

News from the Manse

Dear friends,

By the time you read this it will be 2012, Christmas will have passed and we shall have remembered again the real joy that comes with the birth of Jesus as we realise that indeed God is with us. In His first letter to the churches John writes these words: -

'We write to you about the word of life, which has existed from the very beginning. We have heard it, and we have seen it with our own eyes; yes we have seen it and our hands have touched it. When this life became visible, we saw it; so we speak of it and tell you about the eternal life which was with the Father and was made known to us. What we have seen and heard we announce to you also, so that you will join us in the fellowship that we have with the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ.' (1John 1 vs 1-3)

Are these words not true for us as well as to the writer of this letter? We have shared again the knowledge of Jesus coming into the world and making manifest the Word of Life. This is the joy that will stay with us when presents are put to one side, parties over and decorations put away for another year. Jesus is still with us; Jesus will make each day a celebration for all who share His fellowship. So, off now into 2012, going forward with a sense of celebration, a new year, a new challenge and new opportunities lie before God's people. We will retire in October and the church will seek new ministry – what a great time for reflection and looking forward with anticipation.

Over 30 years ago now the Provincial Moderators in their report to Assembly asked this question: 'Every local church must ask itself why it exists at all: what is the church for?'

Yet, today, it is still a question each church, indeed each organisation within the church, must ask on a regular basis. Is what we are doing today relevant and acceptable to Jesus who is Lord of the church and its organisations? Does our life together help in building the Kingdom of God?

Surely it is that we celebrate with joy in a world that seems to have little cause for celebration. If we truly believe that Jesus came, died and rose again that we might know eternal life then all the problems that pile up around us fade into insignificance, but how often do we allow them to overtake us and swallow up the true joy. Surely in times of gloom and doom we must show something of the love of Jesus that abounds in our lives. Nothing can do Jesus' love more disservice than a miserable ill tempered Christian! The world looks for something different – have we the grace to offer that?

However let us not make 2012 the year of the pious religious smile (that's as bad as being miserable) but let the love and joy shine from within (even on bad days) as we let the love of Jesus flow from us to a waiting world.

Please continue to pray for us in 2012 – the year of great challenge and opportunity.

Your servants in Christ,
Peter and Eileen

In Appreciation

For those who didn't realise it; the 2011 Christmas services were the final ones to be organised by Peter and Eileen, due to his forthcoming retirement in the autumn of 2012. I defy any church leaders to come up with a better way of relaying the wonderful Christmas Story than the one organised by Peter for Christmas Eve; it had everything, simplicity, humour and the active involvement of any willing member of the packed congregation. Peter can't drag people in to the Church off the street with a shepherd's crook but with such a powerful message he achieved the next best thing.

For those who were there on Christmas morning, the message was, as always, simple and effective as we thanked and praised God for the birth of his Son.

It's once again a big "THANK YOU" for the Christmas services, and oh how you will be missed.

Norman Nossiter

Alpha

We are planning a series of Alpha meetings in the New Year, starting on Wednesday Jan 18th. The programme for the evening will begin with a meal at 7pm, followed by a speaker and a time of sharing, ending at approximately 8.30pm.

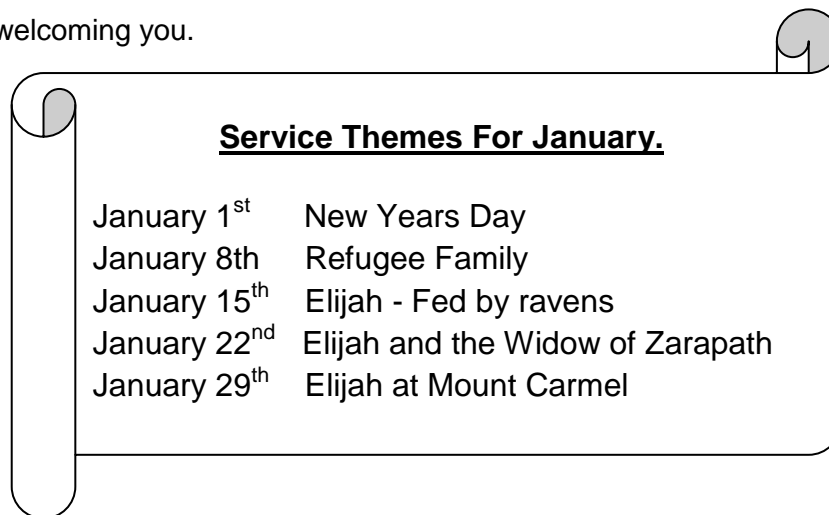
The first session is entitled 'Who is Jesus?' and will be led by Peter.

