

LIVING WATERS



Encouraging Enabling Challenging
in the Tynedale Methodist Circuit

SPRING 2025

Greetings to you all!

Over the past eighteen months I have been getting to know people in North Tyne, working as ecumenical minister at Bellingham and Wark. I also serve Horsley Church in Tynedale.

My theme is 'Endings and beginnings', exploring passages from Luke 5 and John 21. Let's begin with the gospel of Luke.

Simon Peter is challenged. Jesus is telling him to leave the shallows and to cast his nets into deeper, unknown waters. Jesus is about to call the fishermen beside Lake Galilee, asking them to leave their familiar way of life as they set out as his disciples.

Right now, as you read, it may be close to Easter, the season when the last chapter of John's gospel feels current. We take in Jesus' final challenge for Simon Peter and his friends.

There are many similarities in the two readings, one set at the beginning of Jesus' ministry, the other after his resurrection. Although they appear in different gospels, each narrative shows Jesus pushing Simon Peter way beyond existing comfort zones.

First of all, Jesus requisitions the family fishing boat as a floating platform, a place from where crowds are addressed. I wonder what Simon Peter made of that? Then, at night fall, Jesus suggests a fishing trip. *Overtime?!!* What an ask, after spending the previous night out on the water, followed by a strange, colourful day in the hot sun. Yet Jesus insists.

After the crucifixion and Jesus' post-resurrection appearances, the disciples have come north to Galilee. They seem to be picking up their lives of three years ago, the time before leaving home. The familiarity of fishing is a comfort. They might stay out from dusk to daybreak.

In Luke we read of a beginning and, in John, of an ending. Each fishing expedition features an unpromising start, yet, later, the nets are close to bursting point. We might wonder: *with God are there beginnings and endings, or, just beginnings and new beginnings?*

As a slightly younger man Simon Peter is shocked by Jesus' power. His own shabbiness feels overwhelming. Three years on, he carries crippling shame after denying Jesus, an affliction that Jesus addresses and heals. The name 'Simon' is dropped. Petrus is to be the rock on which Jesus founds his new movement, the church.

What comfort might we take from these readings, at a time of new beginnings for our circuit? I ask this question gently, all too aware that unwelcome change brings pain.

We are not alone when all feels futile. God sees good works accomplished over decades. The love we put in is like dormant seed, unseen, yet not wasted. God takes not just our past labours but also our worst mistakes, enabling us to move on. Even as we relinquish all that's familiar, we will be provided for, challenged and enabled by the Holy Spirit, often in ways we could hardly have dreamed of.

I offer a seventeen syllable (Haiku) prayer* to close these reflections. It is a form I often play with in my daily journal.

Jesus, this feels unreal.

**Take despondency, begin
a new thing for us. Amen**

**A haiku is a three line form originating in Japan. To write your own poem, the first and last lines requires five syllables. The middle line has seven syllables. Such short pieces of writing usually come quickly. I enjoy the discipline of being authentic and expressive, albeit in a tiny space.*



Blessings, Roberta

It's possible to capture the essence of the season, or perhaps an encounter.
Readers could be invited to try this themselves and submit more of them:

FROM HAYDON BRIDGE



Haydon Bridge Annual Toy Collection for Hexham Salvation Army

At the beginning of December, we had our annual Toy Collection for the Salvation Army at Hexham to distribute items to local needy homes before Christmas.

Everyone was as usual very kind, toys/gifts were donated not just from Church members but from others in our village - some of whom never come into our building. New Envoy Jason Wearmouth led a wonderfully uplifting service - you will note in the picture, his son moving around beside the stained glass window! It was great to have Jason, his wife and their two little ones amongst us. We thank God for the work of the Salvation Army not just at Christmas but all year through.

