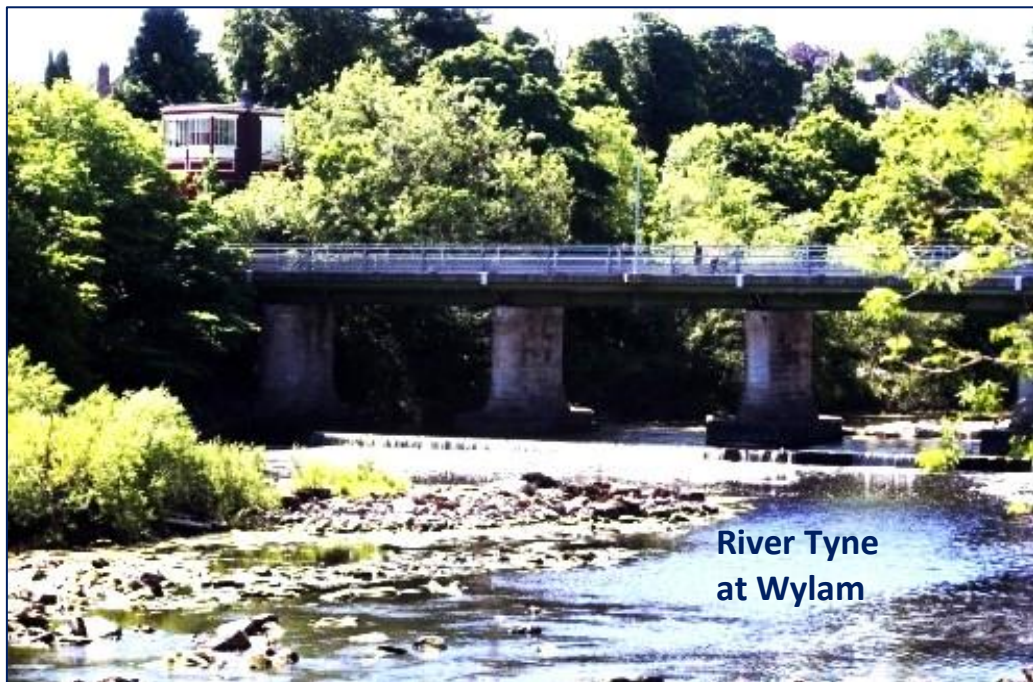


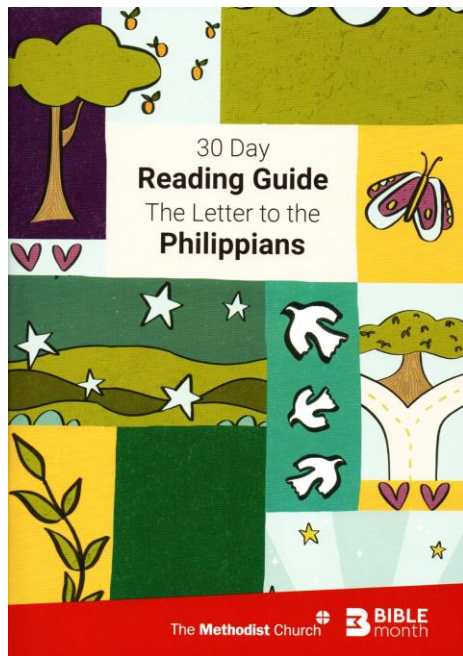
LIVING WATERS



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

SUMMER 2026

As many of you are aware, June is Bible month. The focus for 2026 is Paul's letter to the Philippians



As a prelude to our study of Philippians I would like to introduce the Bell anthem by Henry Purcell (1659-95). This is a joyous choral piece, interspersed with baroque dances reminiscent of peeling bells. It is a perfect setting for the poetry of the King James Bible, published in 1611. (For once, I am pausing my usual preference for inclusive language as we hear Philippians 4:1-7 afresh).

"Let your moderation be known unto all men," sings each lower voice, in turn. In our own times we are used to the fast lane where sensations come thick and fast. St Paul challenges his audience to be counter-cultural. Pace yourselves. Conduct yourselves in a measured way, he says, and remember, **the Lord is at hand.**

If you and I start to live our days with such knowledge, what difference might that make? (Some weeks ago someone gifted me a little bracelet, it's my practice to run the wooden beads through my hands. "Thy will be done" are the accompanying words).

