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The magazine for the Diocese of Newcastle

FEBRUARY 2025

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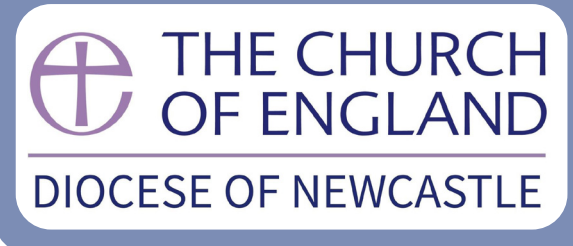
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# A message from Dean Lee Batson



The Very Revd  
Lee Batson

**In the week before Christmas, I found myself walking up Grey Street in Newcastle in search of calories I almost certainly did not need. There was the usual scrum of people enjoying the Christmas market, and various groups and individuals singing and campaigning. Whilst on this occasion no one tried to convert me to Christianity, I was struck by the dissonance between the Free Palestine group singing politicised versions of Christmas carols ten yards away from someone playing heavy metal – ensuring that neither was heard perfectly.**

Further down the road stands the Cathedral, with its most prominent architectural feature being the beacon which was built to house a light to guide ships coming down the Tyne. Whilst it is no longer as visible as it once was due to other buildings being erected around it,

the beacon is still lit. It is also no longer the brightest light – St James’ Park certainly wins that contest. But our light remains lit whether there is a ‘game’ on or not, and it points towards a place of stillness where the competing sounds of our world can be held at bay.

Writing in the eighth century from the desert, St Isaac the Syrian shared his experience of the soul being plunged “into veritable wonders in the stillness which is in God, taking her far from the whisperings of the world and the life of the flesh”. It was in the spaces away from all the noise that God could be found.

During my first twelve plus months in post it has been a privilege to have worshipped around the Diocese from Berwick to Bedlington to Benwell and places in between. Whatever the context, one of the great gifts each of our

churches offer are places of stillness – even in areas which are much quieter than Newcastle City Centre.

As we continue with our Diocesan year of seeking, with more and more competing voices vying for our attention, I wonder how many of us continue to try to find God – or allow ourselves to be found - in stillness? St Isaac continues “when the power of stillness overshadows you... your eyes will be opened to see God’s creative power and the beauty of created things.”

As 2025 continues and as we prepare for Lent, I wonder, therefore, if the invitation to seek is also an invitation to simply stop and be still.

**The Very Revd Lee Batson**  
Dean of Newcastle

# Children create 'lights of the world' at eco-focused Christingle services



Christingle service at Newcastle Cathedral



**N**ewcastle Cathedral opened its doors to welcome more than 300 children from schools across the Diocese for its annual Christingle services.

The special services that took place in January were led by the Revd Canon Ruth Hulse, Newcastle Cathedral's Canon for Worship & Congre-

gational Life, while Children and Youth Team Leader, Tara Russell, gave an interactive talk to help the children understand why Jesus is the light of the world.

Tara said: "It was wonderful to be able to hear the different ways the children are going to be a light in their schools and families after hearing about Jesus' light at the Christingle."

During the services, children were given the opportunity to split off into smaller groups to create their own rather unique Christingles. This year, the team decided to make eco-Christingles; replacing the usual oranges, sweets, tinfoil and cocktail sticks with biodegradable plant pots and forget-me-not seeds.



The Revd Canon Ruth Hulse said: "We decided to do an eco-Christingle this year because being lights of the world also includes caring for our planet"

The children sang a variety of light-themed worship songs before all the Christingles were lit.

# A warm welcome for our new canons



The new canons pictured with Bishop Helen-Ann and other clergy

The Diocese has welcomed six new canons following a service at Newcastle Cathedral in December. The non-residentiary canons were installed during the Patronal Festival of St Nicholas.

The Revd Dr Rae Caro, the Revd Dr Ben Doolan, the Revd Jonathan Lawson, Dr Maggi Creese, John Marshall and Dr Ce Pacitti were installed as honorary canons by Bishop Helen-Ann before being led to their new stalls by the junior choristers.

Bishop Helen-Ann said: "I'm delighted at the appointment of our new non-residentiary canons and look forward to all that they will bring in this capacity in the life of the cathedral and the wider diocese."

The Dean of Newcastle, the Very Revd Lee Batson, said: "The College of Canons is one of the main ways in which

the Cathedral can hear how it can best support the wider work of mission and ministry in this Diocese.

