



St Francis High Heaton

Worship - Community – Service

Notices, Readings & Prayers

16th August 2026 Eleventh Sunday after Trinity (Proper 15)

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Last week, millions of people stepped outside to look at the heavens. In our own parish, we gathered to watch the dramatic partial solar eclipse, and we are grateful to Saeed for organising eclipse spectacles and setting up a telescope for people safely to observe the eclipse. We watched as the moon slowly glided across the face of the sun, dimming the sky to an eerie twilight, albeit hidden from time to time by pesky clouds! While countries like Spain experienced the breath-taking complete darkness of totality, our own partial view was still a profound spectacle. For Christians, a cosmic event like this is more than just a scientific wonder. It is an opportunity to stop and consider our relationship with the world around us. Drawing on the spirituality of St. Francis of Assisi provides a beautiful lens through which we can understand this celestial dance. For example, St. Francis was famous for his deep love of God's creation. He did not view nature as something separate from his spiritual life: he saw every creature, plant, and celestial body as part of one big family under God. In his famous poem, the Canticle of the Creatures, he wrote beautifully about "Sir Brother Sun" and "Sister Moon." When the eclipse happened, we saw Brother Sun and Sister Moon interact in a unique way, crossing paths in a silent embrace. This spectacle in the heavens reminded us that everything in our universe is connected. The sun and moon follow paths predetermined by the laws of nature. Watching them should ignite the same childlike wonder that Francis carried in his heart every single day.

A second insight from Franciscan spirituality revealed by the eclipse is the importance of humility as a religious virtue. As the sky grew dim and the evening temperature began to drop, an unusual hush fell over many neighbourhoods. In some places birds stopped singing, and the people slowed down from the busy-ness of their lives to look up. In that brief window of time we were able to contemplate a sense of proportion concerning our own place in the universe. I felt very small standing under the massive shadow of the moon cast across the face of the earth. Humility is the certain understanding that none of us are at the centre of the universe. We are reminded to take our eyes off our own small worries and to gaze up at the immensity of God. The cosmos does not belong to us; we are simply guests in God's magnificent house, so experiencing this heavenly movement helps us step back from our pride, and perhaps encourages us to live with simpler, more grateful hearts. A third spiritual consideration is that we might have hope in spite of adversity. An eclipse can be unsettling because the darkness arrives unexpectedly during the day. Our Christian faith tells us that darkness never gets the final word. St. Francis faced many dark moments in his life, including painful sickness and blindness. Yet, he constantly allowed the inner light of Christ to guide his actions. The dark shadow of the eclipse was only temporary and within a few minutes the moon moved along, and the light of the sun returned to warm the earth. This natural cycle serves as a living parable for our lives. We all experience personal eclipses when grief, fear, or doubt block our joy. But just as the sun emerged from behind the moon, God's grace is always ready to break through our heaviest shadows. As we pack away our eclipse glasses and look forward to the changing seasons, let us try to keep this Franciscan spirit alive. Let us appreciate the beauty of creation, practise true humility, and trust that God's light will always triumph over the dark.

Eco Tip

Looking after wildlife in the heat

At one time we might have scoffed at this but with more and more heatwaves hitting us we must spare a thought for small animals and insects needing water. It is not necessary to have a pond but a stone placed in a plant saucer for bees and insects to perch on to have a drink is an easy solution. This is arocha's tip for August. Find more on arocha.org.uk/looking-after-wildlife-in-the-heat/.

Jenny Germain

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

Francis Tide Ceilidh Save the date

Advance Notice – Saturday 3rd October 6pm onwards

There is a list at the back of church for offers of food!

Lent soup lunches!

In August we rest from soup, so the next soup lunch will be on Tuesday 1st September 12.30pm - 1.30pm, supporting *Practical Compassion for Destitute Children* working in the Holy Land.



NB Please note Taizé worship will take a break in August and resume on 14th September at 6.30pm

Worship & Prayers for The Eleventh Sunday after Trinity

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

Prayers of Penitence

The Lord is full of compassion and mercy,
slow to anger and of great kindness.

He has not dealt with us according to our sins,
nor rewarded us according to our wickedness.

For as the heavens are high above the earth,
so great is his mercy upon those who fear him.

Silence is kept for reflection.

**Holy God, holy and strong,
holy and immortal, have mercy upon us.**

As far as the east is from the west,
so far has he set our sins from us.

As a father has compassion on his children,
so is the Lord merciful towards those who fear him.