"Be careful....", the chorus resumes. "**Be careful for nothing.**" At first that sounds like a contradiction. We are invited to let go of this world's angst, placing all our activities into the flow of our loving God. Be grateful, let prayer underpin your life, ask for what you need and know that your requests are heard. I challenge you gently.... How about pausing each night, jotting down where you saw God at work?

Repeatedly the soprano line brings exuberance to Purcell's anthem. "Rejoice in the Lord **alway** (no 's', this is the seventeenth century), and again, I say, Rejoice!" Our final challenge is to find a well spring of inner joy, even when we are not in Bellingham, the canniest place on earth*, maybe even through life's toughest circumstances.

*Robert Allen 1920- 2007, North Tyne poet and farmer

Do listen to Purcell. Through Bible month let's take time to read with deep appreciation, resolving to encourage one another with great tenderness.

May the Peace of God which passes understanding keep every heart and mind in Jesus Christ our Lord.



Roberta, United Reformed Church minister serving North Tyne

To listen to the Bell anthem look up Ensemble Pro Victoria 2022 on YouTube. It's possible that you'll want to hear it every day, allowing Purcell to enhance the whole month!

At the time of writing Roberta looks forward to welcoming many at Bellingham. North Tyne hosts the Circuit service on 31st May

Do you have your own copy of the Philippians Reading Guide? These are being issued free to all members of churches/chapels in the circuit as a devotional for Bible Month. See your minister or administrator if not.

JsM

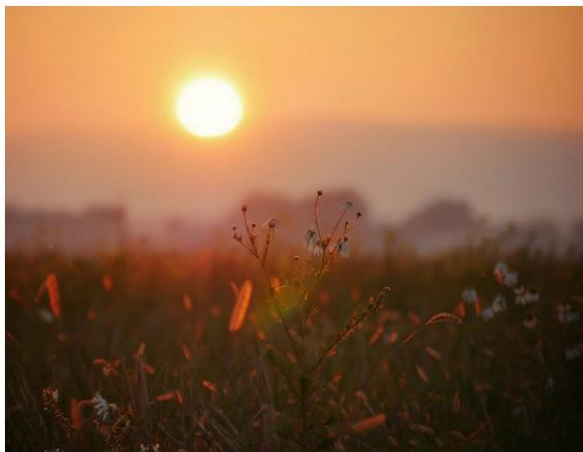
WORSHIP Night

THURSDAY
25th JUNE, 7pm
at WARK

TOWN HALL & Mechanics Institute,
NE48 3LG

*Come and join others
in WORSHIP
across the CHURCH
in the
North Tyne Valley*

For more information :-
Bob Bain 07988564299





PROFILE

Revd Jona Sewell.

Chair of District

“What does a Chair do?” is a question I’m often asked and, beyond the joking response “it lets someone sit down”, it’s not an easy question to answer as it can’t be pithily summed up in a sentence or two.

I am a football fan and, being a born and bred Northumbrian (Ashington & Stakeford), I’m also a Newcastle United fan – not that that’s much to shout about this season! But maybe a couple of football analogies can help answer the question, “What Does a Chair do?”

In some ways the Chair is like the captain of a football team, working with the players, supporting, encouraging and directing on the pitch. But sometimes the Chair is more like the manager – not ‘on the pitch’ doing traditional ministry (I don’t have a ‘church’ which is ‘mine’ to look after) but supporting from the side. Part of the role of the Chair is to support Circuits, and Superintendents in particular, in whichever way is needed in each context. This might be advice or direct involvement in strategic planning, oversight, governance, policy, finance, safeguarding, mission, employment issues, complaints... and any other number of things. I also preach around the District, offer pastoral care, and work with the incredible District Team and policy committee to oversee the life of the District including our strategy, purpose, mission plan, use of resources, and Synods.

There are currently 21 District Chairs spread across the Connexion (national Church). The Chairs meet together regularly, attend Conference, take responsibility for the annual stationing process, and each has connexional (national) roles, often being part of a group or committee tasked with overseeing or reviewing some aspect of church life. All Chairs are part of the CLF (Connexional Leaders’ Forum) and I currently also sit on the Stationing Review Group, the Stationing Committee, the Deliverance Ministry Panel, and the Chairs’ Appointments Group – it’s a full and varied diary!

There's much that I enjoy about serving the Church in this role. I love preaching around the District, visiting churches that I've not been to before, and meeting the many faithful Methodists dedicated to serving God and their local church. I am thankful for everyone who contributes to church life in some way. I also enjoy the fact that every day is different, I don't know from day to day what the emails or telephone might bring, but that can also bring its challenges and occasional stresses. I have also been asked "What keeps you going?" and that's an easier question to answer than the first.

