



Northgate News



June - July 2026

Letter from the Minister

Dear Northgate URC and Friends,

I recently attended the Minister’s May School and we had the theme of Every Day Matters, as in every day is important to live each day for God. But also Everyday Matters to God, what we do in the important moments and the 80% of life that is all about everyday matters is where we find God too. In the washing of our clothes, doing the grocery shopping, making phone calls and eating, it is all important to God and our faith informs all we do at all times. So, this theme ran through our 4 days together.

I have been sitting with the depth and simplicity of the theme while on annual leave as well. In our house in Durham, we have a beautiful cherry blossom tree outside the front of our home. The white blossoms were quite spectacular about 6 weeks ago and now the greenery is lush and plentiful. We pruned the tree within an inch of its life at the end of the last season, and it has been wonderful (and a relief) to see it flourish this year. It was a bit of a reset for the tree, and it has clearly thrived and is almost glowing from the energy it is giving out this season. It felt good to clear out the old and perhaps what was holding the tree back – a good lesson for life – prune the old things that no longer bring life and ways of being that do not allow us to thrive in order to make room for the new and helpful habits that bring life.

But another gift from our tree has been watching something that is part of everyday life and also extraordinary in its beauty. We have a nest and a bird sitting on its eggs in the tree. It is such an incredibly woven ‘solid’ nest, the parents have done such a good job with it. It looks secure, well-hidden and protective. And the ordinary cycle of life is repeating itself but also what a miracle of life – new beginnings.

Revelation 21: 3-6 And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Look! God’s dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God.4 ‘He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death’ or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.” 5 He who was seated on the throne said, “I am making everything new!” Then he said, “Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.” 6 He said to me: “It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End.

My prayer for you is that you see God in the everyday and that you live every day for God.

Blessings

Nadene



From The Editors

Deadline for the next magazine will be on:
Wednesday 29th July 2026

Thank you to everyone who has contributed in this issue, if you have sent something and it has not been included, it will be used in the next issue. If you want to send anything for the next issue:

Get in touch at: **vickimilligan@live.co.uk**

p.s in the spotlight will be back in the next issue

Just for a laugh

How do we know that the ocean is friendly?

It waves

Preachers for June / July

June:

7th – Dot Thomson (Communion)

14th – Dr A Henderson

21st – Rev Nadene Snyman (Windrush Service)

28th – Rev D Whiting

July:

5th – Rev Ian Ring (Communion)

12th – Rev Nadene Snyman

19th – Dorothy Warren

26st - TBC

Christian Aid

Thank you all who contributed to our envelope appeal for Christian Aid, your giving was greatly appreciated. So many families in the world are hungry, facing starvation and are unable to feed their families.

Since 1957 Christian Aid has inspired churches like ours to act and pray in support for our global neighbours who are living in poverty.

We are having an afternoon tea for Christian Aid on Saturday 4th July at 3.30pm at the home of Margaret and Paul, 55 Parkland Drive DL3 9DT. There will be good food, a cake stall, raffle, plus musical entertainment, good fellowship and fun.

Tickets £8.0.0 can be obtained from:

Margaret 01325 352546

Christine 01325 352444



I am sure we will have a wonderful afternoon, and we appreciate your support.

Thank you.

God Bless,
Christine

GOBSMACKED SHEEP!

A good many years ago we acquired a delightful tiny Border Collie pup called Meg. When she was about 6 months old my son and I introduced her to Arran. She was an amazing little dog, already learning basic commands, and very eager to please. One day we took her up a track onto the hillside winding up into the high mountains. As we came through the deer fence gate onto the open hill, we thought we would be safe to let her off the lead as we were off the regular farmland.

Deep in conversation together, we took our eyes off Meg and set off up the track. Imagine our surprise when we looked round to check, to find a small group of about six very astonished and cross sheep standing in a tight cluster on the grass. And very proudly and efficiently our Meg had them firmly in place and was looking at us for approval. She knew exactly how to keep them in a group – this little dog who although born on a farm, had come to us at 8 weeks old with no experience. I don't know who was the most surprised- Pete and me, or the sheep. We hadn't seen a sheep in sight when we started up the path, now we had a neat flock! Needless to say, Meg was put on the lead and the bemused sheep dismissed quickly before a farmer caught us sheep rustling....

