

# niscu West Cumbria

Working with schools and churches

## SUMMER PRAYER LETTER 2023

Welcome to our Prayer Letter which we hope you will enjoy reading. Lesley shares some of her experiences working with the Primary Puppets' teams and gives an update on other NISCU activities in our local schools.



*"There are different kinds of spiritual gifts, but the same Spirit gives them. There are different ways of serving, but the same Lord is served. There are different abilities to perform service, but the same God gives ability to everyone for their particular service. The Spirit's presence is shown in some way in each person for the good of all."*  
(1 Corinthians 12 v's 4-7. Good News Bible)

### Northern Inter Schools Christian Union

NISCU West Cumbria is part of the Northern Inter-Schools Christian Union.  
Charity No: 1135880. Company No. 7203313

If you don't already, could you receive the Prayer Letter by email? This would save NISCU printing and postage costs. For how to change to an email copy please see the back page.

### Puppet Shenanigans!



If you'd asked me this time last year if I thought in a year's time, I'd be a puppeteer with performances of four different puppet plays under my belt, I would have not believed it! When I first started to work for NISCU back in February this year, I went out into schools with the Workington and Allerdale puppet teams, ostensibly to get known in the area, and to make contacts with some of the primary schools. It didn't take long before I was trusted to brandish the coconut shells to do sound effects and then before long, was enjoying some hands-on puppetry. It has truly been a joy to share in the adventures of both Maggie's and Julie's awesome puppet teams since February this year. The teams have told **the story of Easter** through the eyes of Dave the Donkey and his Grandad, and also through the investigative journalism of Digby the intrepid reporter. We have shared **stories of kindness and friendship** with the wonderful children of **Mayfield School**, and this term it's the turn of **Mr Noah** and the tale of **the Good Samaritan** which will be keeping children (of all ages!) enthralled.



Without exception, the reception to all the performances from the schools has been fantastic, with the children being fully engaged and involved in each performance through songs, actions and performance.

The team members make the puppeteering look very easy but believe me it's not! The stamina needed to keep the puppets up and moving around for an entire performance is phenomenal (as my aching shoulders can testify to!). Then there's the co-ordination of the puppets' arms and mouths to contend with as well as making sure that your puppet doesn't spend the entire play with their arms above their heads while staring up at the ceiling (Chin down, arms down - vital pieces of puppeteering advice!). It's taken me a while to get to grips with doing all these things at once, so thank you to the teams for their generous support and encouragement.

### Primary Puppets' Prayer Points

- For the teams (PPTs) as they share the gospel with hundreds of children each term in a gentle and non-threatening way that impacts the children. ( I am sure memories of which will stay with the children for many years.)
- For the leaders of the PPTs, that they would have wisdom and inspiration for the coming terms.
- That the teams have a chance to get a well-earned rest over the summer holidays.
- For good health and strength for the teams.
- That God would bring other volunteers to strengthen the PPTs going forward with this important work.
- That the gospel presented through these puppet plays would take root in the hearts of all the children and adults that are entertained each term by these wonderful performances.

*Lesley*

#### 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 join us for the

**niscu** West Cumbria  
**Annual Celebration & AGM**

Saturday 8 July 2023 4-6 pm

**Lorton Street Methodist Church, Cockermouth, CA13 9RH**

**4 pm for Refreshments. 4.30 pm for a Celebration**  
of work in schools across West Cumbria

*As well as her experiences with the Primary Puppets' teams, Lesley has been busy with many other activities, both in schools and churches, and she shares some of them below.*

This half-term, I have been focussing on consolidating the work in schools that started after the Easter holidays.

