



St. Andrew's URC
Monkseaton, Whitley Bay

NEWSTAND

Volume 85, Issue 12

December 2019

GOD IS HERE



LOVE IS BORN AGAIN

NEWSTAND is the church magazine of
St Andrew's United Reformed Church, Eastfield Avenue,
Monkseaton, Whitley Bay. NE25 8LU
Church Payphone: 0191 297 1184

<http://standrewsmonkseatonurc.org.uk>



monkseatonurc

Features and Regulars in this issue of NEWSTAND

Minister's Musings	3
Transitional Working Group Update	5
Film Club — <i>The Butler</i>	6
58 Society — <i>November meeting updates</i>	7
Peoples Kitchen thanks & Depaul appeal	10
Volunteers Needed! — <i>can you help with SWEP?</i>	11
Priory Singers concert	12
December Stories — <i>thoughts on Christmas past</i>	13
Activities Team — <i>Church Fair thanks and new events</i>	17
Newstand Payment — <i>A reminder for subscribers</i>	18
100 Club	19
Prayer Diary	20
Book of Remembrance	21
Longest Night Service	21
Monthly & Weekly Duties and Newstand Dates	22
Church Contacts	23
Church Calendar	Back Page

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You can also download it from the website.



I am always on the lookout for something that will help me to attempt to articulate the wonder of the Incarnation. One year I stumbled upon, in

that indirect way that wondrous things fall into our hands, WH Auden's *For the Time Being: A Christmas Oratorio*. It is not for the faint-hearted; I read it with my IPAD at my side to google obscure references and unfamiliar words.

Auden wrote the long poem between 1941 and 1943 when the world was at war and after the devastating death of his mother and the discovery of his partner's chronic infidelity. It was a time when WH was re-evaluating everything in life. Old realities had disintegrated, and the new was, silently and slowly, being re-formed.

What Auden came to through his difficult times is the realisation that ***we can't save ourselves***. That is how Advent begins: with the realisation that we are in a mess and we need God, pronto. Traditionally a season of repentance and preparation, Advent observance is meant to enter the land of our longing and open our hands to possibilities that are outside of our control... so that when the miracle happens, when the child is born and the angels sing, when the longstanding feud with your relative softens and the grey cloud that fills your head suddenly dissipates, we will know: God is here, silently working in the depths, creating new life.

We cannot save ourselves. We spend most of every waking hour believing we can – that what we do is important and necessary and if we don't do it, what will happen? Yet the worst things and the best things that happen to us are usually completely outside of our control. What is in our control is how we choose to respond to those worst and best things.

A few Christmas Crackers...

For Auden, Christ's birth demands from us a decision: will we accept the absurd reality of an infinite God in finite human form and our inability on our own to control and fix our lives/ the society/ the planet, **to make room for God to do a new thing in us?** Or will we reject it, and consign ourselves to futility and despair? The choice is ours. We can lean towards the light or wallow in the shadows.

He wrote the poem engaging both the biblical characters and contemporary figures. When his father expressed perplexity about this, Auden said *I was trying to treat it as a religious event which eternally recurs every time it is accepted.* To which I say Yes. The point of the story is to receive it as the good news it is and let it work its magic in us, liberating hope and love especially in dark times. God is here; Love is born again.

Winter and the holidays can be dark times for many of us. Beloved faces no longer across the table or the miles, loneliness and disappointment are as common as the Christmas sparkle on the high street. Add to that the ongoing drama of Brexit that continues to play out to who knows what end and the alarming changes to the climate, and these times can feel particularly desperate. It is tempting to wallow in the shadows, but far more constructive to lean towards the light. This season I pray that we may open our hearts to this child and to the possibility that God is here, among us, waiting for us to love Him back.

Every blessing on your holiday celebrations,

Carla

What do you call a kid who doesn't believe in Santa?
A rebel without a Claus.



The November church meeting approved our suggestion that we hold three lunches – one in January, February and March – to explore a topic that comes from the treasure trove of material from our 20 October lunch. It is our conviction that we can only find a way forward together through face to face conversation. The topics will be chosen by the TWG from our study of the written comments and experience of the October luncheon and approved by the elders at the December elders meeting. Watch this space and the church notices for the dates of the lunches and the topics of discussion.