Anne Jeavons

A new venture for Northgate

THE QUIET PLACE

We were asked a short while ago if our church is ever open for quiet contemplation for anybody who feels the need to be in a tranquil place to pray, consider or just be at peace and so we have decided to open for two hours from 10am to 12md every Thursday morning from June 18th. We will be open for anybody, not just from the Church, so we need help in two ways. Firstly, we want Northgate people to be aware of the open times, so that we can all tell anybody who is perhaps needful of this time of peace that they will be most welcome. And also, we will need a team of volunteers to staff it safely. We are aiming for three volunteers each Thursday – men or women- and have got several names already. But it would be good to have some more names on the list in case we need to cover for holiday times etc. If you feel you would like to add your name, please get in touch with me or Ann Doubleday. I'm sure we will have mornings when nobody comes, but hopefully our beautiful Church will become known as a tranquil haven for anybody who wants to find or enjoy peace and blessing.

Anne Jeavons

annejeavons@hotmail.com

Think of a Number

I still have my Easter decorations up, in my window and on my front door. A friend commented that I hadn't taken them down. I didn't want to go into the whole thing about the Easter season being 40 days until Pentecost but again it got me thinking about numbers. Throughout the Bible, numbers often carry meanings beyond simple mathematics. They are woven into stories, teachings, and visions to convey spiritual truths and remind readers of God's order and purpose. While some numbers are symbolic rather than literal, they help deepen our understanding of Scripture and its message. So as the famous Jonny Ball once said let's think of a number! One of the most important numbers in the Bible is seven, often associated with completeness and perfection. In the opening chapters of Genesis, God created the world in six days and rested on the seventh, establishing the pattern of the Sabbath. Throughout Scripture, seven appears repeatedly: seven churches in Revelation, seven trumpets, and seven seals. The repetition suggests fullness and the completion of God's plan.

Another significant number is three, which often points to divine wholeness. Jonah spent three days in the belly of the great fish. Jesus prayed three times in the Garden of Gethsemane, and Peter denied Him three times followed by his resurrection after three days in the tomb. Let us also not forget the Holy Trinity — Father, Son, and Holy Spirit — as central to our faith.

The number twelve symbolises God's people and spiritual authority. There were twelve tribes of Israel in the Old Testament and twelve apostles chosen by Jesus in the New Testament. In the Book of Revelation, the heavenly city has twelve gates and twelve foundations, again reflecting God's covenant people gathered together.

Forty is another number that appears frequently, often linked with testing, preparation, and renewal. Noah's flood lasted forty days and nights. Moses spent forty days on Mount Sinai, and the Israelites wandered in the wilderness for forty years. Jesus Himself fasted for forty days in the desert before beginning His public ministry. In each case, the period of forty marked a time of challenge leading to transformation, hence from Easter to Pentecost.

Although we should avoid becoming overly mystical about biblical numbers, their repeated use reveals patterns that enrich our reading of Scripture. They remind us that the Bible is carefully crafted and deeply interconnected. Think on next time you hear a number in the lectionary reading and consider their connections to faith.

Zoe Mather

Northgate URC, Darlington, Financial Overview – June 2026

1. Introduction

After discussion in the Elders meeting, the Minister and Elders agreed that it would be helpful to provide a note to discuss the position and development of Northgate church finances for the membership.

2. Recent History

In the past few years, through Covid-19 and two very large structural projects to modify the Church building, Northgate URC has operated with comfortable financial reserves. It has been able to cover all its costs and support its charitable aspirations. This has led to more use (and footfall) of the buildings by outside groups. It has expanded experience of the building by the non-Church Community, and provided addition income to the Church alongside some increase in running costs. In the last 18 months, with the calling of a new Minister, there have been the associated higher costs incurred with Ministry and of operating a Manse (shared with the other Pastorate churches). The Church is now seeking new opportunities to develop mission in the Darlington Community and needs to be in a stable environment to help achieve this.

