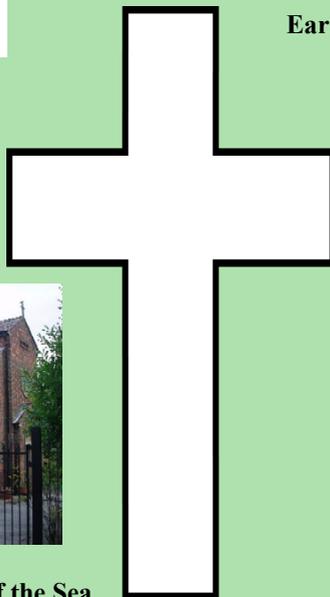




St. Alban's Earsdon



Earsdon Methodist



CHURCH VIEWS

**December
2022**

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St. John's Backworth



**Immaculate Heart of Mary,
Parish of Our Lady Star of the Sea**

THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH

December 2022

Dear All,

I've just come in from showing a group of Year 1 children around St Alban's. They were full of questions. One of them was 'do you enjoy your job?'

The honest answer was 'YES! I *more* than enjoy my job: I *love* my job.' What better way to spend a life than finding all kinds of ways of telling people how much God loves them.

You've just picked up the December issue of 'Church Views'. This is the month that – maybe more than any other – is the one full of the joy of doing what I do.

I love a good school Nativity Play: the children in their tea-towels dressing up as shepherds... the nervous angels in white sheets picking their noses... the Wise Men clutching their squeezey bottles covered in gold tape... the parents who know all the songs backwards mouthing the words as their children sing their hearts out.

And often, I have the privilege of being asked to say a blessing at the end. I particularly love this one: 'May the love of Mary and Joseph, the joy of the shepherds, the obedience of the Wise Men, and the peace of the Christ child be yours this Christmas...'

Thing is, the world is in an awful state as we look towards another Christmas. How can we really enjoy it all when there is hanging over us the war in Ukraine, the cost of living crisis, our concern about energy bills, and another climate summit which has failed to grasp the nettle of reducing carbon emissions. Happy Christmas?

Well let's take each element of the blessing I will soon be praying for those children at their Nativity Plays...

The love of Mary and Joseph. This Christian life of ours is all about love. Love received... love returned... love shared out. As Saint Paul tells us in his great hymn to love, if we do not have love, we are nothing. This Advent, God give us grace to pick ourselves up, to hold our heads high, and to go on and on and on *loving*.

The joy of the shepherds. Yes, we are all facing huge increases in the cost of living. Time to remember then, maybe, that lots of the very best things this life affords are absolutely free: taking time to watch a beautiful sunset... taking off our shoes and socks and letting the North Sea bathe our feet... lighting a candle, turning the lights out, and listening to a favourite piece of music. Naïve? Maybe, but may God give us grace to find deep joy in things not affected by inflation.

The obedience of the Wise Men. The Wise Men travelled a long distance, and brought to Jesus the best they had. This Advent, may I not settle for offering God second best. May I offer the pure gold of a life lived devoted to making the world a better place.

And **the peace of the Christ child?** Maybe we get tired of waiting for the ‘men of strife’ to ‘hush their noise’ and ‘hear the angels sing’. But let’s not let our hands hang limp. Let’s go on and on and on battering the gates of heaven with prayers for peace. For Ukraine, and for every part of the world where there is conflict.

A deeply joyful Christmas when it comes, and a peaceful New Year.

Tim x



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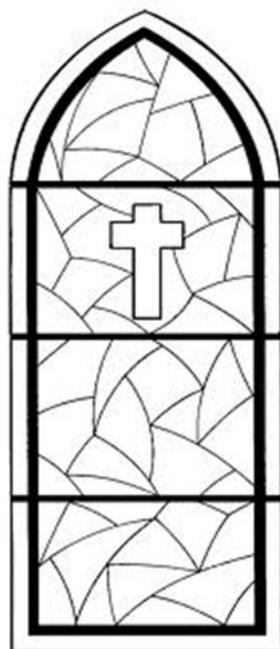
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COMMUNITY NEWS

Forthcoming events

The Parish of Earsdon and Backworth organises a number of social events throughout the year to raise funds and encourage fellowship.

Earsdon and Backworth Mothers' Union:

7th December 2022, is when we meet for our Annual Christmas Meal together which this year will be held at the Beefeater in Whitley Bay.

