

St Francis High Heaton

Worship - Community – Service

Notices, Readings & Prayers

25th January 2026

The Conversion of St Paul

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This Sunday is the Feast of the Conversion of St. Paul, someone defined by his rigid adherence to religious law. Saul of Tarsus was the ultimate enforcer of a settled order, believing that security and righteousness were found solely in the enforcement of boundaries. Today, we witness the fracturing of our own rules-based world order. The international norms and institutional certainties that once promised stability are crumbling under the weight of economic and political forces, but the truth is that while we have enjoyed political stability, many nations have not. Such divisions are not new and when Saul was converted on the road to Damascus, it was not a transition from one set of rules to another. It was a radical collapse of his reliance on systems. Blinded by the light of Christ, he discovered that true order is not imposed by force and decree, but transformed from within by Grace. He moved from the letter of the law, which kills, to the Spirit, which gives life. As the global structures we rely on falter in 2026, Paul's witness offers a path forward. He reminds us that when human systems fail, the Kingdom of God remains. We are called to stop seeking salvation in the perfection of our policies and start seeking it in the person of Jesus Christ. In a world of retreating borders and broken treaties, let us emulate Paul: becoming ambassadors of a reconciliation that transcends national interests and legalistic rigor. Our hope lies not in the restoration of a fragile worldly order, but in the enduring power of the Gospel to turn enemies into brothers and sisters.

The next Taizé worship will be...

Monday 26th January at 6.30pm, a short meditative service with chants, silence, a reading and prayers – join us if you can!



Monthly soup lunches!

The next soup lunch will be on Tuesday 3rd February 12.30pm - 1.30pm supporting Christian Aid – all welcome!



Monthly Litter Pick

YOU ARE WARMLY INVITED TO JOIN ST FRANCIS ECO-CHURCH LITTER PICKERS on the first Saturday of each month. The next one will be Saturday 7th February and then Saturday 7th March 10 - 11.30am, meet at church. All equipment provided, everyone welcome! (*children under 18 to be accompanied by an adult*).



Henry Allen Titley

Our prayers and good wishes go to the family of Harry Titley who died on 10th January. The funeral will be at St Francis Church on Monday 26th January at 11.45am followed by a reception in the church hall. Everyone is welcome to attend and we are very grateful to Harry's family who have asked that in lieu of flowers donations be made to St Francis Church.

Lent is coming, which means Pancakes!

This Year Lent begins with Ash Wednesday on 18th February with a sung Eucharist and Imposition of ashes at 7pm. Every year on Shrove Tuesday we hold a pancake party with the brownies to raise money for a local food charity and this year we are supporting The People's Kitchen. Because Shrove Tuesday will be in half term this year, we have agreed to bring the event forward to Tuesday 10TH February! The party will run from 6.30pm-7.30pm in the church hall and whilst the brownies will manage the front of house, serving and waiting on tables, as well as providing toppings, our role is to produce the pancakes and hot drinks! To do this we need volunteers on the night from about 5.30pm, and also people to provide pancakes in advance which can then be heated up and served to ensure a good flow of pancakes on the night! If you would like to get involved please contact Sue Flood on 07792 830026

Green Tip

Make your own Golden breadcrumbs

I tend to use these shop bought breadcrumbs a couple of times a week to crumb fish or coat Scotch eggs and I always think what a waste it is when quite a bit of it ends up in the bin after the crumbing procedure. Well here is a home-made alternative which looks promising. although I have not yet tried it. Start with 250g stale bread, cut up into cubes and put into a food processor or liquidiser. Blitz to a fine crumb then add 1/4 tsp turmeric and 1/2 tsp paprika and blitz again for a few seconds.. Spread out on a baking tray and bake in a preheated oven (100C/fan 80C/210F/gas 1/4) for 2 - 3 hours. It is important that no moisture remains. Cool and return to the food processor to blitz a little more to produce fine crumbs if that is what you prefer. Transfer to a sealed container and this will keep for 6 months.

Thanks to Elaine Anderson for a look at Nancy Birtwhistle's book, Nancy's Green and Easy Kitchen.

Jenny Germain

If you have a green tip to share, email jenny_germain@talk21.com

Worship & Prayers for The Conversion of Paul

Opening Rite

If you're at home you might wish to light a candle, make sure you are sitting comfortably and take a few deep breaths to still yourself.

The Lord is here.

His Spirit is with us.

