



## NCCM Christmas Newsletter 2023

Once again, as I come to the end of another year I find myself 'surprised' by Christmas. The fact that I've had twelve months to prepare doesn't seem to have made any difference - everything suddenly arrives at once and all of a sudden, life is one big rush. Perhaps, unlike me, your Christmas is planned and sorted - if that's the case, please can I have some lessons? Thankfully, we have a God who is very much unlike me. His plan was established at the beginning of time and unlike our aims at keeping our gifts a secret, God proclaimed the gift of His son, Jesus, well in advance and very publicly (Isaiah 9 vs 6 and Luke 2 vs 8-14). When I turn on my TV and watch the tragic events from around the world, I am comforted to know that we have a God who is compassionate and loving. I am often asking "How can I show God's love and compassion in a hurting world"? It's very easy to see the scale of the problem and dismiss our small efforts as insignificant and of no consequence. However, God does not see any act of love or compassion in His name, as insignificant. Your prayers and support to the work of NCCM has and does continue to make a difference. It is sometimes helpful to look back as well as look forward as Andrew writes:

### **"NCCM The Story so Far**

In God's kindness, NCCM began with a conversation between Robert Gardner (Lay Reader and PCC Vice-Chair) and Andrew Towner (Vicar) about reasons people found it hard to give to Houghton and Kingmoor PCC. Two issues were prominent: fear that money goes into wider Church of England expenses (cars for Bishops etc) though it never has, and fears about possible theological trajectories away from the simple truths of Scripture. Hence the vision to develop a Trust to raise money for evangelical ministry (faithful to the Bible, clear on the gospel) in the North Carlisle area.

As part of stewarding that, our prayerful intention was always to give 10% of the income away either to evangelical ministry outside our area, or to ministry support within our area. This way we maintain our clear focus on evangelical ministry in North Carlisle whilst expressing generosity and enabling wider faithful ministry too.

### **"The 10%**

Over the years we have been able to support two people serving with UCCF as Relay Workers amongst students (Emma Walker and Becca Vogelberg nee Woodbridge); give Bibles to a local church in which some of our team preach frequently (Newton Arlosh); support a number of people training with the North West Gospel Partnership (notably Trudi Barrie nee Newgarth) and those serving in their churches (Bethany Kueh nee Clark); offer administrative support to

Tudor B-W during his time in Burgh, as well as other giving. We praise the Lord for such opportunities to share in his generosity, and know that each of these gifts will be bearing ongoing fruit in different ways – not least in the lives of Emma, Becca and Trudi, and the church building which was once a Bible-free area.

### **“The 90%**

Given Diocesan decisions not to offer regular curates at Houghton and Kingmoor (we remain on the list for curates, although they would be deployed across the Mission Community with St John’s London Rd) it has been valuable to have an Associate Minister for the last three years, enabling us to sustain the ministry we offer across this Parish. This has only been possible as the Lord has worked in his people’s hearts to pray and to give and we hope and trust that we have only glimpsed the beginning of what the Lord will do. Over future years this role may focus on different areas of work – they may be a families or youth worker, someone to plant a new congregation, or to develop our expertise in reaching the retired generations... But whatever the focus of the work, we long that God continues to move us to ask boldly and offer sacrificially, that his Kingdom may come on earth as it is in heaven.”

### **And finally.....**

Thanks to you, NCCM can go on supporting people in sharing the good news of Jesus. In addition to it’s ongoing commitments, NCCM is always on the look out for, and welcomes, new applications for support. Do please get in touch if you’d like to know more.

However you plan to spend Christmas this year, we pray for God’s continued blessing upon your lives. May you know His peace that passes all understanding and find rest in His abounding love.

## **Thank you and Happy Christmas**

On behalf of the Trustees: Bryony Woodbridge (Vice Chair), Neal Andrews, Jo Boddam-Whetham, Andrew Towner and Steve Blake (Chair).



Andrew Towner



Jo Boddam Whetham



Neal Andrews



Bryony Woodbridge



Steve Blake