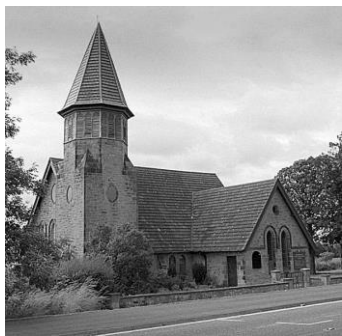




# St George's, Widdrington & Great Bavington United Reformed Churches Newsletter



The  
United  
Reformed  
Church



December & January 2021

Website: [stgeorgesurcmorpeth.org](http://stgeorgesurcmorpeth.org)

## St George's Diary Dates for December & January 2021

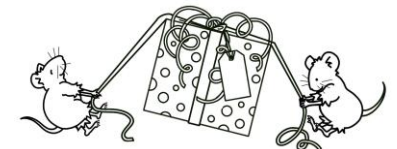
Sun 6th	10.30am	Morning Worship
Wed 9th	12.15 for 12.30pm	Midweek Service
Sun 13th	10.30am	Morning Worship
Wed 16th	12.15 for 12.30pm	Midweek Service
Sun 20th	10.30am	Morning Worship
Wed 23rd	12.15 for 12.30pm	Midweek Service
Fri 25th	<b>10.00am</b>	Christmas Day Service
Sun 27th	10.30am	Morning Worship
Wed 30th	12.15 for 12.30pm	Midweek Service
<b>Jan. Sun 3rd</b>	10.30am	Morning Worship
Wed 6th	12.30pm	Midweek Service
Sun 10th	10.30am	Morning Worship
Wed 13th	12.30pm	Midweek Service
Sun 17th	10.30am	Morning Worship
Wed 20th	12.30pm	Midweek Service
Sun 24th	10.30am	Morning Worship
Wed 27th	12.30pm	Midweek Service
Sun 31st	10.30am	Morning Worship

## Steward's Duty Rota December 2020 & January 2021

Sun 6 <sup>th</sup> December	Gillian Irvine and Andy Cleverley
Sun 13 <sup>th</sup> December	Helen Muckle and Sarah Cleverley
Sun 20 <sup>th</sup> December	Joan Cooper and Karen Howe
Fri 25 <sup>th</sup> Christmas Day	Helen Muckle and Gordon Slack
Sun 27 <sup>th</sup> December	Christine Oakes and Gordon Slack
Sun 3 <sup>rd</sup> January	Gillian Irvine and Andy Cleverley
Sun 10 <sup>th</sup> January	Helen Muckle and Sarah Cleverley
Sun 17 <sup>th</sup> January	Gordon Slack and Karen Howe
Sun 24 <sup>th</sup> January	Christine Oakes and Joan Cooper
Sun 31 <sup>st</sup> January	Sarah Cleverley and Madeline Cleverley

## Flower Rota for December

6	See Notice Board
13	Christmas Flowers
20	
27	
Rep:	Dorothy Luke 514918



## A Message from our Minister, Revd Julian Sanders

Dear Friends,

Jingle Bells! Jingle Bells! I'm afraid you can't deny it but Christmas is coming, and despite what people might be saying it is not cancelled and remains one of the major festivals in our churches calendar. Though, this year I strongly suspect Christmas might feel very different than what we have become used to.

It is good to be reminded, then, that the reality of Christmas is a lot different from the commercial façade that is drummed into us each year in the shops and from the television. At Christmas God came into the world to tell us we don't need to shop for 'things' to make our lives complete. And the 'house' that Jesus was born in was not finely decorated and cosy, but bleak and dirty. Mary and Joseph were not surrounded by friends and family, but alone and in a strange place. And the Angels and Shepherds were not characters in a story told to entertain us, but a truth and a mystery to be lived.

The Angels speak of the 'holiness' of the one who was born in that stable, and the 'shepherds' speak of his earthliness. How these two, heaven and earth, come together in that little baby in the manger is one of profound mysteries we are called to consider at Christmas.

*A group of children were performing a nativity play, and were encouraged to improvise and use their own words to add to some of the realism. Two shepherds approached the manger nervously, smiled at Mary, and shyly knelt down without a word. A third, bolder boy, looked into the manger, turned to Mary and with a smile said, "Isn't he like his dad!"*

How profound is that? God in all his majesty embraces our earthliness in the mystery of Christmas. When we think of Jesus we think of the baby in the manger, or the Galilean teacher, or the silent sacrifice hanging on the cross. The Christmas story reminds us that Jesus, despite his humanity, was totally God too, in all his majestic glory. That is the mystery. Jesus is just like his Dad (God).

"Here in Jesus is a parallel like no other, closer and more striking than even perfectly identical twins, for the Son does not just resemble the Father; he is one with him, fully and completely making him known. To know Jesus is to know God, to look at his life is to see God at work, to experience his love is to be touched by God's love in turn." *Nick Fawcett*

I hope that this Christmas, even if it is to be a Christmas without the traditions and the façade that we have come to love and look forward to, that you find time to sit and contemplate the mystery of this child born in a stable where heaven and earth meet. This person Jesus who was fully God and fully human. This baby who was just like his father in every way.

