

**December/January
2024/5**

Theme:
'Epiphany'

Faith in the Moor



News, Views and Information



50 pence

A Path to Epiphany

For Christians the Feast of the Epiphany marks the arrival of the Three Kings in Bethlehem; the day that the Church later named the 'Manifestation of Christ to the Gentiles'. Through the visitation of the Kings, who had travelled from another country, Jesus' Nativity is revealed as an event with a very special meaning for all humanity both within and beyond the nation of Israel.



In common secular parlance, the word 'epiphany' has come to be defined as 'a sudden, intuitive perception of, or insight into, the reality or essential meaning of something'; a moment of enlightenment that allows a situation to be understood from a deeper perspective. It can also be held to mean the result of a long process of significant work on the part of a discoverer.

While these definitions generally carry no 'religious' significance, are they so far from describing what happened with the Three Kings? First of all, they observed the star – almost certainly of the type known as a super-nova.



Their intuitive understanding of the movement of the heavenly bodies enabled them to interpret its presence as God's chosen sign of His Son's birth. They then had to undertake a long and expensive journey in pursuit of their discovery, during which their lives became endangered on account of the news they brought King Herod.

Perhaps one of the important lessons from the Epiphany for us as Christians is that, when we are presented with a sudden discovery or revelation or an answer to a lengthy process of seeking and questioning in our ordinary day-to-day lives, we should always ask ourselves how God might be trying to reach us through them. So many of us have achieved significant advances on our journeys of faith and in our everyday endeavours by our responses to such 'epiphanies'.

Richard Pattison

God Can Work in Us Too

I'm really excited to be joining you here in Alston Moor as the New Lay Pastoral Worker with the Methodist Church. And I'm already beginning to enjoy living in this beautiful part of the country.



And as we approach Christmas, one of my favourite memories of the Nativity story, is telling it to an after-school club I used to run a few years ago, in a town in Pendle where I'm from. And one of the young people there having the epiphany during the session, that the baby Jesus in the story is God, and the amazement that came with that realisation: that a baby, in all its vulnerability could also be the same God that created us all. And it's this same baby that grew up to do incredible, amazing and impossible things, whilst still being fully human, and taking with him all the challenges that being human brings with it. And of course, it's this same baby that went on to save the world.

It's this Jesus that is vulnerable and relies on his mother to survive that we see at Christmas, and elsewhere in the gospels, that gives me the faith that God will work in me too with all my weaknesses. And we as a one church under Christ; Methodist, Roman Catholic, Anglican and everyone in between, can still do remarkable things in the area. And from what I've already seen from the short time I've been here, are doing remarkable things, no matter how weak we think we are, or the place of weakness that we think we're coming from or what we're lacking, God is still at work in his church. God can and will use us in all our vulnerabilities for the glory of his kingdom. We've just to jump on board. Just as from that vulnerable little baby we see at Christmas went on to save the whole world.

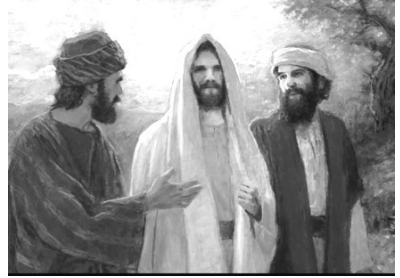
I think this is an easy to miss message in the midst of Christmas, through all the business, and events and friends and family and the old familiar stories, I pray that we can all have that epiphany once again, as if it's the first time we're hearing it, of the vulnerable little baby in the manger being the same God that created us all, and the Saviour of the World.

*Dean Lawson
Lay Pastoral Worker,
East of Eden Mission Community, East Cumbria Methodist Circuit.*

Epiphany People

‘Where is he that is born king of the Jews, for we have seen his star in the East and have come to worship him. Hearing this the king was troubled.’ The Bible and Christian history are full of people who have had epiphany moments in their faith, which in turn may inspire others – or may not. The Kings rejoiced, but Herod was troubled.

When Jesus came to Caesarea Philippi he asked his disciples, ‘who do people say that I am?’ They replied ‘some say John the Baptist, others say Jeremiah or one of the prophets.’ ‘But what about you,’ he asked, ‘who do you say that I am?’ Simon Peter



answered ‘you are the Christ, the Son of the living God.’ Jesus told him he was blessed because the revelation came from God, not man.

In October 1735 John Wesley started for Georgia in a little sailing ship, enrolled as one of the foreign missionaries, part of George III’s aim of developing the American colonies. The voyage took months, was uncomfortable and he feared death. Charles was already working as secretary to the governor when John arrived. John plunged into work as a chaplain teaching the locals, but he did not have his mother’s sensitivity and they did not welcome his efforts, so in 1737 he arrived home and resigned. Charles too had fallen out of favour, and had returned the previous year deeply disappointed. Suffering from pleurisy, alone and feeling a long way from the Lord, Charles heard a maidservant speak to him through the keyhole: ‘In the name of Jesus Christ arise and thou shall be healed.’ In a flash there came an awakening, assured belief. In a second he knew his sins were forgiven, that he had the love of Jesus, and God would take charge of his life. His brother John’s experience of his heart being ‘strangely warmed’ - also when he was at very low point - may be more famous, but both brothers needed that certainty of personal experience before they could inspire others.