We were once dead through the trespasses and sins in which we lived, but now we are alive together with Christ.

Through him we have access in one Spirit to the Father, to whom we humbly confess our sins.

cf Ephesians 2.1,5,18

Prayers of Penitence

After a period of reflection

Open our eyes to your presence in our midst.

Lord, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

Turn our hearts from selfish ends.

Christ, have mercy.

Christ, have mercy.

Draw us into your company on the way.

Lord, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

May the God of all healing and forgiveness draw us to himself,

and cleanse us from all our sins

that we may behold the glory of his Son, the Word made flesh,

Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

The Collect

You might like to keep a few moments of silence

Almighty God,
who caused the light of the gospel
to shine throughout the world
through the preaching of your servant Saint Paul:
grant that we who celebrate his wonderful conversion
may follow him in bearing witness to your truth;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. **Amen**

Jeremiah 1.4-10

Now the word of the Lord came to me saying, ‘Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations.’ Then I said, ‘Ah, Lord God! Truly I do not know how to speak, for I am only a boy.’ But the Lord a said to me, ‘Do not say, “I am only a boy”; for you shall go to all to whom I send you, and you shall speak whatever I command you. Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you to deliver you, says the Lord.’ Then the Lord put out his hand and touched my mouth; and the Lord said to me, ‘Now I have put my words in your mouth. See, today I appoint you over nations and over kingdoms, to pluck up and to pull down, to destroy and to overthrow, to build and to plant.’

Psalm 67



R Let the peo - plēs praise you, O God; let all the peo- ples praise you.

God be gracious to us and bless us
and make his face to shine upon us,
That your way may be known upon earth,

your saving power among all nations. /R:

O let the nations rejoice and be glad,
For you will judge the peoples righteously
and govern the nations upon earth. /R:

Then shall the earth bring forth her increase,
and God, our own God, will bless us.

God will bless us,
and all the ends of the earth shall fear him. /R:

Acts 9.1-22

Meanwhile Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest and asked him for letters to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any who belonged to the Way, men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. Now as he was going along and approaching Damascus, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. He fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, 'Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?' He asked, 'Who are you, Lord?' The reply came, 'I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. But get up and enter the city, and you will be told what you are to do.' The men who were travelling with him stood speechless because they heard the voice but saw no one. Saul got up from the ground, and though his eyes were open, he could see nothing; so they led him by the hand and brought him into Damascus. For three days he was without sight, and neither ate nor drank. Now there was a disciple in Damascus named Ananias. The Lord said to him in a vision, 'Ananias.' He answered, 'Here I am, Lord.' The Lord said to him, 'Get up and go to the street called Straight, and at the house of Judas look for a man of Tarsus named Saul. At this moment he is praying, and he has seen in a vision a man named Ananias come in and lay his hands on him so that he might regain his sight.' But Ananias answered, 'Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much evil he has done to your saints in Jerusalem; and here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who invoke your

name.' But the Lord said to him, 'Go, for he is an instrument whom I have chosen to bring my name before Gentiles and kings and before the people of Israel; I myself will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of my name.' So Ananias went and entered the house. He laid his hands on Saul and said, 'Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on your way here, has sent me so that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit.' And immediately something like scales fell from his eyes, and his sight was restored. Then he got up and was baptized, and after taking some food, he regained his strength. For several days he was with the disciples in Damascus, and immediately he began to proclaim Jesus in the synagogues, saying, 'He is the Son of God.' All who heard him were amazed and said, 'Is not this the man who made havoc in Jerusalem among those who invoked this name? And has he not come here for the purpose of bringing them bound before the chief priests?' Saul became increasingly more powerful and confounded the Jews who lived in Damascus by proving that Jesus was the Messiah.

Gospel Acclamation



The Gospel according to Matthew

Chapter 19:27-end

Then Peter said in reply, 'Look, we have left everything and followed you. What then will we have?' Jesus said to them, 'Truly I tell you, at the renewal of all things, when the Son of Man is seated on the throne of his glory, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or fields, for my name's sake, will receive a hundredfold, and will inherit eternal life. But many who are first will be last, and the last will be first.'

