

THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH DECEMBER 2025

Hello everyone,

This edition of 'Church Views' is hitting the pews on Sunday November 30^{th} – Advent Sunday. I wish you a deep, rich journey through Advent, a joyful Christmas when it comes, and a peaceful New Year.

If you're reading this on the day this comes out, you may well be looking forward tomorrow to opening the first door on your Advent calendar. For me, this sparks lovely memories from childhood. No chocolate behind the doors in those days – just pictures. A star... a full stocking... a Christmas tree... a stable. No chocolate, but nonetheless, the magic of counting down the days to Christmas.

As in recent years, we've bought our Advent calendar from 'Embrace' – a charity working alongside Palestinian refugees. We spent twenty five pounds on this piece of cardboard. But that is because 'Embrace' uses the money to buy essentials for life as a refugee.

There's a powerful picture on the front of our Advent calendar. A young Palestinian mother cradles a vulnerable, defenceless baby – just as Jesus must have been. She looks down at her child with radiant love.

It's easy for the real message of Christmas to be swamped by sentimentality. We sing of Mary, the mother of Jesus. Of her 'silent night', and of the baby who 'makes no crying'. But let's cut through the tinsel. Mary the mother of Jesus is a young Palestinian mother, about to become a refugee.

Because we've used the 'Embrace' Advent Calendar before, we know what lies behind the windows. There are pictures of the essentials refugees need having fled whatever it is that has driven them from their homes.

Behind door number one is a bucket; behind door number two some peanut butter. Then nappies, rice, a toothbrush, some lentils. Soap, cooking oil, vitamins, some toilet paper. Date biscuits, sponge scourers, a pair of gloves. Baby milk, washing powder, a mop, some sugar. Shampoo, milk, and medicine.

What a heartbreaking list of Christmas presents. It builds a picture of life for people – wherever they are – forced to flee their homes. Mary and Joseph had to flee for their lives when an unhinged ruler – Herod – tried to wipe out all children aged two and under.

In our time too, people have had to flee for all kinds of reasons. We've heard of the appalling violence meted out to ordinary people in Sudan. As I'm writing this, talks are ongoing in Geneva to try and end the war in Ukraine. The COP 30 climate talks have just ended, with a compromise likely to please no-one. Yet again, the final communiqué has failed to use the words 'fossil fuels' — when we know that the burning of such material is precisely what is making parts of the world unlivable.

There is currently in our country much talk of how to respond to the arrival of refugees. So we need a memory-refresher. One reason why our country is relatively wealthy is that we are still living off the proceeds of Empire. Another is that this country was the seat of the Industrial Revolution, which turbocharged exactly the burning of fossil fuels that is the cause of the problem.

In the name of all that's decently human, and in the name of Jesus the refugee, let's do all in our power to help this country be generous and open to everyone in need of refuge.

Happy Christmas.

Tim Mayfield

Mothers' Union

(Earsdon and Backworth)

November's meeting was on Wednesday 19th when our leader Christine welcomed twenty members and one guest. We began with a short service led by Christine, who also introduced the speaker, Ann Lilley from St George's, Cullercoats. Her talk was entitled "The ABC of Ts". Everyone had brought a tea cup that was in some way special to them, and Ann asked several of us to tell the story of our own particular cup or mug. She also had two or three quizzes which of course everyone enjoyed. We then had our usual cup of tea, with lovely scones baked by Sandy.

Every year at this time, we donate to The People's Kitchen and this year our branch has donated ten waterproof bags each containing one £5.00 voucher for Greggs, some sweets and a Christmas card. When the bags go for packing a hat and gloves will be added.

Our Advent Carol service will be in St Alban's church on 1st December at 2.00pm. Please come and join us.

Christmas lunch will be on Tuesday 9th December at 12.30pm at the Dolphin Inn, North Shields.

We meet every 3rd Wednesday of the month in the Eccles Hall, Earsdon at 1.45pm, except for Wednesday 10th December. Any visitors will be very welcome.





Seeds of Life

On Sunday November 23rd, St Alban's launched a new three-year plan. Called 'Seeds of Life', the plan will carry us to the end of 2028. A key early priority is the relaunching of Youth and Children's Work at St Alban's. The vicar preached into this, and explained that we will promote this re-launch at our Christmas services.