As always, please don't hesitate to talk to any of us about our work. We are: Sue Ames, Robin Christopher, Catriona Fenwick, Chris Hales, Hazel Hall, Ray Hammond, Jenny Hooper, Una Ketteridge, Rhoda Lee, Alison Mood, Celia Purves, Eddie Thompson, John Thorpe and Joan Yarrow.

*I would like to say Thank You for the lovely flowers brought to me by Susan. They were a lovely surprise and very much appreciated after a very trying and frustrating two weeks.
Thank You for the thoughts and concern shown.*

Sheila Smith

What do you call an elf who sings?
A wrapper!

Film Club

Inspired by true events the film tells the story of a White House butler who served seven American presidents over three decades. It traces the dramatic changes that swept American society during this time, from the civil rights movement to Vietnam and beyond, and how those changes affected the butler's life and family.

Friday 13th
December
2.00pm



THE BUTLER

All profits from the Film Club are in aid of
church funds and charitable works.

On the 21st October the 58 Society were host to the Rev. Trevor Jamison who is the Minister of St. Columba's URC.

His talk titled "Green Christians" was centred on the Church's work in restoring the damaged ecology in this country and, indeed, the world.

He described how, when he worked with the URC in Scotland, he became the environmental chaplain and, with the cooperation of other Churches in the area, established an ECO congregation to tackle ecological problems in that area. After a transfer to northern England he was appointed by the Northern Synod to be the New Green Apostle within the URC. His responsibilities are to inform and the enactment of creative care issues.

The ECO church is now registered to become the ECO Synod, whose purpose is to glorify GOD'S creations. Trevor made reference to quotes from the bible to illustrate HIS love of His creation. But these are insignificant to the reference to God's Garden of Eden.

The talk then turned to a general discussion of the state of our planet and people's dawning awareness of its degrading state, particularly since the start of the industrial revolution. The fears of our grandchildren were expressed. Also the effect rising water will have on civilisation. Finally reference was made to the Extinction Rebellion movement which is perhaps a beginning of the end of the use of fossil fuels.

The URC and the ECO Church are working towards the following to establish a better world for future generations through workers and teachers:

1. The best way of building.

Why is Christmas just like your job?

You do all the work and the fat guy with the suit gets all the credit

then; more likely a little tent or hut on wheels.

John presented a slide show of some of these images, some dating from the 1840's including the old Memorial Hall in Westgate Road, Thomas Bewick's workshop together with an image of his wood engraving tools, and scenes of old Newcastle long since demolished. Of particular interest was the photograph of an engraving of the original Tyne Bridge which was destroyed in the 1771 great flood and then the replacement bridge which was subsequently demolished to make way for the Swing Bridge. Also the Quayside before the building of the Tyne Bridge and subsequent images of its construction.

The show continued with images of Durham and Sunderland. Of interest to me was that of Sunderland being the first to install Police boxes, whereupon Newcastle followed shortly after. As one who had to use one for six years let me assure readers that they were just as small on the inside as they are on the outside.

Another display was of seaside scenes particularly of Saltburn and its very long pier, of the steamship Mauretania on the Tyne, the 1950s Miner's Gala, women working in the fields, Paddy's markets along the quaysides of the Tyne, and young children with their bogies and hoops playing quite happily in the streets.

John concluded his talk, of which this short item does not do justice, with a request that if any one has or obtains a collection of old photographic images to let him know. These images are of great interest to the media as well as historical necessity for future generations.

An extremely interesting and eventful evening.

What do you call a cat on the beach at Christmas time?
Sandy Claws!

Dear Friends,

I am writing to thank you for the generous Harvest gifts that you sent us and for your support for our work here at The People's Kitchen.



During the past few years we have been experiencing a big increase in the numbers of homeless and disadvantaged people coming to us for help. Your gifts will help to ensure that we will be able to continue to provide regular nourishing meals for them.

Without the help of churches, schools, groups and individuals, we simply could not offer the support that we are able to give to our friends and there is no doubt that contributions at Harvest-time are absolutely vital.

Thank you again.

Pat MacDonald
for Marilyn Champion, Administrator



Once again we have been asked to help to make up Christmas Gift Bags for vulnerable homeless and disadvantaged young people who are looked after by Depaul UK in North Tyneside.

This year we have been asked to donate 60 tubes of Pringles. A collecting box is available in the Reception Area to receive the donations or, if preferred, monetary donations can be given in lieu.

