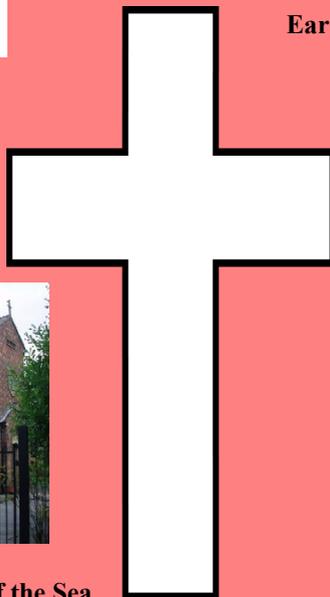




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CHURCH VIEWS

**January
2023**

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THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH

January 2023

I love to wash the car ~ a sad fact perhaps, but true.

I know that there is a certain section of society who think that washing the car is the job that men do in order to avoid other jobs in the home; and can cite examples of men who have never vacuumed inside a house but who have spent hours vacuuming the inside of a car ~ and I confess that such accusations could well be levelled at me ~ but nonetheless, it is something I enjoy and something I do believe that has many advantages. For example it gives good aerobic exercise, and also everyone knows that it is a scientific fact that a clean car goes faster, is more efficient and it makes the person behind the wheel a safer driver by increasing their self-esteem !!

I appreciate that there are some cars that are never washed. They are either very old cars where the dirt is all that is keeping the body together – or else, they are cars and vehicles like those that my farmer friend Andy drives that are constantly being taken over fields and farm tracks and narrow country roads, and so to be constantly cleaning them would be a waste of time, for no sooner were they clean, than they would be covered with mud – and worse – and there would be no benefit at all. Other people just let the rain do its best.

Of course, there are drive through car washes that anyone can use; which I believe is the closest that any town or city driver gets to extreme sport, and it gives you an idea of what it is like being inside of a dishwasher – especially if you leave the windows open by mistake.

However, I love to wash the car and I really enjoy that first drive or two with everything gleaming; and so, whenever I go on a long-ish journey, I always try to start with a clean car.

Some cynics have asked me why I do this. Is it not a misuse of time, when the car will get just as dirty in a day or so? My reply is always the same. “It started clean.”

I am a great believer that if you can get a good start – in anything – then that determines how the rest of the journey will go ~ and here we are at the start of a new year.

I recall that the very first words of the Bible are “In the beginning God created...

This is for me an indication above all else that from the beginning God started not with a clean car – but with a clean and fresh creation. Since then some things have become quite a muddle and some quite horrific like wars and floods and stabbings and ... need I go on ?

But the world does not stand still; creation and creativity is ever present, and its people like you and I need to clean it up; work towards improving what we see; keep bright relationships; be rid of mud and tarnish and enable all people to feel better about themselves. ... and if we get interrupted then there is always another day tomorrow to start well.

a New Year prayer

God of new starts,
May I always do the best I can
Listen before judging
Think before speaking
Admit I may be wrong
Be prompt in keeping promises
Put the best interpretation on the actions of others
So that I may never go to sleep wishing things had been different.
Amen.

Wes Blakey

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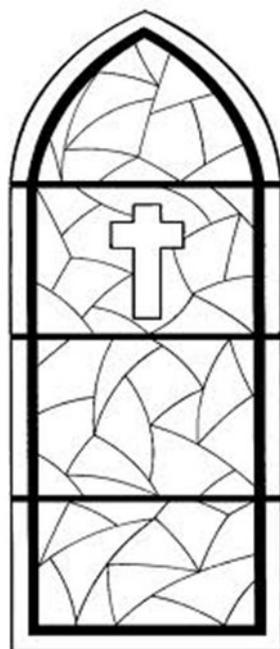
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COMMUNITY NEWS

A big **'thank you'** to everyone who turned up for my Mulled Wine Morning in spite of the bad weather. A special thank you to my kitchen staff Joan, Anne, Sara and Anna and Janet on the Sales Table (I bowed to your better judgement!) and Pam and Pat on the Raffle and Rob on the door.

A special mention to Jack who looked after the step, so good to see him.

Because of all your support we made £523 50.

Thank you all again

Helen x





Christmas celebrations really started on the 14th December. This was the day that the Wednesday group held their Christmas party and kindly extended an invitation to all and sundry.

Being in the “all and sundry“ category we were thankful not to have missed what turned out to be a very happy afternoon’s entertainment with plenty of food provided by Deb’s Deli (once based in Seghill but now in Killingworth). Of course Santa made an impromptu appearance and handed out presents to everyone (I did appreciate how good everyone had been). Sarah was obviously extremely good because she left arm in arm with him. He may have some explaining to do when Mrs Claus gets her claws in him. However as they say hohoho merry Christmas and a big thank you to all those who did the organising.

