

SPRING PRAYER LETTER 2023

Welcome to our Prayer Letter which we hope you enjoy reading including news about Easter activities and introducing our new worker, Lesley.



*"For God loved the world so much that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him may not die but have eternal life".
(John 3: 16 GNB)*

Northern Inter Schools Christian Union

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News from Ruth



As we look ahead to the second half of the Spring Term, our schools' work will mainly focus on Easter, and the related theme of Forgiveness. I will be working with members of the Workington and Copeland Puppet Teams as we bring the Easter Story (as told by Dave the Donkey and his Grandpa) into Kirkland and Moor Row schools. We will also visit Mayfield School, where the children are always excited to see the puppets and keen to join in with the songs, and it gives me an opportunity to practice my Makaton signing!

Meanwhile the Allerdale Team will take the 'Easter Surprise' Assembly into schools (more details on that from Digby!). We have also filmed 'Easter Surprise' with the aim of sending a video Assembly to all our schools once again – this was something we started during the Covid pandemic when we couldn't visit

schools in person, but the videos remain popular and in fact our recent Christmas 2022 video assembly has been the most viewed to date. There are also other NISCU Easter resources that we will be sending to schools or taking in person.

As I visit schools for Collective Worship this half term I will be using a song based on John 3:16 "For God so loved the world that he sent his son Jesus so whoever believes in Him can live with him forever". I usually try to include a song in Collective Worship because it can help consolidate the take home message and give the children an opportunity to join in with words and actions which they often still remember the next time I visit. I use backing tracks, or sometimes we sing unaccompanied, but I was delighted to discover that Lesley (our new schools' worker – see later) is a musician. On her first visit to a West Cumbria school she came with me to Flimby and brought her guitar! I'm looking forward to seeing how we work together as time goes on.

Ruth

Please pray:

- For our Puppet Teams, Lesley and Ruth as we visit schools this half term, for good health and protection.
- That the Easter message of hope, forgiveness and joy will come across clearly.
- That the video assembly will be successfully completed and will be well received by the schools that it is sent to.
- For churches that will be working with their local schools to put on 'Experience Easter' events that help children to explore and reflect on the Easter Story.
- For Lesley, as she continues to get to know NISCU and the West Cumbria Area, and for good contacts to be made with churches and schools as she explores what her role will involve.

Contact the Team

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Hello from Primary Puppets



Hi there everyone! My name is **Digby** and I've been asked by *Maggie* to tell you about our current Easter assembly, which is called, '**Easter Surprise**'!

I think it's going to be a great assembly! Actually, I first performed it in 2011 – a very long time ago! And then in 2020 we performed it again, managing to take it into a handful of schools before Covid interrupted us – just when we puppets felt like we were 'flying'!!!

Now here we are in 2023, aiming to complete what we began 3 years ago, and it all feels incredibly exciting once again!!

Before I go any further though, perhaps I should tell you who I am! Well, I'm the puppet who appears in all 5 scenes of our puppet play. I act the part of a

reporter/photographer who wants to start a newspaper and is on the lookout for some fab photos and interesting items of news! Here's what happens

In scene one, I bump into one of Jesus' close friends, and he tells me what happened when Jesus borrowed a donkey to ride into Jerusalem - how the people waved palm branches and cheered! **In the next scene**, two of Jesus' friends describe how they shared a Passover meal with Jesus where He said that He would soon die - this news really worried them! Later those disciples return briefly to announce that Jesus has been arrested, and they run off before the soldiers can arrest them too! Aargh!

In scene 3, I come across the same two friends of Jesus, and I tell them that I don't think I'm brave enough to be a proper reporter because I ran away when Jesus was arrested! They tell me that they ran away too! Then they update me about what has happened since to Jesus – that He was questioned by the High Priest, and then by the man in charge of Jerusalem called Pilate, and how it was that Jesus was condemned to death!

At the start of scene 4, I tell the children in assembly, how the body of Jesus was put in a tomb, and the entrance was closed with a huge stone door. Then another friend of Jesus appears.

His name is Peter. He tells me how, as soon as the Sabbath was over, some women went to visit the tomb and found that the heavy stone had been rolled away, and that the tomb was EMPTY! They had seen angels saying Jesus was alive! But Peter says he thinks this must be nonsense, and he shares with me how he's feeling – ashamed because he didn't stay close to Jesus and even denied that he knew Him!

