



DECEMBER



Ring Out Wild Bells

Ring out, wild bells, to the wild sky
The flying cloud, the frosty light: the year is dying in the night;
Ring out, wild bells, and let him die.

Ring out the old, ring in the new,
Ring, happy bells, across the snow: the year is going, let him go;
Ring out the false, ring in the true.

Ring out the grief that saps the mind
For those that here we see no more; ring out the feud of rich and poor,
Ring in redress to all mankind.

Ring out a slowly dying cause,
And ancient forms of party strife; ring in the nobler modes of life,
With sweeter manners, purer laws.

Ring out false pride in place and blood,
The civic slander and the spite; ring in the love of truth and right,
Ring in the common love of good.

Ring out old shapes of foul disease;
Ring out the narrowing lust of gold; ring out the thousand wars of old,
Ring in the thousand years of peace.

Ring in the valiant man and free,
The larger heart, the kindlier hand; ring out the darkness of the land,
Ring in the Christ that is to be.

by A Lord Tennyson



~ Hospitality and Hope



Thank you once again for your kind donations. We delivered 2 huge bags of groceries, 20 selection boxes and £285 cash received from individual and coffee club donations.

We'll be doing one more drop before Christmas so any donations, especially chocolates/sweets for the children will be greatly appreciated.

~ Christmas Card 2024 and Whitburn's Church of England Academy



Here's introducing you to our Christmas card, painted by Celia. You'll find copies on the table as you come into church. Why not take an extra copy and pop it through your neighbour's letterbox!

Its a personal way of our church keeping the congregation and community abreast of its Christmas services throughout December. (The end of this newsletter highlights only the Christmas services.)



This leads nicely onto the message below from Nicola Rogers, Church of England Academy's Chaplain who explains:

"If you see our young people out and about the village wearing these high-vis jackets, please say hello to them. They will be delivering the church Christmas cards this year!"

We're delighted to be a part of the link-up with our schools and community in this way.

Lorraine Hood

~ Christine Alder's funeral

Christine's funeral will take place at 12.30pm on Tuesday 3 December in Whitburn Parish Church.

In accordance with her wishes, prior to the funeral, refreshments will be served in the Parish Church Hall from 10am till 12 noon. All are welcome.



Vernon Cuthbert writes...



I usually end up writing for this space at the deadline. Although there is a risk in this, and the editor would prefer to get it earlier, there is a benefit - I am able to reflect a more up to date situation.

This month I am having to write a little way ahead of the deadline as I will be away then for my eldest child's wedding. There are still a few days to go before I travel for the occasion, but there are other events in my diary to be attended to, including a visit to a family to prepare them for the Baptism of their child. I have also just returned from a visit to the hospice to give communion to a parishioner there for what will probably be the last time.

Joy and sorrow. The church is involved in both.

Sometimes there is more of one than the other. As I write, there is news breaking of the resignation of The Most Reverend and Right Honourable Justin Welby as Archbishop of Canterbury. There is sadness about the necessity of his resignation, yet it was difficult to see how he could continue once a report on Safeguarding was published that determined that he failed to act on knowledge of abuse and did not pass that information on to the police.

We need to acknowledge that there has been significant change in Safeguarding practice within the Church of England. In the 1970's and 1980's it was only informal at best. On my appointment to a post in Durham Diocese in 2008 I underwent a check through the fore-runner to DBS. Since then there has come compulsory training and mandatory action.

There is now a clear expectation to inform a relevant person of any and all disclosures of abuse to children and vulnerable adults, to record the disclosure and action taken. This is an expectation placed on everyone within the church. At a local level the relevant person is the Parish Safeguarding Officer, Deborah Wood, or myself if she cannot be contacted. If the abuse is ongoing then the Police are told.

The compulsory training is for all in roles, but anyone can complete the Basic Awareness course online at:

<https://safeguardingtraining.cofeportal.org/>

Other online modules in Safeguarding training are: Foundations, Safer Recruitment and People Management, Raising Awareness of Domestic Abuse.

Any other required training is done 'in person' with a trainer guiding the way through the material needing to be covered.

As a Church we must take recognition of the processes within Safer Recruitment and People Management, as an earlier inquiry into Church Safeguarding practice found there was an over-reliance on the DBS certification, which is only as good as the information provided. This Good Practice means we must recruit to roles through the use of Job Specifications, an Application Form, and taking up References. It does not matter whether the role to be performed is paid or voluntary. This has been the case since January 2022.