(from Stanley Sowton’s biography, 1962)

Our lives demonstrate what we believe, so they may be an epiphany to others.

George Mullard

Ambition for Our Young

A profile of Rob Dawson, Headmaster of Alston Moor Federation

The first thing that strikes you about Rob Dawson, Alston Moor Federation's new head, is that he is tall, tall and friendly with an open face and manner. What's more, he has a sense of humour. Which helps when you have to go into the headmaster's office to interview him.



He has been a teacher for 22 years after growing up on a farm at Stainton, near Penrith, with his two brothers. None of them wanted to follow their parents into farming, instead they all became teachers at some point though one is now in the environmental business and the other is currently working with Dad building bungalows on the farm.

Why not farming? "I wasn't keen on sheep really," he says. Instead, he had thought about becoming a vet but his exam grades weren't high enough. He admits that it could be to do with the time he spent in his teens playing rugby while at Ullswater Community College (UCC) rather than studying. Instead, by the time he did A-Levels he knew he wanted to teach. "I like working with kids, particularly teenagers. I had had some great teachers at school, but some bad ones too."

Did he have an epiphany (the theme of our current issue) along the way? Not really, he says, but coming into teaching showed him that he is quite a lot brighter than his academic record indicated. This is from a man who got 9 GCSEs at A-C and a clutch of A Levels! What he learnt as an adult was the skill of being organised, which he wishes he had known earlier.

After his degree at Leeds Metropolitan University, he went back to his old school, UCC, teaching PE and technology, his other specialisation, for 12 years, becoming head of sixth form. In June 2014 he joined Queen Elizabeth Grammar School, for the next 10 years rising from Assistant Head to Deputy Head.

How does he view teaching after 22 years? It has come a long way but it is a lot harder now, he says. There is more scrutiny, and the Internet and

mobile phones make it challenging. “The way society approaches teaching is difficult at the moment – there is not enough value given to schools and how hard it is to succeed with children. The government imposes lots more responsibilities on us beyond our remit. That said, it’s still a good job”. Not all teachers agree, the speedy departure from the profession of newly qualified teachers is well-known. So how do you keep them?

“Things are getting worse in terms of recruitment. You have to make the job as attractive as possible, but it is difficult when industry offers flexible working, flexitime and 3 days a week in the office.” He can’t do that, instead he tries to offer the most attractive employment he can, with teamwork playing an important role.

Since joining AMF, in January 2024, he has imposed a ban on phones - switched off and out of sight at school. The school role has grown from 90 to 106 pupils and by next summer there will hopefully be around 120. He wants the school to grow and to be able to have two teaching sets. During next Spring’s visit from the Department of Education, they will discuss redeveloping the school premises, in line with his ambition for children at Key Stage 4 to be given a wider choice of options such as more practical subjects. A challenge will be to find employers locally to support apprentices once they leave school. At the moment children are limited geographically in their options because employers are widely spread.

Rob believes that Covid and the lockdowns have had a massive impact on the children. While some, like his own family, found it easy and had lots of devices, “For some families it was lovely being together,” others suffered. “We will be unpicking the impact for a long time.” On the plus side, lockdown drove the use of technology in teaching. Rob is very keen on extra-curricular activities like outings as a way of supporting children’s learning. He did a successful residential summer trip with Year 7 children to Carlisle. Rob is planning a trip to Berlin in 2026 for current Year 7 and Year 8 pupils.

His wife Catherine is a languages teacher: they have two children, Sophie nearly 17 and Jamie, 14. His hobby used to be rugby which he loves, and he has had a dislocated shoulder, broken fingers, ribs and toes to prove it. (I wonder what the other bloke was like?) Now he has started to play cricket again with his son.

Rob's goal is to try and better meet the needs of the children, but in a fast-changing world you do not know what to expect. His message to the children – you get out of education what you put into it. Stress? “I try not to take things too seriously – people I have worked with before say my sense of fun or irreverence are among my best strengths – if you worry about everything too much you will tie yourself in knots.”

Kathy Reeds



“Not keen on sheep” but nurturing the young on his Dad’s farm



everyone will have seen these: behind the doors are themed pictures relating to the eponymous characters, culminating on the 25th December with one showing Santa Claus!

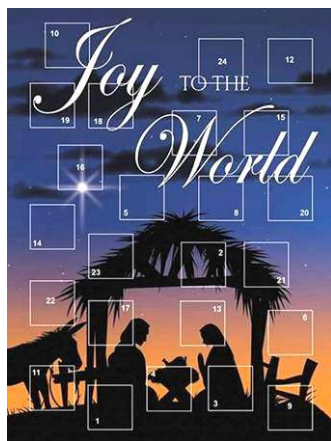
(not to mention the so-called adult ones)

All part of the secular year that includes Hallowe'en and the Easter Bunny; a far cry from the original intention of the real Christian Advent calendar.



