



St Francis High Heaton

Worship - Community – Service

Notices, Readings & Prayers

30th August 2026 Thirteenth Sunday after Trinity (Pr. 16)

www.stfrancisnewcastle.org.uk stfrancisnewcastle@gmail.com @stfrancisnwctl

This week some of us are packing tents and wellies to go to the grounds of Boughton House for the annual Greenbelt Festival. This year's festival theme is challenging: *"Let it all go"*, inviting us to embrace an attitude of *"abandon and acceptance,"* and to turn our *"full hearts and empty hands to whatever - and wherever - is next."* Those words land awkwardly in my ears against the global news cycle. In recent days, our hearts have been filled with a collective, nostalgic grief following the death of country music icon and unparalleled philanthropist Dolly Parton, who passed away at 80 after a brief battle with cancer. From her "dirt-poor" Appalachian roots, Dolly spent six decades producing "songs and happiness". Her nephew beautifully shared on social media that she *"lived in the light and is in the arms of Jesus."* Her life was a vibrant testimony to a faith that never took itself too seriously but took the Gospel command to love and give very seriously indeed. She leaves us with full hearts, having poured herself out until her own hands were completely empty. Meanwhile as we look toward the global horizon there is a different and sharper kind of grief. A catastrophic ice and rock avalanche near the Nepal-Tibet border has triggered a massive flash flood along the Trishuli River valley. Moving like liquid concrete, the torrent obliterated border posts, engulfed villages, and left hundreds dead and over 1,300 people missing, including many international pilgrims and tourists. In a matter of minutes, thousands of families have

been thrust into the ultimate, terrifying reality of empty hands - their homes, livelihoods, and loved ones washed away by the literal melting and fracturing of our fragile planet. At first glance, a country music star's death and a Himalayan climate disaster seem worlds apart, but through the spiritual lens of an event like Greenbelt, where artistry meets activism and the political meets the practical, we see a thread that binds them. Both events call us out of our comfortable routines and demand that we look at what it means to live faithfully in a fragile world. Dolly Parton showed us the beautiful side of letting go. She didn't hoard her wealth, she actively emptied her hands through her global Imagination Library and direct cash relief for disaster victims. She modelled a joyful, faithful surrender to God's call. Conversely, the devastating floods in Asia remind us of the tragic consequences when humanity refuses to let go of its destructive habits, resulting in an ecological collapse that harms the most vulnerable. As a parish community, how do we respond when the world feels this overwhelming? We can start by sitting with the tension and recognising it. We can remember to praise God for the light of Dolly's legacy, and and to fall to our knees to pray for for the rescue teams and grieving families in Nepal and Tibet. But then also we must find ways to act. God calls us to step into the world with full hearts (inflamed by the love of Christ) and empty hands, ready to serve, to give, and to advocate for climate justice. So let us join in our intercessions this Sunday as we pray for the families of the flood victims and the ongoing international search and rescue efforts. Let us act by supporting emergency relief funds via Christian Aid, a long-standing partner of Greenbelt, to provide direct aid to displaced communities. And let us also reflect on how each of us might embrace a lifestyle of "letting go" , whether it is our material wealth or our clinging on to destructive ways of living. Perhaps this week each of us could look for one way in which we could simplify our lives or share our resources with someone in need.

Eco Tip

Dead-head for more growth

Those of you who are gardeners out there will know this, but rough and ready gardeners like me need reminding to take the dead heads off flowers to encourage further flowering. This, of course, ensures a good supply of flowers for our pollinators.

Jenny Germain

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

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 5th September 10 - 11.30am, meet at church. All equipment provided, everyone welcome! *(children under 18 must be accompanied by an adult).*



Lent soup lunches!

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.



Thank you from Jenny Freeman

Jane has been in touch to let us know that Jenny was surprised and moved by all the birthday messages, gifts and cards she received from members of the congregation to celebrate her 21st birthday – she felt surrounded by faith and love in action!!

Save the date! The Francis-tide Ceilidh will be on Saturday 3rd October from 6pm onwards. There is a list at the back of church for offers of food!

