

Stockton Road Church News

August 2026



Mark 12: 30-31

*“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart,
with all your mind, and with all your strength, and you shall
love your neighbour as yourself”.*

We are a union of Presbyterian and Congregational churches at the heart of Sunderland city life, growing from a past rich in mission and hospitality. We embrace this heritage utilising the Five Marks of Mission to guide and enable us to take forward current opportunities for mission and service.

August Reflection

Genesis 45: 1-15

Due to a severe famine in the land, Jacob's sons must travel to Egypt to buy food. This is the second time they have done so, and on the first occasion they returned home only to find that the money they had paid for their food had been mysteriously returned to them. They are not sure why this happened, or how the strange man they have been dealing with, Pharaoh's second-in-command, will react.

On their second visit, the brothers try to return the money, so Joseph can see they have become more honest. But, even so, Joseph executes a second ruse to assure himself that his brothers have really changed their ways. A precious silver cup is placed into the sack of his youngest brother Benjamin, and Joseph sends officers after the brothers to arrest them and 'find' the 'stolen' cup. Fortunately, the brothers pass this test also; they are horrified and begin tearing their clothes in distress when the cup is found.

When it comes to sentencing for the apparent crime, Judah offers to be imprisoned in Benjamin's place, respecting that Benjamin is particularly precious to their father, Jacob. Now Joseph can be truly sure that his brothers have changed – instead of resenting Benjamin for being the favourite child of their father (as they did when Joseph was a young man) they see Jacob's deep affection for Benjamin as a reason to protect their youngest brother.

In this week's episode from the story, Joseph is deeply moved by this display of the brothers' love for Benjamin and for their father Jacob. Now, he can no longer bear to conceal his identity from his brothers. He weeps openly before them, and his brothers are so shocked at the revelation that they

cannot even speak to reassure Joseph when he asks if his elderly father Jacob is still alive.

The reconciliation is a heartfelt affair – a touching family scene where the brothers weep together and talk. There is a lot to forgive, on both sides, and the family has several lost years to catch up on!

The Joseph story is about forgiveness, and the joyous emotional release that comes from forgiving someone. But forgiveness can be a nuanced business. When Joseph's brothers came to Egypt in desperate search of food the first time, Joseph was forgiving enough to show them kindness and send them away with free sacks of grain. Even so, in this week's reading we see that Joseph tested carefully and wisely to be sure that his brothers had changed before fully letting them back into his life.

How might this discerning wisdom look in our own lives?

A Prayer

Lord God, we thank you for working tirelessly in our lives, righting wrongs, bringing good from bad. Thank you for your abundance of love and generosity. Help us to be generous with all that you bless us with, going that extra mile for those in need, just as you did for us. We praise you for your loving grace and forgiveness. We thank you for the change that you bring about in and through us. From the depths of our hearts come our unending thanks and praise. Amen.

Lectionary Readings

2 - 8 August - I will not let you go

Genesis 32.22-31; Psalm 17:1-7,15; Romans 9.1-5; Matthew 14.13-21

9 - 15 August - Holding on to hope

Genesis 37:1-4,12-28; Psalm 105:1-6,16-22,45b; Romans 10.5-15; Matthew 14.22-33

16 - 22 August - From the heart

Genesis 45:1-15; Psalm 133; Romans 11.1-2a,29-32; Matthew 15(10-20),21-28

23 - 29 August - Empowered

Exodus 1:8–2:10; Psalm 124; Romans 12.1-8; Matthew 16.13-20

30 August - 6 September 2026 - One step at a time

Exodus 3:1-15; Psalm 105:1-6,16-22,45b; Romans 12.9-21; Matthew 16.21-28

Church Services

Services at 10.45am in the Sanctuary unless indicated otherwise

- August 2 Barbara Mitchell & Christine Hutchinson.
Coffee and croissants.
- August 9 Elisabeth Meikle
- August 16 **10.30am Joint Service at St. Margaret's,
South Shields** – Revd Jane Rowell
- August 23 Revd Jane Rowell
- August 30 Revd Dr David Whiting

Weekly Church Activities (all welcome)

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| Bible Study Group | Sessions will restart on Tuesday
1 September at 10.30am |
| Food Cycle Lunch | Tuesdays at 12.30pm |
| Gardening Group | Thursdays at 10.30am |

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Love, Amelia

Please see current Wishlist below. If you have items to donate please put them in the box in the vestry. There is also an Amazon Wishlist on their website www.loveamelia.org.uk where you can buy and donate items direct, and where you can also read more about the charity and the work they do.



Wishlist July 2026

BABIES 0-2 YEARS

Clothes

- Clothes - Newborn
- Clothes - 12 months plus
- 0-6 month sleeping bags



CHILDREN 3-11 YEARS

- Clothes - All ages
- Toys (no large)
- Arts & Crafts
- Bedding
- Toiletries



Equipment

- Prams & Strollers
- Moses Baskets & Next to Me cribs
- Cots/ Cot eds / Toddler beds
- Playmats & Playgym
- Bouncers
- Baby baths
- Changing mats
- Toys (no large)
- Comforters



TEENS & ADULTS

- Clothes - All sizes
- Toiletries
- Bedding



Hygiene / Feeding

- Baby bottles (new only please)
- Nappies (unopened please)
- Baby toiletries
- Sterilisers



Please only bring items on our current wishlist & only donate items in good, clean condition

See our pinned post for British Standards codes

