

# ST. MATTHEW'S CHURCH NEWBOTTLE



**NEWS**  
*from the pews*

**Spring**  
**2025**

*You are the light of the world.  
A city on a hill cannot be hidden  
Matthew 5 v14*

# Parish of St. Matthew's Newbottle Diocese of Durham

## Church Services

### Sunday Services

9.45 am Family Worship-  
Holy Communion

### Wednesday

10.00 am Holy Communion

### Church Open

Tuesday 10.00-11am

Wednesday 10:30- 11:30am

### Church Hall

Church Hall Bookings by Email:  
stmatthewshallbookings@gmail.com

### Churchwardens

Tom Dick  
Joy Warren  
Email: Ewol12@talktalk.net

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### Editorial team

Susan Dick  
Vera Marshall,  
Charles Martin (Designer)



# Churchwardens' Chat

Can you believe it's almost Easter? This year especially, time just seems to be flying by. It's a later Easter this year, so hopefully there will be some nice weather for us all to enjoy over the holiday period. We may all know the saying, "Time flies when you are enjoying yourselves" or "Time flies when you are busy". Both are very true at St Matthew's. There have been a lot of things going on at St. Matthew's since Christmas and please do continue to keep your eye on our Facebook page for up-and-coming news and information. One of the things we've been up to, (after being over two years without a vicar) is to have taken part in the diocese's Vacancy Audit Process. There's more information later in the magazine, but it gave us the opportunity to look at ourselves as a parish, serving you, our parish and community around Newbottle, in Jesus' name. It showed us that during the time we have not had a vicar, we, St Matthew's congregation, haven't just sat back and let things go, or in fact, as sometimes happen, let things decline. We are a parish very much alive and pushing forward with new and existing things and we'd love it if more folk would come along.

We often hear in the village that St Matthew's is, "Our church", and that is so true. St. Matthew's church and its people are here, for the purpose of

spreading and showing God's love in our parish, country and the world. And more importantly we'd love you to be part of that.

Two new things in church are, we now have a dedicated café area for use after our service on a Sunday, and once a month we have a "Let's Talk" night where we come together very

informally and comfortably, to talk about Jesus and aspects of our faith. Again, as with everything at St Matthew's this is open to all, and all are welcome. There may even be a few crisps etc to keep us going. It only lasts an hour but is a great opportunity to talk to friends, and make new ones.

One of our recent readings at church was from Philippians 3. Verse 14 states, "I press on towards the goal for the prize of the heavenly call of God In Christ Jesus". At St Matthew's our goal is to spread the wonderful life saving message of Jesus, through our welcoming nature, our love for Jesus and our friendship and fellowship.

We'd love you to join us and help us keep your church alive in Newbottle.

Happy Easter,

Joy and Tom



# Rockin' around the Christmas Tree



That's what we were doing a few weeks before the Christmas services.

The St Matthew's elves got together at church to erect and dress the Christmas tree, erect and prepare the pew candle poles and to build up and fill the two Nativity scenes. There was much to do and about 12 people turned up to do the deeds. Mike had made a pulley system to lift and stabilise the tree. It worked brilliantly, thank you Mike.

There was much action and a lot of laughs as all the tasks were being done. Malcolm or is it 007, went up the ladders to the top of the tree to

position the big star. Everyone helped to hang the baubles and another brave soul, with a head for heights, Jeanette, hung the baubles on the highest branches. All of this was done while listening to some rather loud carols and Christmas music.

Thank you to all the elves who helped with all the organising and decorating. Many people at the Christmas events and services remarked on how lovely the church and tree looked. It was good to know! This is Team Newbottle in action, although at Christmas we are happy to be called "elves".



# Christmas services and events



## Carols Around the Christmas Tree

This was a great, well attended evening a couple of weeks before Christmas. It was, as usual, very informal, with lots of rousing carol singing. Joanne gave us lots of background to the carols before the interval. It was quite a long interval and everyone seemed to enjoy the sherry or wine or juice and the mince pies. The singing during the second half of the evening seemed to be even louder – can't think why – and Tom seemed to have found all of his old Christmas jokes to share! We humoured him and laughed!



## Carols by Candlelight

The church looked beautiful and twinkly and full of people. Over 120 attended, friends old and new. The whole service was warm and poignant, as we followed the Christmas story and its meaning for us today. Beyond the glitter and consumerism, there is the most wonderful gift of all!

Thank you to George Peebles for playing the organ at both the Carols by Candlelight service and the Carols around the Christmas Tree. You help to make them so special.