The origins of the idea of Christians' counting down the days of Advent to Christmas are rather vague but they seem to have appeared in the 1800s with German Protestants, who would make chalk marks on their front doors, and rub one off each day until Christmas Day. Advent candles and putting small religious pictures on the wall each morning also became ways of counting down the days.

The Advent calendars that we still buy today were first mass-produced in 1908 by Gerhard Lang, who worked at the Reichhold & Lang printing office in Munich, Germany. The business produced over thirty different calendar patterns until the 1930s. These calendars had twenty-four doors and by all accounts were beautifully decorated. Before long, Advent calendars had doors that, when opened, revealed religious pictures, and some, particularly ones given to children, contained chocolates. These proved popular over the years, but manufacturing them ceased during World War II when the availability of paper, cardboard, and chocolate became limited. Production began again in 1946 and ten years later, Advent calendars were being used all over the world.



It is sad that the Christian significance of the Advent calendar as a way of expressing the countdown to Christmas has been largely lost through its misappropriation by the world of commerce. Perhaps this year, as we approach Advent, which is after all a *penitential* period in the Church's calendar, we might make it our personal prayer that our society will recover the season's true significance. At this uncertain time in our world's history, too, the words of the Collect for Advent Sunday from *The Book of Common Prayer* seem more appropriate than ever:

Almighty God, give us grace that we may cast away the works of darkness, and put upon us the armour of light, now in the time of this mortal life, in which Thy Son Jesus Christ came to visit us in great humility; that in the last day, when He shall come again in his glorious Majesty, to judge both the quick and the dead, we may rise to the life immortal; through Him who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, now and ever. Amen.

Richard Pattison

Fair trade chocolate and a booklet to learn more about 'the real Christmas'

"I'm not saying the area was rough but when I bought an advent calendar someone had nicked the chocolates and the 24 windows were all boarded up."





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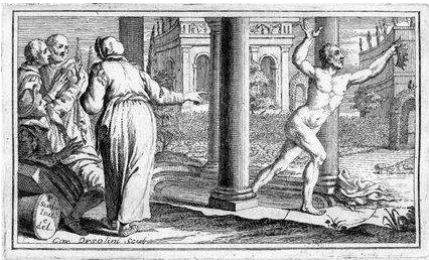
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Eureka! - I've Found It!

As p2 says, Epiphany may mean 'a sudden, intuitive perception of, or insight into, the reality or essential meaning of something' but such an epiphany is generally not 'straight out of the blue.' It results from significant ground work, possibly by several individuals, although the final result may come in a flash or revelation, surprising the discoverer.

In scientific circles, this revelation is often referred to as a "Eureka" or "lightbulb" moment, the latter summoning up the picture of a light in the discoverer's mind suddenly illuminating the answer which had eluded him or her up to that moment, often inducing an emotional outburst.



Eureka! comes from the Greek language and literally means 'I've found it!' and is attributed to Archimedes, the great scientist of antiquity. Around 250BC, Archimedes had been set a tricky problem by King Hiero II of Syracuse, namely to verify Hiero's suspicion that a new gold crown he had had manufactured was not,

as claimed by the jeweller, made of solid gold. Archimedes was initially stumped and decided to think it over whilst taking a soothing hot bath (who wouldn't?). As he lowered himself into the water, he saw the level rise and realised in an instant that a solid body must displace its own volume when immersed in water. Armed with the volume and weight of the crown, the purity of the gold could be determined. Archimedes was so overcome by the emotion of his epiphany that (as shown in the attached drawing by Pietro Scavini, based on an engraving by Carlo Orsolini) he reputedly cried "Eureka!, Eureka!", leapt from the bath and ran naked through the streets of Syracuse to tell the King. Using his new method for measuring volume, Archimedes could prove that the King had indeed been duped by the jeweller. (Sadly, the comments of the King and his Queen on being confronted by the naked Archimedes have not been recorded.)

There are many other examples of Eureka moments in the history of science and below I've included some of my favourites.

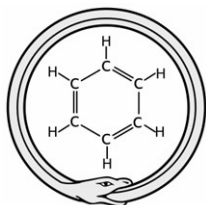
Isaac Newton had his Eureka moment in 1666, when, sitting in the garden of his home at Woolsthorpe Manor in Lincolnshire and contemplating how to explain the orbits of the moon and the planets, he observed that apples falling from a laden tree always fell in the same direction – down towards the centre of the earth. He concluded that the acceleration of the apple must be due to a force of

attraction between the apple and the earth's centre and that such a force of attraction existed between any two bodies. With this insight, Newton was able to formulate his law of universal gravitation, which remained unchallenged for over 200 years. (Today the tree still stands and the apples still fall down to the ground in the same way.)

When wrestling with scientific problems, Einstein famously conceived "thought experiments" to help his understanding. In 1905, Einstein was struggling to resolve Newton's equations of motion with the knowledge that the speed of light was a constant. Travelling home on the tram in Bern, Switzerland, he imagined looking back at the city's famous Zytglogge clock tower whilst the tram moved faster and faster. He realised that when the tram's speed approached the speed of light, then time on the clock face would appear to him to run ever more slowly, whereas his watch would continue ticking at the normal rate. This dependence of time on the observer's speed is one of the key elements in Einstein's theory of relativity. Einstein himself recalled the incident as "A storm broke loose in my mind". In the coming years, this storm would radically change physics and the understanding of the universe.



