

The background of the cover is a photograph of a Gothic Revival church tower at dusk. The tower is made of dark stone and has two clock faces. A large, bright full moon is visible in the sky to the left of the tower. The sky is a deep blue-purple color. The title 'MORPETH PATHWAYS' is overlaid on the top part of the image. 'MORPETH' is in a white, outlined, sans-serif font, and 'PATHWAYS' is in a larger, blue, stylized script font with a white outline.

MORPETH
PATHWAYS

A FORUM FOR CHURCH & COMMUNITY

FREE ISSUE

Epiphany edition 2026

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Issue No 13

From the editor

A very happy new year to all our readers. This issue is called the Epiphany issue, named after the Feast of the Epiphany. This is when Christians traditionally celebrate the arrival of the three kings to see the baby Jesus. It falls on what is known as Twelfth Night, marking the end of the Christmas season.

As I write this, the snow is falling and spring seems a long way off. However, there are plenty of ideas for you to take up during the rest of winter. Why not try bell-ringing with Christopher Teasdale in time for their milestone celebrations? Or you could join the Morpeth u3a and exercise your mind or body – or if that sounds too exhausting you could become a member of their Foodies Group! The Morpeth Group Chair, Steve Morris, has written about the background to u3a and given plenty of reasons to join. The Bread and Butter Thing run by Stobhill Link at St Aidan's church helps people struggling to feed themselves and their families, while saving food waste at the same time. You could offer your services as a volunteer.

Or you may prefer a more contemplative new year's resolution. The Rev Jeremy Cooper has written the third and final part of his excellent aids to reading the Bible. Janice Parks is looking for readers, singers and musicians to take part in the World Day of Prayer on 6th March which is a truly global event, with St James's Church hosting the Morpeth service this year.

You may be inspired by Ian Shaw's account of his walk along the Camino and take up his challenge to try the pilgrimage.

Readers may remember Beth Rookwood who was a curate in the Parish some years ago. She has now set up her own charity, The Roost, and gives us an update here on what is happening.

Finally, you may be wondering what happens to all the elves after Christmas. Martin Booth takes a wry look at what could be happening at the North Pole.

I hope you enjoy this edition of Pathways and if you would like to contribute or have any suggestions do please let me know. My email

address is sally.borderkeith@gmail.com. I look forward to hearing from you!

Sally Keith

Editor

The stunning cover photo of the wolf moon is by Natalie Wright Photography. Natalie's Facebook page is

www.facebook.com/NatsPhotographyUK

Bsky.app/profile/natsrambles

www.instagram.com/nataliesphotojournal.



WHY NOT LEARN TO PLAY BRIDGE IN 2024/25?

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Morpeth's Bells Prepare for a Milestone Year

This year marks a special moment in Morpeth's history — the 75th anniversary of the recasting of the Clock Tower bells for the Festival of Britain in 1951. To make the celebrations truly memorable, the Morpeth Clock Tower Bellringers are looking for new recruits to join their team. Whether you're an experienced ringer returning to the ropes or a complete beginner, you'll find a warm welcome. Full training is offered for novices — all you need is enthusiasm, patience, and a willingness to learn. Handling a tower bell safely takes time, but it's a wonderfully rewarding skill that can provide friendship, challenge and fun for life.

Bellringing is a uniquely English tradition that combines music, mathematics, teamwork, and a love of history. Once you've learned the basics, you can ring at towers across the country and instantly feel part of a national community.

The history of Morpeth's Clock Tower itself is as fascinating as its bells. Built from medieval stone, probably salvaged from Newminster Abbey after its dissolution in 1537, the tower has stood in the town since at least the mid-17th century. The original six bells were gifted to Morpeth in 1706 by Major General Edmund Main, Governor of Berwick and MP for Morpeth. After a failed attempt to win over the voters of Berwick with the offer of a peal of bells in 1702, Main gained favour with the Morpeth voters, using the same offer, at the next round of voting three years later. Hence the curious local saying, 'Berwick Bells are heard in Morpeth.'