Kathleen Armstrong



Christmas Eve Crib Service

Christmas Eve Crib Service over 70 villagers buzzing with excitement flocked in to Haydon Bridge Methodist Church on Christmas Eve for a retelling of the Christmas Story. Rev Michael Holland gently encouraged participation from young children in their chosen nativity costumes to repeat the words of angels, shepherds and kings to an amazed audience appreciative of the local talent. Carols were sung, there was joy at the birth of Jesus and the £121.10 collection has been donated to the West Northumberland Food Bank. Special thanks to Gerry Green, Peter Davey and the 'crib service team' who made the whole event possible, special, and so thoroughly enjoyable.

Jane Dixon



A Mission to connect people together to show God's love and power in their community.

We help churches in a local area to connect together in worship and prayer, and to serve the community in collaborative projects

A national charity affiliated to Churches in Communities International, a member of the Free Churches Group and Churches Together in England. Also affiliated to the Evangelical Alliance

The Welcome network have a number of collaborative projects in the North East where praying groups in the region who have a heart for revival are connected to meet together to seek revival in their communities. One ongoing project is the **Pilgrim Prayer Journey 2025 for the North Tyne Valley**. This involves joining other Christians to pray and bless in five different places over the year with thanksgiving and for all that God has done, and is doing here now.

A meeting in January met at Deadwater, source of the North Tyne with prayer followed by prayers at Falstone Village Hall.

Also:

• **Saturday 8th.March.** Meet at St.Oswald's Catholic Church and hall in Bellingham 2pm.

• **Saturday 10th . May.** Meet at St. Mungo's Church, Simonburn, and village hall. 2pm.

There will be notices for two more meetings in the Autumn Edition - at Humshaugh and at Acomb Methodist Chapel. Each meeting expected to be about 2 hours.

Christians who have a heart for revival, join us when you can for all, or some of these dates and venues

For more information: Bob & Mary Bain 07988 564299 bobbain@hotmail.co.uk
www.welcomenetwork.org

WHITE RIBBON SERVICE – A MOVING ACT OF WORSHIP



White Ribbon Day is observed annually on 25 November.

It is a time to raise awareness about preventing gender-based violence and encourages active involvement from men and boys. The day marks the start of the global 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence

This is clearly a world-wide issue but it also has a particular resonance for us in Tynedale given the stabbing of teenager Holly Newton in Hexham and the ongoing campaign by her parents to have her classified as a victim of domestic abuse. There are some scary statistics regarding domestic abuse in this country:

The police are called out to a domestic abuse incident every 30 seconds;

1 in every 4 women experience domestic abuse (and this figure is the same for teenage girls)

2 women die each week as a result of domestic abuse

pto

Christians Against Domestic Abuse (CADA) is an organisation seeking to raise awareness of this issue and outlines its aims on its website as follows:

“Domestic abuse is a disease in our society. It’s also disturbingly prevalent in our churches. We, the body of Christ, need to fight back. We can bring this evil into the light, challenge it, destroy it and bring life and freedom to those it harms.”

CADA North East is a group of Christians in the North East of England who are opposing domestic abuse by educating and motivating churches and religious organisations to fight abuse and support victims. They work closely with churches to provide training and safeguarding policy advice.”

As part of CADA’s programme for the 2024 16 Days of Action, Reverend Rosemary New led a special White Ribbon Service at Trinity Church on Saturday 7 December.

On arrival, each member of the congregation was given an orange rose to represent one of the 120 women who had died as a result of domestic abuse in the last 12 months. These were brought forward and laid at the front of the church as the names of all these women were read aloud so that each one was remembered by name – and age, as it is surprising how many are older women.



Rosemary preached very powerfully about Jesus’ interaction with the Samaritan woman at the well – interpreting the Bible passage through a very female lens.

I’d always heard this Samaritan woman described as ‘of low morals’, but Rosemary pointed out that women at this time had no power to divorce men, so she had been a victim of repeated bereavement or rejection. Jesus knew this and still saw her as someone who was worthy of his attention and care – and He commissioned her to share his Good News to her own gentile community. She became one of the first evangelists.

There were art installations and prayer stations around the church – all created by victims of domestic abuse, both adults and children and this added to the emotional impact of the whole event. Rosemary is planning to return to Tynedale for another White Ribbon Service in 2025 so watch out for it being advertised. I guarantee you will find it both moving and challenging.

