# St George's, Widdrington & Great Bavington United Reformed Churches Newsletter











December 2023 & January 2024

Website: stgeorgesurcmorpeth.org

Worship & Events in December at St George's United Reformed Church

St George's United Reformed Church						
Sat 2nd	10.00am	Coffee Morning with our Ukranian Friends				
	7.00pm	Church Social				
Sun 3rd	10.30am	Morning Worship for 1st in Advent with				
		Communion, Toy Service & Uniformed				
		Organisations Parade				
Mon 4th	6.30pm	Life Remembered Service				
Tues 5th	6.00pm	Guides Christingle Service				
Wed 6th	12.30pm	WOW Midweek Service				
Sat 9th	10.00am	Coffee Morning with Christmas gifts and				
		decorations.				
Sun 10th	10.30am	Morning Worship				
Mon 11th	6.30pm	Community Carol Service				
Wed 13th	12.30pm	WOW Midweek Service				
	6.30pm	CT Prayer Meeting				
Sat 16th	4.00pm	Carols in the Car Park.				
Sun 17th	10.00am	Morning Worship Nativity Service Jointly with				
		MMC at St George's Church				
	6.00pm	Joint Carol Service at Morpeth Methodists				
Wed 20th	12.30pm	WOW Midweek Service				
Sun 24th	10.30am	Morning Worship for Christmas Eve				
	11.30pm	Watchnight Service				
Mon 25th	10.00am	Morning Worship for Christmas Day				
Wed 27th	12.3	WOW Midweek Service				
	0pm					
Sun 31st	10.00am	Morning Worship for New Years Eve				
Wednesday	s WOW Mid	dweek Service – doors open at Noon for				
refreshments						

The Stewards & Flower Rotas are on the inside back page.



# What's On at St George's

# **SUNDAY FAMILY WORSHIP & JUNIOR CHURCH**

10.30 am

MON	A III/ F	C1 1.1	07050201160
MON	Age UK Exercise9.00-12.00 noon Ronka		07952381160
mr ve a	Age UK Exercise: 3.00 – 4.00pm As about		
TUES	<b>Morning Badminton</b> 10.00am – 12 noo		
	Allen Oake	es allen@o	akesa.co.uk
	Rainbows, 5.00pm	Liz Kell	y 783434
	Mobile 07714481089 liz.kelly@jcpce.		
	<b>Brownies</b> : 6.00pm Susan Fairgrieve.	s.fairgr	ieve21@gmail
	Guides and Rangers: from 7.00pm	Liz K	elly
	Mobile 07714481089 783434	liz.ke	lly@jcpce.com
	St.George's Coffee Club: 2.00pm (3rd Tuo	es)	
	Contact: Sarah Cleverley		515257
	Cobweb Orchestra 7.30 – 9.30pm at KE	VI	
	Contact: Christine Oakes 518608 or Penny	Oxley 514	612
WED	Morning Badminton: 9.30am		
	Sarah Cleverley		515257
	Knitter, Natter Crafts & Chatter 2.00 –	4.00pm	
	Joan Cooper		515682
	<b>Afternoon Bowls</b> 2.00pm Andrew Cleve	rley	515257
	<b>Zumba:</b> 6.00pm High Intensity with Lisa	O	
	on 07507 179 692 or zumbawithlisao@h	otmail.com	l
THURS	Morning Badminton: 10.00-12.00 Alle	n Oakes	
	allen@oakesa.co.uk		
	<b>Zumba:</b> 5.45pm. Low Intensity with Lisa	O on 07507	,
	179 692 or email <b>zumbawithlisao@hotma</b>		
SAT	<b>Table Tennis:</b> 10.00 – 12.00 Christine		513913
	Country Dance Club: (Varies from month		
	Contact: Shirley Forster	/	
SUN		ndrew Ham	nett 518485
	*	hristine Oak	

The next joint newsletter with Widdrington & Bavington URC's covers events in February 2024

# The deadline is Sunday 21st January

Please do not wait for the deadline if you already have articles ready to be included. Please contact Stephanie. E-mail: robson-robson@hotmail.co.uk



# A Christmas Message from our Minister Revd Julian Sanders Dear Friends

# The unconscious imagination is the fount of true perception.

Over the coming weeks, we will be exploring again the familiar Christmas story, and trying to find the meaning behind the words and what relevance it has for us today. The Christmas story is full of amazing things – a virgin birth, a host of angels, Magi bringing valuable gifts from the East, a world changed forever in which God is truly with us – Emmanuel!

# "And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, raising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favours."" Luke 2v 13-14

The Christmas story seems unbelievable, and when I read the Christmas story, from each of the gospels, but in Luke's in particular, I see very much the writer's imagination at work in the way the story is told. And that is not a bad thing. I am not saying that the stories are not true. But in the telling of those stories the writer has looked beyond the ordinary to reveal something special: to reveal a place where God reaches out to us.

Many in society disregard the Christmas story as just a fairy tale, as make believe, or even as propaganda. Because something is not historically and scientifically verifiable then modern society tends to disregard it. But I am not sure the writers of the gospel ever meant to give a truly historically and scientifically accurate record. And if they had, the dry old text would have been consigned to the annuls of history and certainly would not be brought alive again each Christmas. It is surely the use of imagination in the storytelling that keeps the story meaningful to us today.

George MacDonald was a Congregational minister and writer of fiction and fantasy in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, who regarded the imagination as the place where God was encountered. MacDonald saw the imagination as a place where, through images and symbols, God reaches out to us. In this way the imagination allowed access to truth beyond the physical world.

And he is not the only writer, or painter, or musician to use their imagination to reveal something special in the things that often pass us by without us noticing.

The English poet and artist, William Blake, described himself as having double vision, by which he not only saw things, but looked beyond things to the invisible world behind them.

And this is what I believe the writers of the gospel do when they tell the Christmas story, and I believe that is what we do as Christians.