"I am thrilled that Ce, John, Maggi, Jonathan, Ben and Rae have become non-residentiary canons as their voice and experience will add to the considerable wisdom that is already present in the college."

The Revd Dr Kelly Brown Douglas should also have been installed at the same time as Newcastle Cathedral's first Anglican Communion Canon but unfortunately cancelled flights meant Dr Douglas was unable to join the service and her installation will now take place at a later date.

More photos from the event can be found on our Facebook page.

# A thank you and final push for



Grace Millane



At Holy Saviour, Tynemouth, Diane Bayley receives collection bags from Marie Ness of Falstone



**P**eople and churches across the Diocese can continue to support the Bishop's Christmas Appeal until 31 January.

Bishop Helen-Ann launched her latest appeal in early December, in support of Love Grace – Handbag Appeal, which was set up in memory of Grace Millane, a British backpacker who was tragically murdered while travelling in New Zealand in 2018, aged just 22.

Grace was known for her love of handbags and now, handbags are being collected and filled

with useful items for women in need.

Our churches were encouraged to start their own collections, for people to bring handbags and / or items such as toiletries to go inside them.

Individuals and churches can make donations until 31 January at one of four different collection points – Swalwell Cricket Club, Artichoke in Tynemouth, Activate Physio in Tynemouth, or Holy Saviour, Tynemouth, where Grace's cousin Elizabeth Lee worships.

Hannah O'Callaghan, of the Love Grace Team

# Bishop's Christmas Appeal



said: "Thank you so much to everyone who has donated to the Love Grace handbag appeal. We couldn't do it without the kindness and support of the parishioners and can't thank Bishop Helen-Ann enough for making Love Grace her Christmas appeal. We are so pleased that the bags collected will go to women in the local community."

All donations will be taken to Holy Saviour, Tynemouth, on 2 February, and will be counted to give a grand total of bags collected.

Hannah added: "Unwanted Christmas gift sets

would be gratefully received. In addition, if there are any people who like to sew, knit or crochet scarves, hats, scrunchies, make-up bags and totes to pop inside the handbags – they would also be hugely appreciated."

Among the churches which supported the appeal was St Mary's, Monkseaton. Pictured are the items generously donated by the congregation for this very worthy cause. There was also a substantial collection from St Peter's, Falstone, thanks to the generosity of the rural church's congregation.

For more information and to see what items you can donate, visit [here](#).

Since the appeal's inception, more than 23,000 women in the UK, New Zealand, USA, Canada and Singapore have received a Love Grace handbag.

Volunteers are needed to help to pack the bags with the items. Please attend Holy Saviour's Tynemouth Village Hall, at 10am on Sunday 2 February.

# The first flush as Netty Project becomes



The St Alban's Netty Team in the skeleton of what would become the new kitchen.

**A** rural church near Whitley Bay has hosted a special celebration to mark the completion of a five-year project to provide new facilities.

Affectionately known as 'The Netty Project', the ambitious scheme has brought a much-needed ramped access to St Alban's, Earsdon, as well as two toilets (one of them fully accessible), baby change facilities, a simplified entrance, welcome area and kitchen.

The church, which dates back to 1837, also has a new media room to assist with the live streaming of services.

A special service took place on Sunday 12 January, when the congregation gathered while church member Helen Jackman, who originally came up with 'The Netty Project' name, performed a ceremonial flushing of the new toilets to cheers and applause.

The Revd Tim Mayfield, vicar of St Alban's said: "Geordies call toilets 'the netty'. St Alban's had never had toilets. So when Helen jokingly called it 'The Netty Project' the name stuck. The project has done exactly as we hoped, making St Alban's a much improved base for mission.

"A few days before the grand opening, we had a busy baptism. It was lovely to see buggies rolling smoothly up the beautiful ramp, which replaced the previous two-step access. During



# a reality for St Alban's



Live streaming the celebration service from the new Media Room.



Drinks are served in the new welcome area following the celebration service.



Tracey Singleton, Gary Singleton of NCS Ltd (Project Manager), Tristan Spicer of Doonan Architects, Revd Tim Mayfield.

this service, young families came and went to the netty and used the baby-change facilities. Above the font is a beautiful 'halo' lighting. It was special to stand under that for the baptism."

Tim said the church's decision to turn around two pews, creating a welcome area at the back of church, proved popular as it provided space for parents to park buggies and feed babies before the service.