We wish everyone our very best wishes for a Blessed Christmas.

Everyone is welcome to come along to our Mothers Union meetings in 2023.

Watching the Sunrise During the Dark Mornings of Advent

Thank you, what a gift this morning from you as I watched the blazing sunrise through a cloudy winter sky. It is hard getting up these dark mornings Lord, and yet you gift me with a sight that I miss at other times of the year when the weather is warmer and the sun rises before I get up. I stared out of the window at the red and purple light, gloriously framed by the gold of the rising sun. 'Be still and know that I am God' was the only thing that came to my mind as I watched in silence, filled with a sense of your presence in my life.

I am filled with gratitude this day for such a treasure and can feel it and see it as a gift from you. Thank you for your love. Today let me carry a sense of how much you love me, to send me such a gift. Let the awareness of your love change the way I treat others today and let me be more reverent in the irritations of the day. I ask your help to move through my busy day and the Christmas preparations with peace and a sense of your sunrise in my heart.

I give you Thanks, your glory fills my spirit.

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Here's a little reminder for those of you who pay your magazine subscriptions annually. Next year's subscription (still £12.00) will be due next month, so we will be calling early in January 2023. Thank you.



Merry Christmas, happy new year and
peace to all of our readers
and advertisers!

Important notice for all at St Alban's :

As most of you will know, our Sunday morning services are livestreamed and can be watched (both live, and after the event) by anyone. Consequently, we need everyone's signed consent confirming that we have your permission for this. If you haven't already done so, please will you sign the photography and filming consent form. These may be available at the back of church, or please ask Rob Swindells.

If you are not sure whether you have already signed a consent form, again, please check with our treasurer, Rob Swindells.

If you complete the form to say you do **not** give your permission, you will need to sit in one of the four rows (or eight if you count either side of the nave separately) of pews at the rear of church, where the camera doesn't reach.

St Albans Book Club

Our Autumn reading list has been quite European to say the least! It even inspired Jill & David to visit Amsterdam.

We enjoyed the family saga “Behind the Scenes at the Museum” by Kate Atkinson, a novel she wrote some years ago but it brought back childhood memories of growing up in the 1950s for some of us! Who remembers crimpoline and can-can skirts? The story follows the lives of a family living in York, from the early 19th century to almost present day, their adventures, secrets and relationships, as well as highlighting the role dogs played in WW1 which did touch my heart. We gave it 7/10.

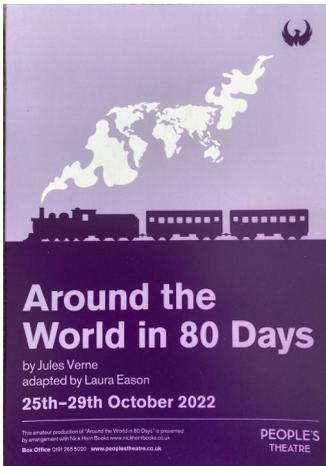
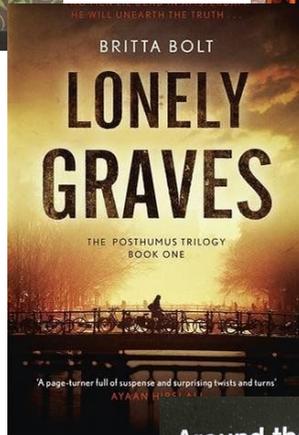
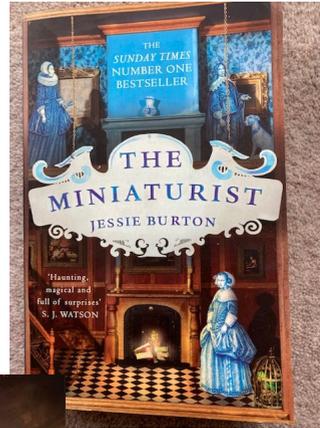
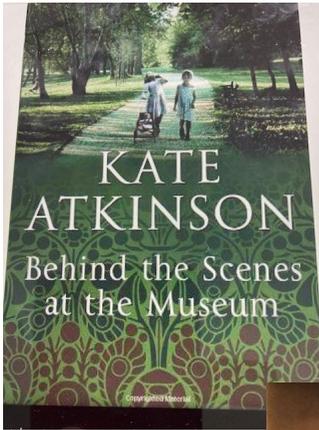
We then “travelled” to 17th century Holland. “The Miniaturist” by Jessie Burton (there’s a film version too), as did our last read, this book had strong female characters! We meet “Petronella”, a new bride in a merchant’s house in Amsterdam and as her life develops we encounter a world of religious issues, gender and racial inequality all set against the Dutch Golden Ageand there’s a miniature house too!!