My final two Eureka's come from the world of chemistry. The Russian chemist and inventor Dmitri Mendeleev had done a great amount of research into the set of chemical elements and became convinced that there must be a way to order these elements in terms of mass and chemical properties. Inspired by the card game "patience", where related cards are placed in columns and rows, he made himself a set of 63 cards for the known set of elements and their properties. In February 1869 he spent three days and nights looking for patterns and sequences but without success and, exhausted, fell into a deep sleep. He later recalled "I saw in a dream, a table, where all the elements fell into place as required. Awakening, I immediately wrote it down on a piece of paper." The resultant "periodic table of the elements" is one of the fundamental tools of chemistry and now contains 118 known elements.

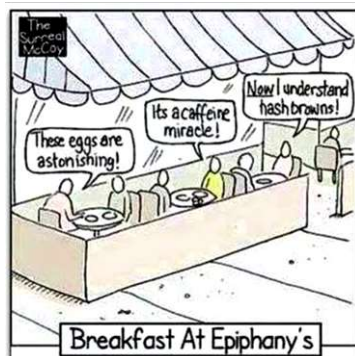


August Kekulé was a German chemist who, in 1858, had defined a ground-breaking theory for the molecular structure of chemical compounds. In 1865 he was working on benzene, a naturally-occurring flammable liquid. Its chemical formula was known but no-one could determine its molecular structure. One evening, whilst writing up his thoughts, Kekulé fell asleep by the fire. He dreamt of writhing snakes and as he

later recalled “And see! What was that? One of the serpents seized its own tail and the form whirled mockingly before my eyes. I came awake like a flash of lightning. I spent the remainder of the night working out the consequences of the hypothesis”. In his dream he had correctly identified that benzene has a ring structure of six carbon atoms. This Eureka moment was the spur for a new branch of organic chemistry in which benzene became (and remains today) one of the most important chemicals in industrial processes.

As a conclusion, if you’re mulling over a tricky problem, always carry a pen and paper to be able to record your Eureka moment and, if you do your thinking in the bath, always have your dressing gown handy ...

Dave Smith



A Christmas Crescendo

‘El Dia de Los Tres Reyes Magos’ - these words ring out with promise and excitement as they announce the Epiphany as ‘The Day of the Three Kings;’ the zenith of Christmas celebrations in Latin speaking

countries from Spain to the Americas. ‘The king’s parade – El Cabalgata de los Reyes - is one of the most cherished and exuberant events in their festive calendar: which asks us to ‘step into a world of wonder and enchantment’ – Barcelona, and ‘comes alive with the captivating three kings procession, a dazzling display of pageantry.’ – Malaga. While ‘a resounding fanfare marks the beginning of the enchantment’ in Puerto Rico.

‘On the eve of the Three Kings Parade, streets will be full of dancers and musicians, amazing costumes, and the Three Kings arriving on camel, horseback or floats. Handfuls of sweets will be thrown to the children watching the parade and you can expect lots of fun and noise.’

[ourspanishadventures.com] Melchior, Caspar and Balthazar will eventually depart and ‘magically’ deliver gifts to every child. Children now asleep will have



placed their polished shoes, with grass and water for the camels/horses and wine for the kings, at the door or on the balcony. Or, as in Puerto Rico, a grass-filled



box for the camels/horses is placed at the end of their bed with a 'wish letter' to their favourite king: who would I - who would you - choose?

A celebratory food widely eaten on Epiphany Day is the Rosca de Reyes, a sweet pastry

or bread wreath or crown carrying scripture references: 'The circular form of the rosca represents God's eternal love which has no beginning or end. The shape of the rosca symbolizes a crown, in this case, the crown of King Herod from whom Mary and Joseph were trying to hide the infant Jesus. The sugar and fruit on top represent worldly distractions that keep us from finding Jesus. The small doll inside the rosca represents the baby Jesus who was visited by the Three Kings and hidden away from King Herod. While the sweets that decorate the rosca represent the crown jewels of the Three Wise Men.



Such is their attachment to this special season, Puerto Rico has founded Casa Museo de Los Santos Reyes: a Museum dedicated to the Three Kings. A museum of two buildings, one containing Puerto Rican artwork depicting the magi, the other containing mannequins robed in the costumes of 2004 when those chosen kings travelled to the Vatican for an audience with the Pope.

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Methodist Services



All services at 11.00 am in St Wulstan's, unless otherwise stated.