Bless the Lord, O my soul,
and all that is within me bless his holy name.

Bless the Lord, O my soul,
and forget not all his benefits.

cf Psalm 103

The Collect

You might like to keep a few moments of silence

O God, you declare your almighty power
most chiefly in showing mercy and pity:
mercifully grant to us such a measure of your grace,
that we, running the way of your commandments,
may receive your gracious promises,
and be made partakers of your heavenly treasure;
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**

Isaiah 56.1,6-8

Thus says the Lord: maintain justice, and do what is right, for soon my salvation will come, and my deliverance be revealed. And the foreigners who join themselves to the Lord, to minister to him, to love the name of the Lord, and to be his servants, all who keep the sabbath, and do not profane it, and hold fast my covenant— these I will bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer; their burnt offerings and their sacrifices will be accepted on my altar; for my house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples. Thus says the Lord God, who gathers the outcasts of Israel, I will gather others to them besides those already gathered.

Psalms 67



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:**

Romans 11.1-2a,29-32

I ask, then, has God rejected his people? By no means! I myself am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, a member of the tribe of Benjamin. God has not rejected his people whom he foreknew; for the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable. Just as you were once disobedient to God but have now received mercy because of their disobedience, so they have now been disobedient in order that, by the mercy shown to you, they too may now receive mercy. For God has imprisoned all in disobedience so that he may be merciful to all.

The Gospel According to Matthew chapter 15.21-28

Jesus left that place and went away to the district of Tyre and Sidon. Just then a Canaanite woman from that region came out and started shouting, "Have mercy on me, Lord, Son of David; my daughter is tormented by a demon." But he did not answer her at all. And his disciples came and urged him, saying, "Send her away, for she keeps shouting after us." He answered, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." But she came and knelt before him, saying, "Lord, help me." He answered, "It is not fair to take the children's food and throw it to the dogs." She said, "Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters' table." Then Jesus answered her, "Woman, great is your faith! Let it be done for you as you wish." And her daughter was healed instantly.

This is the gospel of the Lord

Praise to you O Christ

Reflection

Matthew's Jesus insists that, 'I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel,' and sent out his disciples saying, 'Go nowhere among the Gentiles, and enter no town of the Samaritans' (10.5). Whereas in Mark's account, Jesus goes into the Gentile territory of Tyre and Sidon and enters a house there (7.24), in Matthew, Jesus only approaches its borders and the woman comes out from that region to enter his territory and engage him. Mark's 'Syrophoenician' becomes Matthew's 'Canaanite', the scriptural name for those from whom Israel should separate (e.g. Genesis 28.1; Ezra 9.1). (The preceding discussion of Jesus' saying, 'It is not what goes into the mouth that defiles,' also illustrates this difference of emphasis. Mark notes that 'Thus he declared all foods clean' (7.19), whereas Matthew's conclusion is that 'to eat with unwashed hands does not defile' (15.20), which does not set aside the scriptural purity laws separating Israel from the nation.) Because of this emphasis on the separation between God's Israel and the wicked nations, it is the mother's extraordinary act on her daughter's behalf that is highlighted. She cries out for mercy from the Lord's anointed, but he has nothing to say. When she kneels in supplication for her child, he comes up with a crudely expressed theological objection (see Deuteronomy 23.18; Philippians 3.2). In her personal desperation she still manages to defeat him in debate, and only then he recognises the genuineness of her faith, and allows that the God of Israel will surely meet her need. This Canaanite woman's daughter is healed at a distance, as was the Roman centurion's servant (Matthew 8.5-13). In both cases Jesus commends their faith: 'Nowhere in Israel have I found such faith' (8.10). Obedient to his mission to Israel, Jesus nevertheless finds that his power to heal is responsive to those who are far off, as well as to those who are near (see Ephesians 2.13).