At Christmas we celebrate the incarnation. God breaks into our world. He is here all around us; we only have to have eyes to see. The Apostle Paul writes:

We look not at what can be seen but at what cannot be seen; for what can be seen is temporary, but what cannot be seen is eternal" (2 Cor 4:18)

"We walk by faith, not by sight" (2 Cor 5:7)

Let us celebrate the Christmas story again this year as we rediscover the truth that lies within it and beyond it. And may we all in faith, look through the tinsel and glitter of Christmas to where God reaches out to us.

With every blessing this Christmas, **Julian** 



There will be Carols in the Car Park 4:00pm on Dec 16<sup>th</sup> as part of the Shine Your Light campaign being run this year. **www.shineyourlight.org.uk**We aim to gather in the Car Park at 4:00pm and sing carols, hopefully enticing passers-by to come and join in the singing. Afterwards hot drinks will be served.

## **Refugees December 2023**

As I write this the announcement has just been made that the Government's current plan to outsource responsibility for the processing of some asylum seekers to Rwanda has been declared to be unlawful. We will need to wait and see what happens next.

**Freedom from Torture** has said "This is a huge victory for the millions of caring people across the UK who stand for a fairer and more compassionate asylum system." It goes on to say "It is important that we celebrate victories like today and see them as motivation to continue our fight for an asylum system that treats people with humanity, dignity and compassion."

## **West End Refugee Service**

**The Annual General Meeting** has been rescheduled to take place on **Thursday, 7th December** at One Strawberry Lane, NE1 4BF (Refreshments from 12, AGM, 12.30, Consultation Event 1pm – 2.15pm) The Annual report, now available on their website (www.wers.org.uk) contains the following statement by their Chair of Trustees "We continue to help people with their basic needs, both practical and emotional, to find ways for their skills to be valued and used as they begin the journey to integrate into UK society and to ensure that their voices are heard loud and clear, both in shaping WERS' services and future strategy, and in challenging misconceptions and working towards a fairer and more compassionate society."

The Annual Report states that its mission is "to work to achieve positive change for people seeking asylum and for refugees through:

- our direct support services,
- creating opportunities for people to develop and thrive in their local communities.
- our work with collaborative partners to raise awareness and influence decision-makers."

During the 2022-2023 year they worked with over 600 clients, many of whom had been facing destitution, had 90 people working within the Skillsmatch project and had 50 buddying pairs. They had over 260 people involved in their garden project and put on nearly 400 sessions of social activities. They have also been involved in raising awareness of the needs of refugees and asylum seekers in over 60 organisations.

# **Justice and Peace Project**

The J&P's report says that "With the government's announcement that they are committed to clearing the backlog of cases that have been in the asylum system for some time, we are expecting the Home Office to make decisions about some of our clients in the coming months. We are always very pleased when clients receive news that they have been granted leave to remain, but recently the government has made changes which are adversely affecting these clients by changing the time people are given to move out of asylum accommodation once they are given refugee status - the 28-day so called "move on" period – with some refugees having just seven days' notice. This is leaving some of our clients homeless. The Refugee Project has added its name to a letter from several charities to the Home Secretary asking the Home Office to amend this policy and prevent eviction notices and homelessness."

In addition to the English classes which have been led by volunteers there has now been the opportunity to put on some accredited classes, which further enhances the educational opportunities and employability of the refugees and asylum seekers. Some of them have also been successful in gaining places on more advanced training courses at Newcastle City College.

As the winter approaches, and the weather is colder and darker, please remember those who are reliant on WERS and the Justice and Peace Project for basic support, and also remember those who give up so much of their time and energy to support them.

**Margaret Brock** 

# Our Toy Service on Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> December

Our gift of toys and presents for needy children will once again be distributed via Morpeth Lions. This year they are needing gifts for older children, particularly young teenagers (boxed toiletries are always a great hit.) Thank you in advance for your amazing generosity.

Robin & Joan Cooper



# Coronation Chaos in the Church Hall By Joann Evans

Church Social: Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> December at 7pm Venue: Church Hall Supper: Mince pies and Mulled wine

Tickets available from Christine Oakes £8







If there is anyone interested in being on stage, contact me by email or mobile 07518916939, thanks, **Joann** 

# Stamps

I am still collecting stamps for the St Oswald's Hospice, although I realise that we get less stamps on our mail these days.

Christmas is the time of the year when mail significantly increases, so do please collect any stamps you receive and bring them into the Church.



Many thanks, David Calcraft



4th Morpeth Scouts 2023

# Christmas Post

This year's post will run from Monday  $27^{th}$  November to noon Friday  $15^{th}$  December. Cards for

Morpeth, Pegswood, Mitford and Hepscott only, please.

Drop your cards and donations (suggested donation 4op per card) into the boxes at Central Bean (Sanderson Arcade), Co-op (both Loansdean and Pegswood), Health Hut (Kirkhill), Morrison's (Morpeth) and Sainsbury's (Stobhill).



"I would like to express the family's huge thanks, for how many people came to dad's thanksgiving service and the very warm and touching things people said to us! This really helped to make a very emotional day truly one of joy! We would also like to thank everyone for their generosity. The collection plate in aid of St Oswald's Hospice raised £368 which I have paid to the charity. They have written a lovely letter of thanks which I'll send on for you all to see.

Never fear, our 6'4" & 6'6" (me) frames will be darkening St George's door With Love again!! from Robert Le Grice"

Dear Mr LeGrice,

It meant so much to us to receive your recent donation of £368.00 in memory of your father, Ted LeGrice. We understand that this was from a collection from a Thanksgiving Service at St George's Church, Morpeth. Thank you for kindly choosing to support St Oswald's in Ted's name.



Your gift will enable our hospice nurses to be there for families when they really need us. It will provide quality care in a comfortable, home from home setting at a time when a reassuring hand to hold is desperately needed. Thank you.

# Tasmin Kinkhabwala & Katy Final in Memory Team

# Werca's Folk Concert on Friday 27th October

Flirstly, thanks to all the Church Folk who came out to support this event when the weather was so awful. There was a surprisingly good turnout with the church set out with tables in a café style. We had a most enjoyable evening listening to and also joining in singing some of the songs.