Architect Tristan Spicer of Doonan Architects in Hexham drew St Alban's nine increasingly ambitious schemes. Earsdon Treasurer Rob Swindells held out for the most ambitious of these, which was built by Northern Construction Solutions (NCS) Ltd, of Durham.

Tristan, and project manager Gary Singleton of NCS joined the St Alban's congregation for the big opening.

St Alban's Netty Project was paid for by legacies and a gift day at the church, fund-raising and grants. Transforming Communities Together (TCT) kindly granted £4,000. However, funding dried up and the project stalled. Then in August 2024 the National Heritage Lottery rode to the rescue with a game-changing grant of over £50,000. Work then commenced on 23 September 2024, and has now come to fruition.

# Singing group is a safe space for all to feel good



**The Wellbeing Singing Group**

**A** singing group that focuses on well-being has gone from strength to strength over the past year and is building new relationships between a church and its community.

The Wellbeing Singing Group is based in Newburn Parish, meeting at St Mary's Church, Throckley, every other Saturday morning.

Its members sing everything from Abba, Elvis and Nat King Cole to traditional hymns, and have started to perform as a choir at church services and events.

"We are absolutely loving it," said the Revd Allison Harding, the vicar of Newburn Parish who is one of the singers herself and is a huge advocate of the group's benefits.

"It has really taken off over the past year and is a good mix of people from our two congregations

and the wider community. It is bringing more people into church and when the group performs as a choir, our members bring their families and friends along, so it has been very well received."

Allison, who is vicar at St Mary's, Throckley and St Michael's, Newburn, said the group has become a strong social entity and is also a support network for all who need it.

"It was relaunched early last year," she explained. "It was previously a bit more formal with singing lessons but we realised that we needed a place for people to just sing for fun and to enjoy a cup of tea and a biscuit afterwards.

"It's a place for people to feel good. You can come and sing for an hour on a Saturday morning, putting aside the challenges and responsibilities of everyday life. It's a safe space to socialise, where people have the opportunity to talk about whatever they want and know that there's a support

network around them. It's so encouraging and uplifting. You meet people and feel good about yourself."

Children and Families Community Missioner, Jac Atkinson, is leading the church-run group but not as part of her official role. An avid singer, Jac is offering her services voluntarily.

"Jac has been brilliant," said Allison. "People are actively wanting to sing as a choir and did so at our recent carol service and fun day. There is a missional element - people are coming into church and hearing the gospel but it's thriving as a safe space for people to meet and enjoy themselves."

The Wellbeing Singing Group is open to all ages. Get in touch via the **Newburn Parishes page on Facebook** or visit **newburnparish.org**

My Christmas stocking was unusually heavy this year. That's because it contained Greta Thunberg's astonishing 'The Climate Book' (2024). I thought I knew a fair bit about the climate crisis. But I've learned a lot I didn't know (and as I began to type it up, news broke of the Los Angeles wildfires). Here is what I've learned with quotes and information taken from Greta's book.

**We've known about this for longer than I thought:**

"As early as 1896 chemist Svante Arrhenius predicted that by releasing carbon dioxide into the atmosphere, humankind would warm Earth by several degrees."

**We're on the verge of leaving a 'corridor of life':**

The average global temperature has risen by 1.1°C since 1880. For thousands of years, Earth's temperature fluctuated within a 'corridor of life' — a stable range of plus or minus 1°C from pre-industrial levels. Now, at 1.1°C of global warming, we are at the edge of that corridor.

**The clouds are changing:**

"As the climate warms, we expect the properties of clouds to change. Recent scientific advances have led to the conclusion that clouds are amplifying global warming."

# Environment



By The Revd Tim Mayfield  
Bishop's Advisor on the Environment

"More and more regions are approaching 'peak water' – where taking more water from the environment is impossible."

**Burning biomass isn't as green as it is made out to be:**

"The Selby Drax power plant, in North Yorkshire, is the biggest single emitter of carbon dioxide in the UK."

**Parts of the biosphere are beginning to emit carbon:**

"Some areas of the Amazon rainforest have begun to emit more carbon than they were storing."

**Making the switch away from fossil fuels is good for us:**

"If the US reduced emissions to meet the goals of the Paris Agreement [the 2016 international treaty on climate change] it would provide clean-air benefits to the country that would outweigh the costs of the transition in the very first decade of action."

"Studies have shown a link between higher temperatures and a higher extent of resistance to antibiotics in bacteria."

