



NEWSTAND

THE MAGAZINE OF ST. ANDREW'S URC



Tim Cooke

Musings — Prayers — Church events
Time for a change? — The law of entropy

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St. Andrew's United Reformed Church

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monkseatonurc

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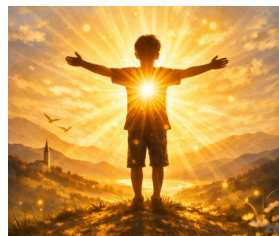
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Member Editor 2026
Association for Church Editors

Musing from the Manse

'Shine! From the Inside Out'



As I write this 'Musings', we are in the middle of Holiday Club, and our theme song has been ringing around the church, sung with all the enthusiasm only children can muster: "Shine – from the inside out so the world can see, you live in me." It's a simple line, but it carries a profound truth at the heart of the Christian life, that we don't shine because we are perfect, polished, or always put together. We shine because Christ lives in us.

Jesus tells His disciples in *Matthew 5:14*, "You are the light of the world." It's an interesting statement because he doesn't say, "Try to be light," or "One day you might become light." He says we already are light because His life is at work within us. Children grasp this instinctively. When they sing about shining, they aren't thinking about achievement or performance, they're thinking about joy, belonging, and the sheer delight of knowing they are loved.

In *2 Corinthians 4:6* Paul writes that God has "shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." The light we carry isn't self-generated. It's God's own light, placed within us, often flickering gently, sometimes

glowing brightly, always present even when we feel weary or uncertain, a bit like the pilot light in a gas boiler!

Throughout Holiday Club we've watched children discover that light - through crafts, stories, games, and moments of quiet wonder. They remind us that shining isn't about being impressive; it's about being open, because when we allow God's love to reach the hidden places within us, something begins to change. Hope grows, courage strengthens and compassion deepens. And slowly, almost without noticing, we shine.

As we move into the rest of the summer, may we carry that same childlike joy. May Christ's light continue to grow within us, warming the places that feel cold, brightening the corners that feel shadowed, and guiding our steps. And may our lives - ordinary, faithful, and imperfect - shine from the inside out, so the world can see the One who lives in us.

*Blessings,
Louise*

Award winners

Songs and Stories recognised by URC community award



We are pleased to share that Louise and Irene have been presented with a Community Project Award at this year's General Assembly for their wonderful work with our baby and toddler group, Songs & Stories. The award includes a plaque and £2,000, recognising the hard work and care that goes into running the group each week.

We are very proud of our Minister and her team, whose commitment and creativity have helped Songs & Stories become such a valued part of our

church life. Thank you to everyone who contributes — setting up, welcoming families, prepping and leading activities, serving refreshments, and of course providing the amazing cakes that have become a much-loved and anticipated feature of the mornings!

This is a well-deserved acknowledgement of a project that brings joy, support, and community to so many.

Jen Fleetham



Louise and Irene pictured with URC Moderator, Catriona Wheeler, and Sarah Knowles, the People and Transformation Officer from Congregational, who sponsor the community awards. Photo credit: URC Communications team.

Activities Team update

More things to look forward to!



Coffee Morning – Saturday 1st August 10.30 am – 12 noon

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 14th August, 2.00 pm

This month's film is *The Choral* (12). As World War 1 rages on, the Choral Society in a small English town has lost most of its men to the army. The Choral's committee is determined to press ahead with new recruits. They engage a new chorus master, Dr Henry Guthrie – recently returned from a career in Germany. As conscription papers start to arrive, the community discovers that the best response to the war is to make music together. Written by Alan Bennett and starring Ralph Fiennes the film is described as “funny and moving”.

Grainger Singers Concert – Saturday 12th September, 7 pm

This promises to be an excellent concert with a wide variety of music including songs from the shows, Gilbert & Sullivan and other popular

musical items. Solos will be performed by Kathryn Sabourn, Julie and Michael Gardner and others. Tickets at £10 will be available soon.

