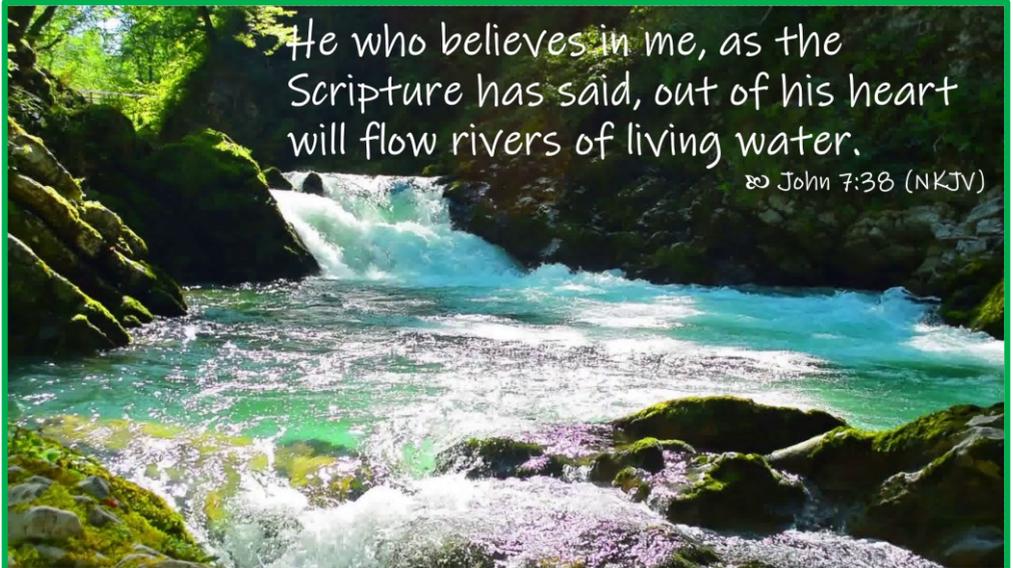


# ***LIVING WATERS***



The water flows faster nearer the source!

***Encouraging    Enabling    Challenging***  
***in the Tynedale Methodist Circuit***

***SPRING 2020***

## Stand Firm! James 5:7-10

How good are you at waiting for things?

We live in a culture where everything is immediate – think about it...microwave ovens; pot noodles; goods on credit; next day delivery, click and collect, speed dating and so on. James reminds us of **how** we should be living as we wait for the Lord's return and his message is both wise and timely!

First of all, James tells us to be patient and stand firm. He uses a picture of a farmer to explain his point. A farmer has to wait for his crops to grow – he cannot hurry the process. However, he does not take the summer off and hope that all goes well in the fields. There is a lot of work for him to do as the growth happens, to ensure a good harvest

We can't make Christ come back any sooner. But while we wait, there is plenty of work to do to advance his kingdom. A couple of years after James writing, Paul was writing the very same thing to the church in Thessalonica. In his first letter, he had written to give them hope of the Lord's return. It was real encouragement to them (or so he thought). But some of the members of the church thought that as Christ would return, they could sit back, put their feet up and do nothing. Hence Paul's second letter where he urges the Thessalonians **not** to sit back, but to stand firm in their faith and work hard for the Kingdom. Exactly as James is saying here

Standing firm means keeping the faith – truth, righteousness, the gospel of peace, the Word of God and the power of the Spirit. And if you know your Scriptures, which is the blueprint we get in Ephesians 6:13 – standing firm in the faith by putting on the armour of God. (Why not read it!)

James in his very practical way, knows how we can struggle with waiting, so he then goes on to give some wise tips about **HOW** we should wait. James envisages a build-up of nervousness, impatience and edginess amongst waiting Christians, so he warns that if things don't quite go to plan as we are waiting and working to advance God's Kingdom that our instinct could be to immediately blame others.

Maybe someone does not quite see the way forward as we do and we can get tetchy with them, or one group want to do things one way and another group a different way and cracks start to emerge. Blaming others is easy. It is much more difficult to own our own share of responsibility.

But James wisely reminds us, that before we judge others, we need to remember that Christ will come and judge us all. He will not let us get away with shifting the blame onto others. It's a sobering reminder to us, but in all that we do – in all our plans and our good intentions, we need to keep seeking Jesus and standing firm in the Word of God. And alongside this, James reminds us that we wait in great hope because we have the promise of Jesus coming in glory He writes, "The Lord's coming is near." And with the return of Jesus is majesty and power and restoration.