Worship & Prayers for The Thirteenth 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

Christ the light of the world has come to dispel
the darkness of our hearts.
In his light let us examine ourselves and confess our sins.

**O King enthroned on high,
filling the earth with your glory:
holy is your name,
Lord God almighty.
In our sinfulness we cry to you
to take our guilt away,
and to cleanse our lips to speak your word,
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen**

cf Isaiah 6

May the Father forgive us
by the death of his Son
and strengthen us
to live in the power of the Spirit
all our days. **Amen.**

The Collect

You might like to keep a few moments of silence

Almighty God,
who called your Church to bear witness
that you were in Christ reconciling the world to yourself:
help us to proclaim the good news of your love,
that all who hear it may be drawn to you;
through him who was lifted up on the cross,
and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Amen

Jeremiah 15.15-21

O Lord, you know; remember me and visit me, and bring down retribution for me on my persecutors. In your forbearance do not take me away; know that on your account I suffer insult. Your words were found, and I ate them, and your words became to me a joy and the delight of my heart; for I am called by your name, O Lord, God of hosts. I did not sit in the company of merrymakers, nor did I rejoice; under the weight of your hand I sat alone, for you had filled me with indignation. Why is my pain unceasing, my wound incurable, refusing to be healed? Truly, you are to me like a deceitful brook, like waters that fail. Therefore, thus says the Lord: if you turn back, I will take you back, and you shall stand before me. If you utter what is precious, and not what is worthless, you shall serve as my mouth. It is they who will turn to you, not you who will turn to them. And I will make you to this people a fortified wall of bronze; they will fight against you, but they shall not prevail over you, for I am with you to save you and deliver you, says the Lord. I will deliver you out of the hand of the wicked, and redeem you from the grasp of the ruthless.

Psalm 26:1-8



Give judgement for me, O Lord, for I have walked with integrity;
I have trusted in the Lord and have not faltered.

Test me, O Lord, and try me; examine my heart and my mind.

For your love is before my eyes; I have walked in your truth. /R:

I have not joined the company of the false,
nor consorted with the deceitful.

I hate the gathering of evildoers
and I will not sit down with the wicked. /R:

I will wash my hands in innocence, O Lord,
that I may go about your altar,
to make heard the voice of thanksgiving
and tell of all your wonderful deeds. /R:

Lord, I love the house of your habitation
and the place where your glory abides. /R:

Romans 12.9-end

Let love be genuine; hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good; love one another with mutual affection; outdo one another in showing honour. Do not lag in zeal, be ardent in spirit, serve the Lord. Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in prayer. Contribute to the needs of the saints; extend hospitality to strangers. Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. Live in harmony with one another; do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly;* do not claim to be wiser than you are. Do not repay anyone evil for evil, but take thought for what is noble in the sight of all. If it is possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably

with all. Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave room for the wrath of God; for it is written, 'Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.' No, 'if your enemies are hungry, feed them; if they are thirsty, give them something to drink; for by doing this you will heap burning coals on their heads.' Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

The Gospel According to Matthew

chapter 16.21-end

From that time on, Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and undergo great suffering at the hands of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him, saying, 'God forbid it, Lord! This must never happen to you.' But he turned and said to Peter, 'Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling-block to me; for you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things.' Then Jesus told his disciples, 'If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it. For what will it profit them if they gain the whole world but forfeit their life? Or what will they give in return for their life? 'For the Son of Man is to come with his angels in the glory of his Father, and then he will repay everyone for what has been done. Truly I tell you, there are some standing here who will not taste death before they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom.'