Dates for the Diary

- **Coffee Morning – Saturday 5th September, 10.30 am**
- **Film Club – Friday 11th September, 2 pm**
- **Play Reading – Saturday 19th September, 7 pm**
- **Art Exhibition – Saturday 3rd October, 10 am – 2 pm**

Ann Hammond



From them to you

Special thanks for your generosity



June Laves / Pixabay

To all of our special friends at St. Andrew's,

We would like to say a huge thank you for all of your support, contributions and help with our fundraising day for the Alan Shearer Centre. What an amazing day it was! Everyone seemed to be happy, having fun together and the result was outstanding! The final total was £2092.99 WOW! I'm sure that will make a huge difference to the centre and help towards their million pound mission for a new swimming pool.

Huge thanks again,

Laura, Rory and Luca Wood xx



Laura Wood

I would like to thank, on behalf of my Grandson Will Keen, St. Andrew's Church and members who so generously sponsored him when he walked Hadrian's Wall. It took four days and turned out to be the first hottest week-end of the year! The amount raised by everyone was \$340. He appreciated the kind words and encouragement he received. Thank you all.

Kathy Keen

Parts

"The whole is more than the sum of the parts." Aristotle



Reidy68 / Pixabay

In the first verse of the Bible's Book of Genesis, God is introduced by the name Elohim, a Hebrew noun in masculine form. In the next verse, the Spirit of Elohim – that "moves over the waters" – is Ruach, a Hebrew noun in feminine form. So from the very start, God is referred to in both masculine and feminine terms. This isn't about gender or sexuality. To see it that way is too narrow by far. Instead, this is about the nature of God.

The writer Carol Wimmer suggests, the masculine, Elohim, creates; the feminine, Ruach, stirs or activates ... the details of this text are thoroughly designed. Genesis 1 is not sloppy storytelling. It is a highly organized, well thought out masterpiece. We can be assured that the introduction of masculine and feminine gendering was not an accident.

But we're not done there. In Genesis 1:26, we find this: "God said, 'Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.'" And in Genesis 3:22 we read, "And the Lord God said, 'The man has now become like one of us.'" This is not the "royal we", such as in a king's communication.

This is a deliberate use of the plural for God which makes it clear that God is everything, God is "all in all", God is all encompassing.

If we know God – and many say that they do – then the God we know is only part of what God is. For example, though I may define God as father, God is also mother, with all that this metaphor might teach me.

No one should ever say that they know the whole of God – even though they may believe it to be true and forcibly communicate that belief. The writers of the Book of Genesis were well aware of that!

So my thought today is this ... we will only ever know a part of God, but we will never know the whole. Someone else might know another part of God and have insights we don't yet have. Such is the nature of God ... if you know God in your way and I know God in mine, we are aware of that part of God which belongs to the whole – and that whole is much greater than the sum of the parts.

A prayer for today

Loving, amazing, complete God, the part of you I know is enough for now.
Amen

*An original reflection © Tom Gordon.
Used with permission*

Charity Cheque Presentation

On Sunday 19th July at coffee time after the service we were able to hear from The Lily Foundation (Mitochondrial Research at Newcastle University) and Pathways4All (North East Disabled Children's Charity) about the essential work each charity does and how the £2000 raised by St. Andrew's members and friends will further their work. They were both very grateful.

Ann Hammond



Chris Hales

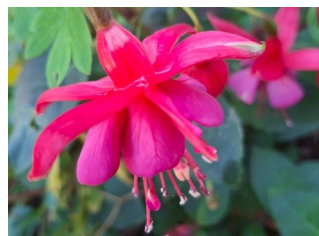
Louise and Irene would like to thank everyone who assisted with this years Holiday Club - 'Supersleuths'. Whether it was overseeing a detective team, making refreshments and clearing up, assisting with the admin, helping to move chairs in and out of the church or opening your shop to bake and deliver pizzas for the weary helpers on the last day, it is all very much appreciated. The children all had a fantastic week and you should all be very proud of yourselves. The week was a success because so many people gave of their time and talents to come together to make it happen - so thank you. You are all amazing - and now you can all have a well-earned rest!

