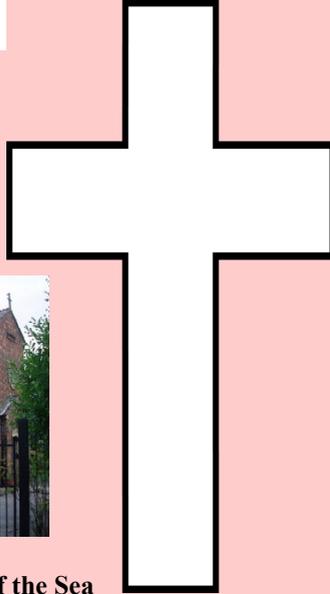


# CHURCH VIEWS



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# THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH

## January 2024

2024 is like the page in front of me, completely blank. “‘Tabula rasa’, Latimer, what does that mean?” takes me back to Mr Mulcahy, (That’s Mul-kie as in sky, laddie), Wednesday Latin, St Cuthbert’s Grammar School, Nineteen Never Mind.

He was probably the first to point out that Janus had two faces, one looking forward and one looking back, making him the ideal god to name this month. I really wonder which one of his faces looks the more cheerful in 2024?

The answer will be personal but 2023 would produce a gloomy face if we only looked back at a world in conflict and filled with natural and man-made disasters. There is always enough bad news to fill all the News Channels every day, and the trivial final item ending the late news, supposed to lighten the overall mood of doom and gloom, often makes it worse because it emphasises how hard the editors had to hunt to find it. You can almost hear the despairing newsroom shout, “Anybody got anything happy? I need ninety five seconds of cheerful!”

It may be just a matter of scale, but I am grateful that I don’t inhabit that big newsworthy world all day or all the time. I’m not advocating hiding from or ignoring the world we live in, that would be as silly as letting every piece of bad world news dominate our lives. Our personal and family worlds are smaller, so smaller events have a greater impact. Smaller things can cheer us, but, of course, the reverse is also true and other personal events, never enough to make news items in that other, bigger world, can make ours darker for a time.

Last year out of the blue I received a note from someone I taught nearly twenty five years ago to say that on an in-service course a tutor had suggested that if they remembered a teacher they would like to thank, they should do it now. And so they did. I remembered the pupil even after so long, and I was moved by the thoughtfulness. It didn’t make even a tiny mark in that bigger world, but it made an unexpected high point in mine.

I thought very ill of ‘the perpetrator’ as Starsky or Hutch would have said when I found damage to my car; I was still furious when I started it up. It was only when I put on the wipers that I saw the note under one of them. The driver I was thinking about so uncharitably had left contact details. A phone call revealed a young driver who’d just passed her test, and this had been her first shunt. Could she pay for my repair? The damage to the car was more easily fixed than my realising how quick I had been to believe the very worst of people.

But to lighten our smaller worlds, events don’t even have to be as dramatic as those. A couple of weeks ago I was stranded on a (literally) freezing, windy, Metro station platform for an hour because of a breakdown. The train was standing room only when it finally arrived. A young man in Metro highviz orange, complete with boots and hard hat, who had obviously just finished working on the line stood up with, “Like a seat, mate?” He must have been every bit as cold and tired as I was, but the kindness was more warming than just getting out of the cold.

There were darker notes too; the loss of a relative cast a shadow, only pushed away eventually because it brought also the laughter of shared memories and stories of younger, very happy times.

Looking back, like Janus, at 2023 I know such small kindnesses shown to us make big differences in our smaller personal worlds. Like Janus looking ahead to 2024 I know that small kindnesses from us will make big differences too. Let’s give a thought to that sound advice of Old Fezziwig,

‘When happiness shows up, always give it a comfortable seat.’