Then a most amazing thing happens! Mary Magdalene appears running along our rear theatre, shouting: **"Jesus is alive! He's alive! I've got to tell everybody!"** And off she goes to share that extraordinary Good News!

Then in our final scene, I bump into a man called Cleopas and his wife who tell me their amazing bit of the story - how as they walked along the road from Jerusalem to Emmaus village discussing the recent events, Jesus came and walked along with them – though they didn't recognize Him at the time! Only later did they realize it was Jesus Himself

Just before I say goodbye to Cleopas and his wife, Peter suddenly appears in our rear theatre shouting these amazing and wonderful words: **"I've seen Jesus too! He is alive!"**

Digby (& Maggie)

Primary Puppet Team Leaders

Allerdale Team

Maggie Cowles, 12 Harrot Hill, Cockermouth, CA13 0BL Tel: 01900 824466

Copeland Team

Angela Scotchbrook, 39 Carlton Drive, Whitehaven, CA28 6XB Tel: 01946 67298

Workington Team

Julie Bater, The Old Vicarage, Park End Road, Workington, CA14 4DG Tel: 01900 68056

Please pray for events on these dates which are some of the things Ruth, Lesley & the Puppet teams have coming up (others tbc):



March

Mon 6: Collective Worship at Broughton School

Tue 7: Collective Worship at All Saints School (x2)

Wed 8: Allerdale PPT at All Saints School (x2)

Fri 10: Workington/Copeland PPT at Kirkland School

Wed 15: Allerdale PPT at Eaglesfield Paddle School (x2)

Fri 17: Workington/Copeland PPT at Moor Row School

Wed 22: Allerdale PPT at Wigton Infants School

Fri 24: Workington/Copeland PPT at Mayfield School
Tue 28: Collective Worship at Flimby School
Wed 29: Allerdale PPT at Borrowdale School
Thu 30: Collective Worship at All Saints School (x2)

Meet Lesley



Hello everyone. It's a great pleasure to be able to introduce myself as a new worker for West Cumbria. I hail from Dundee, famous for its jute, jam and journalism and also for being the driest and sunniest place in Scotland. At school I loved science and went on to study a degree in Microbiology and Genetics. After university, I worked for 25 years as a Cancer Research Scientist for the University of Dundee, but because of lack of funding I left research in 2015 and I went back to university to do a post-grad teacher training course. Since then, I have worked as a primary school teacher in Dundee until marrying Steve in November last year and moving south to Cumbria. So, there has been a lot of exciting change for me in the last few months. Cumbria is a beautiful part of the world and similar to the countryside I grew up knowing, and I'm looking forward to getting a chance to explore it properly as the weather (hopefully!) improves.

Steve and I are currently renovating a house so it has really been a hectic few months filled with paint, wallpaper and power tools! I really had no idea what God wanted me to do once I had moved south, and I was quite content to carry on with the house DIY, and push some doors perhaps in the spring of 2023 and see which ones opened. God clearly had a different idea, as within 3 weeks of arriving, I had been told of the opportunity at NISCU, watched the puppet team in action during the Cockermouth Christmas lights switch on, and also chatted to Nick Klein about the job at the same event! Sometimes it's hard to know what God's plan is for certain situations. However, in this case He provided me with flashing lights and a fanfare!

I became a Christian in my teens and have been involved in a variety of different types of children's and youth work over the years such as Sunday school, Good News Clubs and Youth clubs. For the last 11 years (time really does fly when you're having fun!), I have spent my Friday evenings captaining a Boys' Brigade Company which was the only Christian contact for 40+ boys each week. Thankfully, I have an amazing group of leaders that have taken over the Company since I left and I pray it will grow from strength to strength. Apart from children's work, my other great passion is music. I play guitar and occasionally keyboard, and was involved in leading worship at my home church for many years. I am hoping that I will be able to combine these two things in my work for NISCU. I would appreciate your prayers for open doors and opportunities within schools and churches, and that I am able to develop lasting relationships with these schools that can be built upon in the years to come. It will be exciting to discover what God has planned for the schools in West Cumbria.

Lesley

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