However, there can be no doubt that Morpeth bells belong in Morpeth as the tenor (heaviest) bell's inscription states: "The gift of Major General Edmond Maine to the Corporation of Morpeth 1706." To accommodate the bells, a belfry storey was constructed. If one looks at the tower closely, one can see that the stonework is different above the level of the clock dial. The string course (projecting horizontal band) above the clock dial marks the junction between the medieval tower and the 1706 belfry.

Atop the parapet, the two stone statues of 18th-century pikemen were last renewed in 1951 as part of the wider tower restoration for the Festival of Britain. Known affectionately as Cuddy and Clarence, a local legend has been created that Cuddy jumps down from the

parapet and becomes the Morpeth Gadgy for the annual Morpeth Northumbrian Gathering at Easter.



Over the centuries, the bells have been repaired, and rung for royal jubilees, civic events and local celebrations. Their last major restoration came in 1951, when John Taylor & Co. of Loughborough recast and reinstalled the present ring of eight. Taylor of Loughborough is the last surviving major bell foundry in the United Kingdom. The Morpeth band hopes to centre this year's anniversary celebrations on 17th June 2026 — the date the bells first rang again for the Festival of Britain 75 years ago.

I first took up bellringing 25 years ago as a teenager, thinking it might just be a bit of fun. I had no idea it would become a lifelong passion. It offers something for everyone — music, history, heritage, camaraderie and above all, friendship. Our Morpeth team includes members from diverse backgrounds, occupations and ages, ranging from teenagers to octogenarians. Teenagers can even count ringing towards their Duke of Edinburgh's Award.

If you'd like to be part of this living heritage and help keep Morpeth's bells ringing for generations to come, why not come along and give it a try? We meet on Wednesday evenings at 7:30 pm — anyone interested is welcome to attend. Alternatively, and for more information, we may be contacted through our Facebook page www.facebook.com/morpethclocktowerbellringers or via our secretary, Val Cowan, valcowan@mac.com.
— Christopher Teasdale

The Bread and Butter Thing, Affordable Food, Stronger Communities

The Stobhill Link at St Aidan's Church proudly manages The Bread and Butter Thing (TBTT) for the Morpeth area, helping local families and individuals stretch their budgets and prevent food waste. The project makes good use of high-quality surplus food that would otherwise go to waste, turning it into affordable weekly food bags for local people.

This is not just a project for those on low incomes; it also plays an important role in reducing food waste across the community, and we actively encourage everyone to consider subscribing. The more people who take part, the stronger and more sustainable the project becomes, helping to preserve it for the long term.

For £8.50 per week, members receive three bags of shopping worth many times more. Each weekly bundle includes a balanced mix of fresh fruit and vegetables, chilled items, and cupboard staples. It is a simple, practical way to save money, reduce waste, and support a fairer local food system. Payment can be made by cash or card when collecting.

The Bread and Butter Thing at Stobhill is supported and funded by Karbon Homes Housing Association, whose backing helps keep this valuable service running for the benefit of the whole community.

Joining is quick and easy, with no forms or assessments. To subscribe, simply text 07507 237311 with your name, postcode, and the word 'Stobhill'. You will receive a confirmation and details on how to collect your bags. Alternatively, ask the team at The Stobhill Link for more information by popping in or calling 01670 519575.

The Stobhill Link is also looking for volunteers to help sort and distribute food each week. If you can spare a little time to support this important local project, please call 01670 519575.



WORLD DAY OF PRAYER

(A women led global ecumenical movement)

The origins of World Day of Prayer date back to the 19th century, when Christian women of the United States and Canada initiated a variety of activities in support of women's involvement in mission at home and in other parts of the world. These activities remain related to:

Concern for women and children

The role of prayer in mission work

A vision of Christian unity

Biblical study as everyone's responsibility

Social issues and working with immigrants

Linking world peace with world mission

In 1926, the women of North America distributed the worship service to many countries and partners in mission. The response worldwide was enthusiastic, thus the call was issued for a World Day of Prayer.