We swiftly moved into present day Amsterdam with “Lonely Graves” by Britta Bolt ...a suicide, a drowned man, a sudden death, are all in a day’s work for Pieter Posthumus... what a name!! He and his colleagues work to ensure no-one goes to the grave unmourned. This novel takes you through the investigation of a Moroccan immigrant found in a canal, to a terror plot, all of which are beyond the charms of the leafy canals in Amsterdam. I was waiting for Van dear Valk to come along! Alas not. Jill, I’m pleased to say, had a much happier trip to this delightful city. Although I struggled with this book, we gave it a 7.

Socially our book club had a cultural night out at the People’s Theatre to see Jo in: “Around the World in 80 days” - a marvellous staging of this tale ... the cast worked so hard multi tasking, the audience laughed and applauded, just a fun production. Here’s to the next one !

Happy Christmas from all at Book Club, hoping you get a good read in your stocking from Santa ... ho ho ho!

Many thanks to Dianne Morgan for the Book Club article, and for enlightening me (your editor, Jean) to yet another of Jo’s talents - what an impressive lady!



Around the World in 80 Days
by Jules Verne
adapted by Laura Eason

Cast

Phileas Fogg	Ensemble
Roger Liddle	Daniel Magee
Passepartout	Cat White
Moira Valentine	James Hardy
Mrs Aouda	Jess Chapman
Nadia Rafi-Kenny	Ruth Gibson
Inspector Fix	Isabella
Sean Burnside	Warburton Brown
	Geffen Yoeli-Rimmer
	Alison Carr
	Jo McEvedy
	Sands Dobson

What an excellent night we all had at the bingo. With dabbers poised we listened closely for the numbers being called with some surprising prefixes!



Please see pages 18 & 19 for more pictures.

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In the days long before electricity, candles were the main source of light in most homes. In Victorian times, tiny candles were placed on Christmas Trees to make them look even more magical – whereas today, most of us use fairy lights. The biggest danger was the candle tipping over and setting fire to the pine needles and decorations. Candle wax also dripped down onto the candle holders and splattered on the floor. Spiral candles were invented so that the wax would run slowly down the grooves and not drip.

As more and more homes got electricity, candles became less and less in demand. As a treat, people would buy candles to use in candlesticks on the dinner table on Christmas day. Often these were red, and often spiral too.

Today, candles are very much back in fashion, with whole shops given over to selling all the different varieties. People use candles all the year round, not because they need to see by them, but for the pleasure of it.

There is a candle still special to Christmas though: The Advent Candle. With rings around it numbered 1 to 24, representing Advent which is simply the period through December leading up to Christmas.



CHURCH VIEWS FOR DECEMBER 2022 FROM THE PARISH OF OUR LADY, STAR OF THE SEA

It's time for the Nativity Play!



No Christmas is complete without a visit to the school Nativity Play. Often in the school hall, complete with the wall bars behind the scenery, it is always carefully rehearsed but the performances can often be unpredictable. Enjoy a closer look at this to trigger your own memories. When I look at it I always wonder who the donkey is looking for in the audience! *

**This picture is reproduced with the kind permission of Mrs Pat Hughes*

Christmas Luncheon Club

Everyone is looking forward to the special Christmas Luncheon Club. Now that it is firmly re-established in the parish calendar after a pandemic gap, the festive lunch will take place on Thursday 15 December.

Food Bank Reverse Advent Calendar

On this Advent Calendar we will add one festive item to the essentials requested for every one of the twenty four days leading up to Christmas, so on a day when donors are asked for tinned peas, for example they might also add a treat like some Christmas crackers. Food Banks at Christmas want to lift the mood too.



Deacon Terry Retires

The parish wished Terry and Christine McGann very many happy years ahead together after Terry stepped down as Deacon on the Feast of Christ the King.

