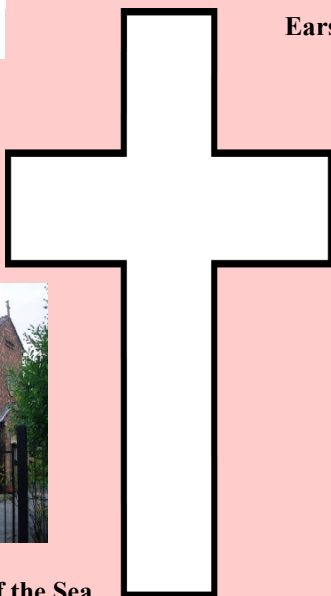




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CHURCH VIEWS

**September
2023**

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St. John's Backworth



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THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH

September 2023

This time, there are a few smaller “thoughts for the month” instead of a contribution from one of our dedicated writers. This is because your editor forgot to send out the invitation to write it for us. My humble apologies to you, please forgive me.

This autumn, do you feel overwhelmed with all the things that you need to get done?

Then think of your life as an hourglass. There are thousands of grains of sand in the top of the hourglass; and they all pass slowly and evenly through the narrow neck in the middle.

We are like that hourglass. When we start in the morning, there are hundreds of tasks which we feel that we must accomplish that day. But if we do not take them one at a time, and let them pass through the day slowly and evenly, as do the grains of sand passing through the narrow neck of the hour glass, then we are bound to break our own fragile physical and mental structure. Do not attempt more than God designed you to do.

Have you ever wondered how you can be certain about who and what God really is? One Christian put it this way: “I’m reminded of the story of the little boy who was out flying a kite. The wind was brisk and large billowing clouds were blowing across the sky. The kite went up and up until it was entirely hidden by the clouds. Then a man came by and asked the little boy what he was doing, staring up at an empty sky. “I’m flying my kite,” he replied.

The man replied: “What kite? How can you be sure it is still there? You can’t see a thing.”

The little boy agreed that he could see nothing, “but every little while I feel a tug, so I know for sure that it is still up there and is connected to me!”

When it comes to God, you don’t need to take anyone else’s word for it. You can find Him for yourself by inviting Jesus Christ into your life. Then you too will know, by the warm wonderful tug on your heartstrings, that though you can’t see Him, He is up there, and that He lives in you. You are connected!

A survey was conducted among people who lived to be more than 100 years old. What had kept them going so long? You’d have thought that they would recite their health diets, their miracle drugs, or their devotion to strenuous exercise. Instead, the one thing all these centenarians had in common was a purpose in life. They had had a good reason to get out of bed each morning.

St Paul writes: *‘For me to live is Christ’* (Philippians 1:21). For Paul, that kept him going. He lived to exalt the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and to share the Good News.

So many of us are instead like the man who said; ‘No matter what I’m working on, I’d rather be doing something else.’



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COMMUNITY NEWS

Forthcoming events

The Parish of Earsdon and Backworth organises a number of social events throughout the year to raise funds and encourage fellowship.

Earsdon and Backworth Mothers' Union:

A Report from the Annual Outing in July 2023, by Ella Heaney.

This year, members of the MU enjoyed a lovely day out at Howick Hall Gardens and the Parish Church of St Michael and All Angels. We were met by the Reverend Jane Wood who took us to the church to see the kneelers. She told us that a group of local artists painted pictures which were then transferred to the fabric. They are 82 in number and all very different from each other. The pictures were then embroidered by local people and made into kneelers. They are absolutely beautiful and well worth a visit.

After looking around the church some of us had a light lunch in the Earl Grey Tea Room. One or two of us tried Earl Grey tea and were told by the waitress that it was the actual recipe used by Earl Grey himself and far superior to any bought in a supermarket! I must say we did like it, but sadly that recipe is not available except at Howick Hall!

