



# NEWSTAND

THE MAGAZINE OF ST. ANDREW'S URC



*From Heaven you came, helpless babe*

Volume 89 Issue 12 — December 2023

# St. Andrew's United Reformed Church

Eastfield Avenue, Monkseaton, Whitley Bay, NE25 8LU

<http://standrewsmonkseatonurc.org.uk>



monkseatonurc

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# Musing from the Manse

*"The unconscious imagination is the fount of true perception"*



George MacDonald was a fantasy writer and a Congregational minister in the 19th Century. He was a prolific writer and C.S. Lewis says of him, "I regard George MacDonald as my master, indeed, I fancy I have never written a book in which I did not quote from him".

MacDonald saw the imagination as a place where we encountered God, and that through images and symbols God reaches out to us. And he is not the only writer, or painter, or musician to use their imagination to reveal something special in the things that often pass us by without us noticing.

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

When I read the Christmas story, I see very much the writer's imagination at work. That's not a bad thing and I am not saying that the story is not true. But in the telling of this story, the writer has looked beyond the ordinary to reveal something special; to reveal a place where God reaches out to us.

Secular society tends to disregard the Christmas story as a fairy tale, partly because it is not historically or scientifically verifiable. But I think they miss the point that that may not have

been the intention of the writer to begin with. If a historically and scientifically accurate account had been made, then the dry old text may have been consigned to the annals of history and certainly would not be brought to life again every Christmas.

William Blake described himself as having double vision, by which he not only saw things, but looked beyond them to the invisible world behind them. This is what I believe the writers of the gospels do when they tell the Christmas story, and I also believe it's what we do as Christians.

As Christians we celebrate the incarnation. God breaks into our world. He is here all around us, we need only to have eyes to see. The apostle Paul writes:

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

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

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

Blessings,  
Louise

# Activities Team update

*More things to look forward to!*



**Church Fair** – A massive thank you to all who gave so willingly of their time and effort in preparing for the Fair and for all the help in setting up and clearing away. As always, St Andrew's teamwork came up trumps!

Also a big thank you to all who came to the Fair, supported the various stalls and enjoyed St. Andrew's renowned refreshments. It was a very happy and sociable occasion. Thanks to all the hard work and support a splendid total of £3,455 was raised for church funds and charity. We are also very grateful once again to Gary Staker (our local Funeral Director at William Purves) for his contribution by way of an excellent raffle.

## **Coffee Morning – Saturday 2nd December, 10 am – 12 noon**

Do come along if you can and enjoy a cup of coffee/tea or soft drink amongst friends in the warmth of the church hall.

**Film Club** – Due to so many other activities in December it's been decided not to show a film in December and therefore the next Film Club will take place on Friday 12th January.

**Festive Plays and Poems – Saturday 9th December, 7 pm** – This provides an opportunity to enjoy an evening of seasonal plays and poems along with a glass of wine or soft drink plus a mince pie.

## **Dates for the Diary**

**Coffee Morning – Saturday 6th January 2024**

**Film Club – Friday 12th January 2024, 2 pm - 'Shall We Dance'**

A happy and peaceful Christmas to all!

**Ann Hammond**

Whitley Women Choir, who practise in the church, would like to invite everyone to join us for coffee and cake on Thursday 14th December at 10.45 with an invitation to hear us sing in church at 11.30.

# Prayers at Home

*Bringing ourselves together  
in a moment of peace*



Advent is all about the coming of the Light of Christ.

It is that light which enables us to see things as they really are.

It is that light which can enter our darkness and dispel it to the margins.

We pray for that light to illuminate our hearts and minds.

## **Opening words**

Gracious and loving Lord,  
we come to You in the quiet  
of the day, morning or evening;  
we come and we wait during  
this Advent time.

In the waiting may we find patience;  
in the patience,  
may we find peace;  
in the peace may we find You.

Gracious and loving Lord  
we come to You in the quiet of our  
day, morning or evening  
and You call us by name.

AMEN

## **Prayer of Confession**

God of tenderness and love,  
breathe Your grace into our lives.  
Forgive our wandering ways,  
and guide us along Your paths of  
peace.

