

# ***LIVING WATERS***



*Christmas Nativity Crib, Church of the Nativity, Bethlehem, Palestine West Bank*

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

***WINTER 2025/2026***

I write this having just preached on Isaiah 65. A sermon about hope that is made through God's promises. In this passage God's people have returned to Israel. After being in exile for a long time in Babylon, they have returned not to the place they knew but a place that no longer has full independence and is under control of the Persian Empire. A place that is physically desolate with Jerusalem and the Temple in ruins. A place that contains just a small proportion of those exiled with relatively small numbers returning, many of the Israelite people choosing to stay in Babylon, where they had established their lives.

It is into this context that God's hope is spoken. And it is a hope that we see each and every year. A hope of restoration. Each winter we see creation go through a period of death where the trees are bare, the bees are absent, and the fruits and the flowers are gone. Yet we know of the hope that is to come, the new life that is ahead of us when spring arrives. This death / new life model is woven into the fabric of creation. And this death and restoration is promised to us by the author of that creation.

As we move into Advent, a season itself separate from Christmas, we wait for that restorative hope, for the return of Christ to our world. We wait for when the glimpses of hope we see in the day to day no longer become fleeting moments but become permanent in all God has created.

And then on the 25th of December Christmas begins and we celebrate the one from whom that hope springs, as the coming of Christ, God as man, the one that spearheads that restoration by defeating death is born a baby in a small town just 6 miles outside the place Isaiah refers too.

But celebration can be hard for some and while this time of year can be a time of great joy it can also be a time of great pain. And for those of you who feel great pain know that with suffering comes God's kingdom. So may you cling to that hope, the hope God promises in Isaiah. The hope found in Jesus Christ, that hope of restoration.

Rev Gareth



## Our Fragile Earth



After almost a year of planning **Our Fragile Earth**, an event in which Wylam Methodist Church played a major role was held in Wylam on 18<sup>th</sup> & 19<sup>th</sup> October. The aim of the event, organised by Wylam and District Churches, was to stir up, inspire, educate and equip us all to care for the planet, as individuals, as a community and as a nation.

On the Saturday afternoon visitors could view 17 stalls; get involved in 6 interactive demonstrations and workshops; listen to 2 talks; take a tour of the Nature Reserve; view posters created by Wylam Scouts; Wylam First School and take part in a Treasure Hunt for endangered animals! There was something for everyone (including refreshments!) – certainly plenty to challenge and inspire us to care for the planet.



The stalls in the Methodist Church Centre included

- Bees, Wasps & Ants Recording Society;
- Christian Aid fundraising with *Branimals*;
- Community Action Northumberland;
- Hope for Hedgehogs;
- James Lister wildlife photographs;
- Northumberland County Council Climate Change Team;
- Northumberland County Council Waste Management;
- Nourish Food School;

- Ovingham Middle School Eco Club;
- Ponteland Wildlife Group;
- Practical Compassion for Destitute Children;
- Spetchells Conservation Interest Group;
- Traidcraft;
- Wylam Clean Tyne;
- Wylam Community Orchard,
- Wylam Parish Council Volunteer Tree Warden
- and Wylam W.I.

Meanwhile, a team from Mend It! @The Hearth demonstrated mending techniques for clothing;

- artist Steve Pardue held a workshop on Nature Journaling;
- David Hardman from Nourish Food School was cooking using 'waste' food;
- Tom from Cyclery guided people through a bike check;
- Wylam Community Orchard were apple pressing and giving the opportunity to taste freshly made apple juice using Community Orchard apples and any brought along.
- Craig Little, owner of *Tyne Valley Wind and Solar* explained the benefits of solar panels with particular reference to panels on the roof of St Oswin's Church Hall.



**Apple Pressing**



**Nourish Food School**

Liz Bray, Wylam Parish Council Volunteer Tree Warden, led tours to the Nature Reserve.

Chris Wright gave illustrated talks on *Rewilding your garden* and Anna Revell & Leanne Shipley from Community Action Northumberland explained ways to reduce energy use at home.

Wylam Scout posters on the theme of **Our Fragile Earth** were displayed in St Oswin's Church. In St Oswin's Church Hall prize-winning posters designed by Wylam First School pupils were displayed. Young (and old) enjoyed the Treasure Hunt for endangered creatures hiding in the grounds of St Oswin's.

