

The community of All Saints': living, thoughtful, caring faith

In Touch

December 2019/January 2020

God with us



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Deadline for submission of articles and/or photographs for the February/March issue is Sunday 12 January 2020. Everyone is welcome to submit articles of around 300–500 words. Articles can be emailed to: allsaintsintouch@outlook.com or given to one of the editorial team.

DISCLAIMER: the opinions expressed in this publication are those of the individual contributors and not necessarily those of the Church of England or All Saints' Church.

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Prayer corner

God, fully human, yet fully divine,
you know what it is like
to have no real home—
born into a stable,
no vacancies in the places of hospitality,
forced to flee as a refugee
with life-threatening attempts on your life.

In the seasons of Advent and Christmas
your frailty is remembered,
your vulnerability acknowledged,
your purpose for the world revered.

Come again, to give protection and shelter.
Come again, to strengthen the weak
and to subdue the proud.
Come to our own vulnerability
and enable all to offer
hope to a world in need.

Part of a prayer by Janice Clark, who is a Methodist local preacher.

**If you have a prayer you would like to share with *In Touch* readers,
please email it to: allsaintsintouch@outlook.com**

Cover photograph

Our cover photo shows a winter view southward from All Saints' tower,
over the Town Moor, Exhibition Park, the Civic Centre, and Gateshead,
taken by the Rev. Capt. Steve Dixon.

From the Vicar

Andrew Shipton

God coming to “life as it is”



I write this article before the General Election, the outcome of which is unpredictable. Many commentators today say we are in difficult times, in a period of uncertainty with an absence of consensus and yet this experience is nothing new. For centuries people have lived with worry and insecurity, but it is surely right to recognise particular anxieties and fears about the future as we approach Christmas and come to the end of 2019.

I am conscious that we will vote to decide our political future and celebrate Christmas at the darkest time of the year when the days are short and the nights long. Out of this darkness we trust that a way forward will be found. We do well also to remember that it was into such an unpredictable world that Jesus came. He was born in poverty, in a stable, in the dark, open to the cold, and first-century Palestine was not that different a world to ours, probably even less predictable and certain, with more fear and division. As he grew up, Jesus experienced all the ups and downs of being human; and even in those early months of his life he faced the best and the worst of human behaviour. His first visitors were not friends and family or people that Mary and Joseph knew; they were strangers, and what a mix! He was welcomed by shepherds who may have been the out-and-out rogues of their day, but also by angels, whose hearts must have been open and generous. He could easily have been killed as a baby by the authorities.

Our society is a real mix too. It is full of generosity and compassion, although this is not often seen. Constantly people respond to need, with quiet dedication and goodness. But there is also that tendency, especially in times of fear and insecurity, for people to be defensive and aggressive. We hear distressing stories daily on the news that can play on our minds.

The birth of Jesus is a recorded fact, marked in time, as we read in the Bible. The life he holds out for us is not a theory or a philosophy or an ideal. His living and dying, his teaching and promises do not make things easy, but they give meaning to our lives and are a reference point in the midst of change. Perhaps we are now more open and honest about our difficulties than in any time in the past. I note that the Archbishop of

Canterbury, speaking in one of BBC Radio 4's Thought for the Day slots, has revealed he is taking medication for depression, and has urged others who are “walking in darkness” to reach out for help. There is no magic solution to many of our troubles, but there is an encouragement in the Christian faith to see life “as it is”, in all its complexity, and not despair but indeed hope.

The message of Christmas is that God loves the world with boundless generosity. Jesus was born to express the love of a God who longs for all people to know his care and compassion. As we rejoice in his birth, the coming of the light, we can be assured that whoever we are, whatever our hopes, concerns, fears, expectations or pressures in life, God is with us.

Wishing you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Andrew



Christmas Card Competition 2019

Thank you to all who took part in our Christmas Card Competition. Congratulations to Daisy Bruce our winner.

The Curate writes

Beverley Davies



I write this after taking delivery of an order of flyers and an all-weather banner for the Christmas Eve service at St. Hugh's. Planning an event which has never happened before is a little nerve-wracking. It takes plenty of patience, planning, commitment, and of course, prayer. All I can do now is pray and wait for Christmas Eve and a successful nativity!

This period of waiting for things to now just unfold and happen and leaving it in the trust of God is something that is becoming increasingly difficult to do in our modern world. In a world where quick fixes and instant answers are the norm, how do we anticipate and realise the involvement of God in our lives? What do we miss when we focus on the goal rather than allow ourselves to hold back and be part of a journey that could take us on unexpected stop-off points along the way: the people we meet, the experiences they share, and, of course, sharing in their expectations and anticipations of God?

Listening and looking for the signposts from God is an important part of our relationship with him. Sometimes when we are on a journey we might know a short cut that will get us to our destination quicker, but we will all too often miss beautiful scenery, a group of enthusiastically welcoming walkers, amazing wildlife, or a simple rainbow in the sky to remind us God's presence is with us at every stage of our lives.