At the end of the Saturday Vigil Mass, served as usual, but for the last time, by Deacon Terry, Monsignor Faley paid tribute to

Terry's parish work since his ordination by Bishop Seamus Cunningham on June 18 2016. Terry's service as we know has been tireless; his contribution to parish life has been carried out quietly and without fuss, and as a special minister of the Eucharist his visits to those who were ill at home and in hospital have been particularly warmly welcomed.

He has celebrated baptisms and officiated at funerals, served at Masses, and his weekly contribution of the Sunday Reflection to the Parish Bulletin has continued throughout the six years of his ministry. It is very often the quieter elements of Terry's ministry which have been most appreciated by the people of the parish.

To applause from the parish, Deacon Terry was presented with a cheque and Christine with a bouquet of flowers.



A big 'Well done' and an even bigger 'Thank you' from all of us.

Parish Mass Times:

St Edward's: Sunday 10.00am, Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday 9.30am

Immaculate Heart of Mary: Saturday 6.00pm, Wednesday, Friday 9.30am

Continued from page 12





Please note - all material for next month's magazine (January 2023) will need to be in by Wednesday, 28th December 2022. Thank you, *Jean*.

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BRUSSELS SPROUTS

When I was a lad, my parents encouraged me to say grace before every meal. This was our regular practice, the only exception being at breakfast when it was often eaten in a rush in order for me to get out of the house in time for school. We carried this through to our children although I confess it was a little more hit and miss, however it was always said when we all visited Grandma and Grandad.

I think that the end of the regular practice at our house came when one Christmas a certain member of our family – who had better remain nameless offered the below grace: ~

*“Thank you Lord for all you’ve made
and for the food before us laid.
You made it all we have no doubts,
but what possessed you to make sprouts?”*

We all burst into fits of laughter, which kind of spoilt the effect, although I like to think that the good Lord may have enjoyed the moment too.

As you may suppose, there is a mixed reaction to Brussels sprouts in our family. Personally, I love them, but not everyone agrees with me in this. Even though this is the season, when hundreds if not thousands will be sold and cooked in many homes, I concede that not everybody is a sprout fan; not everybody will thank you for putting them on the plate beside the turkey.

But back to the practice of saying grace. Imagery connecting food with gratitude apparently goes back to Stone Age cave paintings, and evidence has been discovered of giving thanks before a meal that dates back to 2,500 B.C., to ancient Hindu blessings. Today, we don't think about it that much, but when you think of food as life and death, then you can see how serious it became in the consciousness of the people and if you are starving and got something to eat, you would be mighty thankful.

As for why we call a prayer before a meal "saying grace," the pre-Elizabethan English word for giving thanks was "graces," derived from the Latin phrase *gratiarum actio* (thanksgiving) and the Italian word *grazie* (thanks). Although other faiths have traditions of saying a prayer or giving a blessing before or after a meal, it's primarily Christians who use the phrase "saying grace," which is an act of being thankful for that which we have.

I really should be thankful for all that I have, and such thankfulness may even lead to sharing – sprouts or something else.

Wes Blakey

Earsdon Methodist Church

Preachers for December 2022

Sunday	4th	Rev'd. Enid Gordon - Holy Communion
Sunday	11th	Mr. John Bedigan.
Sunday	18th	Rev'd. Linda Eccles - Carol Service.
Sunday	25th	No Service to be held.

For Rev'd Wes Blakey's regular item, please see previous page (21).



TRISH ELSENDER

We are sad to report the death of Trish on 26th October, a remarkable lady, much loved by family and her many friends and a very special member of our Methodist congregation.

Trish was born in Byker and brought up in Forest Hall and after leaving school at 14 trained as a clerk/typist and followed this by having many different jobs including working at the Northern Rock; being a debt collector; a Youth Trainer; manager of Citizens Advice Bureau during the time of the Meadow Well riots (1991). She sometimes had more than one job and in addition she was a Methodist local preacher. In amongst this she was an excellent mother to Tracey, Karen and Ruth giving them a very happy childhood in their home in West Moor and enjoying many memorable holidays in Northumberland. Trish shared her love of nature with her family and even when at home loved to see and feed the garden birds and name them as they appeared. She was a member of the North Tyneside Ramblers; Seaton Delaval Valley players; attended Keep Fit; Mat and Chat; loved Farmers markets ~ in fact she always seemed to be involved in something, somewhere. When she lived in Earsdon you may have seen her in her sports car with the roof down and her personalised number plate!

