

LIVING WATERS



A Prudhoe Snow Scene

Encouraging Enabling Challenging
in the Tynedale Methodist Circuit

WINTER 2024/2025

Dear friends,

I have just re-read my message for the Winter Edition of Living Waters 2023 and in many respects, it is tempting to simply refer you to last year. Certainly, it seems no time ago that I was writing it, this year has gone so quickly, and its message of hope and new life promised in Jesus' coming among us is no less relevant, but it did make me wonder about those 'round robin' letters which are so popular at this time of year. As wonderful as it always is to hear from dear friends and family, and for us to share our news with them, I often find myself writing the same old same old each year, that nothing much has changed, and life goes on.

In many respects, that is reassuring, that we have a constancy. Remaining true to ourselves and to God's calling is important, that we continue in our Christian journey, that we continue on life's path. Our God is a faithful and unchanging God, the same yesterday, today and forever and in that we find comfort and reassurance.

But the gospel is a story of transformation. The hope we have in Jesus is that we find new life in all its fullness, that we can be changed, renewed, reborn. We look to be 'changed from glory into glory, till in heaven we take our place'. If nothing ever changes it suggests that we aren't fulfilling our potential, if nothing ever changes, we are just stuck in mere ritual.

And of course, the Spirit of God is dynamic, bringing new opportunities, blowing us off course into new and exciting adventures. We need to be open to the unexpected and challenging because our God travels with us and goes ahead of us.

I wonder what the round robin letter of our Circuit will say at the end of 2025. I pray that it will reflect the sure ground of our confident faith in God, which is open to transformation in the service of Christ and empowered by the Holy Spirit.

May we all be filled with the joy of Christmas and the challenge of a New Year journeying with God.

Marie x



Samaritan's Purse Shoe Box Appeal 2024 Haydon Bridge



It's always a pleasure during October to ask for and receive gifts for the above yearly appeal. This year was no exception - some lovely toys and knitted items were received both from members of our congregation, some from village folk who never attend and also from another of our Circuit church congregations.

Most of the postage too for transportation which now is £5 per box, was also kindly donated.

Having been their contact at Haydon Bridge for several years, earlier this year I received a postcard from Samaritan's Purse announcing a new destination for UK shoeboxes which was to be the southern African nation of Malawi.

We are told that due to its dire economic situation, many Malawian children grow up without proper toys and end up making their own out of clay-like soil that forms after the rain - what a humbling thought when so many children we know have more toys than they will ever need! We were also reminded that not only will each shoebox of gifts delight a child but it will also show them that they are known and loved, and provide an opportunity to hear the Gospel message.

The Methodist Church in Togo, West Africa, is also a partner distributor of shoe boxes for Samaritan's Purse. While serving there, Michael and Sheila Holland were privileged to be involved in the giving of shoe boxes to children (in this instance the shoe boxes came from the USA).



These were received with delight and excitement by both children and their parents. One response was to exclaim with thankfulness that someone had remembered them and cared so much that they would send a shoe box of gifts, even though they had never met. A wonderful symbol of God's grace.

Kathleen Armstrong & Michael Holland

Trinity's Prayer Event for the Future of the Tynedale Circuit

"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." - [Jeremiah 29:11](#)

With all the discussions about the Circuit's financial challenges and the questions this has raised for how we sustain Methodism in the Tyne Valley, we need to remember that God knows our struggles and has a vision for our future. But how do we know what those plans are and what part we have to play in putting them into action?

On Saturday 12 October Trinity hosted an open prayer event to provide space to listen to God and try to discern His will. There were 5 stations set up within the church, each equipped with materials and resources to inspire and guide our prayer:

1. An art activity focusing on thanksgiving for the gifts we have received from Him already
2. Prayer space to listen to God in silence using candles as a focus
3. Space and resources to read – allowing God to speak through the words and prayers of others in a range of books and worship materials
4. A Prayer for the congregations across the Circuit and for the leadership team – using a visual representation of the Tyne Valley with each chapel mapped onto it
5. A prayer station focusing on the way forward – how do we get to know God better within our own church.



