

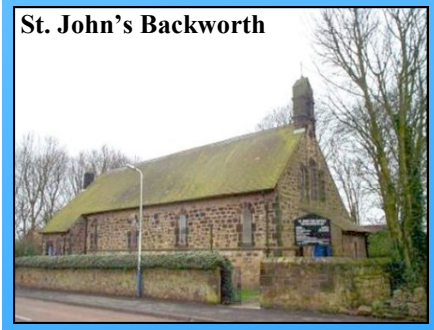
St. Alban's Earsdon

CHURCH VIEWS

November

2026

£1.00



St. John's Backworth



Immaculate Heart of Mary,
Parish of Our Lady Star of the Sea

THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH NOVEMBER 2026

And here we are in November, beginning to wonder where another year went, planting daffodil and tulip bulbs for Spring while bombarded with Christmas advertising. Time is always weird and wonderful. Remember as a youngster when those warm beach days stretched forever, when even the freezing sledge runs lasted and lasted? The condensed Christmas Day that followed the interminable Christmas Eve?

November has always been a bit on the receiving end of change that way. In the early Roman calendar it was the ninth month of ten, but in the Julian calendar two new months pushed it back to eleventh. It was displaced but allowed to hang onto its number . Our Anglo Saxon ancestors filched even that, they just called it Windmonath, the time of gales - so Austen, Boelo and Chloe are hardly as new as Paul reckons on Look North. They didn't need Weather Warnings or commentaries then: just a look at the sea and a definite "Not today, Olaf".

Scott Fitzgerald claimed that "The test of a first rate intelligence is the ability to hold two opposed ideas in the mind at the same time and still retain the ability to function." If he'd applied that to calendars instead of people November would have to come out among the brightest, even if not in the meteorological sense. It is a month of contrasting, even conflicting, events and attitudes, a time of anticipation and recollection. For Christians it begins with the Feast of All Saints, looking back at those who have left us and ends with the first Sunday of Advent, looking forward to the coming of Christ. For other faiths it is a month of anticipation: for the Hindu Duwali and the Jewish Hanukkah, both, like Christmas, in December. In the United States the 26 November is Thanksgiving this year, a longer celebration of family time than Christmas. If you can't wait for December celebrations, allow me to point out that November 7 is International Merlot Day, and 26 November is National Cake Day. Oddly, that is also Anti-Obesity Day. High time the Day-fixers got together before 2027.

Because of the World Wars and other conflicts in the 20th Century, November also has its own deeply solemn, even sombre, element of Remembrance, where the bright red poppies are not the celebratory colour of Christmas, but echoes of the Flanders poppies that grew on the Great War battlefields. Our local monuments, particularly in Backworth and Shiremoor, with their often-repeated surnames, mark multiple bereavements in a single family, and are a tribute to those who sacrificed their lives. They are still a terrible reminder to our own time that young men still have to fight the wars started by old men.

My father rarely spoke about his army service, but he recounted that in November 1944, his unit moved into a Dutch village where the population was almost starving, including the children. The cooks were immediately warned, particularly because they were mainly family men, that under Army Regulations, food was not to be given to civilians, and therefore every plate of food had to be accounted for.
After a few days, the Adjutant casually visited the cook-house and just happened to remark to the sergeant cook that the Brigadier had commented, only in passing, that according to the Kitchen Return, he seemed to be getting more despatch riders than Montgomery, which might seem odd to Division. The next day the Kitchen Return showed that although the despatch riders had stopped calling, a truck passing through with a corresponding number of troops had stopped for food. That happened every day until the unit pulled out, when the cooks were told that any cases of tinned food 'damaged in transit' should be written off and left behind. To save transport.
My father was one of the cooks and we still look forward to our annual Christmas card from Holland.

November is the epitome of Ecclesiastes:

a time to weep, and a time to laugh;
a time to mourn, and a time to dance.

Gerry Latimer
Parish of Our Lady, Star of the Sea

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Easy fundraising

Thank you to all 17 people who have used the easy fundraising app over the last year. In total we have collectively raised £90.48p which has come in over 80 separate donations.

The app is easy to use, costs nothing but gets St Alban's church 'free' money. If you would like to support using this method then please see the page on the notice board which gives information about the scheme and a QR code to download the app. Alternatively see Rob Gowdy.



Seeds of Life

Some of our 'Seeds of Life' are bearing fruit at the moment...