If you want to find out more you can visit the [White Ribbon](#) or the [CADANortheast](#) websites.

Anne Lambert

‘Lord you came to bind up the broken-hearted and to set captives free. Your mandate has become our mandate so today we stand against domestic abuse in all its forms. We pray for all those suffering at the hands of others, be their strong tower, their comfort, their refuge and hope.’ (From a prayer of the Red Chair Project, a campaign to raise awareness of the women and girls killed by domestic abuse.)

To the Tynedale Methodist Circuit. West End Methodist Church

I write to confirm the news that West End Methodist Church will cease to meet for worship following the 20th April, Easter Day.

On the 20th April, West End shall have their final service as a congregation in the morning, followed by a circuit service of thanksgiving and celebration for the life and witness of West End over many years at 3pm. The Newcastle Chair of District Rev Jonah Sewell has agreed to come and preach. We hope you will be there to join us that afternoon.

As West End has one of the biggest congregations in the circuit some of you maybe questioning this decision. It has been made for many reasons. Firstly, the finances are heading in a direction that mean we as a church would run into difficulty in the near future and so have faced up to our reality in making this decision before we are forced into trouble. Secondly the scale of the building is now a bigger project than our current congregation can manage. We also wish to support the circuit leadership team's plans and hope that our joining with Acomb allows them greater freedom and flexibility. Finally, the relationship between Acomb and West End following joint services and having become one church council has blossomed, and there is a real opportunity to further God's kingdom in Acomb by working together, maintaining a smaller building and focussing our ministry so as to enhance the Christian witness to the village on behalf of Jesus Christ. As with all things involving God, we enter this future with hope that there is an opportunity to relaunch a new and effective ministry in Acomb. However, as we do this it doesn't take away from the sadness and pain for many of the members of West End who face this loss, I ask you hold them in your prayers as we travel this journey.

Following the service in April and over the coming months, we plan to take stock of where we are and continue to grow that relationship as one worshipping community before a launch of The Chapel in Acomb in September.

With regards to the West End building, as you may know the responsibility will fall into the circuit's hands to maintain it until a decision has been made on its future. We have made clear the congregation's desire to not necessarily sell it to the highest bidder, but to recognise the Hexham community and the Circuit's future. We therefore encourage and look to support the Circuit leadership Team in being creative whilst also recognising they are beholden to the charity commission and charity law.

In the meantime, we ask that you pray for all at West End Methodist Church and for Acomb who shall also be seeing changes in their way of life as a worshipping community, and the circuit leadership team as they help the churches and circuit work through this time.

God Bless
Rev Gareth Sherwood

Opening the Doors for Christmas at Trinity

"I've passed this church so many times and always wondered what it was like inside"

Over the past few months the leadership and congregation at Trinity have been considering how to respond to the call to get to know God better and help other people get to know God. We are very aware that our exterior doors do not allow folk passing on Beaumont Street to get a picture of what happens inside the church building. Also, most of our users of the premises come in through the 'back door' into the hall and coffee area and so never see into the sanctuary which is obviously, for us, the heart of the building.

So we have been actively looking at opportunities to 'open the doors' and invite people into the church – and we thought the day of the Christmas Market in Hexham might be a good time to try this. We decided to serve free tea/coffee and mince pies in the front foyer and invite folk to consume these refreshments in the sanctuary which was beautifully decorated for Christmas.

To be honest, when we planned the event we envisaged the Christmas market stalls being laid out along Beaumont Street and we expected to have lots of visitors passing the church. On the day, though, we realised that the market was set up within the Abbey and therefore we were not going to get so many passers-by. So, at 9.50 am we were a bit pessimistic about how many folk would actually come in and we thought our plans of opening from 10 am to 2 pm might be unrealistic. How wrong we were!

