



50p

December 2023/January 2024

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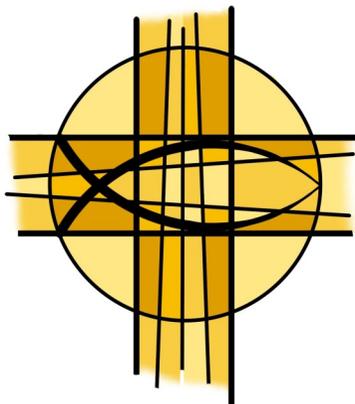
PARISH WEBSITE: www.newburnparish.org



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Letter from Rev Malcolm:

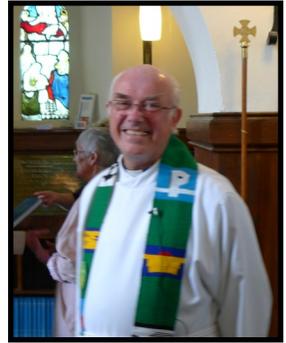
Dear Friends,

As I'm now in my 80's, like most older people, I tend to reflect on Christmases gone by! My first recollection of Christmas was when my family got home again, from being evacuated to the country, at the end of the Second World War. At least our house was still standing. Others in the road were missing.

Christmases were very modest affairs. Children usually got only one main present, and maybe a storybook or an annual from a more distant relative. What we got for our main gift was really cherished and loved. We didn't expect anything more.

What we did do differently was to collect all the years' worth of sweet coupons from the back page of our ration books and bought a year's supply. Over a few days we guzzled all the year's ration of chocolate and jelly babies, and some were squirreled away in secret hidey-holes! In the 1950's people had more money. But my dad was mostly out of work, so there was a widening gap between working people and those of us who remained on benefits. All the same, some people bought televisions at that time. We had to wait till the 1960's. Then we could also afford a fridge and stopped keeping milk in a bucket of water. We eventually managed to buy a small second-hand car, in which the seats were covered with paper to keep them clean. Then cardboard to keep the paper dry. Then another cloth to keep the cardboard clean. I very rarely was allowed to ride in the car.

We used to put up decorations for Christmas: the same old red or green long plastic ribbons that wound across the room several times. And the paper folding bells. They all



came out of the same box in the loft every year that I can remember!

And for years we kept a few chickens. We killed one each year for Christmas. Tough as old soldier's boots!

Then something happened to me. We used to go to Church youth fellowships in those days, where we learned to dance to records, and where we made new friends. In my mid-teens it was a grand place to meet girls and start simple relationships. I met lots of nice girls. One of these impressed me very much because she was a devout Christian.

Girls I went with always lived in the opposite direction from the church than my direction, so walking them home took me ages. I got into fearful trouble if I got home late and was sometimes locked out (and had to climb in through an upstairs window!).

This girl told me a lot about life with Jesus. I wanted that life as there was a lot wrong with mine. She taught me how to pray, and to ask Jesus to forgive me, and take over my life. I took her seriously and asked Him. Suddenly, WHAM!!, I was swept off my feet with the reality of His presence with me in the room where I was busy doing my homework one night. Jesus was so real to me that night that I have never turned back. That was 66 years ago on 25 September.

So, Christmas that year took on a very new meaning for me.

Instead of thinking about Christmas presents, I was bowled over with what Jesus had done for me. That first Christmas, when He was born in Bethlehem, gave me a new purpose for my life. Life sprang up with new hopes and things to make life mean much more to me. I wanted to volunteer to help people, visit people in hospitals, and help my friends in the youth club to do the same. We loved it.

Former enemies became friends. I began to plan my future

with some kind of direction. At Church, the hymns and prayers took on a new meaning. I found I could really love people. And all this because I had found the true meaning of Jesus coming down to live among us, what we celebrate at Christmas. At last, though we were still poor, I had found what it means to become rich!

May you enjoy the same rich blessings in the year ahead.

Happy Christmas to you all.

Yours sincerely, Malcolm.



