



# NEWSTAND

THE MAGAZINE OF ST. ANDREW'S URC



*God so loved the world that he gave His only son*

Volume 87 Issue 12 — December 2021

# St. Andrew's United Reformed Church

Eastfield Avenue, Monkseaton, Whitley Bay, NE25 8LU

<http://standrewsmonkseatonurc.org.uk>



monkseatonurc

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# The Christmas Countdown

*It's a new Church year and a new look for Newstand*

As we've begun a new period of vacancy where we wait in anticipation of the calling of a new Minister, not only to serve St. Andrew's, but potentially as future Minister of St. Columba's too, we also begin the start of the new Church year, with the coming of Advent and the anticipation of the celebration of Christ's birth.

As part of that new year then I also bring you the new look *Newstand*. Feedback, though sparse, was that you wanted the A5 format, being easier to hold. Last month I used that size but kept the previous *Newstand Lite* layout, but feel it is now time to try a different layout. No more waves; no more boxed-in text like the original *Newstand* I produced. This also features just a colour, heavier weight paper cover, and black and white inside. I hope to start the return of some of the other regular articles and information



that the “old” *Newstand* featured, but for this month have just kept it with the articles received and just a small filler.

As ever, your contributions are what makes *Newstand* the magazine that everyone (hopefully) waits for each month, so I do encourage you to keep submitting them. If there is anyone that has the time and inclination to become a “sub-editor” and perhaps help with some new types of article — interviews with church members and groups for example, or even just some regular “fillers”, please do get in touch. It really would help make *Newstand* the magazine that sits alongside your more “professional” publications!

Take care everyone — God is with us, as will our Lord Jesus be soon!

Tim

# Longest Night Service

*A reflective service for those suffering from pain, loss or confusion at Christmas*

Christmas time can be difficult when we have sadness in our life. We can feel disconnected from the joy and happiness of the festivities, or can have a sense of loss or emptiness. 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.

Our Longest Night Service, led by the Cooke family, takes place on Tuesday, 21st December at 7pm, lasting about 30 minutes. The Church will be open for reflection from 6.30pm.

You are invited to complete one or more stars, either before the service or on the day, and we will add them to the stars we have collected on previous years.

The service is open to all, so please do ask friends and neighbours who might be interested in being involved – either by writing on a star, or by being present.

**Tim Cooke**

# A very Sinclair Christmas

## *Memories of Christmases past by Ann Sinclair*

Picture it. On the 1st November this year I started to think of the preparations for Advent. As I turned the corner of my street, I stopped in my tracks as there in the first house was a Christmas tree ablaze with lights! Wow! By my calculations that would mean the tree will be there until 5th January 2022...I hope it isn't a REAL Christmas tree, it might be needleless by then! Perhaps the little family there are making the most of having a Christmas tree up after a 'different' Christmas last year. I can only think of how the Sinclair family Christmas was so different last year as I am sure it was for so many folks. My family did come and see me in the morning and we exchanged and opened presents in the back garden. It wasn't exactly warm and hot drinks and hot water bottles didn't give much comfort so we soon ended up walking round and round the garden to keep warm. I haven't a large garden by any means so trying to



keep the family groups separate was difficult...it was a short visit! However, the Sinclair family are never stuck, or nearly never stuck, we made up for Christmas 2020 by having Christmas 2021 on the 25th August 2021. We had a Christmas tree, frosted windows, holly and ivy on the table, crackers, place cards, a chocolate log cake with a robin and reindeer on top, Christmas cards on display and a secret Santa gift each...well there was a limit! After a traditional Christmas meal, turkey with all the trimmings we watched Dr Who Christmas episodes followed by a walk across the nearby fields. It's not the first time we had had a late/early Christmas depending which way you look at it. My elder daughter lived in Australia for some time and came home in a July one year so we had a July Christmas. That same daughter travelled the far East and Australia

extensively and so often birthday and Christmas cards arrived very late. Her comment was always 'it's your birthday every day', the same could really apply to Christmas. And that isn't such a far-fetched idea, Christmas every day doesn't need to involve intricately timed cooking or decorated homes but it does involve gifts, the gifts we receive every day of the year, every hour and every minute of the year...the wonderful gifts that God gives us that surround us, and the greatest gift of all: the Son of God, our Lord Jesus Christ, the grace of our Lord, the love of God and the Holy Spirit. As Christians we can share that precious gift and ensure

these gifts are spread all around every day of the week.

As we go through this Advent time and into Christmas, we shall be reminded of the stories of the coming of the baby born in Bethlehem, the Christ child and the greatest gift of all. Christmas? It is every day of the week.