I wish you peace and happiness this Christmas time,

*Julian*

## CHRISTMAS ARRANGEMENTS

**You will be aware that many of our usual church traditions have had to be cancelled this year, but we do hope that you will be able to join with us over the Christmas period in some of our usual services.**

**At the time of writing, we plan to have our Christmas Eve services at Gt Bavington and Widdrington, and Christmas morning service at Widdrington and St George's URC.**

**There will be no midnight service at St George's on Christmas Eve.**

Please don't forget there are further opportunities for us to meet online together as church throughout the week:

Tuesdays 1:30pm – 3:00pm Advent Course "The Voice of the Prophet"

Thursdays 7:00pm – 8:30pm Advent Course "The Voice of the Prophet"

Fridays 10:30am-11:30am Virtual Coffee Mornings

Get in touch with me for details of how to access these, or keep an eye on our Facebook pages/websites.

## Good news

Derek and Lorna Anderson are delighted to announce the marriage of their youngest daughter Kelly to Thomas Scott on Thursday 29th October in North Yorkshire.

The ceremony was attended by their immediate families.



## Refugees and Asylum Seekers November 2020

### West End Refugee Service

Since last month's report there have been the autumn newsletter and WERS AGM with all the reports etc which goes with it. So in this report I can give a brief flavour of what has been happening but if you are interested in greater detail please go to their website at [www.wers.org.uk](http://www.wers.org.uk)

One big piece of news from the AGM is that the previous day they had appointed a new Director, Hannah Barnes. Hannah has been working with WERS for some time and has been Acting Director, since June. During the meeting she spoke very enthusiastically about the work of WERS and the team of staff and volunteers who make WERS function.

The reports at the AGM detailed the amount of hard work that had been ongoing in the year 2019-20 so only included the first week or so of the lockdown, but the talks went on to stress how much work they had been able to continue doing, recently, albeit in different ways.

During the year 2019-20 they had had 70 volunteers who had provided between them 5000 hours of support whether in the clothing store, acting as befrienders, working in Skillsmatch, support workers, gardeners etc. They had had 5065 contact episodes to provide support and advice. This had been with 510 different service users, 178 of whom were new to the service in that year. They had been able to make 62,399 hardship donations. 1668 people had been reached by Awareness Raising, especially in schools. This had also led to further donations in money and kind.

Due to the pandemic they have been working differently and now work in conjunction with the food banks, providing a delivery service where necessary. They have continued with their befriending but often done remotely. They managed to open face to face work again in August, two days a week, in a covid secure setting, sitting outside whenever possible.

Their festive appeal is for toiletries, socks and chocolates but these need to be with them by 1 December. But people can still make donations to the hardship fund for the festive appeal at <https://www.justgiving.com/wers>. They also remind people they can sign up to support them through amazon smile or "giveasyoulive".

### Justice and Peace

Over the past few months Justice and Peace has been developing closer working relationships with the St Vincent de Paul charity and the intention is that in the near future the project will move to the SVP site at Blackfriars in the New Bridge Street area of Newcastle.

This base will give them more space and will be more accessible. The work the centre has been reduced significantly throughout the pandemic as most of their volunteers are aged 70+, but they have continued to give out food vouchers to their refugee and asylum seeker contacts. This time has been used positively as they have been busy making plans for the future.

I am advised that the SVP centre works largely with homeless and destitute men and they have a functioning clothes store at the moment. So if anyone has men's clothing or sheets (but not duvets) which they wish to pass on arrangements could be made for this, but **not** via the garage. If you have goods to send please let me know and I can try and put you in touch with someone who could advise you on this. (margaretdbrock@aol.com)

### Ruhi Aktar

As regular readers will know Ruhi Aktar, from Morpeth, works with refugees and asylum seekers on the Greek islands. Joy Wight has shared with us a thought from her

*"I hope ...*

*That when I stand before my God at the end of my life, I would not have a single bit of talent, skill, love, fight, courage, prayer, heart and soul left, and I can say 'I used everything you gave me.'"* (Ruhi Aktar)

**Margaret Brock**

### Christian Aid

This Christmas, Christian Aid is facing the climate crisis by supporting the charities which are doing as much as possible to help those in desperate need in their countries. Lack of rain is making survival and farming difficult for many. It can be tackled, but needs money to do it.

C/A is giving us a present to help us celebrate Christmas. It is a 'candle shield', but can be used in other ways. It is decorative and comes with suggestions of how to use it. Those of you who have received this magazine will already have your festive candle shield, but if you take this magazine online that will not be the case. However there are copies of it in church. (It is printed on card and is ready for you to colour and use as instructed). Hopefully you will be able to get to church before Christmas and get one to help decorate your home.

It would be good if you could respond to this gift by making a donation to their Christmas Appeal. This donation would help those whose survival is being made so difficult due to the climate crisis. You can find out more about their Christmas Appeal at [caid.org.uk/hope](http://caid.org.uk/hope)

**Margaret Johnson**

## **NOTES FROM THE MEETING OF THE NORTHERN SYNOD HELD BETWEEN 17 AND 31 OCTOBER 2020.**

The Spring 2020 Northern Synod Meeting was cancelled due to the Covid 19 pandemic, but our resourceful national church accepted that “virtual” Synod Meetings would be perfectly acceptable so the Northern Synod “met” via Zoom on the mornings of Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> October. For the intervening fortnight, there was a Festival of Tents – virtual meeting places via Zoom, which included daily worship and two or three events to join such as policy proposals, safeguarding, ecumenical and inter-faith workings, children’s work, and there was even a quiz, a treasure hunt and a concert. I understand that those who joined were inspired, informed, enthused and reconnected. If Synod does it again, we should all join in – I regret not doing so on this occasion.