1. Advent Sunday Rev M Elliot
5 pm The Hive, Nenthead - Pennine Praise
8. Rev Dave Milner
15. at 3 pm at the Town Hall Community Carols
22. Dean Lawson
29. Local Arrangement - a seasonal time of sharing
5. Annual Covenant Service with Holy Communion - Mary Elliot
No Pennine Praise
12. Local Arrangement - Pauline de la Mare
19. David Pepin
26. Rev Dave Milner

Quaker Meeting for Worship



Quaker Meeting for Worship continues to take place every FOURTH SUNDAY of the month at 10.30am, throughout the year

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Roman Catholic Mass

St Wulstan's, Kings Arms Lane, Alston, CA9 3JF

Vigil Mass every Saturday at 6.00 pm

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Christmas Eve Vigil Mass at St Wulstan's: Tue 24 Dec 3pm



Ecumenical Service at Grisedale Croft

A relaxed, informal service, on a Thursday afternoon 1.30pm:

Thursday 19th December, and Thursday 16th January

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 18 – 25 January

Tuesday 21st January – St Wulstan's 6 pm



Church of England services & events



Sunday Services in December



For Christmas Services, see back cover



Sunday, 1st December (1st Sunday):

9.30 am Holy Communion (BCP) Holy Paraclete, Kirkhaugh
11.00 am Sung Communion St Augustine, Alston (*also livestream*)

Sunday, 8th December (2nd Sunday):

9.30am Morning Prayer St John, Nenthead
11.00am Sung Communion St Augustine, Alston (*also livestream*)

Sunday, 15th December (3rd Sunday):

9.30 am Holy Communion St John, Nenthead
11.00 am Prayer & Praise St Augustine, Alston (*also livestream*)

Sunday, 22nd December (4th Sunday):

9.30am Morning Prayer St John, Nenthead
11.00am Sung Communion St Augustine, Alston (*also livestream*)

24th-25th December – Christmas Eve & Christmas Day: *See separate page*


Sunday, 29th December (5th Sunday):

11.00 am Sung Communion St Augustine, Alston (*also livestream*)

New Year's Eve


11.50 pm Ringing in the New Year St Augustine, Alston
Bells, prayers and bubbly!

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Sunday Services in January

Sunday, 5th January – The Epiphany (1st Sunday)

9.30 am Holy Communion (BCP) Holy Paraclete, Kirkhaugh

11.00 am No Service – Methodist Covenant Service at St Wulstan's

Sunday, 12th January (2nd Sunday)

9.30am Morning Prayer St John, Nenthead

11.00am Sung Communion St Augustine, Alston (*also livestream*)

Sunday 19th January (3rd Sunday)

9.30 am Holy Communion St John, Nenthead

11.00 am Prayer & Praise St Augustine, Alston (*also livestream*)

3.00 pm Evening Prayer St John, Garrigill

Sunday 26th January (4th Sunday)

9.30 am Morning Prayer St John, Nenthead

11.00 am Sung Communion St Augustine, Alston (*also livestream*)

****No service in Lambley or Knaresdale, no January Evensong Kirkhaugh****

Sunday services online

- Join us at 11am weekly on **Zoom**. The **Meeting ID code** is **357 123 751**.
- Or find us on **YouTube** – youtube.com/@AlstonMoorParishChurches
- Download the orders of service from alstonmoorcofe.org.uk/worship and the notice sheet from alstonmoorcofe.org.uk/whatson

Weekday Services

Morning, Evening & Night Prayer (except 25th December – 1st January)

- Morning Prayer: Wed-Sat, 9am St Augustine's & on Zoom
- Evening Prayer: Wed, Thu & Sat, 5pm St Augustine's & on Zoom
Fridays, 6pm St John's, Nenthead
- Night Prayer: Fridays, 9pm Zoom

Informal Holy Communion (except 26th December)

- Every Thursday, 12 noon Chat Room, Alston

December-January Dates for your Diary

Mondays, 6.30 pm **Parish Prayer Group** Old Meadow barns, Alston

Saturday 7th December 10am Christmas Fair K&K Community Hall

Tues 21st Jan, 6 pm **Wk of Prayer for Christian Unity Service** St Wulstan

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Remembering Remembrance: servicemen and women honoured across the whole parish; Church, Forces, and Community together.





Incarnation

He's grown, that Baby.
 Not that most people have noticed.
 He still looks the same,
 Lying there in the straw, with
 Animals and shepherds looking on.
 He's safe there, locked in that moment
 Where time met Eternity.

Reality of course is different,
 He grew up, astonished people with his
 Insight, disturbed them with
 Ideas that stretched them into
 New maturity.

Some found him
 Much too difficult to cope with,
 Nailed him down to fit their
 Narrow minds.

We are more subtle,
 Keep him helpless,
 Refuse to let him be the Man he is,
 Adore him as the Christmas Baby,
 Eternally unable to grow up
 Until we set him free.



By all means let us pause there
 At the stable, and
 Marvel at the miracle of birth.
 But we'll never get to know
 God with us, until we learn
 To find him at the Inn,
 A fellow guest who shares the joy and sorrow,
 The Host who is the life we celebrate.

He's grown, that Baby.