There was hardly time to draw breath before the evening Panel Debate in the Methodist Church. On the panel were

Reverend David Coleman, Eco Chaplain for Scotland, (representing the theological aspect of caring for the planet);

Dr Wendy Fail, Senior Waste Management Officer for Northumberland County Council (representing the lifestyle aspect);

Joe Morris, Member of Parliament for Hexham (representing the political aspect) and Dr Stephen Westgarth, founder member of Wylam Clean Tyne (representing the campaigner aspect).

After introductions by the chair, David Atkinson, the panel were asked two questions, of which they had prior knowledge. These were – *'Did George Stephenson inadvertently and massively contribute to our climate crisis when he introduced the steam train? Is this a lesson for today's inventors?'*

And *'Anyone who has lived in different parts of the country recognise vastly different recycling facilities. Why can't we have a national scheme?'* There followed questions from the audience but too little time to ask all the questions the audience wished to ask!

On Sunday morning the Reverend Canon Derry Twomey officiated at the ecumenical Eco Harvest Service at St Oswin's Church. He was assisted by Reverend Fiona Calverey, Methodist Minister at Wylam and Reverend David Coleman, Eco Chaplain for Scotland who preached the sermon which was extremely thought-provoking and beautifully illustrated. Afterwards, a delicious soup and pudd. lunch was served in St Oswin's Church Hall by a brilliant team from the St. Oswin's church. Lunch was accompanied by donations of stotties from the Big River Bakery and apple juice from Wylam Community Orchard. Financial donations were divided between FareShare North East and SolarAid.

To finish the weekend, the Prayer Labyrinth (diligently mown in the lawn throughout the year by Damien Favraud) at Wylam Methodist Church was enhanced with prayer stations en-route (thanks to Christians in Wylam) – allowing time and space to contemplate **Our Fragile Earth** and how best to protect it.

Ruth Barriskill and Hilary Johnson



## The Chapel @ Acomb



It's amazing what unexpected things can happen and what direction God can move us in.

The first weekend in October saw the relaunch of Acomb Methodist Church. Although as you approach the building now you will see has a slightly different name The Chapel @ Acomb. With two congregations joining together to make one worshipping community it seemed fitting to have a new name and it made sense for us to adopt the name given to us by the community - The Chapel.

This is exactly how Methodists got their name with people outside of Methodism referring to them as Methodists.

The relaunch weekend saw different events and celebration that welcomed the people of Acomb, the community this Chapel was built for, to share in alongside us as a newly amalgamated church community. The invitations made it through every door in the village accompanied by a stick of rock with The Chapel written through the centre.



And it worked as we saw about 150 people walk through the doors to take part in the weekend's events.

What a weekend it was also, that started with a concert from the superb Dark Sky Voices, as they made full use of the wonderful acoustics and superb piano The Chapel offers, using their gifts of singing and bringing joy and worship to us. The highlight for many was a beautiful and original arrangement of Amazing Grace that brought many to tears.





*The hands of the Acomb Community*

The following Friday night saw teams battle it out in a quiz.

Then on Saturday the church opened its doors to the community offering refreshments, bacon and sausage butties, some history of the chapel, games, quizzes and of course some homemade bakes. But most of all what it offered was a place for community, where people met and talked and laughed together.

This community was represented by a banner made on the day with the hands of many of the people who attended drawn round and cut out to make a tree like image hung on the wall at The Chapel



Finally on the Sunday we enjoyed a worship of joy together.

And we welcomed someone new from the village to become a regular worshipper with us. It was overall a weekend blessed by God, and we give glory and thanks to God for it.

*Community in the newly decorated Community Room*



And more blessings came the week after as we celebrated our Harvest with a fantastic red Tractor parked outside the chapel and a wonderful offering for the foodbank followed by “Harvest Pie” after the service.



*Harvest at The Chapel*

And chapel was blessed further still as so many from the village came to the chapel on Halloween to light a candle for a loved one and for the children to take away some fruit and sweets.



*Halloween at The Chapel*

For many the closure of a church can be painful, for some this joining together didn't feel the right step and for others the idea of closing a larger church to join a smaller church didn't make sense. However, God has been in the joining of these two communities the whole way since they started sharing joint services.

And while most don't live in Acomb, just as the disciples travelled all over the world for their ministry, there is a passion for the people in Acomb to meet Jesus. With an opportunity to minister to a community, as a part of a community, a new community, The Chapel @ Acomb.

Rev Gareth



## Fruit Baskets - Prudhoe



As part of our All-Saints' Day celebrations at Prudhoe Methodist Church we produced Fruit Baskets to be given out to the Modern-Day Saints in our community.