The World Day of Prayer is an international, women-led, ecumenical movement that shares the hopes, concerns and prayers of women from around the globe. Each year, women from a different country craft a service, sharing their unique spiritual journey and culture. For 2026, the women of Nigeria have created a service that speaks to our need for peace and solace, drawing on their faith and experiences in a world filled with struggles and anxieties. The service reflects on the theme "I will give you rest, come" (Matthew 11:28-30).

The preparation for this day is extensive. The writing country and theme are chosen years in advance, and the service then travels to the international committee in New York for translation and dissemination to national committees in over 120 participating countries. From there, it is adapted and shared locally, culminating in gatherings at hundreds of churches every March.


This day is a powerful demonstration of global solidarity. It begins in Samoa and moves across the world in a continuous wave of prayer, finishing 38 hours later in American Samoa. It truly is a worldwide day of prayer!

Our service this year in Morpeth is being hosted by St James Church and takes place on Friday, 6th March, beginning at 1.30pm. All are welcome to attend.

Prior to the service, we hold three rehearsal mornings on Fridays, 20th and 27th February and 6th March, from 10am to 12noon for readers and 11am to 12noon for singers and musicians. We would welcome anyone to come along and help with the singing and playing in the band. You don't have to be a choir member or professional musician, just come along to the rehearsals and produce a joyful noise. We need you.


If you would like to be a reader, singer or musician, please contact Janice Parks on 01670 512347 or Vivienne Sommerville on 01670 513181, who are our Churches' representatives on the World Day of Prayer committee.

For more information about World Day of Prayer in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, visit: wwdp.org.uk




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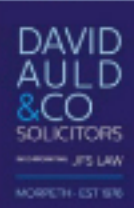
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MORPETH AND DISTRICT u3a

Back in the early 1980s three leading educationalists - Eric Midwinter, Michael Young and Peter Laslett were working together on a number of projects. Out of their work we now have The Open University, The Consumers Association, Which magazine and The Young Foundation. In 1982, they started a new project – The University of the Third Age. Using the strapline 'Learners Teach / Teachers Learn', this was to be a self-help and self-organised structure for groups of older learners to come together around mutual interests and activities. There would be a national organisation and regional groups but the key groups were local – locally based and locally organised.

Steve Morris explains the background to u3a and gives a tantalising list of groups to join



Today there are 100 plus u3as in the UK with over 400,000 members. Each local u3a group is a Registered Charity and takes responsibility for all its activities, management, publicity and funding. All local and regional activity is voluntary, with a small paid national team. This means running costs are low. In Morpeth and District u3a the annual

subscription is £15 – this covers nine editions of the national magazine 'u3a matters', a monthly Morpeth u3a newsletter, free access to all groups, activities and meetings in our area, a Morpeth u3a website, a monthly meeting with a guest speaker or presentation, along with the inevitable public limited liability insurance.

There is a significant number of u3as in Northumberland – here in Morpeth and District we have members in Morpeth itself, but also in Bedlington, Ashington and other locations. A neighbouring u3a is Mid Northumberland u3a mainly based at Longhirst. Members can join more than one u3a – usually for a reduced membership fee. The only condition for membership of any u3a is that the member is no longer in full-time work, although it is a condition that is never applied or checked. The principal reason for this being that many u3a activities take place during the day.

There has been a move in recent years to rebrand ourselves as 'The u3a' rather than 'University of The Third Age' The term 'University' does deter some potential members if the association is with tests and exams. We are much more inclusive than that. Here in Morpeth and District, we have around 250 members who have come from all walks of life. About two thirds of our Membership are women – for many members, it is the companionship that is the most important feature of being in a u3a.



At the core of u3a activity are our groups. We have 25 special interest/ activity groups run by members for members. We have Art and Art Appreciation, Craft and a Foodies Lunch Club that lunches each month in and around Morpeth. There is French and German Conversation, Gardening, History, Music for Pleasure, Play Reading and Poetry and Prose. There is a very popular Quiz Group and an equally popular Tai Chi Group – both of these meet at St Christopher’s at Kirkhill. There are five Reading Groups – most of these meet in members’ homes. We have two Scrabble Groups and a newly established Games Group. There is a Theatre Group which organises theatre visits to Newcastle and beyond. We have two Walking Groups – an Amblers 3-mile group as well as a 5-mile group.

