

Stainbeck Church (United Reformed)

# OUTLOOK

May 2026



COME

SPRIT

HOLY

**Please worship with us:  
Sunday Morning at 10.45am  
Thursday Prayers on Zoom  
at 7.30pm**

<https://stainbeckurc.org.uk>

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**May 2026**

## **Pentecost**

On 24 May, we celebrate with churches across the world – the day of Pentecost. The scene of Pentecost is vividly depicted in the Bible. Roughly one hundred and twenty people are assembled in a room, feeling rather lost and despondent and unsure about what to do without Jesus. Then suddenly they experience an extraordinary storm. A violent wind, sparks, flames. And they are ‘bewildered’, ‘amazed’, ‘astonished.’

The people, both in this room as well as in the growing crowd outside, break out in wild chatter. Chatter in dozens of languages from across the globe. In the Book of Acts from the Bible, the writer, Luke uses the verb ‘hear’ three times in his narrative. A better translation would be ‘to listen’. It is important to capture the active, purposeful nature of the verb. The emphasis of the passage is on listening rather than speaking. Listening to where the Holy Spirit is leading by listening to one another.

Similarly, in Jesus’ encounters with people have you ever noticed how He listens deeply to their story. In listening to their stories, He gives people His full attention which shows their story, their lives matter and are worthy and important. THAT is God’s love in action.

And we can do the same. We can embody and share God’s love when we take the time to listen to another person’s story. Giving someone our time and full attention shows them that their life matters and is important.

In our current context, where people’s views on many issues are so entrenched, where the rhetoric is angry and violent, listening is key. In our city of Leeds, listening has been key at the protests and counter-protests where asylum seekers have been housed. For the last few months there have been gatherings at Seacroft. On one side of the road are the group of anti-migrant protestors. On the other side of the road, are a group of counter-protestors. Both sides, liberally equipped with flags, megaphones, and chants. Both sides trying their hardest to drown the other side out.



I've been part of a third group, made up of all faiths and none, who come together, with one aim. Our group is there to listen. Listen to each side. Listening to new ideas and experiences. Because listening is transformational. Listening changes both listener and listened to. It helps us see our lives and world differently. It helps us to see beyond our own perspective or worldview.

There's a beautiful quote by Epictetus:

"We have two ears and one mouth so that we can listen twice as much as we speak."

I wonder, where are the opportunities for us to take time to listen?

- You could listen to someone of a different race/culture/sexuality.
- You could listen to someone from a different generation.
- You could listen to the groaning of Creation.

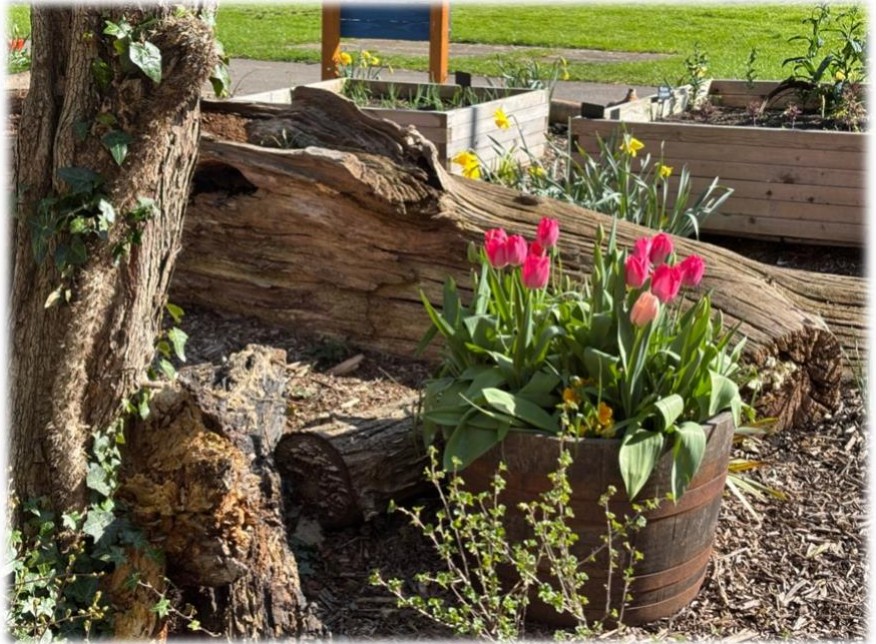
So, this month I invite us to embody the spirit of Pentecost by opening our ears and hearts to each other in our churches, communities and world.

**Nicola**

## Looking back .....

Spring has finally arrived – flowers bloom beautifully in the ever-expanding **Beckhill Community Garden**.