**This is the Gospel of the Lord
Praise to you O Christ**

Reflection

Paul (then known as Saul) approved of Stephen's stoning and began to persecute the Church (Acts 7:58–8:3), pursuing the disciples of Jesus who had taken their faith as far as Damascus in Syria. Belonging to 'the Way', they understood their acceptance of Jesus as the right way of understanding the Jewish Scriptures, just as the Dead Sea Sect at Qumran argued that in their interpretation of Scripture they were 'those who have chosen the Way' (see The Damascus Document 9:18). Paul was 'persecuting the Church' because he was 'far more zealous for the traditions of my ancestors' than others (Galatians 1:14-16). But it was while violently preserving the status quo that his perspective was radically changed, leading him to interpret his Jewish Scriptures afresh in the light of Christ's death and resurrection (1 Corinthians 15:3-4). The blinding light and regained sight recall Simeon's description of the infant Jesus as 'a light for revelation to the Gentiles' (Luke 2:32), itself drawn from the prophetic vision of Israel as the servant given by God 'as a light to the nations' (Isaiah 49:6). The persecutor Paul now shares the vision of the persecuted Stephen (Acts 7:56,22:20). The risen Jesus is the suffering servant of his people (9:5), whose sufferings Paul will share (9:16) as God works in him to fulfil Israel's calling. Paul later recalled that the Lord had said, 'I am sending you to the Gentiles to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light' (26:17-18). The high priest's posse accompanying Paul lead him away, 'and for three days he was without sight, and neither ate nor drank' (9:9). This suggests his participation in Jesus' arrest and crucifixion, death and burial (see Romans 6:1-4). In Damascus, Ananias, the disciple of Jesus, has also received a vision, responding as the prophets responded, 'Here I am, Lord'. Ananias finds the courage to go to Paul at Straight Street. By Ananias' touch and teaching the scales fall from Paul's eyes and, filled with the Spirit, he participates in Jesus' risen life, greeted as 'brother' by the courageous man whose life he had threatened.

Prayers

Spend a few moments praying for the people you know and love, for the world, for peace and for the relief of refugees everywhere.

On the Feast of the Conversion of Paul

Almighty God,
you have built your Church upon the foundation
of the apostles and prophets,
with Jesus Christ himself as the chief cornerstone:
so join us together in unity of spirit by their doctrine,
that we may be made a holy temple acceptable to you;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

Praying for the Earth

Biofuels

Teach us wisdom in our use of the earth's resources. Grant us inspiration in our search for alternatives to fossil fuels. Give guidance to those involved in the development of biofuels. Help us to find the right balance between the need for food and the need for fuel. **Amen**

From the Diocesan Cycle of Prayer for the Church

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity: All Black, African and Ethnic Minority churches in Britain

Porvoo Communion: Diocese of Birmingham, Diocese of Elsinore (Evangelical Lutheran Church in Denmark), Diocese of Cork, Cloyne and Ross (Church of Ireland)

Anglican Communion: Iglesia Anglicana de Chile Primate: The Most Reverend Enrique Lago Zugadi

Diocese of Botswana: Parish of St Simon of Cyrene, Tiokweng: Fr Botshabelo Beleme, Revd Dr Nelson Mwaniki and Fr Chris Mensah

Norham Deanery: St Michael and All Angels' Church, Ford Hugh Joicey C of E First School, Ford

From our Parish Prayer Cycle this week

pray for all residents of Kingham Court, Finstock Court and Burford Court

Being baptised today

Isaac John Robinson

For the sick and those being cared for in hospital or at home

Sheila Sidney-Wilmot, Jacqueline Pearson, Ida Smart, Irene Gibson, Lynne Dryden, Liz Clarke, Corinne Harris, Jo Whittam, Veronica Brown, Alan Trotter, Linda Pallister, Alastair Day, Jenny Freeman, John Irving, Maureen Webster, Carol Greener, baby Rajvi, baby Gianna Skye and Daniel Hassan

For those in residential care

Doreen Richardson, Deirdré Crowe, Brian Smart, Tony Bartlett, Pat Bell and Pat Hindmarsh

For those who have recently died

Ada Medwell, Harry Titley and Alicia Jerrard

For those whose year's minds are this week

John Duncan Brack, Muriel Edwards, Constance Wears, Jean Holmes, Sarah Elizabeth Lawrence, Barbara Anne Bryant, John Munro, Sarah Atkinson and Alice Brown

You might like to end your prayers with The Lord's Prayer

**Our Father,
who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come;
thy will be done on earth
as it is in heaven.**

**Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
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.**

The Conclusion

**The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
and the love of God,
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit,
be with us all evermore. Amen**

Let us bless the Lord!

Thanks be to God!