When we lose our way, and forget the  
reason and purpose of this season of  
Advent, guide us back to You.

God of tenderness and love,  
You know the thoughts of our minds.  
You understand our fears and You are  
gentle with us.

Help us to entrust to You those things  
that trouble us as we journey through  
Advent, that there may be purpose in  
our steps and courage in our souls.

We offer these prayers in the name of  
Your Son, our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

AMEN

## **Words of Assurance**

Lord God, You know each one of us  
by name.

You wrap us in Your arms  
and forgive us, comfort and love us.

AMEN

## **The Lord's Prayer**

Our Father, who art in heaven,  
hallowed be thy name, thy Kingdom  
come, thy will be done;...

For thine is the kingdom, the power,  
and the glory, for ever and ever.

AMEN

**Prayers of Intercession, prayers of concern for the world, our nation and the church.**

Come, Lord,  
into the darkness of our world;  
where there is injustice and war,  
where nations inflict destruction  
on other nations.  
We pray for justice and peace.

Come, Lord,  
into the darkness of our world;  
into the uncertain future of displaced  
people;  
of migrants risking their lives to  
escape atrocities;  
for those who seek a new start free  
from war and fear.

We pray for justice and peace.

Come, Lord,  
Into the darkness of our world;  
guide the leaders of every nation,  
give them integrity in policy and  
decision making.  
We pray for tolerance in our society.  
We pray for justice and peace.

Come, Lord,  
into the communities of this nation,  
where families are struggling with  
redundancy and debt  
and foodbanks have become a  
lifeline for those in need.

We pray for justice and peace.

Come, Lord, into our lives  
and to the lives of those we hold  
close.

Bring comfort to the bereaved  
and to those who are struggling to  
cope with life on their own.

We pray they find peace and  
comfort and Your love.

Lord, in the darkness of the world,  
let Your love shine.

Lord God, we bring these prayers in  
the name of Your Son, our Lord and  
Saviour, Jesus Christ.

AMEN

In shadows  
in light, fragile and flickering  
prepared and unprepared  
we wait, Lord.

As night dismisses the day and we  
hover on the cusp of Christmas  
we wait  
in cautious joy  
in unfamiliar expectancy  
in hope  
we wait.

So come, Lord  
come in the first breath of the  
morning  
and call us by name

AMEN

**Blessing**

Trinity of loving, our end and our  
beginning, let Your face shine on us,  
let Your love be born in us, bless us  
with new life.

AMEN

***Ann Sinclair***

(Inspiration and words amended  
from *The Soft Petals of Grace*:  
Thomas Schuman; Winter: Ruth  
Burgess & Kathy Crawford)

# The Big Card for sharing!

*And a new place for your individual ones*



After a very warm response to the "Big Christmas Card for Church Charities" last year, it will be available again in December for everyone to sign if they prefer to donate rather than send cards to church friends.

However there are now pigeon holes in the cloakroom if you prefer to leave properly addressed cards for church friends.

**Joan Blanchfield**

## A search for 24 cities (and a town!)

*by Ralph Hewitt*

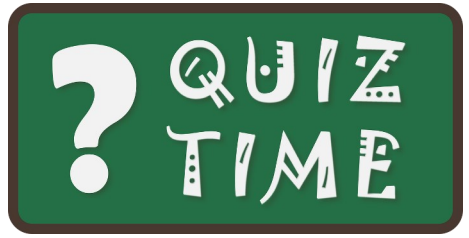
Ralph Hewitt is a member of the Methodist Church. He not only loves doing puzzles he creates them for fun. The grid above contains the names of 24 cities and one town. They all have five letters or more in their name. If you find all 25 names you will also find that the unused letters in the grid spell out a relevant verse from the Old Testament. You might even manage to identify the source of the verse!

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

If you get stuck, the answers appear later in the magazine.

