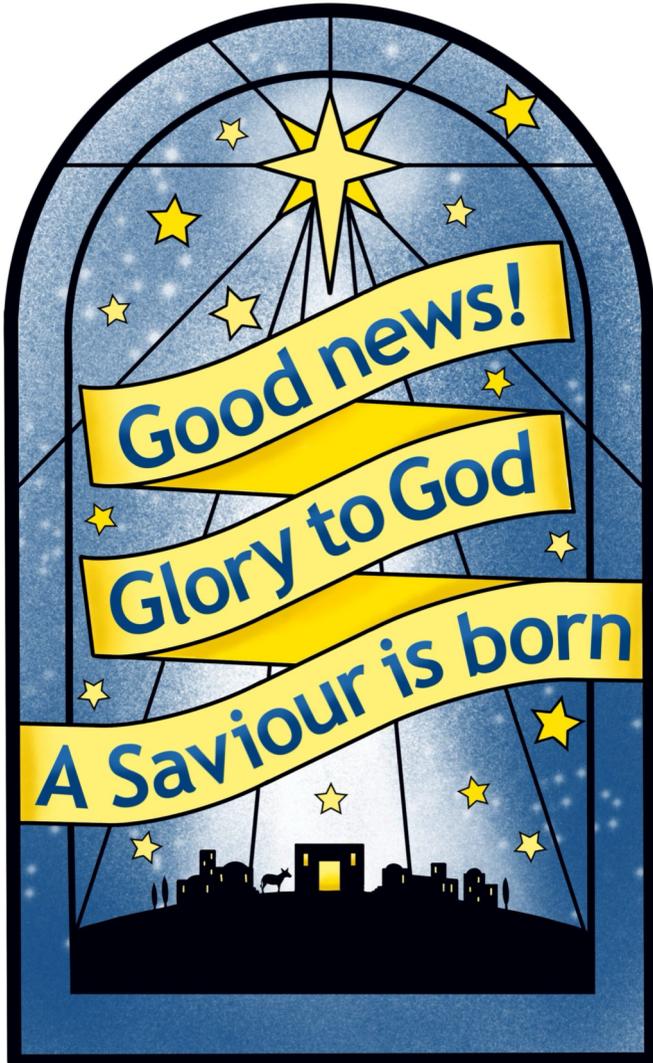


Contact

Chester-le-Street Methodist Church
December 2025, January 2026



OUR VISION

The Chester-le-Street Methodist Church is a people in whom Christ's love is celebrated through Worship, expressed through Service and shared through Mission.

CIRCUIT MINISTERS

Rev. Jenny Porterpryde

Tel: 0753 835 2684

e-mail: prydejenny2@gmail.com

Rev Anne Kilvington

Tel: 0191 388 3268

e-mail: revannekilvington@gmail.com

Deacon Linda Watkin

Tel: 0191 410 2082

e-mail: lindawatkin67@gmail.com

CIRCUIT CHILDREN & FAMILIES WORKER

Neil Garlick

Tel: 07855 386292

e-mail: neilg.clsmethodistcircuit@gmail.com

Facebook: Cornerstones Children and Families

This edition of Contact is available on-line at
<https://clsmethodist.org.uk/styled-4/>



From the Stewards

Hello once again it is time for another letter from the Church Stewards it is hard to realize we are in the last month of 2025 months seem to go by so quickly, we have many happy memories of things happening in our Church Life and some Sad ones, we can look forward to 2026 for more Happy Ones to come.

We can look forward to the Christmas season the Tree lights the crush and bustle of Christmas Shopping, Church activities include;

Sunday December 7th am Baptism,

Saturday 13th Youth Connection Winter Concert

Sunday 21st 6pm Church and Community Carol Service.

Wednesday 24th December 3pm Christingle.

ChristmasDay Service 9.30 am. There are NO Services at Chester-Le-Street Church on Sunday the 28thDecember.

As we celebrate Christmas giving and receiving gifts may we remember and receive the first Christmas gift, the Gift of God's Love Baby Jesus.

On behalf of the Church Stewards, I wish You A Happy and Blessed Christmas and 2026 year.

Freda Raine S Steward.



Know what?

As we were putting out biscuits for Father Christmas one Christmas Eve, I accidentally dropped one. I picked it up and dusted it off before placing it back on the plate. "You can't do that," argued my four-year-old. But I assured him that Father Christmas would never know.

He shot me a dubious look. "So, he knows if I've been bad or good all year, but he doesn't know if you dropped his cookie on the floor?"