## Christmas Day morning worship

Our Christmas Day celebratory service was cosily held in the chancel and was extremely well attended, everyone just managing to squeeze in. Our easy to follow short family service order was used and Marjorie Lydiatt led the service, Joy Warren reading the lessons. Marjorie's appropriate talk was interesting and contained much humour. Carols were heartily sung by everyone and the service ended within 45 minutes. People didn't hurry away and there was much friendly chatter. It was so good to catch up on news with people we just see occasionally. Some people did have to get back to their kitchens, however, and didn't have time to join others for a glass of sherry with mince pies and biscuits. Yes, our Christmas Day service was very nice indeed and many attendees remarked on how lovely it had been – such a lovely atmosphere. Marjorie said later that it had been an honour to take the service.

### Christingle service

On the last Sunday before Christmas Rev. John Barron lead and preached at our Christingle service. It was a lovely service, during which we all received a Christingle candle and John explained the meaning of them. All donations and the collection were sent to the Children's society.

### Newbottle Primary Academy Christmas Service

It was lovely to have the children and staff from the school back in church for Christmas, having had to relocate to the school for the previous Christmas and Easter services. The singing of traditional carols and songs was wonderful – always so lovely to hear children's voices. Year 6 lead us with their prayers and Tom unwrapped a number of presents. He then told how Jesus surprised everyone by coming to earth and

explained how Jesus is the most wonderful gift of all.

### Lighting of our village Christmas Tree

Many from our village turned out to see the Christmas tree lights come on, on Friday 6th December. And how beautiful it looked. There were hot drinks and mince pies served at the church hall afterwards.

### Christmas Fayre

Our annual Christmas Fayre was held on Saturday 30th November, in the church hall. As usual all hands were on deck to fill the stalls with all manner of goodies and there were teas on sale in the Jubilee Room. It was lovely to see everyone! Thanks to all those who supported the fayre. We made over £1000 for church funds. It's always a great help with heating the church.

## Café Corner

Subtle changes have been occurring for quite some time at the back of church. Nearly everyone attending the 9:45am service on a Sunday, stays for tea or coffee and a chat. It is quite lively and people enjoy the catch up and "crack". It's a great part of our church family at St. Matthew's.

So, we wanted to make the area at the back of church easier to use and special for people. Last year Mike and his team discussed and pooled ideas on how we could improve this area. Mike built a mobile servery with wood matching the pews. A large, robust tea trolley was purchased and this has made the transporting of

crockery and water boiler much safer and much, much easier. We've had this new arrangement for some months now.

More recently the seating arrangements have been played around with and altered, in order to provide more seats and tables. All of these, together with the trolley and servery, can be moved to facilitate "big" services, such as when we have 400 plus school children at Easter and Christmas.

It's made a huge difference. Many thanks to Mike and the team.



# Pancake Party and Lent

On Saturday 1st of March we held our usual pancake party at the church hall. Pat and Mary did the honours with the cooking and made numerous delicious pancakes. Who doesn't love a nice pancake? We had a lovely time chatting and eating. It was really lovely to welcome a family from the village – a couple and their very well-mannered son, who enjoyed his pancakes with Nutella. For many of us it was just the start of pancake season, because the following Tuesday was Pancake Tuesday or Shrove Tuesday.

The season of Lent lasts for forty day. It is a time when Christians reflect and prepare for the celebrations of Easter. Some people fast, eat in a more sparing way or give up treats

following the example of Jesus, who fasted for forty days in the wilderness. People also give to charity, set aside time to study the Bible and meet with other Christians to reflect on Jesus' life and prepare for the events of Holy Week and Easter.

Ash Wednesday is the first day of Lent. Ashes made from palm crosses are blessed and are used to make crosses on people's foreheads. The custom dates back to the middle ages.

There was a joint Ash Wednesday service at St. Matthew's, lead by Rev Paul Grundy and we were joined by our friends from Houghton and Hetton churches.



# The Lent Course

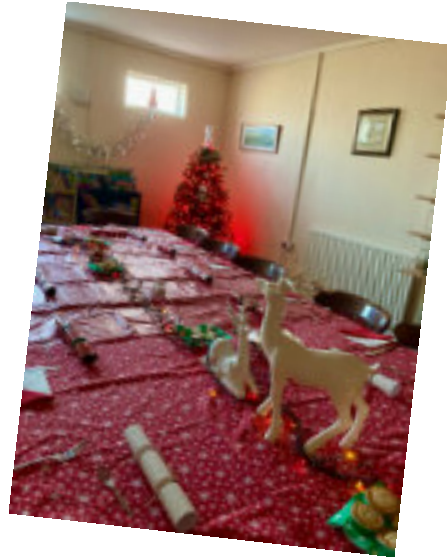
This year we have been meeting at Space 4 at Houghton for our joint Lent Course. The course is following Andrew D Mayes' book, "Roads of Hurt and Hope." There have been five sessions through Lent, on a Monday night. This is structured through five biblical highways. It originated from the author's ministry at St George's College, Jerusalem and was written at the beginning of the current Gaza War. Each session describes a particular road, as known in biblical times and in the modern day. It reflects on associated passages of scripture and adds reflections with present day voices from the area.