Ann Lewin from the book 'Candles and Kingfishers' first published 1993

Darkness and Light

Many, many years ago I was struck by the beauty of nature. Everything was just right, the colours, the perfect cycles of life, water being eternally purified and reused, the myriad ecological niches that housed myriad strange and beautiful creatures – and that was just in my backyard in Newcastle! At that point I realized it had all been intended, it fits together so perfectly that there is no way it could be random, it must be created. At the same time the question arose in my mind as to whether I thought I could do it better – I had to confess that no; it was of an order of which I could not even have conceived. Thus came the thought that whatever had created it must be to all intents and purposes a God. This has stayed with me ever since and forms the core of my spiritual beliefs – it was an Epiphany in the Biblical sense of the word, a revelation of the Divine. I see the act of working within Nature, seeking deeper understanding and even simple appreciation of it as a form of worship and communion.



Recently, another thought struck me. We destroy Nature at every turn, concrete it over to pursue material gain, destroy wilderness and habitat of species most of us have never even seen to obtain resources which let us spend our lives in an artificial world totally disconnected from creation.



This Christmas many loving parents will spend money they don't have on devices that separate their children from reality, they will stuff them with foods concocted entirely in a laboratory or that have been genetically modified because they have been told it tastes

good and have given no consideration as to what is in it and what they are doing. A festival that is one of the centrepieces of Christianity, and that in other faiths represents the triumph of light and life over darkness and death as the sun strengthens after the solstice, has been turned into an orgy of consumption and waste to be paid for some time in the future.

When I see the scramble after ever more technology regardless of the cost to the earth, the drive towards AI and transhumanism, to more genetic

modification of plants, animals and ultimately humans, the increasing production of artificial foods in artificial environments, I wonder are these also acts of worship and communion – if so of and with what? Clearly it is something that in pride and arrogance believes it can do better than the original creator. Something that takes delight in destruction and turns a festival of light and hope into one of waste and debt. The epiphany of who or what this may be is not a comfortable thought.

Andrew the Gardener

News from St Jude's

Christmas with all the celebrations is almost here. Hope you are all up to date with your preparations!

The Coffee Stop at the end of October was just a little quieter after the busy MacMillan one in September. But it was still buzzing with one or two new people joining us, if you move into this area you are immediately asked if you want to come to the coffee stop; it is such a good way to meet people. November Coffee Stop's theme will be Christmas as it will be our last before Christmas. We will resume at the end of January.

November service was Remembrance Sunday, so after we cleaned the church, it was decorated with poppies, the drape over the font comprised of hand knitted and crochet poppies all made and assembled by our local ladies. It was a lovely sunny day so the walk to our War Memorial was very pleasant, Bar took a moving service and Wendy Taylor read out the names then poppy wreaths were laid.

Our church will have a table at K&K Community Hall Christmas fair on the 7th December. Please come along to support us, the Mulled wine and mince pies will start the proceedings and a fabulous lunch is also available, as well as interesting tables with competitions and a raffle.

Friday December 13th is the date for our much talked about Carols by Candlelight, 6.30 start, followed by - at the invitation of Nick from the Kirkstyle - mulled wine and mince pies; tea and coffee is also on offer. A Christmas Eucharist on Christmas Eve at 8pm will start your Christmas celebrations.

Coffee Stop on January 25th a great way to start 2025.

All our best wishes for a wonderful Christmas and a Happy New Year. Have fun. Look after each other.

God Bless. *Irene Boyles*

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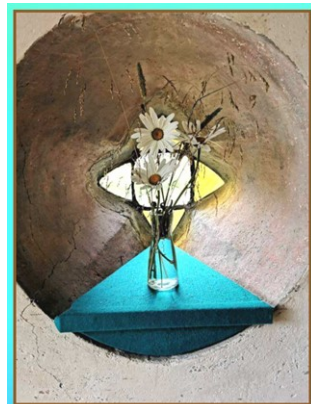
Looking Backwards and Forwards

As we come to the turn of the year, why not pause to look back at a few moments that have meant a lot to you in 2024, then look forward with hope, that great blessing of our faith, much needed in the face of global turmoil.

Here are just a few to get you thinking.



There was much beauty to enjoy in the Moor, such as the Northern Lights angel hovering over Lambley Viaduct, photo by Richard Beard, and the wild daisies that lit up the fields in Summer, displayed by Madeleine at Nenthead,



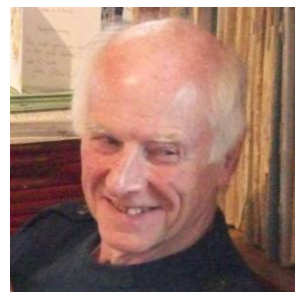
and photographed here by Josephine Dickinson.

Of course the most precious memories are of people: we have had weddings and baptisms, and a confirmation in St Augustine's, and Fr John's celebration of 25 years as a Priest.



We've lost friends too; amongst them Trevor Wright. *Richard Glover* remembers: 'On the 14th of September I went to the celebration of Trevor's life in the Town Hall. For me it was a real joy to celebrate the life of a much loved musician, someone I would go to hear play whenever I could. But Trevor was much more than a musician. On the night we had clips from various pantomimes he had written. It was also an opportunity to see the Granddad

Play performed, that he had written, for those like me who had never seen it before. There were tributes from some of Trevor's many friends, many of whom he had encouraged with their guitar playing, or who



had simply shared tea and biscuits with him! There was music from The Hilltop Hoolies and Harry and Ian, musicians Trevor had played with. A very fitting celebration for a much loved friend.'

