



NEWSTAND

THE MAGAZINE OF ST. ANDREW'S URC



Louise Sanders

Musings — Prayers — Church events
Good News on Gen Z — Don't be Miserere!

Volume 92 Issue 7 — July 2026

St. Andrew's United Reformed Church

Eastfield Avenue, Monkseaton, Whitley Bay, NE25 8LU

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monkseatonurc

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Small print: Details of events, contacts and other material were correct at time of publication based on information received by the Newstand Editor.

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Member Editor 2026
Association for Church Editors

Musing from the Manse

When Holiness Loses a Shoe!

I saw this statue during evening worship at Hinsley Hall during a training retreat last weekend. It stood in a quiet corner: Mary crowned, Jesus crowned, both robed in rich colours and gold. And I'll be honest - I didn't really like it at first. It felt too formal, too stiff, too far from the earthy, laughing, dusty-footed Jesus I meet in the Gospels, and so I didn't really give it a second glance. But then my friend pointed out the shoe.

The tiny sandal, slipping from the Christ-child's foot. A tiny detail, I'd missed - yet it changed the whole statue for me. Suddenly the scene wasn't frozen or remote, instead it was alive. Jesus wasn't a miniature adult posed for display; he was a child shifting his weight, wriggling in his mother's arms, who was caught mid-movement. And Mary wasn't a distant queen but a mother doing what mothers do: holding on, steadying him, adjusting to the unexpected.

That loose shoe opened up a whole new way of seeing. It reminded me that Jesus always seems to inhabit the "in-between" places. Fully divine, yet fully human. Crowned in glory, yet with dusty feet.

Held by Mary, yet holding the whole world. That slipping shoe becomes a symbol of that threshold - the place where heaven brushes against earth, where holiness is wrapped in the ordinary, where God chooses to be found not in perfection but in the beautifully untidy moments of real life.

And maybe that's where we meet God most often too. Not in the polished, carefully composed parts of our lives, but in the moments when something is slightly off-kilter: when we're tired, or uncertain, or juggling more than we can manage. And in these recent weeks, as we've grieved the loss of John and Ann - dear, faithful members of our church family - that truth has felt especially real. Grief is its own kind of "in-between" place, where love and loss sit side by side, and we need God's steadying presence more than ever.

The statue at Hinsley Hall didn't change, but I did. I saw, in that tiny detail, a God who steps into our wobbling, shifting, half-balanced lives - and stays with us there, steadying us with love.



Image by Louise Sanders

*Blessings
Louise*



St Andrew's URC
Eastfield Avenue, Monkseaton



HOLIDAY CLUB 2026

'Supersleuths'

Monday 20th – Friday 24th July
10am – 12 noon

**Join us for games, crafts,
refreshments and fun!**

Suitable for children aged 4–11

***must have finished reception class**

BOOKING ESSENTIAL

£2 per child per session



For more information please contact

Rev Louise Sanders: 07537 848492 or email louise.sanders208@gmail.com

To book a place please contact

Jen Fleetham: jennifer.j.fleetham@gmail.com

Activities Team update

More things to look forward to!



Coffee Morning – Saturday 4th July 10.30 am – 12 noon

We congratulate Laura Wood in organising such a super Coffee Morning last month and raising a wonderful amount of over £2,000 for the Alan Shearer Centre, such a worthy cause. This month we're back to our usual 10.30 am starting time. All are welcome to come along and meet with friends old and new for a chat over a cup of coffee/tea or soft drink. There will be the usual raffle and bric-a-brac stall.

Film Club – Friday 10th July, 2.00 pm

This month's film is *H is for Hawk* (12). It is a true story based on the award-winning memoir by Helen Macdonald, which chronicles her real-life experience processing the sudden death of her father by an unlikely friendship with a stubborn hawk named Mabel.

Acapella Concert — Saturday 11th July, 7.30pm

The Flower Team are hosting a concert by "Acapella". Tickets, at £10 including interval refreshments, can be obtained from Joan Blanchfield.

Quiz Evening with Fish & Chips – Saturday 18th July, 6 pm

It's time to get your thinking caps on! Iain Ord has once again kindly compiled a quiz for us and we look forward to an evening of fun and friendship plus fish and chips from Seashells. Tickets at £10 are available from Ray Hammond.