Sunday Service Information

9.30am St Michael's

11am St Mary's

6pm (4th Sunday) St Mary's

Thursday 10am The Parish Hall

Morning Prayer Service

*The following information can be
applied every month:*

1st Sunday: Communion

2nd Sunday: All Age

3rd Sunday: Communion

4th Sunday: Morning Praise (am) & Contemporary
Worship (pm)

5th Sunday: JOINT SERVICE 10am

CHRISTMAS

SERVICES 2023

17th December

9.30am Communion at St Michael's

11am Carol Service at St Mary's

6pm Carols by Candlelight at St Michael's.

24th December (Christmas Eve)

10am Joint Parish Service at St Michael's

6pm Nativity at St Mary's

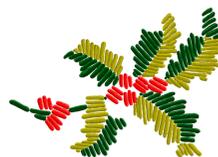
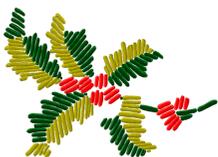
11.30pm Midnight Communion at St Michael's

25th December (Christmas Day)

10am Joint Parish Service at St Mary's

31st December (New Year's Eve)

10am Joint Parish Service at St Michael's



Spotlight on December:

World Soil Day – 5th December 2023

[World Soil Day](#) is held annually on 5th December to focus attention on the importance of healthy soil and to advocate for the sustainable management of soil resources.

This environmental day aims to raise awareness of the importance of maintaining healthy ecosystems and



human well-being by addressing the growing challenges in soil management, fighting soil salinization, and increasing soil awareness. It also encourages societies to improve soil health.

International Mountain Day – 11th December 2023

[International Mountain Day](#) was set up in 2003 by the UN to highlight the importance of sustainable mountain development. Our mountains are under threat from climate change and overexploitation. As the global climate continues to warm, mountain people – some of the world’s poorest – face even greater struggles to survive. The rising temperatures also mean that mountain glaciers are melting at unprecedented rates, affecting freshwater supplies downstream for millions of people. The day seeks to help mobilise people to take care of our mountains, based on a particular theme. Previous years have included “Mountain minorities and indigenous peoples.” This aimed to raise awareness about indigenous peoples and marginalised groups who live in mountain environments and the relevance of their cultural heritage, traditions and customs.

No more ‘postcode lottery’ recycling

The Light of the World

During the month of December, people are 'counting down' to Christmas Day in an ever-increasing variety of ways. In my childhood we had a simple card with a traditional picture of a manger scene with doors marked with the countdown numbers and a picture of the different characters behind each. If my parents had extra money to spend, they would buy one with shiny snow made of sparkles! These days you can pay hundreds to have a gift for each day from toys to jewellery. And don't fret, your pets can have their own also!

Churches don't normally count the days, but they do note the four Sundays before Christmas Day. They give each of those four 'advent' Sundays a theme and light a candle each time. One for the first week, two for the second and so on.

Unlike the secular world, the church counts up, and not down. It increases the light as we get nearer to Christmas Day and then adds an extra light on that day. So, a total of five candles. Churches vary in their use of colour in the candles. Some will use all white, whilst many only use white for the Christ-light on Christmas Day and 'colours' on the four Sundays.

There again they vary; some use all purple – originally the most expensive colour - as we prepare for The King. In a more modern style, some use blue – perhaps recalling the most associated colour for Jesus' mother Mary. But perhaps reminding us of creation and that we are surrounded by God's love as the earth is surrounded by the blue sky.

And again, others will change the colours for each Sunday, often giving the third Sunday to be pink as we are over half-way through Advent and it is known as *Gaudate* – Joyful – Sunday. Or there are those who make the fourth Sunday pink, as that one is often dedicated to Mary and it's a 'girly' colour.

This month

Have a look at the advent candles in your church, or perhaps in your own home, and think about what the colours mean to you. How do they reflect your faith? Whatever the colour – Have a Good Christmas!