*Gerry Latimer, Parish of Our Lady Star of the Sea*

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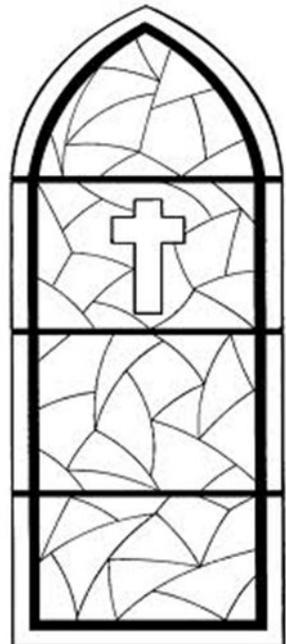
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## COMMUNITY NEWS

### **Forthcoming events**

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

### **St Alban's Church:**

Saturday, 20th January. Burns Night Supper at the Eccles Hall. Please contact Joan A (07813 247 815) for tickets, but be quick, this is a very popular event!

Coming soon ...

Tuesday, 13th February. Shrove Tuesday Pancake and Quiz Night at the Eccles Hall.

\*\*\*\*\*

### **From the Diocese of Newcastle, Church of England;**

We're delighted to introduce the Revd Tim Mayfield as the new Acting Bishop's Advisor on the Environment for our Diocese, who is taking over the role from the Revd Mark Nash Williams. Read more about Tim, his background and why he's excited to be taking on this challenge.

<https://bit.ly/3uZ1ym0>

Well done Tim,  
congratulations from  
St John's and St Alban's  
congregations!



The beautiful Christingle service at St Alban's on Christmas Eve.

*Thank you Cathryn and Ali for the pictures.*



## Erdesdon House

The story of my dolls house. By Helen Jackman

### 2 – The Attics

I thought I would link the story of the two attics together. The Cook/ Housekeeper has one of the rooms and the other is occupied by the twins Freddie and Winnie. The rather buxom Cook is called Jenny, and she occupies a comfortable room in the attic. She is responsible for the smooth running of the house and is much respected by the family. The room has a Dormer Window and a nice coal fire and is prettily papered. She has a dressing table, washstand together with a hip bath, stone hot water bottle and a chamber pot.



Across the hall is the bedroom occupied by the twins, two well behaved children! They have a nice room also with a dormer window and cheerful fire. They have twin beds, washstand, and chamber pot. The room is full of toys, including teddies, a rocking horse, footballs, kite, trainset, hoop, and a dolls house. I have to say the only toy out of time is a little racing car which I could not resist! The room is papered in nursery scenes.



There is a Butler on the scene called William, but he lives in the village! All the little people who live in the house are named after family members and were made by a very talented lady Lisa Johnson Richards who lives in Jarrow. Most of my lights came from Ray Storey a glassblower who lives in Wellfield another very talented man. I bought furniture etc. from catalogues and visiting exhibitions. All the floors are wooden and can be removed for easy access to the lighting (copper strips) and the hall floors are imitation Victorian tiles.

The hall/landing contains a trunk and a deer's head on the wall.



Next time – the Smoking Room.

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# Smile-lines

## Why?

A young couple invited some people to dinner. At the table, the mother turned to their six-year-old daughter and said, "Would you like to say the blessing?"

"I don't know what to say," the girl replied.

"Just say what you hear Mummy say," the father answered.

The daughter bowed her head and said, "O Lord, why on earth did I invite all these people to dinner?"

\*\*

## Sunday School Lesson

A Sunday school teacher was telling her class the story of the Good Samaritan, in which a man was beaten, robbed and left for dead. She described the situation in vivid detail so her students would catch the drama. Then she asked the class, "If you saw a person lying on the roadside all wounded and bleeding, what would you do?"

Jenny, a thoughtful little girl broke the hushed silence, "I think I'd be sick!"

\*\*

## Miscellaneous observations on daily life...

If you love someone, let them nap.

Take my advice. I'm not using it.

I'd like to help you out. Which way did you come in?

Cats know how we feel. They don't care, but they know.

Life is like a box of chocolates. Sometimes it makes you sick.

Some people like living in the past. For one thing, the rent is a lot cheaper.

