

# inter MISSION



**CHRISTMAS 2024**

Cover: Type "nativity scene" into your favourite search app and you will be provided with thousands of different views. You may also find discussions on which portrayal is the most or least accurate; opinions of those who must be over two thousand years old. I like this one because of its simplicity. But it does raise a question. Does our faith rely on having a verified image, or even the gift of eyesight? Surely not. -Ed.

## FORTHCOMING EVENTS

WOW- all WELCOME ON WEDNESDAYS  
Reflections on Creation, faith and science.  
Final meeting 27<sup>th</sup> November 7:30pm PMC

Sat 30 Nov 10am-1pm at PMC  
**Pre-Christmas Coffee Morning**  
with festive stalls.

Sat 07 December at 7pm at PMC  
**"Christmas with Prudhoe Gleemen"**  
Tickets £8 – please see Peter Chapman

North East Women  
**Day Retreat at Minsteracres**  
Sat 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2025 9:30am – 5:00pm  
Speaker: Rosemary Gray  
(Newcastle District MWiB President)  
£37 (including lunch and refreshments)

**Thursdays 10-11.30am Bairns & Brews**  
and coffee morning in the Hall



**PMC Bookings** Our premises at Prudhoe Methodist Church are available to book for some community meetings and activities. Please call (01661) 833465 or 832066 for information.

## PMC Services



Please note Sunday services begin at 10:30am

- Sun 01 Dec  
Rev Gareth Sherwood
- Sun 08 Dec  
Jacqui Cameron
- Sun 15 Dec  
LA
- Sun 22 Dec  
Rev Fiona Calverey
- Sun 29 Dec  
Tom Dodds
- Sun 05 Jan  
Ruth Johnson
- Sun 12 Jan  
Rev Fiona Calverey HC/Cov
- Sun 19 Jan  
LA
- Sun 26 Jan  
Norman Fullard
- Sun 02 Feb  
Ian Warburton
- Sun 09 Feb  
Rev Fiona Calverey HC
- Sun 16 Feb  
LA
- Sun 23 Feb  
Robin Charlton
- LA = Local Arrangement  
HC = Holy Communion  
Cov = Covenant service



## Rev Fiona Writes

Hi Friends

We all long for something. We long for our children to grow up and to be healthy and happy in themselves and their relationships, fulfilled in their work, and secure in their financial well-being. We yearn for a place to belong, friends who see us and allow us to be our authentic selves, and time and resources to do the things we love.



We ache for a world of kindness, sufficiency, and equality for all. We want a world of justice and compassion in which we can all thrive. Every single one of us longs for these things and more. Longing is part of the human condition.

The Hebrew and Christian Scriptures are both filled with stories, songs, and supplications that express the wide diversity of our inherently human hankerings. And, in the liturgical tradition of the Christian faith, we have twin seasons devoted to our longings and their fulfilment: Advent and Christmas.

While we often define Advent as a period of waiting for Christmas and the birth of Christ, it is much more than this. As the Advent readings in the Lectionary show, it is not just Jesus that we wait for. We also hope for our longings to be fulfilled and for us to be shown the way to a life of flourishing for ourselves and our families, friends, and neighbours.

In the first verse of the Advent hymn, O Come, O Come, Emmanuel, the turmoil from which we need to be saved is described as exile and being held captive. This is what it means to let our hearts grow dull to escape from chaos and suffering. This is what it feels like when we lose ourselves and our capacity to wake up, grow up, and show up in our lives and relationships.

O come, O come, Emmanuel,  
and ransom captive Israel  
That mourns in lonely exile here  
until the Son of God appear

We long to be who we are. Not our labels. Not our identity as defined by various categories. But the self beneath it all; the core of our unique, God-created, God-imaged, and God-beloved humanity. And we long to live and love fully, courageously, and authentically. Jesus is the Emmanuel, the God with us who awakens our dulled hearts and reminds us that we are more than our struggles say we are. We are connected to a Reality that is bigger than us, and that gives our lives meaning, purpose, and fulfilment.

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This Advent and Christmas season we will be using the MCB' series called "Hush the Noise", as we reflect what it means to quieten the secular 'noise' that calls us to buy more consumer goods to fill our longing hearts for more blessings.

May we open ourselves to what God wants to do in our lives and be blessings wherever we find ourselves.  
Christmas blessings to you all.

Love  
Fiona

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## **CHRISTMAS AT PRUDHOE METHODIST CHURCH**

**Sunday 22 December, 10.30am**

Carols and Candles.

An invitation and warm  
welcome to our Carol Service.



**25 December, 10am**  
Family service arranged  
by our Worship Leaders

Merry Christmas!



1 Corinthians 13  
(A Christmas version)

If I decorate my house perfectly with plaid bows, strands of twinkling lights and shiny balls, but do not show love to my family, I am just another decorator.

If I slave away in the kitchen, baking dozens of Christmas cookies, preparing gourmet meals and arranging a beautifully adorned table at meals times, but do not show love to my family, I am just another cook.

If I work at the soup kitchen or food bank, carol in the nursing home and give all that I have to charity, but do not show love to my family, it profits me nothing.

