



## FEBRUARY WEATHER

February sulks it's shadow  
Over moorland, marsh and meadow.  
Dreary drizzle unabating,  
Then there's weather worse awaiting:  
Fog and frost and soft snow drifted  
Deep in heaps that can't be shifted,  
Rain that pours for hours and hours  
Putting paid to plants and flowers,  
Howling wind and gusting gale,  
Slushy sleet and hammering hail.  
Hopefully this woeful weather  
Has to pass, not last for ever.  
On a brighter note, a thought:  
Just be thankful February's short!

*C. Richard Miles*

## Christmas in our Church and Community

Here we have reflections on just a few of the events linking church with our community in December. This is the first opportunity to report them as there was no January Newsletter.

### ~ Hospitality and Hope

Thank you all once again for your continuing support of this vital charity. Just before Christmas Joanne and I delivered another 20 selection boxes, toiletries, food and £75. In January, 5 more bags of food and £165 were delivered to Hospitality and Hope.



The food bank provides up to 3 days of emergency food for anyone in a crisis and they are so grateful for all the help they receive from all of you.

*Lorraine Hood*

## ~ Our Schools' Celebrations



Christmas started early this year! On 27 November to be precise. The children from Marsden School arrived for their Christingle service. They were quite a sight to see, walking from school to church, the bigger ones holding the little ones' hands (out with my tissues!)

Then on 6 December, the Academy hosted their Christmas coffee morning, to which we were invited, with their wonderful choir and orchestra entertaining us, and filling us with coffee and cake!

On 18 December the church hosted the Academy Carol Service. Year 7 arrived in the afternoon and then in the evening we had their full choir, orchestra and readings and were left with "...the thrill of HOPE, in which a weary world rejoices".

Finally on 20 December Whitburn Primary School arrived for their service with the children again leading the readings and prayers.



Thank you all, children and teachers alike, for using your church for these wonderful and very special services.

*Lorraine Hood*

## ~ Angels



Many thanks to Lesley Butler for the 27 little white angels she knitted and donated to us. These were given out to children over the Christmas period and were very much appreciated.

*Lorraine Hood*

## ~ Church Celebration

So many who attended our church's annual 'Nine Readings and Nine Carols' service in December told me how much they'd enjoyed the evening. Held on 22 December just two days before Christmas Eve it opened the gate to Christmas for many of us. My thanks to Shirley who kindly sent me an email sharing her and her husband's appreciation of the evening. It's so thoughtfully written and I'm sure their observations overleaf resonate with many of you who attended. (I'm printing it with Shirley's permission.)

“ We have attended as many Christmas Eve Carol services as we could since moving to the area in the 80’s and have many happy memories of them for various reasons. On Sunday 22nd December we again were present.



The church was transformed with all the beautiful floral decorations, the trees both inside and out and the numerous tea lights twinkling in the windows. We would like to thank everyone for their hard work behind the scenes.

Thanks too go to everyone who did the readings, not an easy thing to do but greatly appreciated.



Whitburn has always been outstanding with the music and this year as always we were treated to beautiful pieces by the choir along with all the descant parts lifting the carols to another level. We couldn’t stay to partake in the fabulous refreshments but appreciated all the efforts made.

For me the service is the start to Christmas and on a dark and blustery night the true spirit of Christmas was alive and well. “

*Shirley Hetherington*

## Vernon Cuthbert writes...



As we enter February, Christmastide comes to an end with the feast of the Presentation of Christ at the Temple on 2nd February. The presentation, forty days after his birth, has Jesus acknowledged as the Messiah rounding off the season of Epiphany.

Epiphany is when God reveals himself in Jesus. During Epiphany, from 6th January, we recognise who Jesus is through:

- The visit of the Magi, bringing the gifts of gold, incense and myrrh.
- The baptism by John when a voice calls from heaven, 'You are my son, the beloved; with you I am well pleased'.
- The rescuing of a wedding going wrong when the wine runs out and Jesus takes the purification jars of water and turns them into wine.
- His identification of Isaiah's prophecy as his own manifesto.

All this helps us to recognise that it's not just through his birth that the nature of Jesus is proclaimed. With these events we get to recognise Jesus is both man and God fully entwined in the one person: fully God, fully human, not divisible but one.

