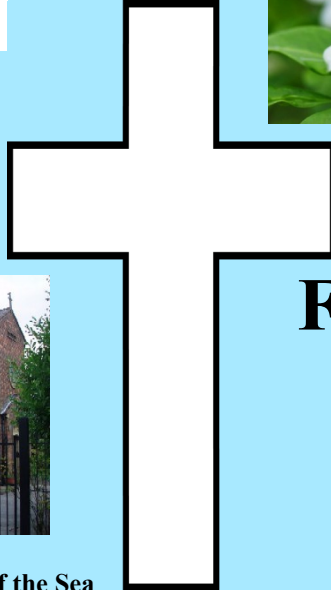


CHURCH VIEWS



St. Alban's Earsdon



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Parish of Our Lady Star of the Sea**

**February
2024**

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St. John's Backworth



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

THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH

February 2024

It's February already – how has that happened? I'm sure Christmas was only a couple of weeks ago! But the shops think I should be fully immersed in planning my perfect Easter celebrations by now.

Nowadays the secular Christmas lasts from early September until 25th December. Then it promptly stops, and the shops start promoting Valentine's Day, Chinese New Year, and Easter.

I used to think that Christians should resist getting involved in a Christmas which begins in early autumn. But St John's Gospel says that followers of Jesus should be "in the world"* , so surely we should not be seen as joyless do-gooders who want to put a stop to any Christmas-like fun taking place before the fourth Sunday of Advent.

I read a radical comment on Facebook recently, from a Christian who said he actually believes we should remove Christ from Christmas, and celebrate Jesus and Christianity in other ways and at other times of year. What an interesting idea! His argument was that the date of Christmas was taken over from the pagan festival about the winter solstice, and that it's great to have lots of fun in December, but why not separate that out from the celebration of the birth of Jesus, so that they are two distinct things, marked at different times and in different ways?

He definitely has a point. Jesus almost certainly wasn't born in December. If we are to believe the traditional nativity story, then Jesus' birth can't have been in the winter because shepherds wouldn't have been out in the fields with their flocks at that time of year.

Perhaps we need to concentrate on celebrating and spreading the Christian faith at other times of year when we aren't quite so caught up in the materialistic aspects of December. It's all well and good to ensure we have plenty of wine in, that we've bought gifts for everyone we should have, and that our houses are sparkingly clean and tidy in case of unexpected festive guests**, but it doesn't leave much room for spiritual reflection and talking about the birth of the one who changed the course of history.

Maybe we could find a different time of year to celebrate Jesus' birth, and use it to draw people into Christianity when they're not caught up with all their preparations for 25th December? Or perhaps we could make more of Easter. From a Christian point of view, Easter is more important than Christmas. Everyone was born – but only Jesus rose from the dead! Lent starts this month (on Valentine's Day, funnily enough). Maybe we could use Lent to think about how we as Christians can fully celebrate the importance of Easter, and use that time to spread the message of our religion to those who are too pre-occupied to think about Christianity in December!

* “In the world, but not of the world” is how John's Gospel describes how a follower of Jesus should be. In other words, Christians shouldn't detach themselves from real life, but should always have their mind on spiritual things too.

** well, my house is never sparkingly clean and very rarely tidy, whatever the time of year!

Gillian France

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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:

A correction/ update from last month's notice:

The Eccles Hall had already been booked for Shrove Tuesday, so our very popular **Pancake and Quiz Night** will now take place on Saturday 10th February at 7.00pm in the hall. Tickets for this event are £5.00 and there is a seating plan at the back of St Alban's church. Alternatively, please contact Joan on 0191 2529239 .

The pancakes are created and served by a wonderful team of very hardworking people from church, and I (editor) can personally recommend them.



The quiz is very cleverly set by our amazing Quizmaster Craig. He caters for all of our various ages, knowledge and skill levels so that everyone can enjoy participating.