In these times of uncertainty (by the time this goes to press who knows what the outcome of the general election will be, and of course the ongoing question of Brexit?), we can only place our trust in God, who came to live on earth and journeyed alongside us, going out of his way to walk the difficult long hard paths to reach those in need of him.

Rejoice, be still, rest yourself in the eternal presence of our Immanuel.

Beverley

From the Ministerial Assistant
Isaac Wilkinson



So two months into my time with All Saints', and I'd firstly love to pass on my warmest thank-you to everyone for making me feel so welcome! It's been such a delight to get stuck in and get involved with parish life like this.

However, I must admit, some of the work I've been set to do does feel wonderfully bizarre. The community mapping project (*see p. 22*) I've been undertaking both here at All Saints' and at St Hugh's has me sleuthing about, investigating the local areas. I'm nosey, I pry, sometimes I ask awkward questions, and I've been putting together some documents and information that hopefully will go towards helping both churches become more engaged with their local areas. But it does feel delightfully strange sometimes. Getting to know an area in such a high level of detail is a peculiar privilege, and I think has had me looking at things in new and interesting ways. I look at parts of the community, its buildings, people, shops, facilities, and ask more questions. I internally ask why and how a lot more, and things and places seem to get wrapped up in the processes I'm beginning to learn that happen around them.

This strange feeling is also probably partly because the ways in which I sleuth about might have on occasion bordered on the "unconventional". Café owners might be asking "Who is this strange young man and why is he staring at our noticeboard and writing down what's on it?" The local councillors' ward meeting might have people asking "Why is the same young man introducing himself (rather forcefully) to everyone and anyone?" And I think similarly the people of St Hugh's must be sick and tired of me trying to ask them questions about themselves with the survey Beverley put together. I feel I'm treading on perhaps a few social norms, but hopefully more in a Sherlock Holmes-sleuth fashion of merely unconventional, rather than a Pink Panther or Jonny English type-sleuth, stumbling about causing chaos wherever I go.

But the product of this research has me extremely hopeful. I look forward to sharing what (I think) I've found out about our local areas, and I think there are a lot of ways in which All Saints' in particular is well equipped to engage with its area even further, which may hopefully lead us into more growth and connectivity.

Isaac

A Special Welcome

This is the wording of the welcoming message seen recently just outside Coventry Cathedral. It would be hard to think of a better welcoming message to draw you into a church. Well done, Coventry!

WELCOME TO COVENTRY CATHEDRAL

We extend a special welcome to those who are single, married, divorced, widowed, straight, gay, questioning, well-heeled or down at heel. We especially welcome wailing babies and excited toddlers.

You're welcome here if you are just browsing, just woken up or just out of prison. We don't care if you are more Christian than the Archbishop of Canterbury or haven't been to Church since Christmas ten years ago.

We extend a special welcome to those who are over 60 but not grown up yet, and to teenagers who are growing up too fast. We welcome keep-fit mums, football dads, starving artists, tree huggers, latte-sippers, vegetarians, junk food eaters. We welcome those who are in recovery or still addicted. We welcome you if you are having problems, are down in the dumps or don't like organised religion. (We're not that keen on it either!)

We offer a welcome to those who think the earth is flat, work too hard, don't work, can't spell, or are here because granny is visiting and wanted to look round.

We welcome those who are inked, pierced or neither. We offer a special welcome to those who could use a prayer right now, had religion shoved down their throats as kids, or got lost on the ring road and ended up here by mistake.

We welcome pilgrims, tourists, seekers, doubters... and especially you...

PLEASE COME IN!

We thought that we ticked quite a few of those boxes (which ones, we leave up to you to decide!) and so we went in for a wonderful visit to a wonderful building.

Nick and Sue Glover

Ten Commandments for Safeguarding Creation

This is the second in a short series of commandments as contained in the Assisi Paper, produced by the International Ecumenical Fellowship. The fourth commandment, being by far the longest, was published in the August/September issue of **In Touch**, and the rest follow here.

According to the book of Genesis, humankind, "the king of creation", cannot appropriate the creation for their own use, not be its predator, but rather its protector.

- 1 **Take responsibility for your movements.** Do not automatically take the car. Share transport, take the bus or bike, or walk. Are there alternatives to flying if you have to travel a long distance?
- 2 **Use water sparingly and well.** Reduce water consumption by not leaving taps running; reduce the number and/or lengths of showers; use ecological washing products in small amounts to avoid pollution in rivers and streams; use a "Guppy Friend" wash bag for synthetic fibres like fleeces, to catch microfibres.
- 3 **Limit your use of paper.** Print out emails only if you must. Use both sides of a sheet of paper; refuse junk mail.
- 4 **8 Rs for reducing the use of plastics** (see **In Touch** August/September 2019, page 19).
- 5 **Take responsibility for food purchases and consumption.** Choose local and seasonal produce from farmers or associations; opt for organic; control quantities to avoid waste; limit and balance consumption of meat, fish and vegetables.
- 6 **Limit and sort waste.** Recycle as much as possible in the various bins provided: glass, paper, plastic and compost.
- 7 **Combat household pesticides and the greenhouse effect.** Avoid spray cans, use natural products such as distilled vinegar (e.g. a recent recipe for weed killer in *La Croix*: to 7.5 litres of water add 1.5 kg coarse sea salt and 3 litres of vinegar).
- 8 **Save energy (and money).** Reduce the central heating by 1 degree. Turn off electrical appliances, don't leave them on standby. Switch off lights when you leave the room.
- 9 **Recycle electrical appliances:** mobile phones, tablets etc.