Love from Louise and Irene



Midweek Prayers

Coming together
in a time of quiet



Ann Sinclair

Opening Prayers

Loving God,
we come to You to recognise and
feel Your presence at this time and in
every aspect of our lives.

Help us to glimpse something of Your
greatness, enable us to see life from
Your view, with all its opportunities,
potential, goodness, and beauty.

Loving God,
Teach us to be aware of Your
presence at this time and feel Your
love and peace around us.

AMEN

In a prayer of Confession

Loving God,
forgive us for all the times we have
missed opportunities to speak out, to
share Your Word because perhaps we
have become too comfortable and
complacent, concerned only with
ourselves rather than others.

Help us to recognise all we have to
share of the Good News of Christ and
make us ready to see these moments
breaking through our hesitancy to
those we meet to give the love of
Christ.

Lord in Your mercy forgive us.

We have heard and received the
Good News and with a thankful heart
save us and give us what we need to
spread Your Word.

AMEN

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom
come, thy will be done...For thine is
the kingdom, the power and the
glory, for ever and ever. **AMEN**

Prayers of Intercession

Loving God,
we pray for the world, for those
suffering: injustice, hardship, illness,
anxiety, debt, destroyed by drugs and
scarred by bereavement.

Loving God,
be with them and may Your light shine
where there is darkness.

We pray for such people known to us:
family and friends,
colleagues and neighbours,
and people unknown to us,
each struggling with their burdens.

Loving God,
be with them and may Your light shine
where there is darkness.

Loving God,
it is hard sometimes to believe those
around us, and the world around us
can ever change for the better.
We see countries broken by war,
people consumed with hatred,
people living in fear, nations turned
against nations and so many people
made homeless by natural and
human made disasters.

What hope can we offer; what help
can we give?

Loving God, may Your light shine
where there is darkness

Loving God,
help us to see beneath the surface,
recognising You are at work and
things can change.
Help us to see You are able to
change even the most hopeless
situations.

Loving God,
may Your light shine where there is
darkness.

We offer these prayers through Jesus
Christ our Lord and Saviour.

AMEN

Prayer

Loving God, go with us on our journey
of faith, go with us and grant us the
grace to serve You through Jesus
Christ our Lord.

AMEN

Ann Sinclair

***Inspired by Prayers for All Seasons
by Nick Fawcett***

A successful graduation

*Former Junior Church members
just keep on growing!*

It was so good to hear the news
that Lucy Anderson, a past
member of Junior Church, has
obtained a First Class Degree in
Civil and Structural Engineering at
Newcastle University. Lucy
graduated on the 10th July. Lucy
has recently accepted a position
as a graduate civil engineer at
SYSTRA UK engineering

consultancy. She starts mid-
September.

Laura Fleetham, another past
member of Junior Church, will be
performing Highland dancing in
the Berlin Military Tattoo in
November.

No end to the talents of Junior
Church!

Ann Sinclair



Brett Jordan / Unsplash

Church Meeting

A summary of the minutes of meeting held 28th June 2026



Tim Cooke

The Church Meeting took place on Sunday 28 June following the 11.00 am service, with 44 members present and the Revd Louise Sanders in the chair. Apologies were received from 10 members. The Minutes of the March meeting were approved, and there were no matters arising.

The Secretary announced the formation of a new Way Forward Group, inviting anyone interested to attend the first meeting on Monday 13 July. The group will explore how the Church might allocate funds for internal projects and wider community initiatives.

Three items of other business were notified: silencing mobile phones during worship, the playing of hymn introductions, and the proposed installation of handrails on the chancel steps.

The Secretary's report was received, including clarification that it was hoped the holly tree could be removed due to damage to the fence and overshadowing the neighbour's garden.

The Treasurer's report was presented with no questions.

In her report, the Minister reflected on her first six months in 50/50 ministry,

recent church activities, family events, and preparations for Holiday Club. She noted pastoral losses, training commitments, and upcoming reviews of summer service patterns. She also reported the first meeting of her support group and plans to meet individually with Elders in September.

The Minister announced that Songs and Stories has won a URC Community Award, receiving £2,000 and a plaque, and expressed thanks to all volunteers. The meeting responded with applause.