A floor representation of the Tyne Rivers with location of the churches/chapels. Plus a large scale map of the Circuit area marking the churches/chapels.



A representative vine on which people labelled bunches of grapes to thank God for the fruit and gifts He has already given us.

In each space, people were provided with prompts for their prayer and encouraged to record their thoughts and responses. The materials have all been displayed in the prayer chapel for further reflection by folk who couldn't attend on the day.

We were blessed with about 20 folk attending and a real sense of God's presence with us. As one person said: "I came thinking I would be there for 10 minutes and then stayed for 2 hours!" The planning group have been inspired to build on this by making such prayer events a more regular feature of church and Circuit life.

Anne Lambert

FOURSTONES WITH WARDEN CHURCH REMEMBERS



The annual Newbrough and Fourstones Remembrance Sunday Service is held each year in Newbrough's Town Hall. Led on alternate years by an Anglican priest and the local Methodist Minister, this year by Rev Michael Holland. Each year the chapel lays a wreath at the War Memorial which is adjacent to the Newbrough Town Hall.

It also remembers the occasion by decorating its cross with greenery and poppies as well as knitted poppies on the railings along the front of the church.

On the following Tuesday afternoon the Messy Vintage theme was based on remembering. We were reminded that November was a month for memories. All Saints and All Souls days. 'Remember, remember the 5th. of November', as well as those who died as a result of conflict. We were also reminded that God said "I shall not forget you! See, I have engraved you on the palms of my hands" Isaiah 49:13-16. And for the Christian - remembering has a special place "Do this in remembrance of me" Jesus said. Luke 22:19 Our craft activities were writing on 'hands' as to how we use our hands, and completing Memory Trees before afternoon tea was served.



Sheila Bell



PROFILE

JACKIE DAVISON – CIRCUIT STEWARD

Loving as my family were, they were not practising Christians. However, I started to go to the local Church of Scotland Sunday School with some friends from school, and continued to go to Bible Class as a teenager and help with the younger children and the Brownies. Although I did not join the church as an adult, I did get married there in the early eighties.

I met my first husband when I began teaching in the Borders and we moved down to his home town of Newcastle. It was there that I began attending the local United Reformed Church – I suppose the nearest style of worship to the Church of Scotland – and that is where my daughter was christened. We moved to Hexham in 1989 just after the birth of our son and I was looking for a church to attend as I wanted him baptized. I was invited to go to West End Methodist Church by a lovely lady I met at the toddler group which was then held in the hall. As soon as I stepped into the building I was drawn in by the warmth of the welcome and then both comforted and challenged by the service. I went home and looked up (pre Google!) the tenets of the Methodist faith and immediately loved the John Wesley principles of doing no harm, doing good and ‘attending to the ordinances of God’. These simple ideas very much appealed to me and I began my journey into Methodism.

After my son was baptized, I attended classes and joined the church in 1992. I still feel I have lots to learn but I firmly believe I am in the right place!

I began to play the piano for Sunday Club performances and then in the service itself. About 15 years ago, Gordon McRae gave his time to teach me the organ. I was never the most talented player but I was keen! It was a pleasure to use my skills to worship God and to be part of the music group and then play for ‘Vision’ and ‘Encounter’ evenings which were open to all as informal sessions.

It was a fantastic day when I married my second husband, Mark, at West End – my second family home

When I retired from teaching I took on the role of Treasurer – and it has to be said it is only due to the patience of John Dunn and David Kilner that I have managed to balance the books each year!

Last year, Martyn Johnson addressed our congregation to ask for volunteers to become Circuit Stewards. Again, as I had a little more time I was happy to join this happy band. It has been a challenging time and it is a lot of responsibility to help to manage the Circuit successfully but I am working with a great team who all have the very best interests of our churches at heart.

I feel very privileged to have been welcomed into Methodism, welcomed into the West End and Acomb communities and now to be part of the Circuit Team.

I look forward to meeting many more members from all of our churches in the years to come.

Jackie



On Friday 15th November over forty gathered in Catton Village Hall for the Tearfund Big Quiz where nearly £500 was raised for the work of Tearfund. Tearfund works with local churches and organisations in more than 50 countries to tackle the complex challenges of poverty.

