

# All Saints Gosforth



All Saint Annual Report Brochure  
for year ending 2023

West Avenue, Gosforth, NE3 4ES

Welcome to the Annual Report Brochure for 2023.

All Saints, the Anglican (Church of England), is a Parish Church of Gosforth, situated on the west side of the High Street, serving a population of over 8,000 people. The church aims, in the words of its vision statement, to be 'at the heart of the parish', and 'a positive force in the wider community'.

In this document, you will see how All Saints actively seeks to encourage 'life in its fullest' among many, both by leading groups and providing facilities through which many flourish. With numerous contacts and associations, the church has 'lots going on'. I hope that when you read here about the diversity and engagement with different age groups and interests, you will feel welcome to be involved or become more involved!

**Andrew Shipton**  
**Vicar**

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# Church Services, Groups & Committees

## Faith @4

After its launch in the autumn of 2022, Faith@4 continued throughout 2023. Faith@4 takes place on the last Sunday of the month at 4pm in the church hall and is an informal, all-age service with music, story, craft and snacks. We typically start with the group gathered for a few songs and a Bible story and reflection, then we break out and everyone chooses which craft activity they would like to do. Most children want to do them all! So we rotate around the tables as needed, which gives everyone an opportunity to chat as well as working on their projects. Towards the end of our time together we bring out drinks and snacks to share.



Each Faith@4 has a theme, usually with a connection to the liturgical year. Our theme for January was 'hope'. We heard the story of the presentation of Jesus in the Temple and thought about Jesus bringing light; we planted snowdrops (also known as 'candlemas bells') and made prayer lanterns. In February, we looked ahead to Lent and focused on 'temptation'. We heard the story of Jesus' temptations in the wilderness, and made shields with Bible verses to defend ourselves

against temptation. In March, looking towards Holy Week, we thought about Jesus as the 'Servant King'. We dressed up and walked the red carpet as we thought about Jesus entering Jerusalem like a celebrity, then got our feet muddy and washed them as we thought about Jesus washing his disciples' feet like a servant. April's theme was 'Friends of the King', where we looked at



Jesus' final words in Matthew's gospel, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me ... And surely I am with you always' (Matthew 28:16,20b), and talked about prayer. In May, we heard the story of Pentecost and made headbands with tongues of fire to remind us of the Holy Spirit resting on us and empowering us. In June, looking ahead to the start of the summer holidays, we looked at what the Bible says about the importance of observing times of rest. In



July and August we had a break from Faith@4 for the summer, and then came back in September with a special Pet Service in the church. We gave thanks for all the animals God created and thought about caring for the earth and our own pets at home. We were joined by a number of dogs and a hamster, all of whom received a blessing. In October we anticipated All Saints Day with an opportunity to come in fancy dress as one of the saints. We thought about God's faithfulness all through history and learned about some of the saints through our activities. Our final service of the year was in November at the start of Advent, so we continued with the theme of God's faithfulness and

thought about the people of the Old Testament who had looked forward to Jesus' birth. We made a Jesse Tree by colouring in ornaments representing their different stories and pinning these to a large tree hung on the wall.



Faith@4 aims to be accessible, welcoming, and fun: a place where we can explore faith together, whatever stage of faith or life we are at. During the first half of 2023, we held a trial to see if the model could be replicated at St Hugh's as a way of connecting with new people in that area. Sadly, there was not enough interest over the first six months to continue after the summer. At All Saints, on average we have had 10-12 people at each service and over the course of the year there have been over 40 people of all ages who have attended Faith@4 one or more times. It has been a real joy to welcome each and every one. Thank you to everyone who came along! There is always room for more, so if you or someone you know would like to come along, please know that you are very welcome!



Lastly, let me also say a huge thank-you to all who gave of their time to help facilitate one or more service, whether at All Saints or at St Hugh's. Those who have helped with music, moving chairs and tables, preparing and serving refreshments, planning crafts, welcoming people, telling Bible stories ... Faith@4 could not have happened without you. Thank you all!

**Miriam Jones**

## **Christian Meditation Group**

The group has continued to meet fortnightly throughout the year with a regular attendance of between four and six people, some of whom are from outside the parish. We are always pleased to see new faces.

**Charles Foister**

## All Together Services

The All Together Team has continued to plan All Together Sunday morning services once a month in Ordinary Time, Lent, Advent, for Remembrance Day, Mothering Sunday, Baptisms and Good Friday, among others. The team of five plans themes, prayers, music, readings (sometimes dramatized), linked activities such as art workshops contributing to themes and then produces a draft ready for printing. Parts of any one service are often identical to previous formats we have used in the past, in contrast to new elements such as different songs or settings sung by the choir or with the congregation.



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All Team members have attended church for decades, some are from families of ordained ministers and one member is a professional musician of broad and very extensive experience. The material is always planned and checked at some point in conjunction with clergy and the Director of Music for views and advice. The aim of the group remains to vary the spectrum of services we offer, keeping some old traditions while adding a different angle from our usual one and giving a chance to experience the appeal of new expressions of Christian worship.

**Felicity Shoemith, Ann Cross, Helen Langley, Diana Lavin, Rosamund Place**

## Coffee and Conversation



Coffee and Conversation has gone from strength to strength this year. Every Monday morning from 10.30am -11.30am a small band of people, from the congregation or passers-by, meet up to share each other's company over a cup of coffee.

It is especially valuable for those who live alone, to share friendship, laughs and bring any worries or problems which often get solved.

Come along and receive a warm welcome and companionship or just pop in on the way back from Gosforth shops to catch up with the friendly gossip.

**Yvonne Carr**

## Choir

It's hard to believe another year has passed here at All Saints. The choir have again responded well to the challenges of new and unfamiliar music that I have thrown at them, and they continue to build in confidence. A major source of new musical requirements has been the monthly All Together services when we have tried our best to find music to shake things up a little and perhaps break with expectations. We have tackled arrangements of music by The Beatles, Carole King, Cindi Lauper, Todd Rundgren, with a couple of spirituals thrown in for good measure. The choir and I very much value the many positive comments that we have received from the congregation.



We also learned a piece especially commissioned for the coronation of King Charles III which utilised the wonderful organ talents of Myles Hartley (husband of Bishop Helen-Anne). Last July, we welcomed a small chamber ensemble into our church to accompany the choir in the selected movements from the Haydn Little Organ Mass. It was a new venture to have harpsichord, bassoon, flute, violin and viola fulfilling the role that is traditionally performed by the organ; the resulting sound was wonderful and this is something I look forward to repeating in the near future through our connection with Westfield School.

Still on the subject of guest musicians, I was very much looking forward last Christmas to having some steel drum and percussion players join us for the Calypso Carol on Christmas Eve, however the wretched Covid 19 virus had other ideas - fingers crossed for this year. Our 'open door Evensong' policy stills brings us extra singers from neighbouring churches on the last Sunday of the month and our repertoire of Evensong music continues to build.