The day was freezing cold, the town was so busy that local cafes were full and the Abbey was very crowded. As a result lots of people were delighted to come into the church and take advantage of the warm space and refreshments. In fact we had about 200 visitors over those 4 hours. We were able to engage them in conversation, talk about church activities (including the forthcoming Christmas Services) and enjoy fellowship with both local folk and visitors to the town. One couple from Sunderland even came back for our Candlelit Carol Service a couple of weeks later.

Opening the doors, standing outside to actively invite and welcome visitors and providing a warm space and a warm welcome proved really successful. We had lots of lovely feedback about the building and the hospitality, but also the extent to which people appreciated the quietness and peace of the sanctuary space in the middle of all the Christmas busyness. This seemed such a wonderful example of God blessing our efforts and seeing the importance of the Methodist Church's Advent theme of 'Hush the Noise'.

We are now considering how we identify or create further opportunities to 'open the doors' at other times of the year.

Anne Lambert

TYNEDALE CIRCUIT LADIES LUNCH AT THE COUNTY

Twenty-three ladies, from Haltwhistle, Haydon Bridge, Fourstones, Trinity Hexham, Corbridge, Riding Mill and Prudhoe Methodist Churches, met at The County Hotel, Hexham on Friday 7th February 2025 to socialise, have fun and support a charity.

A leisurely two and a half hours of drinks, starters, mains, desserts and coffees was interspersed with a sung grace and two quizzes from Lynne Graham (faces, and hymns from Singing the Faith with of course, you guessed, sung answers), a book launch for Valerie M Noon (local preacher Valerie Anthony), and impromptu personal testimony on Isaiah 41:10 The Passion Translation (yes, you need to look that one up) from Helen Taylor.

We were delighted that Newcastle District MWiB President Rosemary Gray and Newcastle District MWiB Project Treasurer Margaret Waring, both from Ponteland Methodist Church, joined us. Rosemary spoke briefly about why she chose 'Tynedale Hospice at Home' for her President's Project, and sold sunflower notelets painted by her late husband Steve Gray along with knitted items to raise £51 for the cause.

I found it so exciting to be mixing with each other, getting to know one another better, and hearing news from around our churches. Hebrews 10:25 Good News Bible 'Let us not giving up the habit of meeting together' comes to mind.

To this end ... Everyone, yes everyone, men and women, are invited to attend **Tynedale Circuit Easter Offering** Dedication Service (of our money donated in the envelopes to The Methodist Church World Mission Fund). This year's theme 'Education for All, Hope for All', 6 pm Sunday 25th May 2025 at Catton Methodist Church followed by a faith supper.

Jane Dixon, Tynedale Circuit MWiB Treasurer





PROFILE **Tony Buglass** Supernumerary Minister

If someone had told the young Tony Buglass that he'd find himself living in a nice house in Hexham in the Tyne Valley, he'd have burst out laughing.

I grew up in a poor council estate in North Shields, the eldest of five brothers

I was the first of our family to get to high school, and found I was quite good at languages, so decided to become a French teacher. I had no faith, church wasn't part of the picture until I went into the sixth form, where some friends invited me to the youth activities run by the local Methodist churches. That was the beginning of a life-changing journey, beginning with a strong sense of God's presence in a local chapel, knowing that I had Someone walking with me. That led a year later to a powerful encounter, in which I gave my life to Christ - people often say they invited Christ into their lives: I felt He was the one doing the inviting!

That new life included a call to preach, which I thought meant I'd teach French, and be a local preacher. God had other ideas. I passed French and German, but failed English! (The fault of the exam board, but that's another story...) It was while I was planning a different route into teaching that I realised that was a diversion: my heart was in full-time ministry. I trained as a local preacher, including a year at Cliff College, then trained for ministry in Bristol. Instead of studying French or German I did Greek and Hebrew as part of my Theology degree (and have occasionally preached in French and German!).

I began ministry in Wallsend in 1980: coming back to Geordieland felt like one of God's jokes: was this because I understood the local folk, or because they were the only ones who could understand me? I served in three appointments in the Newcastle District, Wallsend, Amble, and Corbridge. These appointments included hospital and prison chaplaincies, tutoring further studies for local preachers, taking part in local radio live discussion programmes, and becoming squadron chaplain to RAF Air Cadets (which I'm still doing 30 years later). The LP tutor work included teaching a student in Estonia, which led later to visits to the Estonian Methodist Church.

