



Parish of Newton Abbot and Ogwell

WEEKLY NEWS

1st February 2026. Fourth Sunday of Epiphany

In this edition:

- Notes from the Rector on the life of St Paul- and Jesus-inspired fresh starts!
- Times of prayer gatherings for the next few weeks
- Resource of the week: two fantastic conferences on our doorstep (or almost!)
- Youth Group Meetings.
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- Prayer list.
- Notes from our recent PCC Meeting.
- Prayer letter from our mission partners Rachael and Bernie Muluuta (in case you missed it last week!)

FROM OUR RECTOR

Dear Friends

Over the next few weeks, we are going to look at the life of St Paul, focussing on his conversion, his mission and his perseverance.

Of course, at the beginning there was no one called Paul! He was Saul of Tarsus, and he was an enemy of Jesus and his church. Having been a bystander at the martyrdom of Stephen, Saul had approached the Jewish leaders for permission to head to Damascus to arrest any Christians he could find. (*You can read Saul's story in Acts chapter 9*)

But God had other ideas! In the original Damascus Road experience, Saul met the risen Christ in all his glory. Having been brought to his knees, and temporarily blinded, Saul was confronted with his error, humbled by the voice of Jesus and led into the city like a little child. For three days he prayed, eating and drinking nothing, until a disciple named Ananias was commissioned in a vision to visit Saul. Ananias greeted Saul as a brother, prayed for him so that he regained his sight, and baptised Saul as a Christian.

Some people have political conversions, moving from left to right or vice versa. Some people ditch the football team of their youth and start supporting their bitter rivals. Coffee drinkers swap the bean for the tea leaf. Sugar monsters go lean and change their diet. Many of us have moments where our minds and lives are changed, but I doubt that we can find many conversions as dramatic as Saul's. He went from hating Christ to loving him.

From shutting down gospel witness to preaching in the city centre. From persecuting the church to being persecuted. From being an enemy of every Christian to being a beloved brother in Christ. And God was only just getting started!!!

What brought about this dramatic change? It was nothing less than an encounter with Jesus. On the Damascus Road, Saul met the One he had been persecuting and came away transformed. His life was turned around and sent off in the opposite direction. And as Saul/Paul walked the way of Christ and proclaimed the message God gave him, so his character increasingly grew more like the LORD he now served.

Encounters with God will do that to us as well. They may not be as dramatic as the one Saul had, but as we encounter God through his Word the Bible, in prayer and through the sacraments, so our lives will also be turned around. Our ambitions are altered. Our habits are reformed. Our characters are remade. And like Saul, the more time we spend with Christ, the longer we walk the way of Christ, the greater our desire to grow closer to Him, the more we are changed into the people God made us to be.

Sadly, like children being satisfied with mud pies in the garden rather than the sumptuous feast inside, we can often be fearful of what we do not know. We content ourselves with spiritual scraps rather than feeding on the True Bread of Life, but we need not live our Christian lives on such a starvation diet! If we draw near to God, He WILL draw near to us! (James 4:8) But as the verse goes on, we must not be double-minded. Only a steadfast pursuit of Christ will reap results. Only a willingness to let God be God will allow the Holy Spirit to do His work in us.

So, are you up for a life-changing encounter with Jesus? You may not need to change your name, but if you are ready and willing, you need only open up the scriptures, pray that God will speak to you, and follow where He leads.

Is it time to seek God yourself? Saul became Paul and God used him in remarkable ways. What might He have in store for us, I wonder?

Grace and peace,

Dave

Please pray for:

Our Church, our parish, benefice and diocese, our Rector Dave Brown, Team Vicars Gareth Regan and Fr. Matthew Cashmore, Curate Jon Bealey, and all others who carry out their own form of ministry.

Our King, His Majesty King Charles III, members of the Royal Family and our government.

The Church of England

Residents in the following streets: Webster Close, West Golds Way, West Mount, Western Drive, Western Road, West Ogwell, Westward View and West View Close.

The sick and suffering including: Sheila Fletcher, Joyce Sutherland, Sally Fulcher, Marie Graham, Martyn, Eve Taylor, David Littlewood, Ruth and Ted Parkhouse, Sandy Vaughan Edwards, Paul Hewson and any others who are unwell.

Ben, Sarah and family as they care for Noah.

The families and friends of the recently deceased.

Please email prayer@newtonabbotparishes.co.uk to let us know about anyone needing our prayers.

Readings for 1st February.