The last twelve months have not been without their share of trauma; we were shocked and saddened by the loss of Tony Armitage (a true gent and a wonderful tenor). The choir numbers were dramatically affected when Mo Idowu, her husband and two children (each of whom were choir members) moved away to Kent much sooner and with much less warning than anticipated. Having said that, we have been lucky enough to recruit some more singers recently (Josie, Mina, Camilla, Brenda, Joe and Chris), so we are in good shape going forward.

I often get asked about the possibility of a repeat performance of Jesus Christ Superstar in the near future ... all I can say is, we are currently unable to perform this specific work due to the fact that there is a professional production of the show touring the country (the licensing organisation does not permit any performances other than

the official one at any one time). I have, however, been in discussion with Durham Cathedral on the subject ... more soon.

Our very extensive music library is the envy of other local churches, but there are many pieces that either require a much bigger choir than we currently have or a separate organist and conductor (which places demands on the availability of additional musicians). As the choir's experience and confidence build, I hope that we will be able to tackle some of the more demanding pieces in the library and keep the music at All Saints evolving and improving. I will continue to seek out new choir members, especially youngsters, and I hope to continue to build on our relationships with other local churches, schools and with the Cathedral.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the congregation for their support and appreciation for what the 'music dept' adds to our worship, and the choir for their continued enthusiasm, dedication and hard work. They are a wonderful and friendly bunch of people, we have a great time rehearsing and performing and the sound is more cohesive now than ever. I am proud of what we have achieved so far and look forward to continuing to build upon it.

**John Lewis**

## **Keeping in Touch**

Keeping in Touch continues to be produced approximately two-monthly to provide a snapshot of life at All Saints. It is usually ten or twelve pages, either sent by email in pdf format to save paper, or on paper available at the church. It

contains a Vicar's letter, news of improvements or repairs to the church fabric, obituaries of worshippers at All Saints, news from Archbishop Runcie First School, news of our various youth and adult groups, including the bellringers, book reviews, sometimes even jokes, and many colour illustrations.

We are grateful to all those who send us contributions, including descriptions and pictures of events and of our beautiful surroundings. However, much of the work of producing Keeping in Touch falls on a very small band of volunteers some of whom are ready to hand over to others. So please, if you have any ideas or would like to consider getting involved, please do get in touch with one of the editors.

**Christine Willoughby, Lesley Atkinson, Ann Cross, Dermot Killingley, Editors**



## **Fellowship Lunch**

The Group was formed in summer 2023 following group discussions with a number of recently bereaved people of the parish. It has some similarities to the old Loss Adjusters but the format has been revised.

The meal is a finger buffet style with wine as an option and is held on the first Sunday of the month in the Centre.

The Group has been opened up beyond the bereaved so that anyone who is alone or who would like a bit of company is welcome. The name of the group was revised to reflect this.

Our first meetings were attended by about eleven new and long standing widows since when the group has grown steadily with twenty-six booked in for the March lunch.

If you would like to join us or know of someone who might benefit please let me know.

**Vic Spong**

[victorspong@btinternet.com](mailto:victorspong@btinternet.com) 0191 236 4532

## **Study Groups**

During 2023, study groups convened for those preparing for Confirmation and during Lent. The Lent Groups completed a course hosted and led by church members based on material written by Henri Nouwen on the story of the Prodigal Son. Members were struck by how Nouwen explains that the son's leaving home was, in fact, a deeply offensive action. In effect, he was rebelling against the treasured values of family and community, actions that would have been virtually unheard of. We reflected on how many feel their worth is dependent on achievement and success. This led some group members to explore questions about their relationship with God and how, in the end, it is based on God's loving acceptance of us.

**Andrew Shipton**



## Bell Tower

May 6th last year provided an ideal occasion for lots of joyful ringing when we rang to mark the Coronation of King Charles and all of our ringers plus one returning ringer managed to take part in the celebration.

In June three members of our band attended an ART (Association of Ringing Teachers) course in Masham on Teaching Bell Handling.

Sarah Jackson, our Ringing Master, and Stuart Henderson one of our ringers had never taught from scratch before, I had but so many years ago that I thought a refresher would be a good idea. We spent an enjoyable, if intensive day watching presentations of the aspects involved and also working with the tutor and other members of the group to develop the necessary skills. We were then encouraged to try to begin teaching as soon as possible after returning to our towers. Fortunately, shortly after completing the course we were presented with a learner at All Saints. Sarah agreed to teach her and I was asked to mentor the progress of both learner and teacher and advise as necessary. Sarah is doing an excellent job and our new learner is making good progress.

We have also recently begun lessons with a young man who learned to handle a bell about ten years ago but hasn't rung since and needed to refresh and develop the skills he had started to develop then.

The number in our band has decreased slightly over the past year and we are usually only able to ring a maximum of eight bells on a Sunday morning and six in the evening. However, we hope that our learners will soon have progressed enough to join us and enable us to ring all ten bells more often.

In January we were hit by an even more serious deterrent to our ringing the ten bells when the clapper on our fifth bell sheared off. This had to be transported to Taylor's Bell Foundry in Loughborough for assessment to determine whether there was any possibility of a reweld. However, on inspection we were informed that the damage was too great and we would require a new clapper and crown staple (the part the clapper is attached to). The new clapper arrived back on 21<sup>st</sup> February and we were fortunate enough to have it refitted the following day. We are all delighted to have the ten bells back again as losing the fifth of a ring of ten bells is I am told the worst scenario we could have faced.

In conclusion I would like to thank everyone who has helped me over the past year, particularly Sarah Jackson our Ringing Master, Stuart Henderson our treasurer and Bill Shepherd who organises our Tower Maintenance. I look forward to the year ahead.

**Yvonne Cairns, Tower Captain**



## Little Saints Toddler and Parent/Carer Group

Tuesday afternoons have continued to be very busy in the All Saints Centre. From 1.30pm until 2.30pm the hall reverberates to the sound of toddlers having fun exploring the space and developing new skills. It has been fascinating to watch children arrive as young as a few weeks old then progress through developmental stages, learning how to play and share activities with their new found friends.



A wide range of groups for pre-school children is available in the local community, many of which focus on specific skills such as music,

creativity or physical coordination. Little Saints aims to complement these groups by providing opportunities for children to initiate and lead their own play, inviting adults to join them in their chosen activity.

The group has a gradual turn-over of families during the year as children take up nursery places and parents return to work. We work on a 'drop-in' basis, there is no need to sign up for a specific number of weeks, and we are always pleased to welcome new families.

When we ask families how they first heard

about us, responses include word of mouth, the church website or poster and NAPI (Newcastle Action for Parent & Toddler Group Initiative) who support groups throughout the city. Do encourage any young families known to you to come and try us out.