God in the Sciences

This series is written by Dr Ruth M. Bancewicz, who is Church Engagement Director at The Faraday Institute for Science and Religion in Cambridge. Ruth writes on the positive relationship between Science and Christian faith.

The Incarnation: fearfully and wonderfully made

*My frame was not hidden from you when I was made
in the secret place,
when I was woven together in the depths of the earth.
Your eyes saw my unformed body; all the days
ordained for me were written in your book
before one of them came to be. Psalm 139:15-16*

You began life as a single cell. For a few hours you were a miniscule but highly complex blob of jelly, until it began to divide: two cells, four, eight, sixteen, a ball, a hollow ball, and then something more recognisably like a living organism. You were still tiny, but developing a nervous system, a head, a body, arms and legs.

Until recently I hadn't thought much about Jesus being an embryo. Somehow, I find that thought even more shocking than His birth. How could God, who made the universe, have become something so completely and utterly vulnerable? Maybe in the past, when the development of a child happened in 'secret', it was possible just to let that part of the Christmas story go untold.



Today, when we see images of a developing child, or even embryos outside the womb, it is harder to ignore the process of Jesus developing into a baby. The incarnation meant that God's Son went through all the stages in the diagram in my developmental biology textbook: 'zygote', 'morula', 'blastocyst', implantation, and so on.

Jesus was there in the beginning, and all life owes its existence to Him. But instead of remaining aloof, He chose to become one of us. The Son of God shared the same kind of DNA as every other

In Psalm 139, the writer is meditating on God's intimate knowledge of him, which began when he was an embryo. There is nothing God doesn't know about him, and even darkness cannot obscure him from God's sight. The incarnation means that God's intimacy with us now extends even further. He became one of us, lived alongside us, and shared our very fragile material nature.

The transcendent God is also immanent, longing for us to relate to Him as Father. He became as fragile as we are so He could rescue us from the messes we so often find ourselves in. With His help, we can remember what it means to be fearfully and wonderfully made.

Reproduced by permission from [Merry Christmas Everyone: A festive feast of stories, poems and reflection](#), Edited by Wendy H. Jones, Amy Robinson & Jane Clamp ([Association of Christian Writers](#), 2018)

The Legend of the 4th Wise Man

The legend is that there were four Wise Men not three, but on his way to Bethlehem the fourth Wise Man was delayed when he stopped to help someone. When he arrived in Bethlehem he discovered he had arrived too late and that Mary and Joseph had left with the baby Jesus to go to Egypt to avoid Herod. So he set out after them for Egypt and arrived only to find that they had left to go back to Nazareth. He set out once more, but each time he set out he was delayed by someone who needed his help.



Later he was asked if he ever managed to catch up with them. He answered that he never did until many years later at Calvary. In looking onto the face of Jesus he saw the faces of all those who he had helped.

'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.' - Matthew 25 v40

Christmas is a gift - its up to us as to whether we accept it or not.



CORNERSTONES OFFICE

Christmas Open Hours

We will close at 12pm
Christmas Eve and
reopen Monday 5th
January 2026

May the true spirit of Christmas
shine in your heart and light your
path

Wishing you all a joyful,
peaceful, and heartwarming
Christmas

The **Methodist** Church
Chester-Le-Street

CORNER STONES

THURSDAY LUNCHES

Every 1st and 3rd Thursday

NEXT DATES:- Dec 4th & Jan 15th



Everyone is welcome! Served from 12 Noon.

Soup, Sarnie, Cake and Cuppa

Only £4.00

(or Pay As You Can)

Chester-le-Street Methodist Church, North Burns,

Chester-le-Street, Co Durham, DH3 3TF

NOTE: December 4th is the Christmas Lunch and must be booked in advance -

happy 90 birthday

Happy Birthday to Bob Dobson! 90 years young on 28th December.

This Year and Next...

The year is passing quickly by,
the days all come and go,
and what the months ahead will
bring,
Lord, only You can know.
We thank You for
companionship,
the laughter and the joy,
the gift of knowledge and of faith
which nothing can destroy.

We ask for peace across the
world,
with to light each day,
new tolerance for all mankind,
Lord, help us find the way.
We count our blessings many
times
and all your gifts we see,
remind us, Lord, throughout the
year,
the best is yet to be.

Courtesy of Bob Fleetham

Flower Rota

December

- 7th
- 14th Anthea Heel
- 21st Mary Elliott
- 28th Bob & Jean Dobson
Marjery Greener

January 2026

- 4th
- 11th
- 18th Jean Watson
Joan Moore



Crafting for Wellbeing



Connect with a community of creative women at our crafting for wellness group.