A group met for an initial meeting to plan an event to mark the anniversary of the **Hartley Pit** disaster. This will take place at St Alban's at 3pm on Saturday January 16th 2027. We've chosen that time because the light will be beginning to fail. We plan to light electric T lights (real candles would blow out), one for each of the 204 victims of the disaster at the Hartley Pit, and 76 for the victims of the disaster at Burradon.

We've reached out to the National Union of Mineworkers, to Backworth Colliery Band, to local schools, and to North Tyneside Council. A 'save the date' has been left on the Bloomin Earsdon website. The plan is to hold at least some of this event in the open air, but then to come into a warmed church for refreshments. This will give visitors an opportunity to engage with the Hartley Pit memorabilia held at St Alban's.

Meanwhile, on September 9th we showed the powerful film 'The People's Emergency Briefing'. This was followed by a three-part course on climate change 'Towards a Better World'. I'm delighted that eight members of this course have indicated a willingness to attend an initial meeting towards establishing an **Environmental Working Group**

Finally for now, members of the congregation at St Alban's were invited to join the **choir** to boost it in readiness for Christmas. Several people responded, and there has definitely been a new spring in the choir's step since.

Tim Mayfield.

Joan's mulled wine coffee morning

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to enquire about availability.

Building the new St Andrew's

Many thanks to everyone who has contributed to the building of the new St Andrew's Church in our partner village of Majeleko in Tanzania. Revd Harun Wilson, the vicar of St Andrew's, recently sent this picture of the building work underway.

Harun writes: 'I would like to take this opportunity to thank all our friends who have spent time, ideas and money to make the money transfer from the UK. On behalf of the Christian community of Majeleko Parish, we express our deepest gratitude to you for supporting us in the construction of the house of God. We also continue to call for continued support in this construction project. Send our warmest greetings to all the Christians of Earsdon and Backworth. We love you very much.

We have 2,500 blocks together with twenty bags of cement which we have bought from your fund. We are so happy for your donation and we are still welcoming you to continue to help us in this project of construction of the new St Andrew's Church.
Asante sana (thank you very much).

Meanwhile, Magendo – also from Majeleko – added: 'Praise the Lord Jesus Christ. To be honest, we do not have any other partners contributing to this construction project apart from you. For this building we are contributing ourselves together with our believers of St Andrew's, and by the grace of Almighty God the work is progressing slowly.

Above all, we give you many thanks for supporting us in our construction. May this unity and cooperation continue forever and MAY THE GOD OF HEAVEN MULTIPLY YOUR INCOME.

The Tanzania Support Group met recently to think about future fundraising activity. We're wondering whether we can hold our Christingle services this year in aid of the new St Andrew's. We're talking to Wellfield Middle School about a possible fundraising concert. And we'll be exploring the possibility of someone doing the Great North Run for this cause.

Progress on building the new St Andrew's Church in Majeleko



****

Deanery Planning

You might remember that Tynemouth Deanery, in conversations about restructuring, suggested the uncoupling of St Alban's and St John's. Your Deanery Synod Reps made quite strong representation about this, and the Deanery has thought again. In any future restructuring, the current plan is that St Alban's and St John's would stay together. We would join an 'Estates Group' to be resourced by 2.5 priests. Other parishes in the group would be St Mark's Shiremoor, St Aidan's Billy Mill and St Hilda Marden.

Weather Outlook for the month of November 2026.

General overview.
The presence of High pressure increases the chance of settled, drier weather overall. Occasional rain may occur in northwestern areas. Expect chilly nights with local morning and evening fog patches. Daytime temperatures are likely to be close to the seasonal average.

Early to mid-November.

Atmospheric Pressure is set to build in the vicinity of the UK as we move into early November, resulting in much drier weather. Cloud amounts will be rather variable with weak frontal troughs producing cloud and light rain at times, it is difficult to predict the areas that it will affect. During the influence of the high pressure, some places and perhaps more likely towards the east, will see overnight and morning fog, at this time of year it could take a while to clear and where it persists it will remain chilly. Temperatures overall are likely close to average for most areas during this period. Winds will generally be light, although stronger for northern coastal regions.

Mid to late November.

This period appears rather settled at first with some chilly nights. As we progress further into November, there is a likelihood of more unsettled conditions developing, with periods of moderate to heavy rain and the potential for strong winds.
The wettest and windiest areas are uncertain at this time. Overall, temperatures will probably be near or a little above average.