Little Saints is a delightful group but doesn't just 'happen' every week without significant help from Tricia Maylia, who puts out the toys (and clears them away), Helen Poole, who serves up snacks each week and Miriam Jones, who helps lead the group on occasions. Andrew Shipton and Ruth Birnie both lend their much valued support throughout the year. Many thanks go to everyone who contributes to the success of the group in any way at all.

Having enjoyed many years' involvement with the group, a new leader is now needed. If you have a few hours to spare on Tuesday afternoons, do let me or Andrew Shipton know.



**Lesley Atkinson**

## **Sew, Knit and Natter**

This group, which has now been running for twelve years, has continued to be a welcoming space for people. Two of the original members still attend. One of them, Sue Finkill, deserves a special mention for her foresight in setting up the group, which she led from strength to strength until



she decided to have a well-deserved rest last year and pass the organising on to someone else. The group has attracted many new members over the years. Sadly, this year we lost one of our dearly loved ones, Elizabeth Crawford, who had been a stalwart supporter of the group and a great help to some of us less capable knitters.

We are a mixed group of church and non-church members, experienced knitters and complete beginners, with the experienced knitters always willing to help others out. We knit whatever we want, either personal items or things such as hats for premature babies, toys for charities and many other things. We have a stall at the church Christmas Fair and the various decorations, gloves, scarves, jumpers etc which the group knit throughout the year always prove to be popular, as does its annual knitted raffle prize.

But more than anything else, it is a social group and some very strong friendships have been formed as a result. Yes, we knit lots of things but we also enjoy a cup of tea or coffee and a good natter each week. We organise the occasional outing to somewhere interesting. Not everyone can come every week but we manage to keep in touch via our own WhatsApp group. New members are always welcome. If anyone would like more details about us, do give me a ring me on 07474040267.

**Diane Kirkup**

## **Christians Together in Gosforth**

The leaders of the Gosforth churches met every two months during 2023 at Trinity Church and the Quaker meeting house for fellowship, information sharing, and planning. The service of Prayer for Christian Unity was held at the Quaker Meeting House in January. A United Service of Witness was held outside on Trinity Square on Good Friday. Members of St Charles and the Society of Friends, along with volunteers from the other churches, maintained the weekly Thursday 'Space to Share' drop-in sessions at the Quaker Meeting House. As in previous years, the ministers partook in the Remembrance Day Service in Gosforth Park, with this year the Revd Paul Baker from St Nicholas taking on its organisation and leading. Ministers again shared and advertised events in each other's churches throughout the year.

**Andrew Shipton**

## Film Group

This group continues to meet on the last Friday of every month in the Upper Room of All Saints' Centre. We start at 6.30pm, bringing our own supper (often fish and chips) then settle down at around 7.15pm to watch whatever film has been chosen by members of the group or recommended by others. This is normally followed by a discussion on any issues that have been touched on in the film and might prompt some debate.



We've seen a wide range of films over the past year, from older ones to some that have only recently been released on DVD. A particularly memorable occasion was when we watched *The Old Oak* filmed in this area and had the privilege of hearing about its filming first hand from a member of the cast.

We are very grateful to Pat and Vic Spong, who run the projection equipment. It would be really good if there were more who could share in that task.

This is a very enjoyable social occasion and newcomers are always welcome.

**Ruth Birnie**

## All Saints Book Group



I have been so encouraged by our launch of Book Group 2.0. Although very different from our original group in terms of members, venue and timing, the lively discussions and fellowship shared are making our monthly meetings a great success. We have tackled a range of texts and genres, often challenged to pick up a book we would never have chosen by ourselves. We are also trying to extend our reach by including reviews in *In Touch* and thanks must also go to Ann Cross for organising a monthly Book sale to boost Church Funds.

We are always looking for new members and you can expect a warm welcome. We might not always agree that we liked the text but the debate is always fun and friendly.

Please keep an eye on the weekly pew sheets to see what is coming up. Feel free to join us at Cafe Nero to share your ideas, opinions and questions – we'd love to see you.

**Karoline Wellborne**

## Mothers' Union

Mothers' Union meetings continue to take place at 2.00pm in the Church Centre on the second Monday of every month (except August). Although the number of members has decreased significantly, we are nearly always joined by two diocesan members and often welcome one or two guests and speakers.

We always begin our meetings with a short service with a set theme. The members are then informed of any forthcoming events, news from the deanery and diocese, and told what the next month's meeting involves.

In the last year we have heard all about Ad Gefrin at Wooler, St Valentine, had two informal talks from our vicar, thought about belonging (and belongings) and had two quizzes. The Revd Diana Macnaughton has visited us twice in her role as Action and Outreach Co-ordinator and knows that we still produce emergency toiletry bags for St. Nicholas's Hospital, Christmas bags for the homeless and comfort bags for mothers taking their children to Archbishop Runcie School on their first morning etc.etc.

We would really love to gain a few more members or even to welcome anyone to come along for the fellowship, refreshments and a good old natter!

**Pam Taylor**  
**Branch Leader**

## Art and Craft sessions



These monthly sessions came about as we realised that props were needed for the All Together services. In the first one, we created a series of pictures for the 'Creation' reading, and the success of this encouraged us to organise more, held on Saturday afternoons in the Hall either the week before or even the day before the services. We made a Poppy Banner for Remembrance Sunday then a host of Angel-related activities to complement the Festival of Angels in church. Since Christmas we have created townscapes, flames and a camel head

(!) for the story of Elijah, and a very bright and cheerful Mothering Sunday banner.

It's all very informal with copious amounts of glue and paint, and we have enjoyed welcoming lots of faces, some new, some familiar to All Saints. We will be taking a break over the summer months so that young people can enjoy Saturday afternoons outside and then restart in the autumn.



**Ann Cross and Helen Langley**

## **Pastoral and Spiritual Care Group**

The Pastoral and Spiritual Care Group continues to be concerned with how we care for one another as members of All Saints' congregations, as neighbours and with those we come into contact with through baptisms, weddings and funerals. We seek to encourage fellowship among members of the congregation and to welcome newcomers. In order to do this effectively good communication is essential and we are dependent on receiving up to date information about anyone needing pastoral and spiritual care.

Since the end of lockdown it has been a matter of concern that many families with young children have not resumed attendance at church but we have introduced an All Together Service on the second Sunday of the month at 9.30, designed to involve children and lay people and on the last Sunday of the month there is Faith@4 for families.

The group continues to send Christmas and Easter cards to those who are housebound and these are always greatly appreciated and we also send cards to those celebrating 'significant' birthdays.

It is our aim that all members of All Saints should feel that they are valued and that their pastoral and spiritual needs are met.