I have been blessed by weekly **collective worship** for all year groups in two Church of England primary schools. On Monday afternoons I visit **Bassenthwaite School**, where last term we were looking at the parables of Jesus. The children especially enjoyed acting out the story of the unforgiving servant and have engaged well. This term, with the looming Year 6 transition to secondary school, we are going to be looking at "Change" and discovering what the Bible can teach us about that. In **Braithwaite School** we have been looking at friendships in the Bible and used the examples of this to learn how to be a good friend. We have now started a series on thankfulness and will again be using Bible stories presented in a variety of different ways to engage the children. The executive head of Braithwaite also covers **Dean School**, so I've done a couple of collective worships for them at the end of the last half term. I have also been in a couple of times per half term to **St Herbert's School, Keswick** and followed their themes for the term. In all the primary schools, I include songs to support the learning, either using my guitar or a backing track – which makes it simpler to demonstrate the actions.

We have been running "The Big Question" **after school clubs in Bridekirk Dovenby** (with Cat Kinghan) and **Eaglesfield Paddle primary schools** last half term. The children were asked to come up with questions about life, the universe and everything, and each week we tackle one of them from a biblical perspective. Children think deeply! Some of the questions discussed so far are: Who made God? Why do people get sick? If everyone dies what's the point of being born in the first place? Why did Jesus have to die? These topics make for interesting and insightful discussions with the Year 4, 5 & 6 children. We also play games, have a snack and do a craft activity that supports the topic being discussed. Currently there are 8 children enrolled in each club.

I am currently helping Lucy Thompson with the **QM club** at **Cockermouth School** on Wednesdays. As you may be aware Lucy and husband Adrian are moving down south in the summer so I will be liaising with the school to establish if the club can continue to run after the summer holidays. I am also working with Alison Riley at a newly established games lunch club in **Whitehaven Academy**, looking to build relationships with the young people.

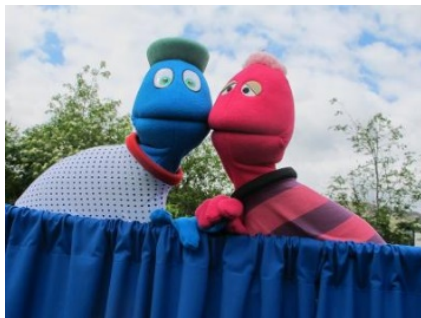
This term I am going to be working with **Threlkeld School**, doing a whole school assembly and introduction to **prayer spaces**. I will also be working with the school to support them in the development of their **school vision** through input during one of their staff in-service days.

We've been invited to do a whole school assembly at **Moor Row School** during their **RE week** and also to produce lesson materials for their staff to be used during that week.

Offers of “**Moving Up**” lessons for the Year 6s have been sent out to the schools I am working with, and dates are now in the diary. The focus will be the story of Joseph and how he coped with all the changes in his life with the help of God.

**Discover Pentecost.** I was asked to support Claire Chittenden, the churchwarden from **St Oswald’s Church in Dean**, by leading one of the stations. This event was attended by the Year 6 from **Dean School**.

**Dearham Boy’s Brigade.** I have visited the company and will be giving input to them sometime this term. I have also been given the honour of presenting the prizes at their annual display and prize giving.



**Primary Puppets teams.** I’ve been supporting the Allerdale and Workington Puppet teams as they go out to schools to share the gospel. (See my other article for more details.)

*Lesley*

**Mr & Mrs Noah**

### **Lesley’s Prayer Points**

- For more open doors in schools and opportunities to deepen relationships with the schools I am already involved with.
- That schools will be keen to for me to continue working with them after the summer break.
- For Threlkeld School as they discern their new vision and direction.
- That the message that children (and adults) hear during collective worship and at the various clubs will be impactful and take root in their hearts.
- For the West Cumbria area job vacancy, that the right candidate would apply.

### **Contact details**

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### **Job vacancy**

Niscu West Cumbria is currently advertising for a **youth evangelist/Christian schoolworker** working predominantly but not exclusively with secondary schools and also young people in churches. 16 hours per week. If you know someone who may be interested further details and a job pack are on the Niscu website at [niscu.org.uk/vacancies](http://niscu.org.uk/vacancies).

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