Section 5 of the Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure 2016. requires all authorised clergy, bishops, archdeacons, cathedral chapters, licensed readers and lay workers, churchwardens and parochial church councils to have “due regard” to safeguarding Guidance issued by the House of Bishops. A duty to have “due regard” to Guidance means that the person under the duty is not free to disregard it but is required to follow it unless there are cogent reasons for not doing so. ‘Cogent’ for this purpose means clear, logical and convincing.

Failure by a member of the clergy to have “due regard” to House of Bishops’ safeguarding Guidance is an act or omission which may constitute misconduct under the Clergy Discipline Measure 2003 (‘CDM’). Failure by a Reader or lay worker to have due regard to House of Bishops’ safeguarding Guidance would be grounds for the revocation of that Reader’s or lay worker’s licence by the Bishop, and failure by a churchwarden or parochial church council could result in an investigation being carried out by the Charity Commission and the churchwarden or PCC members being disqualified as charity trustees.

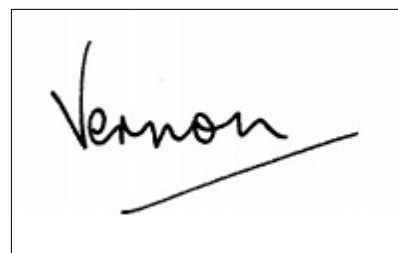
All this is needed as there must be confidence that the Church is a safe place to be. That it is safe from abuse, both physical and spiritual abuse, and it is safe for workers, whether volunteers or paid, from accusations of abuse.

This was not the message I wanted to write as I sat down, but felt it was important to acknowledge the unfolding events, even if these events may be old news by the time you get to read this.

I had hoped to concentrate on the joy of Christmas with the arrival of Jesus, Emmanuel - or ‘God with us’ - as a vulnerable baby. Yet even within the Christmas story there is the massacre by Herod of all Hebrew boys under the age of 2 once he heard of the failure of the Magi to return to him after their visitation in Bethlehem.

Emmanuel means that God understands the sorrows of the world when they are experienced. Joy is not jollity, but deeper and more fulfilling. It is based in the confidence we can have in the promises of God, promises rooted in the resurrection and ascension of Jesus. A rooting that could only take hold once the pain and anguish of the Cross had been experienced.

May you find Joy this Christmas.

A rectangular box containing a handwritten signature in black ink. The signature reads "Vernon" in a cursive style. Below the name is a single horizontal line that extends to the right.

PS Remember Christmas Day starts 12 days of feasting and follows on from Advent, which ends on Christmas Eve.

If you really want to push the boat out, then Christmas can be celebrated until the Feast of the Presentation of Christ at the Temple (also known as Candlemas) on 2nd February, some 40 days of celebration. It doesn't all have to be contained within the one day.

Tribute

Christine Alder

Many of you will already know that Christine died peacefully on November 16th in the loving care of St. Benedict's Hospice. Her family are so grateful to all those who in thought, word and deed, have supported them through this very difficult and emotional time.

She has left an unfillable gap in so many lives, but she is now at rest, free from pain and safe forever with the God whom she loved and served so faithfully throughout her life.

She will rest in peace and rise in glory.

Elizabeth McCarthy

NEWS FLASHES!

~ Churchyard Clear Up!

Thanks to Vernon, Janet, Lorraine, Joanne and Steve for their effort in clearing the autumn leaves prior to our service on 3rd of November and before the wedding service of Scott and Paige the same afternoon. Our thanks also to John, pictured below (standing worryingly close to a manhole!), who cleared away leaves and other debris that were blocking the church drains. Well done team!

BEFORE



and

AFTER!



~ Wedding on 3rd November



We announced in October that wedding banns were being read for Paige and Scott, members of our congregation, in anticipation of their wedding on 3rd November.

I'm delighted to publish these photos of the happy couple taken on the day!

Congratulations from us all Mr and Mrs Povey!



~ Urgent Reminder - Children's Society boxes



I'd hoped to receive the contents of all your boxes by mid-November but I've only had a small number returned so far.