At this point, James very briefly throws in that we should remember the prophets, those who have gone before. The Prophets spoke a message that went against the tide. It was not what the world wanted to hear, but the prophets didn't water down the message to sit in line with the world they were prophesying to. They stood firm in the Word, in God's Word - no wavering or making excuses or only giving part of the message; no changing any theology to comply with the world; they told it as it was and were persecuted for it, but they stood firm because they wanted to grow the Kingdom and see lives transformed.

And if we want to do the same, it's no good offering something that is no different from what the world is offering. We need to offer the radical Gospel message. We need to offer the coming Christ in all his glory; not a cosy story, a pick and mix of the bits that we **think** people might want, but the true Gospel message – birth, life and death of Jesus; repentance and faith; the agony of the cross and the joy of resurrection; judgement alongside the promise of eternal life. And in it all, just as the prophets of old, we point away from ourselves and towards Jesus, towards the coming Saviour who is promised to us in all his glory.

So in just four verses, James reminds us how to live as we wait for the second coming of Christ:

- We need to be patient and stand firm
- We need to remember both judgement and great hope
- We need to remember the example of the Prophets

We finish with closing words in our Scriptures "He who testifies to these things says, "Yes, I am coming soon." Amen. And we respond,

**Come, Lord Jesus, come.**

Rev. Alex Dunstan

At the Covenant Service at **Haydon Bridge** on Sunday 5<sup>th</sup>. January, five people were received into membership of the Methodist Church and one person transferred her membership to the chapel from West End. James Bell, a member of the family that are part of the congregation, also confirmed his faith with a testimony as why he chose at this time to be confirmed. The service was led by Deacon Anne and Rev. Tony Buglass.



L – R. Tony Buglass, Jane Dixon, Liz Drawbridge, James Bell, Peter Parker, Christine Irwin, Joanne Southren, Deacon Anne Taylor.

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## FOCUS ON - WARK

As you will probably know by now 2020 in the Methodist Church is The Year of Story and we have been encouraged to tell our stories.

I would like to tell you about Wark MURC move to the Town Hall. This happened quite quickly following on from the Church Council at the end of October. Due to the cost of repair work needed on the building which was estimated around £40k -£50k the decision was taken to stop using the building for worship and move to the Town Hall in the middle of the village.

We arranged a 'closing of the building service' on Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> December 2019. Many people shared their stories of Wark chapel. At the end of the service we took the church bible representing the Word of God and the Christ Light from the advent ring representing the Light of Christ to the door of the chapel to show that the chapel would continue worshipping elsewhere in the village. We also took the lectern given to us by Mickley chapel, the table and a crystal vase.



Two views of Wark Methodist /United Reformed Church that was being left

Although there wasn't going to be much time to plan the services at the Town Hall as we had decided to begin our services there the following week on Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> January 2020, it was felt that we wanted the services to be different and pick up on the year of story and faith sharing.

I went to visit one lady to tell her about the plans we had. As I sat chatting to her, her face lit up and she said "I have a real sense of joy bubbling up inside me, I am really excited about this". I asked her would she be willing to tell her story. She started to tell me something of her story and that when she was younger she had written Christian songs. So, I asked her if she would tell something of her story and sing a song at the first service. She then said "God had given her a passage". She went and got her bible and turned to Isaiah 60 :1-6 and started to read it.

*"v.1 Arise shine for your light has come and the glory of the Lord rises upon you.  
v.5 Then you will look and be radiant, your heart will throb and swell with joy."*

I wasn't preaching at Wark on 5<sup>th</sup> January, Ruth Johnson had been planned. I saw Ruth at an **Ignite** meeting and told her about the chapel closing and that she was down to take the first service at the Town Hall.

We went onto Wark Town Hall after leading the morning worship at Haydon Bridge and got there around 12:30, just as they were about to serve lunch.



Wark Town Hall  
Wark chapel's new home

Cottage pie and vegetables and three different deserts. Sixteen of us sat down for lunch. The hall looked lovely it was warm, and the sense of joy and fellowship we met with was tangible. There were three blue screens at the front, the table and lectern we'd brought from the chapel with a vase of pink lilies. The church bible was on the table with two blue ribbons hanging from it, the Christ light from the advent ring, the blue lectern fold and the padded chairs were also blue, everything matched.



The lady I had spoken with had told her story and sang a song. She excitedly told me the preacher spoke on the same passage Isaiah 60: 1-6. I had come into a place of God.

Wark meets on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of the month in the Town hall at Wark. They share their worship with the Anglican Church at least twice a quarter and have been doing The Bible course together. They are trying out different styles of services in their new location.

Anne Taylor

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**A story of memories of Wark Methodist/United Reformed Church shared at the last service held at the chapel itself.**

A Presbyterian chapel was built at the North side of Wark in 1848 with a day school for Presbyterian children. It was later sold and the current church and a manse were built and opened on May 27th. 1875. The manse and some of the grounds were sold as a private house some years ago. My brothers and I were all christened in the church, as was our mother and where she was married. Her funeral was held there last year at the age 102.