The second session is 'Why did Jesus die?' and will be led by Michael Hickey the priest at St. Theresa's

We do hope you will feel able to invite friends and family, or just come along yourself to learn more about our faith.

To assist with catering please let Peter know if you are coming, we will have a simple meal with a vegetarian option. If you need someone to look after children please let us know and we will see what can be done.

Looking forward to welcoming you.



<u>Service Themes For January.</u>	
January 1 st	New Years Day
January 8 th	Refugee Family
January 15 th	Elijah - Fed by ravens
January 22 nd	Elijah and the Widow of Zarapath
January 29 th	Elijah at Mount Carmel

AN APOLOGY FOR A FRONT FLOWER BED

That title can be read both ways which is what I had in mind. Come spring the front flower beds will not be giving their usual splash of colour which will make it an apology of a flower bed, and I apologise for that.

Everyone can see (and perhaps smell) the front flower beds have been prepared for planting but there are very few plants in save for the usual perennials which I have left in. The reason for this is that I prepared the soil in the beds but then I had to go to Singapore and when I returned it was too late to buy bedding plants for a spring show and it is now too late to sow seeds. So, if anyone has any spring plants they can spare I will gladly plant them. If not then we will have to await the summer to bring some colour to the front.

Dennis Watson

THANK YOU

Those of you who kindly ordered Christmas Cakes will be pleased to know that I have been able to make a donation of £100 to church funds. Thank you for all your orders, and your continued support.

Audrey Matfin.

I hope you had a Very Happy Christmas and wish you Good Health in 2012.

Love, Audrey.

BIBLICAL BOOK CLUB **THE** **CORINTHIAN CORRESPONDENCE**

Led by
David Peel

A study of letters from a hard-pressed missionary to a church in a cosmopolitan society through which we gain a glimpse of early Christianity and discover insights for the contemporary church's struggle in a non-Christian environment.

St Cuthbert's, Heaton **Mondays at 1pm**
January 9, 23
February 6, 13, 27

St Andrew's, Monkseaton **Tuesdays at 7.30pm**
January 10, 24, 31
February 14, 28

Open to all the members of the churches of the Newcastle East/Coast Mission Partnership of the United Reformed Church.

MUSES FROM THE BOTTOM STEP

Well for once I'm not sat in the library bathed in sunshine. It is a dark, cold night here in Cambridge. Winter has really set in and the layers of jumpers are on. I am still, however, sat in the library! Well it is warmer here than in my flat and I have the 'end of term' cold, so keeping warm is essential.

Dark and cold are great words for describing January. Christmas is over, the decorations and lights are down and put away for another year. There doesn't seem to be anything to look forward, apart from maybe Easter, but that's about three months away. All is dark and bleak, break out the Lament Psalms, all is woe and there is not a single reason to be happy.

Hmmm... hold on a minute, have we not just celebrated the coming of the Light into the world? We may have taken down the Christmas lights, but does that mean Jesus' light has gone out? And what about chapter 3 to 25 of Matthew, the first 13 chapters of Mark, chapter 3 to 21 of Luke and the first 17 chapters of John? A story isn't just a beginning and an end, there is always a middle.

The Light came into the world and lived among us. He taught, advised, loved, laughed and cried. Without the middle, the story makes no sense. We can't go straight from the manger to the cross, because without knowing what happened between them, they mean very little. The middle explains to us who Jesus is, why he was laid in a manger and why he had to hang on the cross, so that he could then leave the tomb empty.