Afterwards we went on a short walk led by one of Howick Hall's volunteers. She was very good and showed us the MU Tree. It is an Indian Chestnut planted in August 2022 to commemorate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee. Right now it is about 5ft high but in a few years time - it will be reaching for the sky.

After that we boarded a coach to take us to the Fishing Boat Inn at Boulmer for tea. We all had a lovely meal, and since the dining room overlooks the sea, a number of us went outside for a few minutes to admire the view.

Then sadly it was time to go home.

Many thanks to Christine, Sandy and Anne for organising such a lovely day.

Ella Heaney

Another lovely shot of St Alban's Ramblers, this time at The Rising Sun country park.



These summer walks are drawing to a close as we slide into autumn.



Heritage Open Weekend Saturday 16th and Sunday 17th September 2023

St Alban's church will be open from 10.00 - 5.00 on Saturday 16th September and from 11.30 - 5.00 on Sunday 17th September. Stewards will be available to talk about the history of our church if you would like to know about it or you can come along and just soak in the atmosphere and feel the prayers of those who worshipped here over the last 186 years.

In 2022, over 1,000 people visited the church on Heritage Open Weekend. Many were strangers visiting the village for the Scarecrow Festival and the church for the first time, while others were regular visitors who just 'popped in'. I wonder how many will cross our doors this year?

Joan Armstrong.

Speaking of the Earsdon Scarecrow Festival ...



Also on Saturday, 16th September 2023. From 13:00 - 17:00, at the Eccles Hall, Earsdon. Come along and see if you can find all the Scarecrows. Enjoy the afternoon, there will be lots more going on!

(Please note that the Scarecrow Festival is to raise money for the village of Earsdon, and not the Church itself. It does, however, provide a great buzz of activity and fun for so many visitors.)

Another Date for your diary:



Saturday 30th September 2023. 7pm

St Alban's Harvest Festival Supper and Beetle Drive, at the Eccles Hall, Earsdon. Tickets £10.00 from Joan A.

The evening includes a raffle and coffee.

St Alban's :

The walking group continues during the summer, meeting every Tuesday outside the vicarage, at 7pm. All welcome.



The final ramble for this summer will be either 5th or 12th September.

* Don't miss the Ramblers' picture on page 9. *

Please do consider using the services of our advertisers who loyally support our church magazine. If you know anyone who would be interested in taking out an advertisement, please

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or call Jean on 0191 2377273**

Please note - all material for next month's magazine (October) will need to be in before Wednesday 27th September . Thank you, *Jean*.

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Smile-lines

This month's funnies come from Christine Steele, who has sent in poems in the past. Nice to hear from you again, Christine, and thank you.

A doctor at the hospital had a phone call from the ward's phone. A young lady who was very worried told him that she was a diabetic. "Please can you help me? I'm afraid I have binged on chocolate and alcohol, and I don't feel too good." The doctor asked, "are you light-headed?" "No" she said, "I've got dark hair."

Arriving home from work, hot, sweaty and exhausted, the man's wife asked, "what's happened Honey?". "I ran all the way home, behind the bus, to keep me fit and healthy, and I saved £1.50 bus fare". "Well" said his wife, "that's all very well but why didn't you run behind a taxi, and save £10.00?"

At a party, a young wife told her husband off. "That's the fourth time you've filled your plate with cake, and ice-cream. Doesn't that bother you?". "Nope" said the husband, "I keep telling people it's all for you".

A small boy went to church for the first time, with his Granny, and copied her when she quietly slipped off the pew, to kneel and pray. He then copied Granny when she buried her face in her hands to pray. After five minutes he asked her, "Who are we hiding from, Granny?".

A man said to his doctor, "I've broken my arm in three places". "Well", said the doctor, "don't go to those places any more".

Especially for Pam H, and for Gillian.



The church magazine mouse is back from his holidays and helping with the harvest!