Come again Lord in this season of Advent, come into our hearts so that like kindling on a fire, we burst into flame and bubble with joy. Don't keep it to yourself, lift up your voice and shout! AMEN

(Prayer amended from  
Bridge of Love Handbook 2002/03)

**Ann Sinclair**

## **I almost laughed...**

1. When one door closes and another door opens, you are probably in prison.
2. To me, "drink responsibly" means don't spill it.
3. Age 60 might be the new 40, but 9:00 pm is the new midnight.
4. It's the start of a brand new day, and I'm off like a herd of turtles.
5. The older I get, the earlier it gets late.
6. When I say, "The other day," I could be referring to any time between yesterday and 15 years ago.
7. I remember being able to get up without making sound effects.

# Wednesday Prayers at 10

## *Prayers for Advent*

### **Opening Words**

Heavenly Father,  
as we prepare for Christmas, help us to find time in our busy lives for quiet and thought and prayer, that we may reflect upon the wonder of your love and allow the story of the Saviour's birth to penetrate our hearts and minds.

So may our joy be deeper, our worship more real, and our lives worthier of all that you have done for us through the coming of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Let us come together in prayer.

AMEN

### **In a Prayer of Confession**

Loving God,  
sometimes we feel as though we are groping in the dark, struggling on, hoping against hope, perhaps unwilling to face up to our failures and disappointments.

But then, caught by a quiet moment or challenged by the glaring needs of human life, we glimpse your love in Christ.

We are sorry for harsh words and neglected opportunities; sorry for



acts of kindness left undone; Lord, lighten our darkness that we may stand in the brightness of Your presence.

Through Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour.

AMEN

### **And in the Prayer our Lord Jesus Christ taught his disciples**

Our Father, who art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name...For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory for ever and ever. AMEN

### **In Prayers of Intercession**

O come, O come Immanuel, Light of the World, and shine into the darkness; we pray for all those bowed down by fear and anxieties: for those in places of violence and war – we pray peace; for those in communities divided by race and religion – we pray understanding; for those who are hungry and cold – we pray support; for those whose health is failing – we pray courage;

for those whose relationships are breaking – we pray healing;  
for those who have lost hope – we pray encouragement. For all people and for all creation – we pray blessings in Jesus' name.

O come, O come Christ Jesus, give us guidance as we seek your kingdom, shine brightly through us as we do your work.

O come, O come Emmanuel, hear our prayer in the name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. AMEN.

## Closing Sentences

Living God,  
help us to be bearers of hope;  
to bring love to those in despair,  
to see the possibilities of change even in the darkest experiences.

Grant us the courage to wait in the dark until your light breaks through.

AMEN

*Submitted by the Hope 4 Team  
Inspiration from: Seasons and Celebrations, Donald Hilton*

8. I had my patience tested. I'm negative.
9. Remember, if you lose a sock in the dryer, it comes back as a Tupperware lid that doesn't fit any of your containers.
10. If you're sitting in public and a stranger takes the seat next to you, just stare straight ahead and say, "Did you bring the money?"
11. When you ask me what I am doing today, and I say "nothing," it does not mean I am free. It means I am doing nothing.
12. I finally got eight hours of sleep. It took me three days, but whatever.
13. I run like the winded.
14. I hate when a couple argues in public, and I missed the beginning and don't know whose side I'm on.
15. When someone asks what I did over the weekend, I squint and ask, "Why, what did you hear?"
16. When you do squats, are your knees supposed to sound like a goat chewing on an aluminium can stuffed with celery?

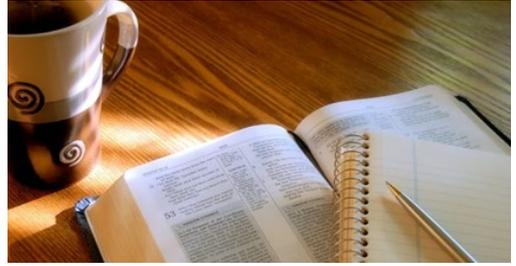
# Bible Study

## *Advent to Epiphany*

Bible Study will begin again soon with a 6-week course focusing on Advent to Epiphany. We shall be using David Adam's book: 'The Echo of God' (published by Kevin Mayhew Ltd., 2008).

This course aims to celebrate the joy of knowing that God loves us and comes to us whatever we face. We shall look at passages from the Old Testament to the Gospels and Epistles, where joy or delight are expressed and find space together to be open to hear the echo of God in our lives today.