Christopher Wordsworth wrote:

' Manifest at Jordan's stream  
Prophet, Priest and King supreme  
And at Cana wedding guest  
In thy Godhead manifest.  
Manifest in power divine  
Changing water into wine  
Anthems be to thee address  
God in Man made manifest. '

It is a time when God's mission is recognised as encompassing us as contributors and collaborators. The feast of the Conversion of Paul, Apostle to the Gentiles, falls within Epiphany. We are to be willing participants in sharing the light of Christ.

We celebrate this each and every year. For some it may feel like a version of Groundhog Day (also on 2nd February), yet it is important that we remind ourselves of these things so that we don't lose sight of them. In the film Groundhog Day (director Harold Ramis) a cynical television weatherman, Phil Connors, gets trapped in reliving 2nd February until love breaks the cycle and he is able to wake to 3rd February with the love of his life, his producer Rita.

Epiphany and Christmastide finishes on 2nd February with Joseph and Mary taking the almost 6 week old Jesus to the Temple as the scriptures required of them. Whilst there, Simeon and Anna, who had both separately been told that they would see 'God's Consolation', recognise in Jesus the fulfilment of God's promise to them.

Jesus is recognised as a 'light to the Gentiles'. It's for this that the feast of the Presentation is also known as Candlemas. A time when the candles for the year are blessed to give light to live by. Light is for sharing. It broadcasts itself to the surrounding area dispelling darkness.

The Groundhog is brought out on the 2nd February to see if it creates a shadow. If it does then the sunlight indicates a high pressure with a further period of colder, wintry weather is to be expected. A lack of shadow suggests winter is drawing to a close.

For us, our winter of discontent draws to a close because of the love God has for us, shown by Jesus on the cross, a future Simeon alluded to at the Temple. Spring is coming, New life made manifest.

Vernon

## Church mice

Karl Zorowski



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## NEWS FLASHES!

### ~ Special birthday wishes to nonagenarian, Pat!



On Sunday 12th January 2025 I had the privilege of being barman after the Church morning service, to celebrate the birthday of the lovely, irrepressible Pat Turner. When she asked me if I would help to celebrate a 'special birthday' I thought, gosh you do look good for 80. To my astonishment I was assured that I was 10 years out.....she would be 90!

It was always an irritation to Pat's YOUNGER sister that she looked older than Pat. But that's what country air and a husband's freshly grown garden vegetables do for a girl.

She is never without a smile. Pat, Sue and Linda are the unsung heroes of the wonderful flower arrangements we enjoy in our Church every week.....taken so often for granted despite being carefully nurtured into thought provoking and beautiful designs. All this work goes on behind the scenes on a regular basis, often changing the Church kitchen on a Friday morning into a veritable flower shop.

On behalf of Whitburn Parish Church can I say a huge 'thank you' and a very HAPPY BIRTHDAY to the lovely Pat Turner.....God bless.

*John Shield*

### ~ .....and here's Pat's reply!



After our morning service on 12 January, I celebrated my 90th birthday with help from my Church friends, even though I was only 89 ( my 90th was the next day)! Thank you to barman, John, and to everyone for my birthday cards and your good wishes.

My very special thanks to Milda for my spectacular birthday cake - a Norwegian kransekake. I believe she had the assistance of husband Peter whose surgeon's hands were put to good use rolling the almond dough! It was a magnificent cake and tasted delicious.

Thanks to all for making my 90th birthday so special!

*Pat Turner*

## ~ Hospice donation



Almost £800 was donated in Christine's memory at her funeral in December. This has been passed to St. Benedict's Hospice, whose devoted care gave her the peace and dignity that she deserved at the end of her life.

*Elizabeth McCarthy*

## ~ Whitburn Defibrillator Maintenance Fund - success!



Good news! Thanks to Michael O'Brien's efforts, funding has been secured towards elements of future defibrillator maintenance. Michael provided the following update:

“ The Community Defibrillators installed and managed by Whitburn Parish Church and sponsored initially by Latimer's, The Borough of South Tyneside, The City of Sunderland, The Barbour Foundation, and members of Whitburn Parish Church are still in place and are

monitored weekly by a Guardian. **The Circuit** - a national register for defibrillators- is kept up to date with monthly reports on the status of each machine.