Further discussion took place on the three notified items of business. Notices will be displayed from 5 July reminding everyone to silence mobile phones. Hymn introductions will revert to a short play-through from the same date, with any tune variations announced. Regarding handrails on the chancel steps, it was agreed that further design and cost investigations should continue, with a final proposal to return to a future meeting.

The next Church Meeting will be held on Sunday 20 September 2026. The meeting closed with the Grace.

Jen Fleetham
Church Secretary

Time for a change?

Celebrating the Transfiguration of our Lord

Whilst not widely celebrated within the reformed tradition, the 6th August is the day when the Christian church celebrates the Transfiguration of our Lord.

The event is celebrated in the magnificent Transfiguration window that you will find in Durham Cathedral. In 2010 it was given by the Friends of Durham Cathedral in honour of Michael Ramsey (1904-1988). The window design combines multiple layers of time and meaning. It includes key figures from both the Bible and the history of Durham itself.

The Transfiguration of Christ

The Transfiguration of Christ is the Bible story of how Jesus Christ took three of his apostles, Peter, James, and John, up a high mountain. Jesus began to shine with a bright white light, and the Old Testament prophets Elijah and Moses appeared. The prophets spoke about Jesus' approaching death, which frightened the Apostles.

Shown at the bottom of the window is the healing of an epileptic boy, which took place at the foot of the mountain immediately after the Transfiguration.



St Cuthbert's hermit days

Durham Cathedral is shown over the forested vale with people on a pilgrimage making their way towards it. One of the pilgrims looks like Michael Ramsey himself.

St Cuthbert is shown praying on the island of Inner Farne. An eagle, associated with Cuthbert, can also be spotted.

When St Cuthbert lived with the monks on Lindisfarne, he would sometimes go to a rocky island 100 yards to the southwest of the Priory in search of solitude. The remains of a later chapel can be seen there, and it is known as St Cuthbert's Island. Later, deciding he wanted to be somewhere even more remote, he moved away from the main island to Inner Farne, the largest of the Farne Islands.

Next time you are in Durham be sure to visit the cathedral and look out for the window. Hopefully the light will shine through it, as Christ did on that mountain.

Tim Cooke

Image of the window used by permission of the Chapter of Durham Cathedral and the artist Tom Denny.

Churches Together

Report on meeting held 25th June 2026

Meeting held on 25th June 2026 at St Mary's CoE Church, Whitley Bay where 18 people attended.

Clair, the curate at St Mary's, did the opening devotionals. (In the future she will be the chairman of the group.)

Introduction of Basic Income with Regard to the Welfare State – A talk given by Matthew Johnson of Northumbria University, a lecturer, and also Anna Thew, a research fellow at the aforesaid University. Their question posed was "How can Whitley Bay Churches Together become involved?"

John Morley from Cullercoats Methodist Church promoted the "Living Well" event – Saturday 17th October 2026 – community event providing advice on care etc for the aged (see poster in reception area).

Discussion on the format of Whitley Bay Churches Together group for the future:

- Meet in smaller groups with one meeting of whole group once a year.
- Formally split into area groups.
- Continue as we are.
- Small area groups for discussion and then come together for

whole group discussion (same night).

Update from Treasurer - Finance discussed.

Initiatives update:

- SWEP (Severe Weather Emergency Protocol) –finished in March but had several guests (homeless) over the period from November to March.
- Street Pastors – because of lack of volunteers several patrols in Tynemouth have been curtailed. There would be a Street Pastor presence at all the events of the Mouth of the Tyne Festival.
- Christian Values. (There is a poster in the reception area.)
- Safe Families – currently 70 children getting support.
- Food Bank – currently in great demand.

Green Update – North East Briefing Film of 40 minutes available for hire (watch and discuss).

Any Other Business

- Pastor from Whitley Lodge Baptist Church intending to do activities on the beach during the summer (Friday-Sunday).
- Also he's involved with Family Fun Day on Saturday 1st August 2026

at Churchill Playing Fields, 2-4 pm.
Volunteers needed.

