



## Keeping in Touch

### Winter 2025 Edition

From the Vicar

Dear Friends,

#### **Approaching the New Year with positive energy**

I wonder if you can remember significant moments in your life when you did something for the first time or stepped into the unknown.

Perhaps it was the first time you rode a bike without stabilisers, dived into deep water, started your first day at school, prepared for a major operation, or made a public speech. Maybe you have even jumped out of a plane. There must be that moment when you take a gulp and jump.

In the face of the unknown, we often feel vulnerable, shaky, nervous, or even frightened. It's at these times we appreciate words of reassurance—a pat on the back, a thumbs-up, or a hand squeeze. On the first Sunday after the Epiphany, we heard about such a moment for Jesus at his baptism.

All four Gospels describe Jesus' baptism by John in the River Jordan—a significant event with major consequences. Jesus, about 30 years old, had spent his early life in Nazareth, working alongside Joseph and guided by Mary, his teachers, and elders. Up to this point, there is no record of him preaching or teaching. He must have sensed a call during this time. Then, suddenly, he left his old life for a new one.

The day of his baptism marked the start of his public ministry. Jesus was about to go public. His vision, hopes, and mission would now be revealed. This turning point began his teaching programme, which directly challenged worldly wisdom.

Did Jesus have specific training before his ministry? The Gospels suggest he did not. He queued for baptism like everyone else, had firm words with John, and prayed—seeking help. John baptized him, submerging him in the dark, cold water. As Jesus emerged into the light, a vision of heaven opened, and the Holy Spirit descended gently, like a dove. The voice from heaven affirmed him as God's Son, beloved and strengthened by the Spirit.

This divine affirmation reassured Jesus that he was on the right path. Matthew's Gospel notes the voice addressed the crowd, while Luke's report is brief. Immediately after, the Spirit led Jesus into the wilderness to face challenges.

As we enter the New Year, we too may face significant challenges. Some we share, others we keep private. Like Jesus, we need strength from within and beyond to navigate the unknown with a positive spirit. How much did Jesus know about his future? Even early on, he likely knew it wouldn't be easy. He knew he needed to pray, seeking God's voice for assurance, support, and challenge. In the Bible, assurance and challenge often come together.

At his baptism, was God not reassuring Jesus, saying, "You will be alright. I am pleased with you. Now go for it" When we pray, especially in uncertainty, we too can hear familiar words from Isaiah: "Do not fear, I have redeemed you. I have called you by name, you are mine. When you pass through waters, I will be with you; they will not overwhelm you."

We fear being overwhelmed, but we are told it will be alright. "Fear not"—God

created us, we are his, and he is with us. The past is forgiven, in the present He is with us, and the future is already in God's hands. As we begin the New Year, we too hear those words:

"You are my beloved, and I am well pleased with you. Do not fear."

Andrew Shipton

## Confirmation

On Sunday, November 3rd, All Saints' Church celebrated its patronal festival with a significant event: the confirmation of six members of our congregation.

The Right Reverend Helen-Anne, Bishop of Newcastle, presided over the service, where six individuals, having completed their preparation, were confirmed in their faith.

This occasion marked a momentous step for the confirmands and a joyous celebration for the entire All Saints' community.



team, which is tasked with encouraging worship with young people, invited members of the church, local uniformed groups, nearby schools, and community members to craft stars and other heavenly bodies from recycled materials.

The result was a spectacle of creativity and community spirit. A diverse range of star designs and planets, each with its own story, adorned the church nave. The stars were illuminated for the first time during the Advent carol service on December 1st, captivating all those who attended. Our Director of Music, John Lewis, arranged a special song complete with custom lighting for the event. You can view the special event on YouTube: [1st December 2024 6.30pm Advent Carol Service](#)

It was an amazing opportunity to create community engagement and invite so many into our church. Well done to the team and all involved. We can't wait to see what you come up with next year!



## Stars Light Up Advent

All Saints dazzled the local community with a unique and heartwarming display of recycled art. Inspired by last year's successful Angel Festival, the All Together

# Parish Giving

## Join the Parish Giving Movement!

All Saints Church is transitioning to Parish Giving, a modern and efficient way to support our ministry.

## Why Switch from Standard Order?

- **Convenience:** Automatically make regular gifts easily online.
- **Efficiency:** Reduce administrative costs for the church, allowing more funds to support our mission.
- **Tax Benefits:** Gift Aid is automatically reclaimed, maximizing the impact of your donation.

