

LIVING WATERS



As the deer longs for streams of water, so I long for you, O God.

Psalm 42: 1

Encouraging Enabling Challenging
in the Tynedale Methodist Circuit

AUTUMN 2020

Dear Friends,

As we begin our new Church year, a year which starts following a year like nothing we have experienced before, I want to share a story with you which started a long time ago but has been part of my lockdown experience.

In spring 1995 I was 13 and a pupil at Trinity High School, a Church of England school, in Manchester. I was taught Religious Education (RE) by Mrs, now Rev., Jones. I have always remembered the topic we did on Martin Luther King Jr and his role in the fight against racism in America. As part of that topic we learnt about Rosa Parks, a black woman who refused to relinquish her seat in the 'coloured' section of the bus for a white person. As a teenager who travelled on the bus each day to school I remember being horrified that I would have had more right to a seat on the bus because I was white than 50% of my class who were black or brown, some born in Britain as I was, and some born across the globe.

During lockdown I saw a video on Twitter which was posted by Rev. Raj Bharat Patta, a minister in the United Stockport Methodist Circuit. The video was of his son who is now a student at Trinity High School. In the video his son speaks about Rosa Parks, about how she stood up to racism and remained in her seat. Raj's son speaks about how she inspires him to stand up for racism, to be bold in his acts for justice. It is an amazing video from a young person and one which brought tears to my eyes.

Whilst I was so moved by the video it also made me very angry. Let me be clear, Raj's son did not make me angry, neither did the amazing words he spoke. What made me angry was that 25 years later the same topics about racism still need to be taught. That, even though I and my peers were horrified 25 years ago at the evil of racism, so little has changed and racism is still so prevalent in our society. It makes me angry that those from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) communities are still subjected to racism. It made me angry that we find racism across society sadly including here in Tynedale and in the churches of Tynedale.

Throughout the last few months as we have grappled with COVID-19 we have also witnessed the tragic death of George Floyd and others and been reminded that without a doubt **#blacklivesmatter**. We have been reminded that black lives are an equal part of God's Kingdom but sadly so often this is not the reality that those from BAME communities experience.

The fact that those who are members of the BAME community who contribute so much richness to our diverse world do not experience the same welcome and equality in the community and in the church is why the **#blacklivesmatter** campaign is so important.

A few weeks ago I preached on Mark 10:13-15, the story of Jesus saying to the disciples *'Let the children come to me; do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of God'*. In this passage the disciples want to stop the, probably noisy, children coming to Jesus. They believe Jesus is too busy or important for the children. This left Jesus indignant and leads him to say *'Let the children come to me'*.

Sadly, over the last few months there have been a number of voices saying that we should be campaigning that **#alllivesmatter** rather than **#blacklivesmatter**. This is deeply sad as whilst it is right that all lives matter it does not acknowledge the racism, abuse and pain that those in the BAME community have suffered and continue to suffer. Saying that **#blacklivesmatter** is not denying that all lives matter but highlights the racism and experiences of the those in the BAME communities where sadly people are made to feel that their lives do not matter.

To say **#alllivesmatter** would be like Jesus saying in Mark 10 *'let everyone come to me'*. Of course we want everyone to come to Jesus, but in that moment it is the children who have been turned away from Jesus, it is the children who had been denied access to Jesus and that action of the children being turned away is rightly acknowledged by Jesus when he says *'let the children come to me'*.

In these times when so many members of the BAME community continue to be subjected to racism, something which horrified me 25 years ago, and still does today, it is absolutely right that we say **#blacklivesmatter**. That in what we say we acknowledge the racism, abuse and pain which has been caused. As we acknowledge this reality we must commit to do all that we can to rid our communities and churches of racism.

In 1999 the Methodist Conference passed a resolution that clearly states *'racism is a denial of the Gospel'*. It made that commitment and stands by it today, reinforcing it at this year's Conference in light of the **#blacklivesmatter** campaign. This year the conference encouraged all Methodists *'to engage properly in their own contexts, without fear or favour to confront and challenge all racism and other forms of unjust discrimination that the day may come when our actions, as well as our words, show that "racism is a denial of the gospel."*

It is a significant call but one which I feel every one of us needs to take part in, and my writing of this article is one small part of me doing that.