Poetry Evening– Saturday 25th July, 7.00 pm

All are welcome to come along either to take part or just listen to a wide variety of poems while enjoying a glass of wine or soft drink. Tickets are available at £5 (to include wine/soft drinks and nibbles).

Dates for the Diary

- **Coffee Morning – Saturday 1st August, 10.30 am**
- **Grainger Singers Concert – Saturday 12th September, 7 pm**
- **Art Exhibition – Saturday 3rd October, 10 am – 2 pm**

Ann Hammond

From them to you

Thanks and requests



June Laves / Pixabay

We would like to warmly welcome everyone from the church to join us for the christening of Sasha Popov on Sunday, 16th August.

Following the service, everyone is warmly invited to continue the celebrations with us over food and refreshments at The Ship, Monkseaton. We would be delighted if you could join us in celebrating this special day.

With love,

Jo and Evgenij

A very big "thank you" to all of my St. Andrew's friends for the cards, beautiful flowers and visits following my recent illness. Thank you to everyone for your good wishes on my return to church. I'm now doing well and it's good to be back with you.

Kath Hales

Holiday Club 2026

If anyone is available to help with clearing the church on Sunday 29th July after the service - that would be greatly appreciated. We need to remove all the chairs from the church and place them in the meeting room. Thank you.

Can you help?



A piece of Good News

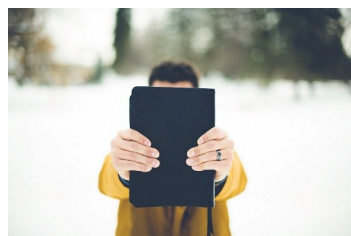
Generation Z heads back to church...

Book-sellers are reporting a record increase in sales of the Bible with sales in 2025 put at £6.3m as increasing numbers of Generation Z are said to be looking to the church.

Figures show sales are at record levels with a 134% increase in six years. According to a study by SPCK, (Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge), sales of religious books rose by 11% between 2024 and 2025. SPCK say the findings indicate a growing interest in Christianity particularly among young people with increasing interest among young men, and that a growing number of young adults are engaging with faith in a way that previous generations did not.

SPCK's CEO Sam Richardson said research shows that 62% of 18-24-year-olds describe themselves as "very" or "fairly" spiritual, a notable contrast to only 35% of those over 65. Additionally, only 13% of Generation Z identify as atheists - far lower than the 20% of millennials and 25% of Generation X who do. This suggests that Gen Z is approaching faith differently — not necessarily through traditional institutions but by exploring spirituality on their own terms.

"We are seeing an increased curiosity about Christianity. Events like the



Wirestock / Freepik

Covid-19 pandemic and the mental health crisis have caused many individuals to think deeply about their spirituality. Rather than relying on atheist thought leaders (or, for that matter, church leaders), we are seeing people want to draw their own conclusions by reading Christian books in general and the Bible in particular."

SPCK say that with rising levels of anxiety and depression, especially in the wake of the pandemic, many are turning to faith as a source of hope and reassurance. The Bible's messages of love, peace, and purpose resonate with those seeking comfort in difficult times.

Social media they say, has made faith more visible and accessible than ever. Online platforms such as TikTok, Instagram, and YouTube have created spaces where Christian creators share Bible-based content, making Scripture feel relevant and engaging for younger audiences. The hashtag #Bible has amassed billions of views on TikTok, highlighting the platform's role in increasing engagement with Scripture.

via Association for Church Editors

Monastic Typo

A new monk arrives at the monastery. He is assigned to help the other monks in copying the old texts by hand. He notices, however, that they are copying from copies, and not from the original books.

So, the new monk goes to the head monk to ask him about this. He points out that if there was an error in the first copy, that error would be continued in all of the other copies. The head monk says, "We have been copying from the copies for centuries, but you make a good point, my son." So, he goes down into the cellar with one of the copies to check it against the original.



Freepik

Hours later, nobody has seen him. So, one of the monks goes downstairs to look for him. He hears sobbing coming from the back of the cellar and finds the old monk leaning over one of the original books crying. He asks what's wrong.

"The word is 'celebrate'," says the old monk.