Yes it is dark out there, but the Light is still shining. So instead of singing Psalms of Lament, start singing Psalms of Praise. Rather than just sitting and waiting for Easter, spend the next three months looking at what happens between the manger and the cross and discover who Jesus really is. The Light came into the world at Christmas, but He didn't then just go out—He's still burning and shining as brightly as ever, just stop and look around you!

So here is to a light-filled New Year, from a not so dark Cambridge.

Elaine

From Debbie Thompson

24th December 2011.....During quiet prayer time in my living room; having my pet bird out to fly, I realised she'd snared her claw in my curtain. Freeing her and making her safe; I continued to read my Bible reading and said prayers; tearfully. After, the Lord spoke to me softly, gently, '...Just as you freed that little bird so I freed you!' I felt so touched; I needed to share this.....

Emails can touch our lives

Over the last few weeks I have received the following emails and thought that they would be good to share with you all.

Sandra

Alternative Christmas

*The embers glowed softly, and in their dim light,
I gazed round the room and I cherished the sight.
My wife was asleep, her head on my chest,
My daughter beside me, angelic in rest
Outside the snow fell, a blanket of white,
Transforming the garden to a winter delight.*

The sparkling lights in the tree I believe,

*Completed the magic that was Christmas Eve.
My eyelids were heavy, my breathing was deep,
Secure and surrounded by love I would sleep.
In perfect contentment, or so it would seem,
So I slumbered, perhaps I started to dream.*

*The sound wasn't loud, and it wasn't too near,
But I opened my eyes when it tickled my ear.*

Perhaps just a cough, I didn't quite know, Then
the
Sure sound of footsteps outside in the snow.
My soul gave a tremble, I struggled to hear,
And I crept to the door just to see who was
near.

Standing out in the cold and the dark of the
night,
A lone figure stood his face weary and tight.
A soldier, I puzzled, some twenty years old,
Perhaps a Marine, huddled here in the cold.
Alone in the dark, he looked up and smiled,
Standing watch over me, and my wife and my
child.

"What are you doing?" I asked without fear,
"Come in this moment, it's freezing out here!
Put down your pack; brush the snow from your
sleeve,
You should be at home on a cold Christmas
Eve!"
For barely a moment I saw his eyes shift,
Away from the cold and the snow blown in
drifts.

To the window that danced with a warm fire's
light
Then he sighed and he said "It's really all right,
I'm out here by choice. I'm here every night."
"It's my duty to stand at the front of the line,
That separates you from the darkest of times.
No one had to ask or beg or implore me,
I'm proud to stand here like my fathers before
me.
My Grandfather died in France' on a day in
December,"
Then he sighed, "That's a Christmas 'Gran
always remembers."
My dad stood his watch in the jungles of Burma
And now it is my turn and so, here I am.

I've not seen my own son in more than a while,
But my wife sends me pictures; he's sure got
her smile.

Then he bent and he carefully pulled from his
bag
The red, white, and blue... a Union flag.
I can live through the cold and the being alone,
Away from my family, my house and my home.

I can stand at my post through the rain and the
sleet,
I can sleep in a trench with little to eat.
I can carry the weight of killing another,
Or lay down my life with my sister and brother.
Who stand at the front against any and all,
To ensure for all time that this flag will not fall."

So go back inside," he said, "harbour no fright,
Your family is waiting and I'll be all right."
"But isn't there something I can do, at the least,
"Give you money," I asked, "or prepare you a
feast?
It seems all too little for all that you've done,
For being away from your wife and your son."

Then his eye welled a tear that held no regret,
"Just tell us you love us, and never forget.
To fight for our rights back at home while we're
gone,
To stand your own watch, no matter how long.
For when we come home, either standing or
dead,
To know you remember we fought and we bled.
Is payment enough, and with that we will trust,
That we mattered to you as you mattered to
us."

He is God

**He is the First and Last,
The Beginning and the End!
He is the keeper of Creation and the Creator of all!
He is the Architect of the universe and the Manager of all times.
He always was, He always is, and He always will be
Unmoved, Unchanged, Undefeated, and never Undone!**

**He was bruised and brought healing!
He was pierced and eased pain!
He was persecuted and brought freedom!**

He was dead and brought life!
He is risen and brings power!
He reigns and brings Peace!
The world can't understand him,
The armies can't defeat Him,
The schools can't explain Him, and the leaders can't ignore Him.
Herod couldn't kill Him, the Pharisees couldn't confuse Him, and The people couldn't hold Him!
Nero couldn't crush Him, Hitler couldn't silence Him,
The New Age can't replace Him, and "Oprah" can't explain Him away!

