

Newsletter – Christmas 2025

Upcoming Events and Updates (in date order)

Tree of Life – Christmas gifts for local school children in need by 30th November

As well as having started their grocery deliveries, the distinctively Christian local poverty support charity who we partner with are organising an event for the families most in financial need from Brook Street and Norman Street Schools. Could you buy & wrap a present (or 2) using the labels at the back of the St John's building on the mini Christmas tree? These need to be brought back for Sunday 30th November ... so get shopping 😊

Please pray that Tree of Life's ministry opens doors for people to encounter God's people and be intrigued.

'The Christmas Experience' – early December

Before Easter a great team hosted 6 classes from Brook Street School and Norman Street School for 'the Easter Experience', with some also having assisted at 'Bethlehem Live' with Carlisle Baptist Church. As 'Bethlehem Live' is not being run this year we want to give our local school children the opportunity to explore the true, biblical meaning of Christmas. So, we are planning to run 'the Christmas Experience' in early December, with Brook Street and Norman Street Schools both interested. We need volunteers to make this event a memorable celebration of Jesus' birth, and a gateway to the gospel. Whether you can help with planning, decorating, or assisting on the day, please reach out to Tudor if you'd like to get involved, and **please pray for its impact**.

NB All present when the schools come will need appropriate Safeguarding & DBS checks & safer recruiting.

Christmas Events

Jesus is the Light of the World who everyone needs and Christmas provides a wonderful focus to worship God incarnate and invite others to do the same. We'll soon have flyers ready to share with our friends and neighbours and give out in the Parish soon, but here are the dates for your diary:

St Andrew's: Christmas Eve Carols 4pm Christmas Day Communion at 9:30 AM

St John's: Rainbows Christmas Spectacular Saturday 20th 6.30pm Carol Service with Border Concert Band Sunday 21st December at 11:00 AM Christmas Day Communion at 11:00 AM

Please pray that this enables more people to regularly worship Jesus, and for God's kingdom to grow.

Church Away Day – 10am-4pm 31st January 2026 at St John's Houghton

After a few years break (with Pandemic and vacancy) we plan to have a special day of bonding teaching, activities, food and encouragement which YOU are warmly invited to. Please **put the date in your diary now**. More details will be communicated nearer the time, including organising transport for anyone who needs it.

Church lunches at St John's

All those who have been part of them will know how good our Church lunches are, both in time together and the food too 😊 They express our calling to share lives across differences, and to welcome and connect with the stranger and the lonely. We would love to have the capacity for these to be held monthly. Our dates planned

from now until Easter are 31st January 2026 (at our Church Away Day); & 29th March (Palm Sunday). If you could help with these please speak with Karen or Sue.

Please pray for God's provision, protection and blessing of these Church family bonding times.

Putting into practice our 'Talking about faith' training

Back in September, a number of us gathered to prayerfully consider and discuss a number of questions that (depending on the conversation) we might use to open up conversations about Jesus in, given the increasing openness in society to talk about what excites us, including faith.

From "What have you been up to this week(end)?" through "Is there anything that (other) Christians have that you wish you had?" and "What do you like most about Jesus? What difference does he make in your life?" to "On a scale of 1-10, how confident are you that you will go to heaven? And why that number?" we considered what others might say and how we might lovingly respond whilst praying for the Holy Spirit's work.

Who might you consider asking these questions to?

Please pray for us to love our neighbours enough to want to speak with them about Jesus, and for God to provide natural opportunities.

Mission Community Mission – end of February 2026

Looking ahead, we are thrilled to announce that we are in the initial stages of planning a Mission week of events with our Mission Community partners in Houghton & Kingmoor planned for 23rd February – 1st March 2026. This initiative will bring together our church family and wider community to hear and share God's love in transformative ways with the help of a team of students on the Cornhill Scotland bible teaching course. More details will be shared as the week approaches, but **please keep this in your prayers,** and let us know what kind of events might work for people and groups that you know and are involved with.

The Missions of St John's at St John's Café and Botcherby Brew

We're so thankful for the team who run these cafés and would love those of us with diary flexibility to consider if we could support them regularly, both to reach out to anyone who comes in, and to benefit from the friendship and fellowship ourselves. **Could you make one of them part of your weekly events?**

Further ahead...

The weekend after Easter Day (5th April) will see an evangelistic stand-up comedy evening 'God, the Bible & Everything in under an hour*' on Friday 10th April (who could you invite?) ... and Tudor & Jo would love you to join them for a Ceilidh on the afternoon of Saturday 11th April to celebrate their 50th birthdays 😊

May you know God's peace, joy and blessing as we continue our Spirit empowered Mission of Welcoming, Connecting, and Transforming in Jesus name.

St John's & St Andrew's Parochial Church Council (Abbey, David, Esther, Giles, Julie, Moray, Stuart, & Tudor)

Which of these items do you need to act on now: diarise, add to prayer list, contact someone about...etc. ?