Werca's Folk decided in view of the current situation in Gaza to donate their £150 fee to Médecins Sans Frontiers and the audience very generously donated a further amount of £338 at the end of the concert Between ticket monies and a raffle Church Funds benefitted by approximately £400.

Many thanks to to all who sold tickets, moved tables and chairs, served refreshments or helped in any other way. Gillian

#### DATES FOR YOUR DIARIES DURING THE COMING MONTHS



There are a lot of things planned for St George's during December and into the New Year. The following is a concise way of recording when and what is happening during that period.

This is always a very busy time and there will be more information about these events within this magazine but this aide memoire may also help. Please pop these dates in your diaries and bring your friends.

We are a very proactive church and need to advertise to and share with the local community our planned activities.

Saturday December 2nd at 7.00pm Sunday December 3rd at 10.30am Monday December 4th at 6.30pm Tues December 5<sup>th</sup> at 6.00pm Saturday December 9th 10am - Noon. Monday December 11th at 6.30pm Saturday December 16th at 4.00pm Sunday December 17th at 10.30am Sunday December 17th at 6.00pm.

Church Social **Annual Toy Service** Life Remembered Service **Guides Christingle Service** Ladies Coffee Morning Community Carol Service Carols in the Car Park Nativity Service at SGURC Joint Carol Service at MMC Sunday December 24th at 10.30am. Christmas Eve Service

Sunday December 24<sup>th</sup> 11.30pm Watchnight Service Monday December 25th at 10.00am. Worship for Christmas Day

The Annual Manager's Coffee Morning and Sale of overbought Christmas goods will be on January 20th from 10.00am until Noon.

On February 14th at 12.30pm there will be a Lunchtime Concert by KEVI with tea and coffee available beforehand.

There will also be all the usual activities and Sunday services during that time unless otherwise announced.

# St. George's Knitter Natter Group

Just a note to let everyone know that the Autumn session will finish on Dec 13th, we will restart on Jan 10th, 2-4 pm in the Drysdale room



Our knitters are looking for double knitting wool if anyone has any don't want. Odd balls are perfect.

Joan Cooper 01670 515682

## Moments of calm in a terrible war by Andrew LeGrice

From inside the Church of the Holy Sepulchre drifted the calming tones of an all-male voice choir. Light fell out of the gnarly old wooden doors into the square where three Ethiopian ladies sat on polished steps. Their cute little toddler boys sauntered and played around them; a cat curled up on one of the broken marble pillars that face the church. It was a calm haven of peace; a favourite place of our family to stop by whenever we visited the old city of Jerusalem. It hadn't felt calm the day I arrived. I flew into Tel Aviv on a flight full of Israelis coming to terms with the horror of the Hamas attacks on the towns near Gaza which had killed so many people, and the regional escalation which felt as though it could spiral out of control. The pilot explained that the flight had been delayed "due to military activity in Israel": not your usual excuse!

Sat next to me was Doron, a 60 year old civil engineer from one of the northern towns of Israel bordering Lebanon. "I'm going home to save my country" he said. "We are a divided people when we have peace. But now we are united. I was in Lebanon in 1982 [When Israel invaded and the infamous massacres in Palestinian refugee camps took place]. I lost my brother there. We have always had a problem with the Arabs. Now we have to finish Hamas in Gaza once and for all, and then finish Hezbollah in Lebanon". He pumped his fist into the palm of his other hand. The message was very clear; the repercussions terrifying. The pilot came back on: "We are living in unprecedented times, but we will do everything to make sure you have a safe journey". Doron next to me quipped "Do you know how to swim?"

Tired and eager to get to work in Jerusalem, we were held up by a police checkpoint at Ben Gurion airport. As we eventually pulled onto the highway we watched Biden's Air Force one take off from the runway, his whistle stop tour of solidarity with Israel complete. In Jerusalem and the West Bank, there was anger and fear. Anger at unilateral support from the US and UK for Israel as it bombed Gaza and killed thousands of civilians. Colleagues were losing family and friends in Gaza at an alarming rate. One friend Hanan lost her aunt, two cousins, and their four children in a single airstrike. Another colleague lost 15 family members.

But there is also real fear amongst Palestinians in the West Bank that they will be next. Israeli officials are talking in apocalyptic terms. Israeli security forces and extremist settlers are killing people in the West Bank with impunity, and around 1,000 have been forced out of their homes. In Jerusalem, the police were pro-actively on the streets harassing and arresting Palestinians to deter people from being out in the city. One evening I had dinner with a friend who works in a local bookshop. He offered to drive me home. As we drove back we were pulled over. I was worried because he had had a whisky to drink and might be breathalysed. He knew this wasn't the sort of thing they would care about. As we pulled away border police officers pointed their rifles directly at us. My friend simply sighed and drove past. This is an everyday hazard. In Israel the atmosphere was very different. People were naturally still coming to terms with the terrible events of 7 October and shocked that attention had already shifted away from their suffering and onto events in Gaza. There was still a regular barrage of rockets firing from Gaza into Israel. Sirens would sound and people would race from the beach or a nearby café into bomb shelters until the rocket-firing stopped. As we drove along the beachfront between Tel Aviv and Jaffa on the way home the sirens started up. As others raced off to shelters, the automatic door of our people carrier opened up ever so slowly! A bit late for the bunkers we hunched up against a nearby wall and watched the Israeli missile defence rockets snake through the sky and shoot the rockets out of the air. While the rockets were not capable of anything like the destruction we have seen from Israeli airstrikes in Gaza, they were piercing through the lives of Tel Aviv's young residents and would not be forgotten.

Peace seems very far away from Israel and Palestine; that only makes it more important than ever. The current destruction is senseless. A lot of people can see that: many Israelis from the villages neighbouring Gaza where hundreds were killed a few weeks ago are pleading for a political solution, not more walls, bombing and rockets. And the Palestinians are asking simply for their basic rights. We can afford to carry the hope these people have long lost. And we can pray and call for peace. They need it now more than ever.

# St George's Coffee Club and Flower Committee Christmas Coffee Morning

# Saturday 9th December

Any donations of homemade jams, marmalade and pickles for this event would be most welcome.