He is light, love, longevity, and Lord.
He is goodness, Kindness, Gentleness, and God.
He is Holy, Righteous, mighty, powerful, and pure.

His ways are right,
His word is eternal,
His will is unchanging, and His mind is on me.
He is my Saviour,
He is my guide, and He is my peace!
He is my Joy,
He is my comfort,
He is my Lord, and He rules my life!

I serve Him because His bond is love,
His burden is light, and His goal for me is abundant life.
I follow Him because He is the wisdom of the wise,
the power of the powerful,
the ancient of days, the ruler of rulers, the leader of leaders,
the overseer of the overcomers, and is to come.
And if that seems impressive to you, try this for size.

His goal is a relationship with ME!
He will never leave me,
Never forsake me,
Never mislead me,
Never forget me,
Never overlook me and
Never cancel my appointment in His appointment book!

When I fall, He lifts me up!
When I fail, He forgives!
When I am weak, He is strong!
When I am lost, He is the way!
When I am afraid, He is my courage!
When I stumble, He steadies me!
When I am hurt, He heals me!
When I am broken, He mends me!
When I am blind, He leads me!
When I am hungry, He feeds me!
When I face trials, He is with me!

**When I face persecution, He shields me!
When I face problems, He comforts me!
When I face loss, He provides for me!
When I face Death, He carries me Home!**

**He is everything for everybody everywhere, every time, and every way.
He is God, He is faithful. I am His, and He is mine!
My Father in heaven can whip the father of this world.
So, if you're wondering why I feel so secure, understand this...
He said it and that settles it.
God is in control, I am on His side,
and that means all is well with my soul.
Everyday is a blessing for GOD Is!**

Women's Fellowship

The Christmas meal at the Killingworth Arms was very good, the only damper on the proceedings was the tables were very close together, so close in fact that some of could not sit down and we had to get the manager to come and move the tables to give us more room. Apart from that we all enjoyed the meal and fellowship and the staff were very nice and worked extremely hard.

The January meeting will take place on Tuesday 24th January 2012, and the speakers will be Peter and Eileen.

For further information please contact Moira Applegate, telephone number 2818930.

Bible a Month Club: Bolivia

***"May your constant love be with us, Lord, as we put our hope in you"*
*Psalms 33, verse 22(GNB)***

Bolivia is in South America, surrounded by Peru, Brazil, Paraguay, Argentina, and Chile: it covers an area of over 1 million sq km, approximately 4.5 times the size of the UK. The population is a mere 10.1 million, about a sixth of that of the UK. The literacy rate is 86%, and the languages include Spanish, Quenchua, Aymara and other minority languages.

Thirteen year old Daniella, one of 24 children living at the Huge heart children's home in Cochabamba, proudly shows off her Bible Society workbook. It's full of her drawings illustrating the Bible stories she's been reading. They're clearly making an impact.

"I think it's the first time I've worked through a book like this. I feel very good about that" she says, "At school, they just talk about the Bible- but this book is much better because it breaks it down"

Like many of the young people at the home, Daniella is here after experiencing abuse at home. And the Bolivian Bible Society is dedicated to bringing hope and healing to children like her, says Fanny Cossio, General Secretary of the Bolivian Bible Society. "We have a vocation from Jesus: "Let the children come to me", she stresses. "And only God can fill the gap of love and security that's left when children are abandoned"

Bible Society's latest programme is already reaching more than 5000 children like Daniella in 28 homes across Bolivia.