Any member can propose and start a new group if there is an interest that is not being met and may attract others. Group size varies – some Reading Groups are small and meet in members’ homes. Others, such as Quiz and Tai Chi, have 20 plus members and meet at St Christopher’s where we pay a small fee for room hire.

Every month we have a General Meeting which is free and open to all members. Meetings are at St James’s Community Hall at Wellway. There is always a speaker or presentation- recently we have had talks on George Stephenson, Dolphin Watch, the Cramlington Train Wreckers, Awesome New Zealand and Beekeeping.

We have a wide and varied programme, but the key u3a principle is that it is all developed and run by members for members. There is a tremendous amount of goodwill involved but there is also a huge benefit in combating loneliness and promoting companionship and friendship. This is the key u3a message.

For more information about Morpeth and District u3a visit our website at

morpethanddistrict.u3asite.uk

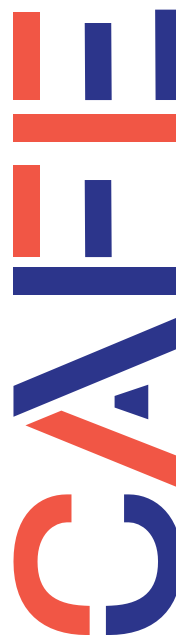
Steve Morris

Chair 2021 - 2025

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Place: Morpeth NE61 1SU



WHEN?

Date: 1st Saturday of Month (*2nd Sat in Jan & not Aug)
From: 10am to 1pm

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A Change in Direction

By Martin Booth

The hall fell silent as Santa entered the room and strode to the small stage in front of the assembled elves. "I have asked you all here today so that I can tell you all about the future of the North Pole and Christmas itself," he began, looking at the sea of elven faces all adorned with their red and green pointy hats. "For some time now," said Santa, "it has been clear that we need to make, er, improvements to what we do... increase productivity, if you like. To this end, I have recently been using AI to analyse our procedures and methods."

Ever wondered what happens to Santa's elves after Christmas? Martin Booth takes a wry look at what could happen this year.

In the third row, Elf Barry leaned to Elf Brian next to him. "I don't like the sound of this," he whispered. On the stage, Santa continued. "The AI suggests that, as the choice of Christmas presents is now changing amongst the youngsters, we, too, must change. I'm sorry, but nicely painted wooden train sets and blinking eye dolls now have a very limited sales market. The children of today want electronic gadgets, phones and so on which we cannot make here."

"But we've always outsourced things like that," called out an elf from the back of the hall.

"I know," said Santa, beginning to stride about the stage. "But it now accounts for almost 71.45% of our gifts... and it all has to be paid for." He looked around. "I'm sorry to have to be the bearer of bad tidings, especially in the run-up to Christmas, but a lot of you will have to retrain into IT, sales and marketing, and customer services. The rest, I'm afraid, will be made... redundant!"

There was pandemonium in the hall for several minutes while Santa stood watching. Finally, he drew a deep breath and roared, "SILENCE!"

"How will we know who's doing what?" called an elf.

“The AI is sorting through your files at the moment. Anyone with an aptitude for the above-mentioned jobs will be retrained. The rest, well, I’m sorry, but you’ll have to go. Redundancy packages will be worked out later. Now then, that’s all for now, back to your benches. Thank you.” At this point, in the shocked and stunned silence, Santa left the building.

It has to be said that very little work was done that afternoon. A delegation of senior toymakers went to see Santa but got nowhere. “He just relies on that AI thingie on his phone,” said one.

“I know what he said was, er, unpalatable,” said another, “but I suppose he is right. Children today don’t want nicely made toys. They want games consoles, phones, designer clothes and trainers... even money!”

“So is this inevitable?” asked Elf Brian.

The senior elf sighed and sat back in his chair. “I’m afraid it is,” he said.