CHURCH VIEWS FOR SEPTEMBER 2023 FROM THE PARISH OF OUR LADY, STAR OF THE SEA

St Dominic's 150th Anniversary



The magnificent high altar in the Priory Church

St Dominic's Priory Church in Blacket Street, Newcastle, will mark its 150th year on Monday 11 September 2023 when Bishop Stephen will celebrate the Anniversary Mass at 6.00pm.

Work began on the site in the 1860s when the parishioners in Shieldfield, Byker and Heaton dug the church foundations to save money on the construction. The foundation stone was laid in 1869 and Cardinal Manning opened the church four years later. The Dominican Friars were no strangers to Newcastle even then. Commonly known as the Blackfriars, they first came to Newcastle in 1239 and stayed until the Dissolution of the Monasteries, when the Blackfriars buildings were sold to the City as workshops. They returned to Hexham in 1721, and were later offered the use of St Andrew's Church in 1827. That is another Catholic link with the City, because St Andrew's was founded by Fr James Worswick and the street was named after him.

During their stay in the City the Dominicans devoted themselves to improving the living conditions of families in what was then the most deprived area of the City. Sadly, as Dominican numbers declined, their eight hundred year link with the City ended in 2020.

Congratulations!

Our congratulations and best wishes go to Vera Bolam who has just celebrated her 100th birthday. Elegant as ever, Vera is pictured here celebrating her special day with friends and family at the Dome. Vera is one of the first recipients of the new Royal congratulatory 100th birthday card signed by both the King and Queen.



Little Sisters Concert

It was a joy to see so many parishioners at the recent concert



given by the Newcastle Male Chorus in the chapel at St Joseph's Care Home in Newcastle. The 'full-house' enjoyed a wide range of music during the evening, with the funds raised going to help with the cost of replacing all the passenger lifts in the Home.

St Thomas More Academy

Congratulations to Year 13 students on their A Level success – 85% gained A*-C Grades. Some are now looking forward to employment, including high-level apprenticeships, and others to beginning University, including Oxford and Cambridge. Well done!

Yemen donations

The two retiring collections to relieve the terrible suffering in Yemen raised a magnificent £985 which will be forwarded to CAFOD for the Emergency Committee. We pray for a swift end to the appalling conflict there.

Gerry Latimer, Our Lady Star of the Sea

Parish Mass Times:

Building work at St Edward's has now been completed, so Masses will be: St Edward's: Sunday 10.00am, Tuesday and Thursday 9.30am
Immaculate Heart of Mary: Saturday 6.00pm, Wed and Friday 9.30am

From Rev Tim Mayfield:

I'm fresh back – fully re-charged – from the unique riches of the Greenbelt Festival. I asked for your prayers for the festival. So I owe it to you to give you a flavour of what went on.

Greenbelt is a Christian arts and social justice festival. It takes place every August Bank Holiday weekend, in the grounds of Boughton House near Kettering. Thousands of festival-goers camp, but others stay locally in hotels. On the bill is a wide range of events, from talks on climate change to the pounding music of rock and pop bands.

At this year's festival I went to a seminar called **Is talking climate change with my MP worth the bother?** Organised by Christian Aid, the seminar was helpfully practical. We were put in pairs to role-play talking to our MP about climate change. As a result of this seminar, I have written to our MP Alan Campbell, and offered to help the local Green Party in doorstep canvassing. **Greenbelt – a Festival of Riches**

Former Prime Minister **Gordon Brown** spoke at this year's festival. A huge crowd spread out where he was speaking. We sat in the sun listening to his passionate plea that we work together to end poverty in the UK and abroad.

Kathryn Mannix is a palliative care nurse. She explained that she has been present at the deaths of roughly five thousand people. In her talk, called **Scared to death**, she lamented how our dying, once something done surrounded by family at home, is now often in hospital surrounded by beeping machines. She carefully explained the process of dying, and encouraged us to see it as something as natural as childbirth.