Abbotsbury and St Paul's Churches: Ruth, chapter 2, verses 14 to 23 and Mark, chapter 12, verses 35 to 37

St Bartholomew's and St Mary's Churches: 1 Kings, Chapter 17, verses 8 to 16
John, Chapter 2, verses 1 to 11

NEWS AND NOTICES

Parish Prayer Gatherings: Our next **evening** Parish Prayer Gathering will be on Monday 2nd February at St Paul's Church starting at the NEW TIME OF 7PM!!! Do come and join us.

Our next **morning** Parish Prayer Gathering will be on Monday 9th February at St Paul's Church starting at 9:15am.

Resource of the Week. This spring there are **TWO** Conferences (almost) on our doorstep that would be well worth investing time and money to attend.

KESWICK in DEVON is based at All Saint's Church Sidmouth (where I did my curacy) and is a 5-day gathering for ***Bible teaching, fellowship and worship in one of Devon's premier seaside resorts.*** ***This year the conference runs from 2-6 March 2026 and is entitled: CONFIDENT - '...continue in him, so that when he appears we may be confident and unashamed before him.'*** (1 John 2.28)

The two main speakers this year are **Dr Andrew Ollerton & Dr Helen Miller**

Dr Andrew Ollerton is a theologian, pastor and popular communicator. He works with Bible Society and developed The Bible Course, an eight-session guide to the big story of the Bible for small groups.

Dr Helen Miller lectures at Moorlands College in Dorset. She initially taught life skills to young people before lecturing in sports science at an FE College. She has also taught English as a foreign language in Thailand and the UK.

The conference is FREE but offerings are taken up to cover the costs. You can find out more details here: www.keswickindevon.org.uk

Nearer to Newton Abbot, but more expensive is the **RISING LIGHTS CONFERENCE** which runs from 6th to 10th April at the Riviera Centre in Torquay. This is a much bigger conference, with people coming from all over the UK to attend. Rising Lights offers '...five days by the coast to hear God's word, to praise our risen Saviour, and to rest. With plenty for adults, teens, and kids, alongside space to enjoy Torquay with friends and family.'

The programme this year includes:

Paul Mallard, former pastor, author, and FIEC Director for the West Midlands, who will be opening up God's word each morning from the book of Philippians.

Tim Chester, who will help us explore how we can cultivate intimacy with Jesus by looking at the portrait of Christ's relationship with his people that we find in the Song of Songs.

Glen Scrivener, who will run a seminar track called *Evangelism for normal people*. Glen will help us think about what we communicate, how we do it, and - perhaps most importantly - how to make a start.

Rachel Jones will help us get better at praying.

Sharon James will lead seminars focussing on the lives of 4 people whose encounter with God renewed their zeal and changed the world. And

James Mildred from CARE will help us consider what Christians should believe about complex issues around the beginning and end of life and help us to act on them in our daily lives.

Weekly tickets are £160 for adults, with big reductions for children and students. You can book and find out more here: www.fiec.org.uk/events/rising-lights

Lunch with God. This week, and for the following 5 weeks, LUNCH WITH GOD at St Paul's Church will be one of the venues for our lunchtime 3-2-1 course. Accompanied by hot homemade soup, we'll watch one of the videos and have chance to discuss the questions it raises. Alternatively, you can take the course yourself by registering at www.321.speaklife.org.uk.course/321

Youth Group Meetings for 2026.

From 7.30 p.m. to 9 p.m. for ages 11 to 17.

30th January – Abbotsbury Church

27th February – Avenue Church

27th March – Abbotsbury Church

24th April – Avenue Church

26th June – Avenue Church

31st July – Abbotsbury Church

25th September – Avenue Church

24th October – Abbotsbury Church

27th November – Avenue Church

18th December – Abbotsbury Church

Contact Robert Palmer, email Robert.Palmer@stantec.com

Prayer List: If you'd like your name or the name of a loved one added to the new list, please let us know. Please email prayer@newtonabbotparishes.co.uk or contact the Parish Office.

News from the PCC: Some Highlights from our Recent Meeting

Join us in giving thanks that our Christmas services were well attended and well received. Although promoting the 321 course during services was unusual, it has led to some people from outside the church showing an interest and coming along. By now you will have been asked to complete a feedback form about these services, and we will consider everything carefully as we plan next Christmas's events.

Work continues on our buildings. The full faculty request for the proposed changes at St Paul's are now with the Chancellor. We hope to go out to tender on the work soon, and God-willing, start the work in early summer. The PCC also agreed to seek permission for the full internal redecoration at All Saints Highweek, a new handrail for the slope at St Mary's Wolborough and for swift boxes to be fitted to the tower at St Bart's Ogwell. Plans are being drawn up for new toilets and a vastly improved entrance space at Abbotsbury.