Sheila Holland.



Church Mice

Karl Zorowski



The Circuit Meeting held each September is generally more of a 'business matters' meeting. This September, the members of Circuit Meeting met at Wylam Methodist Church to discuss and agree on various items of business. These matters included finance, property, safeguarding and reports about various aspects of Circuit life.

One of the reports focussed on the Special Circuit Meeting which had been held only a few days' previously on 15 September. The meeting heard how one outcome of the special meeting was to be the introduction of a focus on prayer for the Circuit and the way forward and each Church Council was tasked with looking at the difficult question of what their church can give to the Circuit.

Members of Circuit Meeting then agreed the Circuit Safeguarding Policy 2024/25 and the Safer Recruitment Policy 2024/25.

The finance report gave details of the final statement for year ending August 2024. Once again, the Circuit ran at a deficit during last year and the shortfall was addressed by a large grant from the Model Trust Fund (MTF). This year's budget is also in deficit although monies from the sale of the Bellingham Manse and the return of the Pension Reserves Fund monies will reduce the deficit slightly. The remaining deficit amount will be addressed by an increase in church contributions and a further grant from the MTF.

As well as the sale of the Bellingham manse, the meeting heard that the sale of Ebenezer is still ongoing and that Barrasford Methodist Church was sold subject to contract. There was no further news on the sale of the chapel at Otterburn or the resolution of the lease on Corbridge Methodist Church.

In July, the Local Preachers' Meeting, held at Allendale, included a celebration of Margaret Weatherson and Evelyn Charlton's long service as Local Preachers. The meeting was informed that Margaret Carr, a Local Preacher for 34 years, had passed away. Daryl Ralston remains as a Local Preacher On Trial.

Rev Marie shared some of the information available following the Methodist Conference in the summer. Both the Conference Digest and the Methodist Prayer Handbook are now available. Rev Marie also has some booklets on the Walking with Micah project if churches would like a copy.

The final two items of business dealt with the various Circuit appointments that must be agreed annually and the yearly consideration of public worship at Slaley, Corbridge & Riding Mill, and West End & Acomb.

The next Circuit Meeting will be held on **Thursday, 13 March 2025**, at 7.30pm.

Venue: Hexham Trinity Methodist Church. The meeting then closed in prayer.

The Tynedale Circuit Prayer

Loving and eternal God, we give you thanks for the Tynedale Circuit.

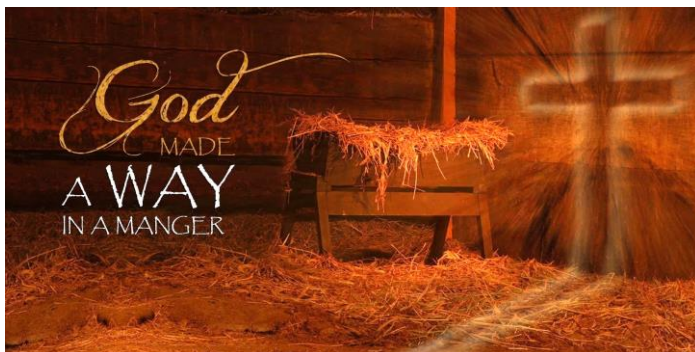
Grant that we may become an increasingly vibrant, Spirit filled, Christ centred people; Faithful to Scripture, deeply rooted in prayer; and with a heart to follow Your for mission and growth, as we catch and share glimpses of Your glory in our lives.

Now to Him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to His power that is at work in us, to Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! **Amen**

We Methodists are invited with other Christians to share in **A Pilgrim Prayer Journey** in five different locations along the North Tyne valley over the course of 2025. Organised by the Together Network it will be an opportunity to pray and bless the valley, with thanksgiving for all that God has done and is doing here. On the Pilgrim Prayer Journey, we plan to listen together to what God might be saying at this time, and pray for the different communities, especially any particular prayer requests from those actively engaged in God's work in different ways in those communities, as we make our way down the North Tyne Valley over the year.