If I trim the tree with shimmering angels and lace snowflakes, attend a myriad of holiday parties and sing in the choir's cantata but do not focus on those I love most, I have missed the point.

.....in other words

Love stops the cooking to hug a child.

Love sets aside the decorating to kiss the spouse.

Love is kind, although harried and tired.

Love doesn't envy another house that has coordinated Christmas china and table linens.

Love doesn't yell at the kids to get out of the way but is thankful that they are there to be in the way.

Love doesn't give only to those who are able to give in return but rejoices in giving to those who can't.

Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

Love never fails.

Video games will break, pearl necklaces will be lost, golf clubs will rust,  
But this gift of love will endure for ever.

[www.veybridgemenethodistchurch.org.uk](http://www.veybridgemenethodistchurch.org.uk)  
[Weybridgemenethodistoffice@gmail.com](mailto:Weybridgemenethodistoffice@gmail.com)

Thanks to Margaret G



# YOUNG EARTH CREATIONISM

# TWO

# CREATION

## Genesis – Literal

Proponents of Young Earth Creationism (YEC) believe that the age of the universe can be reckoned in thousands of years, and that Creation is based on a literal understanding of Genesis.

The “Ussher Chronology” suggests that the universe began on the evening of 20 October in 4004 BC, based upon calculations made by the protestant Primate of all Ireland, James Ussher in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Ussher was a learned and well respected Archbishop, but with a puritanical view of theatre and entertainment.



Today, there are still many who believe that modern cosmology models of creation are in conflict with the literal account in Genesis, although few adhere to the precision attributed to the Archbishop.

When challenged by the paleontology dating of dinosaur and other fossils, some YEC advocates have suggested that these remains of supposed earlier life-forms were placed in the ground by the Creator and it is not for us to question the Creator's purpose in this.

Whatever your own interpretation of Genesis, it is important to remember that our Christian faith has resisted many upheavals in scientific belief over the past two-thousand years. Our scientific models have been re-written time and time again to embrace new discoveries and experiments. So any scientists who venture to say that the latest scientific models will never be revised are likely to end up with egg on their academic faces.

It has often been said that the Holy Bible reads us, and we will each receive individual guidance from it. Science is temporal, but faith is eternal.

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**Faith is essentially a personal commitment**  
**We believe in Divine creation, whatever routes God**  
**intermission**

# ON THEORIES

or Metaphorical?

## OLD EARTH CREATIONISM

Many advocates of Old Earth Creationism (OEC) will read Genesis with a metaphorical interpretation of what was written as a contemporary prose account of God's wonderful creation.



The "big bang" theory of universal creation is often attributed to modern cosmologists. Enter Georges Lemaître, a Belgian priest, scientist and mathematician, who formulated the big-bang theory in 1927, almost a century ago. Despite the eponymous USA TV sitcom, the big-bang theory was not an American product.

The most recent estimate (not fact) of the age of the universe is 13.7 billion years. This has led some flippant students to parody Ussher by calculating that the universe began on 20 October 13,699,997,976 BC.

Joking aside, we have two theologians (Ussher and Lemaître) with two very different views of the date of Creation. But does it really matter to our personal faith in Jesus Christ, the "Word of Creation", where we should draw a ring around some date on the ancient calendar?

**This month, we celebrate the "Word made Flesh" in Bethlehem.** Yet we do not know, with any certainty, the precise date in history when God's wonderful gift was given to humankind. Does our faith hinge on knowing the precise date of Jesus' birth? Of course not.

So will our faith crumble if we don't know the the date of birth of the universe? Why should it? Faith, mystery and wonder are compatible.

To quote Woody Allen, film director, actor and comedian:

"Eternity is a very long time, especially towards the end"

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**and we all arrive there by different routes.**  
**took to create and maintain our wonderful universe.**  
**@ uwclub.net**



Many will remember Rev Rob Hawkins and his wife Katie who were with us in Prudhoe between 2018 and 2020 before they moved to Melbourne in Derbyshire. Katie writes ...

## **Fall on Your Knees**

**Over the Christmas period**, the song "O Holy Night" had been on my mind. Whenever Rob and I passed each other going about the house, we were humming or singing this song. Then we began to notice that many Christmas Services included, you've guessed, "O Holy Night", then a Christmas card arrived with the words, "O Holy Night". They were singing it in Birmingham, Watford, Manchester, Newcastle, Australia and America. God speaks to us in many ways, he was certainly very persistent with this song. I ended up downloading the lyrics, playing and singing the song MANY times. I am sure our lovely neighbours also know it well by now.

What are you saying to us God? The climax of the first verse moved us powerfully, "Fall on your knees". Could this be what God was saying? We must learn to worship again. We must position ourselves in an attitude of worship, first and foremost. The first Commandment calls us to put the worship of God as our priority — nothing else must take His place.

When we read the birth of Jesus, we see that the angels worshipped, the shepherds worshipped, the wise men worshipped, Jesus, the Son of God was born, surrounded by worship.

Saint Richard of Chichester prayed these words, "May I see thee more clearly, love thee more dearly and follow thee more dearly, day by day." Saint Paul wrote in a letter that he resolved to know only Jesus Christ. Let us resolve to put God first and last. Any other resolutions we might make will fall in order, or disappear if they don't align with God's plans.