With all the ongoing building projects to take our worship spaces forward into the late 21st century, will you join us in praying for wise decision-making, for the right contractors to be found, for safety on site? We are blessed to have Julie Boulby as our architect, advising, preparing drawings and generally smoothing the way with the diocese and other partners.

Please also pray for Clare Lillington, our treasurer and self-confessed lover of numbers. She works tirelessly for our parish (and many others!) ensuring that legacy money is used appropriately, claiming back VAT (whilst we still can!) and other entitlements and generally keeping things in good order. This year she will need to prepare a more complex set of accounts as our income has increased, so please prayerfully support her in this.

We value our clergy, and the PCC Standing Committee will look at how the Clergy Wellbeing Covenant can be practically expressed in our parish. They will report first to the PCC, and then to the congregations.

It was encouraging to hear from Fr Matthew Cashmore about his ministry at St Luke's and St John's. Let's pray for strong links and good relations with all churches in the parish.

As a PCC we want to keep ourselves informed about parish life and will be inviting speakers into our meetings to tell us what they are doing (e.g. children's workers, Anna Chaplains)

Looking ahead to Lent, the clergy will be preaching on the subject of prayer, and midweek there will be sessions enabling us to put the teaching into practice. More details to follow.

Rachael & Bernie Muluuta

January 2026



'Zion shall be redeemed by justice, and those in her who repent, by righteousness.' Isaiah 1:27

Enjoying an autumnal walk

Happy New Year! We are delighted to share with you that we are expecting a baby girl in mid-May. So far, the pregnancy has been going well and despite the tiredness, Rachael managed to attend all the lectures and complete all the assignments for the first semester of her part-time master's. Bernie has been a wonderful help all round, especially making sure that Rachael is eating plenty of broccoli!

We have both greatly enjoyed our studies this semester. Together, we attended classes on the book of Isaiah, which has previously seemed like a daunting book to tackle. We've really appreciated getting a handle on how the whole book fits together and have been particularly struck by God's concern for righteousness and justice along with his great compassion for those living on the fringes of society. It's led to many fruitful discussions thinking through what this might look like in practice in a Ugandan setting.

Bernie has also studied the doctrine of God this semester and continued with third year Greek and second year Hebrew. He has improved in his knowledge to be able to translate more of 1 Peter and Hebrews from Greek into English and Rachael has benefitted from his learning during our morning devotions.

Rachael has completed a module on research methods ahead of getting going with her dissertation where she hopes to think through the understanding of the theology of the child in three Anglican churches in Kampala and how that might inform the training and equipping of Sunday school leaders. She hopes to do her field research in Uganda when they visit in August (with baby in tow!).

There are various admin tasks on the horizon which we would appreciate your prayers for. We need to apply for Bernie's UK visa extension (by the end of January) which is a time-consuming job but should be straightforward. Pray that process runs smoothly. Bernie would also like to apply to do a master's in theology next year and so will begin the application process for that in the coming months along with applying to various grants and trusts to cover the cost of fees and living expenses. He hopes to focus on the minor prophets (who are so rarely read and taught in Uganda) and think through how those books in particular might serve the church in Uganda. Before we came back to the UK, we were both advised by Ugandan colleagues to try to get our master's while we were in the UK as that will open up more teaching opportunities for us upon our return. Lastly, on the admin front, we have some AMIE (Anglican Mission in England) papers to read through before formally starting the discernment process which could lead to ordination.

For various reasons we were unable to visit Bernie's family in the States over Christmas, but we very much hope to visit next year, especially so that Bernie's mum can meet her newest granddaughter. Also, on a global front, please pray for Uganda. As I type, the internet has been turned off across the country. It is expected to stay that way for the next 5-7 days as elections take place on Thursday 15 January. There have been videos making the rounds on social media of hundreds of military personnel making their presence known across the country so as to intimidate voters. Pray for a peaceful election and for there to be no loss of life.

Please also pray for The Good Shepherd Primary School situated in a Kampala slum where Rachael used to teach. Just before Christmas, Gloria (one of Rachael's previous students who was full of life and character) passed away due to lack of funds for medical care. She had just sat the equivalent of her GCSEs. We wish we could have known about her situation before it was too late. Currently, the headmaster's wife, Razia, is unwell. Pray that she would get all the medical help she needs and would make a quick and full recovery.