**More carbon dioxide harms the nutritional content of foods:**

"Staple food crops such as wheat are losing nutrients. Scientists grew crops at a CO2 concentration the world is expected to reach around the middle of this century. They found that crops grown at these elevated concentrations had significantly lower amounts of protein than identical crops grown at today's CO2 levels."

In terms of carbon capture, we are nowhere near the scale we need to be:

"The world's biggest carbon removal plant will capture three seconds' worth of each year's global emissions."

God have mercy on us, and inspire us to take the urgent action we need to combat climate change.

Quotes taken from *The Climate Book*, written by Greta Thunberg, 2024.



It is often said that there is no substitute for 'fresh eyes,' and there has certainly been no shortage of things to see and experience since I began in September, in the wonderful and extraordinary world of the mother church of our diocese.



The Revd Canon Zoe Heming

Being part of our values of *Radical Welcome*, *Inspiring Worship*, and *Empowering Worth* is the most exciting ministry context I have encountered since I came to faith at 16, and it is a joy to work with such a passionate, vibrant team.

Since the redevelopment of the building in recent years, much has changed and the whole world, in one way or another, comes through our doors. Whether to find warmth, spiritual food or access support for addiction, domestic violence or asylum. Our brave and inclusive approach leads to transformed lives and the formation of new communi-



## View from the Lantern

By the Revd Canon Zoe Heming, Canon for Mission, Newcastle Cathedral

ties. As a new senior team, we are now focused on how this incredible work shapes the entire life of the Cathedral.

In addition to the daily services I share with my clergy colleagues, my role involves supporting the incredible work of colleagues in social justice, education, the arts, safeguarding, volunteering and chaplaincy. The opportunities to share the Good News are endless, as we strive to be a 'beacon of light' under the 800-year-old Lantern Tower at the heart of this special city!

One thing we want to make clear: this cathedral belongs to everyone! Ministry can be tough and exhausting, and we invite colleagues from across the Diocese to join us for prayer and worship or to explore ways we can be a resource for you.

We would love to hear about how our experience with homeless people, asylum seekers, and other faith groups and charities could help you equip your churches to respond to the communities you serve. Similarly, we would benefit from the passion, gifts, time, energy and experience that is abundant across your own parishes.

In these difficult and divisive times, our communities need us to be confident peacemakers, bridge-builders and light-bearers, who recognise and serve Christ in those who are feared, scapegoated, marginalised or dismissed. The greatest thing I've learned here is that we do not have to do it alone; the harvest and the workers are plentiful.

# Go in peace – to be generous



**A**s we hear the words, “Go in peace to love and serve the Lord,” we are reminded that our faith is not confined to the walls of the church. These words are a commissioning - a call to carry the spirit of worship into our daily lives through love, service and generosity. Living a generous life isn’t just about grand gestures or significant donations; it’s about cultivating small, intentional habits that reflect God’s love and grace in every interaction.

Biblical generosity is not an occasional act but a consistent posture of the heart. It is reflected in the way we treat others, the time we give, and the compassion we show. St Francis of Assisi is often credited with saying, “Preach the Gospel at all times, and if necessary, use words.” This powerful reminder emphasizes that our actions often speak louder than our words. Every act of kindness, every moment of selflessness, and every instance of generosity becomes a testimony of the Gospel.

Generosity can start small: sharing your time



**By Leanne Conway-Wilcox**  
Generous Giving Advisor

with someone who needs a listening ear, offering encouragement to a colleague, simply being mindful of the needs of others around you, or making a small sacrifice to support God’s work financially.

These daily habits are seeds of faith, planted in ordinary soil but yielding extraordinary fruit. The beauty of these small acts is that they cre-

ate a ripple effect. A simple kindness can inspire someone else to do the same, creating a chain of love and service that reflects God’s kingdom here on Earth.

Why is this important for us as Christians? Because generosity is not just about meeting physical needs; it is a powerful witness to the Gospel. When we give freely, without expectation, we reflect the heart of Christ, who gave everything for us. Our generosity becomes a testimony—a living, breathing expression of God’s love in action. We are made in the image of a generous God and all we have comes from this generosity.

So, when we hear “Go in peace to love and serve the Lord,” let us take those words to heart. Let us leave our places of worship not as passive attendees, but as active participants in God’s mission. Let our week be filled with small, faithful acts of generosity that point others to Christ. For in loving and serving others, we are ultimately loving and serving the Lord Himself.