10 **Respect the animal kingdom in all its diversity.** Look after insects; sign petitions against the abuse of animals.

Lesley Atkinson

Most of the above are well rehearsed ideas, worthy of repetition, but are not the last word. You will also have many other ideas. Please do share them with us.

Messy Church

About 18 children accompanied by adults had a fun afternoon at a Messy Church held in the church during October half-term week.

There were six activities, run by a team including 10+ group member Patrick Hurrell and our Ministerial Assistant, Isaac Wilkinson. The theme was “Creation”. Here are some of the strange creations from one of the groups.



Sew, Knit and Natter

see opposite



Who has time to knit when boxes are to be sorted? Gail with her handiwork.

Pictures: Margaret Patterson



The Sew, Knit and Natter group have been busy recently knitting jumpers and hats for babies in Africa. These are destined for Murambinda Hospital in Zimbabwe, which has been one of All Saints' Missions of the Month for many years.

Meanwhile, in the Upper Room, the Knit and Natter storage cupboard was turning chaotic and offered displacement activity to Gail Adcock, who writes:

I spend most of my time at Sew, Knit and Natter doing anything but knitting! At a push I'll manage a few lines of the twiddle muff I've been knitting for the last year for people with dementia.

Ann Shaw and I decided to catalogue all the knitting patterns, and I had a lovely time making labels and filing them. I (and everyone else) can now lay their hands on just about everything that can be knitted, from tea cosies to prayer shawls to toys.

As for the wool, it's now easy to find just about every colour under the sun!

Perhaps I'll have to start knitting again, as I've finished sorting everything that could be sorted!

Congratulations to Gail and her helpers—and we hope that everyone will work hard to keep the cupboard tidy!

Date for your Diaries: Safeguarding

Please note that a Safeguarding training session will take place in the Church Centre on 11th February from 5.30 to 7.00pm.

Anyone who volunteers at All Saints' will be legally required to attend training by September 2020. In addition we would encourage all members of the congregation to attend. The training is intended to ensure that those coming into contact with vulnerable people (who can be of any age and may after all be sitting next to you in Church!) are equipped to deal with them safely.

Please indicate your interest by giving your name to Louise in the Church office. Please keep the date free, and more details will follow in due course.

**Kath Davies,
Safeguarding Officer**

Missions of the Month

Each month any plate donations from our services are given to a nominated charity agreed by the PCC, unless otherwise stated.

Gift Aid envelopes, when received from the organisations we support, are placed in the pews for those who feel able to increase their donations in this way. If there are no envelopes in your pew, please use a yellow All Saints' envelope by crossing out "All Saints'" and writing the name of the relevant Mission of the Month in its place.

The following will be supported in December and over Christmas:

December 2019: West End Refugee Service (WERS), a local project which provides support to asylum seekers in the west end of Newcastle by way of clothing, bedding and food parcels, working out of St Philip's Vicarage, Arthur's Hill.

Christingle Service: All open plate giving goes to **The Children's Society**.

Carol Services on Christmas Eve: All open plate giving will be divided between **All Saints' Church; Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC)**; and **Destiny Streetworx**. Destiny Streetworx is a new charity for us, and works practically: taking food and clothing to "Street Friends" in central Newcastle; socially: talking and interacting personally; and spiritually: as and when a person asks.

Christmas Day Services: All open plate giving will go to **Caritas Baby's Hospital, Bethlehem**.

January 2020: The Cedarwood Trust, in Meadow Well Estate, North Shields, which we have supported for many years. Its work includes one-to-one support; prison support; accompanying/supporting people with hospital visits/court appearances; school problems; debt-related/housing problems. A drop-in (4 mornings a week) offers refreshments and conversation.

Donations sent out since the last **In Touch**:

<i>August:</i>	Practical Compassion for Destitute Children	£1694.46
<i>September:</i>	Northumbria Deaf Church	£832.95

Please don't forget to look at The Mission of the Month display board each month to find out more about the Missions we are supporting, and please take away any literature supplied—the board is situated at the back of the Church.

At the PCC meeting of 19th November it was agreed that the following organisations will be supported monthly and at Single Services in 2020. Our selection tries to include both local and international organisations.

February: **NIDAS** (Newcastle Integrated Domestic Abuse Service) , run by Changing Lives, providing specialist support and accommodation services for women, including those escaping domestic violence, involved in sex work, or at risk of sexual exploitation.

