroughs,
Tarzan of the Apes*

If “smiles are the foundation of beauty”, what beauty have we shared today?

I went home on the bus today, and the bus was busy. So the only seat I could get was up at the back, one of those seats facing the rear of the bus, where you have a back row of passengers looking straight at you.

Well, they might have looked if they'd been bothered ... But you don't have any eye-contact on the bus, do you?

The matronly type was studying my tie – intently – and with a disapproving frown behind her spectacles, obviously with no great liking for my sartorial elegance – at least, that's what the furrowed brow told me. But she never said, and I didn't dare ask ... Because you don't have any eye-contact on the bus, do you?

And the kid fiddling with his iPhone, with irritating white noise leaking from his earbuds; and the girl with the magazine; and the man counting the parked cars; and the lady furiously texting, and smiling at her reply, but not at any of the passengers round about her ... Well, you don't have any eye-contact on the bus, do you?

And me, realising I was doing exactly the same ... disapproving of the matronly lady's dangly earrings, and wondering what rubbish music the kid is into, and doing my own texting, and counting some cars, and when someone catches me looking, me looking away ... 'Cause you don't have any eye-contact on the bus, do you?

And a woman comes on with a baby in her arms, and they sit opposite me, and the mother gazes down the bus, and the baby looks around and catches my eye, and I smile, and the baby smiles back, and the matronly lady catches me smiling, and she smiles at me, and I smile back, and the whole bus-journey is transformed. Oh, but you're not supposed to have eye contact on the bus, are you?

And you're certainly never expected to smile.

But then, babies don't know that yet, do they?

*Adapted for “A Thought for the Day”
from “A Blessing to Follow”
(Iona Books)*

A prayer for today

*God, when a smile transforms my day,
help me make the most of its beauty.
Amen.*

An original reflection © Tom Gordon

**You are invited to join us at
St Andrew's United Reformed Church,
Monkseaton**



for

**Friday Lunchtime Lent Services
at 12.30pm**



followed by soup and a roll



**Lent for Everyone
Seen through the eyes of Mark**

A book by Tom Wright



Dates



March

6th 13th 20th 27th

What's in a name?

How many of these did you know?



Dmitry Ratushny / Unsplash

1. The space between your eyebrows is called a glabella.
2. The way it smells after the rain is called petrichor.
3. The plastic or metallic coating at the end of your shoelaces is called an aglet.
4. The rumbling of stomach is actually called a wamble.
5. The cry of a new born baby is called a vagitus.
6. The prongs on a fork are called tines.
7. The sheen or light that you see when you close your eyes and press your hands on them is called phosphenes.
8. The tiny plastic table placed in the middle of a pizza box is called a box tent.
9. The day after tomorrow is called overmorrow.
10. Your tiny toe or finger is called minimus.
11. The wired cage that holds the cork in a bottle of champagne is called an agraffe.
12. The 'na na na' and 'la la la', which don't really have any meaning in the lyrics of any song, are called vocables.
13. When you combine an exclamation mark with a question mark (like this ?!), it is referred to as an interrobang.
14. The space between your nostrils is called columella nasi.
15. The armhole in clothes, where the sleeves are sewn, is called armscye.
16. The condition of finding it difficult to get out of the bed in the morning is called dysania.
17. Illegible hand-writing is called griffonage.
18. The dot over an "i" or a "j" is called tittle.
19. That utterly sick feeling you get after eating or drinking too much is called crapulence.
20. The metallic device used to measure your feet at the shoe store is called Bannock device.

“

Death Notice spotted in a Parish magazine

“He was 80 years old at the time of his death and had been married for 59 years. His ordeal is now over.”



FAMILY FUN AFTERNOON



**SATURDAY
18TH APRIL
AT 3PM**

ST ANDREW'S URC MONKSEATON

**CRAFTS • GAMES • REFRESHMENTS
SUITABLE FOR ALL THE FAMILY**



CONTACT REVD LOUISE SANDERS:

louise.sanders208@gmail.com



Stewarding at St. Andrew's

A call for interested volunteers

We are currently seeking additional people to join the Stewarding Rota for the period May 2026 – April 2027.