The Moderator, Revd David Herbert welcomed everyone – I think there were approximately 60 participants and we had opening worship with prayers prepared by Carla Grosch-Miller. We heard of comings and goings and retirements from Synod Clerk, Melanie Campbell. Ordination anniversaries included Peter Rand 40, David Grosch-Miller 45 and Tony Ritchie 60. We also heard that it was Synod Officer, Andrew Atkinson’s 50<sup>th</sup> Meeting (*he deserves a medal!*). Youth Intern, Amelia Turner, received the Lundy Award for two years service at Roker.

Safeguarding Adviser, Matt Knowles introduced the latest edition of Good Practice (5) and urged everyone to attend at least the basic level course of three. St George’s Safeguarding person is Margaret Brock who can arrange for our members to attend.

In her report, Pastoral Committee Convener, Revd Joan Grindrod-Helmn said that Revd Dr Carla Grosch-Miller’s term as Transitional Minister at St Andrew’s, Monkseaton, has been extended due to Covid 19. Carla is working at 50% until the work is completed. Revds Lynda Coulthard and Ann Shepherdson have been re-invited to serve in SENEa with the approval of the SENEa Area Meeting (Resolutions 2 and 3 carried). The Holy Island Project has been granted a third term as a Special Category Ministry until 2026.

Sadly resolutions 4 and 5 were carried - “giving thanks for the faithful life and service through the years, Synod concurs with the decision of the Church Meetings to close Berwick United Reformed Church and Crookham United Reformed Church.”

Northern Synod Trust Convener, David Grosch-Miller, introduced retired accountant Willie Duncan as the new Trust Secretary, following the retirement of Andrew Hamnett after eight years as Company Secretary and almost ten on the Board. He recorded our gratitude for Andrew’s wealth of experience and his contribution to the work of the Trust.

David emphasized that the Trust is committed to support congregations as best as they can and he also reassured Synod that there is no threat to pensions. Following discussion, Resolution 9 was carried: “Synod, being representative of Local Churches and part of the whole Church, affirms the Church’s commitment to the pensions promises already made, and wishes any consideration of future pension arrangements for the Church’s Ministers of Word and Sacraments, Church-Related Community Work Ministers, missionaries and staff to keep clearly in mind:

- a. The Church’s warm gratitude for the commitment, gifts and service of those who work among us and serve in our name;
- b. The Church’s desire to deal with these people honourably in their retirement;
- c. The Church’s desire to act as a responsible employer, for the people of the Church employs and for our stipendiary office-holders.

*(NOTE: full reports and resolutions are on the Synod website. Some Resolutions were taken en bloc).*

David Dick is preparing a new Synod website, reflecting our aims of Belonging, Caring, Growing Faith – new branding to reflect our core beliefs. Visitors will be able to find their nearest church by entering a postcode.

During worship we had reflections from General Secretary of the URC, Revd John Bradbury, (which may be seen on the Northern Synod website) and the Moderator closed the meeting with prayer.

“Yet not I, but through Christ in me.”

**Joyce Calcraft**



# Bible Bite

A short story from the Bible

It can be read in the Bible in  
Luke 2 verses 22-38

God promised the Jews that when times were bad, He would send a leader to save them. He told Simeon it would happen in his life time.

God told Simeon to go to the Temple.



He saw a couple with a baby.

Mary and Joseph had come to give their offerings for their first-born, Jesus, and for child birth.



Simeon held Jesus and praised God.



I can now die in peace because You have kept Your promise.



I have seen the one You have sent to save Your people and all the world!

Mary and Joseph were amazed! Simeon blessed them, but said..



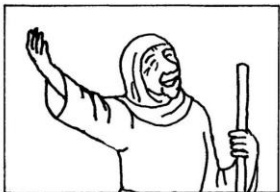
This child will show what people are really like inside and this will mean pain for you as well.



Anna the prophet was also in the Temple.

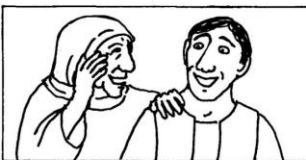


Her family was from the north of Israel and she was very old.

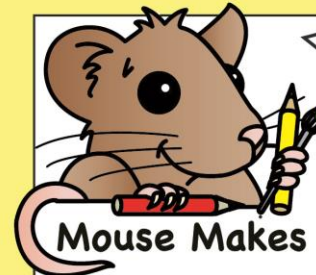


She spent every day praying in the Temple.

When she saw Jesus she praised God.



Anna spoke about Jesus to everyone who was waiting for God's Saviour.



Mouse Makes

HAPPY CHRISTMAS!

Read the Christmas story in Luke 1:1 - 2:21

"I bring you **good news** that will bring great **joy** to all people. The **Saviour** has been born today! ...

Glory to God in the highest heaven, and peace on earth to those with whom God is pleased".

from Luke 2 vs. 10,11,14



A picture to colour for Christmas. Colour in one star each day as you count down to Christmas!

## Crossword for December/January

**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 (Titus 3:2) (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)

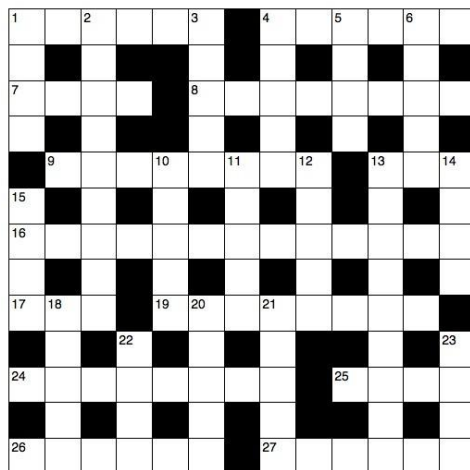
5 One of the gifts Joseph's brothers took with them on their second journey to Egypt (Genesis 43:11) (4) 6 'Reach out your hand and — — into my side. Stop doubting and believe' (John 20:27) (3,2) 10 Be outstandingly good (2 Corinthians 8:7) (5) 11 'What — — that you are mindful of him, the son of man 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 page 23*

**Present...** First man: 'My wife doesn't know what she wants for Christmas.

'Second man: 'You're lucky. Mine does.'