Fruit trees all in bud and plants around the **Thrive Cabin** too. We are grateful to the ‘**Green Men**’ for clearing the grass by the bus stop, tidying and pruning the church flower beds, siting bird boxes, sowing seeds and encouraging the



young people. We are richly blessed in so many willing helpers.

Our **EASTER** worship services were full of expectation and joy. It was good on **Maundy Thursday** to share in communion with **Revd Natalie Hughes** and friends from our Churches Together. The moving **Good**

**Friday Tenebrae** service was as always a privilege to attend. Thank you to all those who took part so thoughtfully. The joy of **Easter** day celebrated by Nicola both at early communion and at our annual celebration to decorate the cross brought smiles to many faces. Thank you to Helen, Adrian and their team for preparation of our Easter breakfast. What a joy filled day!

*And don't forget Easter is not yet over. There are 50 great days of EASTER before we celebrate **PENTECOST**. We are an EASTER people!*

Last week our Church musician, **Jo Yates**, and her friend **Liam**, gave a violin/viola concert to a very appreciative, but small group of people who attended. There was a wide variety of music ranging from classical to Scot Joplin. A big **THANK YOU** to **Judy Taylor** who sorted the microphone and helped with the refreshments and to Jo and Liam for their musical prowess – two very talented musicians.



Congratulations to **Alanna Hurman-Hancock** called '*in the name of the Masters of the Bench, to the Degree of the Utter Bar*'. Alanna, now married to Louie and a member of Stainbeck URC has her first meeting on the **Synod Ministry Committee** this week as a representative for young people. Please hold both Alanna and Louie in your prayers.

### **And a special note:**

*May I at this point offer my grateful thanks and appreciation for all the prayers, messages and support I have received from Stainbeck friends as I get used to managing my new hip. I have felt so blessed to be cared for and hope it's not too long before I am back in person. Ann x*

### **Plus a 'thank you'**

*from Donald and Angela for the many good wishes received as they celebrated Donald's birthday and their 66<sup>th</sup> Wedding Anniversary.*

## DIARY FOR MAY

### Elder on Duty – Brian Bellwood

Sun	3 <sup>rd</sup>	10.45am	Hybrid Morning Worship led by Revd Dr Nicola Robinson
Mon	4 <sup>th</sup>	11-2pm	Lunch Club closed
Wed	6 <sup>th</sup>	7.00pm	PRIDE Service at Leeds Minster
Thu	7 <sup>th</sup>	11-1pm	Community Café open for tea, coffee, cakes, sandwiches, toasties and friendship
		7.30pm	Zoom opens for Partnership prayers led by Revd Dr Nicola Robinson
Sat	9 <sup>th</sup>	11.00	Coffee morning in aid of Christian Aid – am to tea, coffee, plants, books and other
		1.30pm	goodies to purchase (see p 8 &12)
Sun	10 <sup>th</sup>	10.45am	Hybrid Morning Worship for Christian Aid led by Ann Coates
Mon	11 <sup>th</sup>	11-2pm	Lunch Club reopens
Thu	14 <sup>th</sup>	11-1pm	Community Café open for tea, coffee, cakes, sandwiches, toasties and friendship
		7.30pm	Thursday Prayers led by Ann Coates
Sat	16 <sup>th</sup>	All Day	Synod <b>BIG DAY OUT</b> at the Yorkshire Sculpture Park – see flyer for details – heartily recommended
Sun	17 <sup>th</sup>	10.45am	Hybrid Morning Worship with Holy Communion to celebrate the 95 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Stainbeck Church led by Revd Angela Hughes – the service will be followed by a Faith Lunch. All Welcome
		3.30-5.30pm	Messy Church
			<b>Synod Ministers visit the Corrymeela Community.</b>
			<b>Please hold them in prayers</b>
Mon	18 <sup>th</sup>	11-2pm	Lunch Club
Thu	21 <sup>st</sup>	11-1pm	Community Café open for tea, coffee, cakes, sandwiches, toasties and friendship
		7.30pm	Thursday Prayers led by Revd Angela Hughes

<b>Sun</b>	<b>24<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>10.45am</b>	<b>Hybrid Morning Worship for Pentecost led by Sheila Telfer – Elder at St. Andrew’s Roundhay</b>
Mon	25 <sup>th</sup>	11-2pm	Lunch Club
Tue	26 <sup>th</sup>	7.30pm	Elders’ Meeting
Thu	28 <sup>th</sup>	11-1pm	Community Café open for tea, coffee, cakes, sandwiches, toasties and friendship
		<b>7.30pm</b>	<b>Thursday prayers led by Avril and Brian Bellwood</b>
<b>Sun</b>	<b>31st</b>	<b>10.45am</b>	<b>Hybrid Morning Worship led by Alex Walker – Member of the Ministry Team</b>

**N.B. Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> June after Worship  
There will be a Quarterly Church Meeting**

A reminder of the Stainbeck link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/7019277749> (Meeting ID 7019277749).