It is so sad that racism is still present in our world today. The fact that 25 years on the topic of Martin Luther King Jr and Rosa Parks still needs to be part of the RE syllabus rather than the History syllabus shows that.

As we begin this new Methodist year, I hope that as the people called Methodists here in Tynedale the racism which is present in our local communities and churches and across the world will make us all angry, indignant, that it will make us all want to learn, to act, to challenge so that the racism which is present may be eradicated.

I pray that as a community of God's people by being more and more aware of the racism and prejudice around us and within us we will be encouraged to play our part in reducing all forms of racism. By doing this I believe we will see God's kingdom flourish into the diverse kingdom which God so desires and is bringing into being through movements like **#blacklivesmatter**.

If you would like to be part of how your church responds to racism, please speak to your minister who will be delighted to hear from you.

God Bless, Rev. David Goodall

A hymn chosen as part of the 'Service at Home' for the North Tyne section of chapels for 16th. August by Rev Tony Buglass. It summarises his reflection on the readings chosen. Isa.56:1, 6-8; Matt.15:(10-20)21-28; Rom.11:1-2a 29-32

"Those who know themselves to be God's people often have problems with those who aren't us"; and his intercessions on 'Who is my neighbour'?

In Christ there is no East or West,
In him no South or North
But one great fellowship of love
Throughout the whole wide earth

Join hands then all the human race,
Whate'er your nation be;
All children of the living God
Are surely kin to me.

In him shall true hearts everywhere
Their high communion find;
His service is the golden cord
Close-binding humankind.

In Christ now meet both East and West,
In him meet South and North;
All Christlike souls are one in him
Throughout the whole wide earth.

John Oxenham 1852 – 1941.

(a pseudonym for the poet and author William Arthur Dunkerley)

Acts 8:26-40 Philip and the Eunuch

Do get your Bibles out and have a read of this passage! I have been delving into the book of Acts during this time of Covid and looking at the example of the Early Church and all we can learn from them.

The good news for us is that they weren't perfect! That gives us hope!

The first thing we hear in this passage is that Philip, a follower of Jesus, hears from the Lord – and does as he is told! He goes down the desert road from Jerusalem to Gaza (a distance of about 100 miles), with no idea why, but when he comes across a chariot with an Ethiopian Eunuch sitting in it and reading from the scriptures, he is told to go up to the chariot.

There follows a lovely image of Philip explaining the Scriptures to the Ethiopian and going on to tell him the Good News of Jesus Christ. Philip was desperate for this man from Ethiopia to know the Good News about Jesus. It was the most important thing for Philip to do at that time and you can sense his urgency.

Have a look at the account in detail and ask yourself the question, what does it mean for me and what does it mean for my fellowship?

Here are some thoughts:

Firstly, we are reminded by Luke (who wrote Acts), that the Good News of Jesus is for EVERYONE regardless of gender, race or status

As a church and as individuals, we should welcome all people and learn to come alongside and relate to those we find different, difficult or a bit scary

- We can do this, like Philip did, if we do it in the strength of the Lord, in obedience to Him, and with the help of the Holy Spirit
- If you think you are a bit afraid of having a conversation with someone you don't know, send up a quick prayer and know that God will empower you, just as he empowered Philip
- Secondly, look carefully. NONE of this happens in a Church or Chapel building. Philip went out to others.
- And thirdly, as Christians, as followers of Jesus, we need to be bold as we share to Good News of Jesus and we need to be as desperate to do this as Philip was.
- Sense his urgency! We need to feel the same urgency to share the good news.

- It's not something to keep to ourselves and unless we have the courage to share our faith, others will not know about Jesus and will miss out.
- Just go back to vv 30-31 in the passage when the Ethiopian is reading the scroll, and Philip asks, **"Do you understand what you are reading?"** And he replies, **"How can I unless someone explains it to me?"**
- How can people know about the good News of Jesus Christ, unless **we** explain it to them?
- That is our purpose. That is what we are here for.
- Be bold – we have much to share!

Rev Alex Dunstan



The Newcastle and Darlington Districts Learning Network usually provide the 'Great 50 Day' series between Easter and Pentecost. This year rather than booklet form due to the Coronavirus they did an online version. By popular request they extended this to a series of Summer Reflections starting on July 20th.



One needed to register to receive these daily reflections by volunteer contributors. There is still time. Contact Tricia Mitchell mitchellt@methodistchurch.org.uk

Here is one dated 12th. August by one of the circuit's Local Preachers.