Perfect for all skill levels!

10am till 12:30pm

December; 13th and 20th



For more information contact the office,
Cornerstones, Chester Le Street DH3 3TF
0191 388 1313

CHRISTMAS

Family Fun Afternoon

Explore the theme of Jesus the Light of the World through a Bible story and crafts

Plus bounce along to Christmas songs in our disco dome!



Refreshments included

SUN 14TH DEC | 2-4PM | FREE

Chester-le-Street Methodist Church, DH3 3TF

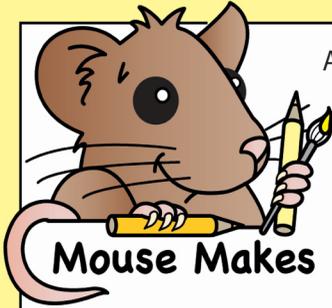
Explore the theme of Jesus the Light of the World through a Bible story and crafts

All families with children welcome. Prize bag for each child. To book, contact Neil Garlick on 07855 386292 or cfw.cornerstones@gmail.com

The **Methodist Church**
Chester-Le-Street

CORNERSTONES
centre for the community

TLG make lunch



Mouse Makes

At Christmas we celebrate the birth of Jesus, God's Son and our Saviour coming into the world as a baby, and we look forward to the time when Jesus will come again, not as a baby but as the King of kings and Lord of lords!

read
John 14:3

A baby needs clothes to keep warm like a snuggly sleep suit or a vest and nappy.

What were you dressed in?

Jesus was wrapped in

.....

read Luke 2:7

A baby needs somewhere to be born like at home or in a hospital.

Where were you born?

Jesus was born in a stable in

.....

read Luke 2:1-6



A baby needs somewhere to sleep like a crib or a cot. *What did you sleep in?*

Jesus slept in a

.....

read Luke 2:7

A baby needs a name.

What name were you called?

Jesus was given a special name that had a special meaning.

read

Matthew 1:21-23

HAPPY CHRISTMAS!

NADOLIG LLAWEN ✨ NOLLAIG CHRÌDHEIL ✨ NOLLAG SHONA
JOYEUX NOËL • FELIZ NAVIDAD • BUON NATALE • GOD JUL • FROHE WEIHNACHTEN

God in the Arts

Editor: The Revd Michael Burgess completes his survey of sacred art that can be found in various museums...you can see the image by googling the title of the painting and the artist.

‘He gave us eyes to see them’: Madonna and Child from Donatello’s workshop

Each month during this year we have visited art galleries and museums in England that are often overlooked by the tourist trail, but which contain treasures that can inspire and deepen our Christian faith. Our final visit in this series is to a gracious, elegant Georgian villa rejoicing in the odd name of the Ranger’s House. It is outside the western wall of Greenwich Park in London and is home to the Wernher collection of art.

Julius Wernher was a diamond magnate who died in 1912, and in his lifetime, he amassed an amazing array of 700 works that make up this collection. There are paintings by Joshua Reynolds and Romney, Renaissance jewellery, and a marble statue by Bergonzoli, ‘The Love of Angels.’



But this month we focus on another love – the love of a mother and child by the workshop of Donatello. When I was a student I visited Florence for the first time, and I can always remember the impact of entering the Bargello and being greeted by the sculptures of Donatello. It was a special moment of revelation to be able to look around and wonder at the glorious works of this sculptor filling the second floor of the castle.

By contrast the Madonna and Child in the Ranger’s House is a miniature, a bronze plaque just 4 inches square. Our Lady is depicted in classical profile with flowing robes and wavy hair, but the mood is one of tenderness as she cradles the Christ-Child. She holds His left hand in hers, while He looks down at something that

has caught His attention. Perhaps it is a noise at the stable door or the sound of an animal in the Bethlehem night. Perhaps it is St Joseph getting everything ready for the Holy Family to leave. We don't know, but it is another special moment of revelation caught in this little plaque. It may not be by Donatello himself, but we sense the master overseeing the creation of this work.

At Christmas we ponder the mystery of infinity caught in a little space, the cradle at Bethlehem, just as the mystery of love, maternal and divine, is caught in the little space of this plaque. Margaret Rizza's carol, 'Jesus is our joy' captures the mood of wonder, joy and hope as we open the stable door to see the love of a mother and her new-born baby expressed here and at the heart of the Christmas gospel:

*'Lovely in your littleness,
longing for our lowliness,
searching for our meekness...
Held in Mary's tenderness,
tiny hands are raised to bless,
touching us with God's caress.
Joy then in God's graciousness,
peace comes with gentleness,
filling hearts with gladness.'*



Actual children's versions of Christmas Carols:

"...sleep in heavenly peas"

"Joy to the world, the Saviour rains!"