The wonderful District Team keeps me going. I am so very thankful for every volunteer, lay employee, and minister who is part of the district staff, Leadership Team, Policy Committee, or who serves in any number of ways. I truly couldn't serve in this role without their support, encouragement, diligence and respective ministries – I am truly blessed to be part of such a team.

I also find life in paying attention to my 'inner life' – that is my walk with God. I am a trained Spiritual Director and meet regularly with my own director as I reflect on my walk with God and on the inner work I need to do to find peace, and to not carry too much negativity, hurt or unprocessed feelings with me into ministry. The busier I am, the more important this aspect of my life needs to be, but the more likely it is to be pushed out. I have learned the importance of discipline and giving this aspect of my journey with God the time and attention it deserves. We neglect this level of self-care and self-reflection at our peril, as this is the route to deep and lasting spiritual transformation.

As well as supporting Newcastle United, which is often a cause of stress rather than life!, I also find life, and meet God, in hiking (especially in Northumberland and the Dales), nature, going to concerts, and spending quality time with the people I love and who love me.

I love the North East and am fiercely proud of this area. I am thankful for the honesty, friendliness, and down-to-earth nature of its people. I am deeply thankful for everyone who supports and prays for me, my ministry, and the District.

God Bless,

Jona.

Lord, I am no longer my own, but Yours. Put me to what you will, rank me with whom You will. Let me be employed by You or laid aside for You, exalted for You or brought low by You. Let me have all things, let me have nothing, I freely and heartily yield all things to Your pleasure and disposal. And now, O glorious and blessed God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, You are mine and I am Yours. So be it. Amen.

John Wesley



NEWS FROM PRUDHOE, SUMMER 2026

Just ahead of the official Red Nose Day, we held a Red Nose Coffee Morning on Saturday 14 March and it raised the impressive sum of £335.27..

Having given Roger Jones' musical Simeon shortly after Christmas, we were delighted that he was able to visit us for an evening of psalms, hymns and songs on Tuesday 17 March. Unfortunately I was unable to attend but it's clear that this was a well-supported event and offered a thoroughly rewarding evening to those who were there

Following Morning Worship on Sunday 29 March, we joined other local churches to travel to Humbles Wood to meet the donkeys. Humbles Wood Farm is a community interest charity company and rescues animals.

Church was open on Tuesday 31 March from 11:00am to 1:00pm for Holy Week Reflections, a display of pictures depicting Jesus' journey through Holy Week, with some guided thoughts available and soft music playing.

On Good Friday, we joined our friends at Stocksfield Methodist Church for a service led by Rev Fiona, after which there was a Walk of Witness to Stocksfield Cricket Club. Those who wanted to remain in Prudhoe were invited to worship at either St Mary Magdalene Parish Church or the Gate Church and join Prudhoe's own Walk of Witness.

We celebrated Easter Day with a Local Arrangement led by Rev Marion Proud, who presided at Holy Communion.

It was a great pleasure to welcome the District Chair, Rev Jona Sewell, to preach and lead worship on Sunday 19 April. Rev Jona took the Lectionary theme of the Emmaus Road and delivered a very thought-provoking and challenging sermon.

I've enjoyed compiling this note of what's happening at Prudhoe and hope to provide more information in future editions of Living Waters.

Ian Warburton

FROM THE CHAPEL @ ACOMB



Jacqui Cameron led our Easter Morning service rather brilliantly and had scripted a modern language scenario whereby an incredulous TV reporter was interviewing Mary Magdalene and the 'other' Mary on encountering the newly resurrected Jesus.

Dorothy Neal as the reporter, Shirley Jowett as Mary Magdalene and Jackie Davison as the 'other' Mary

Lesley Saxon

NEWS FROM HAYDON BRIDGE

Talking Jesus

Thank you to Rev Michael Holland who during Lent, with much thoughtful preparation and contagious energy, led the '**Talking Jesus**' course at Haydon Bridge Methodist Church over six Tuesday evenings this February and March – training Christians to share their faith.

This interactive course with video clips and discussion groups was great fun and hugely inspiring, as we challenged what holds us back from being more ready to simply and naturally drop Jesus in to our everyday conversations with others and wait for them to bite.