March: **Friends of Murambinda Hospital, Zimbabwe**, an international project with UK-based support, working in a country with much poverty. This is our 14th year of support, and the yearly update from Dr Carolyn Rigby is always well received.

April: **CMS**. We continue to support our chosen partners Tony and Katherine Paton's work in South-East Asia.

May: **uS**, a North-East charity founded by a former member of our choir, Dr Mary-Jane Tacchi, to provide support and opportunities for young people with, or at risk of developing mental illness, to help them identify and achieve personal goals. An article about uS has appeared in the *Guardian*, with a photo of a young man who was linked into the charity by a member of All Saints' congregation.

June: **Cornerstone, Benwell**, another worthwhile local project which continues to "include the excluded, empower the disempowered and encourage the discouraged", but will suffer from lack of local grants.

July: **Mission to Seafarers**, which gives huge support to all seafarers around the world, especially those stranded in a strange country, and victims of piracy..

August: **PCDC** (Practical Compassion for Destitute Children), an international charity with UK-based support for children in the Bible lands who have lost their parents or whose parents are unable to get work, to provide for example, school and hospital fees.

September: **Northumbria Deaf Church**, based at St Andrew's Church, Newgate Street, supporting services for deaf people in Northumbria and Durham by providing Lay Pastoral Assistants fluent in sign language.

October: **Walking With**, based in Wallsend, supporting asylum seekers and refugees in North Tyneside providing practical and moral support services to individuals and families, information and guidance

continued overleaf

sessions, English Language classes, social activities where people can feel safe and understood. Most of all it helps them to be accepted and feel valued. They also provide food parcels, clothing and household goods to help ease poverty and deprivation.

November: **ShelterBox**, an international disaster relief charity offering emergency shelter and other essential items to disaster-hit families around the world, to support them in rebuilding their lives.

December: **West End Refugee Service (WERS)**, supporting asylum seekers in the west end of Newcastle by way of clothing, bedding and food parcels, working out of St Philip's Vicarage, Arthur's Hill.

2020 (Single service open plate giving)

Good Friday: **Amnesty International**

Easter Day: **Tyneside Welcome**, a local charity run by a small group of volunteers on Tyneside with no single political or faith-based affiliation. Their aim is to take on the responsibility for resettling Syrian refugee families on Tyneside through a Government approved Community Sponsorship scheme.

Harvest: Gifts and open plate to **Walking With** in Wallsend.

Christingle: **The Children's Society**.

Carol Services: Open to respond to needs of two organisations and All Saints' Church.

Christmas Day: Open to respond to needs.

We also propose to continue supporting The People's Kitchen goods appeal through the year (boxes situated in the Baptistry and South Porch).

Chris Matthews, Mission Secretary

During November a group of us have been discussing '**A Future That's Bigger Than the Past**' by Sam Wells. We have been reading Wells reimagine how the church can live its vocation of receiving God's abundance and sharing it far and wide. He recognises the surprising, exuberant and plentiful things that the Holy Spirit is doing in the world and calls the church to celebrate creation, enjoy culture and share in its flourishing. He longs for a church which strives to include all kinds of people, which is working for change, generating all kinds of experience and stories every day. It has been an inspiring read. More details from **Andrew Shipton**.

Culture Kitchen

On Saturday 16th November we had another visit from Culture Kitchen. A team of asylum seekers and refugees cooked and served food from their own national cuisines for about 60 of us: delicious Middle Eastern and Asian dishes. There is no charge; diners contribute what they choose to.

It was a relaxed and highly sociable event, with people from All Saints, friends and neighbours, people from other churches, and contacts of the catering team all attending to share time and food together. The servers, led by Nick Sinclair, gave their origins as Pakistan, Iran, Palestine and Syria. One young professional had just received permission to settle this week, after nearly 10 years here when she had been unable to work.

These events bring people together with a common purpose, and the money they raise pays for the food for the next booking. We were pleased and envious to hear they will be heading to Holy Saviour, Tynemouth—our former curate Steve Dixon's parish—in February 2020. The project, financed by Newcastle City Council, aims to promote integration, well-being and cultural understanding in our communities, and I reflected on the success of this intention. A visitor remarked that her church “never ever does anything like this—and they should!”

We look forward to our next encounter! People in the team told me they love coming to our Centre!

Rosamund Place



Pictures: Rosamund Place

A Fascinating Journey

Two intrepid travellers have recently returned from a fascinating journey through Georgia and Armenia, both formerly part of the Soviet Union, and in the past occupied by other nations, but now independent countries.

We covered great distances from the border with Russia in the north of Georgia to the border with Turkey in the south of Armenia, where we had a view of Mount Ararat—the alleged resting place of Noah's Ark. In both countries many of the rural areas seemed to be relatively traditional in practice, and poor, but the capital cities of Tbilisi and Yerevan are modern, vibrant and developing.