In the following two weeks, the elves tried everything they could to avert the approaching redundancies. They tried working to rule, striking and even picketing the North Pole complex, but nothing had any effect. Santa was determined to push through the changes as recommended by the AI. It had designed training programs for some elves to become computer literate, some elves to move into customer services and some to remain as cleaners. Sadly, for three hundred and ninety-one elves, though, it was the end of the road.

In the second week of January, there was an almighty party for the elves who were leaving, followed by several days to get over the hangovers. Each elf was allowed to choose whereabouts in the world they wanted to go and given a small pension (for up to and no longer than two years, as recommended by the AI). Elf Brian sat in the Job

Centre, feeling slightly out of place in his bright green and red outfit. The young woman opposite him looked at her nails. “Well, have you been looking for employment?” she asked. Brian nodded.

“Well, what skills do you have?”

“I can make highly decorated toy trains,” he said, “and I can paint dolls’ eyes.”

“Computer skills?”

“Er, not really.”

The woman sighed. “It’s those skills we need,” she said. “We’ve got some temporary jobs, but elves... before Christmas, yes, but it’s January. How about football team mascot? The local club needs someone to dress up as a lobster.”

“What’s football?” asked Brian.

The woman looked again at her computer. “The local supermarket wants someone to dress up as a sandwich to sell mayonnaise.”

“Can I eat the sandwich?” asked Brian, who was getting hungry.

“No. Have you thought about retraining?”

Brian frowned. “As what?”

“Can you act?” asked the woman.

“I don’t know, why?”

“A local production company is making a film this year and they need someone, er, small-ish.”

“I’m almost four feet tall,” said Brian. “What will I be?”

She read down the screen. “Should suit you,” she said finally. “It’s a film called Santa’s Sleigh. Interested?”

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

January 18th to 25th 2026

Join us for a short service of evening prayer @

Monday 19 th	6.00 pm Morpeth Methodist Church
Tuesday 20 th	6.00 pm NewLife Church
Wednesday 21 st	6.00 pm St Georges URC Church
Thursday 22 nd	6.00 pm St James Anglican Church
Friday 23 rd	6.00 pm St Roberts RC Church
Sunday 25 th	6.30 pm St Georges URC Church

*“One Body
One Spirit”*

Holding the jigsaw

I hadn't expected to go back to school this year! I started the sixth form chaplaincy role in KEVI as part of my curacy in Morpeth, back in 2016. Over these past eight years, the role has developed, and become a key strand of the work of The Roost - the charity I founded to nurture spirituality and wellbeing with young adults in Northumberland.

Former Morpeth curate Beth Rookwood gives an update on the work of her charity, The Roost

One of our dreams was that we'd be able to develop this work in other sixth forms and colleges across the county, and, having received some funding, I started working on this after my return from maternity leave in 2024. It's a bit like holding a jigsaw puzzle, trying to get the pieces of 'school', 'person', 'funding' and 'local church' to fit together, and sometimes they feel far apart! However, hope has always been my orientation, and incredibly, from January this year, we will have four chaplains trained up and serving in four school communities! After some unplanned personnel changes, I am very glad to be one of them!



There are lots of ways to describe chaplaincy, but the one that currently resonates most with me is that it is a 'giving away'; a sharing of the love, care and presence that we experience as we walk with God, and it overflows out of us. It's also about staying open - listening to God and

others and seeing how we may nurture the love, wellbeing and spirituality that is already there.

At the beginning of a new chaplaincy role, just as when I started in KEVI, there is a lot of listening, learning, gently building relationships, and getting a sense of the place. Over time, the role starts to take shape as we respond.

In KEVI, what emerged was a lot of one-to-one support for students and staff, as well as creating a suite of lessons around personal development. There are students whose stories I have been privileged to hold over their two years of sixth form, witnessing their struggle, their courage, and celebrating their journey and achievements. There are others I have met with once, and still others whom I have only glimpsed in a lesson, or going past on the stairs. Whatever the encounter, my prayer is that people may go away feeling more loved, cared for, and significant as they are smiled at, listened to and encouraged.