It really is not as scary or as difficult as we might think to admit to attending Sunday and midweek worship, praise and prayer meetings, gathering with friends to share what God has been doing in our lives since we last met, studying the bible with others, going on residential retreats and to Christian conferences, or organising social events in our churches. It is just part of ordinary conversations about what we have been doing, as we show interest and ask others what they have been doing.

The really important thing to grasp, is that **just one small comment or remark can be transformational in someone else's life**, and the beginning of their journey to faith in Jesus and the knowledge of the love of God within them to be shared with others.

Jane Dixon



WORLD DAY OF PRAYER

World Day of Prayer is celebrated annually on the first Friday in March bringing together Christian women and communities worldwide to pray for peace, justice and solidarity.

For 2026 Nigeria was the focus country and the theme “I will give you rest: Come” (Matthew 11: 28 – 30.)

This year's World Day of Prayer was led by the St Cuthbert's, Haydon Bridge and Beltingham with Henshaw Branch of the Mothers' Union and focussed on the Country of Nigeria. The members of Haydon Bridge Methodist Chapel very kindly provided the space and facilities for the afternoon. Churches Together come to this Service with each denomination sharing a role.

The Rev'd Gill Alexander opened and closed the Service with the members of the chapel providing the music.

There were three testimonies from Nigerian women who gave a moving and thought provoking message, read by a member from each of the Churches. Everyone joined in the singing of well-known hymns and less known anthems in the Igbo language, The table display consisted of a Bible, fruit of the region, rice, cooking oil, small stones, School books with lit candles, in a colourful display.

The collection of £260:00 was sent to the World Day of Prayer organisers.



The afternoon rounded off with tea, coffee, cakes and biscuits provided by St Cuthbert's.

We would like to put on record our grateful thanks to the Members of Haydon Bridge Chapel, who gave so willingly their time and talents,

Anne Brunton

Secretary, St Cuthberts, Haydon Bridge, Beltingham with Henshaw Mothers' Union.

HAYDON BRIDGE CHURCHES TOGETHER BEETLE DRIVE FOR CHRISTIAN AID

On 27th March in the Chapel we held a Beetle Drive organised by Anglican Church member Julia Cooper. Forty adults and children attended this event - about two thirds of which as far as I know, were not connected to any of our churches. Small prizes for the winner of each round were given and an overall adult and child winner received a larger prize. Light refreshments were served by Catholic Church member Gerry Green and monies raised £111.20 were sent to Christian Aid.

The photo shows everyone hard at work, trying to complete their beetle.

We are very grateful to Julia for giving her time and efforts to organise and run this event which we hope to repeat later in the year.



ETHEL MASON'S 90th. BIRTHDAY



Many thanks to Maureen Haney for making such a super cake for Ethel's 90th birthday for Sunday 10th. May. After our morning Worship, we sung Happy Birthday to Ethel and all enjoyed a slice of the wonderful cake.

The following day, her actual birthday, her daughter Caroline along with husband Alan and her son Charles put on what can only be described as a truly amazing afternoon tea. 70 people attended, including her Church friends, others from the Friday Luncheon Club, most of her own immediate family as well as friends from other parts.

The Chapel was decorated beautifully and the three mentioned above, as well as two of their friends, waited on us all at the tables. So, we were all able to sit, relax and share in our dear friend Ethel's special day.

Kathleen Armstrong



Haydon Bridge Methodist Church hosted six men and twenty-one women from nine of our Methodist Churches for the **Tynedale Circuit Easter Offering Dedication Service** on the last Sunday evening in April.

Rev Marie Beard selected the best of the material prepared by Methodist Women in Britain to lead an uplifting service entitled **'Unbound: a gospel that breaks barriers'**, opening with the foot tapping anti-apartheid song of hope 'Freedom is Coming' on her blue tooth speaker. Marie used her Newcastle Theatre Royal trip with her daughter Becky the previous night to see 'To Kill a Mockingbird' as an illustration of racial injustice and the destruction of innocence that society can allow to happen.

Representatives of six of the circuit chapels read scriptures, told stories of persecution because of their Christian faith – and led prayers.

David Kilner (Riding Mill) accompanied on the organ which enhanced the great singing of five well known rousing hymns – 'My chains fell off, my heart was free': release from the things that bind us.

Marie blessed and dedicated the **£1523.25** collected around the Circuit, as generous personal donations in the Easter Offering envelopes this Easter, as part of our celebration of the Resurrection of Jesus and new life offered to us all. All this money has been sent to the **Methodist Church World Mission Fund** supporting work in the global Church.