"Angels we have heard on high, sweetly singing o'er the plane..."

"While shepherds washed their socks by night..."

"Deck the Halls with Buddy Holly..."

"We three kings of porridge and tar..."

"On the first day of Christmas my tulip gave to me..."

ToDDler GroUp

Our Toddlers's Groups have just done their Sponsored Toddlers for Children in Need this week. Amazingly we have so far raised £721 (with more donations to

come in). Given that we only had 7 children on Wednesday and even though today was such an awful day weather wise, we still had 19 toddlers taking part. The BBC Children in Need did give our Toddler Groups a mention on the Radio Newcastle Breakfast Show



Kath x

Baptism

On Sunday 2nd November at 10.30a.m. service we welcomed Aaron and Sarah with their family and friends as they brought their young son Mason James Larvin for baptism. The service was led by Rev. Jenny Porterpryde.





YC DURHAM
presents



A Winter Concert

YC Duham perform some of our favourite songs from musical theatre, film and pop. As well as some Christmas songs sure to get you feeling festive!

Saturday 13th December 2025

7.30pm

Tickets £10

(price includes a free hot drink and mince pie)

Chester-le-Street Methodist Church
North Burns, Chester-le-Street, DH3 3TF

Book tickets:

www.ticketsource.co.uk/ycdurham

call 07885 583628

or buy in-person at Cornetstones



With New Year's Resolutions in mind, here is John Wesley's rule of conduct:

Do all the good you can
By all the means you can
In all the ways you can
In all the places you can
At all the times you can
To all the people you can
As long as ever you can.

Meditation Class



Do you feel stressed, overwhelmed, anxious or want to make some quality time for you to relax, come along to our meditation class

2:00pm to 3:00pm

December; 13th and 20th



For more information contact the office,
Cornerstones, Chester Le Street DH3 3TF
0191 388 1313



THE ARGUS SINGERS

SAT: | TICKETS | 7PM
20 | £5 |
DEC

CHESTER-LE-STREET
METHODIST CHURCH

Tickets available from
Cornerstones 0191 3881313

Prayer for Christmas 2025

Dear Father,

Christmas is coming. It's all such a rush – planning, shopping, spending, wrapping, posting, stressing! What's it all about?

Lord, help us, in all the rat-race busyness, to make time to focus on that baby at the centre of it all. That baby who is Your Son, who was with You in the beginning and who, with You, created all things; that baby who brings life and light and hope and salvation; that baby who was and is Jesus, God, made man.

Lord, we thank You for that baby-gift to us – the greatest gift there has ever been. Thank You that because He came, grew up, lived, died and rose again, there is light in the darkness of this world's mess – light that can never be put out, that evil can never overcome.

Jesus is the Light of the World. Putting our trust in Him, we thank You Lord, for Christmas – for Your grace and love for us. In Jesus' name. Amen.

By Daphne Kitching



I heard the Bells on Christmas Day

I heard the bells on Christmas day
Their old familiar carols play,
And wild and sweet the words
repeat
Of peace on earth, good will to
men.

And in despair I bowed my head:
'There is no peace on earth, ' I said
'For hate is strong, and mocks the
song
Of peace on earth, good will to
men.'

Then pealed the bells more loud
and deep:

'God is not dead, nor doth He
sleep;
The wrong shall fail, the right
prevail,
With peace on earth, good will to
men.'

Till, ringing, singing on its way,
The world revolved from night to
day
A voice, a chime, a chant sublime,
Of peace on earth, good will to
men.

By Henry Wadsworth Longfellow



English COURSE



FROM
12 JANUARY
2026



FREE

- 
- BASIC COMMUNICATION
 - VOCABULARY
 - FUN AND SUPPORTIVE
- 



Join us for:

- MONDAYS & WEDNESDAYS
 - 1.PM TO 2.30PM
 - LIMITED SPACES REGISTER
EARLY
- 



REGISTER NOW:

**INFO@CORNERSTONESCENTRE.CO.UK
OR 0191 3881313**



FORGET ME NOT SINGERS



FREE

Dementia - Friendly

- Fun, friendly & relaxed music sessions
 - A great way to enjoy music while making friends
 - All ages welcome
 - Perfect for people with dementia to come along with family, friends & carers
 - Arrivals & refreshments from 1pm
- 