In our church she was a longstanding and valued member; a regular attender at worship and all of our functions and activities. She was a hoot on the cake stall, but if occasion called for it she would just say things in a straightforward way - kindly and openly. A lady with a very kind heart. Trish had a great sense of fun and it was always a joy to be in her company. In recent times her illness really restricted what she could do, but she bore it all with courage and distinctive determination.

We continue to pray for her family – daughters Tracey Karen and Ruth, her 11 grandchildren and 6 great grandchildren and commend Trish to the eternal keeping of our loving God.

JWWB

St. Alban's and St. John's



Diary Page for December 2022

Sunday	4th	<u>Second Sunday in Advent</u>		
		8.30am	Holy Communion	St John's
		10.00am	Holy Communion	St Alban's
Thursday	8th	9.30am	Holy Communion	St John's
Sunday	11th	<u>Third Sunday in Advent</u>		
		8.30am	Holy Communion	St John's
		10.00am	Holy Communion	St Alban's
Wed	14th	9.30am	Holy Communion	St Alban's
Sunday	18th	<u>Fourth Sunday in Advent</u>		
		8.30am	Holy Communion	St John's
		10.00am	Holy Communion	St Alban's
		7.00pm	Carols By Candlelight	St Alban's
Thurs	22nd	9.30am	Holy Communion	St John's
Sunday	25th	<u>Christmas Day</u>		
		8.30am	Holy Communion	St John's
		10.00am	Holy Communion	St Alban's
Wednesday	28th	9.30am	Holy Communion	St Alban's

At the time of printing, the newspaper "The Link" is not yet available. I hope to be able to include the hyperlink in the online version of this magazine.

St. Alban's and St. John's

Sunday Gospel Readings for December 2022 :

4th

Matthew 3.1-12

11th

Matthew 11.2-11

18th

Matthew 1.18-end

25th

Luke 2.4-16



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



We begin with box, the plural is boxes
 But the plural of ox is oxen not oxes.
 One fowl is a goose and two are called geese
 Yet the plural of moose is never called meese.
 You may find a lone mouse or a house full of mice
 But the plural of house is houses not hicc.
 The plural of man is always men
 But the plural of pan is never pen.
 If I speak of a foot and you show me two feet
 And I give you a book would a pair be a beek?
 If one is a tooth and a whole set is teeth
 Why shouldn't two booths be called beeth?
 If the singular's this and the plural is these
 Should the plural of kiss be ever called keese?
 We speak of a brother and also of brethren
 But though we say mother we never say methren.
 Then masculine pronouns are he, his and him
 But imagine the feminine - she, shis and shim!

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Marti's Musings 105

Oooh it's getting chilly! I have had to put a jumper on for my last couple of walks as I am feeling the cold. Although being a bit nippy means that Christmas is coming! It's absolutely my favourite time of year, I get to celebrate with family, wear my Christmas jumpers and mum makes the house look so pretty with all the lights and decorations. I have been trying to persuade her to put them up, but she says it's too early as Advent hasn't arrived yet. I did coax her into getting them down from the loft so now upstairs is covered in boxes. She does have rather a lot of decorations.

It was fabulous to see you all at the bingo and curry night. I think the bingo calling was excellent and Ali made a delicious hot beef curry. We didn't fair too well on the bingo, but did manage to get a raffle prize! I must practice my dabbing before the next one. Advent greetings to you all.

Lots of sparkles
Marti xxx



WORDSEARCH

Christmas is nearly here! Two thousand years ago the Jews were longing for the coming of their Messiah. The Old Testament had promised that when He came, He would preach good news to the poor, bind up the broken hearted, proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners, proclaim the year of the Lord's favour, comfort all who mourn and to bestow on his people a crown of beauty instead of ashes. Jesus did all those things. He was and is the Son of God, and whoever has seen Him has seen the Father. Whoever believes in Him will have the best gift of all – His Spirit within them, which gives them eternal life.

Messiah
Broken
Heart
Freedom
Darkness

Favour
Prisoners
Comfort
Mourn
Bestow

Crown
Beauty
Ashes
Son
God
Jesus



Seen
Father
Whoever
longing
thousand

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