Prayer Pointers

- Please pray for children like Julia, who is finding strength from God to heal her past. Pray that the sisters at our home will always be there to help us and love us.
- Give thanks for the love and commitment shown by staff in Bible Society partner homes, in La Paz, Cochabamba and elsewhere. Pray that Bible Society's educational materials will help the young people in their care realise and embrace God's love for them.
- Please pray that the children who live in children's homes will grow up secure in the love of Jesus. That they will become responsible parents with strong families.
- Pray for Fanny Cossio, General Secretary of the Bolivian Bible Society, as she leads this mission to plant the Bible's life-changing message in families struggling with abuse and violence.
- To discover other ways of making the Bible heard, visit biblesociety.org.uk

Northern Synod Prayers

The prayer diary this year focuses on one Mission Partnership each month.

January **North Northumberland**

- 8th Berwick: Rev'd Kate Baxter: Mr Graham Ferguson: Wooler: Rev'd Pamela Ward:
Chatton: Crookham: Rev'd Dr Tony Ritchie.
- 15th Erskine & St. Cuthbert's: Rev'd David Herbert
- 22nd St. Cuthbert's Centre, Holy Island: its users and its management team: Rev'd
Rachel Poolman: Synod Racial Justice Advocate, Rev'd Barry Welch.
- 29th The Lindisfarne Regional Training Partnership: Majors Darrell & Katrina Thomas,
Commanders of the Salvation Army Northern Division: Rev'd Leo Osborn, Chair of
Newcastle Methodist District and also this year President of Conference.

February **Mid Northumberland**

- 5th St. James's Alwick: Warkworth: Rev'd Joan Grindrod-Helmn.
- 12th St. Mark's Amble: Rev'd Alison Mills: Rothbury: Rev'd Pamela Ward.

and finally, not everyone gets it right

THE MESSIAH – Handel

A performance of this great oratorio was being given in the Cleckheaton Town Hall many years ago and old Cuthbert Briggs from Liversedge thought he might like to go. He tried to persuade his wife to go with him but she wasn't too keen. "Nah, Cuthbert lad, you know it's not my line. Give me a bit of comedy or a

sing-song on the end of Blackpool Pier. No, you go and tell me all about it when you come home. So Cuthbert went on his own. He had no idea what to expect. In fact he had never heard of "The Messiah". It was just that he fancied doing something a bit different from his usual Saturday night visit to the Sun Inn.

When he got back home Cuthbert's wife was all ears. "Come on the, tell me all about it". "Oh well," began Cuthbert. "It were all right but not quite what I expected. There weren't a lot of movement on the stage. In fact, there weren't a lot of room on the stage. It were full of singers. I'd been sitting there for a bit when in comes a load of fellas carrying fiddles. They brought in the biggest fiddle I have ever seen. It were that big they had to wheel it on castors and a little chap rubbed its belly with a stick and you should have heard the groan. It sounded like a cow with croup. Well, all the fiddlers joined in and made such a racket. Then they settled down and it all went quiet. After about a minute in comes the Messiah, well, I think it were him because everybody clapped and all the fiddlers stood up to welcome him. He were a dapper of a bloke, all dolled up in a white waistcoat with a red carnation in its buttonhole. I'm sure it must have been the Messiah. Then he picked up a little stick and started waving it at everyone on the stage. They were all staring at him wondering what was up. Then they started to sing.

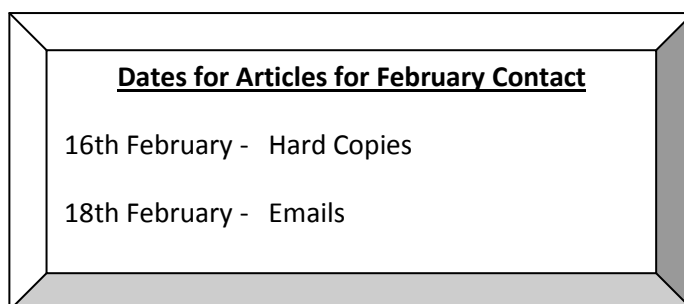
They had not been going long before they were arguing. They all wanted to know who were the King of Glory. First one side said HE is the King of Glory and then the other side said HE is the King of Glory and then they all went at it hammer and tongs but it fizzled out in the end. Some of the singers must be a bit partial to a bit of mutton because they keep singing "Oh we like sheep". Personally I like a bit of well done steak, but never mind. Well I think that them lost sheep must have belonged to one of the singers because he stood up and said that every mountain and hill should be laid low. I thought "Good – if they flatten all the mountains they'll be sure to find the sheep that were gone astray."