Hosting friends from Uganda at Oak Hill

Amidst our studies, we have been overjoyed to host many people over the last semester: family, supporters, friends and even some people who used to be in the youth group Rachael led many years ago. Most recently, we hosted a group of nine (mostly) Ugandans whom we know from our time in Uganda but who are currently residing in the UK. It was such a joy to be together over four days of fun, laughter, fellowship and mutual encouragement. We treasure all these times together and look forward to more in the months to come.

We sometimes find it hard to take time off and to rest well (Rachael in particular). We were blessed by friends who loaned us their home for a week back in September which enabled us to enjoy a change of scenery, some coastal walks and sea swimming. Other friends are loaning us their home in the south of England for the last week of January before the second semester begins. Do pray for deep physical, mental and spiritual rest for us as we decompress from a busy but wonderful semester.

Finally, do continue to pray for our health. Rachael was especially unwell in the lead up to Christmas with a chest infection which led to out-of-control asthma which was quite scary at times. Thankfully, she is much better now.

We would not be able to do any of this without you. We are deeply grateful for your support of us in so many and various ways. Thank you! We love hearing from you and endeavour to pray regularly.

With much love,
Rachael and Bernie

Prayer points:

- Pray that we would both be able to start and finish assignments early as soon as the second semester begins in February.
- Pray that our little baby girl would be growing well and would love the Lord Jesus all the days of her life.
- Pray for us to prepare well for her arrival, to trust God with all the upcoming changes and to be equipped to be godly parents.
- Pray that the Lord would provide all that we need to purchase before May.
- Pray that we would be quick to see areas of life where we can execute justice and righteousness and that we would have a growing, active concern for those on the fringes of society both in the UK and in Uganda.
- Pray that we would set aside time for the various admin tasks ahead and that we would remember that these are all important jobs for the ministry that lies ahead.
- Pray for a peaceful election in Uganda and for life to be valued. Pray for Christians to speak up for truth and justice.
- Pray for Razia to make a full recovery and to get any medical help she may need.
- Pray for continued opportunities to host and visit family and friends.
- Pray for us to be able to raise the funds we need for the next academic year and for us to grow in our trust that it is the Lord who provides for all we need.
- Pray for deep rest during the last week of January and for continued health for us both.

Rachael and Bernie Muluuta training for ministry in Kampala, Uganda

5 Canon Mohan Close, London, N14 4PW | rachaelandbernie@gmail.com

R: +256 783356820 (WhatsApp), 07570202022 (calls) B: +256 782802320 (WhatsApp), 07808559896 (calls)

Crosslinks, 116-118 Walworth Road, London SE17 1JL | pletters@crosslinks.org | 14 Glencregagh Court, Belfast BT6 0PA | +44 (0)20 8691 6111

COMING EVENTS

Lunch with God. Free soup and hot drink. Bible teaching. Wednesdays at St Paul's Church. 12:15 to 1:45 p.m.

Youth Group for ages 11-17 at Abbotsbury Church 30th January, from 7.30 to 9 p.m.

Charity Coffee Mornings. 31st January 10 a.m. at St Paul's Church in aid of Motor Neurone Disease and 28th February in aid of Anna Chaplains. Coffee Mornings at St Bartholomew's Church have been suspended for the time being.

Craft Club. 3rd and 17th February at 2 p.m. at St Paul's Church.

Choral Workshop – The Armed Man - Mass for Peace. Abbotsbury Church, 7th February. See www.torbaysingers.org

Women's Breakfast. Saturday, 14th February at 9:30 a.m. at The Clock Tower Coffee Shop, Wolborough Street, Newton Abbot.

Men's Breakfast. Saturday 21st February, 9:00 a.m. at the Leisure Lounge Café.

Joint Parish Communion. 29th March at 10:30 a.m. at All Saints' Church, Highweek.

CHURCH SERVICES

1st February

Abbotsbury Church, Holy Communion at 9:30 a.m.
St Bartholemew's Church, Holy Communion at 9:30 a.m.
St Mary's Church, Wolborough, Matins at 11 a.m.
St Paul's Church, Service of the Word at 11 a.m.
St Luke's Church, Mass at 11 a.m.

8th February

Abbotsbury Church, Service of the Word at 9:30 a.m.
All Saints Church, Holy Communion at 9:30 a.m.
St Paul's Church, Holy Communion at 11 a.m.
St Luke's Church, Mass at 11 a.m.