## Need Help?

Don't have a computer or unsure how to sign up? We've got a team is ready to help:

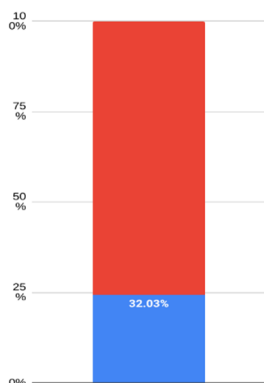
- **In-person guidance:** We can help you set up your account.
- **Questions answered:** Our team can address any concerns you may have.

**30% of our donors have already embraced Parish Giving!**

Join them in supporting All Saints through this innovative program.

Contact Nick Glover for more information or to schedule assistance.

Let's modernize our giving together and ensure a thriving future for All Saints Church.



# Christmas Services 2024

This Christmas season saw an unprecedented outpouring of community spirit at All Saints' Church. Over 1,000 visitors joined us for our festive services.

We extend our heartfelt thanks to everyone who contributed to the Christmas Eve and Christmas Day services, from our dedicated volunteers, choir, clergy, and to the many visitors who graced our doors. Your presence made Christmas at All Saints' a truly special occasion.

## In Memoriam

### Margaret Wilkinson

It goes without saying that Margaret was deeply interested in people and cared about them profoundly. She was outward-looking, observant, sharp, and perceptive, with a sparkle in her eye. She was willing to question, give her opinion, be honest, and share insights from her experiences.

Visiting Margaret was always stimulating, refreshing, and fun. She had an active, questioning mind and stayed up to date with events and ideas. She worried about people and felt deeply for them. No matter how she was feeling, she was interested in you and concerned about the important things in life. Our conversations would cover a wide range of topics, and she always wanted to know your opinion. I can imagine that Margaret was a most effective teacher, committee member, and school manager, as some of you will know from working with her.

Just a few days before she died, she sent me an email that was so typical of her. She wrote "I have been thinking about young ....., who has decided to be confirmed, and the others joining the confirmation classes. Please let him know

that I am thinking about him and am very glad he has taken this decision”.

Margaret knew herself well—what she liked and what she didn't. She lived her life with intention and integrity. As I have mentioned, she remembered people and so many details. She was confidential, dependable, and utterly reliable. Her ability to get to the heart of an issue was truly impressive. She gave strength to others through her attentive listening. People felt recognised by her as she sometimes gently tapped them on the arm at the end of a conversation.

This thanksgiving for Margaret's life is also a statement of her faith over all things and an encouragement to us on our own journeys of faith. That victory was made possible because Margaret wrestled with God. Despite experiencing great loss and sometimes doubt, she believed in the power of grace and love. She strove to uphold whatever is true, noble, right, pure, lovely, admirable—whatever is excellent and praiseworthy.

One of the things I found so encouraging about Margaret was that while she held onto these pure intentions with integrity, she also accepted life as it is, with all its complications. She remained positive while acknowledging the difficulties, compromises, sorrows, and joys of life. She lived fully in the present, looked forward to the future, and avoided becoming overly nostalgic about the past.

Margaret drew on the wisdom and understanding gained from her experiences and offered it to others, all the while knowing there was always more to learn. With this approach, Margaret was a pilgrim throughout her life. I know that she thought deeply about the words of the Gospel read each week at parish communion and tried to understand their meaning for herself.

Even while living at Ashley Park Care Home, Margaret remained totally engaged. She watched the service on YouTube a week or two before she died. When her name was mentioned twice, she took notice and offered some thoughtful and sharp comments on the sermon during a phone conversation. Margaret's curiosity and engagement never flagged.

Looking back, many of us at All Saints recognise the remarkable partnership Margaret and Fred shared. They were a close and effective team, devoted to one another. They shared values, supported each other's endeavours, and took an active interest in each other's concerns. Margaret enabled Fred to have a distinguished teaching career and a broader ministry within the Diocese. This partnership was tenderly expressed in her book 'Just Fred' that she published last year.

Margaret was clearly proud of her children and grandchildren and delighted in their accomplishments, often sharing updates about them. In recent years, she grieved for the loss of Rob and Fred but faced these losses with great courage, saying goodbye with gratitude and love in the summer, knowing her time was not long.

Margaret was a good friend to us and a deeply respected and admired member of our church community. It is still a shock not to see her among us. I imagine she has much to say to the Lord.

May Margaret rest in peace and rise in glory.