## Eglantyne Jebb – founder of 'Save the Children'

Here is a modern-day saint whose compassion and determination has saved literally millions of lives. Eglantyne did not begin as an obvious 'mover and shaker' of people. Born in Shropshire in 1876, she grew up in Ellesmere, studied history at Lady Margaret Hall in Oxford, taught at Marlborough, and then resigned as she was not physically robust.

Eglantyne moved to live with her mother in Cambridge, and it would have been so easy to settle for a life of peaceful obscurity. But she was a Christian, and at Oxford she had developed a passion for social concerns, so this compassion now drove her to take action. She began in 1906 by publishing research on the poverty she'd found in Cambridge. Then in 1912 the Balkan Wars broke out, and Eglantyne left Cambridge for Macedonia. Her months among the refugees led her to decide that long-term constructive aid was more effective than short-term handouts.

The First World War left Eglantyne horrified by the prolonged Allied blockade on Germany and Austria-Hungary, which even after Armistice meant starvation for millions of civilians, especially children.

And so in 1919 Eglantyne and her sister Dorothy Buxton helped found the 'Fight the Famine' Council, which wanted to end the blockade and establish a League of Nations. One day during a rally in Trafalgar Square, Eglantyne was arrested for distributing a leaflet showing starving children which read: "Our blockade has caused this – millions of children are starving to death."

She ended up in court and was fined, but the judge was so impressed with Eglantyne's commitment to children that he himself paid her fine. His money became the first donation to Save the Children, the new charity just set up by Eglantyne and Dorothy.

Save the Children was officially launched at the Albert Hall in May 1919, with the aim of helping the starving civilians of central Europe. It was a success, raising £400,000 in that first year alone. When in the autumn of 1921 Russia was facing famine, Save the Children chartered a cargo ship, the SS Torcello, to carry 600 tons of lifesaving food and medical supplies to Russia – saving hundreds of thousands of lives. By 1922 Save the Children had become one of Britain's biggest charities. Eglantyne's Declaration of the Rights of the Child, written in 1923, was adopted by the League of Nations the following year. The present-day UN Convention on the Rights of the Child is derived from it.

But ten years of running Save the Children had sapped Eglantyne's fragile strength, and she died in Geneva in 1928, aged only 52.

## Homeless King Carol (Tune Brahms lullaby)

Baby Jesus, God's own son,  
Y-ou came to this ea-rth  
As a humble human child  
When you chose to share our birth.  
Source of Hope, Prince of Peace,  
Word of Truth, Grace of Go-d,  
Bringing light in the dark;  
Come and live in our hearts.



Homeless king, in our world,  
A-n outhouse your birthplace,  
As an infant refugee  
Yo-u joined the human race,  
Image of the Father's love  
Fo-r all of humanity,  
Bringing joy to quell our fear;  
Come and live in our hearts.

Loving Saviour of the world  
W-e ask for your blessing  
T-o live life to the full,  
Helping o-thers in need.  
As we learn to share your love  
W-ith neighbour and stranger,  
Bringing peace to all we meet;  
Come and live in our hearts.

(C) **Carol Dixon**

## Wordsearch for December

### Silent Night

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. As Christmas 1818 approached, he asked the local schoolmaster, Franz Xaver Gruber, to 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

S	I	I	O	E	V	E	T	E	T	A	L
T	H	I	R	D	G	H	N	L	F	Y	E
T	V	O	G	G	G	I	E	G	A	O	L
I	E	I	A	I	N	E	L	N	T	U	O
P	R	S	N	I	J	U	I	I	H	N	R
B	S	D	I	H	R	O	S	S	E	G	A
S	I	E	S	A	M	T	S	I	R	H	C
M	O	V	T	F	I	T	S	E	I	R	P
C	N	O	S	L	I	R	H	U	P	E	T
I	E	L	L	A	H	R	V	G	A	H	U
V	M	E	L	O	D	Y	S	B	I	N	G
S	S	A	M	N	A	C	H	T	H	N	H

*Solution on page 23*

**Picture...** The teacher asked her Sunday school class to draw a picture of a Bible story with a Christmas theme. She was puzzled by Kate's picture, which showed four people on an airplane. She asked her which story it was meant to represent. 'The Flight to Egypt,' was the reply. Pointing at each figure, the teacher ventured: 'That must be Mary, Joseph, and Baby Jesus. But who's the fourth person?' 'Oh,' explained Kate happily, 'that's Pontius – the pilot!' Attention

With several relatives visiting, I was struggling to get my wife's attention. So, I simply sat down and looked comfortable. That did the trick.



**St James the Least of All...** *The Revd Dr Gary Bowness continues his tongue-in-cheek letters from 'Uncle Eustace'...*



## On the best ways for a vicar to disrupt Christmas

### My dear Nephew Darren

I am sorry I was not alive during that wonderful four-year period when Oliver Cromwell abolished Christmas; no Christmas parties, no carol services, no cards to send and no frantic last-minute shopping. That man was a hero.