We have utilised funds to replace defibrillator pads (CPADS) when they have been used or have been deemed out of date and we have also replaced batteries in three of the four machines.

In November 2024 we recently applied for and received funding from The City of Sunderland Council, The Barbour Foundation and The Dogger Bank Operators Fund to ensure that resources can see us well into the next six-year period. This means that we can replace batteries and CPADS when required. “

*Michael O'Brien (Guardian)*

~ A request for HELP to run our Church Hall, please.....



Our Church Hall at Sandy Chare provides a safe, comfortable and well-maintained venue for community activities from which many of us benefit throughout the year. These events generate an income that helps towards the costs of maintaining both the hall itself and our church and grounds.

Could you work in a team of 3 or 4 volunteers helping to run our Church Hall? (These numbers would comfortably allow cover for holidays, sickness etc.)



Roles could include:

- maintenance and health and safety;
- administration and finance associated with regular and new bookings;
- gardening (thanks to Chris Moore who has offered to continue mowing the grass).

If you, or anyone you know, think you can help in any way, please have a word with our Church Warden, Joanne Glen. Thank you.



## DATES FOR YOUR FEBRUARY DIARY

### Whitburn Parish Church Sunday Family Service - 11am on Sunday 23 February



We love to give a warm welcome to everyone visiting our church, be they regulars, occasional visitors or newcomers! On the last Sunday of each month we extend a special welcome to families to join us in our 11am Family Service. This month the date for your diary is 23 February!



## 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.

**Monday 10 February** - Quiz Night, 7pm. £3



**Tuesday 11 February** - Wine Tasting, 7pm. Tickets can be bought from the Library for £20 per person (over 18).

**Thursday 20 February** - Valentine's Music Night, 7pm £5 per person.



**Monday 24 February** - Quiz Night, 7pm. £3



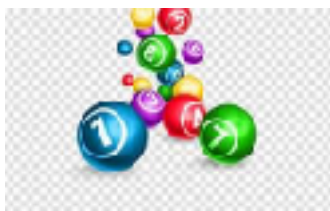
## CLUB 100



### **Club - December's Draw results:**

1st Prize	£50	Audrey Pringle	no. 82
2nd Prize	£30	Mark Glen	no. 83
3rd Prize	£15	June Ward	no. 29

### **100 Club Draw for January and February:**



Lynne and Roly will carry out the draws during coffee after the morning service on **Sunday 9 February**.

**Please ensure you renew your annual subscription before this draw.**  
Remember, **YOU MUST BE IN IT TO WIN IT!**

There are still a few numbers left - **and next month the winner could be YOU!** Please have a word with Roly Humphrey if you'd like to join in the monthly fun. But do hurry, once the numbers have gone, they're gone.

## THE LAST WORD.....



As I type this last article for the newsletter its Monday 27 January 2025 - *International Day of Commemoration* in memory of the victims of the Holocaust. The Holocaust that resulted in the genocide of one third of the Jewish people, along with countless members of other minorities by the Nazis and their collaborators between 1933 and 1945.

Today was the day 80 years ago in 1945 when captives in the Auschwitz concentration camp were liberated.

Yesterday Pat Turner showed me this poem printed in a national newspaper 20 years ago. It affected her so deeply she kept it. She shared it with me to share with you:

### Auschwitz Remembered - 60 years on

I was not there, but might have been  
I did not see, but might have seen  
I was not forced aboard a train  
I did not know inflicted pain  
I did not witness deep despair  
I did not breath the poisoned air  
I did not share the fear of death  
I did not dig the frozen earth  
I did not have to bear the shame  
Of numbered arm, forgotten name  
I did not see where thousands died  
I was not there - but today I cried.

The international theme for 2025 commemorations is 'For a better future' to remind people that genocide doesn't just happen; there is always a set of circumstances which build a climate where genocide can take place and where perpetrator regimes can remove the freedoms of those they are targeting.

We and future generations must NEVER forget this persecution.

*Celia Moore*

