

Stockton Road Church News December 2023/January 2024



Mark 12: 30-31

*“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart,
with all your mind, and with all your strength, and you shall
love your neighbour as yourself”.*

We are a union of Presbyterian and Congregational churches at the heart of Sunderland city life, growing from a past rich in mission and hospitality. We embrace this heritage utilising the Five Marks of Mission to guide and enable us to take forward current opportunities for mission and service.



Dear friends,

Merry Christmas to you all!

Firstly, this is my opportunity to say thank you for the gift that I received earlier this year – I wanted to wait until it was almost spent to say thank you so I could tell you what I bought!

I used it to get some practical things for the house and also some special things. So, firstly I bought an air fryer – a super duper, 8 in1 air fryer – that bakes and roasts and fries!!! All singing all dancing!! I also bought two new rugs one for the living room and one for the bedroom, and some throws for my settees etc!

Next, I went to the glass centre and bought two pieces of glass. The first is a small piece called the tree of life (made in Sweden) and then also a vase which was made in the centre itself - it's hard to describe but looks like the sea with the waves crashing! Come to the manse and see it for yourself.

Advent and Christmas are upon us – times of preparing and a time of God giving us the best gift ever – in the baby Jesus. How many of you have advent calendars? Or advent candles? How many of you use this time to reflect on the year past and the time to come? To prepare ourselves spiritually anew for Christmas and then the Year to come?

In the New Year I'll be beginning a series of whole pastorate Studies - I'm not sure if we'll be using Stepwise or something else but we will be doing something! These will be held at the manse but would require folks to sign up so we can make sure I have enough room for everyone in the manse!

So, go well in your preparations! Be blessed and bless others this Christmas time.

Blessing and love
Jane

Advent 2023

As Middle Eastern skies are rent
once more by weaponry whose one intent
is slaughter, fuelled by desire to vent
revenge for millennia of dissent
concerning rights to land broken, bent
by opposing claims, vindication lent
by conflicting theologies, hell-bent
on victory by methods violent
both physical and political, no restraint,
no lex talionis, instead, descent
into murder, kidnap, indiscriminate extent
of wholesale destruction of life now spent
with no thought given of how to prevent
recurring outbreaks bound to cement
bitter hatreds, despite well-meant
pressure, support, encouragement
for a two-state agreement with consent
for all to live with scope to repent
of division causing such lament
over Jerusalem and Bethlehem by One sent
whose purpose was to end torment.

Peter Jordan

Mark 13: 24 – 37 (Lectionary reading for 3rd – 9th December 2023)

A new Church year, a new start, and we focus our attention on Mark's Gospel, although this passage from Mark, chapter 13, feels very much like a continuation of the themes in Matthew 25 with which the previous lectionary year ended.

Scholars like to discuss Mark 13. Did Jesus deliver this as a single talk, or did Mark collect together a number of shorter utterances into one speech? Does it matter? When we get lost in these self-made puzzles, we are in danger of making faith simply about what we know. But as Christians we are cast in a divine drama that involves the whole of creation with roles to play. We are to live with a purpose, and to act in a way that best tells the story of Jesus, in which we have a role to play.

Mark 13 is presented as a single speech delivered to the disciples on the Mount of Olives overlooking the Temple, the biggest, most wondrous building in Jerusalem, and which was regarded as the outward sign of God's presence among his people. The scene opens: 'As he came out of the Temple, one of his disciples said to him, 'Look, Teacher, what large stones and what large buildings!' Then Jesus asked him, 'Do you see these great buildings? Not one stone will be left here upon another; all will be thrown down.'" (vv.1-2). The scene is a bold and stark lesson for Jesus' audience. For Jesus, it's all about God's greatness and the limitations/gap there is between the Almighty, all-knowing, all-powerful God and finite human beings.

As humans, we want to know, understand and control. We are not good at not being in control. Waiting puts us at the mercy of whatever we are waiting for, whether it's a bus or Christmas. Waiting is like a drill, where we have to wait for a command. But with a fire drill, if we get it wrong, we can try

again. Advent is about waiting and being ready to go for God. Our role, as we see in Mark 13:28-36, is to be careful listeners and to act decisively on what we hear.

A Prayer

Thank you, Father God, for your abundant blessings:
for never giving up on us;
for giving us all we need to live and serve you;
for peace and stability in this unstable and conflicted world;
for the security we have in you and in your guiding word;
for keeping us strong in faith and hope in a world where
Jesus is pushed to the sidelines and ignored by many.
Thank you, Father, for the riches of your grace,
and the glory that is yet to come.

Amen

Lectionary Readings

December

3 - 9 December - Staying alert as we wait for Jesus

Advent 1: Isaiah 64.1-9; Psalm 80.1-7,17-19; 1 Corinthians 1.3-9; Mark 13.24-37

10 - 16 December - Looking for the whole picture of Jesus

Advent 2: Isaiah 40.1-11; Psalm 85.1-2,8-13; 2 Peter 3.8-15a; Mark 1.1-8

17 - 23 December - How John responds to searching questions

Advent 3: Isaiah 61.1-4,8-11; Psalm 126; 1 Thessalonians 5.16-24; John 1.6-28

24 December - Risking everything for God

Advent 4: 2 Samuel 7.1-11,16; Luke 1.47-55; Psalm 89.1-4,19-26; Romans 16.25-27; Luke 1.26-38

25 December - The Christmas Story

Christmas Day: Isaiah 9.2-7; Psalm 96; Titus 2.11-14; Luke 2.1-14 (15-20)