# Let's get quizzical!

## The 12 questions of Christmas



1. According to the song, what gift was brought on the fourth day of Christmas?
2. When was the first Nativity scene invented?
3. Who invented the Nativity Scene?
4. Which King was on the throne when Father Christmas first appeared in the UK?
5. Who is Santa Claus named after?
6. Why do we have 12 days of Christmas?
7. Who invented the Christmas tree?
8. How many Christmas trees are grown in Europe?
9. Why is Christmas Day on 25 December?
10. What names have been given to the Magi and from where did they come?
11. Where in the Bible is the story of the birth of Christ?
12. Who told Joseph to call their baby 'Jesus'?

Answers later in the magazine.

## St. Andrew's 100 Club

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

The October draw took place on 29th October when Jennifer Fleetham drew the following numbers:



1) No 45	Marilyn Walton	£121.50
2) No 80	Ann Hammond	£60.75
3) No 25	Christine Ridley	£20.25

With £202.50 going to Church Funds.

**Kathleen Hopper**



# 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.

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

You are invited to send us any names you wish to be included (email, post, phone, or in person). 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. We will add them to the names on the roll that we have collected in previous years, so if you have previously had names included be assured they still will be (and if for any reason you would like a name removed, please let us know that too).

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

**Tim & Lucy Cooke  
(contact details on page 2)**

Thank you to all at St Andrew's for your cards, flowers, kind thoughts and prayers after my altercation with a dog.

The fractured knee is healing well. I am not in pain, but frustrated at how slow I have to move.

**Hazel**

# Churches Together

## A report on the latest meeting

# Whitley Bay & District CHURCHES+TOGETHER

Held at St Andrew's on 14th November 2023

It was the first time St Andrew's had hosted the meeting and it was poorly attended – only 11 people, with only five churches represented.

I led the opening devotions based on the reading from Ecclesiastes Chapter 3: "For everything there is a season" etc – remembering 11th November. The writer wrote these words in his twilight years reflecting on the world as he had experienced it – in a form of a memoir.

There were so many dates mentioned I'm just going to list them. Then you can choose to support them by putting them in your diary. Also there are posters referring to 'Night Stop' and 'Parish Nursing' which will be on the noticeboards.

### Dates for your Diary

**Fiesta** – Sunday 3rd December between 11 am to 3 pm held at St Paul's and the Shopping Mall.

**Christmas Carol Service** – Ecumenical involving Whitley Bay Churches Together – Sunday 10th December at 4 pm at St Paul's C of E.

**Lunch on Christmas Day** – Open to all, at the Islamic Community Centre (behind the Ice Rink).

### 2024 Activities

**Week of Prayer for Christian Unity (18th – 25th January)** – Service to be held at St John's Methodist Church on Friday 19th January at 6.30 pm

**Festival of Light** – on Saturday 10th February between 5 pm – 9 pm at St Paul's C of E.

Now other bits of information:

- DePaul Christmas Hampers to be presented to 16-24 year olds at a special service on 18th December. We've been asked to contribute Pringles – lots of them! (The deadline for contributions is 13th December.)
- The group are still looking for a chairman – are you interested?
- The voluntary groups which are part of the Whitley Bay and District Churches Together group are all looking for volunteers: Parish Nursing; Whitley Bay Street Pastors; Severe Weather Emergency Protocol; Night Stop; Warm Spaces.

I think I've covered everything!  
God Bless You! And I wish you all a Happy and Peaceful Christmas!

**Valerie Taylor**

# Ecumenical Services

*Joining our friends in Christ  
to worship indoors and out*



## “Travelling in Advent”

You are welcome to join a short series of ecumenical, informal gatherings on Friday lunchtimes at 12.30 pm on 1st December, 8th December and 15th December – of course, as usual, followed by our delicious bowls of homemade soup. The theme this year over the four Fridays will be: ‘Travelling in Advent’

## “Carols around the Christmas Tree”

Another ecumenical service: “Carols around the Christmas Tree” – outdoors, opposite the Spar store, on Saturday 23rd December at 4.00 pm.

All are welcome to any and all the services. Hope to see you there!