Netty Fund. To help raise funds for these long overdue toilet facilities, a 100 Club is to be started. Providing that all numbers are sold, the plan is a monthly draw, when the lucky winner will receive £100. For details, please contact Sandy on: sandyswindells@gmail.com.



From Ali Griffiths:

A lovely afternoon at the Wednesday Walkers' monthly cuppa at the Eccles Hall on Wednesday 31st January. One of our lovely ladies had a Birthday, Happy Birthday Sylvia Turnbull, hope you enjoyed the rest of your special day.



Erdesdon House

The story of my dolls' house. By Helen Jackman

3 - The Smoking Room

This is rather a dark room although it has a nice bay window and a view of the sea. It's probably due to the William Morris wallpaper. This is Mr James Elliott's domain, he is a Consultant Gynaecologist and this is his study where he does all his paper work. He is well respected in his profession and a pillar of the nearby church St Alban's. This is a very comfortable room with leather chairs, always a nice fire (protected by a fireguard) and his faithful companion Isla, a little pug, sitting on a tiger rug. It also has a plate rack running around the room with interesting plates. He has a desk with a quill ink pen and blotter and also a telephone. The fire has a nice wooden surround with a mirror and on the mantelpiece, a glass dome with stuffed birds and above the fireplace a fox's head. He is rarely seen without the Times newspaper and a cigar! His Gladstone bag is on the floor in which he brings the babies!! There's also a little table where he keeps his whisky and soda syphon There's also a pretty little Tiffany lamp on the table which broke, and it was a nightmare to repair. Terry spent a long time trying to do it and it was eventually mended by my good friend Steve Smith who spent ages getting it to work Consequently I daren't touch it!! The Elliotts are a very musical family hence the French Horn and Saxophone.

Next time -the
Bathroom.





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Smile-lines

With Valentine's Day in mind :

Romance, love, marriage and all that stuff –
the way children see it....

How do you decide who to marry?

You've got to find somebody who likes the same stuff. Like, if you like sports, she should like it that you like sports, and she should keep the crisps and dip coming. - Alan, age 10

Nobody really decides before they grow up who they're going to marry. God decides it all way before, and you get to find out later who you're stuck with. - Kirsten, age 10

What is the right age to get married?

23 is the best age because you know the person FOREVER by then.
- Camille, age 10

No age is good to get married at. You've got to be a fool to get married.
- Freddie, age 6

How can a stranger tell if two people are married?

You might have to guess, based on whether they seem to be shouting at the same kids.
- Derrick, age 8

What do you think your mum and dad have in common?

Both don't want any more kids. - Lori, age 8

What do most people do on a date?

Dates are for having fun, and people should use them to get to know each other. Even boys have something to say, if you listen long enough. - Lynnette, age 8

On the first date, they just tell each other lies and that usually gets them interested enough to go for a second date. - Martin, age 10

When is it okay to kiss someone?

When they're rich. - Pam, age 7

The law says you have to be eighteen, so I wouldn't want to mess with that. - Leon, age 7

The rule goes like this: If you kiss someone, then you should marry them and have kids with them. It's the right thing to do. - Howard, age 8

Is it better to be single or married?

It's better for girls to be single but not for boys. Boys need someone to clean up after them.

- Anita, age 9

How would you make a marriage work?

Tell your wife that she looks pretty, even if she looks like a lorry. - Ricky, age 10

Other thoughts :

Several women in the church prayer group were visiting an elderly friend who was ill. After a while, they rose to leave and told her: "We'll do what we can to help. We promise to keep you in our prayers."

"Thank you," she said. "But really, I can do my own praying. The thing I can't do is the dishes in the sink in the kitchen...."

In his younger days our golden retriever Catcher often ran away when he had the chance. The vet's surgery was about a mile down the road, and Catcher would usually go there. The nursing staff knew him and would call me to come and pick him up. One day I called the vet to make an appointment for Catcher's yearly vaccine. "Will you bring him," asked the receptionist, "or will he come down on his own?"



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

Well, that's 2023 put away....