15th February

Abbotsbury Church, Holy Communion at 9:30 a.m.
St Bartholemew's Church, Holy Communion at 9:30 a.m.
St Mary's Church, Wolborough, Holy Communion (BCP) at 11 a.m.
St Paul's Church, Service of the Word at 11 a.m.
St Luke's Church, Mass at 11 a.m.

EVERY WEDNESDAY 10 a.m. Holy Communion at St Paul's Church, Devon Square **and** 10 a.m. Said Mass at St Luke's Church, Milber.

ALL WEEK St Bartholomew's Church in Ogwell is normally open for private prayer during daylight hours.

FUNERALS AND INTERMENTS

Daniel Small. 4th February at 1 p.m. Funeral at St Mary's Church, Wolborough.
Peter Whitehouse. 5th February at 10:30 a.m. Funeral at St Bartholomew's Church, Ogwell
Stephen Hurston. 5th February at 11:30 a.m. Funeral at All Saints' Church, Highweek.
Peter James Robinson. 12th February at 10:30 a.m. Funeral at All Saints' Church, Highweek.
Michael Taylor. 20th March at 10:30 a.m. Funeral at St Mary's Church, Wolborough.
June Davies. Funeral at St Mary's Church. Date to be arranged.

PARISH CONTACTS

Team Rector: Rev Dave Brown. Day off Thursday
rector@newtonabbotparishes.co.uk 01626 335862

Team Vicar and Vicar of St Luke's, Milber: Fr. Matthew Cashmore. Day off Monday
father@slsj.co.uk 07555 924862

Team Vicar: Rev Gareth Regan: Day Off: Friday.
gareth@newtonabbotparishes.co.uk 01626 201237

Curate: Rev Jonathan Bealey curate@newtonabbotparishes.co.uk 07886567732

Licensed Lay Minister:

Keith Butler: puffin@blueyonder.co.uk 07980 457919
Lay minister for St Luke's, Graham Whittle family@hotmail.co.uk

Churchwardens:

All Saints': **Michael Gillibrand**
Abbotsbury: vacant
St Mary's **Sharon Lawrence** salawrence21@outlook.com 07794 108166
St. Paul's **Lorna Tresidder** lornatresidder@icloud.com
St Bartholomew's **Stella Llewellyn** stellallewellyn@icloud.com 01626 906814
and **Gwyn Hughes.** gwynhughes@icloud.com 01626 365028

Anna Chaplains: Mei Lan Machin. d.m.machin2013@gmail.com 07926 991578
and **Kim Martin** annachaplain@newtonabbotparishes.co.uk

Organists:

Steve Cox 079 686 21511 or 01626 854228 stephen.cox54@talktalk.net
Clive Sawers 07967 148794 clivesawers@aol.com

Parochial Church Council Secretary: Barbara Garrick 07910 207358
barbara_garrick@yahoo.com

Safeguarding Lead: Rob Palmer 07792 081776 treb0r@hotmail.com

Weekly Parish News by Email. John Calderwood. news@newtonabbotparishes.co.uk
07760 226488

Other Communications Media (website and social media)
comms@newtonabbotparishes.co.uk

IT Support it_support@newtonabbotparishes.co.uk

Prayer List. Please let us know about anyone in need of prayers. Their name will be kept on the list for a month. Please email prayer@newtonabbotparishes.co.uk

Parish website: www.newtonabbotparishes.co.uk

Parish Office at St Paul's Church, Devon Square. The office is normally open Monday to Thursday, 10:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

Phone 01626 211346 or email office@newtonabbotparishes.co.uk

OTHER USEFUL CONTACTS

Newton Abbot Town Council. 01626 201120 www.newtonabbot-tc.gov.uk

Shopmobility, Ring & Ride, Community cars – 01626 335775

Teignbridge Council – 01626 361101, www.teignbridge.gov.uk

THAT Foodbank. 8 Queensway House, Queensway, Newton Abbot. TQ12 4BA. Tel: 01626 437310, email: office@thatfoodbank.com Website: www.thatfoodbank.com

Footnote. Thank you very much to those of you who have sent me contributions.

Relevant photos are very welcome.

I aim to circulate each weekly issue on Wednesday to give notice of the coming weekend's events and perhaps report what happened last weekend.

Please let me have any news of past events, notice of future activities or any other information that may be interesting or useful for our Church members, by Tuesday for the next issue.

If you know of anyone who does not receive this weekly email, but wishes to do so, please ask them to email me or contact the office.

John Calderwood news@newtonabbotparishes.co.uk