The other chaplaincies are in the early days, but the staff are fantastic at signposting the most vulnerable students our way and letting us know the needs of the community. It is a journey - and as we walk with God in these places, we hope and trust that something meaningful will emerge.

I count it such an honour to do this work, and there is so much need for caring roles like this. The academic and social pressures experienced by those there can be immense. If you add to that other things many have to contend with such as bereavement, trauma, poverty, future planning, physical illness, mental health diagnoses - it's a lot.

When I first worked in a chaplaincy role in the nightlife of Leeds, it struck me that the long-term love and care that is at the heart of most churches is exactly



what is needed by so many. Our hope is that where there is a church that has a sixth form in their area, we might be able to partner with them in chaplaincy, sharing this love and care with these 16 - 18-year-olds who need it so much.

Other areas across The Roost are also developing, and it's lovely to be able to invite students we meet through chaplaincy to our outdoor space and into our community which explores Christian faith in a contemplative way. We've had some great days hosting groups in the meadow - making space for reflection and learning, often with muddy hands and food cooked over the fire. And we also continue to build relationships with young adults whom we've met in school, meeting one-to-one, at community gatherings, and recently sending Advent packs to those who have gone to university - supporting them in their life with God, and letting them know they are remembered and cared for.

There is much need, and there are many young adults and sixth forms that are still on our hearts to support and serve. We can only do what we do with the support and resources we have, and we live and work, trusting that the jigsaw pieces will come together as we share about our work and invite others to participate in it.

If what I'm writing here stirs something in your soul, then please get in touch. You may wish to explore training with us as a chaplain or supporting us financially and in prayer. You are also very welcome to visit The Roost's meadow, especially if you fancy getting a bit muddy with a spot of gardening, or a bit of maintenance on the cabin! We would love to see you, and the kettle is always on!

With our love, Beth, Barney & The Team at The Roost

beth@roostcommunity.org
www.roostcommunity.org

👣 Boots, Stamps, and Solace: Finding the Camino Way.

Is it a walk? Is it a holiday? Is it a job?

It is more than all three: it is a pilgrimage.

Take one month, broken-in shoes, and a small amount of packing, and you are ready to go. With less time shorter routes are available. The allure of the journey, stretching from the Pyrenees to Santiago de Compostela, calls to the spirit.

Ian Shaw
looks back on
walking the
Camino Way

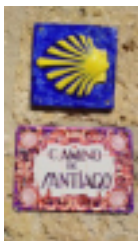
A Walk: The Rhythm of the Footpath

Start off slow. The whole route has been kindly divided into manageable sections—some days a bit longer than others—all with interesting places to see on the way. They have been testing the route since about 824AD and have perfected it.

Most of the 770km has excellent paths: some flat, long views across the meseta; some winding paths up the Pyrenees; some dark routes overhung with dense tree cover. All the sections of path have their own unique charm.



Wander along the well signposted wide paths until you feel like stopping, or reach the end of your chosen section. The path itself is clearly marked by the yellow shell arrows painted often on walls, stones, and posts.



What could I see: apart from the phenomenal architecture, sunrises and the almost never-ending path the wildlife comes to greet you. Some of the highlights we saw were the daily flock of Golden Eagles in the Pyrenees, swallowtail butterflies, dragonflies, Fire salamander, plenty of birds, and geckoes. The best times were earlier mornings, before

sunrise, when the moon and stars were fading, the creatures ventured out.

A Holiday: The Joy of Discovery

Take time. Stop to smell the roses, visit the chapels, look inside the churches, receive a blessing from a hermitage!



Eat, drink and be merry: we arrived in Leon on the Spanish national day, the streets were packed with people. This was a sight and sound to behold. Amazing architecture, narrow stone streets and raucous bands everywhere.