- It was with great sadness we learnt about Monsignor Andrew Faley's retirement due to ill health.

After our next meeting was arranged we closed with the saying of the Grace, communally.

Valerie Taylor
(Representative for St Andrew's)

Holiday Happiness for the Hammonds!

Well, who would have thought that we would choose one of the hottest weeks of the year to use the super voucher so kindly given to us at the March AGM. We had a splendid time at the excellent Lakeside Hotel Windermere and felt as though we had been abroad due to the glorious weather.

Our days were varied and included travelling by steamer up and down Lake Windermere (it was cooler on the water!), a nostalgic steam train journey along the Leven Valley to Haverthwaite and a fascinating visit to the Buddhist Temple for World Peace at Ulverston.

Thank you to all involved in providing us with some much appreciated R&R.

With our love,
Ann and Ray



The law of entropy

'Where there is no vision, the people perish' (Proverbs 29:18 KJV)



Shree Rama / Pixabay

A pastor writes: The second law of thermodynamics states this physical truth: If left to their own devices, everything in the universe moves towards disorder and decay. Cars rust. Food rots. It's also called the law of entropy. And the only way to prevent entropy is to introduce an outside energy source to counteract it. The technical term for this is negentropy. And the refrigerator is a good example. You plug it into an electrical outlet, and it produces cold air that keeps food from rotting. If the refrigerator gets disconnected from its energy source, entropy will take over again. And things will get smelly. Isn't that what happens when we get disconnected from God? Life moves towards decay and disorder. So how do we overcome our entropic tendencies? Solomon answers: 'Where there is no vision, the people perish.' If sin is entropy, then investing

our energies in a God-sized vision is negentropy. The word perish comes from the Hebrew word para and 'entropy' is a fair translation. Perhaps many church problems don't come from an abundance of sin but rather from a lack of vision? We're not suggesting that there aren't sin problems or that those problems don't need to be dealt with. But in too many instances, there isn't enough vision to keep the church busy. Our vision isn't big enough to demand all our energies, so we focus on petty problems to keep us busy. The same is true on a personal level. If we had a larger vision of what God wanted to accomplish in us and through us, our problems would diminish because we are consumed by a cause greater than ourselves.

Via Association for Church Editors

A Personal Prayer

Lord, may I ever speak as though it were the last word that I can speak.
May I ever act as though it were the last action that I can perform.
May I ever suffer as though it were the last pain I can offer.
May I ever pray as though it were, for me on earth, the last chance to speak to you.

Chiara Lubich, Focolare Movement.

From the Book of Remembrance for this month

Remembering those who have gone before us

Ada Corby

Rene Bridges

George Dudgeon Russell

Annie (Nancy) Adamson

Saunders

Molly Yarrow

Robert Foster Barbour

Betty and Norman Buckle

Church Register

DEATH

STEMBRIDGE

Ann Lisle, on 14 June 2026,
aged 86 years.

Committal at Whitley Bay on 16 July,
followed by service at St Andrew's,
conducted by Revd Louise Sanders.



And now food for thought....

If your supermarket has been lowering prices every day how come nothing is free yet?

Media power...

Taken from a newspaper: "Owing to the overcrowded conditions of our columns a number of births and deaths are unavoidably postponed this week."

September Newstand

The next edition of Newstand will be out on 30th August.