Then in early in 2026 the plan is to draw together a team. It will mount a Good Friday Children's Workshop on April 3rd 2026, before a first Sunday session proper on April 26th.

Vicar Tim asked why we should re-establish Youth and Children's Work at St Alban's. He gave these answers...

- Because Jesus puts children at the centre
- Because Jesus tells adults to become like children to enter the kingdom
- Because Jesus says that in welcoming children we are welcoming him
- Because we are not currently catering for the whole family
- Because we are missing out on the life and energy that children can bring

He then wondered if you might be part of the answer...

- Because Jesus teaches us that life is about giving not getting
- Because it's good for our faith to make our unique contribution
- Because if God is calling us, responding is about simple obedience
- Because of the life that you might receive in the company of the children
- Because you would be playing your part in ensuring a future for St Alban's



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Nativity Festival - Saturday 6th December 2025 Open from 10.00am until 4.00pm in St Alban's Church. A display of nativities from very large to very small in the beautiful setting of our old church. * Hot drinks and mince pies will be available.

**

This is one of last year's nativity scenes, Journey to the Crib.



Please note - all material for next month's magazine (January 2026) will need to be in before Wednesday 31st December. Thank you, Jean.

Weather Outlook for the month of December 2025.

Direct from the Captain's Charts.

General outlook.

The long-range outlook for the Northeast of England is for changeable weather, with spells of rain, strong winds and milder temperatures for the early part of December.

Early to mid-December.

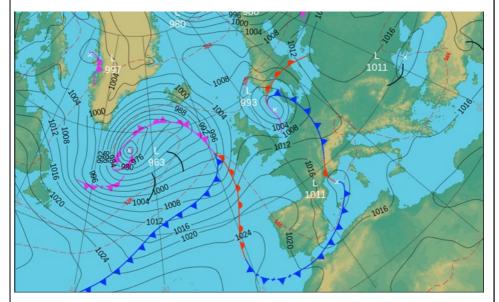
Changeable and often unsettled conditions are expected across the UK during this period. Low pressure systems will tend to dominate, meaning showers or longer spells of rain for much of the UK, some brief drier and more settled interludes are also possible.

The wettest weather is perhaps more likely in parts of the west, but heavy rain is possible almost anywhere at times throughout this period. The greatest chance of snow will probably be over northern high ground. Given the dominance of low pressure, strong winds will occur at times. Overall, temperatures are predicted to be close to average, though colder conditions may occasionally impinge on northern areas. Some frost is to be expected during drier, clearer and cloudless conditions that may develop overnight.

Mid to late December.

We can expect the unsettled conditions through mid-December to continue with further spells of wet and windy weather, especially in the northwest. Some drier, more settled periods are possible, particularly in the southeast. Later in the month it may become wetter in the south and perhaps a little drier in the north, details are uncertain at this time. Temperatures will probably be above average overall.

North Atlantic Surface Pressure Chart Prediction for 12:00 hrs (UTC) on Sunday 30th November 2025.



David Gibson 27th November 2025.

Tips to help you stay safe during adverse weather conditions.

- 1 In strong winds be aware of falling branches, masonry and roof tiles. Do not walk near loose garden fences or any degraded structures. Be mindful of trip hazards such as ice patches, wet leaves and windfall branches. Stay tuned to local weather forecast for gale or storm warnings and any flood risks. It is good practice to secure loose garden items to prevent them from becoming airborne during wind gusts.
- 2 Plan your journey with respect to the weather, try to avoid routes that leave you exposed to cross winds. Sudden squalls combined with cross winds can cause you to loose control of a vehicle especially on wet roads.
- 3 In cold weather:- Dress in layers of warm clothing and stay inside when it is extremely cold. Protect your extremities from frostbite and insulate with gloves, hat, and warm socks. When outdoors, wear shoes with good grip and avoid getting wet, as moisture increases heat loss.

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CHURCH VIEWS FOR DECEMBER 2025 FROM THE PARISH OF OUR LADY, STAR OF THE SEA

It's the Nativity Play Season



Everybody knows that all the girls are angels - for Nativity Play casting anyway - even the angel having a sulk because she knows she should have been Mary because that's what her unbiased Granny told her. But where are the boys? Well, to keep all those parents happy there must always be just as many shepherds as there are angels, but on a stage that size, shepherds must wait until all the angels have gone.