Planning for Christmas at St James' normally starts on 2<sup>nd</sup> January. By Easter, the flowers for church have been carefully chosen to be colour coordinated, and the seating plans and table decorations for the Christmas party have been allocated (with nominated reserves in case someone should inconveniently die in the intervening eight months). Long before summer is over, the tree lights have been tested, music for the 9 Lessons and Carols Service has been chosen and the service sheets printed. Way before the dark nights set in, car parking attendants will have been found, those who are to light all the candles will have been rehearsed to perfection and the brass lectern has had its annual polish. We do not do spontaneity at St James the Least of All. If ever there was a service when time for something unexpected had to be allowed, its place would be announced in the order of service, how long the unexpected thing would happen for would have been decided by a committee, and who was to be spontaneous would have been allocated on a rota.

But the one person none of these well-meaning, efficient, committed organisers can control is the Rector. You could call it a staff perk.

Carols will (accidentally, of course) be announced in the wrong order; if verse 3 was to be omitted, I announce it will be verse 4. This keeps the organist on his toes while the choir hovers on the point of a collective nervous breakdown. At the Christmas supper, my introductory welcome speech and extensive grace make those in the kitchen wonder if the vegetables being boiled should better be served as thick soup.

I offer the helpful suggestion that the tree, having been installed and decorated in the chancel, may perhaps look better in the sanctuary and I turn all the heating off throughout the season, explaining that it will help the flowers to last.

All Services will start five minutes early (was my watch rather fast?) so I can look disapprovingly at those still coming in while we are singing the first carol and making it clear that I think they had spent too long in the pub next door.

And so we all reach Christmas morning, with 12 months of planning having gone yet again slightly awry, with parishioners exhausted and I exhilarated at the chaos that has been created with such ease. Mr Cromwell, your spirit lives on.

Your loving uncle, Eustace

## Sudoku for December

*Solution on page 23*

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

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**Next Christmas....** A grandson had just taken a photograph of his grandmother who'd come to stay for Christmas and her 89th birthday. 'Grannie, I hope I'm around next year to photograph you on your 90th birthday,' he said tactfully. 'Why not?' his grandmother shrugged. 'You look healthy enough.'

**Angels?** Two daughters had been given parts in a Christmas pageant at their Church. At dinner that night, they got into an argument as to who had the most important role. Finally, the 14 year-old said to her 8 year-old younger sister, 'Well, you just ask Mum. She'll tell you it's much harder to be a virgin than it is to be an angel.'

**Friction at Christmas...** This Christmas, when your family gets together, remember: a certain friction between the generations is inevitable. After all, the young and the old have all the answers and those in between are stuck with all the questions.

**Angels on high...** The young minister was tense as he announced a Christmas carol for his first live-streamed church service. 'Our next hymn,' he said, 'is "Angels We Have Heard Get High".'

# P.R.E.S.S

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**The wonderful Pam Ayres...now 73 years old and penned her latest ode ~  
to Coronavirus...**

I'm normally a social girl; I love to meet my mates  
But lately with the virus here we can't go out the gates  
You see, we are the 'oldies' now we need to stay inside  
If they haven't seen us for a while they'll think we've upped and died

They'll never know the things we did before we got this old  
There wasn't any Facebook so not everything was told  
We may seem sweet old ladies who would never be uncouth  
But we grew up in the 60s - if you only knew the truth!  
There was sex and drugs and rock 'n roll The pill and miniskirts  
We smoked, we drank, we partied and were quite outrageous flirts

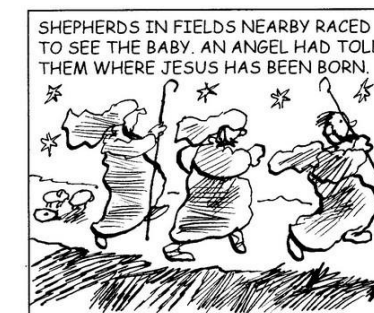
Then we settled down, got married and turned into someone's mum,  
Somebody's wife, then nana, who on earth did we become?  
We didn't mind the change of pace because our lives were full  
But to bury us before we're dead is like a red rag to a bull!

So here you find me stuck inside for four weeks, maybe more  
I finally found myself again then I had to close the door!  
It didn't really bother me I'd while away the hour  
I'd bake for all the family but I've got no flaming flour!

Now Netflix is just wonderful I like a gutsy thriller  
I'm swooning over Idris or some random sexy killer  
At least I've got a stash of booze for when I'm being idle  
There's wine and whiskey, even gin if I'm feeling suicidal!

So let's all drink to lockdown to recovery and health  
And hope this awful virus doesn't decimate our wealth  
We'll all get through the crisis and be back to join our mates  
Just hoping I'm not far too wide to fit through the flaming gates!

***Submitted by Gillian Irvine***



## **Safeguarding Training**

Earlier this year the URC published new policy and good practice guidance for safeguarding children, young people and adults at risk. It is called Good Practice 5. Work has been ongoing to update our safeguarding procedures in line with this.

To support Good Practice 5 three levels of training are being arranged. The first level is designed for anyone and everyone within the church. You do not need to have a specific church responsibility to do this basic level training and it doesn't matter whether you have never done any training before or if you have done some and feel you could do with a refresher. It lasts for no longer than 2 hours (with a comfort break) and can be done from the comfort of your own armchair at home. All you need is a device with internet access and a camera so you can join in with other course members.