Please have contributions to Tim **by 24th August.**

Prayer Diary and Lectionary

*Weekly prayers from the URC
and lectionary readings*



2	Redcar Missional House, Revd Dr Sue Walker and its residents.	• Genesis 32:22-31 and Psalm 17:1-7, 15 • Isaiah 55:1-5 and Psalm 145:8-9, 14-21 • Romans 9:1-5 • Matthew 14:13-21
9	Church: St Andrew's, Benton. Minister: Revd Helen White.	• Genesis 37:1-4, 12-28 and Psalm 105: 1-6, 16-22, 45b • 1 Kings 19:9-18 and Psalm 85:8-13 • Romans 10:5-15 • Matthew 14:22-33
16	Safeguarding Officers: Matt Knowles; Helen Berg; Carrie Kaunda. Admin Support: Paula Kitson.	• Genesis 45:1-15 and Psalm 133 • Isaiah 56:1, 6-8 and Psalm 67 • Romans 11:1-2a, 29-32 • Matthew 15: (10-20), 21-28
23	Pastoral Committee, all members and Convenor: Revd Kate Hackett.	• Exodus 1:8-2:10 and Psalm 124 • Isaiah 51:1-6 and Psalm 138 • Romans 12:1-8 • Matthew 16:13-20
30	Church of the Good Shepherd, Battle Hill, served by Revd Julie Mooney.	• Exodus 3:1-15 and Psalm 105:1-6, 23-26, 45b • Jeremiah 15:15-21 and Psalm 26:1-8 • Romans 12:9-21 • Matthew 16:21-28

This month's Rotas

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



ELDERS	Vestry	Ann Hammond
	Reception	Ray Hammond
	Communion	Joan Blanchfield
	Extra	Iain Ord
STEWARD	Kathleen or Bill Hopper	
Sunday 2nd August	Organ Helen Storey	Prayers Hazel Hall
	Readers Joan Blanchfield/ Val Taylor	
Tuesday 4th Prayers	Carole Mallett	
Sunday 9th	Organ Helen	Prayers Carole Moore
	Readers Chris Hales/ Celia Purves	
Tuesday 11th Prayers	Andrew Cooke	
Sunday 16th	Organ Helen	Prayers Sandra Pine
	Readers Kevin Ames/ Sandra Pine	
Tuesday 18th Prayers	Sue Ames	
Sunday 23rd	Organ Alex	Prayers Ann Sinclair
	Readers Ray Hammond/ Jenny Hooper	
Tuesday 25th Prayers	Geoff Mills	
Sunday 30th	Organ Helen	Prayers Worship Group
	Readers Worship Group	

Church Calendar for August / September

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)

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
Friday	14	Film Club – 'The Choral'	2.00 pm
Sunday	16	Let's Sing and Prayer Group CANCELLED FOR THIS MONTH	-
		Morning Worship (with Baptism); Revd Louise Sanders	11.00 am
Sunday	23	Communion Service; Mrs Valerie Taylor	9.30 am
		Morning Worship; Dr Ann Sinclair	11.00 am
Sunday	30	Morning Worship; Dr Ann Sinclair and Worship Group	11.00 am
SEPTEMBER 2026			
Saturday	5	Coffee Morning	10.30 am
Sunday	6	Communion Service; Revd Louise Sanders	11.00 am
		Evening Worship; Revd Louise Sanders	6.30 pm
Thursday	10	Pastoral Team Meeting followed by Elders' Meeting	7.00 pm
Friday	11	Film Club:	2.00 pm
Saturday	12	Grainger Singers Concert	7.00 pm
Sunday	13	Morning Worship; Mrs Valerie Taylor	11.00 am

Pause in this moment

A place for
prayers,
thoughts
and poems

Take this moment, sign and space;
take my friends around;
here among us make the place
where your love is found.

Take the time to call my name,
take the time to mend
who I am and what I've been,
all I've failed to tend.

Take the tiredness of my days,
take my past regret,
letting your forgiveness touch
all I can't forget.

Take the little child in me,
scared growing old;
help me here to find my worth
made in Christ's own mould.

Take my talents, take my skills,
take what's yet to be;
let my life be yours, and yet,
let it still be me.

John Bell (b.1949) & Graham Maule (1958-2019)

John Bell and Graham Maule of the Iona Community always managed to weave into their hymns the threads of everyday life. The picture they paint is rarely rosy; their words are full of realism and humanity. They take human beings as nowadays they so often are ... inadequate, weary, stumbling and fearful... and yet what they write is never hurtful or criticizing, simply touching and inclusive. When we sing 'Take this moment' we all recognise that feeling of tiredness and regret, and are aware of ways in which we've failed to come up to scratch... but God is able to acknowledge it all, and still meet us with forgiveness.

From Pam Rhodes "Hear My Song"

Contributed by Ann Sinclair