A New Normal

Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever. **Hebrews 13:8**

So much has changed, and continues to change, every day. Is our world smaller because of lockdown? Or has it become enlarged? People I know have developed new skills, especially with technology, and revived old ones. Lockdown is also seen as an opportunity to 'declutter'. In February we had new roof insulation installed, so needed to empty our attic and lockdown seemed a good opportunity to sort everything before returning stuff upstairs again. We made a start, but so many memories were re-kindled, and then the garden gained priority with lovely spring weather. Perhaps lockdown will be long over by the time we have sorted, saved or discarded.

Our lifestyles – already different – will be greatly changed when we get past these difficult times, with a substantially altered ‘normal’. The future looks uncertain; words like ‘unprecedented’ have gained dislike through overuse. When will ‘normal service be resumed’? The word ‘normal’ reminds me of a book from 50 over years ago. ‘The Normal Christian Life’ by Watchman Nee*; an exposition of the first eight chapters of Paul’s Epistle to the Romans. Is the Lord telling me to return to this book from the past, and study it for my future ‘normal’? At first glance this paperback book looks fragilely old, with archaic language, so I’ll use a modern commentary on Romans.

Is lockdown an opportunity to declutter our lives spiritually? So many outward changes out of our control – but the Lord does not change; is always faithful and true to His Word. We cannot avoid change and turmoil, but when we fix our thoughts on God and His Word, we can know His peace, becoming steady and stable in His unchanging love.

I, The Lord, do not change. (Malachi 3: 6a)

Prayer

Dear Heavenly Father, you are our rock, our refuge and stronghold in times of trouble. Fill us with confidence, hope and courage, so we bless others as you bless us in your wonderful life, in Jesus name. Amen

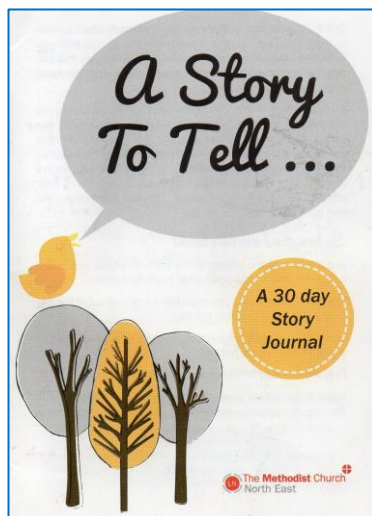
Sandra Martin, Local Preacher, Tynedale Circuit

*Chinese evangelist and bible teacher who was martyred for his faith.

The Methodist theme for 2019/2020 was the ‘Year of Testimony’, when people were encouraged to tell their faith stories.

The Methodist North East’s Learning Network provided a resource for members to reflect on their day and see where God might have been at work that could be shared with others. Part of the daily prayer was “Open my eyes and ears to notice You in all I do today”

It would be wonderful to have stories to share in future editions of Living Waters as a result of this initiative. Especially if your 30 days coincided with the Coronavirus pandemic.



The fourth IGNITE course to be held in the Tyne Valley started in September 2019 at Hexham West End Methodist Church. Participants on this weekly programme came not only from Tynedale but also Newcastle West, North Shields & Whitley Bay and Bede Circuits. Regular speakers from the Pioneer network travelled from Scotland, Southampton and other parts of the country as well more locally. In March, with 'lockdown' the course could not continue as 'normal'.

After a break of a few weeks, and a practice Zoom meeting, the course continued in virtual format to its completion in July – including a virtual mission during what would have been the half term break! How could we mission 'virtually?'

The 2019 IGNITE mission was held in Haydon Bridge, the village where the course was being run. This year a village was chosen where the chapel needed support. Kibblesworth is part of the Bede Circuit and within the district of Gateshead: a typical historical Durham mining village. 'Mission Week' had different people lead a Zoom Prayer meeting each day. Included was the chapel's children worker who was preparing outreach over the summer for families of the village, as well as other members of the chapel. Photographs of the key locations within the village became a focus for prayer. A map and a summary of the history of the village was circulated online, its mining legacy, its community and rich Methodist heritage. The only visual Christian presence in the village. Kibblesworth is known as the 'Pearl on the Hillside'. There was even a separate virtual healing prayer meeting for chapel members.