Also, homemade cakes which can be brought on the day. If you are able to contribute any of these items, please let Sarah Cleverley know. (515257)

#### **Christmas Floral Decorations**

There will be some available on the day but to avoid disappointment they can be preordered.

Please contact Dorothy Luke (514918)



# St George's Church Coffee Club

On Tuesday 20th January The club will be having its

**Annual General Meeting** 

Linda Glascott (Tel 515582)

#### Mother in a storm

One cold winter night, during a violent storm, a mother was tucking her small, frightened little boy into bed. She was about to turn off the light when he said with a tremor in his voice: "Mummy, will you stay with me tonight?"

Mummy smiled and gave him a reassuring hug. "I can't, dear," she said, "I have to sleep with Daddy." A long silence – and then came his shaky reply: "The big coward!"

# **Christmas gifts**

Grandfather was talking to his granddaughter, "When I was a child all we got for Christmas was an apple and an orange."

The little girl clapped her hands in joy. "Brilliant! I'd love a new computer and a mobile!"



# Hamper raffle, Cake Raffle, Cakes, Jams & Pickles Tea, Coffee and Mince Pies

# **Proceeds in aid of Church funds**

# **LIFT ACCESS**

# Shadows - a Christmas 'Lullaby'

(Scottish traditional tune to the song is 'Bonnie George Campbell')
Here in this humble and ramshackle barn
earth confronts heaven as a baby is born,
Universe Maker and Artist Supreme,
Bringer of Hope and Creator of Dream.

Softly the animals shuffle and stir, sensing that strange things are happening here. Born as a 'no-one' in this 'nothing' place, Jesus is Lord of all time and space.

Filtering through the ill-fitting door, dim light illumines a scene of such charm, throws a dark shadow on ceiling and wall, shaping a cross standing upright and tall.

Yet for the present, the baby may sleep, cradled in cloths and all swaddled in love.
Time enough later, for trial and test.
Time enough now for deep peace and sweet rest.

#### **IMPORTANT NOTICE**

Coffee Mornings with our Ukranian friends are now taking place on the first Saturday of each month so they can meet with us and also catch up with each other and iron out any small problems.

The next meeting is on Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> December at 10.00am

#### Father Christmas...

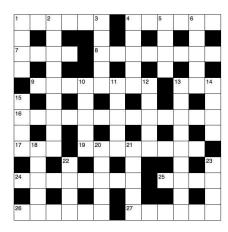
Of course, I had expected that by the age of seven it was inevitable that my son would begin to have serious thoughts about Father Christmas. Sure enough, one day near Christmas he suddenly said: "Mum, I know something about Father Christmas, the Easter Bunny and the Tooth Fairy." Taking a deep breath,

I asked him what that might be. "Easy," he said, "They are all nocturnal."

#### Crossword

**Across: 1** Rely (Psalm 62:7) (6)

4 'He stretches out the heavens like a —, and spreads them out like a tent to live in' (Isaiah 40:22) (6) 7 What the dove carried the olive leaf in, when it returned to Noah's ark (Genesis 8:11) (4) 8 Annoy (1 Samuel 1:6) (8) 9 Judah's last king, who ended his days as a blind prisoner in Babylon (Jeremiah 52:11) (8) 13 'They all — and were satisfied' (Luke 9:17) (3)



- **16** Eliphaz the Temanite was one; so was Bildad the Shuhite and Zophar the Naamathite (Job 2:11; 16:2) (4,9) **17** National Association of Evangelicals (of the USA) (1,1,1)
- 19 Popular song for New Year's Eve, Auld — (4,4) 24 Able dock (anag.) (8)
- **25** The number of stones David chose for his confrontation with Goliath (1 Samuel 17:40) (4) **26** Elgar's best-known 'Variations' (6) **27** Soak (Isaiah 16:9)
- (6). **Down: 1** Money owing (Deuteronomy 15:3) (4) **2** Conciliatory(Titus3:2)(9)
- **3** 'Do this, whenever you it, in remembrance of me' (1 Corinthians 11:25) (5)
- **4** A group assisting in the governance of the Roman Catholic Church (5)
- **5** One of the gifts Joseph's brothers took with them on their second journey to

Egypt (Genesis 43:11) (4) **6** 'Reach out your hand and — — into my side. Stop doubting and believe' (John 20:27) (3,2) **10** Be outstandingly good (2 Corinthians 8:7) (5) **11** 'What — — that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him?' (Psalm 8:4) (2,3) **12** Horse's feet (Judges 5:22) (5) 13 Notice (Deuteronomy 17:4) (9) **14** Comes between 2 Chronicles and Nehemiah (4) **15** One of Israel's northern towns conquered by Ben-Hadad (1 Kings 15:20) (4) **18** Narnia's Lion (5) **20** One of the two rivers in which Naaman would have preferred to wash (2 Kings 5:12) (5) **21** Avarice—one of the evils that come from inside people (Mark 7:22) (5) **22** Knight Grand Cross of St Michael and St George (1,1,1,1) **23** Jacob's first wife (Genesis 29:23) (4). *Solution on inside back page*.

#### The Christmas stars

Any astronomer can predict with absolute accuracy just where every star in the universe will be as the clocks chime midnight on Christmas Eve. He can make no such prediction about his teenage daughter.

**Sudoku**.....solution on inside back page

6	1			7				
					4	5		2
				8				3
	7		8			9		
		2				6		
		2			2		8	
4				5				
1		6	3					
				4			9	7

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# Christmas in my heart...

Christmas is in my heart twelve months a year and, thanks to credit cards, it's also

on my Visa card statement twelve months a year.

# Turkey....

He ate so much over the holidays that he decided to quit cold turkey. Which side of the turkey has the most feathers? The outside.

# Sums up Christmas...

Three phrases that sum up Christmas are: 'Peace on Earth'; 'Goodwill to Men'; and 'Batteries not included'.

#### Red...

What's red and white, red and white, and red and white? Father Christmas rolling down a hill.