Andrew Shipton

## From the Registers

### All Saints

#### Baptisms:

8<sup>th</sup> December 2024 Jude August  
Sainsbury

## Funerals

23<sup>rd</sup> December 2024 Keith Buchanan died  
4th December 2024 aged 90  
27<sup>th</sup> January 2025 Charles Ellis Foister  
died 3<sup>rd</sup> January 2025 aged 83  
27<sup>th</sup> January 2025 Paula June Sands  
Smith died 13<sup>th</sup> January 2025 aged 77

## Memorial Service

14th December 2024 Margaret Wilkinson  
died 6th October 2024 aged 94

## Burial of Ashes

11th January 2025 Patricia Hilton  
17th January 2025 Elizabeth Crawford

## St Hugh's

### Funeral

16<sup>th</sup> January 2025 Raymond Trainer died  
27<sup>th</sup> December 2024 aged 97

# Support Us

There are several ways to support the work of our church in your community:

Visit [parishgiving.org.uk](http://parishgiving.org.uk) and quote All Saints unique parish code 250625092  
Or you can call 0333 002 1271, Monday to Friday 9.00am – 5.00pm, quoting our unique parish code 250625092

Text giving is now available! Text **SUPPORTASC** along with your donation amount to **70580**.

Thank you! Your donations are no small thing and helps support not just our congregation, clergy, and historical buildings, but our continued **mission** and **ministry** in your community.

# Social and Events Update

The Social and Events Committee has been running now for over half a year, with

a programme that is quickly becoming established as part of the life of All Saints. We organised a second trip to The People's Theatre in January, with both previous visits having been enjoyed by a group of around 20! All enjoyed a French-themed Brunch after the 9.30 morning Epiphany service, and we hosted a family walk in December around Jesmond Dene. We've been very lucky in that Helen Langley, a City Guide and member of our congregation, has been able to lead these walks and if you haven't been along before do come, she has a wealth of information about our area!

Future events include a family Quiz Night at the beginning of March WITH PANCAKES!

As explained before, there is a lot going on at All Saints already with groups focussing on various interests and skills, but if you feel there's a gap which could be filled – perhaps your age range isn't being catered for, for example – please do speak to one of the church wardens or members of clergy and we'll see what we can arrange! Do keep an eye out for posters advertising forthcoming events; these are often included in the weekly Newsletter/Pew Sheet and displayed on boards in the Centre, and inside and outside the church.

Thanks to our team and volunteers and we look forward to an exciting calendar of events in 2025!

# Eco Update



We've won an award! Some of you may remember the Eco Group that ran for some time at All Saints' but then was disbanded a couple of years ago. The good news is that this group is to re-form and will, as its first remit,

look at the ways in which our church can up its game in the Eco stakes.

All Saints have been awarded a Bronze Level certificate, and we think that with a little bit of work we may be able to achieve Silver. The All Saints' Eco Group Facebook page is still running, so why not take a look at that and maybe join?

Candle Recycling Project – can you help, please?

*“How far that little candle throws his beams. So shines a good deed in a naughty world.”*

*(Portia, Merchant of Venice)*

A few years ago, Paul Wilkinson and I began a candle recycling project re-purposing stacks of old candles in vestry cupboards which we cut, trimmed, wittled and scraped and fitted into existing candlesticks for display during Advent and Epiphanytide. I have spent no money at all on this to now but our project now needs assistance as we continue to avoid landfill and by making use of existing resources avoid spending on candles for at least 5 years.

We have dozens of candles 1¼” / 3cms wide that have no solid base in which to lodge – some are a hand's width high, so need a firm foundation.

- Do you have a wide candle or candlestick base that we could have, please? (We have small candlesticks in church that need fine, thin candles – we're not after these!)
- Perhaps you already make candles - could you make small candles for displays – not as small as tea-lights, but in jars 2” / 5cms high? We have half, broken candles and also glass dessert dishes you could have if so! We have some excellent, old-fashioned-quality large altar and Paschal candles that need to be converted into pillar candles that will

last several services and even whole months of services. We are keen to avoid creating extra work for anyone, including us.

- Would you be prepared to donate towards the cost above? Please let clergy, churchwardens, members of the PCC, Paul or me know your thoughts on this! Thank you!

Paul Wilkinson and Rosamund Place

## Safeguarding News

All Saints should be very proud of the commitment everyone makes to safeguarding and ensuring that all aspects of welcome, worship, and fellowship are as safe as possible for everyone.

All staff, PCC members, group facilitators and many volunteers are DBS checked and undergo the required training. This is an ongoing process as new people volunteer and renewals become due. As the Safeguarding Officer I would like to thank everyone who does this and responds to my, hopefully gentle encouragement, so willingly.

