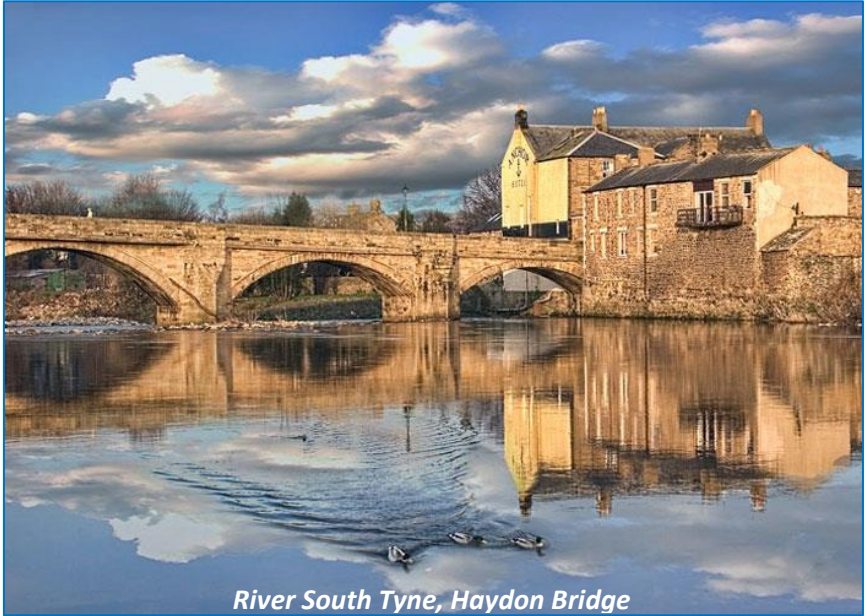


# ***LIVING WATERS***



*River South Tyne, Haydon Bridge*

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

***SUMMER 2025***

Dear Brothers and Sisters,



Early on Easter morning, a few of us gathered at Keenley Methodist Chapel to greet the dawn of a new beginning. We retold the Easter morning story and sang Easter hymns, before walking along Isaac's Tea Trail to our Catton chapel where we shared breakfast together. It was a pleasant experience, to walk alongside others, some whom we knew well, others we had just met, sharing our stories with one another as we watched deer, hares, barn owls and curlews along the route.

As I write, we are between Easter and Pentecost. The old has gone in Jesus death on the cross and a new beginning has come in his resurrection and so we rejoice! However, we are still in that time that sits between the resurrection of Jesus and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. We often call Pentecost the birth of the church, yet the church was already gathered, and had been gathering since Jesus' resurrection, yet little did they know what was to come on that day as God poured out the Spirit upon them in great power and wonder.

I feel that as a church, as a circuit, we too, find ourselves at an in-between moment. Yes, we live both post resurrection and post Pentecost, but at the same time we sit in what seems to be a moment of one era coming to an end and a new one beginning in the life of the Methodist Church in Britain. While we do not yet know what this new era will be like, we know that it is coming, whether we like it or not, and I suspect that many of the old familiar ways of doing things have not equipped us to the time to come.

These last few weeks Luke's Book of the Acts of the Apostles has been in our lectionary readings. If you've been following this you will have heard some amazing stories of life and mission in the early church. Scholars debate whether Luke intends Acts to be descriptive or prescriptive - i.e. is he simply describing what happened or is he telling us what happened so that we might follow their example. While we might debate this, there are two themes in particular that stand out to me:

One is the importance of prayer - the disciples soak everything in prayer - they are always praying in every situation, giving thanks to God or seeing his help and guidance.

The second thing, which I think is not unconnected, is the repeated recounting of being filled with the Spirit. Now I don't think this was simply a number of Pentecost style events when the Holy Spirit came upon them in power, rushing wind and tongues of flame. Rather, they lived lives continually in tune with the Holy Spirit of God and seeking God's presence and will.

In this way they set out and developed what it meant to be the new community of the resurrected Jesus in the power of the Holy Spirit in a context of mission and in which the Lord added to their number daily.

How does this relate to our church today? Are we continually at prayer in all things? Are we continually seeking the filling of God's Spirit in the ordinary everyday things?