Rev Dr Jo White



Choir Meets in St Mary's church on a Saturday at 10am

~~4th November~~
~~10th November~~
2nd December
9th December
16th December

 **Join us !**

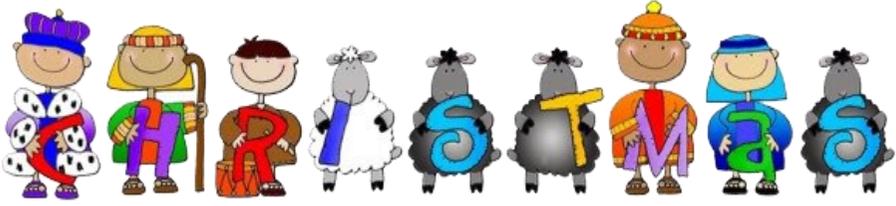
17th December – Carols by candlelight at St Michaels Church Newburn @ 5pm for warm up

Community Choir

Messy
Church
Christingle



**Saturday 2nd December,
4-6pm,
Newburn Parish Hall**

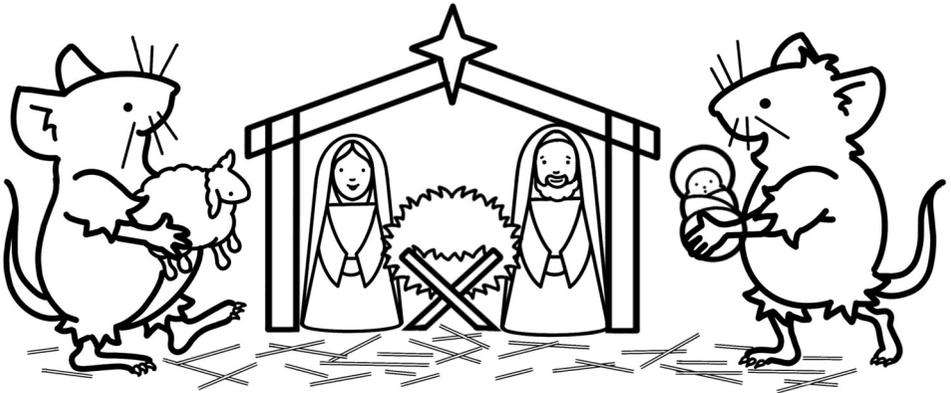


Christmas Eve - 6pm St Mary's

An instant nativity, bring your children, or come dressed as any of the people in the Christmas Story and join in with all the family as we celebrate the birth of Jesus.

There will be some costumes if you can't find anything at home.

This is for all the family whatever your age!



The Heart of Christmas

We're at that time of year again! But is Christmas just about the shopping, tree or presents? At its heart, Christmas is all about a God who has showed up on earth. The Creator of the universe, whose hands flung stars into space, cared enough to come to earth as a tiny baby. 'The Word became flesh and made His dwelling among us.' (John 1:14)

Every year we sing carols and retell the same story of the donkey, innkeeper, stable, angels, shepherds, star, wise men, gifts and Mary and Joseph with baby! Why do we do all this? It's to remind us that God deals with the mess of our world by sending His Son to die in our place. This makes it possible for us to have a relationship with Himself:

When the time came, He "did not consider equality with God something to be used to His own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to death - even death on a cross! (Philippians 2:6-8)

Reflecting on Jesus in the manger is a great place to start understanding the heart of the Christmas message. However, it's so much more than simply a cute baby lying in the bed of straw:

If our greatest need had been information, God would have sent us an educator;

If our greatest need had been technology, God would have sent us a scientist;

If our greatest need had been money, God would have sent us an economist;

If our greatest need had been pleasure, God would have sent us an entertainer;

But our greatest need was forgiveness, so God sent us a Saviour.

By Canon Paul Hardingham

Preparations

Christmas is a time for making plans. Presents to buy, cards to send, decorations to put up, food to order, travel arrangements to make... the list goes on and on. But whether our plans are ambitious or simple this Christmas, we still dread anything going wrong.