As the New Year starts, I would like to encourage anyone in the congregation who is interested, to consider doing the Safeguarding Basic Awareness training module, which can be accessed online using the following link. When you open the page scroll down the left-hand column to the Safeguarding Learning Events where you will see the Basic Awareness Module to click onto.

<https://www.newcastle.anglican.org/safeguarding/safeguardingtraining/>

The course has been developed by The Church of England and gives great insight into the situations any one of us may encounter in the church setting. Our Bishop Helen-Ann has been at the

forefront of ensuring all our church spaces are safe and is keen that everyone has an understanding as to why safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.

If you are interested but unable to access online training, please let me know. If there are a number of people who would like to do the training but in a group setting then I could look at delivering a face to face session, again please let me know.

If you do decide to undertake the training, I would be most grateful if you could please let me know.

Any questions or thoughts please do not hesitate to contact me on 07880618911.

Thanks, Kath Davies

## Mens Group News

This new group started in October last year with an initial get-together at the County in Gosforth High Street. Following that it was thought that we could meet on the first Wednesday of each month, alternating between social meetings and speakers.

To date we have welcomed two speakers, the first being our own Peter Mitchell from All Saints. Peter gave a most interesting talk on the The Bridges of Konigsberg which exercised our minds thoroughly! The next speaker was Paul Waugh from Street Pastors Newcastle, whose illustrated presentation was quite an eye-opener when we saw how these volunteers were willing to put themselves at risk quite regularly in order to prevent vulnerable people, out in the city centre and enjoying themselves, from coming to harm.

Our next meeting will be on Wednesday 5th February at 7.30 in the Job Bulman. We hope to have a programme for future meetings out soon, so do watch out for this. Ideas for speakers are always welcome.

Paul Cross ([paulcross505@gmail.com](mailto:paulcross505@gmail.com))

## Epiphany Breakfast

Last September the Social and Events Team discussed creating opportunities for people to meet newcomers and each other at various kinds of social events. The All Together Team had agreed with clergy to concentrate on our main festivals and the Social Team's ideas stemmed directly from that.

The French-themed Epiphany Brunch came from our sense that Magi came from afar, from distant, foreign lands, from the East. We in the North therefore gave a nod to the South by heating and baking French food during the Epiphany service – croissants, pains au chocolat, aux raisins, quiche Lorraine, aux legumes méditerranéennes etc. We served cafetière coffee and half of our coffee was Fair Trade. We were grateful too to include Ann Downey's special party food!! Thanks to all our volunteers who helped in every way.

Requests for a galette des Rois produced two – thank you!! A pastry dating back to the 14th century and maybe even further, it is eaten in France on Twelfth Night. It has a small figurine in it (it used to be a bean!) and ancient tradition dictates that the person who finds the bean (often engineered to be a particular child) is crowned King or Queen for the day. As it was Ann Downie's very special birthday, we decided she should be crowned Queen! Ann wore her crown with style.

The weather was dreadful and quite a lot of congregation members did not make it to church in the snow and ice. Nevertheless, we had good numbers, a merry atmosphere with French accordion music and many appreciative comments!!

Neither the Social or All Together Teams are responsible for catering – if you fancy offering your services, give us a shout!!

Ann Cross, Pam Taylor, Joyce Jennings,  
Karoline Wellborne, John Lewis,  
Rosamund Place



Look out for news of the next film choice on February 28. Come and join us in the upper room at 6:30 with food or 7:15 just for the film. We have a short discussion afterwards.

Well done to everyone for braving the weather!

Valerie Farthing

## Film Group

Although poor attendance was forecast due to illness, regulars being away, and worrying Amber weather warnings, we monitored wind speeds on our weather apps and were able to meet after all. Ruth was, on one hand, asking me for assurance I would appear at 6:10pm so we could go for our fish 'n chips, while on the other hand, my daughter was messaging me from Majorca, hoping to hear that I was staying safely in for the evening.

Knowing that Katy had her taxi booked and aware that our projectionist Vic had not yet wavered, I assured Ruth I was on board. Wind speeds had dropped some by 6:00, so Gosforth Chippy was duly visited, and we were back on the high street in reasonable time to park. The table was out, Katy was already seated and the Spongs appeared. We all demolished piping hot haddock and chips with various tipples! We also welcomed some newcomers, Julia and Judith.

*American Beauty* was a surprisingly risqué choice for a church group. Explicitness and expletives had to be taken on the chin! After all, as Katy said, we were all adults. We did conclude, however, that it was a good film, effective on blowing apart the American dream - 25 years before Trump did.