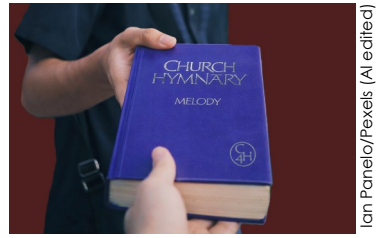
Stewards are the people who give out the hymnbooks on a Sunday morning, greeting you with a smile and a cheerful “Good morning”. They are also responsible for bringing forward the offering at the appropriate time, and after the service is finished they help the Church Treasurer to count and record the Gift Aid offerings. None of this work is onerous, but it is important. The Stewards work in pairs, and they are normally on duty each Sunday for one month in the year, although they can be asked to help

out on other occasions if, for example, a Steward is unable through illness or for some other reason to fulfil his/her own duty.

For people who have started coming to St Andrew's more recently, being a Steward is a good way to get to know other people. Alternatively, people who have been a Steward or a Serving Elder in the past, might feel they could take up a Stewarding role once more. If so, please do get in touch with me.

Thank you.

Carole Mallett



Ian Panojo/Pexels (AI edited)

Newstand Subscriptions

A reminder for Newstand subscribers that the annual payment will shortly be due, and I shall be grateful if you will arrange for the money to be paid to your distributor (or to myself if you normally pay me direct), before the end of March, please.

The annual payment for 2026 remains at £12.00, and covers one issue per month until December.

Should anyone wish to change from

buying Newstand at the door each month, to paying annually and having their copy of the magazine delivered to their home (or given to them at church), please contact me. There is also the option of having a copy sent by email if preferred, thereby saving paper.

Thank you.

Carole Mallett
Newstand Business Manager

From the Book of Remembrance — March

Remembering those who have gone before us

Baby Holborn

Stuart Mackay Adamson

Jenny Evelyn Merrick

Edna Thwaites

Ann Mitchell Young

James Alexander Murphy

Arthur Parr

Constance Mary Lisle

Jeanne Kynoch

Judith Christine Coulson

Keith Watson

Church Register

DEATHS

SKEE

Peter Ronald, aged 94 years,
on 8th January 2026.

Service and committal at
Whitley Bay on 2nd February,
conducted by Revd Gordon Connacher.

“

God is the only one who never makes me feel shy or afraid of being in the way, or not good enough, or something enough, and I do love it so.

Anon

April Newstand

The next edition of Newstand will be out on 29th March.

Please have contributions to Tim **by 23rd March.**

Prayer Diary and Lectionary

*Weekly prayers from the URC
and lectionary readings*



1	Church Action on Poverty North East. Trinity, Ashington; Trinity, Bedlington; St Andrew's and St Martin's, Newbiggin; Seaton Delaval. Minister: Revd Alan McGougan.	Genesis 12:1-4a; Psalm 121; Romans 4:1-5, 13-17; John 3:1-17 or Matthew 17:1-9
8	Preparing for the Synod Meeting (14 th). Moderator: Revd Kim Money. Synod Clerks: Lucy Cooke and Lisa McAvoy and Synod Staff Team: Andrew Atkinson; Wendy Watson; Ragen Dorward; Helen Hogg. URC Youth Assembly.	Exodus 17:1-7; Psalm 95; Romans 5:1-11; John 4:5-42
15	Widdrington; St George's, Morpeth; Great Bavington. Minister: Revd Julian Sanders.	1 Samuel 16:1-13; Psalm 23; Ephesians 5:8-14; John 9:1-41
22	Our work with northerly Synods – Moderators: Jamie Kissack; Lindsey Sanderson; Geoff Felton; Mike Thomason.	Ezekiel 37:1-14; Psalm 130; Romans 8:6-11; John 11:1-45
29	St Aidan's, Hexham. Local Church Leader: Linda Gowland. Northumbrian Industrial Mission (NIM). Fiona Usher.	Isaiah 50:4-9a; Psalm 31:9-16 Philippians 2:5-11; Matthew 26:14-27:66 or Matthew 27:11-54