## Stronger...

Statistics prove we're all getting stronger. Fifty years ago, you needed an estate car to hold £50 worth of Christmas presents. Twenty-five years ago, it took two people to carry £30 worth of Christmas groceries – now a five-year-old can do it

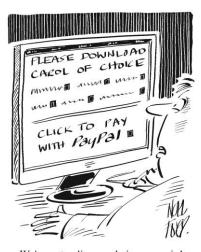
## What do you get Dad?

December is the month when the family begins to discuss what to get Dad for Christmas. Some argue for a shirt; others hold out for a pair of socks. But the argument usually ends in a tie.

## **Getting ready for Christmas...**

In this season of endless parties, socialising and constant hospitality, please remember:

- ~ No woman ever yet shot her husband while he was washing the dishes.
- ~ Light travels faster than sound. That's why some people appear bright until you hear them speak.
- ~ He who laughs last, thinks slowest.
- ~ Everyone has a photographic memory. But sadly, some don't have film.
- ~ Blessed are those who can laugh at



We've got online carol-singers again!

themselves, for they will never cease to be amused.

# **Christmas shopping...**

ŀ

was Christmas and the judge was in a benign mood as he asked the prisoner what he was charged with. "Doing my Christmas shopping early," replied the man. "Why, that's no offence," said the



Sara preferred to let people work out the hymns for themselves

judge. "How early were you doing it?"
"Before the store opened," replied the defendant.

#### Father Christmas...

Of course, I had expected that by the age of seven it was inevitable that my son would begin to have serious thoughts about Father Christmas. Sure enough, one day near Christmas he suddenly said: "Mum, I know something about Father Christmas, the Easter Bunny and the Tooth Fairy." Taking a deep breath, I asked him what that might be. "Easy," he said, "They are all nocturnal."

# **Country Dance Club.**

Hello dancers old, new and potential!

The 2024 dates are still to be confirmed but we usually meet on the second Saturday of the month: Jan 13<sup>th</sup>, Feb 10<sup>th</sup>, March 9<sup>th</sup>, April 13<sup>th</sup>, May 11<sup>th</sup>, June 8<sup>th</sup> and July 13<sup>th</sup>. Dancing starts at the usual times 7.30-9.30pm.

Bring your own refreshments and £2.00 for St George's hall hire costs. **You can just turn up but it is helpful if you can let me know you are coming.** Our last do the Christian Aid Ceilidh attracted a huge crowd and raised £500 + which is brilliant. It was great to have so many there. In 2023 we had just enough dancers each meeting but to have more would make it so much more fun. We would welcome some feedback and ideas, for example would it be better to have it at an earlier time, at teatime or afternoon; what type of dances are preferred, etc. If you haven't been coming recently, let me know if there are any changes would like to see. We now have a face book page!!!! You can see us in live action for 10 seconds!!! If you are a face booker please look for it, like it, make a comment and even joint it.

https://www.facebook.com/groups/1667324183706823/permalink/167599195950

We hope to see you soon Shirley

# Wordsearch

# The story of 'Silent Night'

6712/?sfnsn=scwspmo&ref=share.

This much-loved carol comes from Austria, where it was first sung as *Stille Nacht*, heilige Nacht on Christmas Eve, 1818. It was written by Father Joseph Mohr, a young priest at St Nicholas parish church, in the village of Oberndorf bei Salzburg. Christmas 1818 approached, he asked the local schoolmaster, Franz Xaver Gruber, to

MOHRLAAMASST RTNELISTILLE YEMGLIANRDNE JLBINGMMTTOM IOALDUTLSGIE TVSITNSEUESL OEIETSINAGRO YDNHPRRGAEED OAGIPHHIHCVY UILORACTFTHE NDEDOTADRIHT GCAGAFRAEHAU compose a melody for his carol. Gruber was organist in the nearby village of Arnsdorf, and so was happy to oblige. On Christmas Eve they presented the carol to the church during the midnight mass. The carol went on to become loved world-wide; and the version sung by Bing Crosby is the third best-selling single of all time.

Silent Night Loved Carol Austria First Sung Stille Nacht Heilige Christmas Eve Father Joseph Mohr Young Priest Organist Midnight Mass Melody Single Bing Version Third. Solution on inside back page.

# **St George's Church Morpeth**

**Country Dance Club** 

**Saturdays 7.30-9.30** 

Nov 11<sup>th</sup>, Jan 13<sup>th</sup> Feb 10<sup>th</sup>



You don't need a partner. You don't need to know how to dance,

Dances are explained and there is plenty time for a rest and a chat.

£2.00 for St George's Church Morpeth. Bring your own refreshments

Info from Shirley Forster 07749525269 shirlsgurc@gmail.com

+ see us in action on facebook 'Morpeth Country Dance Club'



# ADVANCE NOTICE

# St George's URC **MANAGERS COFFEE MORNING**



SALE OF OVERBOUGHT **CHRISTMAS GIFTS.** 

TEA, COFFEE AND HOMEMADE SCONES.

# Sat. 20th January 2024 10am to Noon

# Just a reminder – and an appeal to Members

We will need items to be provided for this sale. From Christmas onwards we will have a box in the vestibule where all items may be left. Donations may also be given directly to Gillian. Please don't forget that donations must be "as new" – we cannot sell second hand or used items.



# A short story from the Bible

It can be read in the Bible in Luke 1:26-56 & Matthew 1:18-25 In Israel, about 2000 years ago, a young woman, Mary,was going to marry Joseph. The weddings were in two stages.

In one year we will



Then God's messenger

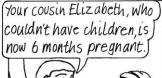


You will have God's baby, complete our wedding angel came to see Mary, and call him Jesus, 'aod saves because he will save people



How can this happen?

nothing is impossible





Mary visited

When Joseph heard that (This will bring) Mary was pregnant, he





shame on me and my family.)



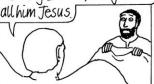
He always did what was right so he decided to end their marriage, but quietly.



But the angel came to him in a dream.



(Don't be afraid to marry Mary The baby is Gods, and you will callhim Jesus.)



So Joseph and Mary completed their marriage.



#### **Memories of Ted LeGrice**

A transcript of Ted's epitaph by Robert, Chris & Andrew LeGrice at Ted's Memorial Service.