As soon as it became possible to travel, some IGNITEES agreed to meet at the chapel to undertake a prayer walk around the village. Its southern border is the track-bed of the Bowes (Incline) Railway that took coal from the pithead to the Jarrow Staithes. It was even agreed as part of continued missioning, that support would be given clearing the ground around the chapel.....even if entry to the chapel itself was still restricted. An exercise that attracted conversations with passing villagers.

A recent report from a delighted children's worker says that the summer activities couldn't have gone better. The online scavenger hunt has now ended. The families that took part really enjoyed it and they received well-earned prizes. As a result, a few more families have joined the Messy Church Facebook page and look forward to undertaking 'pop up' activities in the chapel grounds in September, starting with planting a community garden. They are also on the allotment waiting list so they have space to create a children's garden. Church does not have to be inside.

This will be a great encouragement to them as they have had no families as regular members for some time. An IGNITED faith in practice.

Millie Robinson

COPING WITH COVID

Like many of you, we at **Prudhoe** have tried to make the best of this unusual situation. At the start of lock-down we felt the need for some signs of hope for our community and did this by placing positive posters on our notice boards and also by placing an Easter Cross of flowers on the outside of the building.

Our garden at the side of the church is a public walk way and has slates with Christian messages and Bible verses on them placed among the flowers and as people walk through here, they often stop and read them and people told us that had been really helpful to them during lock-down. To celebrate VE Day the front of the church was decorated with flags and bunting.

We, like many others, have been making use of technology and are fortunate enough to have some clever people to set up Zoom and Telephone services on a Sunday, as well as paper copies for those unable to use these forms of worship. These services have been extremely uplifting and have been a good way of keeping in touch with each other with different people reading, praying and leading. These services also enabled us to reach the community via YouTube etc. and we have been blessed that people from different areas share with us on the telephone services.

We also use zoom for our Friday Ecumenical prayer time, which again has been very encouraging.

Messy Church has also been reinvented along with 6 weeks of Holiday Club using crafts, games and challenges for the children.

‘Open the Book’ went out to our 4 primary schools via face book right up until the end of the summer term. Well done with the technology of this, they did an excellent job in very trying circumstances.

On a Wednesday morning we join together via telephone for PVC (Prudhoe Virtual Café) which replaced our fortnightly coffee morning. This is a get together for fun and fellowship with quizzes, stories general chat and prayers. We have even managed to get a lady from Wooler to join us for this.

From August we will be having a weekly Bible Study via zoom.

All these new ways of doing church showed us that we can do new things when we need to and as we move towards opening our buildings it is our prayer that we may continue to be outward looking especially through technology as this is the best tool along with ourselves to take the Gospel to those in our communities.

We pray that God will continue to Bless His work here at Prudhoe in future days.



Hexham Holiday Club 2020 had to change considerably this year. It was whilst doing a promotional slot in one of the churches that I realised there was the very real possibility that Holiday Club would not happen this year.

As I shared in one of the daily films, I have never heard God speak in an audible voice or had a vision or dream but I do get a definite 'poke' or 'nag' in the back of my mind. This one was that HHC would happen - just differently.

So started the journey to catch up with God's plan! Scripture Union, our supporting organisation, asked us to recruit team and prepare as normal but at the end of April cancelled ALL summer missions and holidays. They did say that we should contact them if we would like to still 'do' something. We said we did.

At the steering Committee meeting, after the SU announcement, we discussed what we could do. Our overarching concern was that whatever we did had to be done really well - passionately and professionally as it is for God and we must give our best. We focussed on doing a few things well, cutting out anything that would add to our difficulties or could not meet the standard we would hope for.

Scripture Union have been a brilliant asset, supporting, finding out, equipping, enabling and training.

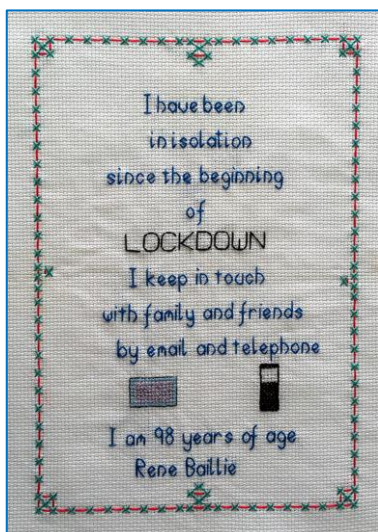
So we settled on a taste of holiday club in a daily short film – approx. 20 minutes long, containing all the main elements of our usual Holiday Clubs; a Bible story, testimony, prayer, songs, puppets and a daily challenge, enhanced with 'do at home' packs full of activities and crafts that linked to the theme for each day.