Both Georgia and Armenia are very proud of their Orthodox Christian inheritance; Armenia is the oldest Christian country in Europe, having been converted by Gregory the Illuminator in 301 AD. We visited many churches and monastery complexes, with their rich inheritance of frescoes and icons, and also many legends of miraculous events in the past. We thought we had mastered the conventions of dress to visit churches, i.e. head covering and trousers, but were surprised to find that at one church we were required to wear a dress and had to use the plastic skirts



Haghpap Monastery, Armenia



Mount Ararat

provided! The church in Georgia is fairly wealthy, being supported financially by the state, and also, in one place we visited, by the local wine manufacturer. We visited many wineries and sampled their produce—moderately, of course!

Our guides in both countries were dynamic and highly informed young women who told us a great deal about their country's past; remote and more recent. We paid a sobering visit in Yerevan to the memorial for the Armenian genocide, an atrocity now recognised by many other countries.

This is a trip we will long remember, which has hopefully left us rather better informed about these two countries.



Dressed for church



Fountains in Yerevan

Photos by Ruth Birnie

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Moira Flanagan ALCM Music tuition



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All Saints' Amnesty

Our Amnesty group writes monthly letters on behalf of prisoners of conscience who are imprisoned for their beliefs or for the peaceful expression of their beliefs.

In July, our letters were written in support of Tran Thi Nga, a human rights defender in Vietnam who is known for her peaceful activism and advocacy on land and labour rights and environmental issues. She was arrested in January 2017, accused of “conducting propaganda against the state” for her writings. In July 2017 the court of Ha Nam province convicted her and sentenced her to nine years in prison and five years’ house arrest. She is being held in solitary confinement, is always accompanied by a prison guard when she leaves her cell, and is forbidden to talk to anyone in prison.

Our first letter after the summer break was to the Iranian authorities concerning Monireh Arabshahi, Yasaman Aryani and Mojgan Keshavarz. These women were imprisoned in April for peacefully protesting against forced veiling laws—Monireh and Yasaman for 16 years and Mojgan for 23 years. They were arrested on International Women’s Day, when a video of them without their head squares was shown on social media. Their prosecution is part of a crackdown on women’s rights defenders there.

Our October letter was on behalf of Firew Bekele, a university lecturer in Ethiopia, who was arrested in August under that country’s draconian Anti-Terrorism Proclamation (ATP). For the last decade, the ATP has been consistently used to suppress any form of dissent. Firew is accused of writing a book that criticises Ethiopia’s new Prime Minister, Abiy Ahmed, which is a charge that he consistently denies.

We will be remembering these people at our Vigil.

Tony Champion

PCC Digest

At its meeting on 19th November the PCC:

Received an update from Andrew Cole on **Citizens UK**. The local organisation now has over 20 members, including All Saints’, and has made progress in three priority areas addressing mental health, poverty and hate crime. A ‘listening campaign’ will be launched in December to determine future priorities and Andrew will be approaching congregation members for assistance.

Received a presentation from Isaac Wilkinson who has been carrying out a **Community Mapping** of the Parish (*see p. 8*) This has helped identify hubs where people congregate, strengths, weaknesses and gaps. It will lead into consideration of ways in which All Saints’ might better use its assets for the wider West Gosforth community.

Agreed to appoint John Lewis as **Director of Music**.

Confirmed Marian Coulson Cave as a **Foundation Governor of Archbishop Runcie School**, joining Craig Dallison.

Adopted government guidelines for **Church fees** in 2020.

Agreed proposals to address problems with the sound system and improve amplification in the central nave.

Considered proposals for a **Handlebards Shakespeare** performance on the Church Green in August 2020.

Noted three performances by the **Herschel Trio** to take place in Church during 2020.

Agreed proposals for **Missions of the Month** in 2020.

Noted a potential increase of 2% in the **Parish Share** for 2020.

Agreed a revised **Health and Safety Policy**.

Noted thanks from **Lindisfame College of Theology** for opening the Church for their worship.

Agreed proposals to repair the **Rood Screen** where it has become fragile with pieces broken off.

Christine Willoughby, PCC Member

Full minutes of each PCC meeting are displayed at the back of the church following their acceptance at the next meeting of the PCC.

School News: Archbishop Runcie First School



School Monitoring Visit

Our Governors have asked Mrs Alison Stephenson (Ofsted Inspector, June 2019) to work with our school, this academic year, to help continue the rapid progress that our school made last year.

We were delighted to receive her very positive report this week. Among many other things, she commented that:

- All pupils are provided with a broad and balanced curriculum which is closely linked to first-hand learning experiences to ensure all pupils are given high quality, rich and memorable learning.
- The EYFS (Early Years Foundation Stage) environment has greatly improved and will support pupils' rapid progress.
- The school was very calm and settled.
- Pupils were keen to share their work and were able to talk confidently about skills they were acquiring.
- Pupils support each other well and are keen to celebrate each others' achievements.
- The school is very tidy with well organised resources.