Then the organist started up and the band joined in and, by gum, they seemed to be getting mad over something. The way they were sawing at them fiddles I was expecting them to fall apart. Then after all that the women stood up to sing. Believe me some of them were a bit past it. By looking at them they must have been 70 if they were a day and they sang "Unto us a child is born" and all the fellas shouted, "Wonderful". I thought, "It's a blooming miracle." Then they all composed themselves a bit and sang about a woman called Joyce Greatly. I'd never heard of her but apparently she's the daughter of Zion, whoever he is. Oh well, I were getting a bit fed up by now 'cause I'd been sitting for nearly two hours when, all of a sudden, I got cramp in my leg. I jumped up out of my seat and, what do you know, everybody else jumped up at the same time. They must have all got cramp the same as me. Then the choir shouted "Hallelujah! It's going to rain forever and ever." Well I never thought to bring my brolly with me so thought I'd better get off home before it started. So seeing as how I were on my feet I reckoned I'd had my money's worth. It was different but I do hope they find them lost sheep.

Diary

January 2012

1 st	10.30am	New Years Day worship. Holy Communion
7 th	6.30 pm	Night Out (in) Family Social
8 th	10.00am	Preacher is Mr Jim Farley
12 th	7.00 pm	Development Elders meeting
18 th	7.00 pm	Beginning of the Alpha course
19 th	7.00 pm	Church Meeting
22 nd	10.00 am	Preacher is Rev'd Margaret Johnson
28 th		Induction of Rev'd Margaret Johnson (at St. Cuthbert's)
30 th	7.30pm	Heaton Churches Together meeting at St. Cuthbert's.



Hire of Halls, Rooms and Church

Our premises are available for letting as follows:-

Regular Hires - based on a maximum of a 3 hour session

- Large Hall: £45
- Minor Hall: £30
- Meeting Room: £15
- Church: £45

One-off Hires - based on a maximum of a 3 hour session

- Large Hall: £60
- Minor Hall: £40
- Meeting Room: £20
- Church: £80

If you want to book any of the above, or require further information please telephone Miss Moira Applegate, telephone number 2818930.

Duty Rotas

	January					February	
	1st	8th	15 th	22nd	29 th	5th	12th
Duty Elder	Mrs J Cartman	Mrs R Croft	Mrs J Das	Mrs J Holmes	Mrs L Willford	Mrs D Barker	Miss D Coates
Door Steward	Mrs E Cowey Miss M Applegate	Miss D Coates & Mrs C Cowie	Mr & Mrs Renton	Mrs J Das Mrs L Cadwallader	Mrs A Matfin Mr A Armstrong	Mrs B Ions Mrs D Hume	Mr & Mrs Fawcitt
Communion Stewards	Miss M Applegate Mrs S Cowey					Mrs R Croft Mr. H Fawcitt	
Computer Rota Setting up	Bob Renton	Stewart Barclay	Sandra Nossiter	Bob Renton	Stewart Barclay		
Computer Rota Operating	Harry Fawcitt	Stewart Barclay	Sandra Nossiter	Lucy Cowey	Harry Fawcitt		
Sound Desk			Norman Nossiter				
Offering Counting	Moira Applegate & Audrey Matfin	Sandra & Norman Nossiter	Denise & Harry Fawcitt	Ivy & Bob Renton	Sharon & Steve Cowey	Moira Applegate & Audrey Matfin	Sandra & Norman Nossiter
Flower Donations	To Be arranged	To Be arranged	To Be arranged	To Be arranged	To Be arranged		
Flower Arranger	To Be arranged	To Be arranged	To Be arranged	To Be arranged	To Be arranged		
Flower Distribution	Miss Applegate	Mrs Cartman	Mrs Croft	Mrs Das	Mrs Holmes	Mrs Watson	Miss Coates

If you are unable to do any of your duties please arrange your own swaps in advance. Please don't leave it until the day of your duty as it is not always possible to get replacements on the day.