Michael Spicer
Church Representative

Who doesn't eat on Christmas?
A turkey because it is always stuffed



Volunteers needed!

There are several homeless people in the North Tyneside area and during the months from November to March they are able to be given shelter, hot drinks and a breakfast. when SWEP (Severe Weather Emergency Protocol) comes into operation – but we can only operate this successfully if we have a team of volunteers. No training is required, the volunteer turns up at 9.30 pm (with sleeping bag) at the Oxford Street Church Hall, spends the night as a host/hostess, makes breakfast and then goes home (about 8.00 am). The volunteer is part of a team of volunteers – your support would be greatly appreciated as a volunteer.

If you are interested to find out more please ask me – Valerie Taylor. I can be contacted on 0191 252 6172.

God bless you!

Valerie Taylor

PS If you have a sleeping bag you no longer require we would gladly take it off your hands!!

IN HAPPY MOMENTS – PRAISE GOD:
IN DIFFICULT MOMENTS – SEEK GOD:
IN QUIET MOMENTS – WORSHIP GOD:
IN PAINFUL MOMENTS – TRUST GOD:
AND IN EVERY MOMENT – THANK GOD

What do you call Santa's helpers?
Subordinate clauses



the Priory Singers



Carol Concert



Monday 16 December 2019, 7:30pm

St Andrew's URC Church
Eastfield Ave, Whitley Bay NE25 8LU

Tickets £6 (on the door, from
Hound Dog Music, Whitley Bay or call 0191 2532811)





The 1st of December is racing towards us and it is also the first Sunday of Advent! Advent is that period of the Christian calendar where we move away from Ordinary Time, leave the Lectionary for the past year (The Gospel of Luke) and step towards the preparation of services in Advent and the Christmas Period.

Advent is a time of waiting for Christ, of longing for the coming of God's Kingdom. Advent is also a period of increased activity, in schools, offices, businesses and in churches. Advent can also be a time of anxiety, of financial pressure, social pressure and of getting ready in time. But Advent Services give opportunities for glorious music to simple carols that are loved and familiar to regular church goers, those who come to church for specific services only, or those that don't come to church at all. And already from now until Christmas shops, department stores and supermarkets are playing non-stop Christmas music and carols to the background of the continual 'bleep' of debit cards going through the tills and checkouts.

Churches and schools across the country and the globe will be preparing and rehearsing nativity plays to be acted out before families and friends. Preparations will be in hand throughout the Advent period as angel costumes are made ready, possibly shiny with tinsel trimmings; shepherds' costumes with headdresses looking remarkably like tea towels folded ready, and a far cry from the costumes of the

What do you call an obnoxious reindeer
RUDEolph

three kings' of perhaps (remnants) of velvet and satin and the imaginatively decorated crowns. And the 'gifts' of gold, frankincense, and myrrh in hand, beautifully wrapped and ready to be carried forward with dignity by the wise men...gifts to the King. Advent: the waiting time and the preparation for the celebrations of the birth of Jesus through Scripture with the climax of the story of the Nativity.

The story of the Nativity? Not quite, we don't have one story of the first Christmas but stories of the birth of Jesus Christ. The stories are found in Matthew and Luke, two of the four Gospels of the New Testament. Each begins with two chapters of the birth of Jesus and generally people hear and know parts of the stories from those Gospels. But Matthew and Luke's stories are different. For example, Matthew's is a shorter story than Luke's story. Matthew's story of the birth of Jesus begins with the genealogy of Jesus...a lot of the 'father of' or 'begats', depending on which version of the Bible you read. Matthew's genealogy begins with Abraham, the father of Isaac and ends with 'Mary gave birth to Jesus, who is called the Messiah'.

Mary, Jesus' mother, doesn't feature much in Matthew's story, Joseph is the main character in the first part. In the next chapter of Matthew, although Mary and Joseph are mentioned, King Herod is the main character, and the wise men are brought into the story.

Luke's story begins differently with the prophesy of the birth of John the Baptist. From there Luke moves through, in great

Why was Santa's little helper depressed?
Because he had low elf esteem

detail, to his story of the birth of Jesus, and this is not surprising as Luke's story is four times longer than Matthew's story. Luke's genealogy of Jesus comes in at Chapter 3 and begins with 'Jesus was known as the son of Joseph' and ends with 'Adam the son of God'.