(Picture by kind permission of Mrs P Hughes)

Parish Christmas Luncheon Club

The ever-popular Luncheon Club will hold its annual Christmas Lunch at Immaculate Heart of Mary Church at 12.00pm on Thursday 11 December 2025. Tickets are £5.00 and booking is essential.

OLSS Christmas Concert



Backworth Male Voice Choir is going to perform a Christmas event for us in St Edward's Church at 7.30pm on Saturday 6 December. Terrific way to begin our Christmas celebrations. Tickets are £7.50 and include a glass of wine.

Stained Glass Windows





These beautiful stained-glass windows now enhancing our altar at Immaculate Heart of Mary Church were a much-loved part of the Sanctuary at Our Lady's and St Edmund's in Backworth for seventy years.

They are already a very welcome addition to our church.

Thanks to everyone who made it happen.





It's been a great year and I give you my favourite Christmas message from Ecclesiastes 9:7:

'Go thy way, eat thy bread with joy, and drink thy wine with a merry heart.'

Gerry Latimer, Parish of Our Lady Star of the Sea

Parish Mass Times

St Edward's: Sunday 9.30am, Tuesday & Friday 10.00am

Immaculate Heart of Mary: Saturday Vigil 6.00pm, Wednesday 10.00am St Mary's: Sunday 11.00am, Thursday 10.00am, Saturday 10.00am

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Remembrance Sunday

Remembrance Sunday fell on November 9th. A large congregation, including lots of members of our uniformed groups and their parents, gathered in the Eccles Hall for 10.30am. After a short act of worship, we processed down Front Street to the War Memorial. Max led the way, carrying the cross. The choir came next, followed by vicar Tim in step with Chief Petty Officer Tom Hooper. Mr Hooper served in the Royal Navy for 24 years, and retired as a Chief Communications Yeoman. He had kindly volunteered to lay the wreath on our behalf.

On arriving at Earsdon War Memorial, we found another crowd of people ready to observe the two minutes' silence. Catherine Mackenzie of the Salvation Army kindly played the bugle for us, and the silence was impeccably observed. A feature of Remembrance Sunday in Earsdon in recent years has been the presence of several well-behaved horses. They are beautifully prepared for the occasion, and add a great deal with their presence.





(See also page 23.)

If you have any suggestions, comments or requests regarding the magazine, or for anyone thinking of sending in their contribution for publication, please email it to magazine@StAlbansEarsdon.org.uk or call Jean on 0191 2377273.

Advent and Christmas at St Alban's and St John's

Sunday November 30th – Advent Sunday

4pm Children's Church at St John's 6pm Advent Carol Service at St Alban's

Monday December 1st

2pm Deanery Mothers' Union Advent Carol Service, in St Alban's

Saturday December 6th

Nativity Festival at St Alban's

Sunday December 14th

4pm Children's Church Christmas Special at St John's

Sunday December 21st

6pm Carols by Candlelight, in St Alban's

Tuesday December 23rd

4.30pm Christingle Production Line at St Alban's

Christmas Eve

4pm Christingle Service at St Alban's 6pm Christingle Service at St John's 11.30pm Midnight Mass at St Alban's

Christmas Day

9am Christmas Day worship at St John's 10.30am Christmas Day worship at St Alban's A lovely message from Barbara at St John's, Backworth. The Autumn fete at Backworth Club has clearly been a resounding success - well done to everybody!

St. John's would like to thank everyone for their support at the fete on November 8th. We made a grand total of £883.75.

Two more pictures from Remembrance Sunday at Earsdon...



Thank you, Dianne, for these pictures. As you said, "A very special service".

(See also pages 20 and 21.)



St. Alban's and St. John'sDiary Page for December 2025

Sunday	30th		Advent Sunday	
		9.00am	Holy Communion	St John's
		10.30am	Holy Communion	St Alban's
		4.00pm	Children's Church Advent Special	St John's
Monday	1st	2.00pm	Tynemouth Deanery Mothers' Union Advent Carol Service	St Alban's
Thursday	4th	9.30am	Holy Communion	St John's
Saturday	6th	10am-4pm	Festival of Nativities	St Alban's
Sunday	7th		The 2nd Sunday of Advent	
		9.00am	Holy Communion	St John's
		10.30am	Holy Communion	St Alban's
Sunday	14th		The Third Sunday of Advent	
		9.00am	Holy Communion	St John's
		10.30am	Holy Communion	St Alban's
		4.00pm	Children's Church Christmas Special	St John's
Thursday	18th	9.30am	Holy Communion	St John's
Sunday	21st		The Fourth Sunday of Advent	
		9.00am	Holy Communion	St John's
		10.30am	Holy Communion	St Alban's
		6.00pm	Carols by Candlelight	St Alban's
Wed.	24th		Christmas Eve	
		4.00pm	Christingle Service	St Alban's
		6.00pm	Christingle Service	St John's
		11.30pm	Midnight Mass	St Alban's

