

The Benefice of St Andrew's Blackhall with Hesleden and St James' Castle Eden

15th December 2013

Sunday— Advent 3

09.30 am Eucharist St Andrew's
11.00am Eucharist St James'
4.00 pm Christingle Service St
Andrew's

Tuesday

10.00 am Eucharist St Andrew's

Friday

7.00 pm Carols in the Hall St
Andrew's

Sunday - Advent 4

09.30 am Eucharist St Andrew's
11.00am Eucharist St James'
4.00 pm Carol Service St James'

HYMNS FOR TODAY

265 Hark, the glad
sound

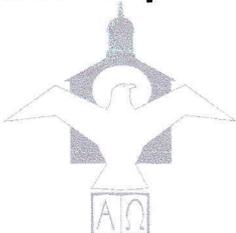
691 Thy kingdom
come, O God

674 This is my body

631 Tell out my soul

Response to the Psalm:

“Happy are they who
have the God of Jacob
for their help”.



WELCOME TO ST ANDREW'S AND ST JAMES' ...

A special welcome to any visitors
to our services this morning.

Readings Advent 3 Year A:

Isaiah 35:1-10
James 5:7-10
Matthew 11:2-11

Christmas Baubles

As part of our Christmas decorations
there will be baubles available for
people to write a name of a
departed loved one on. These
baubles will then be hung on our
Christmas Tree. Any donations that
people give for these will be given
to the Hartlepool and District
Hospice

Confirmation

It is hoped that we can have a
confirmation service here at St
Andrew's in the first few months of
next year. There will
be a confirmation
course run it will
start on Thursday



January 9th at the
Rectory—it will last for 6 weeks prior
to the confirmation and anyone that
is interested in being confirmed
should please contact Alison

DIARY DATES

Dec 15th 4 pm - St Andrew's
Christingle Service

Dec 17th 7 pm—St James' PCC
Meeting at Barbara's

Dec 20th 7 pm – St Andrew's
Carols in the Hall

Dec 22nd 4pm – St James' Carol
Service

Dec 24th 6pm – St Andrew's
Christmas Eve Service

Dec 24th 8pm – St James'
Christmas Eve Service

Dec 25th 10am – Combined
Benefice Christmas Day Service
St Andrew's

Recently Departed

Please pray for the souls and
grieving families of:

Brian Hinton
Elsie Garthwaite

Christingle

Huge thanks to Linda Dott and her
merry band of helpers who put all
the christingles together and thanks
also to those who came and
decorated the Christmas tree at St
Andrew's.

Where to find Prayers & readings

Weekday Eucharistic readings:
Matthew 1:1-17

Next week: 22nd December 2013

Advent 4 Year A,
Isaiah 7:10-16
Romans 1:1-7
Matthew 1:18-25

Rotas for next Sunday

St Andrew's	
Reader	Johnathon
Intercessor	Alan Roxborough
Offertory	Joan Bennett
Chalice	Keith Leight

How to get in touch

Vicar	The Revd Alison Richardson TEL 0191 5864202	
Churchwardens St Andrew's St James'	Harry Hardy Averil Renton	TEL 01915866594 TEL 01429836205
Authorised Pastoral Assistant	Linda Dott	TEL: 01915181765
St Andrew's: Treasurer	Ian Goodrich	TEL: 01915866451
PCC Secretary St James': Treasurer	Ron Stewart Christine Riley	TEL: 01429837744
PCC Secretary	Dawn Carter	

Before the service—talk to God.
During the service—listen to God.
After the service—talk to others.

Notices: The Revd Alison Richardson
TEL 0191 5864202 Email arichardson2@btinternet.com

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Pushing through

by Gillian Cooper
Isaiah 35:1-10

You know that moment. It's still cold, and the skies are grey. But you venture out into the garden, and you glance at the flower border or the patio pots or the place under the trees, and there it is. A small, yellow point in a cluster of leaves: a crocus. It has been in the cold soil all winter, but now is the time to push upwards to find the sun.

The poet describes a dry, barren landscape. When the listeners' parents and grandparents crossed it

last, they were defeated and captive, and every step was a dusty hell. Now the poet is trying to persuade the reluctant people to make the return journey. The poet's song is of a very different experience from last time. This time God will be with them. Wherever God's footsteps tread, flowers will bloom. Rivers will flow with sweet cool water. The rocky ground will become a smooth easy path. All will be able to see their way, and hear the songs of joy. Across the wilderness will lie a swathe of glory.