It would also be timely to share with you the highlights of the statutory data from July 2019. Headlines are:

- The percentage of children attaining a good level of development was **above the national average**.
- An **above-average** proportion attained the standard in the Year 1 phonics screen.
- Proportions reaching the expected standard and higher standards at the end of Year 2 were **above average**.

In September we had a visit from Paul Rickeard, Director of Education for Newcastle & Durham Diocese. On his visit he asked the children what made Archbishop Runcie First School such a special place. There were several excellent answers from the children. These included:

continued overleaf

- Everyone is kind and welcoming.
- We are an inclusive school.
- We do lots of fun activities.
- The staff love us and work hard.
- One pupil in Year 4 told him: "Everyone in our school is unique and special," which he said was amongst the top three answers that he had ever received in over 100 schools where he'd asked the question. Well done!

In addition, an Early Years Advisor from the Local Authority visited, and praised the "significant improvements made to the learning environment". They commented on how "engaged, focussed and challenged" the children were.

The Local Authority have now asked if they can use our EYFS as a venue for meetings in order to show staff from other schools our fabulous classrooms and learning environment. Well done to all our hardworking staff and children!

Kate Massey, Headteacher

Being a Foundation Governor

Having joined fatherhood a little late in life at 37, I had never paid the education system much attention after I had graduated myself. But in September 2017 my daughter started at Archbishop Runcie First School (ARFS).

I decided that I wanted to play a role in the school and try to understand the challenges that the education system faces, whilst also developing myself personally and hopefully re-using some of the strategic and communication skills I have acquired on my journey to become a Director of Marketing.

Following a fortuitously timed conversation with the Rev Canon Andrew Shipton, I learned that the Church had an open position for a foundation governor within the school and I joined the governing board and attended my first meeting in the September of 2017. Fast forward to now, and to say it's been a rollercoaster of a ride over the last two years would be an understatement.

Just before my daughter joined, the school had undergone an Ofsted inspection and moved from an "outstanding school" to one that "requires improvement". Understandably, this resulted in a time of deep reflection for both the governing board and the school, but also a revived culture of drive and focus to improve. Since day one of my tenure on the governing board the whole team has worked tirelessly on implementing im-



provements and making the changes that the school needed. This was finally rewarded by the Ofsted inspection earlier this year which resulted in a rating of “Good”, with some very positive and encouraging comments for staff and governors alike.

During my relatively short tenure we have also had a change of head teacher and a consultation exercise to consider joining a Multi Academy Trust. Both experiences offered their own challenges, but I feel that as a school we emerged with improved stakeholder links, positive ideas for change, and ultimately a stronger school.

At our last governing board meeting I was elected as the Co-vice chair (working alongside Dr Sarah Pickett as the other Co-vice chair, who is a Foundation Governor for St Nicholas’).

I will continue to sit on the Staffing and Finance Committee, Ethos Committee and Strategy group. Each committee brings its own unique challenges, but I gain great personal reward from committing my time to help develop the school and ultimately achieve a better education for all the pupils who attend now and in the future.

Craig Dallison

Marian Coulson-Cave was nominated to serve as a Foundation Governor of Archbishop Runcie Church of England First School at the PCC meeting in November.

Marion writes: I spent over 20 years teaching in secondary schools in Newcastle, not only as a geography teacher, but also as Head of Year and Head of Sixth form. The pastoral side is very important to me, and I recognise the need of confidentiality when dealing with students, staff and parents. I can empathise with staff on the roles and challenges facing them, but also sympathise with parents, who like us all, want the very best for their children. We are, as I see it, all part of the same team with one aim, to work together for the benefit of those children.

I relish the opportunity to be proactive and offer support to staff and children wherever possible. The fact that Archbishop Runcie School has close connections with All Saints’ and St Nicholas, is important to me as a communicant of All Saints’. I have grandchildren in the south; all have attended or are attending schools with strong religious connections, both Church of England and Roman Catholic.

I look forward to my new role, and recognise that there will be a huge learning curve for me, but I am ready for the challenge.

Tales from the Tower

With Tower Captain Paul Cross



We were sorry to say farewell to Alastair Hurrell and Alex Donaldson as they leave to pursue their studies and to travel abroad. Both joined the tower through the Sea Scouts, and used their bell ringing to complete the Duke of Edinburgh Award, Skill Section. Over the years they have been a great asset to bell ringing generally and our tower in particular. We wish them well wherever the future takes them, and hope they will pop in when they are back here.

The Explorer Scouts paid a visit to the tower to see how the bells are hung and rung, and one of their group is now learning to ring. He joins three other Scouts/Explorers who are already part of our band and who ring with us regularly for Sunday services.

Remembrance was again marked by ringing the bells half-muffled for both Sunday services and during the Monday practice held on 11th November. The sound produced has a particularly poignant tone.