Please be mindful of airborne debris in strong winds, consider walking and parking your vehicle to windward of buildings, infirm structures and trees were there is a possibility of falling masonry and branches. If possible, avoid driving in stormy winds and always be aware of encountering strong crosswinds that can cause the vehicle to become unstable.

…….

David Gibson.
28th October 2026.

Mothers' Union October Meeting

At this month's meeting, we welcomed one of our own members to speak to us about First Aid and CPR (CardioPulmonary Resuscitation).

Sarah led our service, choosing the appropriate bible reading of the Good Samaritan. She pointed out, there was no CPR in those days and the earliest evidence of trying to get oxygen to the brain was by the use of bellows, à derrière!!

Members had fun singing Nellie the Elephant as they compressed the dummies' chests. As a few members were absent with chest infections, Sarah suggested that she would just demonstrate mouth to mouth resuscitation!

We learnt about DRAB when assessing an emergency situation.
Danger - to casualty and first aider?
Response - from the patient?
Awareness - of patient and airways?
Breathing - check for evidence

Sarah then showed us a defibrillator and talked us through how to access the box and use the device. A lot of us hadn't actually seen one before, let alone used one, so it was very interesting to learn a little bit about that.

Thank you Sarah for an entertaining but informative afternoon, which was enjoyed by all who came.

Our next meeting will be on Wednesday 18th November when Bob Bruce will be coming to talk to us about the Great North Ambulance service, all are welcome to join us.



Sylvia clearly enjoyed the meeting.

Thank you Sandy, for this article.

CHURCH VIEWS FOR NOVEMBER 2026 FROM THE PARISH OF OUR LADY, STAR OF THE SEA

Remembrance



This November, as in the past, the parish will remember and pray for the eternal rest of those parishioners who gave their lives in two World Wars and other conflicts. The large memorial triptych in St Edward's Church records those killed in the Great War, and more generally refers to the losses of the Tyneside Irish Brigade. The plaque was first unveiled and dedicated in the original 1911 St Edward's Church in Roxburgh Terrace on 4 November 1923 together with an anonymously donated 8ft by 6ft copy of the Reubens masterpiece in Antwerp Cathedral, of Christ's descent from the cross. Both were moved to the current church for its opening in 1928.

The memorial plaque is unusual for the 1920s in that the seventeen names are listed alphabetically; most memorials of that period listed the names by the man's rank.

The service of dedication was celebrated by Canon Austin Magill, one of the original members of the Tyneside Irish Brigade Committee which had raised and partly financed the unit. He was reported in the Shields Daily News to have said that "A fitting emblem for a Christian soldier should be a cross" and pointed out that the national flag is made up of three crosses.



The plaque on the left names those killed in World War ll, including two women; mercifully it has fewer names. We may wish to think of The Soldier's Prayer of St Ignatius of Loyola, the founder of the Jesuits:

Teach us, good Lord, to serve Thee as Thou deservest:
to give and not to count the cost;
to fight and not to yield
to toil and not to seek for rest;
to labour and not to ask for any reward
save that of knowing that we do Thy will.

Parish Remembrance Service
This annual service of prayer, readings and music to remember those who have died, particularly in the past twelve months, will take place at St Edward's at 7.00pm on Thursday 12 November. It is an opportunity to come together, pray together and support one another.



Walking Group, Tuesday 3 November
Jim Gunning will lead this six mile walk to the beautiful Shaftoe Crags from Bolam Lake.
You don't have to mountain climb - it really is not a 'scale a crag' day! Meet at Immaculate Heart of Mary Church at 9.30 am to share cars.

For Your Diary.....
Pantomime Visit



Set the mood for Christmas on this visit to the Playhouse to see *Snow White* on
Sunday 13 December at 4.30 pm. Payment by card or cash may be made after Masses at St Edward's and Immaculate Heart of Mary this weekend (1st Nov)

Christmas Fayre – Little Sisters of the Poor, Saturday 21 November
This will be held at St Joseph's Home on Westmorland Road, Newcastle, between 12 noon and 3.00pm. Christmas arts and crafts and all the usual festive stalls and refreshments.

Concerts at Ushaw
There will be a whole series of Christmas concerts in the beautiful Pugin designed St Cuthbert's Chapel from 7th until 20th December, including various choirs, bands and a Viennese Night. All details on the Ushaw website.

Deacon Terry McGann
The parish was saddened to learn of the death of Deacon Terry who served our parish so well right from his ordination in May 2016 until his retirement. May he rest in peace.



