

December 2025 -----BENEFICE NEWS-----December 2025

For enquiries please contact Revd Dr Robert Brown

Priest-in-Charge, Bewcastle, Stapleton and Kirklington with Hethersgill

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email: Robert.Brown@BewcastleHouseOfPrayer.org.uk

Date	Sunday	Bewcastle	Stapleton	Hethersgill	Kirklington
7th Dec	Advent 2		10 am Carol Service		
14th Dec	Advent 3				10 am HC
16th Dec	Tuesday	7 pm Carols4Shepherds			
21st Dec	Advent 4			10 am Carol Service	
24th Dec	Christmas Eve	11.30 pm HC			Carols @ 5
25th Dec	Christmas Day		10 am HC		
28th Dec	Holy Innocents	10 am HC			
4th Jan	Epiphany				10 am HC

HC = Holy Communion, MP = Morning Prayer, EP = Evening Prayer

Knowe United Reformed Church, Bewcastle

1st Sunday of the month at 2.15 pm

Prayer for the Month – the Christmas Night Collect

Eternal God, who made this most holy night to shine with the brightness of your one true light, bring us, who have known the revelation of that light on earth, to see the radiance of your heavenly glory; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen

From the Registers

Funeral

Jared Little (80) of Nixonstown, Bewcastle at St Michael and All Angels, Arthuret on Friday 31st October

Church Notice

Sunday 7th December 10 am Carol Service at Stapleton with refreshments after the service

Monday 15th December 2 pm Bewcastle School Carol Service at Bewcastle Church

Tuesday 16th December 7 pm. Carols by Candlelight at Bewcastle. This service for which I am responsible has become increasingly popular as a genuinely community event when all are welcome whatever their Church connections - or none. I promise you will enjoy it. Give it a whirl! Bishop John.

Thursday 18th December 2.30 pm Fir Ends School Carol Service at Kirklington Church

Friday 19th December 1.30 pm Shankhill School Carol Service at Stapleton Church

Please note **evening services at Bewcastle** during the winter will be held at **3 pm** instead of the usual 6 pm in summer.

If you know of someone who would be unable to attend church but would like to receive communion at home, or would appreciate a visit from me, please do let me know. My contact details are below and at the top of the newsletter.

If anyone would like to talk to me about anything (doesn't need to be church-related, for example if you don't know where to turn for help or someone to speak to), please do feel free to contact me.

Conversations will always be confidential. My normal parish working days are Monday and Friday (plus Sundays) but I will always try and find time to listen. Phone no: 016977 48438, email:

Robert.Brown@BewcastleHouseOfPrayer.org.uk

A selection of podcast sermons can be found on the [Bewcastle House of Prayer](http://BewcastleHouseofPrayer.org.uk) website under the 'Podcasts' menu tab.

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Dear Friends,

A wild and wet wind is howling outside. Branches, stripped of leaves in the fallow time of year, toss and shake, bend, not break, as the dark sky thunders across the bleak fells encircling the Bewcastle bowl. Rooks and ravens, jackdaws and crows play, lifting on the gust, then folding wings tumble down, round, and up again, thrilling to the ride – its difficult not to smile when watching them. A smile. Who would have thought it in conditions such as these? Perhaps its easier to be on the wing than balancing in a violent tree; but the ground, sodden and soft as it maybe, is still at least stable.

Our summer visitors have long gone; the swifts and swallows, the martins, willow warblers and chiff-chaffs, all chasing the sun across the desert to sub-Saharan Africa. And our winter visitors are here now; the fieldfares and redwings arrived from Scandinavia on 14th October, and the first yapping skeins of Barnacle Geese overhead from Svalbard a week or so before. This year we also have a small flock of friendly redpolls for the first time, who flit along the hedgerows on the roadside, feeding on the fluffy seeds of the uncut rosebay willowherb. But what have all these come here chasing? The gales and the rain? Or perhaps just the haw and rowan berries.

Berries and fruit. This has been a year of overwhelming abundance, a 'mast' year, one of those occasions when many trees seem to agree that this would be a good time to bless the earth. Apples, quince, hazels, oaks, horse chestnuts, beech, and many more, all have had a heavy crop (although that didn't stop the grey squirrels from taking every nut from our many cob and hazel shrubs). 'Agree'? How do trees and shrubs, across huge areas like the whole of northern Europe, coordinate to synchronise their year of abundance? Spring weather alone isn't enough to explain it. No one knows. It seems that plants are able to communicate with each other in ways we know little about – part of a vast, interconnected network of living beings in a complex relational ecosystem.