**Ruth Birnie**

## **Grass Cutting Team**



The Grass Cutting Team is responsible for maintaining the green to the west and the grass borders to the north and east as well as the Garden of Remembrance lawn to the south of our imposing church. Members of the team give up their time from the early spring to late autumn to ensure that the outside of our church looks its best. Although the mowers and the strimming machines are powered, cutting the lawns is a physically demanding task and

our church is thankful for the effort and commitment of the Grass Cutting Team.

Last autumn drainage engineers excavated and installed field drains beneath the green and although the surface appears uneven, we are advised it will settle in time. The new drains will reduce the areas which once were waterlogged after rain. A dryer green will be more useful for church and community activities.



Keeping the lawns and borders neat and tidy is important as attractive church grounds encourage many people to visit and demonstrates that our church is cared for.

**Paul Wilkinson**



### Sing at the Centre 2023

\* Led by an experienced professional musician.

Aims:

- ✓ To enjoy singing in a relaxing, fun & friendly environment
- ✓ To help reduce stress & take care of our mental wellbeing.

- \* The group has met most Tuesdays – (refreshments from 2:30, singing 3:00-4:00)
- \* Focus – many genres of secular music and gospel singing in up to 4 parts.
- \* Only £1 pp weekly subs (all contributed towards new music & use of the heated room)
- \* Regular Seasonal Social Events eg Christmas outing
- \* Our repertoire and skillset have grown hugely this year, and future singing events are in the pipeline for 2024

**Diana Lavin**

## Concerts and Recitals at All Saints 2024

In 2023 we continued to host Master Musicians International recitals monthly on Wednesday evenings, welcoming pianists such as Italian Mario Cuva, Matthew McLachlan, Mark Viner and Aidan Modica and including Gülsen Onay (a household name for decades in her home country of Turkey), a guitar duo from Italy (Giulio Tampalini and Daniele Fabio) and another legendary name, Lithuanian Ugnius Pauliukonis. We have regulars such as Viv McLean and Tyler Hay and in June a young graduate of the Royal Academy of Music, Tasmin Reed, was accompanied in a free flute and piano concert, The Flute Explored, an unforgettable evening of skilled musicianship including some really experimental music that pushed flute sounds into areas you'd never imagined they could go!

These concerts cover a broad range of repertoire, some featuring music you will not have heard before (some composed by the musicians themselves), all to an exceptional standard. The Lunchtime Organ Recital on Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> April 2024 given by Myles Hartley PhD FRCO to celebrate International Organ Day is of this very same calibre.

At our Farmers' Markets we also welcomed amateurs, their music adding an element of delight and interest to the days – Heaton Voices choir in June, an Old Time/Swing Band, Crotchets and Quavers in March 2024, over sixty steelpanners in November 2023 and Axum Folk Ensemble at our Christmas Fair 2023 bringing this time a seasonal programme perfect for the chilly winter weather. These outreach events are opportunities for amateurs of any age, level and genre to gain confidence about playing in public and delight and encourage listeners. They are free to attend and we appreciate donations.

Please continue to publicise these outreach events in person and/or on WhatsApps etc as they put the church on the map for many who have never been inside the building before and marvel at what they hear and find. Please suggest community event times to amateurs you know in case they would like to be invited to perform. As music exams are held in the Upper Room and in church a few times a year we aim to replace the piano in the Upper Room for the benefit of choirs and others! Thanks to those who welcome, help move the grand piano, offer refreshments and explain displays and church features.

**MASTER MUSICIANS INTERNATIONAL**

**ALL SAINTS CHURCH**  
WEST AVENUE - GOSFORTH - NE3 4ES

**CLASSICAL MUSIC CONCERTS**  
2024 SEASON

**WEDNESDAYS AT 7.30 PM**

Apr. 17th	<b>Viv. McLean</b> - piano Scarlatti, Beethoven (Appassionata), Chopin & Piazzolla
May 15th	<b>Mark Viner</b> - piano Kalkbrenner, Mozart, Chopin & Schubert
June 26th	<b>Giulio Tampalini &amp; Daniel Fabio</b> (Italy) - Classical Guitars Rossini, Vivaldi, Albeniz & de Falla
July 24th	<b>Henry Cash</b> - piano Debussy, Grondahl & Schubert
Sept. 4th	<b>Nurry Lee</b> (South Korea) - piano Chopin, Tchaikovsky (Nutcracker) & Ravel
Oct. 9th	<b>Tyler Hay</b> - piano Pianistic Giants of the C19 inc. Field & Kalkbrenner
Nov. 6th	<b>Yuxuan Zhao</b> (China) - piano Beethoven, Chopin & Rachmaninoff
Dec. 4th	<b>Ugnius Pauliukonis</b> (Lithuania) - piano Clementi, Rachmaninoff & Ravel

**Admission £11**  
Accompanied under-18s free

**Tel: 0191 213 0450**  
[www.mastermusicians.wordpress.com](http://www.mastermusicians.wordpress.com)

Generous support for the 2024 season  
by Mr. Alan England is gratefully acknowledged

**Rosamund Place**



## All Saints Gardening Group

The Group still meets regularly on the first Saturday of the month throughout the year and despite the atrocious weather has managed (more or less) to keep the Garden of Remembrance tidy. Amazingly, plants still continue to flourish, and we have recently been rewarded with a beautiful display of snowdrops. We carry out what can best be described as 'light gardening tasks' so anyone who can wield a pair of secateurs or do some gentle hoeing or edge-trimming would be most welcome! As well as working we do socialise too over a cup of coffee or tea and chocolate biscuits.



In 2023 we realised that we had been meeting for ten years, and marked the occasion with a delicious cake (made by Judy Riseborough and decorated by Alan Riseborough) which we shared at parish breakfast. (A point of interest that some may not know is that we started following reports that wheelchair users had difficulty navigating the paths, as some of the shrubs were overgrown. A group of us found that we enjoyed working together, and so the Gardening Group sprang from that. Our remit was always to focus on the Garden of Remembrance however.)

One of our bugbears is the weeds that keep popping up between paving slabs which, as well as looking unsightly, can make the paths slippery. We were deeply saddened by the loss last summer of Tony Armitage, who really made this his mark by clearing long stretches of footpath not only in the Garden but also along the sides of the church. We all owe it to Tony to continue his good work and make sure that the footpaths are both attractive and safe.

If you are interested in joining us do come along one month – we'd be very happy to see you and you can be assured of a warm welcome.

**Ann Cross**

## Farmers' Market



**NB** Initially set up in 2022 (post Covid) to support the church and its mission and to include charities based locally and of relevant importance to the immediate population.

- Second licence (up to 12 stalls) awarded in December 2022 for the 2023/4 season (max six markets, every two months, Saturdays 10-3)
- 4 markets held – April/June/Sept/Nov 2023
- Outdoor stalls, non-duplicate, each selling own produce including pies, cheese, rare-breed pork and lamb, bread, honey, beer, bakes (also VG, GF), recycled kitchenware, recycled turned wood items, microgreens, soaps.
- A Charity stall (eg Daft as a Brush, St Oswald's Hospice)
- Live music in church
- Church Information Guide in attendance

### **Attendance**

No specific record of market attendance numbers possible, but visually overall and Stall holders' reported sales good. Growth noted throughout the year as the Market gained in popularity among the community and wider Gosforth area.