Rob Gowdy.



More on pages 18 & 19 ...



A lovely comment from Anne Perry, St Alban's church:

The article on sprouts by Wes Blakey last month made me laugh. It brought back memories of my youngest granddaughter when she was 3yrs old and I found a sprout in her coat pocket. She said "it's my sprout just leave it". On questioning my daughter she said "I've no idea where this idea came from, when it goes brown I just replace it with another. She certainly doesn't eat them!! Granddaughter is now 24 and is not a lover of sprouts or any green vegetables! She now has no idea why she kept a sprout in her pocket. Anne Perry



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.

Please do consider using the services of our advertisers who loyally support our church magazine. If you know anyone who would be interested in taking out an advertisement, please

email: magazine@stalbansearsdon.org.uk
or call Jean on 0191 2377273

On Saturday the 17th December we held a joint carolling at the Pavilion, Shiremoor as an act to engage with the 'new estates'. There was a good turnout from all three churches, St Marks, St John's and St Alban's. We sang our hearts out just outside of the entrance door then ducked in for a half time heat and warm drink before continuing with a second half rendition. It all went down well and although no one joined us outside in the cold we could see at least one person singing along inside the pub, it felt like a good start and something to build on.

Later some of our brave souls joined the Salvation Army singing outside the Cannon in Earsdon, supported by a donkey and fortified by hot soup.

A lovely start to the Christmas celebrations and big thanks to Rae for organising.



Thanks again to Rob Gowdy, our roving reporter for this month.



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An Article for the Feast of Epiphany on 6th January

‘**Epiphany**’ aka ‘The manifestation of Christ to the Gentiles’ (ref: The Gospel of Matthew, Chapter 2, v1-12.)

About 97 years ago Queen Elizabeth II was born. Among the many gifts given to the baby princess, the prestigious Otterburn Mill sent a woollen rug designed for a pram to Buckingham Palace. Obviously, it was highly suitable and practical for a new-born baby forced to live in cold places. At this time of year, the Church recalls the offering of the three gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh brought by the Magi to the young Jesus at Bethlehem. The Magi, whose number is not known, were professional star-gazers, believed to have more than human knowledge and who were held in high regard. To the predominantly Jewish readers they were foreigners, strangers and total outsiders of unknown religious pagan persuasion who came to pay homage to this royal child. The gifts were hardly suitable for a young child.

Mainstream scholars believed they had symbolic significance for early Christian believers who, steeped in the scriptures, would consider what meaning this event was intending to convey. The truth is in the meaning – it is not a fairy tale. The Christian often needs the help of the qualified to grasp the meaning. Nevertheless there can be a variety of interpretations. For example, the appearance of a star, of little consequence today, would convey to the early Christians that an important event had taken place, i.e. the birth of the Saviour.

In Christian spirituality, thanksgiving and offering are closely linked. In the case of the Epiphany, the perceptive Magi are saying, “*thank you*” and offering their gold (wealth) to our Lord as a response to His love, and for His use. Today we offer our wealth to our Lord in the shape of our time, talents and income. Sweet smelling frankincense reminds us that Jesus is godly and worthy of worship. Myrrh is a preservative used in embalming and suggests that through Jesus’ death on the cross. He has won the gift of new life, now and beyond the grave.

After visiting Jesus the Magi returned home a different way. The Magi did not want to fall foul of the cruel, fearful and devious King Herod, hence their new route. This conveys the deeper meaning, that they adopted a new way of life including a new pattern of behaviour, new values and new attitudes containing aspects of time, talents and wealth as well as those encompassed by frankincense and myrrh.

In the first century, the Christian life was described as “*The Way*”. In the same way, those who reflect on the visit of the Magi are encouraged to follow The Way of the Saviour, with the offering of wealth in all its fullness, of worship and thanksgiving for the life and death of Jesus and more.

The Revd. John Wylam

(Many thanks, Joan, for sending this in.)