# A helping hand for churches as they seek to support people and communities



From left, Jan Hodgson, Angela Abrahams and Lynda Telford of TCT

**A** support network is helping churches in our diocese to develop exciting projects and engage with their communities.

Transforming Communities Together (TCT) Tyne to Tweed is a member of the Together Network – a national network of faith-based charities dedicated to working locally with churches, individuals and organisations.

Established in 2012 as Together Newcastle, TCT added Tyne to Tweed to its name to ensure people know that it operates across the whole diocese.

Over the years, TCT has helped churches with many projects including establishing wellbeing groups, money advice groups, toddler groups and, through the Partners in Community Action (PICA) Fund, improving church facilities.

Development Workers, Lynda Telford and Jan Hodgson, go out to churches to find out more about what they would like to do and offer

support to see if they can help progress an idea.

TCT's Operational Support Worker Angela Abrahams described the initiative as a "great opportunity for churches and communities."

The ecumenical organisation, which works with all faiths and none, is endorsed by Bishop Mark, who is Chair of Trustees.

On Monday 17 February, from 1.30-3.30pm, development worker Jan Hodgson will host an event at St Aidan's Church, Morpeth, where members of the Mothers' Union (MU) will have the opportunity to explore how we can facilitate projects in our parishes which encourage connection and develop our sense of good health and happiness. Lay people, clergy and church representatives are most welcome to attend. For more details email Jan via:

**[jan.hodgson@tct-tynetotweed.org](mailto:jan.hodgson@tct-tynetotweed.org)**

Jan said: "TCT seeks to develop places of wellbeing where people have a sense of belonging,

and feel welcomed, valued and listened to."

TCT administers the PICA Fund on behalf of the diocese, which can help to transform a church's ideas of working in and with local communities into reality through the provision of seed (start-up) funding for projects which demonstrate working in partnership in communities, bringing life in all its fullness to people who may be struggling with loneliness, isolation or financial hardship.

In past years, collections from licensing and confirmation services have supported the PICA fund, and TCT representatives attend services where possible to promote the fund and show their gratitude.

Donations to the PICA fund are always appreciated to ensure it continues to support our churches and communities. If you'd like to make a donation, email: **[admin@tct-tynetotweed.org](mailto:admin@tct-tynetotweed.org)**

For more information about TCT click **here**.

# Sunday evenings are bringing new



Sunday evening services at St Paul's, Whitley Bay.

**A** church is reaching out to new audiences after finding success with Sunday evening services. The weekly services have become a popular fixture at St Paul's, Whitley Bay, where they are a welcome addition to traditional Sunday morning eucharists.

And the 6pm Sunday slot has been relaunched this year, with four different styles on offer for each week of every month.

Choral evensong on the first Sunday evening of the month is followed by Taize style worship on the second Sunday, a Healing service on the third Sunday and 'Encounter' on the fourth.

The Revd John Vilaseca said: "Each service has a very different feel. We have a worship band and it's a very relaxed setting. These services are for anyone who might find traditional worship a bit



formal and for those who are either not available on a Sunday morning or would rather attend church in the evening.

"The services have been successful. We are seeing a new Sunday evening congregation starting to form, which is pleasing to see. We have refreshed the schedule for 2025 to make sure

# people into Whitley Bay church



that there's some variation."

Choral evensong has always been a regular fixture during John's six years at St Paul's, while

Taize style worship is something the vicar introduced himself.

Taize services last for about 45 minutes and include songs, readings and silence. They are named after a French Christian community, where the meditative songs were written by the Taize brothers and provide an opportunity for individual contemplation.

The Healing service includes prayers for healing and the needs of others who are not present. There is a themed sermon and hymns are sung.

A Spanish national, John has previously led Spanish eucharists at St Paul's, although they are not currently part of the schedule.

"Traditional worship is as important as ever," he explained. "But we're keen to try different things, especially on a Sunday evening when these ser-

vices are less formal and are bringing people into church who do not come in on a Sunday morning."

John said the Sunday evening environment is also a good opportunity for people who might wish to remain anonymous in church, or for those looking to use the church for personal prayer before leaving.

"Our church community has responded well to it," said John. "We have involved our readers with the services and with everyone's support, it is building up another congregation."