# CHURCH VIEWS FOR JANUARY 2024 FROM THE PARISH OF OUR LADY, STAR OF THE SEA

## Christmas Craft Afternoon



The Floral Craft for Christmas afternoon at Immaculate Heart of Mary Church was a great success as you can see. Michele Humble (centre, in the hat) had advised that participants only needed to bring their own secateurs, everything else they needed for a great afternoon would be provided. When she arrived everyone saw that she meant it – it’s amazing how many fir tree branches, pine cones, flowers, baubles, and other absolutely essential materials can be packed into one vehicle!

Michele, a retired florist, loves getting creative at this time of year and found it a pleasure to pass on a few of the techniques acquired over many years in the industry but most recently as a technician in the Floristry Department at TyneMet College in North Tyneside. She also lends her skills as one of the team arranging church flowers at Immaculate Heart of Mary during the year.

She was delighted at how hard everyone worked while enjoying a fun afternoon with lots of laughter, some of those who came were even surprised to discover they had skills they never suspected. As the afternoon went on, everyone advanced from making their own individual table arrangements to producing door swags with natural materials. Michele said as everyone left, “I’m glad everyone enjoyed it - for complete novices they produced some lovely arrangements.”

## **Bishop Stephen to visit in January**

The parish is looking forward to the first visit of Bishop Stephen Wright in January 2024. He will celebrate the Vigil Mass at Immaculate Heart of Mary church at 6.00pm on Saturday 27 January, and the Sunday morning Mass at St Edward's church at 10.00am the following day.



His next visit, somewhat more solemnly, will be in June for the formal closure, after seventy years, of Our Lady and St Edmund's church in Backworth.

## **As 2024 arrives...**

There will be Mass at 11.00am at Immaculate Heart of Mary church on New Year's Day which will be followed by a shared lunch, another revival of a pre-COVID tradition. Welcome back!

## **Walking Group**

The first walk of the year will be on Wednesday 3 January to blow away the tinselitis and New Year celebrations. Why not give it a try?

**That joyful 'Epiphany preview' seems a long time ago now.....**



*(Drawing reproduced with the kind permission of Mrs P.Hughes)*

*Gerry Latimer Parish of Our Lady Star of the Sea*

## **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

## St Alban's Church Wednesday Walkers

Fabulous time this afternoon at our Wednesday Walkers Christmas party special, with the amazing Lewis Hill!!! With grateful thanks to Graham, Lewis' Dad for all his help behind the scenes.

Thank you so much for coming to entertain us again, it was an awesome afternoon! We can't wait to have you back. Big thank you to the team that puts this event together led by the wonderful Pat Hugman with help from, Elizabeth York Sylvia Turnbull, Ella Heaney, Kelly Roberts, Richard Hill and also thanks to our Sandy Swindells for making those delicious sweet mince pies and shortbread.



And last but by no means least, Thank You for every one of our guests that came along, I hope you all had a wonderful afternoon.





*And from Lewis Hill himself, posted on 14th December, I had a fantastic time yesterday at the Wednesday Walkers' Festive afternoon in Earsdon. 😊*



*I even met Santa Claus!! 🎅*



## **A New Year Promise to our readers – from the Editor of this church magazine**

*Some of you have noticed a few typos in the magazine now and then. To improve this, for 2024 I am using a new set of rules for editing. They are as follows:*

1. Verbs HAS to agree with their subjects.
2. Prepositions are not words to end sentences with.
3. And don't start a sentence with a conjunction.
4. It is wrong to ever split an infinitive.
5. Avoid cliches like the plague. (They're old hat.)
6. Also, always avoid annoying alliteration.
7. Be more or less specific.
8. Parenthetical remarks (however relevant) are (usually) unnecessary.
9. Also too, never, ever use repetitive redundancies.
10. No sentence fragments.
11. Contractions aren't necessary and shouldn't be used.
12. Foreign words and phrases are not *apropos*.
13. Do not be redundant; do not use more words than necessary; it's highly superfluous.
14. One should NEVER generalise.
15. Comparisons are as bad as cliches.
16. Eschew ampersands & abbreviations, etc.
17. One-word sentences? Eliminate.
18. Analogies in writing are like feathers on a snake.
19. The passive voice is to be ignored.
20. Eliminate commas, that are, not necessary.
21. Never use a big word when a diminutive one would suffice.
22. Use words correctly, irregardless of how others use them.
23. Understatement is always the absolute best way to put forth earth shaking ideas.
24. Eliminate quotations. As Ralph Waldo Emerson said, "I hate quotations. Tell me what you know."
25. If you've heard it once, you've heard it a thousand times: Resist hyperbole; not one writer in a million can use it correctly.
26. Puns are for children, not groan readers.
27. Go around the barn at high noon to avoid colloquialisms.
28. Even IF a mixed metaphor sings, it should be derailed.
29. Who needs rhetorical questions?
30. Exaggeration is a billion times worse than understatement.
31. Proofread carefully to see if you any words out.