**Valerie Taylor**

## 12 Answers of Christmas

1. Four calling birds
2. 1223
3. St Francis of Assisi
4. Henry VIII
5. Saint Nicholas
6. It is based on the Christian theology that marks 12 days between the birth of Christ and the arrival of the Magi.
7. German Lutherans in the 16th Century, when a tree was placed in the Cathedral of Strasbourg in 1539, under the leadership of the Protestant Reformer, Martin Bucer.
8. About 60 million
9. It is 9 months after the traditional date of the conception of Jesus on 25 March.
10. Melchior from Europe, Caspar from Arabia, and Balthazar from Africa
11. Matthew and Luke
12. An angel of the Lord

## Word Search answers

The cities are: MOSCOW, WARSAW, LONDON, CANBERRA, SWANSEA, BIRMINGHAM, BUCHAREST, LEEDS, SINGAPORE, AMSTERDAM, TEHERAN, VIENNA, BUDAPEST, COPENHAGEN, SEOUL, SANTIAGO, BARCELONA, OTTAWA, LISBON, NICOSIA, SAN SALVADOR, PRAGUE, HELSINKI, ATHENS. The town is LLANDUDNO

The Hidden Bible Verse is from Genesis 13:12 (NIV): LOT LIVED AMONG THE CITIES OF THE PLAIN

As I gradually recover from the broken hip caused by a bad fall, I now write to send my most heartfelt thanks to all those at St Andrews who sent me cards and have wished me a speedy recovery over the last few weeks. A special thanks to the Flower Committee for the beautiful flowers and to our wonderful new Minister Louise for her kind visit to me in hospital! It is true that adversity shows you who your friends are, but it also reveals friends you did not realise you had!

**Carole Moore**

## Church Register

### DEATH

CORBY

Edith Isabella, aged 93 years,  
on 28th October 2023.  
Committal at Whitley Bay on  
24th November, followed by service  
at St Andrew's, conducted by  
Revd Louise Sanders.



## January Newstand

The next edition of Newstand will be out on 24th Dec.  
Please have contributions to Tim **by 18th December.**

# Northern Synod Prayer Diary

*Joining in our weekly prayers  
with the wider URC*



3	Methodist Darlington District: District Chair the Revd Richard Andrew.
10	St Columba's, Billingham; Church-Related Community Work Minister Ann Honey; St George's, Hartlepool; Stockton; St Andrew's Mission, Thornaby; St Andrew's, Nunthorpe & Marton; Guisborough; Redcar, and the Mission House.
17	Northgate, Darlington; Zion, Northallerton; Low Row with Keld.
24	Baptist Northern Association; Transitional Strategic Regional Minister the Revd Hayley Young.
31	Salvation Army North East Division; Divisional Commanders Majors David and Gillian Burns.

## From the Book of Remembrance

*Remembering those who have gone before us*

George Charlton

Cynthia Workman

Robert Smith Niven

Alistair Fraser

Mrs. Dorothy Paterson Packer

Elsie Scrafton

Peter Dixon

Joyce Dixon

Jim Turnbull

Elizabeth Morley

# December Rotas

*Make sure you give your presence, even if you aren't expecting any presents.*



**Please see Church Diary for service leaders**

**ELDERS:**      **Vestry**            Carole Mallett  
                  **Reception**        Iain Ord  
                  **Communion**        TBC

**STEWARDS:**    **Vestibule** Jean Jackson    **Finance** Jenny Hooper

**Sunday 3rd**    **Organ** Paul Hartley  
                  **Readers** Jean Jackson/ Tim Cooke  
                  **Prayers** Chris Hales

**Tuesday 5th**    **Prayers** Carole Mallett

**Sunday 10th**    **Organ** Helen Storey  
                  **Readers** Val Taylor/ Chris Hales  
                  **Prayers** Val Taylor

**Tuesday 12th**    **Prayers** Sandra Pine

**Sunday 17th**    **Organ** Paul Hartley  
                  **Readers** Susan Clark/Paul Hartley  
                  **Prayers** Hazel Hall

**Tuesday 19th**    **Prayers** Una Ketteridge

**Sunday 24th**    **Organ** Alex  
                  **Readers** Iain Ord/Andrew Cooke  
                  **Prayers** Andrew Cooke

**Tuesday 26th**    No prayers on this day

**Sunday 31st**    **Organ** Paul Hartley  
                  **Readers** Jenny Hooper/Keven Ames  
                  **Prayers** Ann Hammond

# Church Calendar for December / January

Sunday services are streamed via YouTube for those not able to attend in person or just to watch again in your own time (search for "monkseatonurc").