Yet plans seemed to fall apart that first Christmas. Mary and Joseph had planned to marry and set up home together in Galilee. Then Mary had become unexpectedly pregnant, and they were summoned to Bethlehem for the census. So instead of a comfortable Galilean home amongst family, they were suddenly parents, all alone in a place fit for animals!

The shepherds had expected another routine night on the hills of Bethlehem. But the angel's message and a heavenly choir changed everything, and they went to search for the Christ-child instead. Their change of plans brought them great joy!

The Eastern men had expected to find the 'King of the Jews' in a royal palace. But the star by-passed Jerusalem and took them to Bethlehem. Then their plans changed again, when they were warned in a dream to avoid Herod, and slip home another way. The Holy Couple then had another upset of plans: Joseph was warned in a dream NOT to go home to Galilee, but to flee for safety in Egypt instead.

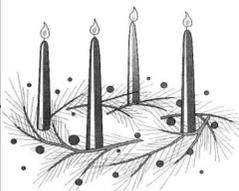
At first sight, all these changes display a chaotic mix of circumstances. But behind it all, God was working out His divine purposes. When Jesus was born, all the Old Testament prophecies of His coming were fulfilled. Nothing happened by chance. Into a messy world God brought to us His Son, to be our Saviour.

We worship a great and loving God who not only planned that first Christmas but is also preparing for our stay in His eternal home.

The plans God makes are wise, and they always succeed!
(Isaiah 28:29)

By Lester Amann

Advent:



Preparing for the coming of the Lord!

Prayers for Dec/Jan

In the preparations for Christmas, pray that there will be room in people's lives for Christ.

Thank God for the Bible, the record of the long years of preparation for the coming of Jesus.

As we tidy up our homes for Christmas pray for the clutter in our lives to be sorted out so that our hearts will be ready to welcome the Saviour.

Pray that in this time of financial uncertainty people will not feel pressured into debt or buying things that they can't afford.

Remember those working longer hours in shops and those working for Royal Mail dealing with increased post.

Pray for children and students who will come into church from the local schools for their carol services.

Pray that we will be aware of those around us who are dreading Christmas because of loneliness, and find a way to reach out a hand of friendship

Almighty God, as your kingdom dawns, turn us from the darkness of sin to the light of holiness, that we may be ready to meet you in our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

CHRIS

Jesus is the Prince
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Love came down at C
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Pray for those who v
Christmas Day to fe
spend the d

Pray for families a
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is conflict a

Pray for children who
abused or neglected
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Remember those ar
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agencies working to

Pray for NHS work
services working to k
festive

**Lord Jesus Ch
at Bethlem
kneel in won
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accept our hea
we worship yo
and our et**

If you would like to join the Annual Magazine Prayer Rota, or ev

by Margaret Ledger

Epiphany



CHRISTMAS

of Peace - pray for
conflict in our troubled
world
Christmas - remember
one to love and care
less and the lonely
will give their time on
ed the homeless and
ay with them
as they spend time
nciliation where there
and tension
o are disadvantaged,
, for whom Christmas
ittle joy
round the world who
ving and pray for aid
relieve their suffering
kers, police and fire
keep us safe over the
period
**Christ, your birth
n draws us to
der at heaven
g earth:
artfelt praise as
ou, our Saviour
ernal God.**

As the wise men followed the
star sure of finding the Christ,
pray for conviction and vision
as we follow him today

Pray for Christians in other
lands who are persecuted for
their faith, that they will have
courage and be sustained by the Holy Spirit
Pray for the work of Pcdc taking gifts of love to
children in Bethlehem today

The wise men brought gifts to Jesus - we are
given gifts by the Holy Spirit - pray that we will
recognise our gifts and use them in the
building up of the Church

Pray that the Church will demonstrate gifts of
thanksgiving, love, service, caring and
compassion

Pray for a just and fair society to be
established in the Holy Land that peoples
there might live together in peace

In the Epiphany season we will read of the
ways in which Jesus was revealed to the world
-pray that he will be revealed as Saviour to
those who seek him today

**Creator of the heavens, who led
the Magi by a star to worship
the Christ-child: guide and
sustain us, that we may find our
journey's end in Jesus Christ
our Lord.**

When just do a one off prayer, please get in touch with Helen Dawson.