Our meetings will be via Zoom, 10-30-11.30a.m. on Tuesday mornings each week beginning 30th



November until 21st December then 4th and 11th January 2022. The link will be sent each week to those wishing to join.

It would be useful to purchase the book, available but not essential. If you are interested in joining in the Bible Study and wish further details, please contact:

**Alison Mood :**

alison.mood@talktalk.net

or **Ann Sinclair :**

eannsinclair14@gmail.com

Pat MacDonald, on behalf of the Trustees and all at The People's Kitchen, has written a letter of thanks for the food donations and of the £246.50. They continue to serve meals every day of the week, as well as providing other essentials to sustain their friends. They have a new initiative to support those who have moved from rough sleeping to a property to help "make a house a home".

A full copy of the letter is posted in the vestibule.

# Activities Team

*A few events for the diary  
in December*

**Film Club** – On **Friday 10th December at 2.00 pm** we will be showing *Dream Horse*. The film is based on the incredible true story of Dream Alliance, a horse bred on an allotment and born to win. It is described as “an inspirational, feel-good movie”.

**Play Reading Evening – Saturday 11th December at 7.00 pm**

These evenings are good fun and offer a chance either to take part or just listen to a play being read, along with a glass of wine or soft drink. Tickets at £5 are now available.

**Pens!** St Andrew's pens are still on sale and would make ideal stocking fillers. Buy now before our stock runs out!

**Carol Singing** – we're hoping to resume our carol singing in the streets again this year on **Wednesday 22nd December** (meet at the church at 6.00 pm). If anyone would like to join us they will be most welcome, the more the merrier! Also 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.

**Ann Hammond**

## Remember the Ice Cream article in Newstand recently?

For those with access to YouTube cut the adverts and search for: [Baby Tries Ice Cream For First Time](#) to raise a smile...we shall not admit that this mirrors our reactions on eating ice cream!

**Catriona Fenwick & Ann Sinclair courtesy of Barbara Watson**

# Letters of Thanks

## *A few words of gratitude*

How lovely the church looked on Remembrance Sunday, when once again some of the members of our Flower Team used their considerable talents to decorate it so beautifully and innovatively.

It was also good to see again the tangible reminders of the hard work and dedication shown by so many people during the production of poppies and other items of needlecraft in 2018. They were still looking as good as ever, and provided not only a very fitting addition to our Remembrance display, but also a lovely memorial to all those hours spent knitting and stitching.

**Carole Mallett**

### **COVID 19's Silver Lining**

I haven't been able to be present at church for a few weeks due to family health issues. However, thanks to Tim's



good works, I have been able to be part of the service online. In addition, concern about weekly offertory has been alleviated by being able to pay online.

We have been very grateful to receive the church flowers.

All in all we have appreciated some silver linings during this difficult period.

**Margaret Varley**

Thank you so much to the flower team and all friends at St Andrews for the beautiful flowers sent to me during the last 2 months. They really lifted my spirits and are much appreciated. Many thanks again and best wishes to you all.

**Kathleen Elwell**

# Letters of Thanks

*And a few more!*

My Father was an active member of St Andrew's until a couple of years ago and participated in many of St Andrew's clubs & societies.

Many will remember him from the Indoor Bowling, Friendship Club, History Society & Open Door coffee mornings.

Can I express my thanks through Newstand to Sue Ames who has stayed in touch and recently visited Peter in Princes Court, Royal Quays where he is now a resident, taking in some lovely flowers. These were much appreciated and we are grateful for the continuing support from St Andrew's.

**Linda Roseby**  
**(Peter's daughter)**

## Bay Food Bank

On behalf of the Bay Food Bank, we would like to say a huge thank you to all the very generous people from St. Andrew's who regularly



contribute very necessary gifts to us via the 'bin' in the entrance hall.

Again, this pandemic year has presented challenges for many, many families and individuals so we have been incredibly busy. Without folks like you we would have struggled to maintain the help they so deserve.

Once more, heartfelt thanks from us all and we hope you enjoy a wonderful Christmas followed by a Happy and Healthy New Year.

**Hazel, Joan and Margaret.**



# D'ye dee art?

Yes, it's a famous line stolen from Lee Hall's "The Pitmen Painters", but it's a very good question.

The St. Andrew's Art Club meet to paint and to socialise in the Main Hall at St. Andrew's in what is a very comfortable, light-filled room and with all the facilities we require to hone our craft.

Our talents are varied and we all enjoy what we do, continually challenging ourselves to practise and improve our skills.