As we move into the future that is not completely clear to us, as we consider the one church in many places model of circuit with all its uncertainties, we recognise that this is a step of faith. Many of the questions about this new future will not be resolved until we are living it. So may we take our lead from the apostles, from the early church and encourage each other to step out in faith, soaked in prayer and filled with the Spirit.

With grace and peace,

Michael

Rev Michael Holland

### Church mice

Copyright Karl A. Zorowski



## Elaine Goy – Local Preacher

### PROFILE

I came to Methodism in my twenties, having grown up with both Church of England and Church of Scotland influences. Yet from my first visit to the small Methodist Church in Shotley Bridge, County Durham, I felt completely at home. I was deeply drawn to the core principles of Methodism—its emphasis on love, social justice, and living a faith-filled life. These were values that had always mattered to me, and the warm welcome, strong sense of community, and focus on grace and service resonated powerfully.



Over time, I became more involved in church life, beginning as a Sunday School Superintendent and later helping at our circuit's youth club and youth events. These experiences opened my heart to the joy of walking alongside children and young people as they explored their own faith.

Supporting children and young people—especially those facing disadvantage—has always been a passion of mine. At just 13, I felt a clear and unexpected call to teaching, which I believe was Spirit-led. I had the opportunity to sing for a youth group of young people with learning disabilities, and spending time in this group changed everything. It opened my eyes to the gifts and challenges of those with additional needs and inspired me to become a teacher for children with multiple and complex disabilities. Teaching in that context has been both humbling and profoundly fulfilling—a space where faith, compassion, and patience meet every day.

When my own children were young, I experienced a further call—this time to preaching. One Sunday morning while praying in bed, I was thanking God for answered prayers when I felt a distinct prompting to read Jeremiah Chapter 1. The passage focused on Jeremiah's call to preach, and it spoke deeply to me. That same morning at church, the second verse of the second hymn—*There's a Spirit in the Air*—stood out in bold to my eyes:

*"Lose your shyness, find your tongue,  
Tell the world what God has done."*

In that moment, I knew with certainty that God was calling me to preach. But I hesitated—not because I was unwilling, but because life was already demanding. I had recently been diagnosed with ME/CFS, was raising two young children, and balancing my teaching and church commitments. So, I responded, "Yes—but not yet."

However, God made it clear that the time was *now*. And who am I to argue with the Almighty?

Once I accepted the call, I felt an overwhelming peace and calm wash over me, and knew I simply had to trust that God would lead the way.

I trained as a local preacher within the Methodist Church, supported throughout by my minister and his wife, and the loving and faithful congregation at Shotley Bridge. That journey deepened both my understanding of Scripture and my awareness of God's presence in every season of life.

Around the time my children left home to pursue their own careers, I moved to Durham City and retrained as a Dyslexia Specialist. I then spent 18 rewarding years at the University of Sunderland, supporting students with Dyslexia and other Specific Learning Difficulties on a one-to-one basis, as well as tutoring children with SPLD's in the evening. I moved my membership to Elvet Methodist Church and preached in the Durham and Deerness Circuit. Whilst there, I led Bible Studies, and mentored several students on-note through to accreditation, and joined the "Open the Book" initiative, bringing Bible stories to life in schools.

In 2021, my husband Chris and I moved to the village of Riding Mill. That same year, our daughter, son-in-law, and two grandchildren settled in nearby Ryton. I now visit their school, along with another local school, as part of an Open the Book team, and I've recently become involved in Prayer Spaces—a project that invites children to pause, reflect, and connect spiritually.

Today, I worship at Riding Mill Methodist Church and feel honoured and privileged to preach across the beautiful Tynedale Circuit that I now consider to be my spiritual home. My journey as a preacher has always been rooted in a desire to share the gospel. When I first started my preaching journey, most congregations were made up of adults and children - unfortunately that is not the case today. Our children and young people, are the next generation of the church and carriers of God's love into the future. And that is one of the reasons I am passionate about taking the message into schools. If the children aren't coming into church, it is important to take the message to where they are.

For me, the gospel is not something reserved for Sundays. It's something we are called to live, breathe, and share every day—especially with the youngest among us. Children approach faith with an openness and curiosity that inspires me. They ask the big questions with honesty, and in doing so, remind us all of the wonder and joy of God's love.