Family life was important, too: Margi and I were married during my training, and our three children were born during our time in Wallsend. We have worked very hard to support each other's work and ministries, my work in church and community, Margi's work as an author. The children's school careers opened doors into school assemblies, music, and so many rich friendships and community relationships.

My last appointments were as superintendent in two circuits in Yorkshire, Pickering then Hebden Bridge. While in Pickering I was chaplain at RAF Fylingdales. I also completed a research Master's degree, which took a lot of years.

And so to Tynedale. Retired? Still working that one out: I am very busy as a preacher, I sing with a number of choirs, I enjoy being a granda, I drive and deliver for the foodbank. If this is retirement, it's a lot of fun!

Long may it continue



MWiB – Tynedale

At the **Easter Offering Dedication Service**, Sunday 25th. May, at Catton 2pm, as previously noted (Circuit Ladies Lunch), representatives from each of our churches will be invited to read stories of people who are committed to changing lives and transforming communities through education.

Please come and celebrate the work of our Partner Churches around the world, funded by the World Mission Fund. A Faith Supper follows. Jane Dixon



This year Methodist Home's theme is the practical support offered to people living with dementia across their homes and schemes. Central to this is Irene's story.

Irene had chosen to make her home with MHA Swindon where, engaging and stimulating environment for her to thrive.

This is exactly what Gary and Julie wanted for their Mum, Irene, after her dementia reached a level where she could not live at home safely anymore. This MHA Sunday, Irene, Julie and Gary share their powerful story and in doing so highlight the importance of the charitable activities that make MHA what it is – compassionate chaplains, affirming music therapy and engaging dementia resources – all vital in allowing Irene to live the life she does, full of joy.

Although MHA Sunday is recognised as the 8th. of June – there are five Sundays in June in which churches and chapels can remember this ministry in their services, with an opportunity to support this charity financially.

MHA offering envelopes will be delivered with the summer edition of Living Waters. How about dedicating a Local Arrangement service with information from the charity?
Margaret Bogie

To host your own service or to download and order your free resources for this annual appeal

visit mha.org.uk/Sunday

THE METHODIST TAPESTRIES COLLECTION



The Methodist Tapestries Collection is an ambitious project to create a set of 100 beautifully embroidered panels telling stories about "The People Called Methodists" which will eventually be housed in the gallery of historic High House Chapel in Ireshopeburn, Co Durham.

The Methodist Tapestries Collection Project is itself part of another ambitious project to repair, restore and create an enlarged Museum and Heritage Centre in High House Chapel. The Tapestry Collection was launched when the Weardale Museum bought High House Chapel in 2019 and Trustees realised that to raise an income to sustain running costs they would need a flagship to attract an audience. The collection of 100 fine embroidered panels with a Methodist narrative, befitting our historic chapel, will be a flagship attraction to visitors from far and wide.



The artist and creator of the Tapestries project, previously the curator at The Weardale Museum, was able to call upon the many years of research and the stories he collected to regale the visitors about High House Chapel, John Wesley and Methodism.



The Methodist Tapestries Collection Inspiration was derived from The Quaker Tapestry in Kendal and The Scottish Diaspora Tapestry which both attract substantial audiences but the Methodist Tapestry is different in that embroiderers are free to choose their own styles for their individual works and each embroiderer has chosen the stitches and techniques they feel best fit the design of their panel.



Mentored by our advisor Tracy Franklin, one of the UKs most gifted embroiderers, over 50 volunteer stitchers from all over the country and beyond have been recruited to carry out the work.

The Collection includes 15 panels telling the local story of High House Chapel, 5 enchanting panels stitched by local school children, and 80 panels which tell further stories about the people called Methodists



When complete this collection will be a significant cultural and artistic attraction in our area. For more information and magnified images see The Weardale Museum website. weardalemuseum.org.uk



The Weardale Museum



Detail from Sandgate, Newcastle Quayside: May 1742.

