

Working with schools and churches

SPRING PRAYER LETTER 2025



Welcome to our Spring Prayer Letter. Enjoy reading about Lesley, Laura & the Primary Puppet Team's activities over the last half term and their plans for celebrating Easter with the young people they meet. There's a special article about the Listening Service from Helen, which will inspire and maybe encourage you to become a volunteer yourself.

*"Yet the proof of God's amazing love is this – that it was while we were sinners that Christ died for us".
(Romans 5:8 JB Phillips' translation)*

Northern Inter Schools Christian Union

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

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Hello again from Lesley

To all you prayer warriors out there, thank you so much! Especially for prayers about travel and safety - we do 600-800 miles per month. It has been a real blessing to be looked after in this way.

I have continued working with the same schools, developing deeper relationships with both staff and pupils. Below is a summary of my news and prayer points. (PS = Primary School).

Bassenthwaite PS– We had fun journeying towards Christmas exploring the nativity story through the eyes of all the characters involved. This term we are looking at the life of Moses and how that links into the celebration of Passover and the last supper leading towards Easter. Pray that these stories will take root in the lives of the children and become more than just "stories". Also pray for the school as they look for a new head teacher who will take up the post as of September 2025.

Braithwaite CofE PS– This term we have been focusing on the school value of Aspiration, sharing Bible stories and exploring themes of harmony, respect and empathy through collective worship. The children have enjoyed being involved in the story telling through readings, drama and object lessons. Pray that the children will find ways to apply and live out these values.

Brigham St Bridget's CofE PS– There are now 17 children attending the Ark weekly infants' lunch club. They are very enthusiastic and join in readily with all the activities. Give thanks for the help of Samm Morris (Methodist Deacon) in running the club and also that the school is very supportive. Pray that the infants will grasp how much God loves them through learning about the events of Easter.

Dean CofE PS– I explore a school value each week – dignity, empathy, aspiration and nurture, in rotation. Give thanks that children and staff live out these values daily in school. We have looked recently at some stories of famous Christians such as Helen Roseveare, Corrie Ten Boom and George Muller. Pray that these will inspire and help the children to understand that God is still at work today.

Flimby PS– I am using the school’s values as a basis for the assemblies. Give thanks that the children there are enthusiastic, engage well with the Bible stories and love to sing! Pray that the truths brought to the children will encourage them and be seeds of faith for the future.

Holme St Cuthbert PS– I have recently covered the Christmas story and Epiphany in assemblies and will be going in after half term to think about Easter. Pray that these will be seen as more than stories and God’s love for the world will be evident.

Eaglesfield Paddle CofE PS– The Big Questions Club is run jointly with Laura and we have looked at the weird and the wonderful as we explore the children’s questions! We usually answer one faith-based and one other question each week. Some questions are really deep – like what’s the proof that Jesus will come back? And some are really technical - like what are we made of? We learn just as much as the kids do! Give thanks for their curiosity about the world and interest in the things of God.

All Saints CofE PS– I continue to support the collective worship rota, when required. Give thanks for all the other volunteers that share worship at the school.

Bridekirk Dovenby CofE PS– Give thanks for an excellent church inspection (SIAMS). The staff and pupils have worked hard to embed their vision and values into the school’s daily life. I support this work through leading collective worship. There is a possibility of a Big Questions club in the summer term. Pray for this opportunity.

St Herbert’s CofE PS– Give thanks that the Journey to Christmas club went well with 14 children, discovering the ins and outs of the Christmas story. I have offered an Easter club, so pray that if this is the right thing it will come to fruition.

Cockermouth School- Games club drop in – Give thanks for the 30-40 young people who attend each Wednesday lunch time. Pray for wisdom as we try to steer the conversations towards the big questions in life. Also pray for the Christian Union that meets on Thursdays, run by a CofE curate and a member of staff, to which we signpost the young people.

Keswick School– Games club drop in – Give thanks that there are more young people dropping in each Friday to play games and chat. Pray for opportunities for faith-based conversations with them. I have also offered to run a separate Christian Union if the school would like this. Pray that if this is the right thing that God would open the doors.

Puppet Performances - I continue to be involved with Maggie’s puppet team on Wednesdays and as usual it is a great joy and delight!



Contact the Team

NISCU Office: Christ Church Rooms, South Street, Cockermouth, CA13 9RU

www.niscu.org.uk

Lesley: lesley.mclaughlin@niscu.org.uk

Laura: laura.smith@niscu.org.uk

Helen tells us about life as a Niscu Listener

When the classroom door opens and I wait for the class teacher to release the selected child and follow me for 1-2-1 Listening there is an uncomfortable moment when so many pleading pairs of eyes are on me saying “Take me today, can I have a turn?”. The child chosen, often because they just love to chat, has been known to skip down the corridor as we leave class, already eager to start the chat as they go. The world has changed since I was punished for chatting in school! However, it’s often a busy, noisy world where everyone talks but few have the skills, understanding or time to just listen. Listen to what? To stories that need to be told, laughter and friendships, animals and cousins, problems that can’t be solved, anxieties and uncertain futures, complex relationships. A life crying out to be seen. I am so happy Niscu’s 1-2-1 Listening course helped tune in my ears to listen and I feel tremendous joy, as well as a real privilege, to sit in the listening seat. There is wonderful compassion and care amongst staff for their children. Learning and compassion combine. Schools embrace the 1-2-1 Listening Service as an important element in their responsibility for pastoral care and express great appreciation.

Equally vital are Niscu’s prayer supporters. Since my sessions were posted in the weekly “Stand in the Gap” I am seeing changes in all of the Listening sessions. There is fresh clarity for me in knowing how to lead the session and children’s response is notable. Thank you so much.