This year All Saints’ hosted the Annual General Meeting of the Northern District of the Durham and Newcastle Diocesan Association of Church Bell Ringers (we call it “the D&N” for short), by kind permission of our vicar. It followed the normal format of ringing, worship service, and tea, followed by the AGM and evening ringing. All the visitors were very complimentary about our arrangements at All Saints’. Our special thanks must go to Yvonne Cairns and Ann Cross for the organisation of



Alex (centre) and Alastair (right), with former ringer Tom Smith (left)

this. We were also very proud of our newly-decorated ringing chamber and recently refurbished bells!

Finally, we entered a team—the Belfry Bats—in the church quiz (*see below*), but failed to achieve a podium finish. Like many teams, we had most of the correct answers offered up, but failed to select them. Great fun though!

Vic Spong



A busy Afternoon Tea Club from earlier in the year.

Quiz Night

The All Saints' Quiz Night on Saturday 9th November was a great success, with more teams participating than in last year's event.

Fred Carr was the quizmaster, and he fulfilled his role with charm and humour. There was much debate and a lot of laughter as teams discussed the answers and made wild guesses at those they did not know.

Many thanks are due to the catering team who provided tasty food half-way through the evening.

Just to keep the teams on their toes, two picture rounds were held during the break, one of *Radio Times* personalities, the other of favourite sweets.

Another three rounds followed, after which the winners were announced—Karoline Wellborne's team, “The Scottish Mafia”.

Everyone went home with a smile, having had a good, fun evening and having learned something new as well as kicking themselves for answers they should have known!

The question on many lips was “When's the next Quiz Night?”

Enid Mitchell



From the Youth Worker Andrew Mason

Greetings Brothers and Sisters of All Saints' Church,

It is with sadness that I have to say goodbye to the people of this great church. I have felt God calling me away to pastures new and, like receiving a phone call at one in the morning, it's best to answer the call.

I have had a great couple of years here. You are blessed with some truly special children, youth and families, not to mention some of your great church members with whom I have had the pleasure to serve with.

The local schools have been a delight to be involved with, and I have fond memories of you all.

I owe a great thanks to many people, and so I take great joy in mentioning a few particular people who I feel the need to praise. Firstly, to Lesley Atkinson, who continues to lead Young Saints and Little Saints. Never have I ever heard Lesley grumble or complain, but rather she encourages those around her and sets a true example of humility in service. Thanks Lesley!

To Dee Matthews, who coordinates the Christmas Fair and Schools' Week. When the events arise, she does the hard work behind the scenes, keen to let others receive the praise, happy just to serve others without getting the praise she deserves. Thanks Dee!

To Diana Lavin, who is single-handedly bringing songs of faith to the children of Gosforth; I've always been impressed how much you do. Between choirs, and visiting the uniformed organisations, I'm amazed you ever find time to rest. Your singing has always brought joy to me and the children. Thanks Diana!

To the team at Open the Book, who go into schools every single week to act out Bible stories. They are happy to put on fun costumes, and sometimes do some truly bizarre things, in order to introduce the children to the God they love. Thanks team!

To the families who continue to regularly attend Young Saints and Café Church; it has been a delight to witness your faith and journey along the path with you. The children often teach me things and I admire the faith of those parents who bring Christ into their every day world. Thanks families!

To the children and youth in the kids club and youth club; never will I forget our games of hide and seek in the church or the many other bizarre

and fun games we have played. I won't forget our journeys into Narnia or the Bible. Thanks guys!

And now to the rest of you; thanks! It's been an honour to serve with you all and I hope you will all continue to live the humble faith of those around you. There may often be no thanks or great parade for the hard work you do, but keep your eyes focused on the finish line, where Christ shall we waiting with open arms. Thanks for all the fellowship and I hope you may have a fruitful ministry going forward.

Andrew Mason

Peter Pan Treats All Saints'



Photo: Andrew Shipton

Our friends from the Peter Pan Society made special 'poppy' biscuits for us for Remembrance Sunday. These were much appreciated by young and old at coffee after the Parish Communion service on 10th November.

Obituary

Helen Watkinson

Helen was a Geordie, born in 1954 at Newcastle General Hospital, and lived for the first two years in Jesmond. After her next sister arrived, the family moved to Whickham, where the acre of garden and woodlands across the road was just the place to nurture and develop an already independent spirit. She and her three sisters quickly discovered other children living nearby with whom to share adventures and to form lifelong friendships. For Helen, attending Dunston Primary School and



Helen on the River Branta between Venice and Padua.

Photo: Tim Watkinson.

Blaydon Grammar School were not just about gaining an education but also making new friends with whom to do exciting things, like educational cruises around the Mediterranean. She took A levels in English and Art, and aspired to train as a jeweller, but opted for nurse training at the RVI. This she pursued with gusto and, true to form, made more lifelong friends. After qualifying, she moved to Oswestry to a specialist training post in orthopaedic nursing, where, needless to say, she also made more friends. She bought a Mini, learned to drive, and passed her driving test just a week before moving to Leeds as an orthopaedic Staff Nurse at St James's University Hospital.