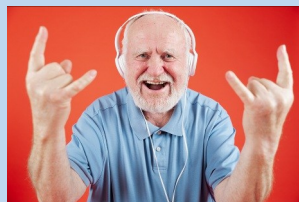
Via ACE

Sing, sing, sing

Scientists have shown that not only does singing in a choir make you feel good, it's got health benefits too. Researchers at the University of Gothenburg, Sweden, found that choristers' heart beats synchronise when they sing together, bringing about a calming effect that is as beneficial to our health as yoga. The scientists asked a group of teenagers to perform three choral exercises – humming, singing a hymn and chanting – and monitored their heart rhythms during each. They showed that singing has a dramatic effect on

heart rate variability, which is linked to a reduced risk of

heart disease. "Song is a form of regular, controlled breathing, since breathing out occurs on the song phrases and inhaling takes place between these," says Dr Björn Vickhoff, who led the study. "It gives you pretty much the same effect as yoga breathing. It helps you relax, and there are indications that it does provide a heart benefit."



Freepik

Via ACE

Midweek Prayers

Coming together
in a time of quiet



Ann Sinclair

Opening Words

We draw apart perhaps from a busy life,
we draw apart from all that is going on around us;
we set aside time and space
to be in Your presence loving God.
In all the changes of our lives,
let us rest in You,
Your strong hands guiding ours,
as You walk along with us
fill us with Your peace.
May we feel Your presence with us
now in this time of quiet prayer.

Amen

Prayer of Confession

Loving God,
forgive us when we prefer our ways to
Your ways,
in our imagining that we know all
there is to know
trusting in our own wisdom instead of
Your guidance.
Forgive our narrow vision and closed
minds
closing our hearts to anything that
challenges our restricted vision,
losing sight of Your greatness,
failing to listen to Your voice.
Lord have mercy on us.
Open our eyes and minds and hearts

to who You are;
fill us with awe and wonder of Your
love and grace. **AMEN**

In an Assurance of Pardon

Assure us loving God, of Your mercy,
teach us to accept everything You
give us
with heartfelt gratitude.
Give us true humility,
and a willingness to listen to Your
voice **AMEN**

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom
come ...And lead us not into
temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, the power,
and the glory for ever and ever.
Amen

Prayers of Intercession

Lord,
We pray for all who are searching for
peace in their lives-
those burdened with anxiety,
about themselves or their loved ones,
facing difficulties and problems,
in which they see no solutions
no matter what age they are.

God of peace,
reach out and still the storms around
and within them.

We pray for those wrestling with inner
fears and phobias,
torn apart by emotional and
psychological pressures,
God of peace,
reach out and still the storms around
and within them.

We pray for those living amongst
change and upheaval,
especially for all who are threatened
by violence and warfare.
God of peace,
reach out and still the storms around
and within them.

We pray for all of those in chaos and
turmoil,
all who are restless and troubled,

grant us Your calm,
Your tranquillity,
Your quietness
and Your peace that passes all
understanding.
God of peace,
reach out and still the storms around
and within them.
In the name of Christ **AMEN**

Blessing

*As we go back to the daily round of
life, may what each one of us have
shared with our Lord, transform all we
do and experience in the days ahead
in the name of our Lord and Saviour
Jesus Christ. **AMEN***

*Submitted by Ann Sinclair
Inspired by Carol Dixon in Bare Feet
and Buttercups & Nick Fawcett
Prayers: for all Seasons and Amended.*

Charity Cheque Presentation

Each year 10% of all money raised
by fund-raising activities at
St Andrew's is donated to two local
charities chosen by church
members. The amount is topped up
by the church to enable £1,000 to
be given to each charity. The
chosen charities this year are The Lily
Foundation (Mitochondrial Research
at Newcastle University) and
Pathways4All (North East Disabled
Children's Charity).



On Sunday 19th July at coffee time
after the service we look forward to
meeting representatives from the
two charities who will be receiving
their cheques and speaking about
their respective charities and the
valuable work which is carried out.

Ann Hammond

News of Junior Church members

A change in direction

Daniel Sinclair has a full-time job. It has been a long road since finishing his degree and gaining a Masters in Criminology and finding employment is not easy for our young people. Dan never gave up the search, a long and frustrating search at times. He worked at Tesco's in Newcastle then Sainsbury's collecting the online shopping orders from 4am for two and a half years now he has changed direction from Criminology and is on the first steps of training to be a Paramedic. He has passed all his exams so far and is 'live' answering calls with a mentor...it takes time to train a paramedic.

As a family we are all delighted for him that he is following in the footsteps of others in the family in the hands-on care for those who are in urgent medical need.

As other young people finish their exams and wait anxiously for their results to open doors in either further study or employment, please pray for them in finding their direction.