January always means that the bright lights and sparkles have been put away until December. If you thought getting your Christmas things back into the loft was awkward, so did those who finally managed to dis-assemble the crib and the twenty foot high altar tree and get them into the sacristy loft. Thank you Paul, Jim, Chris, and Claire. But it did give me a pause for thought....

.....if putting away our church crib needed a bit of effort, at least we weren't faced with this. We spent a family Christmas in Exeter, and enjoyed Christmas services at Buckfast Abbey. Their crib has near life-size figures and those sheep are really sheep-sized. I'm delighted that Our Lady Star of the Sea doesn't have to face dismantling something like that!



Parish Meeting about Our Lady's & St Edmund's, Backworth



An open Parish Meeting about the proposed closure will take place on 1st February at Immaculate Heart of Mary church at 7.00pm, chaired by the Tynemouth Priory Partnership Dean, Fr Chris Hughes. A paper detailing the reasons for the proposed closure has already been widely distributed. Any church closure is saddening, but this one, with its memories and family associations stretching back before the start of the last century is particularly so. However, as St John Henry Newman observed, 'To live is to change'.

Prior to its closure for the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, the church had been open for only one Mass a week and the presbytery, once rented by North Tyneside Council as a young offenders' rehabilitation unit, had been empty since 2019. Despite the buildings not being used, energy standing charges, council tax, and necessary insurance have continued to cost several thousand pounds a year. No organisations, business or domestic potential buyers pursued tentative interest beyond initial enquiries.

Since 2018, two parish meetings about future use of the buildings have generated 130 responses, and it has been considered every two months by the Parish Pastoral Council and the Finance Committee. Their carefully considered recommendation now is that the site should be sold, and this recommendation will be sent to the Episcopal Council and Bishop Wright for final approval.

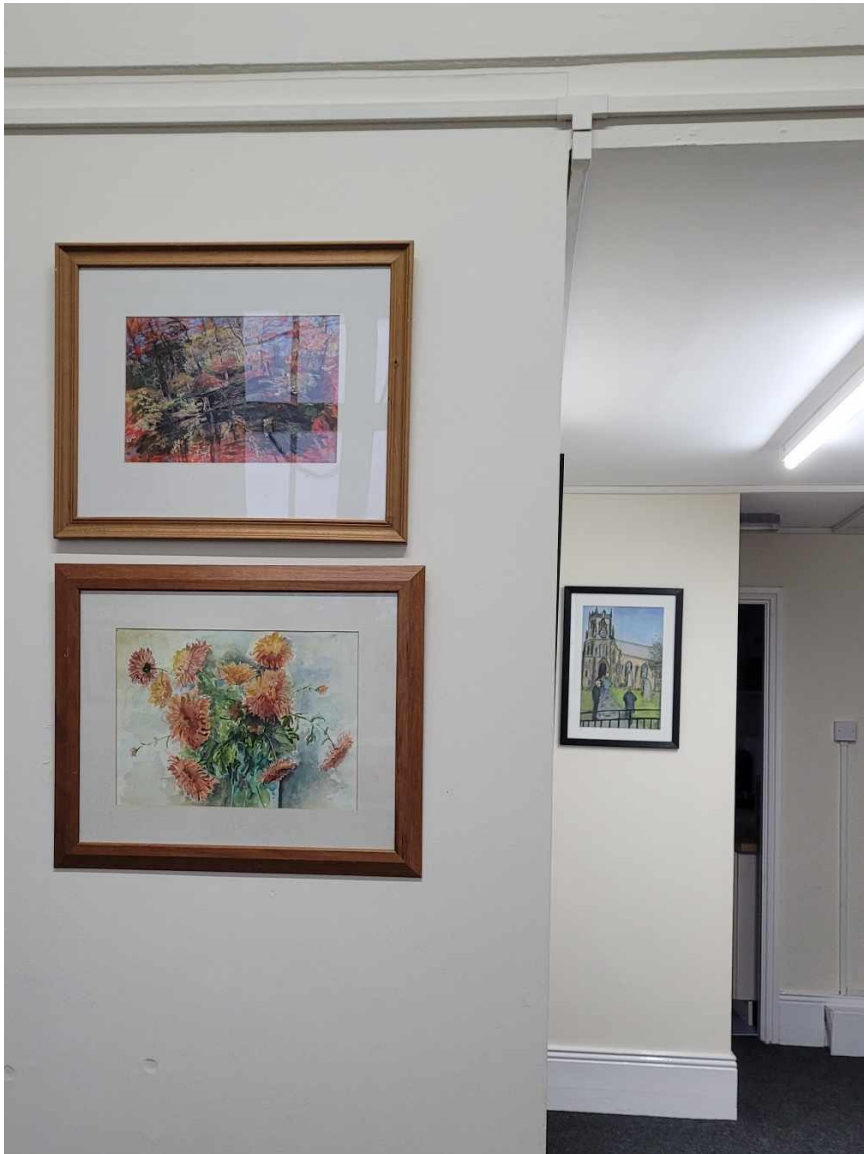
Gerry Latimer, Parish of Our Lady Star of the Sea