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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 Eleventh Sunday after Trinity

God of glory, the end of our searching,
help us to lay aside all that prevents us from seeking
your kingdom, and to give all that we have
to gain the pearl beyond all price,
through our Saviour Jesus Christ. **Amen**

Praying for the Earth

Air pollution

We give thanks that life depends upon the air we breathe. Help us to see the atmosphere as a precious resource, and forgive us when we use it as a dumping ground. As the wind blows where it wills, grant all nations wisdom in dealing with the effects of air pollution, for the health and well-being of all your creatures. **Amen**

From the Diocesan Cycle of Prayer for the Church

Porvoo Communion: Diocese of Kilmore, Elphin and Ardagh (Church of Ireland), Diocese of Aarhus (Evangelical Lutheran Church in Denmark)

Anglican Communion: The Church in Wales Primate: The Most Reverend Cherry Vann

Newcastle West Deanery: St Michael and All Angels, Newburn

From our Parish Prayer Cycle this week

Pray for all working in the government offices

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

Sheila Sidney-Wilmot, Maureen Webster, Heather Chambers, David Cox, Neil Walker, Sam Cole, Shirley Collingwood, Lynne Dryden, Corinne Harris, Jo Whittam, Veronica Brown, Alastair Day, Jenny Freeman, baby Gianna Skye and Daniel Hassan

For those in residential care

Doreen Richardson, Ida Smart, Deirdré Crowe, Irene Gibson, Tony Bartlett, Jacqueline Pearson, Pat Bell and Pat Hindmarsh

For those who have recently died

Deirdré Crowe

For those whose year's minds are this week

Rose Patterson, Winifred Patterson, Margaret Worsley, Mary Parr, Gemma McKenna, Joan Humphries, Arthur Hill, Thomas French, William Ireland and Arthur Mobbs

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!

High Heaton Weather and Air Quality – July 2026

Weather

Although it was the driest, sunniest, and second warmest July on record for England overall, no records were broken in High Heaton. Nevertheless, we had an exceptionally warm and dry month. The rainfall total was 26mm, which is 42% of the average for the month. It was the driest July for 20 years, but we had five Julys with less rainfall in the previous 15 years. The wettest day was Sunday 26th when 18mm was recorded. There was a spell of 20 days in the middle of the month when less than 1mm fell. The average temperature for the month was 17.2°C, which is 1.2°C above the mean, making it the sixth month in succession with above-average temperatures. There have been only four warmer Julys in the last 35 years, the most recent being in 2022. We met the official definition of a heatwave (three successive days at or over 25°C) from Wednesday 8th to Friday 10th. The month's maximum temperature of 28.6°C was recorded during the heatwave at 2pm on the 9th. The temperature also exceeded 25°C on Wednesday 29th. On the night of 28th/29th the minimum temperature was 18.2°, the warmest night of the year so far. It was not until the last day of the month that the temperature dropped into single figures, and it did so for less than an hour. The minimum temperature was 9.8° at 4am on the 31st.

Air Quality

The average PM2.5 particle concentration was 7.0 µg/m³, so we were within the WHO target of 10 µg, but on eight days that value was exceeded with the worst day being Wednesday 15th when the concentration was 26 µg/m³. However the Air Quality Index was in one of the 'good' categories (levels 1, 2, or 3) on every day of the month.

John Telfer

Saturday 5th September
Bereavement

Coffee

Morning

10 - 11.30



Anyone who has experienced bereavement, whether recently or in the past, is welcome to drop in, and have a chat over a drink in a supportive environment.

For further details contact:
Helen 07487 842820 or Marion 07940 811352

St Francis
HIGH HEATON

St. Francis Church, Cleveland Gardens NE7 7QH

The Bereavement
Journey

A place to *talk*

Are you grieving
the death of a loved
one or struggling with
the long-term effects
of loss?

A six-session course
will soon be running
in your area.

Venue: Heaton Baptist Church,
Heaton Road, Newcastle, NE6 5HN

Mondays 7.30 – 9.30pm

First session 28th September, then

5th, 12th, 19th, 26th October

2nd, 9th (optional) November

Cost - £30 in total or £5 per session

for more information and to

book contact either Helen

Helen.swann@blueyonder.co.uk

Or Marion 079 40 811 352

Topics include:

Attachment, separation and loss - The impact and pain of bereavement
Adjusting to change - Anger and guilt - Coping with others' reactions
Moving on healthily - And an optional 6th session on Faith questions

thebereavementjourney.org

Parish Directory

Vicar: Robert Lawrance 07888 693850

robert.lawrance@newcastle.anglican.org

Honorary Associate Priest: Richard Bryant 07765 835 075,

rkbryant28@gmail.com

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

gcadman054@gmail.com

Churchwardens: Sue Flood 07792 830026

Dorothy Frankland 07530 813191

PCC Secretary & Jennifer Germain 0191 266 5144

Electoral Roll Officer jenny_germain@talk21.com

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helen.swann@blueyonder.co.uk

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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

placesofwelcomhighheaton@gmail.com or 07487 842 820