There were more challenging moments – like Revd John Howard sharing his experience in the Middle East, as we shared the World Day of Prayer material 'coincidentally' from Palestine this year. **'We refuse to be enemies.'**



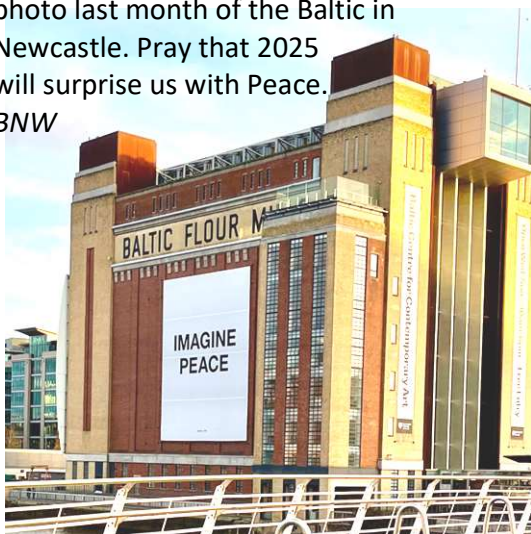
There's hope to be found in belonging to something bigger, like our Deanery friends walking together. And in the new burst of life in Garrigill church and community working together.



Fundraising for something we need on the Moor, or Methodists forging prayer chains, we can make links to others at our local scale, so why not imagine more? Madeleine took this



photo last month of the Baltic in Newcastle. Pray that 2025 will surprise us with Peace. **BNW**



Pepin's Puzzles

Replace the missing vowels in these words connected to the theme of EPIPHANY then fit them correctly into the grid. VISIBLY is given to help you. The jumbled letters in the centre column should also help. (Can you decipher what they spell?)

APP**R*NC* APP**R*NG ILL*M*N*T**N V*S*BLY
INSP*R*T**N M*N*F*ST R*V**L*NG SH*W*NG

						A							
						N							
V	I	S	I	B	L	Y							
						I							
						P							
						H							
						E							
						P							

The following words 1 to 8 (again most vowels are missing) need fitting correctly into the slots A to H.

1. E*ST*RN 2. G*NT*L*S 3. H^*S* 4. L*T*R
5. R*V*L*D 6. ST*BL* 7. TW*LFT*H 8. W*RSH*P

EPIPHANY – 6th January or A ***** Night – (celebrated by the B ***** Church as ‘Christmas’) is the time when Jesus is C ***** , (*made manifest*) to the non-Jewish world, the D *****; hence the story of the Wise Men, the Magi, who would not have gone to the E ***** but came much F ***** to G ***** the Christ Child in a H *****. Read Matthew 2:9ff

The EPIPHANY Season in the month of January, a time when Bible readings reveal why Jesus came and still comes to us today, is an appropriate time for the **WEEK OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY**, for which materials online have been prepared by the Ecumenical Community at Bose in Northern Italy. The theme is from John’s Gospel 11: 17-27 – **Jesus said ‘Do you believe this?’** Read what he said, from bottom left in a spiral to the shaded square.

T	N	E	V	E	E	V	I	L	L	I	W	E	M	N	I	S	E	V	E	I	L	E	B	O	H	W	
H		E	I	D	R	E	V	E	N	L	L	I	W	E	M	N	I	S	E	V	E	I	L	E	B	D	E
O	U	G	H	H	E	D	I	E	S	A	N	D	W	H	O	E	V	E	R	L	I	V	E	S	A	N	H
I	A	M	T	H	E	R	E	S	U	R	R	E	C	T	I	O	N	A	N	D	T	H	E	L	I	F	E

David Pepin

A Season of Giving

Do you enjoy Epiphany? On this great Christian festival we celebrate the coming of the 'Wise Men' (or women?) to worship the infant Jesus – God's astonishing gift of himself to us – and to give him the best they had to offer: gold, frankincense and myrrh.



It's a good time to remind ourselves that God invites us to respond equally generously. In the words of *In the bleak midwinter*: "What can I give him, poor as I am? If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb. If I were a wise man I would do my part; yet what I can, I give him: give my heart." We're invited to give what we can, with our whole heart. Everything we have comes from God, and we have a responsibility to use it responsibly and generously.

Among other things, that means giving to keep the Christian presence alive and flourishing, serving the community here. That's an expensive business: did you know that we have to raise over £1000 a week to pay for the ministry and buildings of the Anglican churches in the parish? There's no external funding – it all comes from us and our fundraising. And we rely on volunteers too: giving can take the form of time, effort and energy as well as money.

In January and February, we'll be holding a 'Generous Giving' campaign to explain what the churches need – and why; and to invite us all to ask whether our giving – of money, time and talents – is realistic. Please take time to consider your giving: in the end, if we value the church, it's up to us to pay for it!

MNW

The Chat Room, bottom of Front Street, next to Mad Hatters. Open all year, for a safe space, a warm welcome, a cuppa and a chat. Whether you need a moment's break from the weather, or an hour of company and deeper conversation, the hosts are always pleased to see you.