The 8 baskets were prepared at our Fellowship Meeting on Monday November the 3<sup>rd</sup> and then taken out to the

- 3 Doctors Surgeries
- 2 Dentists
- 2 Care Homes

And the Post Office (where we do our banking now) in Prudhoe

The recipients seemed rather shocked, surprised and delighted by the kind thoughts sent their way.

This little gesture showed God at work in our community.

Sylvia Waters

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The congregation at Prudhoe Methodist Church joined with local preacher Ian Warburton to mark the occasion of his retirement from regular preaching on Sunday 16 November 2025.

Ian, who is a member of Prudhoe Methodist Church, became a local preacher in 1997 and has served the Methodist Churches of the Tyne Valley for more than 28 years. In that time, he has acted as Mentor to other new preachers, and was secretary to the quarterly Local Preachers meeting for many years.

Tom Dodds, the current secretary to the local preachers, said: "I first heard Ian preach in Crawcrook Centenary Church, and he motivated me to offer myself as a local preacher. I've always enjoyed his style of preaching the Good news, always Biblically based, but always relevant to today."

For his final service, Ian took as his text the letter to the Hebrews, chapter 13, verse 8: "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever."

Ian will be continuing to serve Prudhoe Methodist Church through contributing to locally arranged Sunday services. Tom Dodds



*The picture shows church steward Mrs Ann Worthy, Ian Warburton (centre) and Tom Dodds.*

## CATTON CHAPEL Endings and Beginnings



Catton members decided to celebrate our Chapel's history and mark its closure with 2 events. On Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> October an Open Afternoon and the following day would be the final service. Publicity and Flyers were distributed with Facebook posts to advertise both events.

As we have many photo albums thanks to the late Audrey Jordan, it was decided to use our display boards to mount a timeline with photos, comments and historical Circuit plans.

The remaining albums were spread across tables for people to enjoy. Cake and tea was served. About 60-70 people visited over the 2 hours, many of whom were local or had past connections with Catton Chapel. We were delighted with the response, a busy but happy day.

**Saturday 18<sup>th</sup>. October**



Rev Michael Holland led our closing service the following afternoon. We almost ran out of chairs to seat around 80 people!! It was an inspiring and celebratory service with a focus on our continuing mission in Catton but in a different place, Catton Village Hall. Indeed Michael was able to distribute invitations to attend Catton Carol Service on Friday 19<sup>th</sup> December 6.30pm in the Village Hall.

A number of our past Ministers, Marie our Superintendent and the Rector of our local Anglican Church joined us together with RC and Community Church friends. Methodists from across the Circuit came to support us as did many, many Catton residents.



Contributions from past and present members included Allen Valley Churches Choir of 5 ladies led by Sheila Holland, a memorable and humorous poem written by George Charlton who then joined his brother to give a rousing rendition of “Will your anchor hold?” A sketch from Sheila Holland and Elizabeth Archer was thought provoking with a conversation between God and a worshipper, about The Lord’s Prayer. We were delighted to have Derek Archer to accompany us with his Accordion

Finally a huge Thank You to Michael Holland for delivering such a positive, hopeful and encouraging service.

Ann Potter

Michael & Sheila Holland with Ann



## Church Mice

Karl Zorowski



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## PROFILE Brian Japes – Reader

Perhaps I should start this note with a health warning. Beware a late afternoon call from John Martin saying, “Would you be willing to write something about ....?” More specifically John wanted something about who I am and what it means to appear on the Circuit Plan as 'Japes R' - indicating that I'm a “Reader”. Possibly one of my many failings is that, rather like that song from “Oklahoma”, I sometimes “can't say no”! So firstly, here's a bit about me.

My life began in London, where I was born 18 months before the start of World War 2 and actually a few years before Rogers and Hammerstein wrote “Oklahoma”.

Dad was a petroleum chemist and his work moved north during the war to a refinery in what was in those days part of Cheshire, now Merseyside. After several short moves we soon ended up living in the Wirral, and I went to school in Chester.

My parents were life-long Methodists and so Sunday School attendance became an expectation. I resisted becoming a church member until I was at university, by which time I felt a more genuine commitment than a few years earlier, when as a member of a young people's Christian Endeavour group, I was nearly swept into membership along with a bunch of other young teenagers.