This year, there will be a 'come and sing' during choral evensong at St Paul's for choristers of all ages and for those who wish to try singing in a choir. For more information check the St Paul's Facebook page [@stpaulswhitleybay](https://www.facebook.com/stpaulswhitleybay) or visit their website: [www.saintpaulswhitleybay.org.uk](http://www.saintpaulswhitleybay.org.uk)

# Christian Aid Changemakers' conference

By Juliet Lunum and Helen Cunningham



Picture: Chris Howson

'We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure,' Hebrews 6:19

As Christian Aid marks its 80th anniversary, supporters from up and down the country will be gathering for the charity's annual Changemakers' conference.

The event will take place on Saturday, 8 March at St John's Church, Waterloo in London from 10.30am to 1.30pm. It is an opportunity to hear the results from Christian Aid Week 2024, find out about the stories behind this year's Christian Aid appeal and meet up with other supporters and Christian Aid staff and partners.

North East supporters can watch live at St John the Evangelist, Killingworth. To book a place visit [caid.org.uk/conference](http://caid.org.uk/conference) and click on 'register for a regional event'. The 'watch party' will be followed by a free lunch.

Among the guests at the conference will be Gerardo C Tobar, who is the programme manager in Guatemala – the focus of this year's Christian Aid Week appeal.

Gerardo said: "I'm excited to meet supporters in the UK and share the stories of joy and struggle of people of Guatemala who, despite facing many challenges, are resilient and determined."

Guatemala is part of the Central American Dry Corridor, an area which endures unpredictable rain patterns, bringing both severe droughts and catastrophic floods. These challenging conditions used to be predictable and manageable. Now, the climate crisis is causing seasons to intensify and shift erratically. As a result, vital crops are failing, plunging farming families into hunger and poverty.

Christian Aid has been working with its partner, Coordinación de ONG y Cooperativas (Congcoop), and alongside communities, to combine traditional farming with newer ways of working.

Thanks to supporters throughout the UK, Cong-

coop can offer training and tools so farmers can diversify and grow more resilient crops, build water recycling systems using household items, and create organic fertiliser. They are also supported with selling produce locally and campaigning for their rights against land grabs by industrial plantation owners.

As well as looking ahead to Christian Aid Week, the conference will also be reflecting on the charity's 80 years of work and accomplishments, including an update on ongoing initiatives in places like Gaza.

During the afternoon, there will be seminars and workshops, organised in partnership with **Faith for the Climate** which will be recorded for those not attending in London, and a more in-depth Q&A with the visitors from Guatemala.

The London event will be streaming online as well, so anyone who can't make it to London or one of the watch parties, can join from their home or office.

To register, visit [www.christian-aid.org.uk](http://www.christian-aid.org.uk) and go to Events - and if your church or Christian Aid group would like to host a watch party, please email [hello@christian-aid.org](mailto:hello@christian-aid.org).

## Love on the cards

We took down the Christmas tree at church yesterday - after the main service but before a baptismal congregation arrived. We left the crib scene in place, where it will remain for another couple of weeks. At home, the tree still seems in reasonable condition and will be taken down on Saturday (probably) - long after the traditional Twelfth Night but somewhat short of Candlemas. Our cards will remain on their strings in the wall until we receive cards to replace them and it's quite likely there'll still be something Christmassy remaining by the time the first family birthday comes around in July.

We weren't ever a Christmas card sending family but Anwen likes to give one to every member of her class and as many friends in the rest of her year group and beyond. This year she designed her own - providing artwork, choos-

### LIKE A METAPHOR

Tim Hardy, formerly of the Religious Resources Centre, works from the home he shares with Ros, Anwen and Twinkle.



ing fonts and composing the message inside, whilst I handled most of the computer operation. It was good fun putting it together and, in the end, we had a design we were pleased with.

It seemed a waste to restrict it to just her school friends so, together, we drew up a list of recipients, printed more cards, wrote out envelopes and purchased stamps and, for the first time ever, sent a family's worth of Christmas cards.

The cards were sent to people we're currently in touch with and with whom we've communicated through the year. They didn't really communicate any new information - but did reaffirm our love for the recipients in a more concrete and durable way than a fleeting social media message or a phone call, and our hope was that our friends and family would be reminded of this every time they saw their card.

John's gospel tells us that the Word who was God came and lived among us, because of God's love for us - a much more tangible presence than previously. That loving presence demanded a response then, as it does today - and we have to choose what ours will be - will we leave it forgotten in our school bags or display it in our lives for all to see?