* 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**. *

CHURCH VIEWS FOR JANUARY 2023 FROM THE PARISH OF OUR LADY, STAR OF THE SEA



Bishop Robert Resigns

On 12 December 2022 Bishop Robert Byrne notified the Diocese of his resignation as 14th Bishop of Hexham and Newcastle. In his pastoral letter, read in all the churches in the Diocese on 18 December, he said that after deep consideration and consultation he had offered his resignation which had been accepted by Pope Francis. Part of his Pastoral Letter reads:

“I have concluded that the office of the Diocesan Bishop has become too great a burden and I feel that I must resign from my position as your Bishop. Having undertaken this discernment process and with due consultation with others, I indicated my wish to resign to the Holy Father and he has graciously accepted my request. Since my arrival in the Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle I have received many graces. These have included the considerable kindnesses, care and support of so many of you. I am and will remain deeply grateful to you for that support and the care you have provided to me. I ask for your continued prayers and provide you with an assurance of a remembrance in my own prayers.”

Bishop Robert is a member of the Oratorian Order and will return to his community in Oxford. We assure him of our prayers and our best wishes for his future, with thanks for his service since his installation in March 2019.

Archbishop Malcolm McMahon of Liverpool will act as the Apostolic Administrator of the Diocese until a permanent appointment is made.

So that was 2022.....

Christmas has disappeared and the lofts have been re-loaded with all that joyous clutter which won't be needed for another twelve months.



In both churches, you wouldn't believe how many people it took to go from this to this and back again!



2022 was a year which saw the return of so many great parish events. The Macmillan Coffee morning (raising £820) came back after a two year absence, and the Luncheon Club - sorely missed for so long - came back in November and was a sell-out for Christmas.



Earlier in the year the appeal for clothes, toys and all sorts of medical necessities for Ukraine was met whole-heartedly,



and was augmented by a parish donation of £1,039. At Christmas, donations at the Star of the Sea School Nativity Play added another £270. Altogether the parish donated £6,728 to a variety of charities during the year, including much-needed aid for victims of the floods in Pakistan.

What made 2022 such a good year was the return of parish life, banishing that COVID isolation. Together we can make 2023 even better.

Gerry Latimer

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

More about the 'Wednesday Group', this time from Ali Griffiths:

The 'Wednesday Walkers' group held their Christmas Party on Wednesday the 14th December 22, 13:30pm - 16:30pm. Organised by the wonderful Pat Hugman, helped by Liz York, Sylvia Turnbull and myself, we had a lovely time, anyone was welcome on the day, and any money raised is going towards the repairs to Eccles Hall roof.





See also page 10

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"That's two t's in Matthew", said Osric

Earsdon Methodist Church

Preacher for January 2023

Sunday	1st	No Service being held..
Sunday	8th	Rev'd. Wes Blakey - Covenant & Holy Communion.
Sunday	15th	Mr. Graham Tipple.
Sunday	22nd	Mrs. Joyce Firth.
Sunday	29th	Mr. Mick Walker.

STAN BELL

With sadness we report the death of Stan Bell on 25th November. Stan was born and brought up in Holywell and lived all of his 61 years of married life to Lillian (who died in August) in South Wellfield. He and Lillian were a devoted couple and enjoyed many things together including dancing and holidays and being in the centre of all things with their family.

Stan has been a keen sportsman, having a football trial for Bolton Wanderers in his younger days, and a keen member of Backworth Golf Club. He made friends wherever he went, at home and when he and Lillian travelled far and wide on holiday. Stan's working life started at Fenwick Pit but was spent mostly at Fasson's in Cramlington where he put his engineering skills to good use. His practical skills were not only used there but at home and at the homes of his family where he was in his element if he could fix things. Stan was a great family man and shared his interests and skills with his children Christine and David and also with his grandchildren who often came to his home after school for his renowned beans on toast.

He was an ever present support of Lillian both at home and at our Methodist Church and he loved to chat as often as he could.

We give thanks for Stan, our cheerful, dependable and loyal friend and send our love and prayers to Christine and Bill; David and Loraine and grandchildren Jordan, Kerry, Niamh, Joseph, Elise, Jude and great grandchildren Remi and Nora.

JWWB

St. Alban's and St. John's

Diary Page for January 2023



Sunday	1st	<u>First Sunday of Christmas</u>		
		8.30am	Holy Communion	St John's
		10.00am	Holy Communion	St Alban's
Thursday	5th	9.30am	Holy Communion	St John's
Sunday	8th	<u>Epiphany</u>		
		8.30am	Holy Communion	St John's
		10.00am	Holy Communion	St Alban's
Wednesday	11th	9.30am	Holy Communion	St Alban's
Sunday	15th	<u>Second after Epiphany</u>		
		8.30am	Holy Communion	St John's
		10.00am	Holy Communion	St Alban's
Thursday	19th	9.30am	Holy Communion	St John's
Sunday	22nd	<u>Third after Epiphany</u>		
		8.30am	Holy Communion	St John's
		10.00am	Holy Communion	St Alban's
Wednesday	25th	9.30am	Holy Communion	St Alban's
Sunday	29th	<u>Fourth after Epiphany</u>		
		8.30am	Holy Communion	St John's
		10.00am	Holy Communion	St Alban's
Thursday	2nd	9.30am	Holy Communion	St John's