# 2024

HAPPY NEW YEAR  
TO ALL OUR  
READERS,  
CONTRIBUTORS  
AND  
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Another little reminder for those who contribute annually for your delivered magazines - we will be calling in early January for your subscriptions (£12.00 for the year). Thank you.

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**or call Jean on 0191 2377273**

# Thoughts from Rev Canon J W Wesley Blakey

## SATNAV

All the cars that we have possessed have had names of flowers, and our current car goes by the name of Petunia; and it is Petunia's satnav that has directed us on many occasions. When she says "go right" we go right; when she says "Take second exit at the roundabout," second exit it is. On a number of occasions we have been directed on a much better route than expected. HOWEVER, I am a driver who likes to consult the map before we set off. Often the day before an unfamiliar journey I will pour over my book of maps and write out the directions that I think are those we need. At times my written record and Petunia are exactly the same – wonderful. Yet there are times when I am asked to take a turning that I think is incorrect and so I follow my instinct, ignore Petunia and go my own sweet way. After all the satnav is a computer and she can't know everything – can she ?

I remember one occasion when I digressed from instructions, took a road I believed to be much shorter and was sure that I had chosen a better way. Bad move. We ended up in a cul-de-sac and after a few minutes Petunia very politely said that she was recalculating the route for which I was truly grateful.



I recall another instance when we were going on holiday, and I put the incorrect post code into the system. We had a very picturesque journey through the New Forest, passing horses, ponies and going through five bar gates, ending up in a residential area that was miles off course. Petunia to the rescue again got us from the wrong place to the right place with the insertion of the correct post code.

I start this year with two resolutions

1. I need to be more trusting
2. I need to learn from my mistakes
3. I need to be aware that there is always a way to right a wrong,  
.....and a watchword from King George VI when he quoted Minnie Louise Haskins' poem in his 1939 radio broadcast

And I said to the man who stood at the gate of the year:

'Give me a light that I may tread safely into the unknown.'

And he replied:

'Go out into the darkness and put your hand into the Hand of God. That shall be to you better than light and safer than a known way.'

So I went forth, and finding the Hand of God, trod gladly into the night.

And He led me towards the hills and the breaking of day in the lone East.

*Wes Blakely*

*Note from editor: I'm not sure if Rev Wes intended me to include this piece in the magazine, but I like it:*

From this marvellous machine I have learnt one of the great lessons in life. However many wrong turns you may have taken, if you know where you want to be, there is a route from here to there.

If that isn't a source of hope, I don't know what is.

# St. Alban's and St. John's

## Diary Page for January 2024

Sunday	7th		<b><u>Epiphany</u></b>	
		9.00am	Holy Communion for Epiphany	St John's
		10.30am	Holy Communion for Epiphany	St Alban's
Thursday	11th	9.30am	Holy Communion	St John's
Sunday	14th		<b><u>Epiphany 2</u></b>	
		9.00am	Holy Communion for Epiphany	St John's
		10.30am	Holy Communion for Epiphany	St Alban's
Wednesday	17th	9.30am	Holy Communion	St Alban's
Sunday	21st		<b><u>Epiphany 3</u></b>	
		9.00am	Holy Communion for Epiphany	St John's
		10.30am	Holy Communion for Epiphany	St Alban's
Thursday	25th	9.30am	Holy Communion	St John's
Sunday	28th		<b><u>Epiphany 4</u></b>	
		9.00am	Holy Communion for Epiphany	St John's
		10.30am	Holy Communion for Epiphany	St Alban's