We're an art club, not a class

and we welcome you to join us. It doesn't matter if you are a starter, a returner to art, or have made art for years, if you'd like to try us out, please come along on Wednesday afternoon, have a look at us and our work, and have a chat. We start at 1pm and finish at 4pm.

So... d'ye dee art? If not, why not have a go?

If you'd like to chat about joining, please call Trish on 0191 2581751, or speak with Bill, Beryl, Catriona, Iain or Geoff - they're all members of "the club".

## St. Andrew's 100 Club

*You have to be in it to win it!*

The October draw took place on Sunday 31st when Alison Ridley drew the following numbers:

1)	Number 40	Rhoda Lee	£120.00
2)	Number 32	Ingrid Connacher	£60.00
3)	Number 97	Sheila Smith	£20.00

With £200 going to Church Funds.

Many thanks,  
**Kathleen**

# Northern Synod Prayer Diary for December

*Joining in our weekly  
prayers with the  
wider URC*



5	PCM and the work of Mozambique Council of Churches; Independent Churches Representative in the NE, Dr Mark Bonnington; Human Rights Day (10 December).
12	The Ministries and Development Committee and Convenor, Revd Ron Forster; St Columba's URC, North Shields; Revd Trevor Jamison; St Andrew's URC, Monkseaton.
19	Stamfordham LEP (Methodist/URC); Revds Jona Sewell and Colin Barrick (Methodist); Bellingham LEP (Methodist/URC); Falstone with Kielder URC; Wark LEP (Methodist/URC); Deacon Anne Taylor (Methodist).
26	St John the Evangelist LEP (Anglican/Baptist/Methodist/URC), Kingston Park; Revd Adele Moorhouse (Methodist) and Revd Annie Gray (Anglican).

## From the Church Register

### DEATH

STEMBRIDGE      Derek, on 6<sup>th</sup> November, aged 84 years.  
Committal at Tynemouth on 25<sup>th</sup> November  
followed by service at St Andrew's, conducted by  
Revd Gordon Connacher and Dr Ann Sinclair.

# Church Calendar for December

*Sunday services are still broadcast via Zoom and YouTube  
for those not able to attend in person.*

*Following Sunday morning worship, refreshments are served in the Main Hall.*

*A short Act of Worship takes place in the reception area on Wednesdays at 10.00 am, followed by Open Door Coffee Morning from 10.30 am until 12 pm.*

*Bible Study on Tuesday mornings — see page 9 for further details.*

Friday	3	Executive Team Meeting	10.00 am
Saturday	4	Fifty Eight Society Coffee Morning	10.00 am
<b>Sunday</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>(Advent 2) Morning Worship: Mrs Lucy Cooke</b>	<b>11.00 am</b>
Thursday	9	Pastoral Team Meeting followed by Elders' Meeting	7.00 pm
Friday	10	Film Club – 'Dream Horse'	2.00 pm
Saturday	11	Play Reading Group	7.00 pm
<b>Sunday</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>(Advent 3) Morning Worship: Revd Philip Gray</b>	<b>11.00 am</b>
<b>Sunday</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>(Advent 4) Morning Worship: Revd Trevor Jamison</b>	<b>11.00 am</b>
		<b>Ecumenical Carol Singing outside Black Horse in Monkseaton (afternoon)</b>	<b>TBA</b>
<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>Longest Night Service: The Cooke Family</b>	<b>7.00 pm</b>
Wednesday	22	Carol singing in the area. Meet at St. Andrew's	6.00 pm
<b>Friday</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>Christmas Eve Carols by Candlelight: Mrs Valerie Taylor</b>	<b>11.00 for 11.30 pm</b>
<b>Saturday</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>Christmas Day Worship: Dr Ann Sinclair</b>	<b>10.30 am</b>
<b>Sunday</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>NO SERVICE TAKING PLACE AT ST ANDREW'S TODAY</b>	
Contributions for December Newstand by 20th December, please.			

# Pause in this moment

A place for  
prayers,  
thoughts  
and poems

## **Christmas is a Song of Joy and Love**

Christmas is a song of joy and love,  
However it is sung, however rendered,  
Rich source of childhood pleasures  
that will prove  
In later life a lesson long remembered.  
So may you share the joys of  
Christmas time,  
Though still a child, by giving more  
and more,  
Making child and adult combine  
As slowly, slowly you approach that  
door,  
Surer of what giving might be for.

© *Nicholas Gordon*

## **A Christmas Prayer**

Holy Jesus,  
by being born one of us,  
and lying humbly in a manger,  
you show how much God loves the  
world.  
Let the light of your love always shine  
in our hearts,  
until we reach our home in heaven,  
and see you on your throne of glory.  
Amen.