St. Alban's and St. John's

Sunday Gospel Readings for January 2023 :

1st

Ezekiel 36. 24-28; Revelation 21. 1-17

8th

Matthew 2. 1-11

15th

John 2. 1-11

22nd

Matthew 4. 12-23

29th

John 15. 1-11



Here is the hyperlink to our newspaper “The Link” :

[link-decemberjan2022.pdf \(d3hgrlq6yacptf.cloudfront.net\)](https://d3hgrlq6yacptf.cloudfront.net/link-decemberjan2022.pdf)

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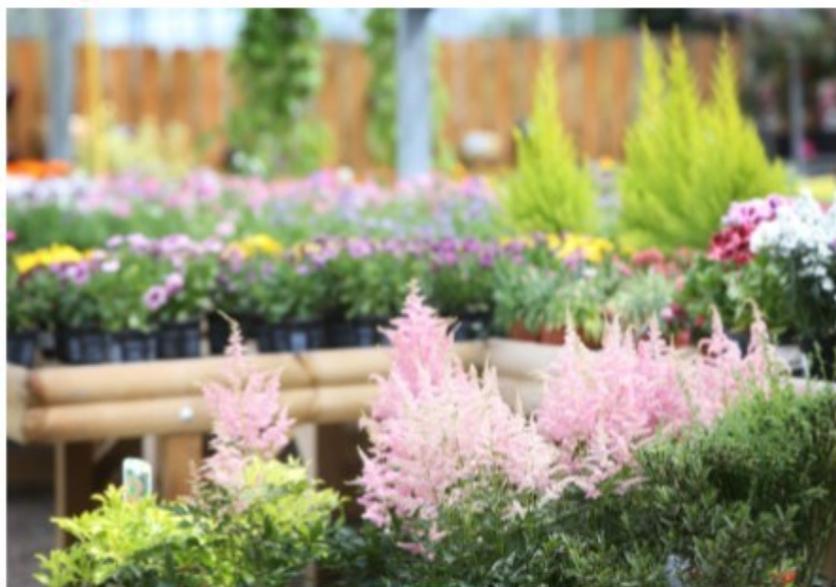
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1	5		9	8				
4			6	5				8
6	4	3				9		
		7				8	3	1
5				3	2			9
				4	9		5	6
	2					3		

Please note - all material for next month's magazine (February 2023) will need to be in before Wednesday 25th January.

Thank you, *Jean*.

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Marti's Musings 106

Happy New Year everybody! I hope you all had a wonderful Christmas. We had a lovely day with good food and friends. I got a stocking full of treats and some new toys that I had to unwrap! Mum said midnight mass was quite quiet but Christmas morning was full of people. We are now waiting for the arrival of the Kings with their blessings.

I got a new coat in the sales which has bees all over it, it won't be long before they are reappearing from their hibernation to pollinate our spring flowers. They are becoming endangered so we need to plant lots of nectar rich flowers like buddleia, primrose and marigolds.

Wishing everyone a happy, healthy and blessed 2023.

Lots of love

Marti xxx



WORDSEARCH

January 2023

The Coming of the Magi

'Where is the One who has been born King of the Jews? We saw His star in the east and have come to worship Him.' So Matthew tells of the coming of the Magi, or Wise Men, to the baby Jesus. Today we remember it on Epiphany, on 6th January. Did they come from Arabia Felix – nowadays southern Arabia? How many came? No one knows, but by the 6th century they were named Gaspar, Melchior, and Balthasar. Why gold, frankincense and myrrh? Gold stands for kingship: Jesus was King of the Jews. Frankincense stands for divinity; Jesus was to be worshipped. Myrrh stands for death and burial; Jesus would become a sacrifice and die for His people. The Wise Men were the very first gentiles ever to worship Jesus. Isaiah foresaw this response to Jesus: 'Nations will come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your dawn.' The Magi wanted to worship Jesus; Herod wanted to kill Him. But the Jewish leaders who knew about the prophecy of a Messiah born in Bethlehem did not even bother to visit to Bethlehem. And it is only six miles from Jerusalem!

King
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Magi
Wise
men
baby
Jesus
Epiphany
Arabia
Felix
Gaspar
Melchior
Balthasar
Gold
Frankincense
myrrh

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Isaiah
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