Parish Mass Times

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

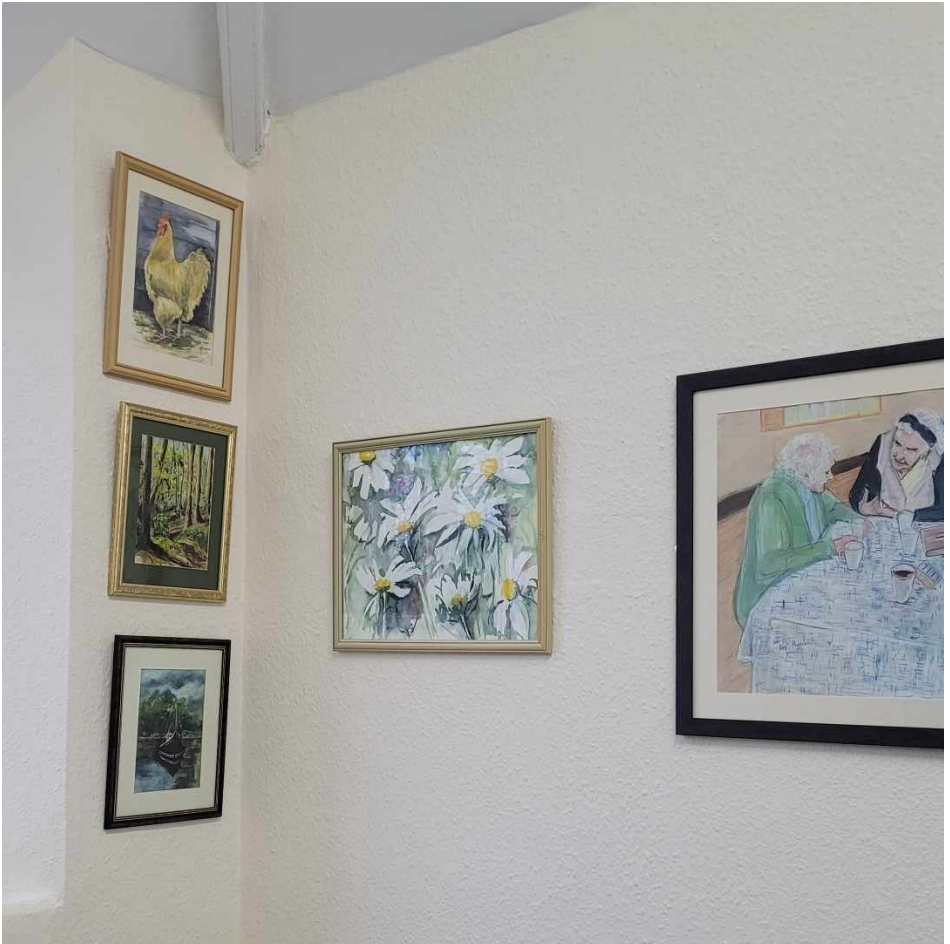
Immaculate Heart of Mary: Saturday 6.00pm, Wednesday, Friday 9.30am

Just a few of the pieces from the very talented Olive Dickson, which are now on display in the Wednesday Walkers room in Eccles Hall.