Whether I'm leading worship, sharing stories in school assemblies, or simply creating space for children to pray and reflect, I aim to carry the message of Jesus with me—bearing witness to His grace in both word and action.

Being a local preacher isn't about having all the answers. It's about pointing to the One who does. And it is my joy to continue doing that for as long as God calls me to serve.



## NORTH TYNE PILGRIM PRAYER JOURNEY 2025

**A pilgrim journey** in five different locations for prayer meetings along the North Tyne valley over the course of 2025, and a Prayer Walk from the source of the North Tyne at Deadwater to the Meeting of the Waters at Acomb.



People of faith representing different Christian traditions have already met at Deadwater and Falstone, Bellingham and Simonburn to pray and bless the communities of the North Tyne Valley, with thanksgiving in all that God has done and is doing here.

The prayer group that met at St. Oswald's, Bellingham, 8<sup>th</sup>. March hosted by Fr. Jim Dunne. They also met at St. Mungo's and village hall, Simonburn, 10<sup>th</sup>. May hosted by Rev. Sarah Lunn. We hope to listen together to what God might be saying at this time, and pray especially any particular prayer requests from those actively engaged in God's work

There is also Prayer Walking down the valley;

- Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup>. July. Deadwater source to Kielder Dam (15 ½ miles)
- Thursday 17<sup>th</sup>. July. Kielder Dam to Bellingham (12 miles)
- Friday 18<sup>th</sup>. July. Bellingham to Barrasford (11 miles)
- Saturday 19<sup>th</sup>. July. Barrasford to Meeting of the Waters (10 miles)

You are welcome to join us for one or all of the days. We aim to start from each location at 9.30 am. This is a peer walk. It is not being led by anyone, and everyone is responsible for their own decisions in assessing the route and their capabilities. Volunteer drivers are sought to take walkers from the destination to the start so they can leave their own cars to collect later.

If you have a heart for revival in this part of beautiful Northumberland and would like to be part of this initiative, let us know that you are thinking of joining us and we can give more details.

Bob & Mary Bain 07988564299 [bobbain@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:bobbain@hotmail.co.uk)

The North Tyne Pilgrim Prayer Journey is being organised by Welcome Network CIO, a national charity which seeks to connect people together to show God's love and power in their community. They help individuals and churches in a local area to connect together in worship and prayer, and to serve the community in collaborative projects



There are two further prayer meetings scheduled in the autumn. Humshaugh Village Hall (20 Sept.) and Acomb Methodist Chapel. Details in the autumn edition of Living Waters.

This year the Circuit Meeting is visiting churches across the Circuit and the March meeting was held at Hexham Trinity where members of the meeting were warmly welcomed.

The main item of business focussed on the future of the Circuit. Over the past few years, the Circuit has been considering what church will look like in the future. Financial and resource pressures make it necessary for the Circuit and its churches to adapt to a new way of being church and the Circuit Leadership Team (CLT) was tasked with looking at ways for Circuit and churches to move forward.

CLT submitted a proposal which looks to work towards a reduction of paid ministerial staff, a reflection of both our financial limitations and the Methodist Church expectation of a ministerial ratio of one minister per 150 members.

The proposal also suggests having Ministers who look after the whole Circuit, rather than individual churches, utilising their particular gifts and skills.

The one church circuit model (which combines governance into one church council but allows worship to continue across multiple sites) is seen to be the best way of moving forward.

Following much discussion, the meeting agreed to reduce the number of ministers in the Circuit to three from September 2026.

Following the Church Treasurers' meeting, an Assessment & Budget finance paper was considered by the meeting. Church contributions are now being calculated using a slightly different formula and the meeting accepted the contribution calculations provided for 2024/25 together with the budget paper.

The property report noted that Barrasford chapel has now been sold. Rev Marie highlighted the process to be followed if other denominations use/hire church premises for public worship. The meeting also approved the closure of Hexham West End chapel and the merger between West End and Acomb. This new merged church will now be known as The Chapel at Acomb.