### **Income**

- Stall pitch fees
- Coffee cart/ice-cream van/snack van pitch fees
- Donations at kitchenware stall
- % donation from wood stall
- Donations in church

### **Costs**

- Market licence fees (charity rate £50 per event)
- Alcohol licence fee, £21 (TENS)
- Facebook ads – variable
- Posters (made in-house as necessary, the laminated bulk intended for re-use)

### **2024 Intended aims:**

- New licence for 16 stalls
- Themed 'Event' Markets (eg Art/Children) to encourage further community connections/networks.
- Continued use of the Church and Green in addition to the N/E pathways

**Diana Lavin**

## **Report on the Proceedings of the PCC for 2023-2024**

The PCC met six times between May 2023 and March 2024, all of which took place in person. There was also an 'away day' at Alnmouth Friary and a team building evening at the Vicarage.

Finance was a subject that continued to be raised throughout the past year. Similarly, Safeguarding is a standing item on PCC agendas, with the PCC regularly being updated by the safeguarding officer on our progress on the Parish Safeguarding Dashboard.

In addition, other matters that came up during PCC meetings and were discussed as follows:

- Fundraising, including events and appeals
- Fabric, including the green, the organ and the tower leak
- Worship and Services
- Church website
- Christmas Fair
- Farmers' Market
- Prayer, study and nurture
- Chalice assistants
- Church video system and live streaming
- King's Coronation
- Archbishop Runcie School
- Young people and children
- St Hugh's
- Tyneside welcomes
- Our vision

The PCC has complied with the duty under Section (5) of the Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure 2016. This duty is to have regard to the House of Bishops guidance on Safeguarding Children and vulnerable adults.

**Alison Charlewood**

### **Fabric Committee**

After a particularly busy year in 2022 there was a hope that 2023 would be a little quieter.

Ongoing maintenance and repair of our buildings continued. Gutters have been cleaned, lawns mowed, the hedge trimmed and our gardens maintained with grateful thanks to the many volunteers involved.

One remaining project from the Crowd Funding in 2022 was the project to drain the green. This was finally completed in October, in between storms. The rain has hardly stopped since which makes it difficult to measure impact, although we can report that

significant amounts of water were drained away. The contractors will return in the Spring to roll the green.

In July our ringers were greeted by a flooded floor in the Ringing Chamber. This was finally tracked down to a drain on the tower roof which runs into the chamber and out onto the lower roof and which had become blocked. Water damage was caused to the carpet and walls of the Baptistry and remedial works were promptly carried out to the drainage system and to redecorate the Baptistry walls. Recarpeting has been authorised by our insurers for the whole church, to ensure that there is a match throughout and this work will be carried out in 2024.

In December our flagpole suffered storm damage. As it also acts as the lightning conductor for the church this was repaired promptly, again the costs, less our excess, being covered by our insurers. Estimated repairs to the organ of over £120,000 have been reassessed to do essential repairs only at a cost of £26,000 and these will be undertaken by Harrisons, the organ builders, in September this year.

Various discussions have taken place regarding future works on the green to achieve more varied spaces for wildlife; a maintenance plan for the trees has been produced, including potential for replacement/additional planting. A project to review the accessibility of the Centre and use of its spaces continues. These will be progressed in 2024.

**Peter Brown, Christine Willoughby**

## **Newcastle Central Deanery Synod 2023 – 2024**

Newcastle Central Deanery Synod has covered topics such as **Shared Worship, Better Stewardship, Pastoral Care** and **Young People Participation, Eco Church** and **Parish Share**.

Some churches have chosen a short- or medium-term objective in collaboration with others. Ten (out of 20) of the latter reported back on their ideas and progress which ranged from providing social space, developing work with toddlers linked to school families, coffee or lunch drop-ins and working with other agencies such as the University Chaplaincy and City Centre churches.

Andrew Shipton reported a meeting in November 2023, reviewing youth and children's work across three larger churches with a view to learn from the other: St George's has a junior choir. St. Nicholas' holds parents' gatherings. An After School Club had been attempted at All Saints but had not thrived (review to follow). Gerard Rundell spoke of collaborative work to bring together young people from across the Deanery such as on Good Friday (29<sup>th</sup> March) for a Youth Event. Joel Barwick (St Thomas's) stressed that individual young people and those in otherwise isolated groups should be encouraged and helped to see themselves as a part of something bigger.

Northumbria University held an exhibition in the city campus library relating to Forgiveness (11-22 March 2024: F-word Exhibition).

A talk by Nicola Denyer about **Lay Ministry** did not take place in April (the meeting was postponed). Training days for ALMs (Authorised Lay Ministers) were planned for 20<sup>th</sup> April and Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> July 2024.

**Eco Church Update:** Central Deanery has the highest proportion of Eco-Registered churches in the Diocese. St Andrews, for example, have just been awarded a Bronze Certificate whilst St Georges have Silver.

**Parish Share and Parish Giving- update:** As a Deanery in 2023 we contributed 99% of our promised sum for the year (across the diocese the sum is at 98%). The total on offer for 2024, £604,539, is £18,000 less than in 2023.

Attendees have spoken of churches' prioritising their need to focus on keeping going themselves and addressing local needs. Since the spring CDS has had no Deanery Secretary but recently an Area Dean Paul Baker has been appointed.

Future CDS Meetings: 26<sup>th</sup> June 2024  
19<sup>th</sup> September 2024  
27<sup>th</sup> November 2024

**Rosamund Place**

## **Mission & Giving**

Every month, any plate donations from our services are given to a nominated charity, agreed upon by the PCC at its November meeting. Before this occurs, a small group meets after appealing to the congregation for suggestions, to decide on these charities and missions of the month, using a set of criteria. In 2023, a total of £10,185 was collected and distributed (in 2022 it was £9,197).

**Andrew Shipton**

## **Standing Committee**

All Parochial Church Councils are required to have a Standing Committee and all officers of the PCC are automatically members. These are the Vicar, the churchwardens, Christine Willoughby and Nick Glover, lay chair, Peter Brown, treasurer, Fred Carr (succeeded in September by Chris Bolland) and PCC secretary, Alison Charlewood. In addition, each year, All Saints' PCC elects two further PCC members to the committee, and, at the moment, these are Katie Hogg and Diana Lavin. Exceptionally, at the first PCC of the cycle a third PCC member was elected and this was Joyce Jennings.

The committee is there to conduct any urgent business arising between PCC meetings, to consider matters in more detail as directed by the PCC and to determine the agendas for PCC meetings. Notes of all Standing Committee meetings are circulated to the PCC.