March Rotas

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



ELDERS:	Vestry: Hazel Hall Reception: Chris Hales Communion: Joan Blanchfield Extra: Carole Mallett
STEWARDS:	Vestibule: Andrew Cooke, Finance: Joy Campbell
Sunday 1st	Organ: Helen Prayers: Chris Hales Readers: A. Hammond / C. Purves
Tuesday 3rd	Prayers: Ann Sinclair
Sunday 8th	Organ: Helen Prayers: Val Taylor Readers: M. Short / J. Jackson
Tuesday 10th	Prayers: Sue Ames
Sunday 15th	Organ: Helen Prayers: Ann Hammond Readers: A. Cooke / K. Hopper
Tuesday 17th	Prayers: Sandra Pine
Sunday 22nd	Organ: Alex Prayers: Andrew Cooke Readers: T. Cooke / H. Hall
Tuesday 24th	Prayers: Geoff Mills
Sunday 29th	Organ: Helen Prayers: Hazel Hall Readers: Worship Group
Tuesday 31st	Prayers: Carole Mallett

Words of thanks

I'd like to say a big thank you to Louise and all my friends at St. Andrew's for the lovely flowers you sent while I was house bound due to my recent illness. They lasted for ages and really cheered me up on the grey days of January. Thank you again,

Gill Bloomfield.

Thank you to everyone for all your kindness during my recent illness.

Love,

Harry Lowrey

Church Calendar for March / April

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)

Lent discussion group: Mondays, 2pm, St. Andrew's / 7pm, St. Columba's

Lent Lunchtime service followed by soup and a roll: Fridays, 12.30pm

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
Friday	6	WORLD DAY OF PRAYER SERVICE AT ST ANDREW'S	2.00 pm
Saturday	7	Fifty Eight Society Coffee Morning	10.30 am
Sunday	8	Morning Worship; Mrs Valerie Taylor	11.00 am
Tuesday	10	Executive Team Meeting	10.30 am
Thursday	12	Elders' Meeting	7.00 pm
Friday	13	Film Club – 'The Ballad of Wallis Island'	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 FOLLOWED BY CHURCH AGM	11.00 am
Monday	16	Fifty Eight Society	7.30 pm
Thursday	19	Worship Group Meeting	7.00 pm
Saturday	21	Poetry Evening	7.00 pm
Sunday	22	Communion Service; Dr Ann Sinclair	9.30 am
		Morning Worship; Dr Ann Sinclair	11.00 am
Monday	23	Activities Team Meeting	3.30 pm
Saturday	28	Coffee Morning with crafts	10.30 am
Sunday	29	Palm Sunday Parade Service; Revd Louise Sanders	11.00 am
Monday	30	Fifty Eight Society end of session meal	7.00 for 7.30 pm
APRIL 2026			
Thursday	2	Service of Tenebrae; Dr Ann Sinclair	7.30 pm
Friday	3	Ecumenical Service opposite Spar in Monkseaton	12.00 pm
		Good Friday Reflective Service; Revd Louise Sanders	2.30 pm
Sunday	5	Sunrise Service at Spanish City Plaza	6.30 am
		Easter Sunday Communion Service; Revd Louise Sanders	11.00 am
		THERE WILL BE NO EVENING SERVICE ON EASTER SUNDAY	

Pause in this moment

A place for
prayers,
thoughts
and poems



Lent Prayer

At the beginning of the day you may find it helpful to pray to God to raise your awareness of God's presence with you throughout the day. This prayer by St. Anselm of Canterbury may be helpful:

O my God, teach my heart where and how to seek You, where and how to find You.

You are my God and You are my all and I have never seen You.

You have made me and remade me, You have bestowed on me all the good things I possess, still I do not know You. I have not yet done that for which I was made.

Teach me to seek You.

I cannot seek You unless You teach me or find You unless You show Yourself to me.

Let me seek You in my desire, let me desire You in my seeking.

Let me find You by loving You, let me love You when I find You.

AMEN

Submitted by Ann Sinclair