



The December Broadsheet

2020



**for the parishes of
Humshaugh
with Simonburn & Wark,
Chollerton with Birtley,
Gunnerton, Thockrington,
St Oswald in Lee.**

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Pastoral Letter from Chollerton Vicarage

I write this letter as we are again in lockdown, waiting and wondering what we may be doing in a few weeks time. This weekend, it is Stir up Sunday, as well as the feast of Christ the King, when we are reminded to allow ourselves to be stirred up and be prepared to be filled with hope and joy as we prepare for the coming of Christ the baby in the manger. Next weekend we begin the waiting time of Advent, and Christmas for the Christian Church does not come until Midnight on 24th December!

I was reading a meditation by Barbara Brown Taylor who writes that however different we imagine our Christmas may be from normal, a universal longing is for a calmer purer more centered life, a rising above the anxiety of the world as we know it at the moment. We receive Christmas cards with an image of the manger, the calm animals, the sleeping child, the doting and serene parents and the star. But that does not tell the whole story. It is a snapshot in a story of folk with no home and no room for a mother to give birth, so she is forced into a stable. And after the angels left? Maybe the donkey stepped on a hen and the resulting squawk woke the baby and upset Mary who did not know where the next meal would come from? Not the picture of serenity and love on the card at all! But God was still there. God the tiny baby in human form in the manger, in the mess. Peace and joy and love were also there because God is there in the best of times and even more so in the worst of times. It is God-with-us, not God-up-there! God with us in the messiness and sadness of Covid -19 and the changes to our lives, as well as God with us as we celebrate in whatever way we can at Christmas and look forward as we plan for the future in this area together.

May God-with-us bless you this Christmas tide.

Sarah Lunn

Humshaugh

During All Souls Day, on the 2nd of November, a plate was on the altar in St Peter's Church, on which people could put a card with the name or names of those who had deceased.

The next morning Revd. Sarah Lunn and Revd. Frances Dower came to read out the names and to bless the cards during a simple, but moving service.

On Remembrance Day, Revd. Claire Robson led the service at the War Memorial, which had been beautifully decorated by Anna Vogelberg with Poppies, all knitted by her.

Humshaugh First School has an outstanding attendance record, well done!

On the 16th of November the children wore odd socks to school to mark the start of Anti-Bullying Week, held each year to help raise awareness against bullying.

On the 15th of December it will be the Christmas Party. We all wish you a wonderful time! We want to wish Melanie all the very, very best in her new home in Wark. Happily, we won't lose her altogether, as she will be carrying on with teaching in Humshaugh School.

Because of the second lockdown, Melanie could not do her sponsored swim in aid of St Peter's in November - however, she is planning to do it when it will be possible and we hope many people will sponsor her.

We would love to wish everybody a Happy Christmas, but in this extraordinary year, all we can do is hope that everyone can celebrate it in as good and blessed way as possible.

Liesbeth

Birtley Notes

Lockdown again, and I can hardly believe it is nearly Christmas, where has this year gone - and we haven't been anywhere!

We at St Giles Birtley are now having services at 3pm on a Sunday afternoon, first and third Sundays in the month. This is because Rev Sarah has so many churches to administer to at the moment also doing a zoom service on a Sunday morning.

The parish wreath was laid at the memorial on Remembrance Sunday by Council chairman Ernest Coulson, a short but lovely service. Our thanks go to Hughie and Gloria Milburn for donating the 'Soldier' at the War Memorial, which looks very in-keeping, this was a thoughtful gesture.

Judith and myself will be running a numbers card for a 'Hamper of Christmas Goodies' in aid of St Giles, all the super items of Christmas foodstuff and bottles, have been made or given by PCC members and friends. (Our grateful thanks to you all). Either of us will see you at some point! do hope you will participate. If church is on, it will be drawn after the service on Sunday 20th December.

Finally, I would like to wish everyone Seasons Greetings and even in these circumstances a Happy and Joyful Christmas time, and hopefully a better New Year.

Hope to see you soon,

Mary

WARK PARISH NEWS

Working with Wark School St. Michael's Pantry has been set up within the porch of the church, which during the current lockdown remains open daily from 9.00am to 4.00pm for individual private prayer. Should you wish to leave tinned goods or unused toiletries please do. Equally should you require to obtain any of the items from the Pantry please visit the church during those hours. We will continue to liaise with the school about whether or not the Pantry will continue during the Christmas holidays.

As for Christmas services; it's impossible to say. Please keep a look-out for notices and listen to village chat regarding the position. We sincerely hope to be able to hold a Christmas Morning service however we shall await instructions. Weekly service for the benefice continues at 10.00am via Zoom each Sunday. Please let me know if you'd like the connection.

I'd like to remind dog walkers their dogs should, at all times, be on a lead whilst in the churchyard and to clean up after your dog. Thank you.

Please have the best Christmas possible and keep safe.

Until we chat again in 2021

Love John

**After a very stressful and difficult year that we have been experiencing,
I would like to thank everyone who has contributed to the Broadsheet,
I wish you all a very Happy Christmas and let's pray for a healthy
New year.**

Stay safe and God bless

Roger H (editor)

Simonburn Notes

On Remembrance Sunday, we remembered, with a two minute silence, all those who gave their lives for our freedom and for all soldiers in more recent conflicts. Dennis Grugan laid the poppy wreath as Anthony Church read the Roll of Honour of the two World wars.

As we are in lockdown again, we are unsure if actual Church services will be allowed this Christmas but there will of course be the Zoom services. Get in touch if you would like to receive the newsletter with the Zoom information.

Please remember that easyfundraising is a way to make donations to St. Mungo's church, when shopping online www.easyfundraising.org.uk

However you celebrate Christmas, in this strange year, stay safe and help others to stay safe too.

Happy Christmas

Love Sharon x

Easyfundraising feel good shopping

When doing online shopping please consider using the easyfundraising app or log into www.easyfundraising.org.uk

A percentage of what you spend will be donated to Chollerton PCC
Humshaugh PCC or Simonburn PCC.

Thank you.

An Advent Study Group for Everyone.

During Advent on Tuesdays [December 1st, 8th, 15th and 22nd]
4 – 5.30 pm on Zoom . We will be studying the Advent York Course entitled 'Living in Hope' which has been written by the novelist Catherine Fox.

This course is a chance to have a think about what it means to live well, and to die well. We are people of history and people of hope. We look back to the Bible to see where we've come from, and we look forward in hope to what lies ahead. There will be a chance for prayer and discussion and if you can only manage some but not all sessions you are still welcome to join us.

You can find out more online and can buy a booklet if you wish. It will be possible to join the sessions without this but it might be handy to have a Bible to hand!

Please let Christine Bull know if you are interested in having the zoom link bull.christine4@gmail.com

Services during December

As we go to print we still do not know what may or may not be allowed for services around Christmas. Anything which we can do will be publicised locally and online. There may be some surprises as we try new things in these strange times!

The Zoom Sunday Worship will continue on each Sunday at 10.00am. In addition there will be

- 24th December at 6.00pm A Zoom Carol Service
- 25th December at 10.00am A Zoom Christmas Day Service