**-Katie Hawkins, from her booklet "Flourish" – with kind permission**



**DAILY NEWS**  
**Supernova appears in east**  
- by Seymour Starz (science correspondent)

## **Christmas** **-a poem by Julie Woodford**

If Jesus was born on this earth today how different His birth would be  
Would they post it up on a Facebook page for all of the world to see?  
Would the wise men of business bring investments and shares  
To increase His wealth like gold?  
Would designer clothes and the latest new phone  
Be given to this child to hold?

If Jesus was born on the earth today would it be in a refugee camp?  
Surrounded by hate and by fighting and fear. In a tent that is cold and damp?  
Would terrorists plot to kill this child not caring who else was killed,  
As Herod had done in days gone by, when the laughter of children was stilled.

Jesus is here on the earth today  
Every day He is here among men.  
In the hearts of His followers here on earth  
He weeps for the suffering and pain,  
He works in the camps, in the hearts of those who show peace in the face of war,  
He works in the prayers of the people who love, and give of themselves more and more.

Lord, we cry for the world and the people we love,  
Lord, forgive us our hatred and pride,  
Lord, come down by Your Spirit and work in our hearts,  
Lord, come near and stand by our side.  
Lord, heal all the terror and hatred and fear,  
Lord, we've let You down badly so far.  
Lord, remind us once more at this time of Your birth  
Of the peace loving Saviour You are.

## **PRUDHOE GLEEMEN MALE-VOICE CHOIR est: 1903** **- an invitation**

We can trace our origins back to 1903, when eight men met in a field beside the Methodist church in Wylam. We now practise on Monday evenings at Prudhoe Methodist Church. But let me correct some misconceptions.

1: We are **NOT** a Methodist choir. Membership is open to men of all faiths and those of none. Chapels generally have superb acoustics ideal for choral singing.

2: We have none of our original members in the choir, as you would expect. But this means that we rely on recruiting new members to join our happy bunch of lads.

3: It's not essential to be able to read music.

4: We believe that choral singing and the fellowship it brings is beneficial for mental and physical health (no kidding).

Practices are held every Monday evening, excluding August and the Christmas holidays. If you have ever considered joining a choir, and you have a male voice, then please come along around 7pm one Monday evening and get a taste of what we do. You will receive a warm welcome and there will be absolutely no pressure from us, nor any expected commitment from you to join.

It's not unusual for casual visitors to our practices to take some time to decide if they wish to become members. I turned up at a practice one evening in 2009 and I now wish that I'd done so many years earlier.

Still not sure? Why not give me a call on **07486 634057** or send an email to [gleemen@uwclub.net](mailto:gleemen@uwclub.net) and I will be happy to answer your questions.

Looking forward to meeting you soon.

Kind regards,  
Pete Barrett – chair – Prudhoe Gleemen.



**PRUDHOE  
GLEEMEN**

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### **December fixtures**

Mon 2<sup>nd</sup> December 6:30pm at Corbridge Marketplace.  
(so no practice this evening)

Sat 7<sup>th</sup> December 7pm at Prudhoe Methodist Church



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# Do they know it's (really) Christmas?

Am I alone in this? This is the time of year when I go to the Customer Service desks in supermarkets to ask them if any of their so-called Christmas music contains any lyrics about the birth of Jesus.

This is the time of year when I go to department stores and survey six-foot tall models of reindeer, snowmen, elves and those nutcracker soldiers before asking an assistant where I can find a nativity display.

Some shop-assistant once replied that "we don't do the Christianity thing at Christmas in case it offends some of our customers of other faiths". What?

Please tell me that I'm not completely crazy. Shouldn't we all be protesting, gently of course, that Christmas has been hi-jacked by the retail sector to maximise spending and fill the tills?

And what's this silly date called "Black Friday"? Well, it's an American invention to "celebrate" (if that's the word) the next Friday following Thanksgiving.

Thanksgiving, presumably, for reindeer, snowmen, elves and nutcracker soldiers.

Yeah, I know. I'm in serious need of some (non-retail) therapy. I'd better go and have a lie down.



Pete B

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## Our interMISSION statement

- [1] To inform our local community, and ourselves, of what happens within the walls of PMC (as a building)
- [2] To inform the same parties of our organised outreach work beyond those walls (eg Open-the-Book)
- [3] To inform about individual work and witness by our members working with the Holy Spirit
- [4] To outreach our fellowship to those unable or (perhaps) unwilling to worship with us.
- [5] To spread the Good News using a fresh theme each month.
- [6] Making disciples.

Rev Rob Hawkins

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*Coffee Morning  
with Festive Stalls*

*Prudhoe Methodist Church*

*Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> November*

*10.00 till 1.00*



CHRISTMAS WITH THE  
PRUDHOE GLEEMEN  
MALE VOICE CHOIR

PRUDHOE  
METHODIST CHURCH  
SATURDAY  
7th DECEMBER  
7.00pm

Festive refreshments  
Tickets £8  
Phone 01661 833465





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