The next Circuit Meeting will be held on **Thursday, 12 June 2025, at 7.30pm.**  
Venue: **Haydon Bridge Methodist Church.**

The meeting then closed in prayer.

## HEXHAM WEST END REFLECTIONS



West End's last two services were held on Easter Sunday after 90 years of witness and worship on this site.

Paul Myers was asked by Rev Gareth to write a Eulogy for the chapel which was shared during the final service in the afternoon to which the District Chairman Rev. Jona Sewell gave the address.

"Nobody wants to write a eulogy but looking back and being forced to reflect on what has gone before, to recall memories, good and bad, can be helpful in knowing where we are, what we are about and where we are going.

Everyone has their own testimony of their associations with this church, and I will share some of those later, but even I have been involved here for nearly 30 years. I remember coming to a service here in early 1997. Sarah and I had rented a house on Beech Avenue and this was the nearest church. I sat down, closed my eyes to pray and then opened them to find I was sitting next to Mark and Sue Knowles who we already knew from the church in Newcastle that we had been attending. I took this as a good sign! We joined a house group and found that John and Dorothy Green were very good friends of a family that I had grown up with in Sale since they had all been missionaries in Nigeria. Another good sign! All reinforcing how connected we are as Methodists through circuits, districts, nationally and internationally.

That was at the end of Trevor Staniforth's time and he will be remembered fondly by many still here. Trevor was followed by Angela a tall Texan minister, then Rev Sue Hill, followed by Gilbert Hall, Sheila Holland's father, David Archer, Marian Olsen then Paul Dunstan and now Gareth. And that is barely a third of the time this part of the building has been used for worship.

At our earlier service, members gave testimony about what West End meant to them. People spoke overwhelmingly about how welcomed they had felt when first attending, how friendly the members were and how the place felt like 'home'.

This area of the church was opened in 1935. The area that we use as a hall was the original church which was opened in 1906."

A United Methodist Free Chapel was formed in 1862 on Tanners Row near the bottom of Gilesgate mainly to benefit the working class, but was sold in 1905 to relocate to their new chapel on Leazes Terrace when completed in 1906.



“When John Wesley first came to Hexham in 1747 and preached a sermon he found the locals to be ‘untamed’. You can see how much progress there has been since then!

Vivien Little, who was in that housegroup that Sarah and I first went to, wrote a book about the history of this church. It’s a fascinating account of Methodist history in Hexham and well worth reading if you’re interested, including excerpts of diary entries from the 1890’s by notable people like Mary Ridley and some short biographies of people like William Robb, of the department store fame. He was a local preacher who once destroyed the pulpit at Whitehall Chapel whilst bashing it so hard to make his point during a sermon.

The adjacent land, now taken up with flats, was a tennis court in 1930 and apparently the cavity wall has many lost tennis balls incorporated as this part of the church was built. I’ve been involved with the property for some time now and we’ve been concerned with the crack in the West wall – there has been some subsidence which has been addressed in the past but was caused apparently by the building of the wall to make the car park. The wall damaged a drain which then washed away a lot of the sandy ground that this corner of the church was built on. If only there was some biblical guidance about building on sand. On Hellpool Lane!

Vivien’s book was written when Eric Wright was the minister – his wife, son and daughter are here today. There is a lot about the Sunday school, listing teachers who will be remembered by many of our congregation and more recently - Christine and David Stott, Kit and Jeannie KitKatt, Ros Matthewson, Sarah, Millie and Carolyn to bring it up to date.

There are references to the choir and of the organ written by Tom Hindsley with mention of Gordon McRae and his son David then followed by Stuart Ralston who taught our son, Sam to play the organ.

There were many activities including the Girls Brigade, the Friday Club which sounds like an early version of CAMEO, the Ladies Group which, of course, is still running and will continue to meet. Apparently it started as a young wives group but they got older and became ladies! Brownies was started by Dorothy Green in 1970 and there is still a pack meeting here as well as Guides. There was a Boys’ Brigade – 1<sup>st</sup> Hexham Company – which started initially in 1944 then again in 1970, stopped and was re-started when Marian Olsen was the minister here with her husband Alec being one of the leaders. We have their colour, or flag, here today. So, as many of you will be very well aware, the church here has provided a space for much more than just Sunday Worship. Jackie Davidson has been compiling a book of memories and pictures from more recent times which will serve as a reminder of the good and faithful work that has been done here in God’s name over the last 130 years.