Ann Sinclair



Jesus, take the wheel!!

I'm afraid that if I hit one more bump, this car will break down (I've hit so many in the past ...).

Besides, I'm a little discouraged.

YOU know what's happening ... YOU know what is to come ...

I'm just an aging Christian who has tried his best to drive, but I'm tired of the bumps, Lord.

For once, I'd like a fairly decent, confident road.

You know EVERY bump and can smooth them out!

So, JESUS, PLEASE TAKE THE WHEEL!!

Amen

via ACE

Just for fun...

No answers provided, but they're
all in there somewhere



Noah and the Ark



Word list:

ANIMALS

ARK

BELIEVE

BUILD

CREATURES

DOVE

EVIL

FLOOD

FORTY

GOOD

LAND

MOUNTAIN

NOAH

PAIRS

PROMISE

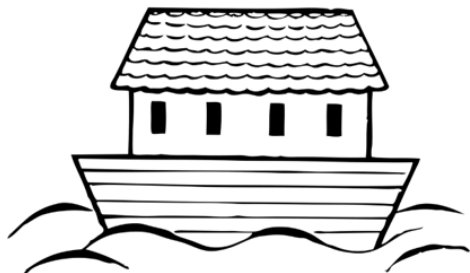
RAIN

RAINBOW

TWO

WATER

WOOD



Miserere by Allegri

*A fascinating tale of a
haunting piece of music*

Gregorio Allegri was born in Rome in 1582. He took Holy Orders to be ordained a Roman Catholic priest, but he was also an accomplished singer, chorister, and composer. His beautiful singing voice came to the attention of Pope Urban VIII who appointed him in 1629 to his private choir – the Sistine Chapel choir. Allegri was a countertenor, a high voice that sang the alto line. He served in the Pope's choir for the rest of his life.

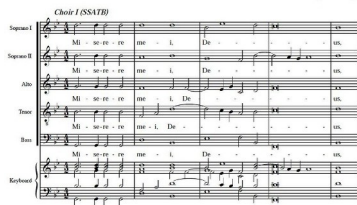
Allegri was known as a virtuous man, good-natured and generous to the poor of the city and to prisoners.

Allegri not only excelled at writing sacred choral music but pioneered writing for stringed instruments including a very early string quartet.

Music written for the Sistine Chapel was generally for its exclusive use: no copies were published, and the choir sang everything from memory. Anyone who obtained an illegal copy would face excommunication! A very important, possibly unique feature of the performances of this choir was the way its expert singers improved and enhanced the music with improvised additions, descants and embellishments to the music – known as *abbellimenti*.

Miserere Mei Deus

Gregorio Allegri



The Miserere (Have mercy on me, O God) is a setting of Psalm 51. It was composed by Allegri for Pope Urban VIII during the 1630s for the sole use of the Sistine Chapel choir. The Miserere was regularly sung at the Tenebrae services of Holy Week during the three days before Easter Sunday.

Dramatically, towards the end of this service, all the candles lighting the Sistine chapel were gradually extinguished and a strepitus (loud noise) took place in total darkness to depict the earthquake that followed Jesus' death.

The chapel choir would form into two unequal choirs to sing the Miserere, making nine separate vocal lines all interweaving and then all coming together to sing as one.

In 1770, the 14-year-old Mozart heard a performance of Tenebrae on Maundy Thursday at the Sistine Chapel. He was entranced by the music and later that evening at his Rome boarding house copied out the music from memory in full knowledge that it was forbidden to do so. In 1771 Mozart's copy was procured and published in England by the famous traveller and music historian Dr Charles Burney.

...continued at bottom of next page.

A few funnies

Just to fill the last page!



Mikhail Nilov / Pexels

Remote In Church

Mrs. Smart was fumbling in her purse for her offering when a large television remote fell out and clattered into the aisle.

The curious usher bent over to retrieve it for her and whispered, "Do you always carry your TV remote to church?"

"No," she replied, "but my husband refused to come with me this morning, and I figured this was the most evil thing I could do to him legally."

A Sheepish Recovery

A devout old shepherd lost his favourite Bible while he was out looking for a wayward lamb. Three weeks later, a sheep walked up to him carrying the Bible in its mouth. The shepherd couldn't believe his eyes. He took the precious book out of the sheep's mouth, raised his eyes heavenward and exclaimed, "It's a miracle!"

"Not really," said the sheep. "Your name is written inside the cover."