Dates and locations will be notified through the Circuit Calendar with as much advance notice, as we are advised

Michael Holland



Northumberland Domestic Abuse Services benefit from Hexham Brass Concert

The twenty-five strong Hexham Brass Band, fifteen men and ten women, struck up a rousing 'Praise My Soul the King Of Heaven', drowning the marvellous singing of fifty-two raised voices in the audience, lifting the rafters of **Haydon Bridge Methodist Church** on 16th November.

'Mickey Mouse March' was the opening fun piece, like watching the start of a film, followed by the fast, furious and exciting 'Punchinello' by the composer of The Full Monty music. Puffed cheeks and pursed lips captured the many emotions of the slow and sorrowful euphonium and cornet piece 'Time To Say Goodbye', before the lazy, swinging, foot tapping, thigh slapping, Toy Story theme tune 'You've Got A Friend', was met with rapturous applause. The twirling, swirling, whistling, 'Those Magnificent Men In Their Flying Machine', was a natural follow on to the seven beat rhythm of 'Nearer My God To Thee' on the flugel horn, with deep tones, crescendos and cymbals. The smooth, soothing, shimmering bolero 'The Shepherd's Song' was the fore-runner of Hans Zimmers' Pirates of The Caribbean dramatic piece 'Dead Man's Chest' with its stealth, staccato, speed, surprise, and smooth blending.



'The Philosopher's Stone', from John Williams' Harry Potter, was the opening music of the second half, followed by the moody and rich, long and sustained, E flat soprano cornet high notes of 'Summertime', then a piece featuring the bottom end, the tubas, with the very danceable but gruff toned 'Quiet Number'.

Conductor Frank, with arms flying, bum swishing and body curling movements, delighted in putting his band through the technically difficult 'Chicago' with its tricky keys and featuring the horn section, producing a riot of delicious sounds when the cornet buffers were out in force and there was much tooting, honking, screeching and screaming. Audience participation was called upon for the singing of 'Somewhere Over the Rainbow' before we prepared for Christmas with the anti-war song 'Stop The Cavalry', 'A Carol Fantasy' combining 'The Holly And The Ivy' with 'The First Noel', and finishing with the charming and outrageous 'Joy To The World'.

The whole evening was a wonderful musical feast, followed by a marvellous spread of food, a second feast, laid on by the hard-working members of the church, which allowed the atmosphere of joy to continue over lots of happy chatter.

The evening raised **£200 for Northumberland Domestic Abuse Services** who support victims of not only physical and sexual abuse in the home setting, but also of the equally dangerous, and often very subtle, coercive and controlling behaviours. **Hexham Brass Band and Haydon Bridge Methodist Church also received £120 each** to help continue their missions of musical entertainment and revealing Christ to each other and the community around us.

Jane Dixon

God, who came and lived among us, born in Bethlehem, we pray for the land of your birth. As Herod slaughtered the innocents of Bethlehem in fear and hatred, so today many children have died again in the land of Your birth. As Rachel wept, so we weep at the loss of innocent lives. Yet even in the darkness, Your light of love shines on in the actions of medics and peacemakers who reach out even while others despair.

We give thanks for the volunteers of the Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in **Israel and Palestine** and pray for their safety amidst settler violence and army intimidation. We pray for those who work for political change to avoid future conflict, that political arrangements may be found to give peace and security to all those who live in the land we call Holy. Amen

John Howard, former mission partner, Israel and Palestine and former EAPPI volunteer. (From Praise & Protest – Methodist Prayer Handbook 2024/2025)



Tynedale
Methodist Circuit

Bellingham and North Tyne MURC
Wark Joint Partnership

Rev Roberta Ritson

Hexham Trinity
Hexham West End
Acomb

Rev Gareth Sherwood

Riding Mill
Corbridge with Slaley JP
Haltwhistle

Wylam
Prudhoe
Stocksfield

Rev Marie Beard

Rev Fiona Calverey

Allen Valley
Haydon Bridge
Fourstones with Warden

Rev Michael Holland

www.tynedalemethcircuit.org

Living Waters is co-ordinated by John Martin & Team for Tynedale Circuit. If you have any comments / suggestions / contributions / ideas / photos for the Spring 2025 edition, please send to: -

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By Monday 17th. February 2025 please