The training is being done via Zoom by Matt Knowles, the Synod Safeguarding Lead. If you are interested and don't know how to get on to Zoom, Matt will help you do it.

Every session is relaxed and informal and you can ask questions throughout. At the end you will get a certificate and it is FREE.

The next sessions are on Monday 11th January at 1.00pm and Wednesday 20th January at 10.00am. If you are interested in these or other dates in the future please let me know. Everyone is welcome to do the training. Matt would love everyone to do it.

Training is also being arranged for level 2 which is for people with specific roles in the church including elders, junior church leaders, leaders of organisations etc. Level 3 is for people who require more detailed knowledge. If you are interested in either of these courses do let me know and I will contact you when dates are available.

**Margaret Brock (margaretdbrock@aol.com)**

## ***Miscellaneous observations during the Christmas season...***

Putting on weight is the penalty for exceeding the feed limit.

Christmas: The time when everyone gets Santamental.

Christmas is the season when your neighbour keeps you awake playing 'Silent Night'.

Some of these new toys are so creative and inventive. This year they have a Neurotic Doll. It's wound up already.

## **Toy Service / Morpeth Lions Christmas Appeal**

This year's Toy Service was due to take place on Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> November but as we are in national lockdown the service cannot go ahead as planned. Morpeth Lions are still taking donations towards their Christmas Appeal. They have an adequate number of toys but can always accept more. They especially need clothes for the age range 7 to 13 e.g. pyjamas, socks, underwear, snuggle blankets and any other clothes that you can think of. These donations can be left at the Church when it is open for private prayer on Wednesdays between 12.15pm and 1pm or contact Robin and Joan Cooper on 515682. The Lions are also accepting money donations; you can do this online via [www.justgiving.com/morpethlions](http://www.justgiving.com/morpethlions) or leave a sealed envelope at the church, marked 'FAO Robin & Joan Cooper'. Thank you.

***Teresa Benkhaleb-House, Church Secretary***

## **Request for British Legion Poppies**

I am collecting Poppies to refurbish the Church Remembrance Cross for next year and would be happy to use yours if you haven't already discarded it. Please leave in the vestibule in the box provided.

Thank you, ***Joan Cooper***

## **A Message from Elsie Lang**

Just to let you know that I moved into Morpeth on Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> November, and that my new address is **3 Chantry Mews, Bridge Street, NE61 1PT.**

I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone for their good wishes and phone calls which I have received over the past months.

Thank you, ***Elsie***

## **Angel Update....**

Well you will be thrilled to hear that as I write this, 225 angels are boxed and ready to go to nursing/care homes already.

Thanks to an amazing donation of 375 we are able to give one to residents in Rennick and St Christopher's house as well.

I now look forward to multiple bagging and tagging by my little team.

Thanks to everyone who is helping to make this year extra special on the Angel front.

***Patricia***

If you could fit the entire population of the world into a village consisting of 100 people, maintaining the proportions of all the people living on Earth, that village would consist of 57 Asians 21 Europeans 14 Americans (North, Central and South) 8 Africans

There would be: 52 women and 48 men 30 Caucasians and 70 non-Caucasians 30 Christians and 70 non-Christians 89 heterosexuals and 11 homosexuals 6 people would possess 59% of the wealth and they would all come from the USA 80 would live in poverty 70 would be illiterate 50 would suffer from hunger and malnutrition 1 would be dying 1 would be being born 1 would own a computer 1 (yes, only one) would have a university degree

If we looked at the world in this way, the need for acceptance and understanding would be obvious.

If you woke up this morning in good health, you have more luck than one million people, who won't live through the week.

If you have never experienced the horror of war, the solitude of prison, the pain of torture, were not close to death from starvation, then you are better off than 500 million people.

If you can go to your place of worship without fear that Someone will assault or kill you, then you are luckier than 3 billion (that's right) people. If you have a full fridge, clothes on your back, a roof over your head and a place to sleep, you are wealthier than 75% of the world's population.

If you currently have money in the bank, in your wallet and a few coins in your purse, you are one of 8 of the privileged few amongst the 100 people in the world.

If your parents are still alive and still married, you're a rare individual. If someone sent you this message, you're extremely lucky, Because someone is thinking of you and because you don't comprise one of those 2 billion people who can't read.

AND SO? Work like you don't need the money. Love like nobody has ever hurt you. Dance like nobody is watching. Sing like nobody is listening. Live as if this was paradise on Earth.

Send this message to your friends. Bypass those who are determined to see the worst in the world no matter what. If you don't send it, nothing will happen. If you do send it, someone might smile while they are reading it, and that will be a positive.

AND APART FROM THAT, SIMPLY HAVE A NICE DAY

***Submitted by Gillian Irvine***

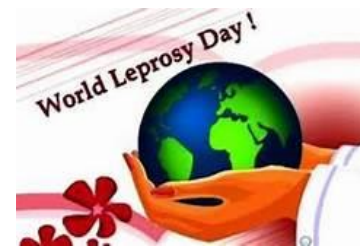
## **Stamps**

I hope you will all be collecting postage stamps for charity over the Christmas period, when we all receive far more than at any other time of the year. Even if you are not planning to return to Church when it hopefully reopens in December, you can still collect them at home and bring them in when times are more normal. Thank you.



***David Calcraft***

## **World Leprosy Day**



World Leprosy Day is on Sunday 31st January and St George's will have its usual retiring collection plate for contributions. This often forgotten charity, The Leprosy Mission does wonderful work which transforms the lives of so many people affected by leprosy.