## **Meet the Team – Rev Dr Nicola Anne Robinson**

I grew up in a family where faith was integrated into my every day, daily life: prayers at home, attending a Catholic primary and high school and church every Sunday. I remember as a small child simply knowing that



God is with us wherever we are.

Church in my teens was more difficult. I continued praying and reading the Bible. But I experienced exclusion and discrimination due to my sexuality. During postgraduate studies at the University of York in my early 20s, a friend invited me to the ecumenical chaplaincy where we were encouraged to be open to new ideas, ask questions and engage in theology and social justice projects.

When I moved home to Edinburgh after completing my PhD, I was drawn to the United Reformed Church because of our commitment to justice, inclusion, education and engaging with local and global communities as well as the way our decision-making rests in the hands of those on 'the ground' rather than hierarchy. I became a Member then an Elder (at 28!) and very involved with the wider Synod.

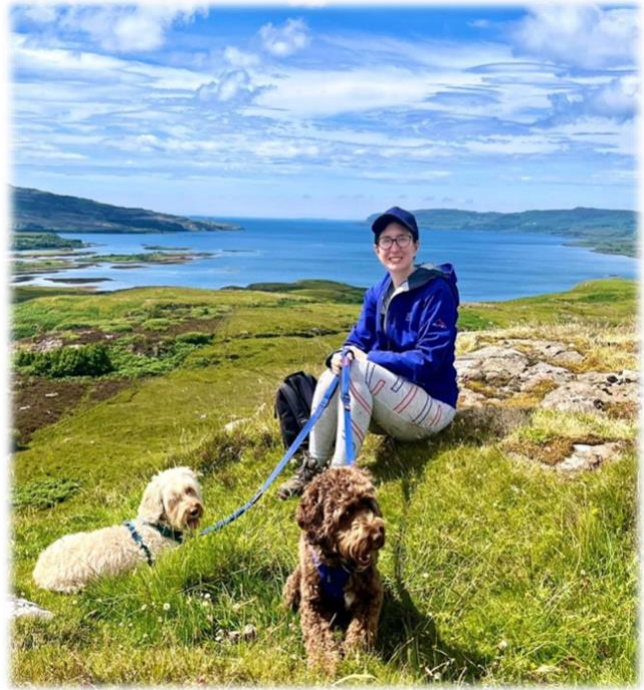
At this time, my life changed forever when my beloved cockapoo, Maisie, arrived in my life. Over the next two years, I worked as the Communications and Engagement Officer with Edinburgh Churches Together and volunteered in mental health chaplaincy. I also trained and became an Assembly Accredited Lay Preacher, co-wrote and facilitated Bible studies, convened our LGBTQ+ ministry team, and acted as Synod rep on Mission Council.

As I lived and reflected on these experiences, I felt God so palpably present. At the same time, I began to read and read about women and ordination: their lives, their struggles and joys and their sense of calling and ministry. And I came to the startling realisation that I could see bits of myself reflected in these women's lives. I was startled yet also reassured that the stirrings of my heart could possibly be real.

So, I candidated and was recommended to train for Ministry of Word and Sacraments at Northern College in Manchester. Alongside undertaking an MA in Contextual Theology, my placements included the Scottish Episcopal Church, L'Arche Community, Workplace Chaplaincy, the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan and the URCs in the Sheffield Team.

I was ordained and inducted into the Leeds URC Partnership in September 2022., For the last 3 years I have served as named minister with Christ Church Halton, Headingley St Columba and Stainbeck and across all our Partnership churches with Quiet Days, Bible studies, shared worship and training. My hope and prayer for the Leeds URC Partnership going forward is that we can be flexible, adaptable and open to following where the Spirit is leading. To me, this means a Ministry Team which draws on all our gifts and skills across our churches.

My calling as a minister is rooted in a faith that prayerfully and actively follows the Way of Jesus. A calling characterised by flexibility and openness to new possibilities, which offers welcome and hospitality to all, highlighting our evolving understanding of God's inclusive love. In practical terms, this means actively seeking and nurturing relationships with schools, ecumenical partners, marginalised groups.