# St. Alban's and St. John's

## Sunday Gospel Readings for January 2024:

**7th**

Matthew 2. 1-12

**14th**

Mark 1.4-11

**21st**

John 1. 43-51

**28th**

John 2.1-22



**Please remember that for a trial period, starting on Sunday 3rd September 2023, the Sunday morning services are starting half-an-hour later than previously. The impact of the new times will be reviewed in January 2024.**

\*\*\*\*\*  
\* If you have any suggestions, comments or requests \*  
\* regarding the magazine, or for anyone thinking of \*  
\* sending in their contribution for publication, please \*  
\* email it to **magazine@StAlbansEarsdon.org.uk** \*  
\* or call **Jean** on **0191 2377273**. \*  
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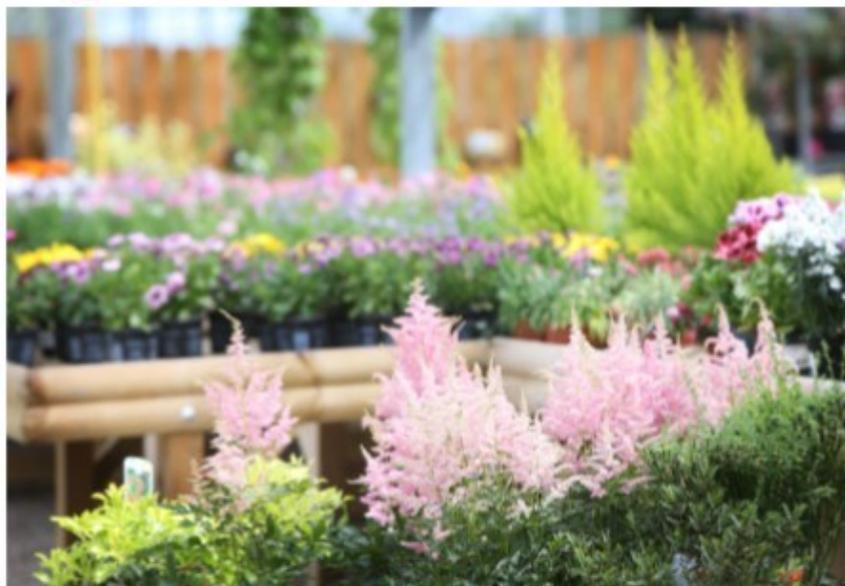
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		7			3	5		
3					7		4	
					2	6		
8	5						1	7
		9	3					
	9		5					3
		4	1			8		
	2				9			

Please note - all material for next month's magazine (February) will need to be in before Wednesday 24th January 2024 Thank you.

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A final picture from the Wednesday Group - big smiles from Ali and Heather.



Please note - all material for next month's magazine (February) will need to be in before Wednesday 24th January. Thank you, *Jean*.

# WORDSEARCH

## Wordsearch – Wise Men and St Paul meet Jesus

The Wise Men and St Paul were both on trips when they first encountered Jesus, but how different those trips were! The Wise Men, whom we remember on Epiphany (6<sup>th</sup> Jan) were seeking the One for whom the Star shone, and came to Bethlehem to worship him. St Paul, whose conversion we remember this month (26<sup>th</sup> Jan), was on his way to Damascus, seeking to kill those who worshipped Jesus. When the Wise Men encountered the Baby Jesus, they worshipped Him and gave Him gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. When St Paul, the proud, fanatical Pharisee, encountered Jesus, he fell blinded on the road, and then worshipped Him by giving Him the rest of his life. St Paul endured years of suffering and hardships in his work as the great apostle to the Gentiles. His mighty faith in Christ has kindled similar belief in many hundreds of millions of people down the centuries.

Wise  
Men  
Trips  
Paul  
Encounter

Jesus  
Different  
Epiphany  
Star  
Shone

Bethlehem  
Conversion  
Seeking  
Kill  
Baby

Gifts  
Gold  
Proud  
Blinded  
Road

Suffering  
Apostle



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