Thank you Ali - these pictures also beautifully showcase the recently decorated Eccles Hall, so here again are the details for hiring the hall.





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The Burns Supper: a celebration of the Immortal Memory

An early Burns night was held on the 20th January.

It got off to a great start with Joan telling the story of the life of Robert (Rabbie) Burns and then proposing the toast in his immortal memory.

Although we didn't manage any of Rabbie Burns traits; .." kirk-defying', hard drinking and womanising!....." we nevertheless had great evening with plenty of good food, drink and dancing.

Once the broth course was finished Paul Gowdy's address to the haggis followed which is something not to be missed. A speech which is long, complex, incomprehensible but above all word perfect. He did a brilliant job of honouring that great pudding, the haggis.

The food was also particularly good with home made broth, haggis, neeps and tatties followed by cranachan, coffee and short-bread.

A big thank you to all those who helped put on a spectacular evening!



The Eccles Hall, Earsdon.



Many thanks to Rob Gowdy for this article.

Thoughts from Rev Canon J W Wesley Blakey

BARGAINS

Near where we once lived there was a Pork Butcher shop that every week offered a 'Friday Special.' This was a sandwich with everything in it – pork, apple sauce, sage & onion stuffing - the bun itself was enormous and the taste was magnificent. It was offered at a price that was much lower than the pork sandwich you could buy on the other days of the week – so it was a double bargain – a better sandwich for less money.

Of course, the butcher was quite clever because by doing this he attracted customers into his shop at the very time when they were considering buying their meat for the week-end, ensuring that many would buy it there and not at the local supermarket. Yet all the same, every Friday he was sacrificing profit by offering his pork sandwiches in this way.

Our former butcher was not alone in offering bargains. I subscribe to a regular gardening magazine and as well as advice on gardening and pictures of someone's immaculate flower bed, there are adverts which show apparent bargain prices. There are holidays with an expert gardener at a ridiculous bargain price that you must experience; there are offers on plants for your garden that are lower prices than those in the garden centres; there is a leaf blower that is better than all the rest – such low prices that are just not to be ignored ~ they are all great bargains!

Well, the reader must judge which is a bargain – especially when you add postage and packing to the price. One definition of a bargain is 'an agreement between two parties to do something positive for each other.' Throughout the Bible there are stories of God making a covenant (a two-sided bargain) with his people, a promise to do something for each other, basically God gives his love to his people, and they respond by acting out his love in their lives. So, this Lent I am taking up the theme of bargaining and see if I can do something positive instead of giving up something. It's worth a try.

Wes Blakey

All in the month of February

It was:

150 years ago, on 15th Feb 1874 that Sir Ernest Shackleton was born. This Irish-born British polar explorer was one of the leading explorers during the Heroic Age of Antarctic Exploration. He led three British expeditions to the Antarctic.

100 years ago, on 5th Feb 1924 that BBC Radio broadcast the ‘six-pips’ Greenwich Time Signal for the first time.

Also 100 years ago, on 12th Feb 1924 that George Gershwin’s *Rhapsody in Blue* was performed for the first time, in New York.

70 years ago, on 23rd Feb 1954 that the first field test of the polio vaccine began in Pittsburgh. It grew into a year-long national trial involving 1.8 million children.

65 years ago, 3rd Feb 1959, became ‘the day the music died’, when American rock-and-roll performers Buddy Holly, Ritchie Valens and The Big Bopper were killed in a plane crash in Iowa.

60 years ago, on 7th Feb 1964 that the Beatles arrived in New York for their first US tour. They were met by thousands of screaming fans.