The closure of the church has prompted lots of searching through bookshelves and old photographs for memories. We have lots of pictures of our son Sam's christening party in 2000. Nobody has changed a bit. Striking was how many study books and commentaries we have accumulated over the years and how relevant some of them still seem. 'New' initiatives and ideas have often been before – as it says in Ecclesiastes: "What has been will be again, what has been done will be done again; there is nothing new under the sun."

Thank God for that! The Jesus whose resurrection we celebrate today is the same Jesus who died 2000 years ago, who's birth was foretold long before it happened and whose existence is referenced in the stories of creation. Places of worship change but everything stays the same.

To finish I will read the last paragraph of Vivien's book:

'Anne Nutman reminded us that the church is not just bricks and mortar, and that it is in the hands of God, the Great Builder. In Ephesians 2, V 20-22 it says: You are built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit'."

---



### FROM HAYDON BRIDGE

Following the Good Friday Walk of Witness in Haydon Bridge between the War Memorial and the centre of the old bridge, shared with our friends from St. Cuthbert's and St. John's, three ladies met the next day to gather greenery from their gardens and bright spring flowers. Thank you to Christine, Ethel and Margaret who knelt over the cross for three hours preparing this spectacular announcement of Resurrection on Easter Sunday morning outside Haydon Bridge Methodist Church - Christ Is Risen Indeed: **Alleluia.** Jane Dixon



Walk of Witness concludes with prayers on the bridge

## **WORLD DAY OF PRAYER**

Friday 27<sup>th</sup>. March.

Ladies from our three village churches joined in this special yearly service which was held in the Methodist Church.

The service this year had been put together by the ladies from the Cook Islands, the theme being 'I made you wonderful' based on Psalm 139 v 1-18



We included in the display at the front of our Church, items and pictures associated with these islands. Our Minister's wife Sheila led the afternoon and several ladies from Allendale and Catton Churches also joined in to help with readings. Those who took part are pictured here. The service was well attended and afterwards light refreshments were served.

Kathleen Armstrong



## **SALVATION ARMY BAND AND SONGSTERS CONCERT**

Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup>. May.

We were entertained with a mixture of hymns, communal singing, rich solo recitals and a selection of spiritual songs by the Songsters.

Haydon Bridge has enjoyed the Newcastle Salvation Army so much over the years and this concert did not disappoint. As the nation awaited the VE Day 80 Year celebrations, a section on the programme was devoted to this anniversary. An old newsreel was played of the celebrations after Sir Winston Churchill announced to the nation the end of WW2 in Europe. Well known songs eg 'Pack up your troubles' were song by us all in the audience.

Nigel Gotobed read us a heartwarming message and the whole audience felt uplifted by the end of this splendid programme of music. Ladies at the chapel had prepared a scrumptious supper for us all to enjoy. Thank you to everyone who helped make this evening such a success.

The money raised on the evening was divided as follows.:

To help support the Salvation Army in Newcastle and surrounding areas.

To help with the SEDCU charity which supports educational needs of disadvantaged children in Uganda. The charity is run by a couple originally from Hexham.

Lastly for our church funds in Haydon Bridge.

Christine Irwin



**Tynedale**  
Methodist Circuit

Bellingham,  
Falstone/Kielder, Wark  
***Rev Roberta Ritson***

Hexham Trinity  
Acomb  
***Rev Gareth Sherwood***

Riding Mill  
Corbridge / Slaley  
Haltwhistle  
***Rev Marie Beard***

Allen Valley  
Haydon Bridge  
Fourstones with Warden  
***Rev Michael Holland***

Wylam  
Prudhoe  
Stocksfield  
***Rev Fiona Calverey***

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

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

**John Martin,**  
email: [john\\_martin\\_sb@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:john_martin_sb@yahoo.co.uk)  
'phone 01434 674425 /07964 616555

**By Monday 18<sup>th</sup>. August 2025 please**



Member Editor 2025  
Association for Church Editor