The Frugal Lutheran

The frugal Lutheran walked into the house panting and almost completely exhausted. "What happened, dear?" inquired his wife.

"It's a great new idea I have to be a better steward of our resources," he gasped. "I ran all the way home from the stewardship committee meeting behind the bus and saved £2.

"That wasn't very bright," replied his flustered wife. "Why didn't you run behind a taxi and save £15?"

... continued...

Over the years the Miserere has become world famous for its vocal abellimenti. A boy soprano soloist would sing occasional descants to

the verses of the psalm. His voice would reach an amazing and thrilling top C.

Via ACE

Winning our possessions

*Something to be found
as well as received*



Markus Winkler / Pexels

Goethe, a great German writer, artist, and politician once wrote, "That which thy fathers have bequeathed to thee, win it anew if thou wouldst possess it." Owning is not possessing. Let us suppose you are the inheritor of an ancestral estate with spacious woodlands and lovely gardens – all yours, but the title deeds in a safe do not constitute possession. They only mean ownership. Strangers may pass through your estate and if the beauty of it all speaks to their souls, but it has no message for you, they more truly possess it than you do.

So with everything that comes to us, whether by inheritance or purchase. Who really possesses a picture – the millionaire who paid millions for it, but cannot appreciate it, or a poor art student to whom it is charged with meaning? Or perhaps a volume of Shakespeare; if you have it on your shelves but haven't read it, what use is it that it "belongs to you?" Ownership is an empty thing when compared with possession! This principle has special application to all the greatest things of life. Think, for example, of the precious inheritance of freedom which has come to us from the past. It is ours in the sense that it has been bequeathed by our ancestors, but it is only really ours

when we "win it anew" and when we prove ourselves worthy of it by showing the self-same spirit which marked those who laboured and died to make it possible.

The difference between ownership and possession is strikingly seen in matters of faith. A creed which we take over from earlier generations may mean nothing to us. It is of no use to us unless we appreciate the vital experience which led to its formation. Faith is a great gift - something received - a gift which is ours apart from our own merit or effort. But it is also something which has to be won - a great acquisition - and there is no contradiction between the two points of view. It is significant that the words of Jesus, "Come to Me... and I will give you rest," are immediately followed by "Learn of me and you will find rest." That is, it has to be found as well as received.

Via ACE

From the Book of Remembrance for this month

Remembering those who have gone before us

Alfred Edward Corby

Edith Walton

Kenneth George Tancock

Doris May Heighton

(Revd) David Idris Owen

George Nicholson Hay

John & Isabella Thompson

Lilian Alex Masterman

Joyce Marion Masterton Malloch

Sarah Jane Laybourn

Shirley Lilico Corrigan

Peter Sayce

Church Register

DEATH

MACLENNAN

John R, on 27 May 2026,
aged 91 years.

Interment at Earsdon on 25 June,
followed by service at St Andrew's,
conducted by Revd Louise Sanders.

Can you help define The Way Forward?

The first meeting of the Way Forward Group will be held on Monday 13th July at 7pm where we will begin exploring future priorities and how we can best use our resources. All are welcome to join. Contact Louise or Jen for further information.

August Newstand

The next edition of Newstand will be out on 26th July.

Please have contributions to Tim **by 20th July.**

Prayer Diary and Lectionary

*Weekly prayers from the URC
and lectionary readings*



5	General Assembly (3 rd -6 th) – praying for wisdom, humility, and vision for the church's mission. GA Moderator: Catriona Wheeler and Moderator Elect: Revd Neil Thorogood and all Church House staff.	- Genesis 24:34-38, 42-49, 58-67 and Psalm 45:10-17 or Song of Solomon 2:8-13 - Zechariah 9:9-12 and Psalm 145:8-14 - Romans 7:15-25a - Matthew 11:16-19, 25-30
12	Church: St John the Evangelist, Kingston Park. Revd Shena Moray-Evans; Deacon Revd Jill Henderson and the four-way ecumenical partnership.	- Genesis 25:19-34 and Psalm 119:105-112 - Isaiah 55:10-13 and Psalm 65:(1-8), 9-13 - Romans 8:1-11 - Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23
19	Giving thanks for all Church Secretaries, Elders, Stewards, Trustees. All those who offer loving service.	- Genesis 28:10-19a and Psalm 139:1-12, 23-24 - Wisdom of Solomon 12:13, 16-19 or Isaiah 44:6-8 and Psalm 86:11-17 - Romans 8:12-25 - Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43 - Proper 12 (17) - July 26, 2026
26	Churches: St Andrew's, Kenton; St James's, Newcastle; Jesmond; West End. Minister: Revd Ryan Sirmons.	- Genesis 29:15-28 and Psalm 105:1-11, 45b or Psalm 128 - 1 Kings 3:5-12 and Psalm 119:129-136 - Romans 8:26-39 - Matthew 13:31-33, 44-52