The stories do share common points but they are set within two different stories, quite naturally, they are written by two different people from different backgrounds.

Matthew was one of Jesus' disciples but once he was a despised tax collector. His life changed when he met this man Jesus from Galilee. Matthew wrote specifically for the Jews around 60-65 A.D to prove that Jesus was the Messiah and to explain God's Kingdom.

Luke was a doctor, a Greek and Gentile Christian, the only known Gentile author in the New Testament. He was a close friend and companion of Paul. Luke also wrote Acts and the Gospel of Luke and Acts go together. Luke's Gospel is the most comprehensive of the Gospels, his vocabulary shows he was an educated man and as a doctor made frequent references to illnesses and diagnoses. Luke wrote his account to present Christ as the perfect human and Saviour.

Both these stories continue to provide us, in the 21st century, with an account of this awesome occasion. Every birth is a miracle and every child a gift of God. The birth of a child, born twenty centuries ago in Bethlehem in Judaea during the reign of King Herod was God's amazing gift to the world, of Jesus' humanity, of Jesus the Son of God coming among us

What is a child's favourite Christmas king?
A stocking

and is among us today. Turning to the Gospel of John 'So the Word became human and made his home among us. He was full of unfailing love and faithfulness. And we have seen his glory, the glory of the Father's one and only Son.' (John 1: v 14).

Step away from the adverts and marketing of the 'must haves for Christmas', away from the clamour of shopping centres and supermarkets, step back and find time and space this Advent period to wait, to experience the real meaning of the season. Find time and space to read the stories of the birth of Jesus from Matthew and Luke for their distinctiveness; read the stories to find depth and a time of reflection on God's promise in the Old Testament of the coming of the Messiah and in the New Testament the coming of the Christ Child. It is a period of longing for an event to come and that coming told through the Nativity stories

In Prayer

O God our Father, we are preparing to celebrate the birth of your Son Jesus Christ.

While we recall his coming as a baby in weakness and humility, may we be reminded that he will come in power and glory.

We make this prayer to you through the same Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord and Saviour. AMEN

(amended from the SPCK Book of Christian Prayer)

Submitted by the Hope 4 Team

What carol is popular in the desert?
Camel ye Faithful



Firstly, a huge **THANK YOU** to all who contributed in so many different ways to making the Church Fair such a resounding success. A lot of hard work was involved before, during and afterwards but it was all worthwhile with an amazing amount of £4,821 raised for church funds and charitable works. Also thank you to all who came to the Fair, supported the various stalls and enjoyed refreshments.

Once again we are very grateful to receive Barclays Match Funding for the Grand Tombola organised by Anne and Neil Cockburn which meant that the money taken on the day will be matched by Barclays. We also appreciate the support of Gary Staker (our local Funeral Director) for his contribution by way of an excellent raffle.

Upcoming Events

We have several festive events lined up for the month of December. First of all, on **Monday 16th December at 2 pm** we will be holding our annual **Afternoon Advent Service** which is especially for those who find difficulty in attending the usual Sunday morning services but **all** are welcome.

Carol Singing – the Activities Team (and anyone else who would like to come along) will be going out carol singing in the area on **Wednesday 18th December** (meet at the church at 6.00 pm). If you would like the group to sing outside your home please contact Ann or Ray Hammond. Once again we will be raising money for the Great North Air Ambulance.

What part of the body do you only see during Christmas?
Mistletoe

Then on **Thursday 19th December at 6.30pm** we look forward to a Christmas Concert given by the young singers from **Harmony and Holly's School of Steel**, tickets at £5 (children £2.50) are now available.

Lastly but not least, tickets at £10 are now on sale for the **New Year's Eve Party on Tuesday 31st December, 9.00 pm.**

Ann Hammond



December 2019

Volume 85, Issue 12



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Monkseaton, Whitley Bay

A reminder for Newstand subscribers that the annual payment will shortly be due, and I shall be grateful if you will arrange for the money to be paid to your distributor (or to myself if you normally pay me direct), before the end of January, please.

The annual payment for 2020 remains at £6.60, i.e. 11 issues at 60 pence, plus 1 issue free (or a combined 'bumper' issue).

Should anyone else wish to change from monthly to annual payment and have their copy of Newstand delivered to their home, or a reserved copy put in the pigeonholes, please contact me.