"Born in Kings Lynn – Norfolk, Dad's father, MD of local drapers shop was very strict having been family prefect of 8 siblings as a child as his dad had been Baptist lay preacher and founder of the shop. Dad, youngest of 3 was mischievous to get attention and landed in trouble a lot (I'm sure you can't believe that!)

At grammar, whilst not studious, dad excelled at sport, and he played for the school. Here he developed those skills that would later stand out - teamwork, loyalty & can-do attitude.

At 16, wanting play sport at the weekend, he escaped working in the family shop and joined Lloyds Bank as a junior. Here he discovered ladies! With the war on there was plentiful supply of the fair sex and less competition. Nearly got him in trouble though!

At 18 in July '44, the war is raging in Europe and dad volunteers for the RAF, Unfortunately, he wanted them, but they didn't need him "we have too many pilots, your army needs you!"

So he joined up with the Royal Norfolk's, Identified as NCO material, he was sent to Inverness for training and after 6 months of early morning runs and salt & water porridge a tougher, fitter Ted was ready for anything! - Except he wasn't called Ted, he was nicknamed Jock! It won't have escaped your notice that dad's a natural mimic, much to the embarrassment of the rest of us. So 'Jock' was posted to India. However, on route the Japanese surrendered. "I was furious – I wanted to fight!! he said!" Dad was posted all over but mainly up in what's now Pakistan.

On Independence Day, Ted & his mates were the first on to the SS Georgic having taken the salute from Lord Mountbatten – a little bit of coincidence as where did he spend the last few months but Romsey, Lord Mountbatten's family seat.

Back at Lloyds, dad was posted to south Lincolnshire. It was at the local tennis club that he took a shine to a young attractive long legged young lady, Margaret, who shared all his interests. In 1953 wedding bells rang and dad was posted to deepest Essex.

They threw themselves into local activities and producing me. In '62, dad was posted to Wisbech, Cambridgeshire and in '65 he was very proud to be appointed Branch Manager Spilsby, Lincs. Sadly, months after his parents died,

my mum fell seriously ill and after a year in Sheffield & London hospitals, died. Four months later by dad's elder brother Frank also died leaving the shop, his wife and 2 boys.

Dad had to take leave to help them and sell the shop. How he coped without showing the strain it must have caused, I'll never know!

Despite the loss of mum, we made the best of things, and it was on a walking holiday in Italy that I noticed that he was loitering with intent at the back of the walking group with an attractive young lady, an unusual situation for a16 year old son! 2 years later Jill and dad married! It must have been tricky for Jill both as newly weds to have an 18 year old lad to share the house with but we all got on really well.

One Day in 1976, dad came home to say he'd been moved. He couldn't work out if to Penarth or somewhere called Morpeth, somewhere in the wild north! Shortly after our fears were allayed by the amazingly warm welcome we received. So warm in fact that dad & Jill felt compelled to produce their very own Northumbrians, all 6'4" of them! (AKA Chris and Andrew!) Scared or scarred by their nappies, after meeting my future lovely wife, I moved south to get married at which point, Chris and Andrew take up the tale....."

"Ted was different things to different people. For many people in Morpeth Ted was the Bank Manager at Lloyds for ten years. He absolutely loved that job; heading out to farms in the sticks to see how their businesses worked; trying to understand different crop yields and appreciate the many qualities of a cheviot sheep; pulling out the whisky from his office cabinet to serve the better customers. I'm sure Henry Brewis got a tipple... Once a bank manager, always a bank manager. He put on a performance wherever money was involved. When signing a cheque he spread his legs like a ballerina, he used to try to get a cash discount in the bakery we visited on holiday in Scotland, just to buy a few buns!!

And he brought his bank manager ways to the home, setting very small limits on the amount of toilet roll we were permitted to use, and opening presents very carefully so the wrapping paper could be reused next year. Christmas presents were also strictly rationed – friends were fascinated; we'd still be opening Christmas presents into New Year! Dad would also often wait until Christmas Eve to get out the decorations. Queen Victoria would have recognised Ted's parenting style. Stern. Strict. Long frowning face. Sounded a bit like the Lord Melchett character from Blackadder – baaaaaa! When my brother was born, Dad rolled into hospital and changed *his* name from baby Alex to baby Chris. He didn't mind too much if we fought outside. But in the

house we broke a lot of furniture and made a lot of noise.

So he dragged us all into the hills on a Saturday to wear us out, and as a payoff he would race us home in the car from the Cheviots down the back roads so we could get back in time to watch the A-Team.

For some reason we called mum and dad "Ted and Jill". Over time, he took on different names: Super Ted, Father Ted, Perry De Kweelez, Mein Farter, and Gross Farter (when David was born!), Dad was one for the accents. Not always good ones. But he would accidently mimic whoever he met – doctors in the hospital, Marshall Landalls from the bowls! Ted will be remembered as a competitor, always keen on sport. He planned to play in a golf competition on the day I was born. He was happy to rinse us at table tennis until we got the better of him. He loved his bowls, here in the church, and in the park. Dad was very good at inventing words in Boggle and Scrabble, and with the most innocent face, knock up a fabricated meaning for them in the hope we'd let it pass. (Even 3 days before he died when we were playing scrabble, says Robert) He was excited to see his great grandson James showing early promise with his overarm throw just a couple of months ago.

You could mark out dad's life by his ladies – his dear first wife Margaret who Robert told you about, our mum Jill who folk from Church will know, and for his last few years with dear Sue Errington.

It turns out he was always fond of the ladies. When dad joined Kirsty and I and the kids on holiday when he was 90, he decided to try swimming for the first time in decades. He looked like a listing ship. I thought he was in trouble but he explained that this was a technique he developed as a youth which meant he could swim always facing the shore and spot the local talent on the beach! And even in the last weeks of his life, he was still cheerfully chatting-up the ladies!

Mum and dad made a very good pair. Endlessly fascinated by the world and its contents and always interested in whatever interested the other.

Always at home in the hills, where they met, even if dad's navigation was not as solid as he'd like, and once they had mountain rescue come and find them as they tried to get our dogs off a hill on Arran in the dark! Dad would take up computers and use them to knock up the church newsletter: mum would do little drawings he could include, to bring it to life.