THURSDAYS 1.30 - 3PM

CORNERSTONES @ CHESTER-LE-STREET METHODIST CHURCH
0191 3881313 INFO@CORNERSTONESCENTRE.CO.UK



CORNERSTONES
centre for the community



**point
north**



*The
James Etherington
Award*



ANNUAL COMPETITION for YOUNG MUSICIANS

Supported by the Rotary Club of Chester le Street



Saturday 7th February 2026



7.00pm at Chester le Street Methodist Church
(Open to the public and free of charge)

First Prize: £500 + The James Etherington Trophy
Second Prize: £250 + The Margaret Crawford Trophy
All other finalists will each receive £75



Applicants must reside or attend an educational
establishment within the DH Durham County Postcode

To obtain more information, or download an Application Form:

Email: jamesetheringtonmusicaward@gmail.com

Download: www.jamesetheringtonaward.org

Facebook: James Etherington Music Award

Twitter (X): @etherington_j



Closing date for Applications
Saturday 13th December 2025

Circuit Children and Families Work

Greetings all! Here's our monthly update about our work with children and families:

Past activities:

- At our **Mosaic worship** on 2nd November we were joined by several families for the **baptism of Mason Larvin**. As part of our worship, the families filled organza bags with cards showing what they were thankful for. We were all thankful to welcome Mason into the church family!
- At **Jigsaw Church** on 9th November, we thought about being open to God through being generous and giving and receiving hospitality. We found out how Jesus used the generosity of one boy to feed 5,000 people and looked at examples of generosity throughout the Bible. We then arranged to try this out at the coffee morning the following Saturday, raising £140 which will be split between our work with children and families across the circuit and Little Acorns Baby Charity. Thanks to everyone who served at the coffee morning and supported us!
- On Sunday 9th November the Newcastle Methodist District began a new opportunity for young people to gather – **The Way Youth**. We were lead in powerful worship, reflected on Psalm 23 and had opportunities to pray. Oh, and we ate pizza!



Activities coming up:

- Our next **Jigsaw Church** will be on **Sunday 30th November at 2pm**. We'll be thinking about Christmas joy, responding to the story of Jesus birth and making decorations for the Jigsaw Christmas tree! We'll also have Jigsaw Church on Sundays 11th January and 8th February, both at 2pm.
- On **Sunday 7th December** we'll be celebrating more baptisms

with two of our Boys' Brigade are being Baptised. There will also be a baptism as part of our Mosaic Worship on 1st February 2026

- Our **Christmas Family Fun Afternoon** is on **Sunday 14th December, 2-4pm**. We'll have crafts, biscuit decorating and two mini-interactive talks all about Jesus the Light of The World. We'll also have a bouncy disco dome so bring your dancing shoes! There will be free refreshments and toys for little ones. Families can just turn up on the day but if you know you're coming please book by contacting me using the details below. At the time of writing we still need volunteers – contact me if you'd like to find out more about this. If you'd like to bake for us please let Elizabeth Oswald know – elizabeth_oswald@tranning.co.uk



- Our annual Christingle Worship is on Christmas Eve at the slightly earlier time of 3pm. Come and join this special service as we prepare to welcome Jesus!

- The next meeting of **'The Way Youth'** will be an all day event on **Saturday 24th January, 11am-5pm** at Strathmore Road

Methodist Church. This is aimed at young people aged 11 and above. Let me know if you'd like to attend.

- Finally, my new colleague in children and families work, Emily, will be starting her part-time role with the circuit at the beginning of January. I'm sure you'll have opportunity to meet her soon. Please do prayer for her as she gets started!

Thank you to everyone who supports our work with children and families both practically and by prayer. Do use the above to inform your prayers.

Blessings, Neil (07855 386292;
neilg.clsmethodistcircuit@gmail.com)

*All it takes to
light the darkness
is one candle of
faith.*



Those articles without names along with God in the Sciences or God in the Arts
are courtesy of Parish Pump

CORNERSTONES

Tel: Office - 0191 388 1313

Mobile - 0780 674 5097

e-mail - info@cornerstonescentre.co.uk

www.cornerstonescentre.co.uk



CORNERSTONES MISSION STATEMENT

A permanent commitment by the whole Church to reach out
and become more involved in the life of the community of
Chester-le-Street and for the community to be supported
by the wider Church family.

Items for "Contact" to be handed in by the 20th of the month to:
Derick Lawson, 2 Loweswater Avenue, Chester-le-Street, DH2 3HJ
Tel: 3884684 e-mail: - derick.lawson@btinternet.com