Spotlight on January:

Veganuary – 1st to 31st January

[Veganuary](#) is a global event to encourage people to try eating vegan for the month of January and beyond. Each year, over 620,000 people pledge to try to eat only plant-based foods.

Veganuary says it “aims to inspire and support people to try vegan, drive corporate change, and create a global mass movement championing compassionate food choices with the aim of ending animal farming, protecting the planet, and improving human health”.

RSPB Big Garden Bird Watch – 26th to 28th January

[RSPB's Big Garden Birdwatch](#) is the world's largest wildlife survey.

To join the 700,000 people taking part each year, all you have to do is sit back, relax and watch the birds in your garden or local park for an hour. Then let the RSPB know what you've seen. Even if you see very few birds or none at all,

that's also really useful information for the RSPB, so do let them know.

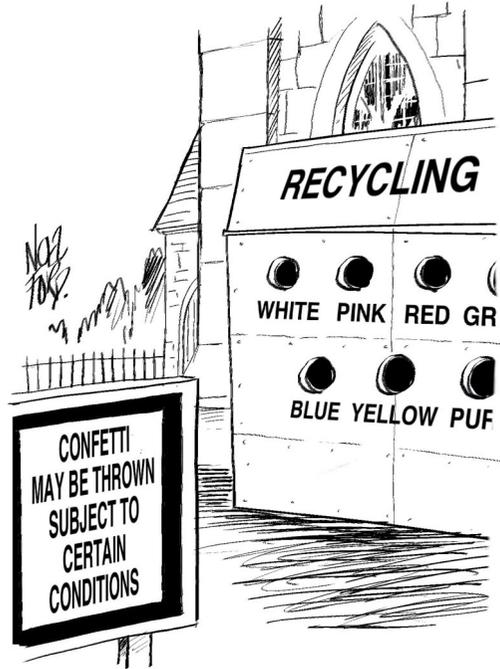
The birdwatch helps provide a snapshot in time of how garden birds are doing in the UK. It is held at a similar time every year so that the RSPB can compare the results with previous years.



Recycling going forward...

Life is going to become simpler when it comes to recycling.

From 2026, the national recycling laws are to be standardised, with Councils across the UK all having to collect the same glass, metal, plastic, paper and card, food waste and garden waste. It is expected that the plans will lead to packaging that is clearly labelled 'recyclable' or not, without the need for households to check local provisions.



“Simpler recycling will help us all recycle more easily, doing our bit to help save the planet and make the best use of precious resources that we use every day,” said Therese Coffey, the Environment Secretary.

“Alongside weekly food waste collections, we are ending the postcode lottery of what you can put in your bin, so that wherever you live in the country, you will be able to recycle the same products with confidence.”

Bethany - Welcome



BETHANY

We meet on the third Wednesday of the month in St Mary's, Throckley at 1pm.

We will be observing some restrictions owing to the continuing Covid situation. As previously we will have a time of worship, an activity or quiz and there will be a cuppa with light refreshments.

ALL ARE WELCOME - we look forward to seeing friends old and new.

There is no charge - voluntary donations to cover expenses can be given.

Please contact Margaret Ledger on 0191 2672953 for more info if required

Noah's Ark will finish for the Christmas Holidays on 13th December with a Christmas party for the children.

Noah's Ark Playgroup

Wednesday 10-11.30am
(school term time only)

Newburn Parish Hall

£1.50 per family,
Refreshments provided





NEWBURN YOUTH GROUP

It was good to see some of you at the Quiz Night in October - weren't the questions hard this year ?!

No winners this time, but fun all the same and Tearfund will have received donations from across the UK to help so many people struggling in many countries across the world.

At our November meeting we prepared some notices for the Christmas Fair, and we again manned the Junior Tombola at the fair.

