

niscu West Cumbria

Working with schools and churches

AUTUMN PRAYER LETTER 2024

Welcome to our Autumn Prayer Letter.

We hope you enjoy reading about a variety of NISCU activities. Pray for the clubs, assemblies and lessons, and special events in the run up to Christmas, that young people would learn more about Jesus's love for them. In addition, meet our new worker Laura who joins Lesley.



*"For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace".
Isaiah 9 v 6 (NIV)*

Northern Inter Schools Christian Union

NISCU West Cumbria is part of the Northern Inter-Schools Christian Union.
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Hello from Lesley

Firstly, a huge thank you to all of you reading this letter for your faithful prayers for the work of NISCU West Cumbria. We could not do any of this without being fuelled by the prayers of God's people who want to see His kingdom promoted and nurtured in our area. This past half term has been very busy with lots to give thanks for and to celebrate what God is doing.



Here's a run-down, starting with assemblies & collective worship.
Bassenthwaite PS (Assemblies) We have looked at some of the main stories of the Old Testament and how they link to the world today. Give thanks: For strong links and good relationships.

Braithwaite CofE PS (Collective worship) We have been celebrating the school's value of Harmony, using a variety of Bible verses eg Ecclesiastes 3:1. Give thanks: For the school's vision for RE and worship and also the excellent SIAMS inspection report recently received.

Dean CofE PS (Collective worship) We explore a school value each week – dignity, empathy, aspiration and nurture. Give thanks: For the children's excellent engagement. Pray: That staff and pupils will see an application for the gospel in their lives.

Flimby PS (Assemblies) A monthly visit to lead on one of the school values. Give thanks: For the children's excellent engagement and the smooth transition of RE lead teacher over the summer.

Holme St Cuthbert PS (Assemblies) A half-termly visit focussing on the main Christian festivals. Pray: The Christmas assembly would be a powerful witness of God's love.

All Saints CofE PS (Collective worship) Occasional support on a rota. Give thanks: For all the other worship team volunteers. Pray: The team will be effective witnesses.

Bridekirk Dovenby CofE PS (Collective worship) Twice-termly support. I also support a Christian Governor to run the Archbishop's Young Leaders course after school. Pray: Children who attend will develop into fine faith-centred young leaders.

Broughton PS (Assemblies) Give thanks: For being added to the assembly rota. Pray: Assemblies will be engaging and impactful.

Additionally, I run or support clubs and deliver lessons.

Eaglesfield Paddle CofE PS (Club) 'Big Questions' after-school club is back for another academic year. Give thanks: Laura (see later) can support me. Pray: Children have fun, learn and explore some of life's tricky questions such as Why are we here, Who made God and Why can't humans fly?!

Brigham St Bridgets CofE PS (Club) 'The Ark' infants lunch club attended by 16 reception/Y1/Y2 children. Give thanks: For their enthusiasm and for the support of Samm Morris, the new Methodist Deacon for the area.

St Herbert's CoE PS (Club) The 'Journey to Christmas' club will be starting again after half term. Pray: For good attendance and inspiration for engaging Christmas crafts!

Borrowdale CofE PS (Lessons)– I have had the privilege of delivering four, hour-long lessons on the Bible to Y3-Y6 children. Pray: The truths unpacked would have a lasting impact on these children (and teacher).

I also work in two secondary schools.

Cockermouth School Games club drop in. Give thanks: 30-40 young people who attend each Wednesday lunch time.

Keswick School Games club drop in. Give thanks: Increasing numbers of young people dropping in each Friday lunch time to play games and chat.

Pray: For opportunities for faith-based conversations with all these young people.

Special Event. I have also had the joy of helping out at for couple of sessions of the **Life Exhibition** organised by the diocese and Grasmoor Mission Community, held in Christ Church Cockermouth, where over 450 children heard the good news of Jesus over the week. Pray for the seed sown to take root and flourish.

Introducing Laura

Hello! I'm Laura Smith, the new schools' worker for NISCU West Cumbria. I live with my husband, Jonathan and two children, Jacob (7) and Isaac (3) in Little Broughton, about 3 miles outside of Cockermouth.

I was born in Reading but spent the majority of my childhood in Wolverhampton, where my parents still live. I started teaching Geography in 2006 in West Berkshire; in January 2011 I moved out to Addis Ababa, Ethiopia and continued my teaching there for 18 months at Bingham Academy. I returned to the UK to continue teaching as I felt that the Lord wanted me here as a Christian witness in a country that has moved further and further away from God.



The big move up to NW Cumbria was in August 2014 just after Jon and I got married (he is a true, Workington-born Cumbrian by the way – my passport to the County!). We attend Cockermouth Christian Centre and co-ordinate the children's ministry and outreach. I have a heart for children and young people both in and outside of the church. For those already in church, my desire is for them to deepen their understanding of Jesus and have a thirst for the Word of God. For those outside, I pray that they will know how deeply loved they are and as a church, we will know how to meet them where they're at in life. Only the Lord can make a way, through prayer, not my good ideas!!