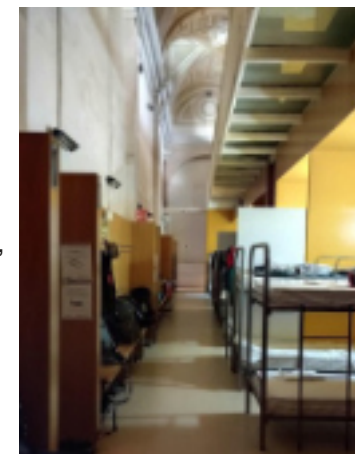
The Confraternity of Saint James offers Camino Passports (or *credenciales*). Collect stamps to mark progress on your pilgrimage. The stampers (black, blue or red ink) seem to be available at most points of interest. This makes a fabulous souvenir of your trip, linking the locations strongly with memories of the people met, the conversations, and the shared meals.

Most accommodation is bookable, though perhaps the best ones aren't. But if they are full, it is only another few km to the next one. For those who prefer a lighter load, there are companies that will transport your bags for you, costing approximately €6 this autumn.

A Job: The Daily Grind

With the Albergues (hostels with dormitories) often closing their doors at 08:00, everyone leaves to walk. After a week or so, the pattern of Camino life emerges.

Up early, ablutions, dress, dress foot sores, pack and leave. (Foot sores not mandatory!). Walk to the next breakfast point, chat with friends you hadn't met before, walk again. Amazingly the language of the Camino is English, as the



pilgrims are from across the globe. See things, experience the history, wildlife, architecture and food of Spain.

Check in, shower, relax with more new friends. Some Albergues offer communal pilgrims' meals—accept the offer, pay the euros. A simple, filling meal with wine or water: exchange stories of the day and hopes for tomorrow. Even the best-laid plans often dissolve into an easy, flexible schedule guided by the sun and local hours. This routine, this *job* of walking, forms the backbone of the entire experience.

More than All Three: The Inner Journey

In talking to other pilgrims, we found some with a deep need for solace—those who had lost loved ones weeks before, those wanting or needing space in life. Most pilgrims were there for the sport of it or the companionship of their group. Walking is cathartic, a way of laying memories to rest.



Each stone a burden left.

We walk lighter.

All with reasons, all on the same path through life, just at a different point on the journey. Go, you will return a different person - and maybe a few kg lighter!

Aids to Reading your Bible: Part 3

Tools and Resources for Deepening Your Spiritual Journey

Introduction

In the first two parts of this series of articles we looked at using modern technology, which is available on your phones and computers to help us engage more with our Bibles and deepen our understanding of scripture. We are aware that some people prefer to use printed resources like books and leaflets. So, I asked members of the Ministry Team and one or two others for recommendations.

Rev Jeremy Cooper continues his look at the tools and resources to help us to read and understand the Bible.

Bible Resources by Phone

For those for whom the idea of listening to someone on the telephone appeals, we came across this.

1. DailyHOPE

I called the dedicated phone line (03456462206). It costs a standard phone call, which might be included in your phone supplier's package.

There is a different reflection on a well-known hymn each day. You can listen, anytime, day or night. I listened to a 20 min reflection.



Bible Reading Books

While digital tools offer convenience and versatility, many readers still cherish the experience of reading physical books. The following titles are selected for their reputation, accessibility, and helpfulness in guiding readers through the Bible, whether for the first time or as seasoned students. A Google search of each heading will take you straight to the appropriate website, where you can order the resources to be delivered by post.

1. BRF Notes (Bible Reading Fellowship notes)

I receive the booklet through the post. There are a variety of options, each with a distinctive approach to suit different needs and preferences, offering a variety of ways to resource your spiritual journey and help you understand and apply scripture to your daily life. The basic daily reading notes cost about £5 for four months. I found these daily materials stimulating and able to deepen my faith and knowledge. They cover a varied selection of Old and New Testament, biblical themes, characters and seasonal readings. Each daily section includes a short Bible passage (text included), a thought-provoking comment and a prayer or point for reflection.



2. Our Daily Bread.

I receive the free booklet through the post. But you can also read it on the computer or mobile phone. It's free and comes out quarterly. The format fits on one page and includes a short Bible reference, a verse to focus on, a little anecdote- usually from present day or recent history- showing how the Bible truth relates to us right now,- a short reflection, followed by a question to get you thinking what the passage means for you and finishing with a short prayer in everyday language. I have found this thought-provoking and very relevant to my everyday life. It helps me start the day by coming closer to the Lord. There is also at the bottom of each page a guide to reading the 'Bible in a year'.