**Peter M Brown, Lay Chair**

## Groups using the Hall

### All Saints Badminton Club

The season starts on the first Wednesday of September until the last Wednesday of April from 7.30 – 9.30pm. All standards welcome. There is a small subscription, with a £2 fee for that evening. Most of the monies go towards the church funds apart from the odd expenses for tea, coffee and biscuits.



Anyone interested do not hesitate to contact me.

**J P Pytlak**  
**Tel No 07867 350226**

### Semitones



Semitones continues to be very grateful for the use of the Upper Room at the church hall on the first two Sundays of the month, for rehearsals. The remaining Sundays of each month, we take our music into care homes to share with those living with dementia. Semitones particularly enjoy playing in the large hall, when invited to entertain the attendees at the after-service tea; there is always a very warm welcome and the cake is exceptional.

Thank you for your continued support, without which we would be unable to carry on.

**Cecilia Owen**

## Zumba

My business is called FitMixx and I have been running community fitness classes at All Saints church hall for over ten years. The hall is in a great location and is the perfect size for my classes.

Initially I started a Zumba class which is still very much going strong and is so much fun.



I have also recently introduced a Clubbercise: Combat + Tone class. Like Clubbercise it is taught in a darkened room with disco lights and glowsticks but focuses more on combat and toning routines.

My classes are very welcoming, fun and friendly. Newcomers are always welcome to join us.

**Katie**

## Painting for Fun



Another fun year at Painting for Fun (P4F). We are a slightly smaller group this year but feel free to join us.

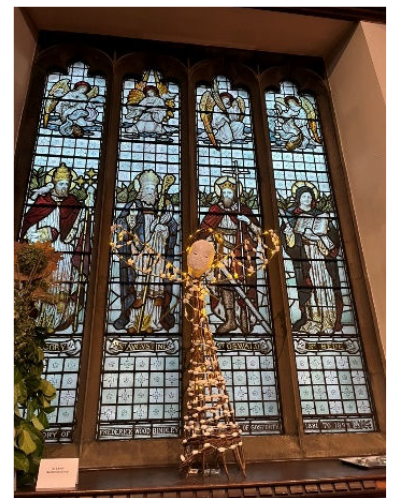
We had great fun producing our eco-friendly Christmas Angel – even buying biodegradable sellotape and yards of brown raffia which was a great help! It started off with a quick sketch and ended

up a bit different. However we were all very pleased with the end result and it looked even better if someone remembered to switch the lights on (which were allowed according to the rules)!

As far as the artistic bit of the group goes, a few people have benefitted from using grids to transfer drawings, photos or whatever to paper in order to paint them or colour them in.

We had an hilarious Halloween themed party and the artistic bit was designing patterns into scrapper board masks.

We had an equally entertaining Christmas party but it's not all about parties – we do actually draw, paint, chat and drink tea and coffee too!



**Gail Adcock**

## Tyneside Welcomes



On June 15<sup>th</sup> 2023 three members of Tyneside Welcomes' Gosforth Branch were at Newcastle Airport to greet a Syrian Refugee family who had been allocated to us under the Government Community Sponsorship Scheme. This was the culmination of almost two years' work to raise funds, find accommodation and build a welcome team able to support the family to settle and thrive in their new home.

As I write this nine months later the family has made great progress. They are very happy in their flat, they have made great strides with their English and manage their daily life pretty much independently. What a contrast with their first few weeks, when they had virtually no English (imagine landing in a city where you couldn't even read the signs as they are in Arabic). They couldn't find their way to the shops, and all their links with school, college, GPs, and Job Centre were yet to be established. Our wonderful team including Debbie Matthews, Valerie Farthing and Hannah Marshall from All Saints, as well as members of St Charles' Roman Catholic congregation and others with no religious affiliation were providing visits once or twice a day at first.

Whilst helping the family to navigate the benefits system has been frustrating at times, at least two British institutions have been reassuringly brilliant. The two boys have been warmly welcomed by their new school, a Church of England Primary and a 'School of Sanctuary' committed to providing a warm hospitable environment to children of all backgrounds. The boys' father has significant health problems resulting from injuries sustained in the Syrian conflict, and the NHS has been welcoming to him too. He is already feeling much better after a stay in hospital. We had not been well briefed about the father's mobility problems so it was really helpful that Karoline Welbourne was able to lend us her late mother's electric scooter at very short notice. I am sure Alfild, an immigrant who became a core member of our community whilst remaining proud of her roots, would have been very pleased about that!

Looking ahead, we will be continuing to support the family, as and when they need it, over the next year. A major challenge will be to find move on accommodation, as their current flat is on a fixed term two year contract. However, the family's progress so far suggests that they will become valued members of and contributors to our community. Both parents are keen to get jobs as soon as their English and health problems allow. As for the boys, who knows what they might achieve?

All of this would never have happened without the support of All Saints PCC and the generosity of the congregation, for which we are very grateful. Tyneside Welcomes, however, is not resting on its laurels and we are looking for new opportunities to support more families seeking a safe place to live. So do look out for future fundraising events and mention us to friends and family who may be interested in joining a welcome team, becoming a trustee, or offering a property to support a new family.  
<https://www.tynesidewelcomes.org/>

**Andrew Cole**



## Rugby Minis

Rugby Minis offer engaging and interactive rugby themed sessions for 18m -7 years olds in the Newcastle area. Our classes are designed to be non stop fun and action ensuring our toddlers (and adults) have the best time in every session.

### So Why Rugby Minis ?

- **Fun and engaging sessions** – Our sessions are non-stop, high energy and lots of fun!
- **Builds essential skills** – We develop physical skills, coordination, teamwork and communication
- **Boosts confidence** – We encourage children to take on challenges with confidence and love seeing our Rugby Minis thrive
- **Promotes a healthy lifestyle** – We help build a love for sports and physical activity

Join us for one of our great classes at All Saints Church-

- **18 months–3 Years Old  
Wednesdays and Fridays 09:30-10:00**
- **3 Years + Wednesdays and  
Fridays 10:05-10:40**

This is a link to our booking page:

<https://www.rugbyminis.co.uk/gosforth2024>

You can also find us on facebook and Instagram (@RugbyMinis).



ALL SAINTS  
CHURCH

[ALL SAINTS CHURCH GOSFORTH](https://www.rugbyminis.co.uk/gosforth2024)

18M - 3YRS: WED & FRI 09:30-10:05

3YRS - 4YRS: WED & FRI 10:10-10:45



<https://www.rugbyminis.co.uk/gosforth2024>

[info@rugbyminis.co.uk](mailto:info@rugbyminis.co.uk)

**Dave**  
07749841520

## Tappy Toes

Tappy Toes offers award winning dance and movement classes for little ones aged from 6 months up to 7 years.