40 years ago, on 14th Feb 1984 that figure skaters Jayne Torvill and Christopher Dean won the gold medal in ice-skating at the Winter Olympics in Sarajevo. They scored the first perfect 6.0 in Olympic history.

30 years ago, on 25th Feb 1994 that serial killer Fred West was arrested in connection with the disappearance of his daughter. Police then discovered human bones buried in his garden. He was eventually charged with 11 murders, and his wife Rosemary with ten murders.

20 years ago, on 4th Feb 2004 that Facebook, the social media networking platform, was launched.

15 years ago, on 7th Feb 2009 that the Black Saturday bushfires took place in Australia. The worst in Australia’s history, they destroyed 1.1 million acres of land, killed 173 people, injured 414, and burned down more than 3,500 buildings, including 2,000 houses.

St. Alban's and St. John's

Diary Page for February 2024

Sunday	4th		<u>Candlemas</u>	
		9.00am	Holy Communion	St John's
		10.30am	Holy Communion	St Alban's
Thursday	8th	9.30am	Holy Communion	St John's
Sunday	11th		<u>Sunday next before Lent</u>	
		9.00am	Holy Communion	St John's
		10.30am	Holy Communion	St Alban's
Wednesday	14th	9.30am	Ash Wednesday	St Alban's
		7.30pm	Ash Wednesday	St John's
Sunday	18th		<u>First Sunday in Lent</u>	
		9.00am	Holy Communion	St John's
		10.30am	Holy Communion	St Alban's
		** No weekly service **		
Sunday	25th		<u>Second Sunday in Lent</u>	
		9.00am	Holy Communion	St John's
		10.30am	Holy Communion	St Alban's
Thursday	29th	9.30am	Holy Communion	St John's



St. Alban's and St. John's

Sunday Gospel Readings for February 2024:

4th

Luke 2. 22-40

11th

Mark 9. 2-9

18th

Matthew 4, 1-11

25th

Mark 8. 31-38

* 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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	1					2		
7				1	5			6
	5	9			6			
			3			4	2	
6			5	4				7
		1					8	
		8	2			6		

Please note - all material for next month's magazine (March) will need to be in before Wednesday 21st February. Thank you, *Jean*.

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Many thanks to everyone who contributed to the St John's and St Alban's churches' Christmas card. As can be seen from the copy of Whitley Bay Street Pastors' letter, a total of £420.00 was raised.
Well done Cathryn, and thank you for arranging it all.

Whitley Bay Street Pastors

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From the Treasurer
Pauline Harrison
7 Allenheads
Seaton Delaval
Whitley Bay
Tyne & Wear
NE25 0EY

Ms Cathryn Richardson,

5th January, 2024

Dear Cathryn,

I acknowledge receipt of the sum of £420.00 from the proceeds of the Charity Christmas card you did with members of your 2 churches, which you have kindly given for the work of Whitley Bay Street Pastors.

This kind gift is greatly appreciated and will help us to continue our work of caring for, listening to and giving practical help to anyone who is in need on our local streets.

Thank you very much for your support.

Yours sincerely



Pauline Harrison
Treasurer

Many Blessings xx

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WORDSEARCH

Wordsearch for February

February is the month of romance. Millions of Valentine cards will be sent in the next week or two, as we celebrate our romantic love for that special person in our lives. But there are other kinds of love to celebrate: and on Candlemas we remember Mary and Joseph taking their baby son to the temple to present Him to God. Jesus' whole life was a loving present to us from God. Through His death for us on the cross, and His resurrection, His love can now transform anyone's life. Romances can die, but God's love for us is always there. But it won't do us much good – unless we accept it!

- Valentine
- Rose
- Romance
- Love
- Present
- Restaurant
- Hearts
- Kiss
- hug
- girlfriend
- boyfriend
- fiancé
- worship
- repentance
- angels
- baby
- temple
- Mary
- Candlemas
- presentation



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