***Joyce Calcraft***

## **2021 Free Will Offering (FWO) Envelopes**

As usual I have prepared the envelopes for next year and was planning to distribute them in November but because we are unable to have Sunday services at the moment that is not possible. Hopefully we will be in church again in December and they will be available then, I know some members of the congregation have decided to change to direct payments so my records may be a little out of date. I look forward to seeing you all face to face soon and in the meantime hope you are all well.

Please ring me if you need them to be delivered and I will try to get them to you.

Many thanks **Linda Glascott Tel: 01670 515582**



## The Christmas List

I have a list of people I know  
all written in a book  
And every year at Christmastime  
I go and take a look  
And that is when I realise  
that those names are a part  
Not of the book they're written in  
but of my very heart  
For each name stands for someone  
who has crossed my path some time  
And in that meeting they've become  
a treasured friend of mine  
And once you've met some people  
the years can not erase  
The memory of a pleasant word  
or a friendly face  
So when I send a Christmas card  
that is addressed to you  
It's because you're on that list  
of folk I'm indebted to  
And you are one of many folk who  
in times past I've met  
And happen to be one of those  
I don't want to forget  
And whether I have known you for  
many years or few  
In some way you have a part in  
shaping things I do  
This, the spirit of Christmas, that  
forever and ever endures  
May it leave its richest blessing  
in the hearts of you and yours.

**Anon – Submitted by Joy Wight**

## 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.

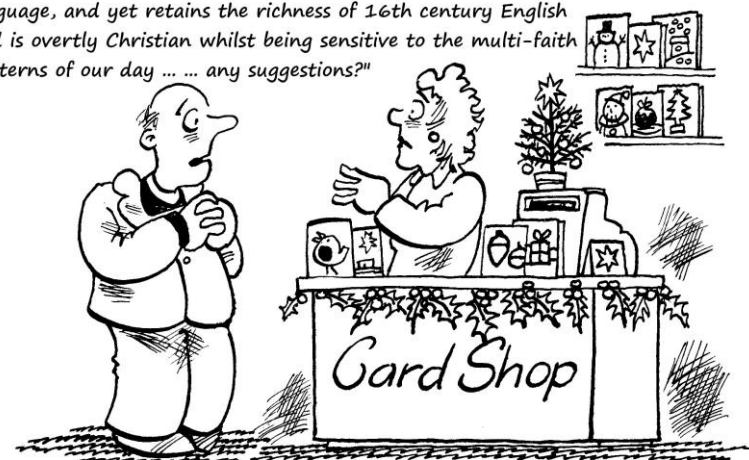
**DOWN:** 1, Debt. 2, Peaceable. 3, Drink. 4, Curia. 5, Nuts. 6, Put it. 10, Excel. 11, Is man. 12, Hoofs. 13, Attention. 14, Ezra. 15, Ijon. 18, Aslan. 20, Abana. 21, Greed. 22, GCMG. 23, Leah.

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

S	I	O	E	V	E	T	E	T	A	L	
T	H	I	R	D	G	H	N	L	F	Y	E
T	V	O	G	G	G	I	E	G	A	O	L
I	E	I	A	I	N	E	L	N	T	U	O
P	R	S	N	I	J	U	I	I	H	N	R
B	S	D	I	H	R	O	S	S	E	G	A
S	I	E	S	A	M	T	S	I	R	H	C
M	O	V	T	F	I	T	S	E	I	R	P
C	N	O	S	L	I	R	H	U	P	E	T
I	E	L	L	A	H	R	V	G	A	H	U
V	M	E	L	O	D	Y	S	B	I	N	G
S	S	A	M	N	A	C	H	T	H	N	H

**21<sup>st</sup> December: Winter Solstice**

"I am looking for a Christmas Card that contains inclusive language, and yet retains the richness of 16th century English and is overtly Christian whilst being sensitive to the multi-faith patterns of our day ... any suggestions?"






## 'Virtual Christmas Social'

St Georges Christmas Social will be held on  
12<sup>th</sup> December at 7pm  
"Virtual Christmas Social", will be an evening of  
seasonal  
poems and music.

The Zoom Meeting ID for this session is 839  
7865 1321



### **Great Bavington United Reformed Church**

#### **December**

If Covid restrictions permit, there will be a service at Great Bavington URC on Sunday 6 December at 4.00pm (note the earlier time).

All being well, the Christmas Eve service will be at 6.30pm but unfortunately we can't have mince pies etc beforehand as we have done in previous years. Instead of taking a Christmas Eve collection for the People's Kitchen as we usually do, we suggest that if people would like to, they make a donation directly to the People's Kitchen or another charity of their choice. This also means that the charity can claim Gift Aid on the donation, if the donor is eligible.

Please check the church's Facebook

page [www.facebook.com/GreatBavingtonURC](https://www.facebook.com/GreatBavingtonURC) in case there are any changes to the arrangements.

#### **January**

The once-a-month service will be at 4.00pm on Sunday 3 January.

Please check the church's Facebook

page [www.facebook.com/GreatBavingtonURC](https://www.facebook.com/GreatBavingtonURC) in case there are any changes to the arrangements.

### **Widdrington United Reformed Church**

#### *PRAYING TOGETHER*

During December and January, please pray for:

People in war zones

Victims natural and man made disasters

Those suffering religious persecution (of any faith)

The work of relief agencies

Those suffering from Covid19 throughout the world, especially in countries where health services are less advanced

Health workers, shop workers, delivery drivers, postmen and anyone else doing essential work at this time

Farmers and farm workers (especially shepherds!)