January 2024

31 December – 6 January - After Christmas, what next?

Christmas 1: Isaiah 61.10-62.3; Psalm 148; Galatians 4.4-7; Luke 2.22-40

7 - 13 January - God shakes things up

Baptism of the Lord: Genesis 1.1-5; Psalm 29; Acts 19.1-7; Mark 1.4-11

14 - 20 January - Recognising when and how God calls

Epiphany 2: 1 Samuel 3.1-10, (11-20); Psalm 139.1-6,13-18; 1 Corinthians 6.12-20; John 1.43-51

21 - 27 January - How we respond to God's call

Epiphany 3: Jonah 3.1-5,10; Psalm 62.5-12; 1 Corinthians 7.29-31; Mark 1.14-20

28 January – 3 February - How we discern what comes from God

Epiphany 4: Deuteronomy 18.15-20; Psalm 111; 1 Corinthians 8.1-13; Mark 1.21-28

Bible Study Group

The Bible Study Group meets on Tuesdays at 10.30am in the Church and is open to anyone wanting to understand more about the Christian faith and to learn from one another.

A 4-week course for Advent is running until Tuesday December 19th led by Revd Dr David Whiting, and all will be made very welcome.



Christmas Tea

Join us for our Christmas Tea on Friday 8 December in the Lower Hall from 2.30 to 5pm. We need numbers for catering so please give your name to Christine, Cynthia or Anne Lewis as soon as possible.

Food Cycle

A reminder that Food Cycle is operating at Stockton Road Church every Tuesday at 12.30pm providing free food.

All you have to do is turn up and you will receive a warm welcome and a delicious meal.



Joy to the World

Church Services December

Services at 10.45am in the Sanctuary unless indicated otherwise

Sunday Dec 3 rd	Coffee and croissants in Lower Hall. Revd Jane Rowell.
Sunday Dec 10 th	Morning Worship. Barbara Ledger
Friday Dec 15 th	Community Carol Service 6pm.
Sunday Dec 17 th	Service of Readings and Carols. Elisabeth Meikle.
Sunday Dec 24 th	Morning Worship. Revd Dr David Whiting. 6pm Christingle Service. Revd Jane Rowell. Anne Lewis.
Christmas Day	10.30 – 12 Grindon Church Mission Project. Centre open for reflection and carols. 10.30am Worship at St Margaret's. Revd Jane Rowell.
Sunday Dec 31 st	10.30 Joint Pastorate Service at St Margaret's. Revd Jane Rowell

Church Services January 2024

Jan 7th	To be confirmed. Coffee and Croissants
Jan 14th	Barbara Ledger
Jan 21st	Revd Jane Rowell
Jan 28th	Elisabeth Meikle

Do you believe that every child deserves to experience the magic of Christmas?

Do you believe that no child should wake up on Christmas morning thinking Santa has forgotten them again?

If you believe, then our Christmas campaign is for you!



LOVE, AMELIA

**CHRISTMAS
GIFT APPEAL
2023**

*Love,
Amelia*

Providing gifts to families across Tyne & Wear and County Durham who would be without this Christmas

Love, Amelia Christmas gift appeal is back for the fourth year!

As well as supporting families with the essentials they need for their children throughout the year, at Christmas we work closely with our referral partners to identify families in need of additional support to deliver Christmas magic.

More families than ever before are struggling the rising energy prices and the cost of living. We know families feel stretched to deliver even a simple family Christmas and this challenge will be felt more than ever. Love, Amelia is here to ensure that no child in our community has to think that Santa has forgotten them.

This year, we expect to be our busiest yet with a record number of requests, but the number of gifts we distribute will depend on how much support we receive from the community. Our Elves are ready to get to work but we need your help!

How to get involved:

The cost-of-living crisis has only amplified the need for support, making this Christmas appeal more crucial than ever before. Here is how you can get involved and make sure no child wakes up thinking Santa has forgotten them.


Donate a gift

Donating a toy, game or special gift for a child can help make their Christmas magical. Gifts are given to children from birth up to 18 years old, as well as a small gift for their parent/carer, to give the family a Christmas they deserve.

We politely request for gifts to be unwrapped

We kindly ask for donations to be with us before 15th December. Gifts will be distributed throughout December to ensure they arrive with the family in plenty of time for Christmas.

Check out our [donations page](#) or [social media](#) channels for details of donation sessions throughout November and December. www.loveamelia.org.uk

Wishlist November 2023 

BOYS & GIRLS CLOTHES:

- Newborn / first size
- All age winter clothes - vests, trousers, long-sleeve t-shirts, jumpers, etc.
- Boys winter coats - age 4-10 years
- All ages - pyjamas/sleepsuits
- All ages - Underwear (new only)
- All ages - tights and socks
- Wellies - all sizes

OTHER:


- Changing Mats
- Toys - all ages
- Books


NAPPIES & TOILETRIES

- Nappies sizes 5 & 6
- Baby toiletries - shampoo, baby bath, body wash, nappy cream etc.
- Cotton wool balls
- Toothbrushes and toothpaste - 0-2years

EQUIPMENT:

- Safety Gates - (pressure fit only)
- Double Prams
- Travel system prams (no car seats please)
- Sterilisers - cold water or microwave only
- Pram cosy toes and raincovers
- Highchairs
- Moses Baskets and stands (no mattresses please)





We kindly ask to please only donate items on wishlist as space and resources are very limited

Thank you for your support 