We also felt it important to bless the whole families of the children that would be involved, so created parent gift packs containing pamper treats and coffee and cake vouchers (all locally sourced) to show God's love and concern for the parents as well as their children.

We had 118 families registered with 214 children. We distributed nearly 850 activity/craft packs and 150 parent care packs. God's word was heard in homes and gardens across our town (and much further afield). Parents shared their children's creations on our Facebook page and by messaging us. A small team got to be at the Bandstand each day of HHC to distribute the packs and gift boxes and very briefly interact with the children and their families. It was a tremendously positive experience for us all. Praise God that it happened and continue to ask His blessing on each of those families as they continue to enjoy the activities, crafts and films.



Hexham Holiday Club Team involved in distribution and videos. Niky Dodds



The Embroiderers' Guild asked members in the North East to do a piece of embroidery depicting what they have been doing during Lockdown. These will be joined to form a large tapestry and hung in the Bede Museum, Jarrow Hall, South Tyneside as a historical piece of work.

Rene Baillie of Humshaugh and long-standing member of Haydon Bridge chapel, certainly one of our older members, managed to complete this despite her limited eyesight.

PROFILE

Ken Williamson, Community Worker Haltwhistle



I moved to Haltwhistle two years ago to take up the post of Community Worker, previously having worked in the East Durham and Chester le Street Circuits from 2014-17.

My first impression of Haltwhistle was that it was a town with a real heart, and nothing in the two years since has given me cause to change that opinion. The community are amongst the most welcoming and straight-talking you could ever wish to meet, and no one could walk along the main street without someone saying hello and making you feel at home.

In the period before the COVID 19 lockdown, we had been making significant progress in engaging with the broader community of Haltwhistle. In particular we had increased our involvement with the local school. Building from a successful Open the Book team, we began to provide school assemblies, which had grown to two per week just before lockdown. The link with the school offers a valuable opportunity to share the gospel. The connection has increased the numbers who attend the Churches Together Messy Church held each month in our buildings.

For the past two years, we have hosted a community carol service, which has involved many groups and organisations from the community. Amongst other events, we have had our choir carol singing in one of the local pubs and a highly successful Christmas tree festival in 2019. During this period, it has been a great joy to serve God in this community.

Of course, in mid-March, everything changed rapidly, and with that change, we had to change how we did things radically. It was necessary to begin to find methods of reaching people online quickly. Fortunately, we already had developed a website and a social media presence. We immediately set about recording a weekly worship service, providing a daily thought for the day and online bible studies. Eventually, we even managed to provide a Messy Church of a different kind online, with daily craft ideas posted by a member of the team. The lockdown brought significant challenges, not least, how to become a video producer and editor in short order. The upside was we began to reach a whole new group of people, and our challenge going forward is how to continue to reach these people in future.

The desire and challenge for us must be to make new disciples, to introduce people to Jesus and to see lives impacted and changed by him. We earnestly pray that sooner rather than later, we will be able to meet people on a personal basis and to continue to grow God's kingdom in this part of his world.



The Spotted Fly Catchers

Living in such beautiful countryside as Tynedale, lockdown ensured we noticed more of the everyday changes in our natural environs. For two previous Springtime's, a nest in our honeysuckle bush has been home to a bird family.

In May this year the little mother bird appeared again, zooming in to her 'old' nest. Within a week or so, 4 little eggs appeared, following in June by the baby birds.

An Electricity Board chap arrived one day to deliver a letter informing us of a pending electric supply shutdown. "Oh my goodness" he declared, "this is so rare, I must get my camera". He returned from his van with a huge wide lens camera to snap the nest and the bird family members. It turned out the family were 'Spotted Flycatchers'.

Smaller than sparrows these tiny birds migrate to Africa for Winter and usually return for up to 4 years to the same area and often same nest site each Spring. Mum and Dad both feed their fledglings, perching on fences and low branches to catch flying insects. While the pandemic raged, it was a wonderful treat to watch these garden visitors, providing a distraction from our national woes. Normal activity was continuing as usual for these birds, their natural rhythms of life unimpeded.