We offer a range of different classes which are as follows:



**Teeny Toes**, our class for non walking babies

**Toddle Toes**, for walkers up to 2.5 years

**Tots Toes**, for children aged from 2 to 5 years

**Tip Toes**, this is our introduction to ballet class

**Top Toes**, this is our newest class which is for

school aged children from 4 to 7 years.

Our class at All Saints' Church Hall runs on Thursday mornings at 9:30am and is mainly populated by children aged from 18 months to 4 years. We would love to add another class in for younger children as soon as there is demand to do so

Our baby, toddler and pre-school classes are designed to foster motor skills, social skills, musicality, confidence, posture, and coordination from a young age. Watch them blossom into little dancers with us!



We use a variety of different dance props to keep your little ones fully engaged: hoops, bells, dance scarves and ribbons are a few of our favourites.



We always begin class with our bespoke Tappy Toes warm up songs and end every class with our Tappy Toes goodbye song.



This is a link to our booking page:

<https://www.tappytoes.com/franchisees/toddler-classes-newcastle-and-gateshead/>

You can also find us on facebook and Instagram.

[carly@tappytoes.com](mailto:carly@tappytoes.com)

**Carly**  
07811355604

## Taekwondo



Taekwondo National Tournament Northumbria University

We have had another very successful year. The motivation behind the academy is to promote social cohesion through the practice of Taekwondo. Our mission statement is 'self-development through self-defence', and through that we aim to help mould our students into kind and caring people who contribute to their community – but who can also defend themselves if need be. We are heartened by the age range of our classes – from four years old to well, could I put it to over 65! Many of our senior black belts have been training at the academy for well over

twenty-five years, which means we are doing something right. One of the highlights this year was two 16-year-old young women who attained their first degrees after training for over ten years – they started in the schools programme at South Gosforth first school and have come through the Taekwondo kids programme and then the Taekwondo syllabus. We are so proud of our young people – It takes a lot of dedication to get a black belt. It gives them a sound grounding in exam skills as well as life skills. We have a large number of young people who volunteer to teach the little children and many who use Taekwondo as their Duke of Edinburgh physical or volunteering awards.



Taekwondo National Tournament Northumbria University

We have had a very good competitive year with one particular Balzama, who achieved her blackbelt last year. She won gold at open British Championships and is English champion aspiring for her age. Francesca has been selected for the England team at the forthcoming European Championships in Poland in April. At fourteen, she has a very bright competitive future in front of her.



Taekwondo National Tournament Northumbria University

Each year we organise events to raise money for our adopted charity, St Oswald's hospice. This year we have organised a charity tournament with cake stalls, tombolas and raffles and raised over £1500. We recycle all of our used equipment and resell it with the funds going to St Oswald's. We organise a set of regional competitions to keep our competitive students at a high level so we can develop their potential and help them discover if they have what it takes to be an international performer.

We have the 'safeguarding code in martial arts' accreditation, which we have to apply for every year. This Sport England initiative means we have the correct policies and procedures in place to ensure that children and vulnerable adults are safe in our hands.

We let everyone train for free at the start of their journey. We think it is important that beginner students have the opportunity to take some time to decide that Taekwondo is the right activity for themselves, and that they commit to becoming a black belt. It is a long journey, but in many ways, the journey is the reward.

**Anthony McKenna**

## 21<sup>st</sup> Newcastle Rainbows

The 21st Newcastle Rainbows unit has had a fantastic first year at All Saints Church and we are now feeling at home. We currently have a full unit of eighteen girls who join us each week for a range of activities. Highlights over the last year have included a summer BBQ with the Brownies, completion of our Innovate badge where we got to be robots, celebration of the Lunar New Year where the Rainbows made some colourful dragon masks, completion of our Leadership badge, and our first Rainbows book club! We're looking forward to exploring the garden more in the summer term as well as some local trips around Gosforth, so please say hello if you see us!



If you know a child who would like to join Rainbows, or if you are an adult looking for a volunteering opportunity, then you can register your interest on join us:

<https://www.girlguiding.org.uk/get-involved/>

**Lizzy James**

## 21<sup>st</sup> Newcastle Brownies



We have been working hard on a number of badges including Innovate Skills Builder, Influence Skills

Builder, First Aid Skills Builder and Explore Skills Builder. The Brownies have also done lots on their interest badges at home including Baking, Grow Your Own, Speak Out and Languages.

The Brownies have taken part on lots of trips this year including the Cinema to see Little Mermaid as part of the Girlguiding screening, a trip to see Cinderella at Christmas and attending Girlguiding Newcastle's County Fun Day.



We had another fantastic Pack Holiday this year, which was held in May. The theme this time was The FIFA Women's World Cup. We played lots of football, baked some tasty goods, participated in crafts and even had our very own Opening Ceremony. All in attendance really enjoyed the weekend, with lots of tired Brownies (and Leaders) heading home at the end of the weekend.

We currently have 33 Brownies, 3 leaders, 1 volunteer, and 3 young leaders.

We have our Wonka themed Pack Holiday planned for May this year as well as a trip to London planned in November. The Brownies will continue to work towards their badges and we will be planning some exciting evenings and days out this year.



**Lauren Burnett**  
**Unit Leader, 21<sup>st</sup> Newcastle Brownies**

## 21<sup>st</sup> Newcastle Guides



This year 21<sup>st</sup> Newcastle Guides have enjoyed a packed programme of events, including baking, playing games and completing a range of 'skills builders.'

We have nineteen Guides, two Guiders, three Unit helpers and one young leader.

In the autumn term we focused on 'Skills for my future' theme award, completing a range of unit meeting activities, such as upcycling and problem solving. In October we had a fabulous time at Inflatespace, racing and bouncing on giant inflatables. The highlight of the term was taking part in a Clubbercise session, dancing to some great music with glow sticks to add to the fun.

The Guides enjoyed creating angels out of a variety of recycled objects to display in the hall. They also had great fun making scented wax melts and helping on the stall at the Christmas fair.

In the spring term we celebrated Burns night, reading Scottish poetry, trying tablet and taking part in a ceilidh dance. We also focused on First Aid, learning basic skills and completing a first aid quiz. On the last Monday of spring half term the Guides enjoyed making pancakes, adding lots of different toppings.

We made the most of the wonderful weather during the summer term, making great use of the field. We played games, completed scavenger hunts and used natural materials to create looms to weave on. We are looking forward to completing many more badges and attending Ford Castle in July for a Guide residential.

We are once again very grateful to the Church for their support.

**Hannah Johnson, 21<sup>st</sup> Newcastle Guide Leader**

## Beavers



Another fun-packed year, as ever. Cycling, camping, badges, knots, and one or two games here and there! After the magic show last year, we put on a shadow puppet show (thanks to Jon for building the 'stage') and St Hugh's

enjoyed visiting camp so much they are coming to spend the whole camp with us this year.

Full of goodbyes as the young people progress on to cub scouts, and this year, to leader Paul as well. Many thanks to him for all his contributions.