3. Bible Society.

The Bible Society has a wealth of resources that could prove useful. Listing just a few:

- **The Bible Course** is a free resource, but you can buy the Guide Book for £9.99 to accompany the course, which has space for your reflections and notes.
- **Dyslexia Friendly Bible** - complete Bible in 26 parts (looks very good for non-dyslexics too!). You could buy a book at a time to spread the cost.
- **NIV Jounalling Bible in One year** (£21.99) The pattern of readings follows that in *The Bible in One Year* app from Nicky Gumbel (already mentioned in part two) and features an easy-to-read layout with extra-wide, lined margins, and thicker Bible paper for notes and jounalling.



- **Numerous Children's reading aids.**
- **Daily Reflections**, free daily bible readings with reflections and prayers.
- **GNB Family edition** - helping families engage with the Bible together (£34.99).

Conclusion

Whether you are new to the Bible or a lifelong reader, the combination of modern technology and thoughtfully designed print resources offers a wealth of opportunities to engage with scripture. From interactive apps with community features and original language tools, to classic books with daily plans and meditative reflections, there is a resource suited to every preference. With these tools in hand, every reader can embark on a rewarding and transformative journey through the pages of the Bible. Enjoy exploring!

Jeremy Cooper, the Parish Ministry Team and others

Interested in finding our more?

explore
life
faith
meaning

Alpha

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Jesus loves me.

A new version of the hymn for those of us with white hair or no hair at all! (submitted by John Harper of Silvas Court.)

Jesus loves me, this I know,
Though my hair is white as snow,
Though my sight is growing dim,
Still He bids me trust in Him.

Yes, Jesus loves me,
Yes, Jesus loves me,
Yes, Jesus loves me,
The Bible tells me so.

Though my steps are oh so slow,
With my hand in His I'll go
On through life let come what may,
He'll be there to lead the way.

Chorus.

Though I am no longer young,
I have much which He's begun.
Let me serve Christ with a smile,
Go with others the extra mile.

Chorus.

When the nights are dark and long,
In my heart He puts a song.
Telling me in words so clear,
"Have no fear for I am near."

Chorus.

When my work on earth is done,
And life's vict'ries have been won,
He will take me home above,
Then I'll understand His love.

Chorus.

I love Jesus, does He know?
Have I ever told Him so?
Jesus loves to hear me say
That I love Him, every day.

Chorus.

The Rector's Ramblings A New Year & the Kings Speech.

As we navigate the opening days of 2026, I find my heart returning to King Charles III's recent 2025 Christmas Broadcast, delivered from the historic Lady Chapel at Westminster Abbey. Standing at the "still point of the turning world," the King spoke of life not as a series of chaotic events, but as a pilgrimage, a journey with a divine purpose. This perspective I found so resonated with me as I listened and still sits with me as I look to this coming year.



I'm reminded that our journeys of life and faith in 2026 aren't just about reaching a destination; they are about the transformation that happens while we are on the way. The King reminded us that the Christmas story itself is a collection of pilgrimages: the Holy Family seeking shelter, the shepherds searching for a Saviour, and the Wise Men following a star. Like them, we often

travel through "physical and mental challenges," yet it is in those very moments that we find an inner strength we didn't know we possessed.

Reflecting on the year past, including the 80th anniversaries of VE and VJ Day, we are urged to "journey back" to learn from the courage of those who came before us. God uses our history to anchor our future. In a world that "spins ever faster," perhaps God has a plan for you this year to find the "still point" to intentionally quiet your mind, perhaps through a digital detox, to hear His whisper above the technological noise.

In 2026, let us embrace the King's call for "compassion and reconciliation." Whether you are healing a personal rift or seeking to "get to know your neighbour," you are walking the path "our Lord lived and died". Trust that your journey is held by a God who is already in every tomorrow. As you step forward, let your prayer be one of spiritual unity and hope, knowing that the greatest pilgrimage of all is the one that leads us closer to His heart.

G Bless Simon.

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