Our Friday ended as we were blown away by 'Balaklava Blues' on the main stage. This was a Ukrainian trio of musicians, backed by a choir of refugees from **Ukraine** now settling in this country. Their concert was passionate and powerful.

On the Saturday, I went to a seminar called **Fighting for Climate Justice**. Led by Ruth Valerio, who founded the Eco-Church movement, the seminar encouraged us to find a community of people with whom to campaign for a better world. Sat next to me was an English Buddhist in her late 70s who had been arrested for sitting in the road to protect against the fossil fuel companies.

A talk on 'Secret Power' by journalists Ewen MacAskill and Stefania Maurizi highlighted the case of **Julian Assange**. Assange used his

platform ‘Wikileaks’ to put into the public domain information about war crimes committed by ‘our side’ in Iraq and Afghanistan. The ‘secret power’ of the title is trying to silence Assange. The two journalists who spoke are trying to prevent Assange’s extradition to the US.

Eve Poole OBE gave a fascinating talk on Artificial Intelligence. You will know there is increasing concern about the growing sophistication of AI. Might it reach the point where it outstrips and turns on humanity? In her talk **Robot Souls** Poole explained that the AI being developed is a very particular copy of human intelligence. However, it completely omits many of the things that make us truly human – emotion, values, intuition and compassion.

Sunetra Gupta spoke to us about **the Covid narrative**. Far from being wise after the event, Du Gupta had been saying from the beginning that lockdown would cause more harm than good. She contended that the lockdown would never have been able to prevent the spread of the disease. She urged the protection and vaccination of the vulnerable, while allowing ‘herd immunity’ to build up in the rest of the population.

Saturday ended back at the main stage, for the ‘infectious retro-soul and jazz-infused pop gems’ of singer **Laura Mvula**...

...and Sunday at Greenbelt always starts with the Festival **Communion Service**. Thousands of people, in small groups with family and friends, break bread and share wine in the open air.

Then back to the mix of music and speakers. As a lover of reggae, I enjoyed Ben Okafor belting out **Sanctify my Soul** in the style of Bob Marley. **David Dark** urged us not to ‘react’, but to ‘respond’. When we’re in a difficult conversation, the temptation is to snap back – to ‘react’. Just a short time to gather our thoughts, however, can help us to ‘respond’ in a more helpful way. Herself Anglo-Asian, **Yasmin Alibhai-Brown** helped us understand the rise and behaviours of politicians such as Rishi Sunak, Suella Braverman and Prithi Patel. Then it was Greenbelt all over to stay in the same tent when next up was joke-a-second comedian **Milton Jones**. Our Festival ended to the strains of Scottish folk trio **Siskin Green** reinterpret classic hymns like ‘Will Your Anchor Hold?’

Climate change... Ukrainian music... Gordon Brown... Milton Jones... a massive open-air communion... artificial intelligence... meeting friends old and new. There really is nothing like Greenbelt. Kettering is a long way away but it’s worth the journey. Get it in your diary for August Bank Holiday 2024.

Continued on next page ...

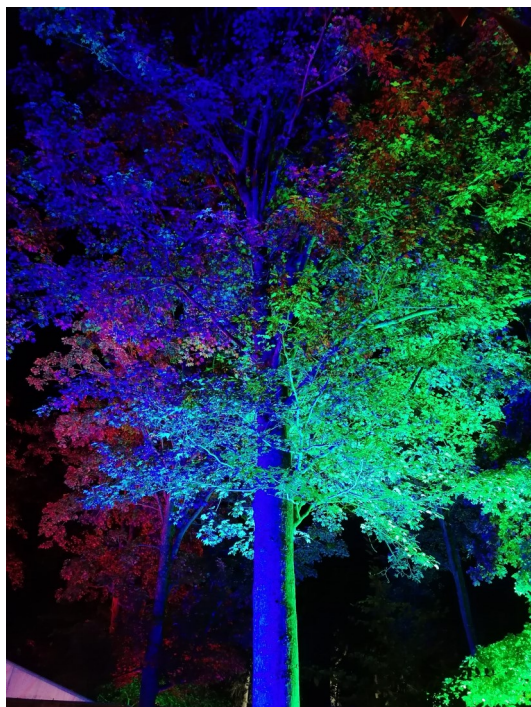
Thousands attend the open air communion on the Sunday morning.