The stained glass windows on this side are from Jill's designs. When mum was drawing Jesus on the water we thought it looked like French football star David Ginola. For some reason this got dad all jealous and we goaded him pretty regularly about the "Painting of the Ginola!"

Dad loved to make music, of any sort. On Arran, he'd bash pans with wooden spoons in the kitchen when we were washing up. He used to get our border terriers to sing by playing the high notes on a recorder! Or play the blues harp sitting in the loft with his feet dangling down.

When mum died ten years ago, dad was pretty lost. But he tagged along to the Music Appreciation Society where dad met Sue Errington. She really gave him his life back and they became great companions. Ted adored Sue and quickly learned the difference between grey and blue ticks on WhatsApp as he waited for a reply to his messages. He was officially a teenager again, in his 90s! Sue was a real match for Ted; she had him pulling out thistles at the field near Newminster Abbey in his 90s! The Erringtons were so good to dad and brought him on their holiday to Centre Parks where a few years ago he tried to impress Sue by riding a bike, and crashed! And Dad's Granddaughter Helen remembers him flirting with Sue as they sang the Blaydon races together by the piano.

# The Church and the Morpeth family!!

This Church has been a family of its own for all of us for the last 30 years or more; ever since we started coming with our gran Mickey in 1988. In dad's later years we've been very touched by all the warmth and support dad had here in Morpeth: from the welcoming Errington family; the friendship of Noel and Lucy next door, and Itziar who is for so many people much more than a gardener! There are so many others.

It's a testament to the way Ted led his life, and his life-long love of cricket, that he wanted to get to his own century. Well, he's 97 and out. We thought he was old when we were born, so forty-odd years later, he's done alright. Ted would not have given a moment's thought about what we would say now, at his funeral. That's not really how he worked. He was still flirting with nurses in the ambulance that took him to hospital a few months ago. "You've got a pretty face' he said.

We are going to miss him, and his lust for life. God bless Ted. "

# **Great Bavington United Reformed Church**

Here is the news from Great Bavington

#### **December Services**

# Please note that services from November to March are at 2.30pm - apart from Christmas Eve

Sunday 3 December, 2.30pm, Rev Julian Sanders Sunday 17 December, 2.30pm, **Carol Service**, Rev Julian Sanders

## Christmas Eve, Sunday 24 December:

6.00pm: mince pies etc

6.30pm: carols and Christmas readings

If you would like to sing carols on Christmas Eve but don't want to stay up until midnight, this is the service for you! We suggest you bring a torch to light your way to the church, and wear good footwear as the path to the church can be wet and muddy.

## **January Services**

Sunday 7 January, 2.30pm, Rev Julian Sanders Sunday 21 January, 2.30pm, Rev Julian Sanders

# **Film Night**

Usually Film Night is on the second Monday of each month, but in December it will be on the second TUESDAY instead. It goes back to Monday in January.

**TUESDAY 12 December**, 7.00pm for 7.15pm start.

Fisherman's Friends (12): based on the true story of the Cornish singers (read about them here: https://thefishermansfriends.com/) and how they got their recording contract - and the culture shock experienced by the London music exec who signed them up.

**Monday 8 January**: 7.00pm for 7.15pm start. The Duke (12A): starring Helen Mirren and Jim Broadbent, based on the true story with North East connections:

In 1961, 60-year-old Kempton Bunton stole Goya's portrait of the Duke of Wellington from the National Gallery in London. He sent ransom notes saying that he would return the painting on condition that the government invested more in care for the elderly. What happened next became the stuff of legend. It is an uplifting true story about a good man who set out to change the world

and managed to save his marriage.

# **History Night**

History Night is on the fourth Tuesday of alternate months, so the next one will be on Tuesday 22 January at 7.00pm. The current topic of investigation is the schools which have been at Great Bavington from the 1700s to 1947.

## The church is open for visitors and walkers

Visitors from all over England and beyond sign the visitors' book, and leave so many appreciative comments about the church and being able to use its facilities. The church is usually open for visitors every day.

There are also some activities in the church for children (or anyone else who is feeling creative or would like to read or look for sheep). There's a purple bag hanging on one of the pews, with all sorts of things inside.

# Other events and updates

Please see the church's Facebook

page **www.facebook.com/GreatBavingtonURC** for updates, or ring 01830 540350. Please check prior to coming to a service or event, just in case there have been any last-minute changes.



# **Widdrington United Reformed Church**

PRAYING TOGETHER

If you would like to add any topics to next month's prayers, please let me know.

During Decemer and January please pray for:

All war zones

Refugees

The people of Afghanistan, especially women

Those suffering religious or ethnic persecution

Victims of natural disasters

Victims of crime

The work of relief agencies

Those suffering still from Covid19 throughout the world

Health workers and workers in essential industries and services

Medical researchers

The sick, both with physical and mental problems, and the recently bereaved

Those in financial difficulties, and fuel poverty

The homeless

The work of People's Kitchen and similar organisations

People who will be alone at Christmas

"Prayer, the Churches banquet, Angels age,

God's breath in man, returning to his birth,

The soul in paradise, heart in pilgrimage,

The Christian plummet, sounding heav'n and earth" (George Herbert)

Seven days without prayer makes one weak

#### WIDDRINGTON CHURCH NEWS

I'd like to invite everybody to contribute information that they think might be of interest. Just give me the details *in writing* either on a piece of paper or by email to **elliemist@gmail.com** and I'll do the rest. (I'd still welcome articles though). The **Copy Date** for each magazine is the second last Sunday of the month before the next issue. If you miss the deadline your contribution may have to be held over to the next issue.

**Flowers:** Flowers for December by Fiona, January and February by Kathleen. We will be putting up the tree on Saturday 9th December from 10.00am. The windowsill decorations will be done on Saturday 16th from 2.00pm. Donations of cash, or decorative berries (especially holly) would be welcome.