We went to Sunday School in the school room at the manse. In June the church held a garden fete in the grounds; a cake stall, garden produce, a work stall of aprons, knitted socks, tea cosies etc. The ladies made these in the winter months on a Monday night in the school room. Games were played, clock golf, pony rides were all fun. But the best part were the afternoon teas held in a small marquee on the lawn; ham sandwiches, egg buns, scones, cream cakes – everyone thought they were fabulous.

Elizabeth Armstrong, Bellingham.



## GUESS THE STORY

This story by the Open the Book Storytellers at Bellingham First School may seem rather obvious with a big fish. But where did Jonah board the boat and where was it going before being beset by the storm?

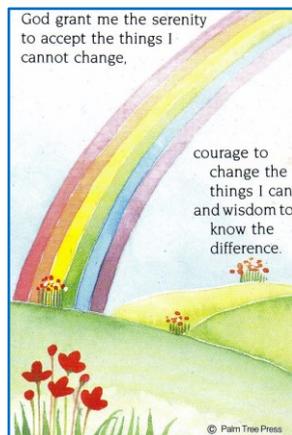
FOR EASTER  
**Vision**  
 A RELAXED INFORMAL  
 EVENING OF WORSHIP

LIVE MUSIC  
 & REFRESHMENTS.

HEXHAM WEST END CHURCH HALL  
 SATURDAY 18TH APRIL 2020  
 7.00PM - 8.15PM.  
 DOORS OPEN 6.30PM.

EVERYONE WELCOME

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The next **Now is the Time** event at the Hexham Mart  
 Saturday May 16<sup>th</sup>. 7.30 pm in the Tynedale Function Suite  
 Guest Speaker – Bert Boonstra, Gate Church, Prudhoe



Best Sunday for Ages  
31st May 2020

'Best Sunday for Ages' (previously Methodist Homes Sunday) this year falls on the same day as Pentecost, the day we celebrate as the birth of the church – truly a 'new beginning' and so an appropriate day to think about Methodist Homes.

It is all too easy to think of those who enter into the care of a Methodist Home or move into one of their retirement flats as people perhaps starting a final chapter but it is equally a 'new beginning' for such as they settle into a caring environment without the responsibilities of home ownership and are able to enjoy the company of many like-minded people.

Recently Pilgrims Court in Jesmond (the MHA retirement flats) held a successful Open Day so that potential residents and their families could see the range of facilities available at this supported living development, including the residents' lounge, the Guest Room and The Bistro where meals can be served, as well as one of the flats where people can live as independently as they wish.

The pictures below show some of the facilities available at Pilgrims Court.



External View



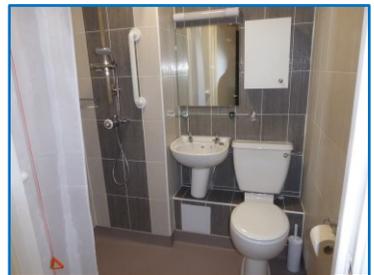
The rear garden



A light, airy sitting room



Their own kitchen



A residents private bathroom



The Resident's Lounge



The Bistro

Whilst the majority of the flats are for single occupancy, a number are larger as the home for a couple. The building is staffed 24 hours a day but residents live as independently as they wish. Regular social events and some outings take place and, as with each MHA development, there is a chaplain. Those who need a higher level of support would look to Harwood Court, the MHA care home at Cramlington. If you would like to know more about life at Pilgrim's Court then contact the Manager on 0191 2817800.

All Methodist churches are asked to observe Sunday 31<sup>st</sup>. May (or a one nearby if you have somethings else that day), giving thanks for the work of residential care homes, sheltered accommodation and 'Live at Home' support schemes run by Methodist Homes (MHA) including work such as chaplaincy and music therapy for people with dementia.

I am grateful for the contributions made by some churches each year towards the work of MHA. Once again, gift envelopes will be sent to your church before 31<sup>st</sup> May for you to make your individual contributions unless your church has arranged to contribute in other ways. Remember to fill in the space on the back of the envelope if you pay tax, so that Gift Aid can be claimed on your contribution – this is at no additional cost to yourself.

If you are a preacher planned on that day, or a Worship Leader assisting in a service, you will find useful material from MHA's website at [www.mha.org.uk/mhs](http://www.mha.org.uk/mhs). Whatever you include in your service, please remember the work of MHA, its staff and the residents who enjoy a high standard of care in a Christian atmosphere.

Many thanks in anticipation of your support.