At the time of producing this article some of us from St Matthew's have attended and really enjoyed the first session, gleaning much from it. We heard of Abraham and Sarah's journey across the area in what is now the North-South route through the Judean and Samarian highlands of the West Bank in Israel – Route 60. We reflected on Abraham's faith and what it teaches us about faith. We also looked at how our faith is tested today and how our faith is strengthened. Rev Margaret Lee lead us and showed us many photos of modern day Palestine (from before the present war).

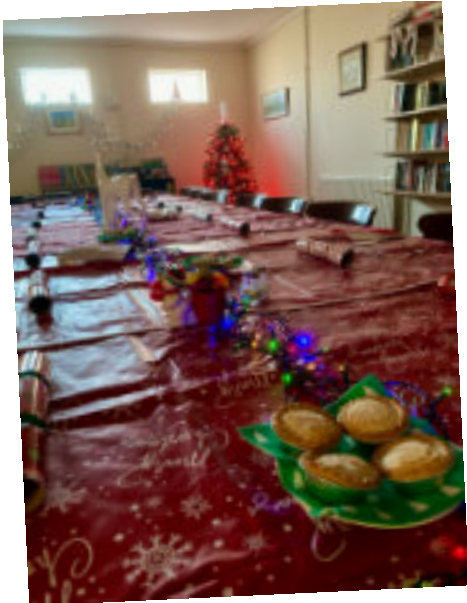
## VAP

On Friday 7th March we participated in a VAP day at the church hall. You may well be wondering what this is! Let me enlighten you! It was a meeting to take part in our parish Vacancy Audit Process. It was a collaborative and supportive process to basically assess our parish and is used for all parishes in vacancy (as in, no vicar). The reverend Stephanie Clark came to us to complete this task. She made it an enjoyable process, where she was asking lots of pertinent questions and giving us prompts to self-assess our church, in terms of mission, buildings, finance, leadership and governance.

We expressed our feelings on moving forward with both Hetton and Houghton churches in a group ministry. We remain very happy to go ahead with this and to fit in with all their structures and processes. We have one expressed wish and that is to keep our present Sunday 9:45am service at that time. We are happy to move forward in our pilgrimage with God and to continue to spread the good news of the gospel message, both in our church and in the community.



# LUNCH CLUB



# Let's Talk

This is our new group, which is hoping to meet, regularly, on a Wednesday evening, for discussion, around a range of topics and bible passages.

At last year's Confirmation preparation meetings, an interest was expressed in holding a group for discussion.

This is being developed as a part of our recently licensed Reader's (Joanne's) project.

A thanks to Joanne for leading the first "Let's Talk" on Wednesday 12th March, on the subject of the Nicene Creed. It was a very good evening of open discussion. It was informative, relaxed, informal and everyone felt as if they could speak.

**The next "Let's Talk" is on 10th April, in the Lady Chapel at 7 – 8:30pm.  
All are very welcome!**



A huge thanks to our congregation and all those who have supported and worked hard at our services, events, in the maintenance of the church and in moving our church forward. Team Newbottle you are simply the best!

A huge thanks to all those clergy (working and retired), who have presided over our services and have given us some excellent sermons. We feel we've been blessed.



# St. Matthew's Makes Worldwide Fame



St Matthew's has recently had some interesting visitors from Alaska! Our fame has indeed spread far and wide. We were contacted by a lady called Lita, whose grandfather, Norman Crozier, is buried in our churchyard. Norman died 10th July 1945. Unfortunately, we have been unable to find his headstone. Lita wanted to bury her mother, Cora's ashes in the same grave, but as this wasn't possible, she brought a memorial stone for the garden of remembrance. Norman was baptised at Newbottle and was living in New Herrington at the time of his death. It would be interesting if anyone local remembers the family.