The clocks have gone back, the storm warnings are more frequent, but at least we don't need highway warning signs like this one in Svalbard.....yet.

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 and Saturday 10.00am

Pennies from Heaven!

In October there were a good couple of days for our St Alban's and St John's Grant Applications Team. First Colin emailed the team to say that we had received a grant of £1,000 from the Duke of Northumberland. No sooner had I replied to this good news than the doorbell rang. It was the postman, asking me to sign for a delivery. When I opened the letter, it contained a £3,000 cheque from the Barbour Foundation towards the repairs to the roof at St Alban's.

Friday was my day off, but when I logged on to emails on the Saturday morning there was more good news. This time it was an email from Rob Gowdy. Rob explained that the diocese had granted us £5,100 from the Minor Repairs pot. £9,100 in two days! Not bad going. But we need to press on, as the needs are quite significant at the moment. A reminder...

- Repairs to the roof at St Alban's
- A new wooden floor in the Eccles Hall
- A complete new roof for the Eccles Hall
- The reroofing of part of St John's
- Work to the chancel arch at St John's

Tim Mayfield

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

We're really looking forward to the beauty and joy of Advent and Christmas. Please note that flyers for delivery around the parish will be available on Advent Sunday, November 29th. If you can take a bundle to distribute, that would be much appreciated – thank you

Saturday November 28th
10am to 12noon 'Celebrate Advent!' for young families, at St Alban's

Sunday November 29th – Advent Sunday
4pm Children's Church at St John's
6pm Advent Carol Service at St Alban's

Sunday December 13th
4pm Children's Church Christmas Special at St John's

Sunday December 20th
6pm Carols by Candlelight, in St Alban's

Wednesday 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

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St. Alban's and St. John's
Diary Page for November 2026

Sunday	1st		**All Saints**	
		9.00am	Holy Communion	St John's
		10.30am	Holy Communion	St Alban's
		6.00**pm**	Memorial Service	St Alban's
Sunday	8th		**Remembrance Sunday**	
		Meet in the Eccles Hall for 10.30am before processing to Earsdon War Memorial. The Act of Remembrance in Backworth is at 12noon at the War Memorial.		
Sunday	15th		**2nd Sunday before Advent**	
		9.00am	Holy Communion	St John's
		10.30am	Holy Communion	St Alban's
Sunday	22nd		**Christ the King**	
		9.00am	Holy Communion	St John's
		10.30am	Holy Communion	St Alban's
Sunday	29th		**Advent Sunday**	
		9.00am	Holy Communion	St John's
		10.30am	Holy Communion	St Alban's

*Please note that the midweek communion service is currently suspended owing to low attendance.

Please note - all material for next month's magazine (December 2026) will need to be in before Wednesday 25th November. Thank you, *Jean*.

St. Alban's and St. John's

Sunday Gospel Readings for November 2026 :

1st	8th	15th
Matthew 18.21-35	See previous page	Matthew 25.14-30

22nd	29th
Matthew 25.31-end	Mark 13.24-end



Living Water Quiet Day. (With thanks to Rob Gowdy.)

On 10th October, five of us came together for the, 'living water quiet day', the fourth day in this year's series of quiet days. The venue was St Mary's Church in Holywell, a small beautifully kept building with exceptional gardens newly planted. One striking feature of the garden was a cross cut with a chain saw from a felled tree. During the day, we explored the miracle of water contrasting it with the gospel reading John 4. 1 to 27. The advantage of a small group ensured that everyone had the opportunity to express their views without being pressed for time. We also learnt that Diane was baptised at that Church and had a long childhood connection to it consequent of her grandparents residing in Holywell village.

As part of the day we broke off to visit the drinking fountain, a memorial to a person killed in the Boer War. The memorial is sited at the west end of the Manor House. We then went into the Manor House grounds to look at the 'Holy Well' from which Holywell is named. The well was reconstructed as part the village's 125-year anniversary, and was blessed by the bishop of Newcastle in 2012. On leaving the well, we took a leisurely walk along the dene, savouring the gentle water flow and the autumn colours of the trees, then back to Church for a final session and communion.

Grateful thanks to Tim for putting a huge amount of effort into the day for a small but very appreciative group.

It was a special day, and these events are open to everyone. Please note that Saturday May 8th and Saturday October 9th have been earmarked for Quiet Days in 2027.



St Mary's Holywell, venue for the 'Living Water' Quiet Day

Cathryn and Dianne at the holy well.