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

**Midweek Worship:** Tuesday 10 am followed by Open Door Coffee Morning.

**Open Door Coffee Morning:** Thursday 10.30 am - Noon.

<b>Fri</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>Ecumenical Advent Service at St Andrew's, followed by soup and a roll</b>	<b>12.30 pm</b>
Sat	2	Coffee Morning	10.00 am
<b>Sun</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>Communion Service; Revd Louise Sanders</b>	<b>11.00 am</b>
Mon	4	Advent course: Forgiving and Forgetting (at St Andrew's)	2.00 pm
		(via Zoom)	7.15 pm
Thurs	7	(at St Columba's, North Shields)	7.15 pm
<b>Fri</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>Ecumenical Advent Service at St Andrew's, followed by soup and a roll</b>	<b>12.30 pm</b>
		NO FILM CLUB THIS MONTH	
Satur	9	Festive Poetry and Play Reading Evening	7.00 pm
<b>Sun</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>'Let's Sing' – Mandy Watson</b>	<b>9.30 am</b>
		<b>Prayer Group – Mandy Watson</b>	<b>10.15 am</b>
		<b>Morning Worship; Dr Ann Sinclair</b>	<b>11.00 am</b>
<b>Mon</b>	<b>11</b>	Advent course: Forgiving and Forgetting (at St Andrew's)	2.00 pm
		(via Zoom)	7.15 pm
		Fifty Eight Society Christmas Dinner 7.00 FOR	7.30 pm
Thurs	14	Advent course: Forgiving and Forgetting (at St Columba's)	7.15 pm
<b>Fri</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>Ecumenical Advent Service at St Andrew's, followed by soup and a roll</b>	<b>12.30 pm</b>
<b>Sun</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>Children's Festival Service; Revd Louise Sanders</b>	<b>11.00 am</b>
Mon	18	Advent course: Forgiving and Forgetting (at St Andrew's)	2.00 pm
		(via Zoom)	7.15 pm
		Priory Singers Concert	7.30 pm
<b>Thurs</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>Longest Night Service; the Cooke Family</b>	<b>7.00 pm</b>
		Advent course: Forgiving and Forgetting (at St Columba's)	7.15 pm
<b>Sat</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>Ecumenical 'Carols around the Christmas Tree' opposite Spar in Monkseaton</b>	<b>4.00 pm</b>
<b>Sun</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>Morning Worship; Revd Louise Sanders</b>	<b>11.00 am</b>
		<b>Carols by Candlelight; Revd Louise Sanders (refreshments from 11.00 pm)</b>	<b>11.30 pm</b>
<b>Mon</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>Christmas Day Service; Revd Louise Sanders</b>	<b>10.30 am</b>
<b>Sun</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>Morning Worship; Revd Louise Sanders &amp; Worship Group</b>	<b>11.00 am</b>
<b>JANUARY 2024</b>			
<b>Fri</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>Executive Team meeting</b>	<b>10.00 am</b>
Sat	6	Coffee Morning	10.00 am
<b>Sun</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>Communion Service; Revd Louise Sanders</b>	<b>11.00 am</b>

# Pause in this moment

A place for  
prayers,  
thoughts  
and poems

## **BC:AD**

This was the moment when Before  
turned into After, and the future's  
uninvented timekeepers presented arms.

This was the moment when nothing  
happened. Only dull peace  
sprawled boringly over the earth.

This was the moment when even  
energetic Romans  
could find nothing better to do  
than counting heads in remote provinces.

And this was the moment  
when a few farm workers and three  
members of an obscure Persian sect  
walked haphazard by starlight straight  
into the kingdom of heaven.

*U. A. Fanthorpe (b 1929)*

*The Oxford Book of Christmas Poems  
(Ed. 2009) Oxford: OUP*