We often hear we are the hands and feet of Jesus but as a volunteer with the 1-2-1 Listening Service will you be His ears? You will love it too.

(Interested in training as a Listener? More information from Jane Callow at jane.callow@niscu.org.uk.)



Laura shares her news

A packed update from me as a lot has happened since the last issue – the Lord has opened many doors! I take assemblies at two schools once a month and lessons at another weekly, but my main focus has been lunch clubs as I love getting to know the children and talking about faith.

I have been running 'Calm Club' or 'Recharge' each day at a specific school (they are basically the same thing, just a different name!):

- Monday** – Recharge @ Monkway Primary School, Whitehaven
- Tuesday** – Calm Club @ Seascale Primary School
- Wednesday** – Calm Club @ Whitehaven Academy
- Thursday** – Recharge @ Jericho Primary School, Whitehaven
- Friday** – Recharge after school @ Broughton Primary School (from Fri 28 Feb)

Each club will be slightly different taking into account the children's ages and interests. They have been structured around 5 well-being themes:

- **Connect** e.g. a card game
- **Learning** e.g. a new skill, such as making a friendship bracelet
- **Active** e.g. can you hold a plank for 2 minutes?!
- **Take notice** e.g. calm, mindful activities – colouring, dot to dot
- **Give** e.g. thinking of others – making encouragement cards

The last 10-15 minutes are spent tackling 'Big Questions' that the children have written themselves – my favourite part! We have had:

- Why are eyes different colours?
- Why are we alive?
- What is hair made out of?
- If God is all powerful, why is there suffering?

My prayer is that these children will see how much they are loved and cared for by NISCU staff as an expression of God's love. As we discuss their 'Big Questions', I hope that it will cause them to seek further and they will understand what having a relationship with Jesus is all about.

Hello from Primary Puppets

A QUICK LOOK BACK!

Our Christmas assemblies were well received by staff and children alike! Here is some of the encouraging feedback:

- "It was excellent! We really enjoyed the puppets and the variation of modern songs!"*
- "Children were clearly having fun and enjoying the 'show' and were keen to interact."*
- "Children were full of stories about their favourite part and favourite puppet. The band and sheep were very popular!"*

LOOKING FORWARD!

The title of this year's Easter assembly is *'What does Easter Mean to You?'*

We are excitedly looking forward to taking this assembly into schools! I think it will be another great assembly, and we praise God for His enabling in every way! We are grateful to each person who has contributed so generously and creatively in different ways!

Rosie (our Roving Reporter puppet) starts by asking four of our puppets individually, what Easter means to them. Some of the children then have opportunity to share their thoughts about Easter with Rosie.

Then follow our three puppet plays, which explore the story of the first Easter and why Easter is so special to Christians. The first play commences with Max and Susie arguing about Easter eggs, when Grandpa puppet joins them, explaining that there is more to Easter than Easter eggs! He describes

what happened to Jesus when He came to Earth, and when He started telling people about God's love for them. They discuss why some people didn't like Jesus, and how He was put to death on a cross.

This is followed by a second, moving, narrated puppet play (sound track pre-record ed) featuring Mary discovering the open tomb in the Garden, and her reaction to that! We see and hear her meeting with two angels, closely followed by her meeting with the risen Jesus Himself! The scene ends with Mary excitedly running off to share this AMAZING NEWS: ***"I've seen JESUS!! He's ALIVE!!!"***



Next we have our song, ***'Resurrection'***, first performed last Easter. Taking part will be two singing flower puppets, a trumpeter, a singing guitarist, a soloist plus four children performing out front with hand puppets!

The third puppet play again features Grandpa, Max and Susie. Max asks Grandpa what happened next to Jesus' friends. Grandpa tells the children about how Jesus promised to send a Helper – the Holy Spirit, to all people who believed in Jesus. He explains how that is what happened, after Jesus went back to Heaven. Susie ends by asking Grandpa if he is a believer, to which he responds: "I certainly am Susie!"

Before our final song, we have a short period for reflection followed by a prayer. Then the puppets perform ***'I'm a Believer!'*** It's a wonderful, lively, fast-moving song, with our amazing donkey puppet as the soloist, and four other puppets as the back-up singers! One of the choruses goes like this: ***'Since I found His grace, Now I'm a believer, Not a trace, Of doubt in my mind, I've been changed, Ooo, Ahhh, I'm a believer, Jesus is walking by my side.'***

Many thanks again for all your support!
Please keep praying! We really value your every prayer!

Maggie, Julie and Angie

Primary Puppets' Prayer Diary

Mon 24 Feb: Workington PPT - Easter assembly practice.
Wed 26 Feb: Cockermouth PPT assembly at Braithwaite.
Mon 3 Mar: Workington PPT – Easter assembly practice.
Wed 5 Mar: Cockermouth PPT at Richmond Hill, Aspatria - 2 Easter assemblies.
Mon 10 Mar: Workington PPT – Easter assembly practice.
Wed 12 Mar: Cockermouth PPT at Holme St Cuthbert, Mawbray - Easter assembly.
Mon 17 Mar: Workington PPT assembly at Northside.
Wed 19 Mar: Cockermouth PPT at Maryport Primary with 2 Easter assemblies.
Mon 24 Mar: Cockermouth PPT assembly at Threlkeld.
Workington PPT assembly at Hensingham School.
Thur 27 Mar: Workington PPT at Beckstone School with 2 Easter assemblies.
Mon 31 Mar: Workington PPT at Westfield School with Easter assembly.
Cockermouth PPT at All Saints School, with 2 Easter assemblies.

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

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