Perhaps one of the most obvious and exhilarating examples of this wonder of communication is the murmuration of the starlings. They started flocking in late October in the fields around us, small groups that fly in from different directions to expand the already sizeable, restless flock gathered on the pasture. Waves of birds rising and falling over the grass, like dark swells on a green sea. And then as I stand still, watching, listening, the soft swishing and hissing as they circle overhead in a twisting, turning cloud like an unfurled flag flapping in slow motion on a strong breeze. Then down again, like a rippling carpet over the ground. It is difficult not to be in awe and moved with an aching love for such beauty.

Most mornings I sing an ancient song called 'Benedicite, Omnia Opera', or just 'The Benedicite' for short (pronounced ben-e-dye-city). It is over two thousand years old and the title literally means 'O bless ye, all works'. It has these lines in it, 'O ye mountains and hills bless ye the Lord, O all ye green things upon the earth bless ye the Lord, O all ye fowls of the air bless ye the Lord, praise him and magnify him forever.' It is a wonderful song to sing walking through the fields and down the lonnings, not just in Advent but throughout the year, giving voice to our role as that part of this web of creation called to lift worship to God on behalf of the whole created order.

It seems a very long way from the horrific sectarian violence that we see in different places around the world, where human pride, ignorance, and fear are used to propagate stories of resentment and bitterness, difference and exclusion, reaching even to our own streets. And from the depressing political and economic systems we have adopted, that treat this intricately interconnected and living creation as nothing more than an inert, unlimited and uncoded material resource to be exploited for capital gain and profligate profit, of which the arrogant denial of anthropogenic climate change is just another expression. And yet this is exactly why Christmas exists. In the midst of all this hubris and turmoil, a single grain of wheat falls to be cradled in the earth, and dies to give life to countless others. God comes to us in the depth of our darkness, in the wilderness of our winter, vulnerable, helpless, dependent on the love of a gentle mother and a concerned father, and the meagre hospitality of an overstretched innkeeper. This is how the world-changing fire begins...

'O all ye works of the Lord, bless ye the Lord.' A song and a smile, and a burning hope.

Wishing you a peaceful and joyous Christmas. And do please join us to lift your voice, too, in worship and wonder.

Your friend and priest
Robert.

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Monday 24th November 8 pm Folk Tunes Sessions at the Black Lion, Hethersgill. All welcome

Saturday 29th November 2 pm Stapleton PCC Christmas Fair at Stapleton Hall. Carols from the children at Shankhill School. Stalls include cakes and preserves, tombola, raffles and competition. Offers to help or donations for stalls greatly appreciated. Contact any member of the PCC.

Saturday 29th November 5 pm Hethersgill's Christmas Celebrations. Mulled wine and mince pies at the hall, followed by a Christmas concert by Dalston Male Voice Choir. Bar and food available by Black Lion pub and Rigg Head farm (cash only). Donations welcome towards cost of the event. Raffle, including Christmas Hamper. Christmas Toy donation for local children

Tuesday 2nd December 11 am – 2 pm Bewcastle Mini Hub at Roadhead Hall. Come for a chat and free coffee in the supper room; scones and cakes for sale

Saturday 6th December Live Music with Duple Up at the Black Lion, Hethersgill

Saturday 6th December 8 pm Stapleton Public Hall Dance with Brian Griffin. Details Mary Thompson 016977 48379

Sunday 7th December 7 pm Arthur's Monthly Quiz at the Black Lion. £2 entry, teams of up to 5

Tuesday 9th December 8 pm Ladies darts reunion at the Black Lion - all welcome

Wednesday 10th December 7.30 pm Stapleton WI Christmas Meal . For more details about WI contact the President Tel 07398 130363.

Friday 12th December 8 pm Live Acoustic Music with Jake Scott at the Black Lion

Saturday 13th & Sunday 14th December 10.30 am – 2 pm Bewcastle Hub at Roadhead Hall. Community drop in event – free entry and refreshments. Cakes, bacon rolls, crafts and produce for sale. All welcome.

Tuesday 16th December 8 pm Bewcastle Heritage Society at Roadhead Hall A History of Roadhead: Old and New: an illustrated talk by David Moorat.

Saturday 27th December 8 pm Live Music with rock guitarist Graham Brown at the Black Lion

Sunday 28th December Christmas Darts Competition at the Black Lion

Monday 29th December 8 pm Folk Tunes Sessions at the Black Lion. All welcome to come along and play or listen. Some tunes to ensure we have something in common to play can be found on the [Bewcastle House of Prayer](#) website. Music can be found on [TheSession.org](#) website

Claiming Dates

Thursday 1st January Games Day at the Black Lion. Killer darts, pool, the dice game etc. lots of prizes

Friday 17th January 7.30-11 pm Hethersgill Parish Hall Dance with Brian Griffin

Friday 23rd January Burns Night Supper & Dancing at Stapleton Public Hall. Supper with a light touch of Burns and dancing led by the wonderful Margaret Main to help the PCC raise funds for St Mary's Church. Tickets £12.50 (under 12s free) to include 2 courses and a nip of whisky. Haggis, neeps & tatties, or steak pie/veggie option. Bar available. Details and tickets from Catherine 016977 48322/07746 286311 or Tricia 016977 48833 or any member of the PCC. Please bring plate, glass and cutlery.