Tickets only £10
Buy on the door!

A Concert of Light Classical Music

Songs from the Musicals and the American Songbook



**Saturday
7th Feb
2026 7pm
St. Francis'
Church
Hall
NE7 7QH**



Eclectic Light Trio with Jonothan Worthy

***In aid of the
Church
Development
Fund***

078 88 693 850

www.stfrancisnewcastle.org.uk



High Heaton Weather in 2025

This week we are looking at some of the extremes and averages of the past year along with a look at how it compares to the previous 30 years.

The spring was exceptionally dry and included an 8-week period when only 5mm of rain was recorded. The dry weather continued into the summer and by the end of August it was the driest year to date. However, the last four months of the year were quite wet, and the total rainfall for the year was 594mm (23"), which is 89% of the average.

The dry conditions in the spring and summer were accompanied by high temperatures and plenty of sunshine causing the ground to become very parched. It was the warmest spring that I have recorded (and nationally it was the warmest and sunniest spring since records began in 1884). There were several mini-heatwaves during the summer, with the temperature often in the high 20s. June was particularly hot and it was the warmest June that I have recorded by a large margin. Nine months of the year were warmer than average, and only January was much colder than usual. As has been widely reported, nationally (and for England and Scotland) it was the hottest year on record in terms of the average temperature. However, in High Heaton (as in Wales and Northern Ireland), it was just beaten by 2022. The average temperature for the year was 10.33°C compared to 10.38°C in 2022. During the first 25 years that I calculated average temperatures there was no upward trend, but four of the five warmest years in the last thirty were 2022, 2023, 2024, and 2025, so this does seem to be local evidence of global warming. If further evidence is needed, 2025 was also the fourth successive year with no substantial snowfall.

Several named storms arrived during the year, and one of these, Éowyn, which was reported to be the worst storm to hit the country for a decade, brought us the year's maximum wind speed of 56mph on January 24th. This equals the previous highest gust which was in 2016.

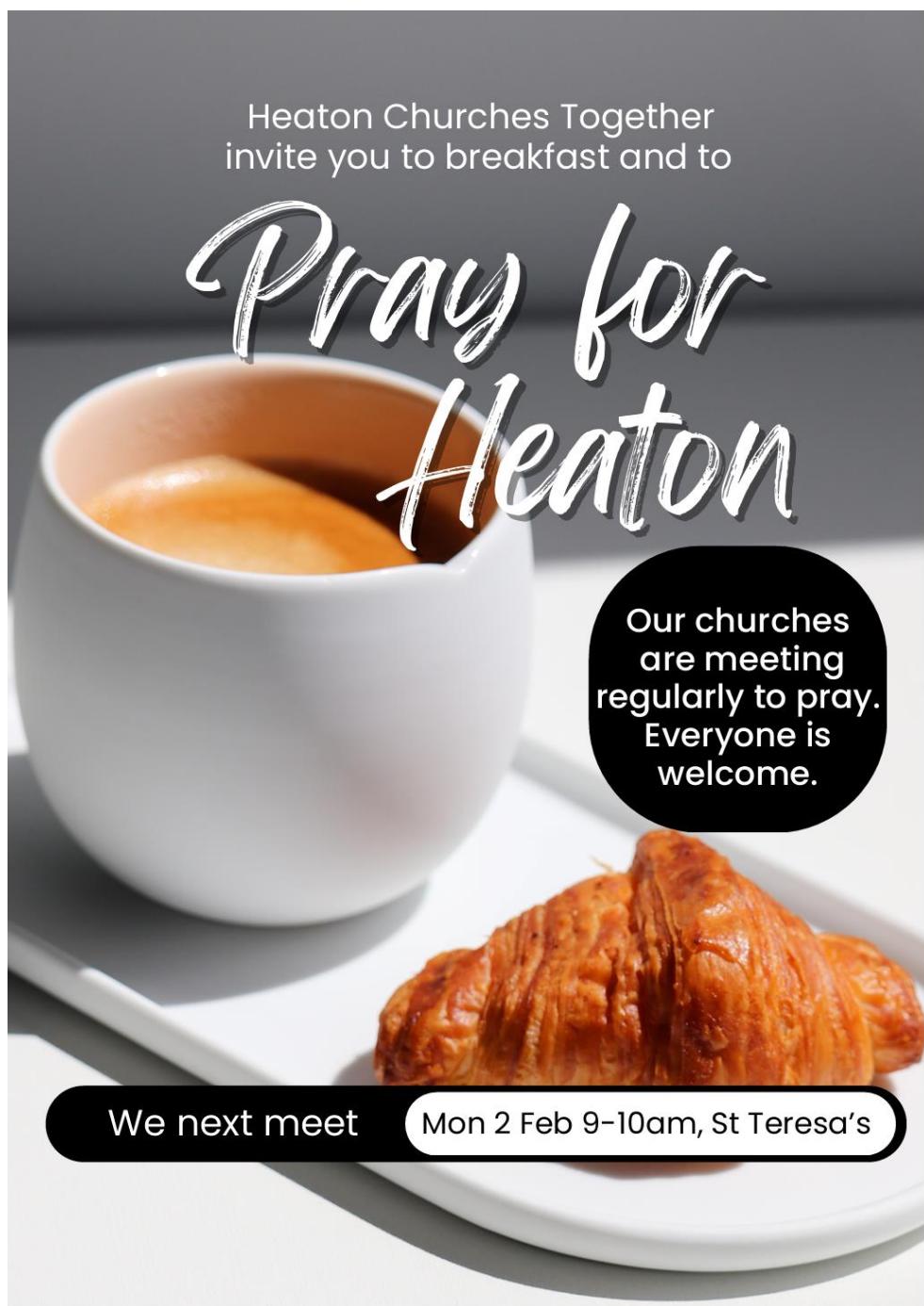
Finally, here are some of the other extremes of 2025:

Maximum temperature: 30.6°C at 2pm on Friday 20th June. This is only the third occasion that 30°C has been exceeded.

Minimum temperature: -3.9°C at 5.30am on Sunday 12th January.

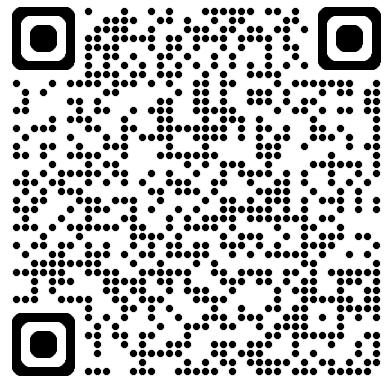
Coldest day: Sunday 19th January with a maximum of 1.1°C (and only 0.3°C during daylight).

Wettest day: Saturday 20th September with 41 mm of rain.



Know Your Church Know Your Neighbourhood!

The group helping us to develop a strategy for the PCC over the next 10 years has drawn up a survey for members of the congregation to fill in – it's quick and anonymous and will help us gather information to shape our future: follow this link <https://forms.gle/F3q6e3yC3jsqdyuS7> or scan the QR code & complete it on your mobile:



Message received from Christian Aid for money raised at soup lunches last year!

Thank you for your generous donation of £566.59. Your donation will soon be working hard in communities across the world, supporting mothers like Joyce to protect their children from hunger, malnutrition, disease and pain. This year, the first £125,000 of our Christmas Appeal will be matched pound for pound – doubling the value of donations and their impact. Any donations received beyond this point won't be matched but will still go straight to supporting families whose lives have been torn apart. Your donation makes a real difference. Obed Buhendwa, Christian Aid's Senior Programme Officer, based in Bukavu, South Kivu Province says: 'We are aware that alone, we won't make enough progress. But with the help of others, we can move forward and build a prosperous Congo where peace is a reality.' Together with our trusted partners, we support families to survive violence and poverty against all odds. We pray that children whose young lives have been torn apart by conflict will one day know peace and comfort. Because when we give, act and pray together, we're united by hope. And with hope, a brighter future becomes possible.

Best wishes, Laura Mead Christmas Fundraising Advisor Christian Aid

We have also received a message from the Ghanaian Children's' Trust which we will share next week!

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Reader with Permission to Officiate: Gloria Bryant 07425 134 494,

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We're open every Wednesday from 2 – 4pm for visitors of all ages, some from the congregation, others from further afield. Whether you're regular or it's your first time you'll be welcomed with friendly conversation and free refreshments!

We are also very grateful to our team of volunteers who run the sessions and would welcome anyone who would like to offer help, whether that be in the form of helping to set up the hall, making and serving drinks, welcoming new people or just being there to engage and interact with people – whatever your strengths might be, they will be highly valued! Contact Helen Swann

placesofwelcomehighheaton@gmail.com or 07487 842 820