St. Alban's and St. John's

Thursday	25th		Christmas Day	
		9.00am	Holy Communion	St John's
		10.30am	Holy Communion	St Alban's
Sunday	28th		1st Sunday after Christmas	
		9.00am	Holy Communion	St John's
		10.30am	Holy Communion	St Alban's

Sunday Gospel Readings for December 2025:

30th	7th	14th
Matthew 24.36-44	Matthew 3.1-12	Matthew 11.2-11

21st 28th

Matthew 1.18-25 Matthew 2.13-18





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The Christmas trees are here!



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Complete the 9x9 grid with digits so that each column, each row, and each of the nine 3×3 blocks contains all of the digits from 1 to 9.

	5					3	7	
			2	7	6			
7					1			
2		3		1				
		7				6		
			59	3		4		5
			1					9
			5	9	4			
	6	2					1	





All in the month of November *It was*...

250 years ago, on 16th Dec 1775 that Jane Austen, novelist (*Sense and Sensibility, Pride and Prejudice, Mansfield Park, Emma, Northanger Abbey, Persuasion*) was born. Over 30 million copies of her books have been sold, 7,000 of them in her lifetime.

175 years ago, on 4th Dec 1850 that William Sturgeon, physicist, electrical engineer and inventor died. He created the first electromagnets and invented the first British electric motor.

150 years ago, on 6th Dec 1875 that Evelyn Underhill, writer and pacifist was born. Best known for her books on religion and Christian mysticism.

70 years ago, on 1st Dec 1955 that African American civil rights activist Rosa Parks refused to give up her bus seat to a white man in Montgomery Alabama. This violated the city's racial segregation laws, and led to the Montgomery Bus Boycott (5th to 20th Dec 1956) and the birth of the modern American civil rights movement.

65 years ago, on 9th Dec 1960 that the first episode of the TV soap Coronation Street was broadcast on ITV.

40 years ago, on 2nd Dec 1985 that Philip Larkin, poet, librarian and jazz critic died.

30 years ago, on 22nd Dec 1995 that the British 'rogue trader' Nick Leeson was jailed for six and a half years in Singapore for fraudulent financial dealings which had led to the fall of Barings Bank.

Also 30 years ago, on 8th Dec 1995 that Head teacher Philip Lawrence was stabbed to death outside his west London school while trying to protect a student who was being assaulted by a gang of youths.

Also 30 years ago, on 21st Dec 1995 that the city of Bethlehem passed from Israeli to Palestinian control. On 26th Dec Israel also passed dozens of West Bank villages over to the Palestinian authority.

10 years ago, on 19th Dec 2015 that Jimmy Hill, football player, manager and host of the BBC football TV series *Match of the Day* (1973-88) died.

WORDSEARCH December 2025

Did the Old Testament expect Jesus to come? Yes indeed! Here are just some examples of OT prophesies:

He would be born of a virgin. 'The virgin will conceive and give birth to a Son and will call Him Immanuel.' (Isaiah 7:14)

He would be born in Bethlehem. 'But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel...' (Micah 5:2)

His lineage would be of the line of David. 'I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, a King who will reign wisely and do what is just and right in the land.' (Jeremiah 23:5-6).

He would bring healing. 'Then will the eyes of the blind be opened and the ears of the deaf unstopped. Then will the lame leap like a deer, and the mute tongue shout for joy.' (Isaiah 35:5–6)

He would be crucified. They pierce my hands and my feet. All my bones are on display; people stare and gloat over me. They divide my clothes among them and cast lots for my garment. (Psalm 22)

He would rise from the dead. 'You will not abandon me to the realm of the dead, nor will you let your faithful one see decay...' (Psalm 16: 8-11)

Born Virgin Immanuel Bethlehem Ruler Israel David King Just Right Healing Blind Deaf Lame Mute Crucified Pierce Hands

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