After the service, everyone stayed and continued fellowship over tea and coffee and a delicious faith supper in the activity room. There was much chatter and lingering longer. A most enjoyable Circuit event.

Thank you to hosts for the evening Kathleen Armstrong, Cathie Burke, Pamela and Christine Thompson (Haydon Bridge) and to all who attended.

With thanks to all the individuals in the churches in our Circuit for their generous donations to the Methodist Church World Mission Fund through the Easter offering envelopes, and thanks also to the church treasurers who handled the money.

This is a splendid total to help support the special projects run by our Partner Churches overseas.

Jane Dixon, Tynedale Circuit MWiB Treasurer.

Circuit Meeting was held on 12 March 2026 at The Chapel at Acomb Methodist Church.

Rev Marie Beard opened the meeting in welcome and led devotions.

The minutes of the Circuit Meeting held in September 2025 were agreed. Under Matters Arising, Rev Marie informed members that a new HR & Lay Employment Adviser, covering five Districts, has been appointed.

Once again, the future of the Circuit was discussed with more consideration being given to the One Church Circuit – Multiple Sites (OCC-MS) model. The response to this consultation has generally been positive with both benefits and challenges being acknowledged. Church Councils were asked to continue their deliberations and to report on progress to the June 2026 Circuit Meeting.

The meeting also considered a Grant Application from The Chapel at Acomb for £30,000 over five years for the appointment of a Village Chaplain based in Acomb. Further funding for this role is being sought by an application for District funding and from the Church funds. The application was declined until further information is provided clarifying some of the points discussed.

Anne Lambert reported on Safeguarding, specifically that a Safeguarding Return is due to be sent to District. Two areas of improvement have been identified around the matters of DBS checks and Role Descriptions. Each Church Safeguarding Officer should have a folder containing Role Descriptions and information on Safer Recruitment processes. Work will be undertaken to address these areas.

Under Finance, it was reported that the audited accounts for the Charity Commission are in hand and will be ready by the end of June. Detail was provided of Circuit finances and even with reduced staffing costs (reduction of one minister) from September 2026, there will still be a deficit in the Circuit budget.

The Property report noted that Ebenezer (West Wylam Methodist Chapel) has now been sold. Permission was sought for the sale of the manse at Wylam (Stephenson Terrace) and formalities for the sale of West End and Catton chapels are ongoing.

Circuit Meeting also granted permission for Fourstones with Warden Methodist Church to cease to meet and for the building to be sold. After 150 years of faithful worship, mission and service, there will be a final service of worship on Sunday, 12 July 2026.

The final item of business concerned the forthcoming need to appoint a Circuit Invitations Committee. Rev Gareth Sherwood leaves the Circuit in August 2026 and both Rev Michael Holland and Rev Fiona Calvery will complete their five year appointments at the end of August 2027. Rev Michael will be taking on responsibility for The Chapel at Acomb from September 2026.

The next Circuit Meeting will be held on **Thursday, 18 June 2026**, at 7.30pm.

Venue: **Haydon Bridge Methodist Church.**

The meeting then closed in prayer.

FOURSTONES WITH WARDEN METHODIST CHURCH

The last of the Methodist places of worship in the Newbrough, Fourstones and Warden area after 180 years.



It was 31st. March 1876 when the foundation stone was laid for a new Wesleyan Chapel at Fourstones. Due to the decline of members, the circuit has agreed that it ceases to meet for worship and for the building to be sold after 180 years of Methodist presence in the area.

Members will be recognising 150 years of this chapel's presence on this occasion.

The community is being invited to share any memories they have of the chapel in their lives and bring any photos or memorabilia they have for a display. The chapel will be open for memories to be shared on Saturday 11th. July, 11 am to 4pm. The final service of celebration for 150 years of faithful worship, witness and service at the chapel will be at **3pm. on Sunday 12th. July.** It is hoped that this time will give an opportunity for members of other chapels to join in the celebration.

According to an item in the Hexham Courant the chapel was built for £730. This was some 30 years after the Primitive Methodist Chapel in Newbrough had started worship services, probably by miners who had come from other mining communities with strong Primitive roots; and 12 years after a United Free Methodist congregation was established in Newbrough as well.

At the time, the area was heavily industrialised which had drawn in many people to work in the mines, quarries and other works in an otherwise agricultural landscape.

