

SUNDAY NEXT BEFORE LENT NEWSLETTER

2nd – 9th March 2025

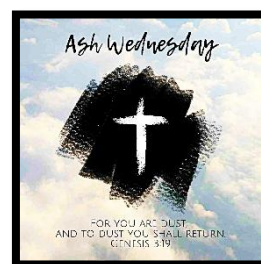
Since God chose you to be the holy people he loves, you must clothe yourselves with tender-hearted mercy, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. Make allowance for each other's faults, and forgive anyone who offends you. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others.

Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds us all together in perfect harmony.

(Colossians 3:12-14 New Living Translation)

Dear friends, this week, **we enter into the particular holy season of Lent.** I have chosen Paul's exhortation to the early Christian communities in Colossae to preface my newsletter because this is the time for our humble seeking of God's help to live as holy people. Paul's analogy of being clothed with those characteristics struck me because I thought, surely, they need to be infused and internal rather than external and worn over our person. But Paul is right: these characteristics are dormant and actually of no use unless they are outward, visible, and known. *'Clothe yourselves with love'* – those features are the fabric of love that connect ourselves with others, knitting relationships together with holiness.

So as Lent approaches and we move from Ash Wednesday into our time of penitence and renewal, let us seek God's help to be his holy people, unafraid and unashamed to express our faith in spirit and in truth.



Everyone welcome!

Video showing of the hugely successful 'The Chosen' about the life of Jesus

Followed by discussion with tea & cake

St Osmunds Centre, Gainford
Monday 31 March, 2.30-4.30pm

Free. Donations welcome to cover cost of refreshments.
Supported and hosted by Churches Together in Gainford.

For more info: Claire Mead, Ordinand in Training, claire.lmead@outlook.com



† **Ash Wednesday 5th March**, a service with Communion and Ashing is **hosted by Winston St Andrew's at 9.30am** for parishioners of all 4 churches and parishes.

† **Monday 31st March 2.30pm – 4.30pm** everyone is invited to a **Lenten Gathering with a difference in St Osmund's Centre, Gainford** – segments of 'The Chosen' followed by a time of conversation with tea and cake, led by our Ordinand Claire Mead.

I should have called us to pray for Ukraine in last week's newsletter as February 24th was the **3rd anniversary of the full-scale invasion of Ukraine by Russia.** "Three years ago, the Lord has saved us from total occupation and surrender, having made a miracle. And we continue to pray for one more God's miracle: a miracle of just peace and reconstruction." These are statements from The Church of England in Kviv and USPG in Ukraine, and they ask that we pray with and for them.

A prayer of peace

Merciful God,

We pray for the people of Ukraine and their family members around the world. We ask that all those involved respond with wisdom and courage and that a peaceful resolution may be achieved. Lord, during these challenging times please lead us from despair to hope, from fear to trust and lead us from hatred to love. We ask this in the name of Jesus, the Prince of Peace.

Amen

Sunday Next before Lent Services

9.15 Staindrop St Mary Rev'd Moji Jaiyesimi

9.30 Winston St Andrew Rev'd Canon Eileen Harrop

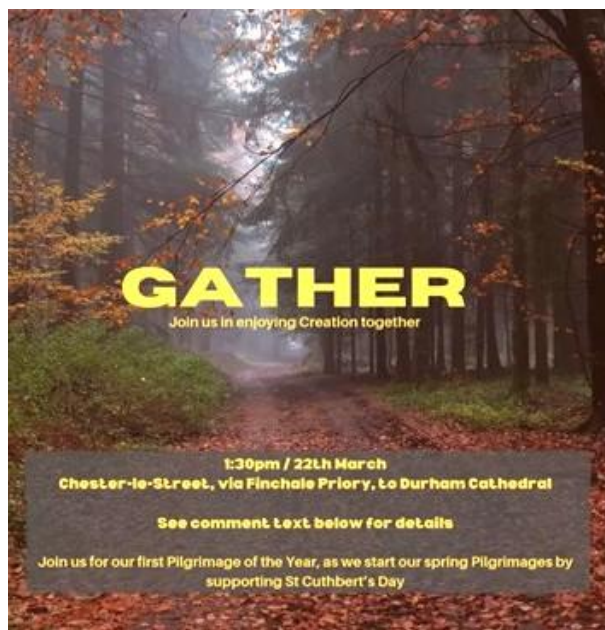
10.45 Gainford St Mary Rev'd Canon Eileen Harrop

Take away, Good Lord, the sin that corrupts us; give us the sorrow that heals; and the joy that praises. Amen

Rev'd Canon Eileen Harrop

Please pray for families recently bereaved and give thanks for the life of

- † The Late Claudette Warne, of Gainford Parish, a regular at Warm and Welcome and at Lunch Club in Winston.
- † The Late Mr George Avison, of Ingleton Parish, whose funeral at Darlington Crematorium takes place on Tuesday 18th March 2025 at 3pm



A GATHER PILGRIMAGE INVITATION

On **Saturday 22nd March**, GATHER will join in the Diocese and Cathedral's annual celebration of St Cuthbert. We will walk the route from St Cuthbert's Church in Chester-le-Street to Finchale Priory and onwards on the Camino Ingles trail to Durham Cathedral.