Our December meeting coincides with the **Candlelight Carol Service in St Michael's, Sunday 17 December at 6pm**

It would be great if we could join together for that.

And then we start the **New Year on Sunday 21 January - in the Parish Hall - 6pm to 7.30pm.**

Till then, Margaret, Carla and Jennie wish you all a happy Christmas and God bless you during 2024 !



Spiritual Disciplines: Celebration

'But the angel said to them, 'Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people.' (Luke 2:10).

As we conclude our series on the spiritual disciplines, this month we look at *Celebration*, which is very appropriate for this Christmas season. We are called to rejoice in God's good gifts and celebrate His faithfulness.

Jesus modelled celebration in his first miracle at Cana, when He turned water into wine, enabling the party to continue (John 2:1-12). Celebration helps us with the other disciplines, as it enables us to keep going through times of joy and struggle: *'Without a joyful spirit of festivity the Disciplines become dull, death-breathing tools in the hands of modern Pharisees.'* (Richard Foster). We celebrate crucial moments in our lives with unreserved joy and thanksgiving and this shape our lives to be more like Jesus.

Richard Foster offers a few helpful pointers to celebration in his book *Celebration of Discipline*. They may come in handy as you celebrate Christmas this year!

Singing and dancing: how can we rediscover what children do brilliantly, in our families or church? Is there room for singing Christmas carols together at home this year?

Laughter: just as Jesus brought humour into His teaching, how can we laugh more? What does it mean to take ourselves less seriously and encourage more fun with our friends?

Imagination and creativity: how can we invest in our own creativity, as well as other people's? - e.g. in painting, poetry, reading and other leisure activities? God gave us these things to enjoy! As we celebrate our own creativity, we are sharing in God's goodness and joy.

Family events: we can use family celebrations and with Christmas approaching, there is the opportunity of putting God at the centre of our celebration.

'So, whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God' (1 Cor 10:31).

Canon Paul Hardingham

25th January – time for haggis and bagpipes!

He died 'lang syne' – long ago, back in 1796, but the Scottish poet Robert Burns is still remembered each January, over many a 'Burns Night' supper of cockaleekie soup, haggis, neeps and tatties - and whisky. Scots and other Burns lovers throughout the world, from Canada to the USA to Russia, still celebrate the poems this most beloved of Scots poets wrote so long ago.

Burns wrote about ordinary things – food, love, death, friendship, and disappointment. We still quote him: 'the best laid schemes o' Mice an' Men'. And at the end of our lives, we can use his 'Prayer, in Prospect of Death': 'Thou art good; and Goodness still/Delighteth to forgive'. Indeed, the Bible promises that if we put our trust in God, He will forgive us and give us new life in Him. A good thought at the beginning of a New Year!

DATE FOR YOUR DIARY:

Saturday 20th January 2024—Parish Burns Night Supper in the Parish Hall. Details to follow—for more info contact anyone in PEGS.

THE WORLD DAY OF PRAYER (WDP)
1ST MARCH 2024

VENUE: WESTERHOPE METHODIST
CHURCH AT 13.30.

This service has been prepared by an ecumenical group of Christian women from Palestine, the land in which Jesus was born, ministered and died, where He rose again and where the Christian faith began and is rooted. The WDP is a great wave of prayer encircling the Globe, involving many countries and islands, to pray for the people of Palestine, The theme is taken from St. Paul's letter to the Ephesians ch. 4 vv 1-3. "I beg you, bear with each other in love." A most challenging theme given the present situation. Their involvement with the WDP has allowed Palestinian women to interact with over 100 countries since 1950, strengthening the Middle East's presence and witness. They are searching and working for a deeper understanding among all people who share the land: Jew, Christian and Muslim, (all children of Abraham.) They are trusting and hoping in the humanity of one another. Please come along and participate in this event - you will not fail to be moved, and enabled to pray more meaningfully

Big Ben

Do you stay up until midnight on New Year's Eve? If so, this year will be special – it is 100 years ago, on 31st December 1923, that the BBC first broadcast the chimes of Big Ben to welcome in the New Year.