- **The Settlingstones Mine.** 1690 – 1969 just West of Newbrough. Originally a lead mine but in 1907 becoming the world's only supplier of witherite, a rare form of barium used in the manufacture of textiles, explosives, soaps, paints, inks, linoleum and paper.

- **Frankham Quarries** 1781 – 1959. Situated above Fourstones. Quarrying Freestone (a hardened version of sandstone – and famously used for many buildings on Queen Street, Edinburgh, as well as Newcastle Station), Sandstone, Limestone and Ganister Stone. It is known that the Romans quarried here and is thought how Fourstones obtained its name.
- **Fourstones Coal Mine** 1805 – 1926. Coal used locally, including the firing of the lime and brickwork kilns in the area. Apart from the large bank of draw kilns at the Lime Kiln Works in Fourstones there were another four dotted about the area. Lime was used for the production of construction material but lime powder was mainly used as a form of fertiliser, neutralising acidity in soil and encouraging nutrients.
- **Stonecroft Mine** 1851 – 1898. On the western edge of Newbrough for lead ore.
- **Fourstones Paper Mill**. Established in 1763 on the banks of the River South Tyne and still producing paper!
- **Fourstones Brick Works**. No dates, but was on the eastern edge of the quarries and is shown on an 1865 map with a rail track leading to it from the quarry works.

It is no surprise that a strong sense of community arose amongst the workers and that Methodism was the prime expression of faith. The Church of England was represented by St. Michael's at Warden and St. Peter's, west of Newbrough; the vicar of Warden had St. Aidan's built at Fourstones in 1892, a wooden missional church, one of only two in the country, to save worshippers the trek to St. Michael's.

The Newbrough and Fourstones district benefitted from this industrial 'revolution'. In 1848 a Reading Room was established in Newbrough with a library of 1100 books, becoming the Mechanics Institute for the benefit of the engineers and literate miners and quarry workers. One rule which was never broken until the day when the Mechanics Institute closed was that the Holy Bible should always be on the table. It was handed over to the Women's Institute in 1948.

Newbrough Town Hall was built in 1878 by the generosity of Miss Jane Todd for the use of the community from the proceeds of the Stonecroft Mine, and placed in the hands of trustees.



In its heyday the district also had a silver band, a penny farthing club as well as the usual annual craft and seasonal grower's competitions as well as parades in which societies and chapels proudly displayed their banners.

Fourstones chapel still displays its Sunday School banner. Date created unknown.

The Primitive Methodists had their own chapel built at Warden, close to the bridge that crosses the South Tyne, opening in 1896, paying an annual ground rent to the local land owner.

The chapel closed in 2000.

The congregation joined the chapel at Fourstones, creating the Fourstones with Warden Church. The Fourstones chapel lies just inside the Warden Parish Council boundary next to Newbrough Parish.



The joining of the two congregations inspired the Millennium project in which the Fourstones chapel received a major refurbishment. Out came the pews, a carpet was laid. Chairs were purchased. The overhead suspended strip lighting was replaced by suspended globes, a sound system put in and the electric organ which the Bowman family had had installed at Warden was transferred.

John Martin



Vicky Herod, Senior Steward at Wark would like to thank all those who pray for us in support of the work of Sycamore Counselling Service which has been serving Tynedale since 2016.

We are pleased to have been offering counselling to people from all over the Tynedale District for the past 10 years.

As a charity we have qualified Christian counsellors volunteering to work with us and in 2026 our team is made up of Jo, Tim and Vicky, qualified counsellors, with students working towards their qualification. We are also supported by 5 Trustees.

For the last 4 years we have been located at Adapt NE, Burn Lane, Hexham in a bespoke counselling room.

Our service is supported by fundraising and grants which enable us to offer this service on a 'by donation' basis meaning that it is available to all who can access our location. We offer a free assessment where we can explain how we work and arrange a suitable counsellor.

Contact: sycamorecounsellingservice@gmail.com

Phone: 07939 493 030



WORSHIP TOGETHER

with Guest Speaker
Reverend Canon David Glover
(Hexham Abbey)

Sunday 14th June, 2026

6.30pm to 8.00pm
(doors open 6pm)

at **Tynedale Function Suite**
Hexham Auction Mart, NE46 3SG

free admission - donations welcome



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

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 2026 edition, please send to: -

John Martin,

email: john_martin_sb@yahoo.co.uk
'phone 01434 674425 /07964 616555

By Monday 17th. August 2026 please



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Association for Church Editors