Rev'd Canon Eileen Harrop will be walking with Bishop Sarah, Acting Bishop of Durham, from Chester-le-Street starting at 10.30am. Others will begin their pilgrimage walk from Finchale Priory at 1.30pm. We will all meet at Durham Cathedral before 4pm, for a special Pilgrim's Eucharist Service.

There is free car parking in Durham County Hall, and organised bus transport to Finchale Priory at £7 per seat.

Contact info@gatherchurchteesdale.com for more information and to make a booking.

An Invitation to Fireside Chats with The Vicar/Rector

In recent months, the Church of England has been disturbed by issues that have triggered the Archbishop of Canterbury's resignation and other senior bishops stepping down from their episcopal roles. Although unconnected to these issues, issues, we have been informed that the nominated Bishop to be the next Bishop of Durham has withdrawn, which means our Diocese's Vacancy in See period is extended. Everyone is welcome to informal conversation about these and other national church matters at **the Vicarage, Gainford on Tuesday 25th March at 6-7.30pm**. So that we can accommodate everyone wishing to attend comfortably, **please email Eileen in advance: ekgharrop@gmail.com** If interest is high, more sessions can be arranged. *Please note a change to the dates: Only Tuesday 25th March is now offered initially as I have been alerted to a clash with a community event.*



ROYAL MAUNDY SERVICE at Durham Cathedral

We are delighted that the Royal Maundy Service is to take place at Durham Cathedral with Their Majesties King Charles III and Queen Camilla in attendance on **Thursday 17 April 2025**. Royal Maundy takes place each year on the Thursday before Easter Day and is a special service in which the King expresses his gratitude for those who serve and volunteer in their communities. The service is rooted in the tradition of Jesus washing his disciples' feet in the Upper Room the night before his death and goes back to medieval times. During the service His Majesty will present 152 recipients, 76 men and 76 women (signifying the age of the Monarch), with specially-minted Maundy money to thank them for their outstanding Christian service and for making a difference to the lives of people in their local communities. These recipients have been selected from the Diocese of Durham and other dioceses across the Province of York and from Wales and Scotland.

We are especially pleased that **Gainford St Mary's Churchwarden and Vice-Chair Geoff Taylor has been selected to receive His Majesty's thanks with the presentation of Maundy money**. It means a great deal to us that Christian service makes a positive difference to the lives of people in our communities. Well done Geoff for representing us all who endeavour to shine with Christ's light in the world.

COLLECT for Sunday Next before Lent

Holy God,
you know the disorder of our sinful lives:
set straight our crooked hearts,
and bend our wills to love your goodness
and your glory
in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

COLLECT for Ash Wednesday

Holy God,
our lives are laid open before you:
rescue us from the chaos of sin
and through the death of your Son
bring us healing and make us whole
in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

Post-Communion Prayer

Holy God,
we see your glory in the face of Jesus Christ:
may we who are partakers at his table
reflect his life in word and deed,
that all the world may know his power to change
and save.
This we ask through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

Post-Communion Prayer

Almighty God,
you have given your only Son to be for us
both a sacrifice for sin
and also an example of godly life:
give us grace
that we may always most thankfully receive
these his inestimable gifts,
and also daily endeavour
to follow the blessed steps of his most holy life;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

Exodus 34:29-35

²⁹ Moses came down from Mount Sinai. As he came down from the mountain with the two tablets of the covenant in his hand, Moses did not know that the skin of his face shone because he had been talking with God. ³⁰ When Aaron and all the Israelites saw Moses, the skin of his face was shining, and they were afraid to come near him. ³¹ But Moses called to them; and Aaron and all the leaders of the congregation returned to him, and Moses spoke with them. ³² Afterwards all the Israelites came near, and he gave them in commandment all that the Lord had spoken with him on Mount Sinai. ³³ When Moses had finished speaking with them, he put a veil on his face; ³⁴ but whenever Moses went in before the Lord to speak with him, he would take the veil off, until he came out; and when he came out, and told the Israelites what he had been commanded, ³⁵ the Israelites would see the face of Moses, that the skin of his face was shining; and Moses would put the veil on his face again, until he went in to speak with him.

The Gospel according to Luke (9:28-36)

²⁸ Now about eight days after these sayings Jesus took with him Peter and John and James, and went up on the mountain to pray. ²⁹ And while he was praying, the appearance of his face changed, and his clothes became dazzling white. ³⁰ Suddenly they saw two men, Moses and Elijah, talking to him. ³¹ They appeared in glory and were speaking of his departure, which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem. ³² Now Peter and his companions were weighed down with sleep; but since they had stayed awake, they saw his glory and the two men who stood with him. ³³ Just as they were leaving him, Peter said to Jesus, 'Master, it is good for us to be here; let us make three dwellings, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah'—not knowing what he said. ³⁴ While he was saying this, a cloud came and overshadowed them; and they were terrified as they entered the cloud. ³⁵ Then from the cloud came a voice that said, 'This is my Son, my Chosen; listen to him!' ³⁶ When the voice had spoken, Jesus was found alone. And they kept silent and in those days told no one any of the things they had seen.