Irish folk song in a darkened wood.

Laura Mvula wows the main stage.





Trees around the site
were beautifully lit



Aching with laughter at Milton Jones

Continued on page 28 ...

Earsdon Methodists

HAIRCUTS

As I write I have just had a haircut with which I am pleased. Quite a contrast to when I was a lad, for in those distant days Geordie (yes, that was his real name) was my barber who operated from a grubby corner shop, sandwiched between the Shoulder of Mutton and the Oddfellow's Arms .

In those distant days he would cut hair for a shilling – and the ash which he blew from a permanent succession of cigarettes held firmly in his mouth – came down your neck free of charge.

He had no finesse– he used the pudding basin method, ~ unless you described in great detail how much hair you wanted to be left on your head – and where it should be.

Geordie's one gift to tonsorial elegance ~~ and biggest money spinner ~was his 'Hair Restorative Elixir' which he sold at half a crown a bottle, claiming that two dabs of this per day would keep your hair healthy. Because he called it a *restorative elixir*, many believed that it would cure baldness, and Geordie never denied this – even though the hairs on his head could be counted on the fingers of one hand.

He was pleased with the income as his balding customers sought happiness in the optimism that one day, they would be able to have an Elvis Presley style rather than a Yul Brynner.

Geordie worked on the principal that it was what went on inside the head / inside the person, that made people happy and not what you put on it.

Although a scoundrel Geordie was right. To be happy and content is worth more than money

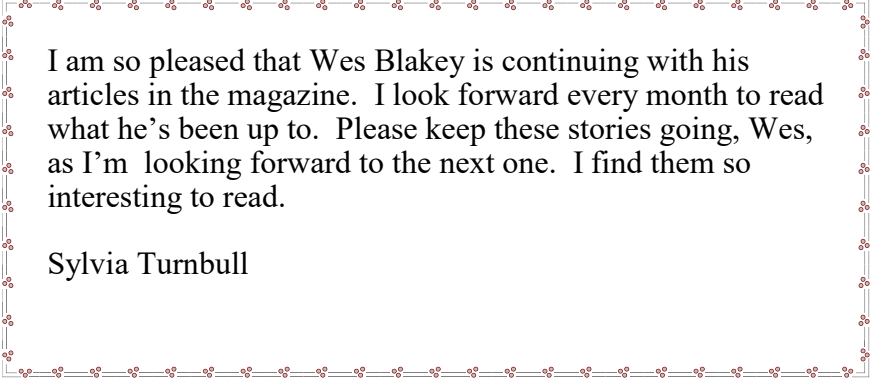
The best his cream did was to shine the head; but the best I can do is to keep, as it were, a shine inside – and not even ash down the neck can ruin that.

Wes Blakely

Dear Wes, one of St Alban's choir members has written this following the closure of the Methodist Chapel at Earsdon.

Sylvia's message is a good example of what other people have said.

Jean.



I am so pleased that Wes Blakey is continuing with his articles in the magazine. I look forward every month to read what he's been up to. Please keep these stories going, Wes, as I'm looking forward to the next one. I find them so interesting to read.