The COVID 19 Lockdown has tested our faith in many ways. Watching our feathered friends made me think of this favourite hymn,
'All things bright and beautiful'.

'He gave us eyes to see them and lips that we might tell
how great is God Almighty who has made all things well.

Christine Irwin, Haydon Bridge.

Do all the good you can, by all the means you can, in all the ways you can, in all the places you can, at all the times you can, to all the people you can, as long as ever you can. John Wesley

FREEDOM

There must be many around the circuit feeling like me at the moment – set free! After two months of lockdown we are free to do what everybody else can do: run our errands, visit friends, go out for the whole day instead of a just short walk; even go on a holiday!

Looking back over those long weeks however, we have so very much to be thankful for. Beauty all around us in Tynedale and for many of us the blessing of a garden for outdoor space and, most especially, the kindness and thoughtfulness of neighbours. I have continually thanked the Lord for my neighbours and friends who have so generously run errands and made sure my needs were supplied. But not only friends, but faceless supermarkets providing priority delivery slots for those who were shielding. How amazingly generous was that.

This last week I have ventured into the village to explore my newfound freedom with long-awaited visits to dentist and podiatrist. And especially a haircut. Free to catch up! Shopping however has been most disconcerting; nobody uses money anymore! Its only use seems to be for car parking. One-way traffic, social distancing, queues to enter shops, though some people seem to ignore the mandatory facemask. Freedom has many limits and surprises in today's world.

Can we remember those whose health still need for them to shield, as protections that were in place have now been removed, making them feel more vulnerable.

We worship a Lord “whose service is perfect freedom”. God does not lay down any rules about how we come to Him. Just “come”. The God of Isaiah says, “Come all you who are thirsty come to the water without money or without price.” And Jesus says, “Come to me all who are heavy laden and I will give you rest”. God's love and generosity knows no limits: only our individual capacity to receive this costly forgiveness and unbounded love. Then our Lord sends us out to share this wonder.

Brenda Mearns, Corbridge

How is your church worshipping at this time? - asks **Open Doors**, an organisation that supports Christians around the world who suffer from persecution, prejudice or severe restrictions on practicing their faith. Are you watching services on YouTube? Sharing a house group over Zoom? Relying on the 'phone to keep in touch? Being 'church at home' may be a challenge for us. But it also gives us a glimpse of what life is like for the secret church. Because, for millions of Christians across the world, this is their 'normal'. But however they meet - they still find Jesus there.

HARVEST HANDS PRAYERS

*Lord of the Harvest, we pray for more Harvest Hands.
We come to you knowing that the Harvest is plentiful but the workers are few.
We pray for willing Harvest Hands to join in your work in our communities so
that all might come to know they are loved and cherished.
As we commit ourselves to pray, renew our hope and restore our passion so that
we might welcome your guidance and influence.
May your kingdom come and your will be done, Amen.*



Why not join the Harvest Hand Prayers Facebook Group?
For more information contact elaine@lindridge.org.uk

This initiative is part of the Newcastle upon Tyne Methodist District.

Wherever you are on Monday morning at ten o'clock a new reflection or song of worship is shared on this Facebook site. This then is open to online prayers submitted by those who are registered. An opportunity to share prayer with others across the district for outreach or evangelical events especially.



Some written responses by children of a Caithness school from a test of what they knew about the bible.

- 'In the first book of the bible, Guinness, god got tired of creating the world so he took the sabbath off.'
- 'Adam and Eve were created from an apple tree. Noah's wife was Joan of Ark. Noah built an ark and the animals came on in pairs'
- 'Lots wife was a pillar of salt during the day, but a ball of fire during the night'
- 'Samson slayed the philistines with the axe of the apostles'
- 'Moses died before he ever reached canada then joshua led the hebrews in the battle of geritol'
- 'The seventh commandment is thou shalt not admit adultery'
- 'The greatest miricle in the bible is when Joshua told his son to stand still and he obeyed him'
- 'Jesus was born because Mary had an immaculate contraption'
- 'The people who followed the lord were called the 12 decibels'



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

Living Waters is a magazine that seeks to inform and encourage people who live across the Tynedale Methodist Circuit. If you have any comments / suggestions / contributions / ideas / photos for the Winter edition, please send to: -

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By Monday 16th. November 2020