Cora was born 27th March 1935. Lita travelled here with her little dog Pita, certainly a well-travelled pooch, having flown in the cabin with Lita! It has been a pleasure and privilege to get to know Lita. She sent me a wonderful video of brown bears fishing in Brook Falls and is a very interesting lady. Hopefully she will visit us again having retired from her career in engineering, working in the north of Alaska, where you can only work outside for five minutes at a time! She was travelling back to the USA on board the cruise ship the Queen Mary.

## ARTS & CRAFTS CLUB

Spaces available for new members at the church hall

Tuesdays 10am – 12 noon

Bring your own art of craft – knitting, sewing, crocheting etc

And enjoy the company and coffee.

Kathleen

# Easter Services

## At St. Matthew's

We are delighted that Rev. Michael Beck is once again leading all our Easter services, (apart from Wednesday).

### **Palm Sunday 13th April**

9:45am Holy Communion for the family

### **Wednesday 16th April**

10.00am Holy Communion

### **Maundy Thursday 17th April**

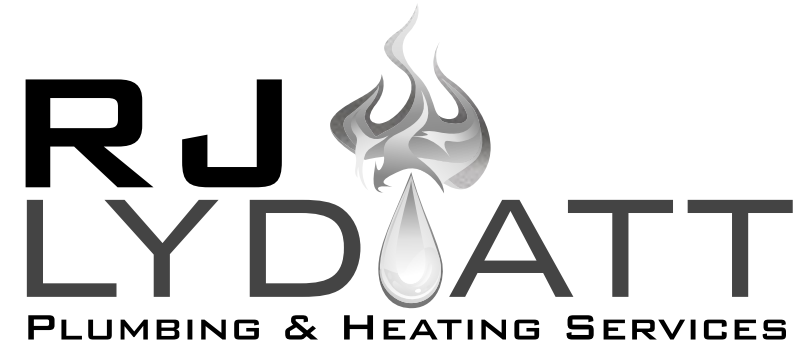
7.00pm Holy Communion

### **Good Friday 18th April**

2.00pm Hour by the Cross Service  
3.00pm ends with singing  
"When I survey the wondrous Cross"

### **Easter Day Sunday 20th April**

9:45am Holy Communion for the family



### **RJ Lydiatt**

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Clubhouse Tel: 0191 5841348

Manager Paul Thompson Tel: 0779 0094 116

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## Notices & Information

### FLOWER ARRANGING ROTA

Mrs Lydiatt, Mrs French, Mrs Martin, Mrs Lawson, Mrs Eden

Flower preparation Friday 9am. All welcome to help, no experience needed.

### FLOWER FUND DONATIONS

Anonymous donation for flowers

Donation in memory of loved ones from John Wilson

Donations from the flower box

Anniversary and Christmas memories of Jack and Peg Smith a much loved Dad Mam and Gran From Carole Brian and Family

Christmas memories of Jim, Ena and Brian Smith a much loved Dad Mam Brother and Gran From Shirley Barry and Family

Anonymous donation for flowers

Donation for Christmas Flowers from Margaret Freeman

Anonymous donation for flowers

Christmas Flowers in memory of Enid and Bill Towers from Denise and Family

Donation in Memory of Cora Crozier from Lita and Family

In loving memory of Sue Holmes from Stephen

Christmas Memories of Brian from Margaret Gould

Flowers for Christmas in memory of past members of St Matthews's Church

Flowers in memory of loved ones

Donation for Easter Flowers

Donation for Mothering Sunday Flowers

### DONATIONS TO THE FABRIC FUND

Anonymous donation

Donation in memory of Tom & Marjorie Galley, from Tom & Marjorie's family

Technically speaking  
Moses was the first to download data  
from the cloud on to a tablet!!

# St. Matthew's Church & Community Hall

...part of the local community spirit

## Weekly Timetable

DAY	TIME	CLUB
Monday	6.30pm - 8.30pm	Judo (Brian)
Tuesday	10.00am - 12.00noon	Arts & Crafts Club (Kathleen)
Tuesday	6.30pm - 7.30pm	Karate
Wednesday	6.00pm-7.00pm	Zumba
Wednesday	7.00pm - 9.00pm	Powertex (occasionally)
Thursday	12.00pm - 1.30pm	Lunch Club
Thursday	6.30pm - 7.30pm	Karate
Friday	10.00am - 11.00am	Zumba Gold
Sunday	5.30pm - 6.30pm	Karate (Ed)

*\*Details correct at time of print*

For all information on St. Matthew's Church and the Church Hall  
visit [www.stmatthewsnewbottle.org](http://www.stmatthewsnewbottle.org)

We're on Facebook  
St. Matthew's Church, Newbottle