3. Cost of Ministry

a. Ministry and Mission Contributions (M&M)

Every year all churches in the URC pay a sum of money to Synod. This provides a contribution towards URC Ministers' salaries and the cost of running national and regional Synods. This is based on membership with some mitigating factors including Church income and Church reserves. A number of years ago, Northgate was not as financially strong as it is now and the above criteria reduced our contribution significantly. In 2026, this will be £18422 and is likely to rise by 10% (limits set by Northern Synod) each year over the next few years.

b. Cost of Minister

As well as making our annual payment to Northern Synod we also contribute to the Tees Swale Pastorate that pays for the running costs of the manse, the minister's travel expenses and office costs. In 2026 we expect the Pastorate charge to be £15000 of which Northgate's share will be approximately £6750. It is believed that this charge will increase annually and that Northgate's share of this will also increase annually as it is linked proportionately to the relative M&M payments of the three churches in the Pastorate.

4. Cost of Keeping the Church Open and Developing its Ministry

The costs linked to keeping the Church and the Hall open include heating, lighting, cleaning and maintenance. In 2025 this cost approximately £30000. In recent years, with assistance from various grant funding bodies and use of our own resources, we have also completed payment for the major structural repairs to the Church building at a cost of approximately £0.5m.

Further significant work is envisaged such as redecorating the Church interior, improving heat insulation, renovation of the yard as a quiet space, organ renovation, upgrade of sound system and making the church front doors out-swinging to allow larger numbers of people in the building. While these are not likely to be on the same scale cost-wise as the recent structural work, they are all significant projects in themselves.

5. Northgate's Financial Reserves

As a church we only hold reserves in our current account. As of end of December 2025, this amounted to £59149 which while not trivial, will not fund much of the above anticipated project work.

If we needed to raise Church funds for any significant expenditure, we can draw on the current account reserves, alternatively raise further funds within the congregation through appeals and fundraising, and/or seek external funding (Union Street Trust, URC Northern Synod, other sympathetic charities, etc). The last alternative, of course, is not to incur the expenditure!

6. 2026 Financial Outlook

The forecast for 2026 is for a deficit of £5000. This is not a significant issue given the Church's current financial reserves, however running an annual deficit is clearly not sustainable into the longer term.

7. What can we, as individual church members, do to help?

a. Personal giving

We all have different pressures in our lives and different choices that we make when contributing to charities and causes.

Given the continuing pressure on Northgate's resources, we are asking all members to reflect on their approach to personal giving and to consider if they can afford to increase their contribution.

b. Gift Aid

For those who are UK taxpayers, please remember that the church and the charities we support can benefit if we declare our donations through Gift Aid. This doesn't cost the donor anything, but adds 25% to the donor's contribution to Church funds through tax reclamation from the UK Government.

If you haven't already registered to donate Gift Aid, are able to and would like to do so, please let Peter know.

c. Fundraising

Continue to support the excellent fundraising activities which have developed over the past decades and offer to lead new initiatives of social events within and beyond the church family.

In the short term, these measures will help us to build the financial reserve we need to support our Church and our work in the community.

8. Summary

The Church is currently financially stable, but is always looking for ways to improve its finances. Any members who feel able to increase their weekly, monthly or annual contribution are asked to do so when they can.

We're all asked to include this in our prayers and to trust in God's guidance as we consider this important aspect of our Church life.

Graham Aird / Peter Thomson / Andrew Randle

Upcoming Events

There are a number of events, coming up in the near future, which are worth putting in your diary.

May 10th - 17th Christian Aid Week

May 24th Pentecost Sunday and 'Invite a friend to church Sunday'.

June 27th 'Synod on Tour' are coming to Northgate.

July 2nd Keld Study Day, Keld Heritage Centre - Fliss Barker reflecting on 'Pilgrimage and Labyrinths'.

A letter from an old member.....

I am very grateful to receive Northgate News regularly and love to hear the news of the church I grew up in. Some of you may still remember me and my family - my parents James and Jessie Irvine, my brothers Robin and David.

I saw in the last edition that your editors had struggled to fill the News Letter so I hope that it is ok to send this contribution.

We now live in Abingdon near Oxford. Our 'children' live in St Albans (Beth our daughter) and Marlow (Pete our son). We are both retired ...sort of.

We like Abingdon very much; it is a market town on the banks of the Thames so we can walk to the river easily. And the church we attend is very near the Thames too.

St Helens is a Church of England church. It is a beautiful building which is wider than it is long. Simon Jenkins in his book England's Thousand Best Churches gives it 3 stars....."a big confident Thames church wealthy in its guilds and ideally positioned between town and river"

We have a wonderful organ and two wonderful organists who direct the choir...which has young children as well as grown ups.