The promises I made at my ordination mean I take my calling to serve the wider denomination seriously and joyfully. As such, I place importance on playing an active role in Synod, denominational and ecumenical settings. I am the Convenor of our Synod's Green Apostles group. In 2026-27, I'm serving as Chaplain to the URC Youth Moderator. I am also part of the ecumenical planning group for Pride Church Leeds which holds a service and gathering for our LGBTQ+ Christian community once a month.

Alongside being a minister, I am a daughter, a sister, an auntie, a friend. One of the great joys of my life is being an Auntie to 3 nephews and 2 nieces. I am also a proud companion to Maisie, my 10 and half-year-old cockapoo. My favourite way to refresh and relax is to walk with Maisie: in the woods, by the sea, through the park. I am an avid reader, knitter and Lego builder (though I haven't quite mastered the art of being able to do all three at the same time!) I also enjoy baking, watching Star Trek, taking photographs and trying my best at Pilates. I treasure holidays with my family and friends.

*Nicola*

## Looking forward

And so we look ahead into May – starting with **Christian Aid Week** (see page 8 and 12) when again there will be an opportunity to come together on **Saturday 9th May** to share food, conversation and the opportunity to browse available plant stalls...and maybe others! Bring your friends and neighbours. Thanks again to Helen, Adrian and their team.

We encourage you to consider a visit to join in on **Saturday 16th** at the **Synod Big Day Out** to the wonderful **Yorkshire Sculpture Park** – full programme and so much to see, so much to do. Great for families but also good for a stroll around and tea. Check out what's going on .... <https://urcyorkshire.org.uk/yorkshire-synods-big-day-out/>



Then celebrate our 95<sup>th</sup> anniversary on Sunday 17<sup>th</sup>!

**! FAITH LUNCH !**

**Everyone welcome**



## Christian Aid week 2026 is 10<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup> May

In the crowded and bustling informal settlements of Nairobi in Kenya, East Africa, most parents wake every single day knowing that they must go and earn money, otherwise their children won't eat that evening. It's a precarious and frightening daily struggle that no family should have to face.

People living in Nairobi's informal settlements often earn less than \$1 a day. Families often spend more than half their income on food and nearly 1 in 3 children in parts of Kenya are stunted because of poor nutrition.

By funding urban farming projects alongside specialist training from Christian Aid's partner Beacon of Hope, parents are being helped to fight food insecurity. With tools and training parents are growing food in small city plots using gardens shaped like cones. These gardens go up like a tower and hold up to 100 plants in the space of a chair. The vegetables help to feed their families and any surplus is sold to earn an income to help pay for their children to go to school.

This Christian Aid Week, your support could help mothers in Nairobi, Kenya, facing the devastating reality of urban poverty and the daily struggle to feed their children.

This year we will be raising money for **Christian Aid on Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> May from 11-1.30pm** in our **café** where you will find bacon sandwiches, vegan sausages, cake, tea, coffee and juice. In the **church** we will have **craft stalls** and a **plant stall** where you can also **sow your own sunflowers**.

**All proceeds will go to Christian Aid.**

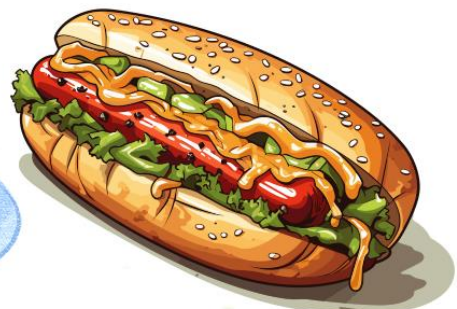
You will have opportunities to donate at the Christian Aid café, in church, online or by phone. If you are able to, please make a donation to Christian Aid this May to help the poorest communities. Thank you.

- **£10** could buy a **pair of chickens** that produce fertiliser for an urban farmer.
- **£50** could fund the **solar dryer** that turns fresh produce into valuable long-life products.
- **£120** could help fund the **mobile kiosk** used by urban farmers to easily take their goods to market.

*Helen & Adrian*



**CAFE**



Bacon and vegan sausage sandwiches,  
cake, tea, coffee and juice.  
And a variety of market stalls.

**Saturday 9th May**  
**11:00am to 1:00pm**  
**Stainbeck Church, Stainbeck**  
**Road, LS7 2PP**

*Views expressed by individuals are personal and not necessarily those of Stainbeck Church.*  
**Revd Dr Nicola Robinson, Minister: [revnicola.robinson@gmail.com](mailto:revnicola.robinson@gmail.com)**  
**Avril and Brian Bellwood, Church Secretaries: 0113 293 5847**