This is the gospel of the Lord

Praise to you O Christ

Reflection

This is the first of three places where Jesus predicts his own death. Given that the claim to be 'son of God' was so politically sensitive, it is not surprising that Peter fails to understand the idea of an emperor who reigns by dying. Jesus seems to him to be announcing that he will be defeated. But succumbing to the temptation to survive is what would

defeat God's kingdom; that's why, in voicing it, Peter has become the voice of Satan. Nor is it surprising that the disciples at this stage are told to keep it quiet. Claiming an empire is a subversive activity. The moment to proclaim it has to be well-chosen, as, indeed, it was. It needs to be in Jerusalem, when everyone is gathered there. The rest of Matthew now becomes the story of the fulfilment of that prophecy. The passage doesn't make clear why this suffering and death is necessary; that becomes clear over time. It does, however, imply that it is a freely chosen path – the 'must' is in order that God's will be fulfilled, not that there is no option – and that it will involve taking on the authorities in Jerusalem. They will do the worst they can do, and demonstrate thereby the limits of their power, since it will not crush God's kingdom. Resurrection will be God's act of defiance against human empires and authorities of all kinds, utterly drawing their teeth. The claim of empire was to remain subversive for Matthew's community, living in the aftermath of an uprising against Rome. They felt themselves to be suffering, even as Jesus had suffered, taking up their crosses, ready to sacrifice their lives. The word to the disciples is a reassurance to them: you are not doing this in vain; you will be vindicated. And that vindication will come soon. Some will not taste death before they see it.

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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 Thirteenth Sunday after Trinity

Almighty God,
you search us and know us:
may we rely on you in strength
and rest on you in weakness,
now and in all our days;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

We give thanks for the ability to travel widely, in this country and around the world. We give thanks for the rich variety of food available to us, at all times and from all places. Help us to discern the true cost of transport, to travel thoughtfully and to buy locally.
Amen

From the Diocesan Cycle of Prayer for the Church

Porvoo Communion: Diocese of Turku (Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland) and the Diocese of York

Anglican Communion: Church in the Province of the West Indies
Primate: Archbishop Philip Wright

Diocese of Newcastle: The strengthening of our links with Botswana and Møre Dioceses

From our Parish Prayer Cycle this week

Pray for all residents of Birkdale Close, Fairville Crescent and Coach Lane

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

Sheila Sidney-Wilmot, Maureen Webster, Pat Park, 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, Irene Gibson, Tony Bartlett, Jacqueline Pearson, Pat Bell and Pat Hindmarsh

For those who have recently died

Deirdré Crowe and Mr M M Luke

For those whose year's minds are this week

George Tempest, Arthur Turner, George Roberts, Louise Lister,
Emily Dryden, Norman Pretswell, Vera Rigg, Ken Yardley

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!

Persian culture evening – Thursday 17th September

6.30 for 7pm in the Church Hall

We are blessed at St Francis to have members of our fellowship from Iran and Nariman and Zohreh Tavakoli have kindly offered to hold an evening to celebrate Persian culture. We are very grateful, to the Mothers' Union for allowing space in their programme to host this event and we hope as many people as possible will be able to join us!

There will be a three course meal with explanation about the philosophy and culture of food in Iran, and then a short recital of music by Nariman playing the Santoor, an Iranian instrument of ancient origin and important cultural significance.

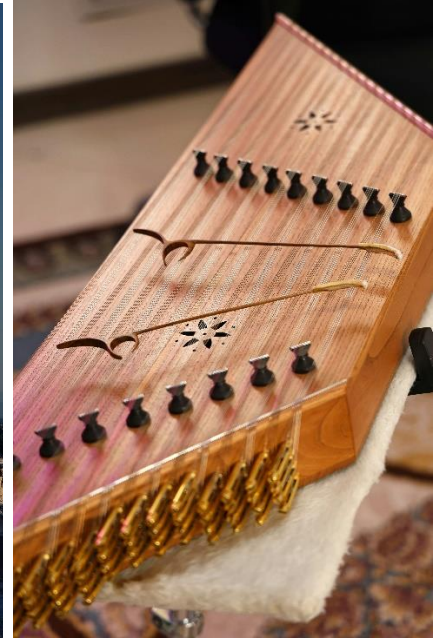
This event will be a real treat and it will be **free of charge**! We need to know numbers for catering purposes so please sign the list at the back of church or email stfrancisnewcastle@gmail.com, indicating also any dietary requirements!



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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

Parish Safeguarding Officer: Helen Swann 07487 842820

helen.swann@blueyonder.co.uk

Bulletin editors: Peter & Elaine Anderson 0191 281 8744

anders.simart@btinternet.com



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