See also next page



Continued from previous page



Postscript:-

History & Legend

The Miracle of St. Cuthbert: According to an 11th-century legend, a monk from Tynemouth Priory was traveling with a piece of St. Cuthbert's shroud. When he arrived at the well, a miraculous event occurred—the relic refused to touch the water, and the monk was instantly cured of a painful disease. A local blind woman who washed her eyes in the water also had her sight restored, cementing the well's status as a medieval site of pilgrimage.

Water Properties: Historical records describe the spring as a "vitreolin" spring with an inky, irony taste that rose in predictable bubbles. The water was traditionally said to be exceptional for treating sore eyes.

Many thanks, Rob.


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So much love, packed in one small box.

This year, St Alban's is once again supporting Operation Christmas Child, aka Christmas Shoeboxes.

In 1993, Samaritan's Purse, a nondenominational Christian aid organisation, began this initiative, to give hope, love and practical help to children in areas of conflict and deprivation, in over 170 countries. It caught the imagination of families in the US and Europe: filling a shoebox with little gifts has become part of the pre-Christmas ritual, especially beloved of children who love to help their less-fortunate counterpart. For many, it's an ideal half-term activity at the end of October. It's so lovely to imagine the face of 'your' child, wherever they might be, as they open the box, which contains so much more than 'things', welcome though they might be.

A story from Our Partners in Ukraine

"*Children affected by war often respond to toys in a very different way. When they open their gift boxes, they don't just see something new—they compare it to what they were forced to leave behind.*

"Many of them fled their homes with almost nothing. *It's hard to hold back tears when you see their joy.*

"One boy, Vlad, from an occupied city in southern Ukraine, received a shoebox gift. As he looked through it, something caught his attention—a small plush keychain. It wasn't just any toy. ***It was the exact same cartoon character he used to carry on his backpack before the war…*** *the one he had to leave behind when his family fled. In that moment, everything changed.*

"For Vlad, this wasn't a coincidence. It was deeply personal. He saw it as a reminder that God sees him, knows his pain, and understands how much he misses home. And more than that—that God is powerful enough to bring a piece of home back to him."—Operation Christmas Child partner, Ukraine.

Now it's your chance to add to the estimated **quarter of a million shoeboxes** the UK will contribute to the **12 million** sent in total. Last year 51% of our UK boxes went to areas where Christians are marginalised or persecuted, so it's a way to tell these children and their families that they are still part of the worldwide Christian family.



How to get involved:

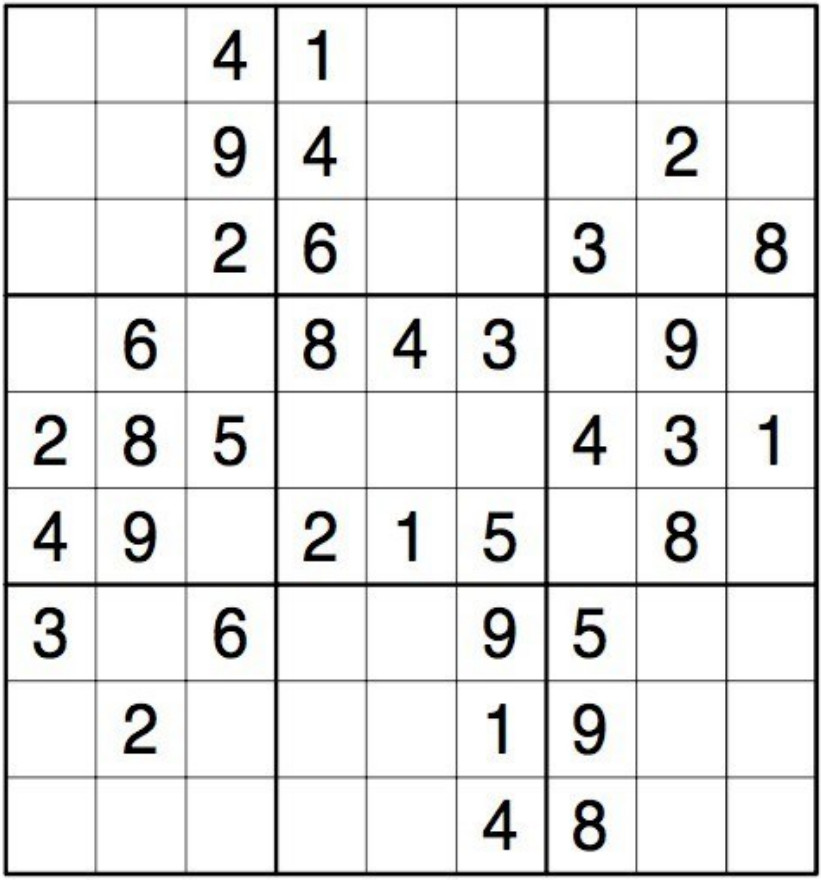
Either cover a shoebox of your own with Christmas paper, or pick up a flat box from St Alban's, together with the leaflet giving detailed instructions about what to pack. It's worth noting that the requirements have changed slightly from previous years, so don't assume you know without checking the latest literature! If you give your £5.00 donation online using the website, you can register to be told where your shoebox goes.
Shoeboxes are welcome in church anytime from now, but they must be with us by the morning service on Sunday 15th November, when they will be commended to God ready for beginning their long journey.