July Rotas

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



ELDERS:	Vestry Joan Blanchfield; Reception Margaret Varley Communion Catriona Fenwick Extra Hazel Hall	
STEWARD:	Andrew Cooke	
Sunday 5th	Organ: Helen Storey Readers: Sue Ames / Alison Mood	Prayers: Una Ketteridge
Tuesday 7th	Prayers: Geoff Mills	
Sunday 12th	Organ: Helen Readers: Geoff Mills / Susan Anderson	Prayers: Sandra Pine
Tuesday 14th	Prayers: Sandra Pine	
Sunday 19th	Organ: Helen Readers: Jennifer Fleetham / Marilyn Walton	Prayers: Ann Hammond
Tuesday 21st	Prayers: Ann Sinclair	
Sunday 26th	Organ: Alex Readers: Carole Mallett / Iain Ord	Prayers: Chris Hales
Tuesday 28th	Prayers TBC	

It's YOUR magazine!

You may have noticed quite a few articles supplied via my membership (and as vice-chair) of the Association for Church Editors, which I've used to provide some additional interest in the magazine.

But this is YOUR magazine, so if there are things you would like to see more (or less) of then please let me know and, even better, send in your own articles and compositions to include — get creative!

Thank you! Tim

Church Calendar for July / August

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)

Friday	3	Finance Team Meeting	2.30 pm
Saturday	4	Coffee Morning	10.30 am
Sunday	5	Communion Service; Dr Donna Moore	11.00 am
		Evening Worship; Worship Group	6.30 pm
Thursday	9	Elders' Meeting	7.00 pm
Friday	10	Film Club – 'H is for Hawk'	2.00 pm
Saturday	11	Flower Team Concert by Acapella	7.30 pm
Sunday	12	Morning Worship; Mrs Valerie Taylor	11.00 am
Monday	13	Way Forward Group Meeting	7.00 pm
Wednesday	15	Worship Group Meeting	7.00 pm
Friday	17	Holiday Club Meeting	1.30 pm
Saturday	18	Quiz Evening with Fish & Chips Supper	6.00 pm
Sunday	19	Let's Sing; Mandy Watson	10.00 am
		Prayer Group; Mandy Watson	10.30 am
		Morning Worship; Revd Louise Sanders <i>followed by charity cheque presentation</i>	11.00 am
Monday	20	(until Friday 24th) Holiday Club	10.00 am
Saturday	25	Poetry Evening	7.00 pm
Sunday	26	Communion Service; Mrs Valerie Taylor	9.30 am
		Morning Worship; Dr Ann Sinclair	11.00 am
Friday	31	Executive Team Meeting	2.30 pm
AUGUST 2026			
Saturday	1	Coffee Morning	10.30 am
Sunday	2	Communion Service; Dr Ann Sinclair	11.00 am
		Evening Worship: CANCELLED FOR THIS MONTH	—
Sunday	9	Morning Worship; Mrs Valerie Taylor	11.00 am

Pause in this moment

A place for
prayers,
thoughts
and poems



In Life

In life there are people that will hurt us
and cause us pain,
but we must learn to forgive and forget
and not hold grudges.

In life there are mistakes we will make,
but we must learn from our wrongs and
grow from them.

In life there are regrets we will have to live
with,
but we must learn to leave the past
behind and realize it is something we
can't change.

In life there are people we will lose forever
and can't have back,
but we must learn to let go and move on.

In life there are going to be obstacles that
will cause interference,
but we must learn to overcome these
challenges and grow stronger.

In life there are fears that will hold us back
from what we want,
but we must learn to fight them with the
courage from within.

God holds our lives in his hands. He holds
the key to our future.
Only he knows our fate.

He sees everything and knows everything.
Everything in life really does happen for a
reason: "God's Reason."

Angie M Flores. "Faith And Courage In
Life." *Family Friend Poems*,
October 2, 2008.