Researchers working on covid19 vaccine and treatments

The elderly and those who may be particularly vulnerable to the virus

The homeless

Anyone who is alone at Christmas, especially those newly bereaved

Your neighbours

"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](mailto:elliemist@gmail.com) and I'll do the rest. (I'd still welcome articles though). Perhaps you have some reflections on our situation which you'd like to share? The **Copy Date** for each magazine is the Sunday prior to the 20<sup>th</sup> of the month before the next issue. If you miss the deadline your contribution may have to be held over to the next issue.

The Newsletter is being delivered by email to those whose email address we have. If you have received a paper copy, and you have an email address, please contact me as above. As well as saving printing and posting costs, it will enable us to send you other relevant information, and links to worship resources.

At time of writing, it is very difficult to know what we will be able to do in December and January. Details of what will happen will appear on our Facebook page, and we will also communicate by phone or email, so that everyone will be kept 'in the loop'.

What follows is what we HOPE will happen.

**Flowers:** Flowers for December by Fiona, January and February by Kathleen. We haven't yet made any plans about Christmas decorations, but it seems likely that the Kathleen / Fiona bubble will have to work alone again. We'll let you know if we need any help or contributions.

**Easy Fund Raising (Easy?)** Doing your Christmas Shopping online this year? If so, when you haven't already joined up, now would be a good time to get busy with Easy Fund Raising! 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](http://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. Please talk to Fiona about it soon (though you can easily register with no help from me, as all our members have discovered). We have raised over £290 so far with just eight members. Hopefully we'll get a pay out again this quarter.

**Social:** We will let you know when our social programme can recommence. Although we intend to carry forward last year's programme as far as possible, any ideas anyone has for activities would be very welcome. As we lost all our coffee mornings and several other events designed as fund raisers your regular support of our work is vital. Please, if you have not returned to worship, continue to put aside your usual weekly collection, by filling up your envelopes, or, if you use online banking, by direct transfer. Or you could set up a standing order. Contact Kathleen for bank details.

During November we have had to revert to provision of opportunities for private prayer on Sundays. We hope that Sunday worship can again be held regularly from December 6th. Please join us if and when you feel able. Please wear a face covering if you can. You will be asked to sign in (for track and trace purposes - visitors will be asked for contact details) and to sanitize your hands on entry. Offering plates will be placed at the back of church. Please place your offering in them either when you come in, or before leaving. Please remember that we will not be standing to sing hymns. If you wish to sing quietly into your mask while following a hymn, you may do so.

We are sorry, but while the 'rule of six' is in place we will no longer be serving coffee after the service. Please avoid gathering in groups in the car park when you leave.

If you don't feel ready to return to church, you can continue to watch and listen to Julian's services online.

#### **Preachers for December and January:**

**December** 6th: Rev'd Paul Golightly

13th: Clive Kemp

20th: Rev'd Julian Sanders

27th: Worship Group

**January** 3rd: Margaret Field

10th: David Simpson

17th: Rev'd Julian Sanders

24th: Worship Group

31st: Carol Dixon

In addition we plan to hold candlelight Carol Service on Christmas Eve at 6.30pm, although we are going to have to find some way of limiting numbers. Also we hope to hold our usual short service on Christmas Day at 10.45am. Advent Sunday (which is the last Sunday in November this year, so we've actually missed it!) is the Sunday we normally bring gifts of toys and other items for the Salvation Army. Obviously we are unable to do this year, but we do urge you to make a monetary donation if you can. Diana suggests that you make donation directly to the Salvation Army. The address is: Mrs M Findlay, The Salvation Army Hall, Second Avenue, Ashington, NE63 0BJ



**Regular events:**

**1<sup>st</sup> Tuesday:** Coffee Club usually meets on the 1st Tuesday in the month.

However, regulations mean that we can't contemplate restarting at the moment.

**1st Wednesday: Prayer Group:** During November, because of lock down, we have continued with weekly meetings of Prayer Group. Whenever we are able to begin Sunday worship again, we intend to revert to monthly meetings. If there is anything you would like us to pray about, please let any member of the group know. If you have Zoom and would like to join us, please contact Julian for an invitation.

**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 over 100 (120 actually) likes, with another 6 people 'following'! Any information we have about service arrangements will be published there.

Please note: Sean, our sheep, has his own Facebook page! Search for 'Sean'.

Sean now has 21 page 'likes' but he wants some more, so please tell your friends about him! He loves seeing people again, especially the children.

The **website** is at: [www.widdringtonurc.org.uk](http://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**

We are happy that our Methodist friends continue to join us for worship, until they can meet in the Community Centre.

The Tear Fund quiz has raised over £200 between the churches. Congratulations to Liv and Darin, who won!

There will be a Churches Together zoom meeting on Tuesday 1st December. We will let you know via Facebook, email or phone if anything is happening before the next magazine.

Has anybody been knitting Christmas angels? Please let Kathleen have them as soon as possible.

**FEM**

I will be sending a gift to Self Help Africa in lieu of Christmas Cards as usual this year. If anybody would like to join me please let me know how much you will give by 10th December. (And pay me when convenient!) Thank you.

Don't Forget



'Virtual Christmas Social'

St Georges Christmas Social will be held on  
12<sup>th</sup> December at 7.00pm  
"Virtual Christmas Social", will be an evening of  
seasonal  
poems and music.

The Zoom Meeting ID for this session is  
839 7865 1321

If you require any further information  
Please contact Joann 07518 916 939

or

Jared 01670 514610