Anyone reading this who is not part of St Alban's congregation is of course very welcome to contribute. Contact Jo on 07855405605 if you want pick up a flat box and leaflet or to arrange a drop-off – or you could come to our 10.30 service on the day!

Let's build a wall of boxes by then!

SUDOKU

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.



		4	1					
		9	4				2	
		2	6			3		8
	6		8	4	3		9	
2	8	5				4	3	1
4	9		2	1	5		8	
3		6			9	5		
	2				1	9		
					4	8		

Celebrate Advent!

You are warmly invited to 'Celebrate Advent!' an event for young families at Alban's. The event will run from 10am to 12noon on Saturday November 28th.

We'll think about HOPE and make a paper lantern.
We'll think about PEACE and make a peace dove.
We'll think about JOY and make paper trumpets and angel puppets.
We'll think about LOVE and make clay hearts.

£5 per child [children need to bring an accompanying adult with them to the whole event]; £10 for a family ticket.

Look out for a booking form at the back of church.



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Wordsearch for November 2026

The poppies of Remembrance Sunday

In late 1914, WW1 erupted across Northern France and Flanders. Great swathes of previously green fields and forests were blasted and bombed, leaving them bleak and barren, with seemingly every living thing destroyed.

But then in the Spring of 1915, something beautiful began to come out of all the destruction. Tens of thousands of bright red Flanders poppies began to put out tentative shoots across the endless vistas of mud. These resilient little flowers had actually flourished in the middle of so much chaos and destruction, because their seeds grow when exposed to sunlight, through disturbances to soil.

Those endless fields of cheerful poppies, growing in the midst of such horror, were what inspired the Canadian doctor, Lieutenant Colonel John McCrae, to write the now famous poem 'In Flanders Fields'.

World
War
France
Flanders
Green
Fields
Bombed
Barren
Bleak
Destroyed
Spring
Destruction
Bright
Red
Poppies
Mud
Chaos
Seeds
Grow
Soil
Cheerful
Growing
Horror
Doctor
poem

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

Church Contacts

St. Alban's Earsdon:
Vicar
Rev'd. Tim Mayfield, 5 Front Street, Earsdon, Whitley Bay NE25 9JU
Tel: 07414 601 351
Church warden
Rob Gowdy, 82 Chipchase Court, New Hartley, Northumberland
NE25 0SR
Tel: 07841 986 019
Church warden
Craig Thornton
Tel: 07946 669 456
PCC Secretary
Rob Gowdy, 82 Chipchase Court, New Hartley, Northumberland
NE25 0SR
Tel: 07841 986 019
PCC Treasurer
Rob Swindells, 81 St Mary's Avenue, Whitley Bay NE26 3TS.
Tel 252 3919
Safeguarding Officer
Tracey Gray. Tel: 07767 382 744



St. John's Backworth:
Vicar
Rev'd. Tim Mayfield, 5 Front Street, Earsdon, Whitley Bay NE25 9JU
Tel: 07414 601 351
Treasurer & Assistant Church Warden
Mary Oliver 10 Melrose Avenue, Backworth, Newcastle NE27 0JD
Tel: 268 4334

Our Lady Star of the Sea :
Priest in Charge
Fr Binoy Mandapathil CSSR
Church of St Edward, Coquet Avenue, Whitley Bay, NE26 1EE.
Tel: 252 8021
Email olss.whitleybay@diocesehn.org.uk. Parish Office Tel: 252 7066 - open on Weds, Thursdays, & Fridays, 10am to 1pm.