Our lives can feel drab and dusty. Advent invites us to remember the active, transforming God, in whose presence flowers of love and joy bloom around us. ☺

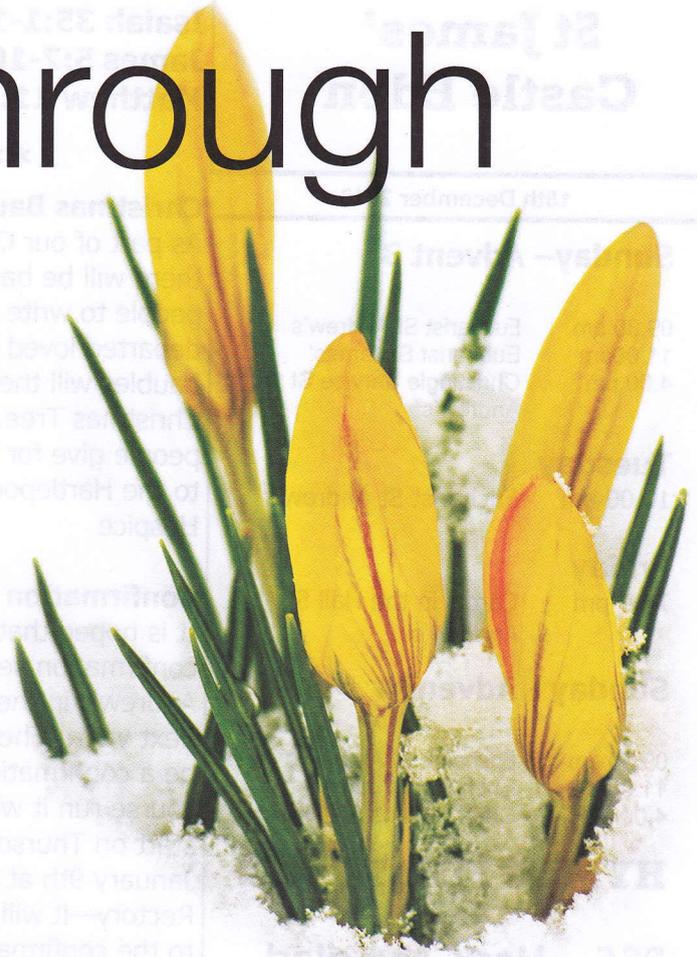
God of renewal and hope, we rejoice in your promise of water in the desert and flowers in the wilderness; may we hear the words of your messengers, and willingly travel into the unknown with you, trusting that we will come to the eternal city where you dwell in light for ever. Amen.

Carol singing

by Ricarda Witcombe

One of the extraordinary things about this time of year is that people everywhere in the nation start to sing. In all sorts of different places, people come together and sing deep theological truths – about the mystery of incarnation, about love and sin and hope. Even as you wade through the shops, you'll hear piped choirs singing about the love of God. "It Came Upon the Midnight Clear" is five solid

verses from the nineteenth century, and it manages to convey both the weariness of human life and the light-hearted love of heaven, and the longing of each for the two to combine. It paints a picture of angels straining to get as close to earth as they can to tell the message of God's love. It suggests, if only we would pause on our life's journey, if only we would pay attention, we would hear heaven, and hope and love and life would empty into our lives. The words will be sung in pubs and churches, drunkenly and with deep sobriety – this year, may their truth be recognised in every context. ☺



The four last things of Advent Heaven

by Andy Lyon

I can remember as a child being fascinated with the notion of where heaven was. I assumed it was high in the sky, of course, and I wondered how far I would have to travel in a rocket to eventually get there. For many of us, even though our logical brains won't

quite stretch to my "rocket theory", heaven remains a "destination" in our minds, specifically located, with its own celestial postcode.

Tom Wright, in his book *Simply Christian*, talks about heaven as "God's space", a dimension of reality which is God's and which is different from – but not always separate from – ours: heaven and earth overlap. But this overlap does not have a location, it has a person: Jesus of Nazareth, who is fully God and fully human. It is in Jesus that heaven and earth combine, and to know something of Jesus, therefore, is to know something of heaven. ☺

“The Lord lifts up those who are bowed down.”

Psalm 146:8