

## Newsletter – Spring 2026

### Thankfulness for Christmas Events & Church Away Day at St John's Houghton

We're so thankful to God for the opportunities He gave to celebrate and share some of the true joy of Jesus' birth, through our Carol Services (including the Border Concert Band and supporters), and the Christmas Experience (with classes from Brook Street and Norman Street learning about the Ordinary and Extraordinary happenings of that first Christmas). Thank you to all involved in praying for, preparing and running these.

We're also thankful to Him for all who came to our January Away Day for fellowship, food, exploration of the Six Working Genius' model and how that can help us, and then the discussions that began there and are continuing in how better to pursue our mission and the challenges and opportunities God has given us.

**Please pray** for all who came in December to remember Jesus' extraordinary love in leaving home for Christmas for us, and for our away day to result in closer relationships and more effective teamwork in Jesus.

### Next steps from our Feb 2026 Mission week

Having joined with our Mission Community partners in Houghton & Kingmoor for a week of events sharing God's love in transformative ways (with the help of students from Cornhill Scotland), what will happen next?

And the answer is nothing ... unless God is at work. Psalm 127:1 says "*Unless the LORD builds the house, the builders labour in vain. Unless the LORD watches over the city, the guards stand watch in vain.*" So:

- First up let's **pray** that the seed of God's Word (see Luke 8:1-15) sowed then (and in all we do as a Church) is neither stolen, grows rootless, nor is choked by the worries of this world or the deceitfulness of wealth.
- Secondly let's **keep building** those **relationships** to show and appropriately speak of the love of Jesus.
- Thirdly let's **consider how to connect** them with Jesus and his people, whether through Sunday Church, our Cafés (\*see below), our 10<sup>th</sup> April Comedy event (see below), or other ways.

Existing details can be found in our Church Prayer Diary and website, and **please** let us know what kind of events/initiatives might work for people and groups that you know and are involved with.

### Helping Botcherby Brew and St John's Café continue our mission

If we were only able to help our existing friends be welcomed, connected and transformed in Jesus name there would be thousands in our parish and beyond who would continue isolated, lonely and ignorant of God's love. Botcherby Brew (11am-1pm Thursdays @ St Andrews) and St John's Café (11am-1pm Fridays @ St John's) provide a warm, welcoming context for anyone in our local communities (available in the daytime) to come and experience our community, get to know us and (at the right time & pace for them) go deeper. We've already seen a number of people who first came to these cafés start coming to our services as well.

We're so thankful for the team who run these cafés and would love those of us with diary flexibility to consider if we could support them regularly by our presence and even practical help, both to connect with anyone who comes in, and also to benefit from the friendship and fellowship ourselves. **Could you make one of them part of your weekly pattern?**

## Church lunches at St John's

All those who have been part of them will know how good our Church lunches are in time together and the food too 😊 They express our calling to share lives across differences, and to welcome and connect with the stranger and the lonely. We'd love to be able to hold these monthly. Our next date is 29<sup>th</sup> March (Palm Sunday) when we will also be celebrating some Baptisms together. If you could help please speak with Karen or Sue.

**Please pray** for God's provision, protection and blessing of these Church family bonding times.

## Comedy and conversation starter... ?

The weekend after Easter Day (5<sup>th</sup> April) will see us hosting an evangelistic stand-up comedy evening '**God, the Bible & Everything in under an hour\***' on Friday 10<sup>th</sup> April. It is put on by James Cary who is a professional comedy scriptwriter whose credits include writing for Miranda & Milton Jones. The show is both informative and comedic (remember God created laughter and fun!) for people of any faith or none, and may well lead to further questions and conversations. Refreshments are included in the Ticket price – purchase from <https://www.trybooking.com/uk/GCAA> or use this QR code.



**Please get this in your diary and invite some friends** 😊

## Our Annual Meeting with elections – Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> April

After our St John's service we will hold our APCM (Annual Parochial Church Meeting) when we look back at God's provision in 2025, look forward together at what He may be calling us to, and vote in Church Wardens, Members of the PCC (Parochial Church Council) etc. Please join us and be praying for godly, willing servants.

## Living Word 2026 – May 5<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> Forgiveness

As a Church in recent years we have had the honour of hosting one of the most effective events in Carlisle for gathering Christians from a whole range of Churches to be equipped together by good bible teaching, praising God, spending time together, and benefitting from a Christian bookstall and stands from various other Christian organisations. This year the Living Word committee are particularly excited about the universal relevance of our topic (considering Forgiveness, Guilt & Shame) and the wisdom in God's word that our speaker Richard Underwood will be sharing. Expect to see publicity soon, with taster videos releasing in mid-March !

**Could you help with our hospitality (e.g. providing refreshments 10.30am-12pm or 7.30-9.30pm) ... and have your souls fed at the same time?** If so please speak with Tudor

May you know God's peace, joy and blessing as we continue our Spirit empowered Mission of Welcoming, Connecting, and Transforming in Jesus name.

St John's & St Andrew's Parochial Church Council (Abbey, David, Esther, Giles, Julie, Moray, Stuart, & Tudor)

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Which of these items do you need to act on now: diarise, add to prayer list, contact someone about...etc. ?