We feel the church is thriving with new members and a buzzy feel. We have just had a new vicar appointed and we have a number of talented retired clergy who bring an additional richness and variety to worship. Some services are traditional but we also have Taize and a particularly orientated family service each month. All good stuff. We have made some very dear friends too from the church which has been a real joy.

Abingdon Town also has a Churches Together organization - in the town there is a church where anyone can feel happy to worship.

Northgate, its membership and its work is always in my prayers; it provided a foundation for me.

I have been in awe of how you have embraced the changes that are needed. And you have such a flexible space now to be in each Sunday.

I have so many memories of growing up at St Georges as it was ...it is great it is still growing!

(Does any one know what happened to the old pews ...during one long sermon I carved a birthday date on the one we used to sit in.....I only told this to an old church friend recently who was appalled at my naughtiness...!!!).

So thank you for including me in the circulation list and with all my best wishes for your continuing witness.

Chris Charles May 2026



Blast from the past.....

Here is a photo of Northgate Church in 1905

Tea in the Garden

55 Parkland Drive
Darlington
DL3 9DT
SUPPORTING

christian aid

4th July 2026 at 3.30pm

Afternoon Tea
Cake Stall and a Raffle
PLUS
Musical Entertainment

TICKETS £8.00
from Margaret or Christine
01325 352546 or 01325 352444
**GOOD FOOD, GOOD COMPANY
AND FUN FOR ALL**



KELD CHAPEL
**Minister in Residence
and Study Day 2026**
Fliiss Barker
2nd July 2026

10.30am - 3pm in the Upper Room

Fliiss Barker is a Church Related Community Worker
in Wooler Northumberland.

Fliiss loves to be out in the hills and is a regular walker of St Cuthbert's Way.
She is married to Carl and loves theatre trips, meeting new people and
cows.

STUDY DAY - 2nd July 2026

Pilgrimage and Labyrinths

Pilgrimage has had a renewed interest over the last few years. Fliiss works
with the St Cuthbert's Way Churches Together Group engaging with
pilgrims and promoting the walk. She has also installed a new Labyrinth at
Wooler URC.

She has also recently been featured on the latest series of BBC Pilgrimage.

On the day, Fliiss will be talking about all things pilgrimage and how
Labyrinths can fit in. There will be a 'have a go' session where there will be
an opportunity to build your own finger labyrinth.



**I look forward to
being with you!**

**To Book Contact Dot:
dtheating@ntlworld.com**

WINDRUSH Darlington

NORTHGATE URC

SUNDAY SERVICE

21ST JUNE

10.45AM

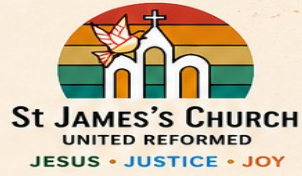
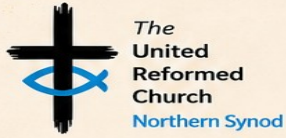
Led by



Contact: Meg Thomson
m.thomson2@btinternet.com
07773 868451
or chat on Sunday at church

Free to join, great to be a part of.
Northgate Walking Group is starting in June.
Everyone is welcome to come along. Walks are
between 3 and 5 miles. Transport will be available.
Dates for your diary:
Tuesday 9th June – Scorton Lakes
Wednesday 24th June – Baydale Circular
Thursday 9th July – Egglestone Abbey Circular
Tuesday 21st July – Reeth + Arkle Beck
Wednesday 5th August – Saltburn Gill





TOGETHER IN CHRIST.
MANY CULTURES. ONE BODY.

MULTICULTURAL *Worship Service*

Let us come together to celebrate the beauty of our diverse cultures in worship and glorify God as one family in Christ.



DATE
WEDNESDAY
3 JUNE 2025



TIME
5:30 PM



VENUE
ST. JAMES'S CHURCH
NEWCASTLE NE1 8JF



A celebration of our many cultures united in faith, hope and love.

Followed by food and fellowship!

"From every nation, tribe, people and language... a great multitude that no one could count."

— Revelation 7:9



CONTACT



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ONE IN FAITH. | ONE IN HOPE. | ONE IN LOVE.

All are welcome!