Our winter opening hours are Tuesday to Friday, 10-12 and 2-4.

We have a soup lunch each Tuesday at 12 noon.

A Kind of Epiphany

In his book 'The Bible Jesus Read' (*Zondervan Publishing House 1999*) Philip Yancey writes about how a presentation of Handel's Messiah in London "became, quite unexpectedly, not just a performance but a kind of epiphany, a striking revelation of the entire Christian story." He records "In a manner I had never before experienced, I felt able to see beyond the music to the soul of the piece."

Although 'Messiah' was a familiar work, it was as if, on that occasion, he lived through Part 1 with its hopeful prophecies from Isaiah about a coming King but then was appalled by the world's response to the Messiah in Part 2 before being cheered by the resurrection and the triumphant Hallelujah Chorus. But that lead to Part 3 where he was confronted by the question: If Jesus has triumphed why does the world remain in such a sorry state?



At that point he says "jet lag and fatigue had produced in me something akin to an out of body state, and for that moment the grand tapestry woven by Handel's music seemed more real by far than my everyday world." He 'saw' that the culmination of history will come when the slain Lamb exerts his right to open the seals (see Revelation 4, 5 and 6). Messiah

ends with the 'Worthy is the Lamb' chorus followed by exultant Amens. In that epiphany experience Philip Yancey became sure of what we all hope for and certain of what, as yet, we do not see.

ME

Answers in grid, top to bottom: REVEALING, ILLUMINATION, VISIBLY, MANIFEST, APPEARING, SHOWING, APPEARANCE, INSPIRATION

Centre jumbled letters spell EPIPHANY

EPIPHANY passage: A 7 TWELFTH B 1 EASTERN

C 5 REVEALED D 2 GENTILES E 6 STABLE F 4 LATER

G 8 WORSHIP H 3 HOUSE

About 'Faith in the Moor'

This Magazine is a 'Churches Together' publication. It aims to share information useful to regular and occasional churchgoers, to the wider community, and to tourists and visitors. It reflects the life of the faith community in our corner of the North Pennines. Here people encourage, celebrate and debate their faith.

The different Christian churches who create this magazine get along very well, and work together in a spirit of openness and mutual regard. Faith in

the Moor welcomes input in harmony with this open Christian

Faith. Also from those whose spirituality is not focussed on a

particular religion, and those whose faith is in the Moor itself; its people, its uniqueness, its future. We support whatever enriches our community here.

Current team: JH = Jeanette Haslam,

ME = Mary Elliot, ES = Lizzie Smith,

MH = Madeleine Harris, RP = Richard

Pattison, BNW = Bar Nash-Williams



February Theme: 'Dreams and Realities'

Deadline: **Saturday 18th January**

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Thank you

Thank you to all our readers, contributors and distributors over the year. Thank you to all knitters and crocheters for the gifts for my friend's charity for homeless people; full report in February. Thank you to all our church volunteers who give so much time and effort to keep things alive. Thank you to all our church leaders who work so hard for everyone in this community.



Reminder: Subs will

be due in February – your usual distributor will be calling for your annual subscription to Faith in the Moor; £5.50 – no increase for inflation!

Twelfth Night

It looks much as it did before,
Now that the cards and decorations
Have come down.
The furniture of life is back in place,
The old routine takes over.
But are we the same?
Is there no echo of the angels' song
Lifting our spirits, no stillness
In our hearts, reminding us that
We were there, just for a moment,
At that birth,
Catching a glimpse of glory?
Let's not put that away,
Tangled with tinsel, for another time.
Let's ponder in our hearts, like Mary,
And let the Child grow with us
Through the year.

*Two ladies in Liverpool
choosing a Christmas card,
overheard by Lizzie:
'Well, Mary's ok, but
it doesn't look at all
like Joseph!'*



Ann Lewin from the book 'Candles and Kingfishers' first published 1993



Christmas Services on Alston Moor

FRIDAY 13TH DECEMBER

6.30 pm **Carol Service**

St Jude, Knaresdale

SUNDAY 15TH DECEMBER

3.00 pm **Community Carols**

Alston Town Hall

FRIDAY 20TH DECEMBER

7.30 pm **Carol singing on the Green**

St John, Garrigill

SUNDAY 22ND DECEMBER

3.00 pm **Christmas Celebration** *Ss Mary & Patrick, Lambley*

6.00 pm **Carol Service**

St John, Nenthead

(meet 5.45 pm at the Hive for candlelit procession)

CHRISTMAS EVE

3.00 pm **Christmas Vigil Mass** (Catholic) *St Wulstan, Alston*

5.00 pm **Crib Service**

St Augustine, Alston

8.00 pm **Carol Service**

Holy Paraclete, Kirkhaugh

8.00 pm **Christmas Communion**

St Jude, Knaresdale

11.30 pm **Midnight Mass**

St John, Garrigill

CHRISTMAS DAY

10.00 am **Family Communion**

St Augustine, Alston & Zoom

NEW YEAR'S EVE

11.50 pm **Ring in the New Year**

St Augustine, Alston

**Come and celebrate -
everyone welcome!**