Saturday 21st February Hethersgill Social Committee Ceilidh at Hethersgill Parish Hall

Line Dancing Classes: Every Monday 7.30 - 9 pm at Stapleton Public Hall. Ann Robb 07855 919368
Anyone who can't attend please let Ann Robb know. Thanks

Stapleton Knit and Natter Group: Every Tuesday 7 pm in Stapleton Hall. **Carol 01697 543094**

Beading Classes: Wednesday 1.30 – 3.30 pm fortnightly. Details Christine Batey 01228 791348

Stapleton WI: 2nd Wednesday of every month 7.30 pm at Stapleton Hall

Yoga: Every Thursday 6 pm in Hethersgill Parish Hall

Carpet Bowling: Every Thursday in Stapleton Hall

Badminton: Every Thursday 7.30 – 9.30 pm at Hethersgill Parish Hall. Contact Andy Little 07765 244071

December 2025-----NEWS AND THANKS----- December 2025

Stapleton Church PCC would like to thank everyone who supported the Harvest Supper at the hall on 24th October. £1,077 was raised over the evening thanks to the generosity of those who cooked, or bought tickets, brought raffle prizes and delicious puddings and helped with the setting up and clearing away.

Hethersgill's Christmas Toy Appeal. Can you donate a Christmas toy? On behalf of Brampton Food Bank and Mission Christmas (Carlisle area), we are collecting toys for local children (0 – 18 years old) who may otherwise go without this Christmas. Please take your unwrapped children's gift to the Black Lion Pub, Hethersgill. The last day to donate is Sunday 7th December.

St Mary's Church PCC ask that people tending graves in the churchyard take plastic wreaths and flowers away with them and do not put them in the compost heap. Thank you.

Hethersgill Church: A big thankyou to everyone who helps keep Hethersgill church & church yard so lovely. If you have any spare time to help in anyway eg. grass cutting/strimming/cleaning please contact Irene 01228 675389 or Madge 01228 675568.

Hethersgill Village Hall All enquiries/bookings please contact Elsie Elliott 01228 675336 or Christine Falder 07790 302016

Hethersgill Parish Hall 100 Club. November winners: 1st Neil Main; **2nd;** Catherine Edwards; **3rd** Dorothy Armstrong. Drawn at Badminton Club. If you would like to renew or join for 2026 please contact Irene on 01228 675389 or a Committee Member. Thank you for all your support

Stapleton Public Hall can be booked or enquiries made by email bookings@stapletonpublichall.co.uk or calling Eileen on 016977 3196.

Shankhill C of E Primary School and Nursery - We have places throughout school for children aged 3 - 11, with free 15 & 30 hours places for children aged 3+ Mon-Fri 8.45-3.30 pm, with the option of Breakfast Club for everyone from 07:45 to 8:45, and After-School Clubs/extended childcare from 3:30 to 5:30. Please call 01228 577264 or email office@shankhill.cumbria.sch.uk for more information

Shankhill Parent & Toddler Group every Tues 1:30 –3:20pm during term time. 01228 577264
Updates on our Facebook page

Bewcastle Primary School and Nursery – places available throughout school for children aged 3 – 11. We now offer wrap around care, 8am -5pm. For further information please call 016977 48662 or email admin@bewcastle.cumbria.sch.uk

Bewcastle School Nursery – Nursery places available for children aged 3+, full and part time places available. For further information please call 016977 48662 or emailadmin@bewcastle.cumbria.sch.uk

Newsletters can be picked up from: Kirklington Church porch, Hethersgill Church porch, Stapleton Church, Bewcastle Church, Stapleton Public Hall Porch, Smithfield Garage office, Garry Phillip's Garage. Or downloaded : www.Bewcastle.com/news-events,
www.BewcastleHouseOfPrayer.org.uk/parish-notice

I have recently got a new computer and I think I may have lost some email addresses in the process, so please let me know if you hear of anyone who hasn't received their emailed copy, or who would like to be added to the list. Thanks. Tricia

Deadline for the **January 2026** issue is **Saturday 13th December** to Tricia Coombe, Damhead, Lyneholmeform, Roweltown, CA6 6LQ. 016977 48833 or triciacoombe@damhead.me