As requested in the November newsletter, can those with a Children's Society box please empty it and send cheques to me and payable to Children's Society. If you'd like me to empty your box I'm still happy to do so if you'd like to bring it to church as soon as possible. Thank you.

Michael Vallance

DATES FOR YOUR DECEMBER & JANUARY DIARIES

WHITBURN COMMUNITY LIBRARY EVENTS



We're delighted to link our community with church by letting you know about the great range of activities being held in Whitburn library this month!

Please note all events are held in the library at Hedworth Terrace, Whitburn. Their team will be able to provide you with tickets and information.



Tuesday 3rd December - Festive Wine Tasting, 7pm. Tickets can be bought from the Library for £20 per person (over 18).

Friday 6th December - Community Christmas Party, 12.30-3pm. Tickets can be bought in advance from the Library for £6 per person.



Saturday 14th December - Christmas Day Disco, 3-8pm. £5 per person.

Friday 20th December - Memory Café Christmas Celebration, 2-4pm. Tickets can be bought in advance from the Library for £4 per person.



WHITBURN METHODIST CHURCH

Tuesday 17 December 7.30pm - A concert of Advent and Christmas to be held at the Methodist Church, North Guards, Whitburn.

An engaging evening of carols, Christmas songs, singalongs and stories to celebrate the Christmas Season.

THE DARKEST MIDNIGHT IN DECEMBER
CHRISTMAS ACOUSTIC TOUR 2024
with GARETH DAVIES-JONES

TUES 17TH DECEMBER
7.30PM
WHITBURN
METHODIST CHURCH
TICKETS: £10.00
(+ booking fee)

An evening of beautiful acoustic music from local singer-songwriter, Gareth Davies-Jones. He'll bring fresh interpretations and arrangements of familiar Advent and Christmas songs, with stories about the songs themselves. A few singalongs and musical surprises are promised.

Ticket £10 plus booking fee, available online at [eventbrite.co.uk](https://www.eventbrite.co.uk). (Any problems booking this way, phone 0191 5192390)

~ WHITBURN PARISH CHURCH HALL

Friday 31 January 7pm - BURNS NIGHT



One of the highlights of our church's social calendar!

Early warning because there's no January newsletter.

Please book early - these tickets will be popular. They're available from

Lynne Humphries 07793975588 and Linda Lumsdon-Taylor 07909631209.



Burns Night
Friday 31st January 2025
7pm
Whitburn Parish Hall
Mussel Square Boys Ceili Band
Food and Raffle
BYO Drinks
Tickets: £20 (Still in school £10)
Proceeds to Whitburn Parish Church



~ CHURCH SERVICES FOR CHRISTMAS 2024



WHITBURN PARISH CHURCH

- Sunday 22 December

11am Holy Communion

6.30pm Carol Service (Nine Lessons & Carols) followed by refreshments

- Tuesday 24 December

3pm Family Crib Service

9.30pm First Communion of Christmas

NB No mid-week services at Whitburn after Christmas Day until 8 January when they restart.

ALL SAINTS, CLEADON

- Sunday 8 December

4pm Christingle held in All Saints Parish Hall

- Thursday 12 December

6.30pm Carols by the Tree, Front Street, Cleadon

- Wednesday 25 December

10am Christmas Communion at All Saints Church, Cleadon

NB No mid-week services at Cleadon after Christmas Day until 8 January when they restart.



100 Club - November draw results

1st prize	£25	Graham Shutt	no. 60
2nd prize	£15	Joy Oton	no. 79
3rd prize	£10	Denise Hughes	no. 10

Plus an important message from Roly:

There will be a double-draw at the end of December.....

.....and a gentle reminder that next year's subs for Club 100 are due in January!

THE LAST WORD.....

This month, I'm leaving the last word (and a very short word!) to Lorraine:



I am collecting used stamps for the Great North Air Ambulance service. So when you receive Christmas cards through the post this year, don't throw the stamps away - instead, please give them to me to forward onto this wonderful charity.

In fact please let me have your used stamps all year round!

Thank you. Lorraine

Please note, there'll be no newsletter in January - you'd probably all be too tired after the busy festive season to read it anyway!

Have a wonderful Christmas everyone, wherever, and with whoever you're spending it - and I wish you a peaceful welcome to 2025! xx

SEE YOU IN FEBRUARY NEXT YEAR!