But also, full of hellos – new beavers joining us, new young leaders (Liam and Struan), and especially the duo of James and his dad Alex – a timely replacement for Paul to bolster the leadership team.

Patrick also turned eighteen (happy birthday!) which meant he was no longer able to be classed as a 'young leader' – he is now a full (proper?) adult leader. Sadly, not for very long as he has plans to go to university in the autumn.

**Oliver Williams**

### **Central Gosforth Cub Scout pack**

Cubs meet on a Friday evening, and we continue to have a thriving pack! In the hall, we have enjoyed evenings learning about navigation, personal safety, road safety, perfecting knots to aid our pioneering skills, making kites (then flying them on the Town Moor) and even building satellites!



We enjoy the outdoors as much as possible, both using the church green and arranging nights out of the hall. In the last year we have been trampolining, swimming, roller skating, coasteering and cycling. We have picked up litter around Gosforth, and we went pond-dipping with Northumberland Wildlife Trust. We have continued to maintain our small area of the church garden, and the cubs always enjoy our annual water night outside in the summer – which involves leaders and cubs getting very wet!

Other visits we have enjoyed include going to the synagogue in Gosforth, and the Gurdwara in Elswick. We also went in the Victoria Tunnel at Ouseburn, and enjoyed some scary stories in the dark. Camps have included a group camp with beavers and scouts at Dilston, and cub camps outdoors at Selby Wood and indoors at Kirknewton.

Our fantastic young leaders Sadie, Pietro and Imogen from Gosforth Explorer Scouts continue to support the group. We regularly hold pack forums to ensure we are meeting the cub's expectations of what they would like to do, and we are as you-shaped as we can be.

**Sarah Parkinnen**

### **Central Gosforth Sea Scouts**

We had a varied programme at All Saints Sea Scouts again this year. A highlight was our weekend on a Tall Ship; last May we had great sailing out from Royal Quays on the 'James Cook' with the Ocean Youth Trust. We make sure this a semi-annual event. We held a Scout camp in April



and a Group camp in June 2023, both at Dilston near Corbridge, and Scouts spent another weekend engaging in water activities on the Tyne based at the Derwenthaugh Sea Cadet centre. Other events included hiking from South Shields to Whitburn, a visit to RAF Boulmer and another to RNLi Amble (kindly organised by Trinity House), orienteering, paddle boarding, ice skating, mini golf, and indoor climbing. We also went to watch the Newcastle Gang Show in which a number of our Scouts participated. This is the longest running Gang Show in the world!

As well as lots of fun and games, activities on our troop nights included: urban orienteering, fire lighting and pioneering (of course!), wide games, 'Task Master' challenges, discussing our values as Scouts, a Halloween bonfire, and making a promotional video for Scouting.

We have maintained our excellent links with the church, attending the Remembrance Sunday parade and running a successful stall at the Christmas Fayre. Our Scouts also did some upkeep around the grounds of the church, and created an angel from recycled materials as a Christmas decoration.

We look forward to a busy year ahead, starting with a hike in May, and camp at West Hall in June.

This year we have some leaders moving on after many years of fantastic service. If you or someone you know is interested in volunteering, we would love to hear from you. In addition, despite healthy numbers, we do have a few places left within the Scout Group. So, if you know a young person (aged 10.5 to 14) who may wish to join us, please see our website (<http://cgsg.scoutsites.org.uk/scouts/158-2/>) or feel free to contact me ([gosforthscouts.allsaints@gmail.com](mailto:gosforthscouts.allsaints@gmail.com)) to discuss current availability.

**Jonathan Higgins, Section Leader, Central Gosforth Sea Scouts - All Saints**

### **Archbishop Runcie Church of England First School**

As we near the end of the spring term and are now two thirds of the way through the school year it is a good time to reflect on what has happened so far – it has been another busy year at Archbishop Runcie First School!



As you will already be aware, we have had some changes in governance over the last year. I would like to thank Andy McCabe for his support and commitment to the school during his time as Foundation Governor for All Saints. His contribution to our school has been significant. We have, this year, welcomed Diana Lavin as a governor to our school. Diana is well known to us in a music capacity and she will be an asset to our governing body.

We have recently appointed Mrs Ellen Brown as a support assistant at ARFS. Ellen not only attended our school as a child but also married at All Saints so we are delighted to welcome her back to our school community. I am also thrilled to let you

know that Mrs Francis, our EYFS Leader for the past four years, has been promoted to Deputy Headteacher!

This year we have been thinking a lot about our school vision, (motto 'Be courageous, be strong; do everything in love') and our school values (love and determination). Children can ably articulate these values and we celebrate acts of love and determination, shown by children and staff, each week in school. These have included making visitors welcome in our school, achieving new milestones and working hard on specific tasks, amongst other things.

Whilst still only half way through the school year, much has been achieved. Our Early Years outdoor areas have had a makeover and, after a recent visit, the LA have requested to use our EYFS as an example of good practice and a venue to host events. We are really proud of the work that has gone into making the children's start to school such a strong one.

Key Stage 1 have visited Newcastle Quayside, Newcastle Castle and St Mary's Lighthouse whilst Key Stage 2 have enjoyed an Ancient Egyptian experience at The Oriental Museum in Durham and Beamish Open Air Museum. We even had a whole school outing to Gibside for 'Face Your Fears' day in October.

Over the summer, our IT suite became a new school library. Mrs Crozier has decorated and organised it beautifully and we are very much enjoying the new library space. The Diocesan Education Board supported us to replace the fifteen archaic PCs with thirty new laptops and a mobile charging trolley! We have celebrated reading in lots of ways since the new Library space opened: bedtime stories, World Book Day, creating stories in a jar and recommending books to others.

The whole school delighted parents and friends with their Nativity Plays – it is a challenge we enjoy each year, choosing three different versions of the great story and involving all 174 children in ways which are meaningful to them, whatever their age or ability. There was hardly a dry eye in the house! My particular highlight of the year so far was a visit from a real reindeer at Christmas and seeing the wonder and amazement on our children's faces.

Our school choir is going from strength to strength and, over the last year, has performed at St Thomas' Church, the Civic Centre, St Nicholas' Church, Durham Cathedral, All Saints' Church and the Utilita Arena!

We continue to be especially grateful to Andrew Shipton and Miriam Jones from All Saints, Gosforth who visit us each week to lead collective worship. We are always looking for support our school and would welcome any offers of time that any of you may have. We have a range of roles for volunteers: from photocopying and laminating, to listening to children read, gardening or putting up displays. If you would like to be part of our team of volunteers, please contact Mrs Coates in the school office!

As I write, the sun is shining and children are laughing and enjoying our fabulous school grounds. Spring is a wonderful time of year, a time where we can appreciate God's beautiful creation and enjoy signs of new life in anticipation of Easter.

**Kate Massey**