Helen thrived in Leeds, and at the age of just 24 was appointed as Ward Sister. She commanded the respect of the medical staff, the loyalty of her nursing staff and the gratitude of the many patients she nursed. She designed a rehabilitation package for a comatose multiple-injured young lady who, after months of intensive work, was able to get down the aisle in her wheelchair to marry her fiancé—and she still sends Helen Christmas cards. Helen made more friends in Leeds—including a young hospital administrator who found many excuses to visit her ward. Helen and Tim started going out 40 years ago, and quickly fell in love and enjoyed a carefree time. Their relationship was strong enough when Tim got a promotion to the Wirral and they could only see each other at weekends. Helen continued to develop her career and got a promotion to Senior Sister. After nearly three years apart, Helen got a Sister's post in A&E in Chester, and they married in Whickham in April 1983. A month later they were on the move again to Wilmslow after getting new jobs at hospitals in Manchester. Their eight years in Wilmslow were very happy and fulfilling: an active social life based on Round Table and Ladies' Circle, stimulating careers, and the joyous arrival of Frances and Alan. Helen also found time to develop her flair for modernising and making structural changes to their homes.

Another job move meant relocating the family to Newcastle in 1991, but with the bonus of being much closer to Helen's parents and family. They purchased (and renovated) their house in Linden Road, in which they were to live for 25 years. Helen moved into clinical research, which provided a second flowering of her career. In the academic department Helen co-authored several scholarly articles and travelled to international conferences. As a non-graduate nurse Helen felt she should get an academic qualification—so amidst the hurly-burly of a full-time job and family life she made time to secure an Open University Health Sciences degree. The graduation party was one to remember.

Helen was a gregarious hostess, and always enjoyed her home being

continued overleaf

full of people and laughter. The Christmas parties got something of a reputation as “Gosforth's must-have ticket”. Aside from home-making, cooking and entertaining, she had other remarkable creative talents. She taught herself beadwork and went to art classes. She made curtains and soft furnishings. She excelled in needlework, but when arthritis made that more difficult, she switched to knitting and mastered the meticulous requirements of Fair Isle and Shetland knitting to produce clothing of great style and finesse. Many will treasure her gifts of jumpers, scarfs, socks, shawls, blankets, hats and baby clothes.

Helen was a devoted mother and an auntie—and with so many friends she was also godmother to a large number of children. She strove to create a special relationship with each one and keep abreast of what they were doing. Helen was a member of All Saints' for nearly 30 years and was variously involved in the creche, Young Saints, parish breakfast and making pantomime costumes. Helen focused on the core message of redemptive and healing love, and, even before she was ill, always said she felt closest to God in a hospital.

Helen's life changed in 2011 with the diagnosis of bone marrow cancer. She did not allow it, or the eight years of chemotherapy, to define her life, which still had to be lived to the best. The cancer was managed as a new—and not entirely welcome—companion on her journey. And it gave impetus for the bucket list—especially travel to New Zealand; navigating a motor boat around the Venetian lagoon; visiting Crete, Madeira and Lanzarote; attending the Marbella Film Festival; European city hopping; relaxing in her beloved Tuscany and Cornwall, as well as enjoying the hospitality of friends across the UK. It was during a trip to Austria that she was taken seriously ill and admitted to hospital. Frances and Alan were able to fly out to join Tim and Helen, and Helen died peacefully the following day, 8th October 2019, in the hospital in Vienna. She was cremated in Vienna on 17th October, and a thanksgiving service was held in All Saints' on 1st November.

Rev. Mike Hills and Tim Watkinson

From the registers

Send us your photographs to
allsaintsintouch@outlook.com

Baptisms

8th September **Darcie Bonnie Macrae**
13th October **Patrick Harris Stoddart**
10th November **Zara Nolan Lambert**

Thanksgiving Service

1st November **Helen Margaret Oates Watkinson**

Funeral

26th November **Sheila Mary Hilton**



All Saints' Weekly Services

Tuesday	10.15am	Holy Communion
Sunday	8.00am	Holy Communion
	9.30am	Parish Communion
	11.30am	Café Church (first Sunday of every month)
	6.30pm	Evening Service or Prayers for Healing. Evensong last Sunday of the month.

Dates for your Diary

December	
Sunday 1st	6.30pm Candlelit Advent Carol Service
Saturday 7th	10.30am — 12.30pm Christmas Fair
Sunday 15th	3.30pm Christingle Service
Monday 16th	2.00pm Carol Singing in the Shopping Centre
Tuesday 17th	3.00pm Carol Singing at the Afternoon Tea Club 6.15pm Parish Carol Singing
Christmas Eve	2.15pm Crib Service 4.00pm Carol Service 6.30pm Carol Service 11.30pm First Eucharist of Christmas
Christmas Day	8.00am Holy Communion 9.30am Parish Communion
January	
Tuesday 13th	7.30pm PCC Meeting in the Upper Room
February	
Tuesday 11th	5.30–7.00pm Safeguarding training (<i>see p. 13</i>)

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A winter view of Gosforth from the church tower, taken by Steve Dixon.

If you have a picture you would like to share with us, please email
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