**Easy Fund Raising (Easy?)** Do you shop online? Have you joined Easy Fund Raising yet? The chances are that your vendor will be part of Easy Fund Raising. Amazon and John Lewis are, for instance. This means that if you register for Easy Fund Raising at easyfundraising.org.uk and select Widdrington United Reformed Church as your Good Cause 1 or 2 % of the purchase price of your item will come to us at no extra cost to yourself. This can range from a penny for a Kindle 99p short to several pounds for a major purchase. Please talk to Fiona about it soon (though you can ieasily register with no help from me, as all our members have discovered). We have raised over £400 so far with just nine members. We get a payout each quarter provided at least £15.00 has been raised. We had a payout in November of just over £24

**Fund raising:** We raised £85 from Coffee Club in the Hall. The Tear Fund Quiz raise at least £85

# Worship:

Please feel free to wear a mask - or not - as you wish. Hand sanitisers continue to be available.

You are invited to join us for coffee/tea after the service.

Preachers for December and January, along with duty rotas are in the table below.

#### Social:

December's event is our Church Christmas Meal which this year is a lunch on Saturday 2nd at Warkworth House at 1.00pm.

Also in December we have our Christmas Nativity Festival, which will be open on Saturday 2nd between 10am and 12 noon, and on Sunday from 1.00pm to 4.00pm.

In January there is a Twelfth Night Party at 7.00pm on Friday January 5th at

Cook's Hemmel, which will be a pooled supper. We are combining this with a discussion about our 2024 social programme.

# **Regular events:**

1st Tuesday: Coffee Club meets on the 1st Tuesday in the month at various coffee shops around the area. However, there will be no Coffee Club in December and January. We will start again in the Hall in February.

**1st Wednesday: Prayer Group**: We gather at Cook's Hemmel, Causey Park at 7.00pm. You are welcome to join us, or tell us any of your concerns for prayer.

**Open Church:** Open Church will continue, weather permitting on Wednesday mornings from 10.30am

**Facebook**: If you are on Facebook, have you checked out our Facebook page yet? Search for Widdrington United Reformed Church. Please like us and let me know if you think I've missed anything that should be on. The page now has 186 likes, with another 8 people 'following '! Any information we have about service arrangements and social events will be published there.

Please note: Sean, our sheep, has his own Facebook page! Search for 'Sean'. Sean now has 24 (+2 following!) page 'likes' but he wants some more, so please tell your friends about him!

The **website** is at: www.widdringtonurc.org.uk

I'd appreciate some help to improve it, as it's very wordy at the moment, partly because I'm happiest with words. I'm still looking for volunteers to be additional site editors. Someone with hardware that can post pictures would be good.

# **Churches Together in Widdrington and Ulgham:**

Christmas events: Saturday and Sunday 2nd & 3rd December is our Nativity Festival: this year it will be open on Saturday morning from 10-12 and on Sunday afternoon from 1-4.

Saturday 10th December: "Carathon" in Community Centre organised by Methodists. 10-12

16th/17th December: Christmas Carol Festival at Holy Trinity. Open Saturday 10-4, Sunday 1-5. Kathleen and I have some ideas for our display but we'd like to hear from you if you are interested in helping.

There will be a leaflet available detailing Christmas events and services. Advent Course in Widdrington URC Hall on Fridays from 1st December. Week of Prayer for Christian Unity: United Service: 9.30am on Sunday 21st January at Holy Trinity: No service in our church.

Also: Friday 19th: Lunch on Widdrington URC Hall; Thursday 25th: Prayers in Community Centre, 6.00pm.

#### **FEM**

# We are still collecting things!

- \*Medicine blister packs for Cancer Research
- \*Green plastic milk bottle tops to make wheelchairs: these seem to be no longer available. We are not sure if the clear ones are still wanted.
- \*Basic toiletries for the Ukraine appeal
- \*And don't forget the hamper for the food bank!
- \*Crisp packets no longer required.

# **December and January Rotas**

Sunday	Preacher	Vestry	Door/Offering
3rd	Pam Oakley	Diana Hogg	Kathleen Bailey
			Audrey Grieves
10th	Rev'd Julian Sanders	Fiona Middlemist	Diana Hogg
			Elizabeth Barber
17th	Sue Rutherford	Kathleen Bailey	Ruth Gordon
			Fiona Middlemist
24th	6.30pm Candlelight	To be arranged	To be arranged
	Carol Service		
31st	Worship Team	Diana Hogg	Kathleen Bailey
			Audrey Grieves
7th	Margery Tate	Fiona	Diana Hogg
		Middlemist	Elizabeth Barber
14th	Rev'd Julian	Kathleen Bailey	Fiona Middlemist
	Sanders. Holy		Ruth Gordon
	Communion		
21st	Week of Prayer for Ch	ristian Unity: 9.30an	n at Holy Trinity
28th	Sue Rutherford	Diana Hogg	Kathleen Bailey
			Audrey Grieves

# **Solutions:**

Crossword: ACROSS: 1, Depend. 4, Canopy. 7, Beak. 8, Irritate. 9, Zedekiah. 13, Ate. 16, Job's comforter. 17, NAE. 19, Lang Syne. 24, Blockade. 25, Five. 26, Enigma. 27, Drench. DOWN: 1, Debt. 2, Peaceable. 3, Drink. 4, Curia. 5, Nuts. 6, Put it. 10, Excel. 11, Is man. 12, Hoofs. 13, Attention. 14, Ezra. 15, Ijon. 18, Aslan. 20, Abana. 21, Greed. 22, GCMG. 23, Leah.

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2	5	8	6	4	1	3	9	7

#### Flower Rota for December

Dorothy Luke Dec 3

10

17 Church Decorated for Christmas

24

31

Rep Dorothy Luke 514918

# Stewards Duties for December/January

**Dec 3** Gordon Slack and Gillian Irvine

10 Katherine Smailes and Christine Oakes

17 Karen Howe and Sarah Cleverley (nativity)

24 Madeline and Sarah Cleverley

31 Christine Hawkins and Gordon Slack

Jan 7 Katherine Smailes and Karen Howe

14 Christine Hawkins and Christine Oakes

21 Madeline and Sarah Cleverley

Gillian Irvine and Gordon Slack 28