We are surrounded by hundreds of beautiful fells and lakes and I love to get out when I can and get our boys to appreciate the beauty of creation. I enjoy peace and quiet in the evenings when that's possible, especially in the winter with our log burner on!

Working with NISCU since September has truly been a breath of fresh air after 18 years of secondary school teaching. Getting to talk to children and young people and have time to invest in their lives has been absolutely wonderful. It has been a slow start in terms of getting responses from schools (I am based in the Whitehaven area) but I know that the Lord's ways are higher than mine, thank goodness!

Highlighting a couple of upcoming events I am involved in:

Weeks beginning 25 November & 2 December – 'Experience Christmas', St Bees area

Weeks beginning 2 & 9 December – Christingle lessons, West Lakes Academy

*****New service*****. Would you like to receive "Stand in the Gap", an emailed weekly prayer diary with items to pray about day by day?
If so contact Laura with your email at laura.smith@niscu.org.uk

Contact the Team

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Hello from Primary Puppets

LOOKING BACK!

What an amazing half-term it's been! Thank you, Lord!

We have been able to present seven more assemblies on the theme of '**Kindness Counts**', plus one on the theme of '**Harvest and Thankfulness**'! Here is some of the encouraging feedback we have received:

"The whole assembly was wonderful. Each section was timed right and had a good pace to keep the children engaged. The mix of songs, plays, info and interaction was great and the children were onboard for the full assembly time. Thank you so much to the team – we love having your assemblies!"

LOOKING FORWARD!

And now here we are, excitedly looking forward to practising and presenting our new Christmas assembly entitled: '**Star Grazing**'! Once again, much thought and prayer has gone into preparing it. New props are being made for each team – including two sets of three large camels and a bare Christmas tree for each team, plus silver stars to hang on them.



This assembly begins with a **Christmas Quiz** about the very first Christmas, followed by our **Puppet Play** with engaging conversation between an adult sheep and his grandson **Barney**! Sadly, **Barney** missed what happened the night before, so his **Grandad** tells him all about it; how an angel suddenly appeared and told them the most amazing news ever - how God sent His Son as a baby to Bethlehem, born in a stable wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger!

Grandad then tells **Barney** how he and the other sheep followed their shepherds and found the baby Jesus, just as the angel had told them, in a stable, lying in a manger with **Mary and Joseph** at His side!

Our puppet play leads into our first **puppet song** (with actions) called: '**Go Tell it on the Mountain!**' which will feature puppets dressed as shepherds surrounded by some of our large sheep puppets!

A **second song** will involve three children from each school, acting the part of the Wise Men on camels, following one of our team dressed as an angel and carrying a large star aloft! Meanwhile, in the theatre will be some singing bird puppets, a male soloist puppet and puppet/s playing instruments. This song is called: **'Wise Men looked up and followed a star'**. It is a lovely song which we first performed last Christmas, but this time will be presented slightly differently!



Then after a short period of reflection and prayer, we will finish with a new third song for us, called **'Saved the World'**, with words like: 'It lit the skies up above them, A star so bright!' and, 'If life breaks down, He will comfort you!'. This song reminds us all how Jesus came where we are to save us!

Thank you **SO** much again for all your valued support in prayer!

Maggie, Julie and Angie

Prayer Diary

Mon 4 Nov: Workington PPT - Christmas assembly practice
 Wed 6 Nov: Cockermouth PPT – Christmas assembly practice
 Wed 13 Nov: Cockermouth PPT – Christmas assembly practice
 Sat 16 Nov: Cockermouth PPT – Cockermouth Lights Switch-On presentation practice
 Sun 17 Nov: Cockermouth PPT at Cockermouth Lights Switch-On
 Mon 18 Nov: Workington PPT - Christmas assembly practice
 Wed 20 Nov: Cockermouth PPT assembly at St Bridget's PS, Brigham
 Thu 21 Nov: Workington PPT - Christmas assembly practice
 Wed 27 Nov: Cockermouth PPT assembly at Broughton CofE School
 Wed 27 Nov: Workington PPT - practice for Workington Lights Switch-On
 Sat 30 Nov: Workington PPT at Workington Lights Switch-On
 Wed 4 Dec: Cockermouth PPT assembly at Dearham School
 Thu 5 Dec: Workington PPT at Beckstone Primary (2 assemblies)
 Mon 9 Dec: Workington PPT - Christmas assembly at Moor Row Primary
 Wed 11 Dec: Cockermouth PPT – Christmas assembly at Flimby Primary
 Mon 16 Dec: Workington PPT – Christmas assembly at Westfield Primary
 Wed 18 Dec: Cockermouth PPT – Christmas assembly at St Michael's CofE PS, Bothel
 Thu 19 Dec: Workington PPT – Christmas assembly at Mayfield School, Whitehaven

Primary Puppet Team Leaders

Cockermouth 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

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