For it was not until 31st December 1923 that the chimes of Big Ben were ever heard outside of Parliament and Westminster. But then the BBC got permission to broadcast them to the nation, and history was made.

That first year, the BBC engineers were not allowed into Parliament, and so had to access Big Ben from the roof of the Palace of Westminster. This meant that their microphone picked up not just the chimes, but a lot of traffic noise as well.

But a tradition had started, and by 1924 the Big Ben bongs were being broadcast every day.

By then the BBC had installed low sensitivity microphones very close to the bells, so that they missed the sound of the clock mechanism.

The nation quickly came to love the sound of Big Ben, and during the Second World War the chimes were broadcast across occupied Europe – encouraging millions in their struggle against the Nazis.

The Big Ben daily time signal on the BBC is still cherished today, and Big Ben rings live for important events such as Remembrance Day and New Year, when the BBC sends the sound right around the world.



Poet's Corner

Bethany

I'd like to give a mention about Bethany today
Held every third Wednesday in the month
In St Marys Church Throckley, it's not too far away

We begin with a cup of tea or coffee
And a snack I haven't had to prepare
After which we listen to a story from the bible
Sing a hymn and recite the Lord's Prayer

Sometimes I find time to converse with my school chums
This is a source of great pleasure to me
If we had our time over again
What would we have done
We squirm at the mischief and we smile at the fun

We end the session with a game or a quiz,
Some of the questions leave me in a tizz.
With my tummy full of tea and cake
It's almost time to leave this midweek break.

God bless the helpers who care for us
As we are growing old
Never take them for granted
They are worth their weight in gold.

Cheerio Bethany, parting is sweet
It is with some reluctance
I cross over the street.

Audrey Nelson, 2022

Treasured Blessings

A freshly marked footprint on a soft fall of snow,
A secluded place where primroses grow,

The colours of nature that each season brings,
Lord, you created all of these things.

The scent of a rose in the morning air,
The loving trust of a child in prayer,
A delicate flutter of butterfly wings,
Lord, you have created such wonderful things.

Clouds shaped like angel wings fluffy and white,
Then a pink and red sunset on a warm summer night.
A hymn to sing at the end of the day,
Lord, you are the one that taught us to pray.

The nurses and doctors who tend to our ills,
The wonder of science and the surgeons' skills.
Dedicated people who earn their degree,
Lord, you are the master of all they would be.

May we never worry about what lies ahead,
Whether short of money or to lie ill in bed
For our Lord is always with us whatever life may bring,
Our creator our Lord our provider,
You control everything.....

Dorothy Duggan



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Email: john@thegrangecentre.co.uk

THE GRANGE DAY CENTRE

Are you looking for day care for your elderly relative?
We offer quality care & support tailored to your needs.

THE GRANGE CENTRE MEALS ON WHEELS SERVICE

We can deliver a freshly cooked hot meal & pudding to your door
Monday - Friday. Only £4.40 per day



The Grange Centre Outreach Service

Newburn Road, Throckley, Newcastle Upon Tyne, NE15 9AF
TEL:01912673728



We at The Grange now offer many services out in the community.

Could you or a family member benefit from any of the following:

Help with laundry, cleaning or shopping?



Support with Doctor/Hospital appointments?



Befriending services or help to join in with community activities?



Please contact John Hewitt or Lisa Langford for further details on :
01912673728



Rev Allison Harding (Vicar)

Please contact Allison to arrange Baptism, Confirmation or Marriage. If you know of people who are ill or are in hospital please let us know.

The deadline for any inclusions for the magazine is

Two Sundays before the last Sunday of the month

Please either email or hand to Helen Dawson.
helenrdawson@yahoo.co.uk

If you have any questions or opinions about the magazine content and style, or would like to write an article please get in touch.

All feedback welcome.

If you know of anyone who would like to receive a magazine (only £5.00 per annum) please get in touch and we will add their name to the distribution list.