Thank you.

Carole Mallett
Newstand Business Manager

What do you call people who are afraid of Santa Claus?
Claustrophobic

ST. ANDREW'S 100 CLUB

October Draw

88 numbers went into the draw on 27th October.

The Winners were:

1st	No. 30	Phil Brown	£132.00
2nd	No. 70	Catherine Kester	£66.00
3rd	No. 104	Marion King	£22.00

£220.00 was given to Church funds.

The "100 Club" is a fund raising activity for Church funds.

Each member pays £5 per month
and the money is allocated as follows:

50% to Church funds

50% towards prize money (split 30% / 15% / 5%)

A monthly draw is held at a Church event or on the
last Sunday of the month during morning coffee.

If you are interested in joining the "100 Club",
please contact:

Kathleen Hopper (2522345)

What nationality is Santa Claus?
North Polish

We remember in our prayers week by week the churches of the Synod, Synod officers, groups and committees. We also remember significant dates in the church and world calendars.



1	<p>World AIDS Day.</p> <p>PCM and the work of Mozambique Council of Churches. Independent Churches Representative, Dr Mark Bonnington.</p>
8	<p>Human Rights Day (10 December).</p> <p>The work of Ministries and Development Committee and Convenor, Revd Ron Forster. St Columba's URC, North Shields; Revd Trevor Jamison; St Andrew's URC, Monkseaton; Revd Dr Carla Grosch-Miller.</p>
15	<p>Stamfordham LEP (Methodist/URC); Revd Harold Stuteley (Methodist); Bellingham LEP (Methodist/URC); Falstone with Kielder URC; Wark LEP (Methodist/URC); Deacon Anne Taylor (Methodist).</p>
22	<p>St John the Evangelist LEP (Anglican/Baptist/Methodist/URC), Kingston Park; Revd Adele Moorhouse (Methodist).</p>
29	<p>PCM, their retired ministers and those newly appointed to posts with PCM.</p> <p>North East England Divisional Salvation Army Commanders, Majors David and Gillian Burns.</p>

Who hides in a bakery at Christmas?
A mince spy



*The names of those we remember
this month are*

George Charlton

Cynthia Workman

Robert Smith Niven

Alistair Fraser

Mrs. Dorothy Paterson Packer



Book of Remembrance

Longest Night Service



In a season of great joy, there seems to be little space for sadness and grief. The *Longest Night Service* (also known as a “Blue Christmas” service) is an opportunity to come together in a simple, reflective service to remember those known to us who have died, and to recognise our sadness and our loss. Whether that be a recent bereavement – or one long past – we remember those dear to us and take time to be in God’s presence in our vulnerability.

White stars are available to write the names of those who we may want to remember at this time. These might be the names of those who have died, or the names of family, friends – or even ourselves – whose sadness we want to mark in this service.

Please join us on Saturday 21st December, 7.00pm. Refreshments will be available from 6.30pm.

What do you get if you cross Santa with a duck?
A Christmas quacker

Monthly Duties

Elders	Vestry: Carole Mallett Reception: Barbara Burgess Communion: Hazel Hall
Stewards	Jean Jackson / Jenny Hooper
Flowers	Kathleen, Ann S & Catriona (22nd Beryl & Mary)

Weekly Duties

Sun 01-Dec-19	Readers: G & J Yarrow Prayers of Concern: Barbara Burgess	Organ: Helen
Tues 03-Dec-19	Prayers: Kathleen Hopper	
Sun 08-Dec-19	Readers: G Mills, A Cooke Prayers of Concern: Hazel Hall	Organ: Pete
Tues 10-Dec-19	Prayers: Ray Hammond	
Sun 15-Dec-19	Readers: H Hall, C Mallett Prayers of Concern: Andrew Cooke	Organ: Alex
Tues 17-Dec-19	Prayers: Carole Mallett	
Sun 22-Dec-19	Readers: C Hales, J Hooper Prayers of Concern: Val Taylor	Organ: Pete
Tues 24-Dec-19	Prayers: Barbara Burgess	
Sun 29-Dec-19	Readers: A Mood, A Cockburn Prayers of Concern: Chris Hales	Organ: Pete
Tues 31-Dec-19	Prayers: Sandra Pine	

Newstand Dates

Next edition, published last Sunday of month:	Sunday 22 Dec 2019
Hardcopy contributions in Editor's box by	Sunday 15 Dec 2019
Email copy to standrewsnewstand@gmail.com	Monday 16 Dec 2019
Earlier contributions are appreciated!	