Sylvia Turnbull

St. Alban's and St. John's

Diary Page for September 2023


Sunday	3rd	<u>13th Sunday after Trinity</u>		
		9.00am	Holy Community	St John's
		10.30am	Holy Community	St Alban's
Thursday	7th	9.30am	Holy Community	St John's
Sunday	10th	<u>14th Sunday after Trinity</u>		
		9.00am	Holy Community	St John's
		10.30am	Holy Community	St Alban's
Wednesday	13th	9.30am	Holy Community	St Alban's
Saturday & Sunday 16th & 17th Heritage Open Weekend and Earsdon Scarecrow Festival				
Sunday	17th	<u>15th Sunday after Trinity</u> Special Service for the Scarecrow Festival		
		9.00am	Holy Community	St John's
		10.30am	Holy Community	St Alban's
Thursday	21st	9.30am	Holy Community	St John's
Sunday	24th	<u>16th Sunday after Trinity</u>		
		9.00am	Holy Community	St John's
		10.30am	Holy Community	St Alban's
Wednesday	27th	9.30am	Holy Community	St Alban's
Sunday	1st Oct	<u>17th Sunday after Trinity</u>		
		9.00am	Holy Community	St John's
		10.30am	Holy Community	St Alban's
		4.00pm	Toddler Harvest	St John's

St. Alban's and St. John's

Sunday Gospel Readings for September 2023 :

3rd	10th	17th
Matthew 16.21-end	Matthew 18.15-20	TBA

24th	1st Oct.
Matthew 20.1-16	TBA



**Please remember that for a trial period, starting on Sunday 3rd September 2023, the Sunday morning services are starting half-an-hour later than previously.
The impact of the new times will be reviewed in January 2024.**

* 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** *
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Continued from page 21

Ben Okafor
singing
'Sanctify
my Soul'
on the
smaller
Orchard
Stage



Pagoda – the tent where we heard Gordon Brown (the crowds have since dispersed)

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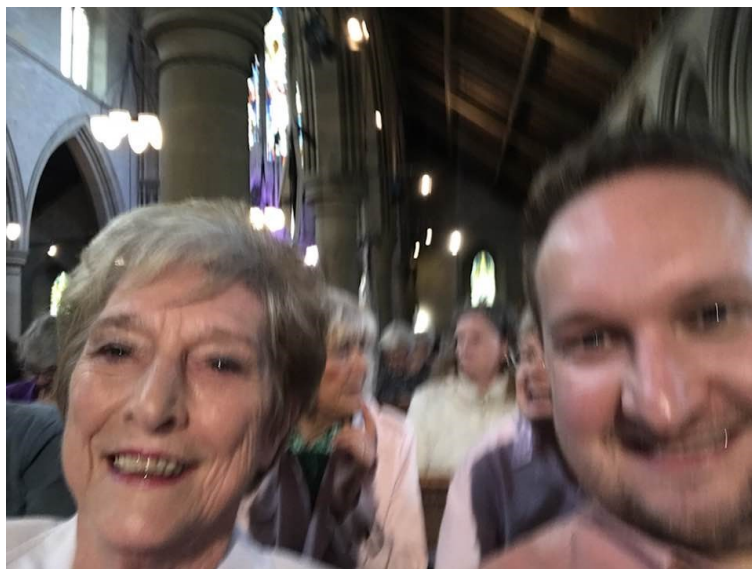
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St Alban's group of singers.



WORDSEARCH

For some reason, the Church gives thanks for angels in September. The 29th is the feast day of Michael and All Angels. Since the days of Genesis, these messengers of God have been sent many times to intervene for the good in human affairs. Angels guarded the Garden of Eden, they led Lot away from Gomorrah, they helped Gideon, they stopped Balaam, they closed the mouths of lions for Daniel, and, most important, the archangel Gabriel was sent to tell Mary that she would mother the Messiah. Angels sat in the empty tomb of Jesus, and told of His Resurrection. Revelation is teaming with angels, sent on all sorts of missions by God in the last times. Today, many Christians in the world's hot spots report having had angels help them when in mortal danger.

Thanks
Angels
Church
Feast
Michael
All
Genesis
Messengers
God
Sent
Intervene
Garden
Eden
Lot
Gideon
Balaam
Mouths
Lions
Daniel
Archangel
Gabriel
Mary
Mother
Teaming
Revelation
danger



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