Brian Elstob

Methodist Homes contact for the Tynedale Circuit



## **PROFILE Alan Wright, Senior Circuit Steward**

When I first became a Circuit Steward I wrote that I hoped to see the churches in the circuit come to understand that they are the Circuit and that the Circuit is their servant. I believed that the answer to so many of our current difficulties is growth through mission and outreach and that we all need to be trained and inspired to share the Good News of Jesus.

I've now been a Circuit Steward for five years and for the last few months I have been Senior Steward. Stewards are responsible for inviting appropriate ministers to work in the circuit, to oversee the finances and to support local churches as they face the challenges of being the church today, always remembering that the prime role for Methodist Churches is the worship of God.

Tynedale Circuit covers a large rural area and has many small chapels. In the last five years we have seen some chapels close, which is always sad, and we have seen others successfully combining with other local fellowships and continuing to flourish. Others have faced the loss of buildings, because of significant maintenance costs, but continue to offer opportunities for worship locally. Innovative alternatives to closure are always being sought. The Circuit Leadership Team has decided that money raised from the sale of buildings should mostly be used to support Mission and welcomes all applications for support.

The Circuit, and the Circuit Leadership team, is committed to Mission. However the truth is that none of us is getting any younger and energy levels wane. Prayer is possible, however old we are, and is essential for all the activities of our churches. The ministers in the circuit have seen changes in personnel. They have always been a great team to work with, being supportive of each other and the circuit in general. They bring different talents and skills to the work and it is a privilege to work alongside them. One of the roles of the steward is to look after the manses, which can be a challenge, as they are often old buildings and may need significant maintenance. It is an important part of our pastoral role for Ministers and their families, as they deserve pleasant homes to live in.

The last five years have been challenging with many difficult decisions. The serious times have been tempered by camaraderie and much laughter. Being a Circuit Steward is an essential role that can be extremely rewarding in spite of the difficulties. We always need more people to offer their time and skills for the task.

# **SUMMARY OF DECEMBER CIRCUIT MEETING**

## **5<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER 7.30 PM FOURSTONES WITH WARDEN**

Two new members were welcomed amongst us

Mrs Jackie Davison (New Treasurer for West End) and Mrs Jacqui Cameron (Circuit Steward on Trial)

Letters of greeting were requested and later sent as follows

- To the family of the late Patrick Eavis (retired local preacher)
- To Margaret Glendenning from Prudhoe after her recent fall
- To Rev. Steve Wilkinson (Anglican Vicar in the North Tyne), following the recent diagnosis of a serious illness.

### **Marriage and Relationships**

The Superintendent reminded everyone that within the series of meetings, one in each Circuit, the local one will take place at Hexham Trinity on 4<sup>th</sup> February 7.30 pm

### **Finance Paper**

Circuit Treasurer David Kilner thanked everyone for prompt payments received and talked us through the income and expenditure within the Circuit as per the finance sheet.

### **Wark MURC**

Due to expensive repairs needed to the present URC building which has very limited facilities, it has been decided to move the services and re-launch in the Town Hall, this will lead to a wider variety of worship and the possibility of also including a meal.

### **Richard Porter's Accreditation Service**

We were reminded that the above Circuit Service will take place on Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> February 6pm at Stocksfield Methodist Church.

### **GDPR Data Protection**

Superintendent Paul Dunstan told the meeting that we are advised to use separate e mail addresses for security purposes. Those spouses/partners using the same are advised to make these changes as soon as possible. We are also advised to make sure that all mobile phones are password or pin no. protected.

Date of next meeting **Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> March 7.30 pm**

Fourstones with Warden Methodist Church

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**GUESS THE STORY** Despite God telling Jonah to go to Ninevah, he tried to escape by getting on a boat at Joppa that was sailing to Tarshish. Jonah 1: 1-3



**Tynedale**  
Methodist Circuit

Bellingham, Barrasford,  
Falstone/Kielder, Wark  
Fourstones with Warden,  
Haydon Bridge  
*Deacon Anne Taylor*

Hexham Trinity  
with Slaley  
*Rev. David Goodall*

Hexham West End  
Acomb  
*Rev. Paul Dunstan*

Riding Mill, Corbridge  
*Rev. Marie Beard*

Allendale, Catton  
Haltwhistle  
Keenley, Sparty Lea  
*Rev. Alex Dunstan*

Wylam  
Prudhoe  
Stocksfield  
*Rev. Jenny Porterpryde*

[www.tynedalemethcircuit.org](http://www.tynedalemethcircuit.org)

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

**John Martin**

email: [john\\_martin\\_sb@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:john_martin_sb@yahoo.co.uk)

'phone 01434 674425

**By Monday 11<sup>th</sup>. May 2020 please.**