Church Contacts

Transitional Minister	Revd Dr. Carla Grosch-Miller c/o St. Andrew's URC (address in front cover)	07427 838 370
Secretary	Mr Raymond Hammond, annray@talktalk.net 3 Cauldwell Close, Whitley Bay, NE25 8LP	252 3319
Assistant Secretaries	Mrs Ann Hammond 3 Cauldwell Close, Whitley Bay, NE25 8LP	252 3319
	Miss Carole Mallett 54 Brantwood Avenue, Whitley Bay, NE25 8NJ	252 1723
Treasurer and Gift Aid Secretary	Mr Kevin Ames 17 Kelso Drive, North Shields, NE29 9NS	251 3016
Assistant Treasurer	Mrs Jenny Hooper 15 Brislee Ave, Tynemouth, NE30 2SQ	—
Hall Lettings	Ray & Ann Hammond, annray@talktalk.net 3 Cauldwell Close, Whitley Bay, NE25 8LP	252 3319
Newstand Business Manager	Miss Carole Mallett 54 Brantwood Avenue, Whitley Bay, NE25 8NJ	252 1723
Newstand, Website and Social Media	Tim Cooke, standrewsnewstand@gmail.com 4, Kingfisher Way, Blyth, NE24 3QR	01670 354834
Safeguarding Officer	Lucy Cooke, cookelucy@live.co.uk 4, Kingfisher Way, Blyth, NE24 3QR	01670 354834

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The views expressed are those of the individual contributors and may not represent the view of the URC, St Andrew's Church Meeting or its Elders.

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Open Door Coffee Mornings
every Tuesday and Thursday
from 10am to Noon

CHURCH CALENDAR

Dec / Jan 2019

A short **Act of Worship** is
held in the Church Foyer
every Tuesday at 9.30am

Sunday	1	Praise Service; Praise Team	9.30 am
		Prayer Group	10.15 am
		(Advent 1) Communion Service; Rev'd Dr Carla Grosch-Miller	11.00 am
Monday	2	Fifty Eight Society - 'The Fifties and My Part in Them'	7.30 pm
Tuesday	3	Executive Team Meeting	10.00 am
Friday	6	Friendship Club Christmas Lunch	1.00 for 1.30 pm
Sunday	8	(Advent 2) Children's Festival & Parade Service; Rev'd Philip Gray	11.00 am
		Messy Church	3.30 pm
Monday	9	Fifty Eight Society Christmas Dinner	7.00 for 7.30 pm
Thursday	12	Elders' Meeting	7.00 pm
Friday	13	Film Club - 'The Butler'	2.00 pm
Sunday	15	Communion Service; Rev'd Gordon Connacher	9.30 am
		(Advent 3) Morning Worship; Rev'd Trevor Jamison	11.00 am
Monday	16	Afternoon Advent Service; Activities Team and Worship Group	2.00 pm
		Priory Singers Christmas Concert	7.30 pm
Wednesday	18	Carol Singing around the area	6.00 pm
Thursday	19	Harmony Choir and Holly's Band of Steel Concert	6.30 pm
Saturday	21	Longest Night Service	7.00 pm
Sunday	22	(Advent 4) Morning Worship; Rev'd Dr Carla Grosch-Miller	11.00 am
Tuesday	24	Carols by Candlelight; Rev'd Dr Carla Grosch-Miller	11.00 for 11.30 pm
Wednesday	25	Communion Service; Rev'd Dr Carla Grosch-Miller	9.30 am
		Christmas Day Family Worship; Rev'd Dr Carla Grosch-Miller	10.30 am
Sunday	29	Songs of Praise; Worship Group	11.00 am
Tuesday	31	New Year's Eve Party	9.00 pm
JANUARY 2020			
Sunday	5	Praise Service; Praise Team	9.30 am
		Prayer Group	10.15 am
		Communion Service; Dr Ann Sinclair	11.00 am
Monday	6	Fifty Eight Society - 'Theatrical Memories'	7.30 pm
Tuesday	7	Worship Group Meeting	6.30 pm
Thursday	9	Elders' Meeting	7.30 pm