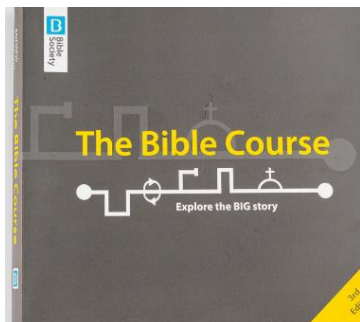
“Surely this place is ripe for Him who came to call sinners to repentance.”

These wonderful tapestries (some made by our own members) **will be on display at West End Methodist Church, Hexham** from 11.00am to 4.00pm on **Saturday 29th March**. Admission is free but donations would be welcomed. Light refreshments served all day. Don't miss a wonderful opportunity to view this handiwork.

Brian Elstob

News from the Bible Society

Bible Society has some fantastic resources to help you explore the Bible and deepen your faith, either individually or in groups.

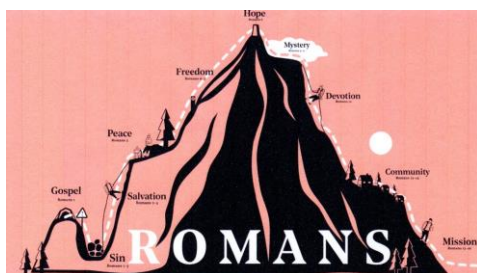


The Bible Course: an eight-week programme, with manual and videos, exploring the story of the whole Bible.

An updated version of this course is arriving in Spring 2025

The Romans Course: Explore the letter to the Romans

A ten-session programme studying Paul's letter to the Romans, with videos presented by Andrew Ollerton (who also features in the Bible Course).



Easter resources for children: This year's books are "It's Going to be Fine! An Easter Rhyme" for toddlers and "It's All True! He's Risen for You!" for primary age children. They make a great Easter gift for family or for children in your church. There's lots more, so why not check out their website at biblesociety.org.uk.

Sandra Innes



Open the Book (OtB) is an exciting storytelling project where Bible stories are shared with children in a way that is fun, interactive and memorable. As invited guests in school, storytelling teams use the Open the Book programme to prepare and present a 10–15-minute scripted Bible story to a school assembly, involving the children as much as possible.

There are a number of teams in the Tynedale Circuit in which members of Methodist Churches are currently registered with the Bible Society as storytellers and actively involved in ecumenical storytelling groups.

Unfortunately, a number of teams have been unable to restart since the schools were closed during Covid. Not because the schools do not want continue, but the teams themselves became disrupted. There is also a new requirement to subscribe to be a storyteller.

The schools in which Methodist storytellers are involved. Some schools are weekly, others fortnightly and some monthly.

Whitfield CofE Primary, Allendale Primary, Shaftoe Trust Academy (Haydon Bridge), Newbrough CofE Primary, Acomb First School, Sele First School (Hexham), Hexham First School, St.Mary's Catholic First School (Hexham), Whitley Chapel CofE First School, St.Matthew's Catholic Primary School (Prudhoe), Prudhoe West Academy, Adderlane Academy (Prudhoe), Prudhoe Castle First School, Ovingham CofE First School, Wylam First School,

"We all feel very blessed by this ministry having built up a close relationship with the schools. It would be wonderful to go into the schools more frequently if there were more volunteers but we remain privileged to be involved in this outreach".

Anne Chapman (Prudhoe)

"I just loving watching the children's faces during the storytelling as they absorb the story" Dorothy Neal (Acomb)

"It is lovely when children see team members out of school and make comment that they had seen us as a Bible character in school." Elizabeth Archer (Catton)

"I love the enthusiasm of the children who want to take part in a story – no shortage of volunteers" Libby Hinson (Hexham)

I'm sure all teams would appreciate some extra help in delivering these Bible stories to primary school children. Fancy volunteering? There is a team near you.

Ed.



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

Rev Marie Beard

Wylam
Prudhoe
Stocksfield

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 19th. May 2025 please



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