Having been born a “townie”, it's perhaps rather odd that I chose agriculture as a career, which was something I loved throughout my working life. To summarise briefly, having worked on a farm, and now qualified in agriculture, the idea of teaching the subject began to appeal. I took a teaching qualification which led to my first spell in this wonderful county of Northumberland, when I was appointed to manage the school farm and teach agriculture in what was the predecessor to Haydon Bridge High School. It was through the Methodist Church there that I met and later married farmer's daughter Kathleen Wardle, although not long before we were married I moved to Nottinghamshire to work as a lecturer in agriculture there, specialising in livestock production. It was there that the first of our three sons was born.

I was appointed to a senior post at Kirkley Hall College in 1970, and the family moved to live in Wylam, where I still live, although very sadly Kath died in 2010. Having held several positions within the Wylam church, I think it was in 1980 that I was invited to become a Circuit Steward.

I was, at least at that time, the youngest to hold that position in what was then the Hexham Circuit



I confess it created a lot of pressure serving in this role in addition to what was rapidly becoming an increasingly demanding day job.

My fellow steward was Ted Elwell. Yes, there were just two of us in those days, together with a Finance Officer in, can you believe it, a Circuit of 32 churches and 5 full-time Ministers. Ted was already a Reader, one of a team of 8 men and women, at that time all from Corbridge, under the mentorship of Rev David Hall, the Corbridge Minister. The idea was to ease the load on Local Preachers by leading worship at churches throughout the circuit, using material mostly provided specifically for Readers by the Methodist Connexion. For many years the word "Reader" appeared on the preaching plan and after it was published we had to meet and decide who was available to fill those slots. Today we offer dates when we are available and we even have our names on the plan!

I asked to join this team, thinking that it would also help me to get to know more people and churches around the Circuit and to better understand their local situation. I can honestly say that it has been a most wonderful privilege, which I hope I have never taken lightly. I have certainly met a lot of lovely people and I hope, above all, that I have helped to carry something of the message of God's infinite love to the churches I have visited. Of one thing I am quite certain, that it has been an immense blessing to my own faith. I recall reading somewhere that you will remember 30% of what you are told but 80% of what you read, and I have always felt encouraged by reading and trying to interpret more deeply the sermons I have used.

You may be aware that several former Readers in this Circuit went on to train and become much-loved and respected Local Preachers. At one time I thought I might try to do the same, at least when I retired, but by that point personal circumstances would have made it difficult and I felt God was telling me to, "just keep doing what you are doing". I trust I got that right, because that's why after 37 years my name still appears on the plan each quarter and I suppose why I was asked to write this.

We Readers have now become a rare breed, not only in this Circuit but, as far as I can tell, throughout Methodism. The Connexion no-longer provides new services and it's becoming difficult to always find a fresh one for those churches where we are more frequently appointed. I confess I do have quite a library of services I have never used but I only choose to use those with which I feel "at home" and that I think I can deliver with understanding and, dare I say, from the heart. I try to choose more modern hymns or worship songs for services where appropriate and the prayers of course need to fit the situation. I don't know at my age how long I will be able to continue. I hope I don't leave it so long that it's a congregation that advises me to stop!

## Paul, the Anxious Apostle

As the nights grow long and the days too short. As the international scene darkens and the national news is gloomy. As prices rise but our income remains the same. We might find ourselves engaging with a friend who is more depressed and anxious than usual. How can I support that person? And how can I look after myself better?

The apostle Paul speaks openly about his own anxieties in his second letter to the Corinthians. He had written a very critical letter to that church and couldn't stop worrying if he had gone too far. He was too anxious to settle. Have you ever lost sleep after saying something careless? That is how Paul felt. (see 2 Corinthians 2:12-13)

Paul is equally honest about an incident elsewhere in the Roman province of Asia (modern Turkey). He doesn't say exactly what happened, except that it was terrifying (2 Corinthians 1:8-9). "We despaired of life", he writes.

So here's the truth about the Christian and anxiety: even 'super Christians' like Paul go through times when they are very vulnerable, this is not unspiritual, it is part of the normal Christian life. If your friend is a Christian, they may find this reassuring.

It is worth saying at this point that there are two kinds of anxiety. The first is a natural response to scary circumstances. The anxious feelings are part of our biology – they help us run away, fight, or perform to the best of our ability. This is normal and it is very useful.

The second kind is not useful, an out-of-all-proportion response to not-very-threatening things. It lasts for ages and has a negative impact on our lives, we avoid the things that make us anxious, and our lives shrink around our anxiety. This is an anxiety disorder, and we need professional help to get through it. If your friend has this second kind of anxiety, encourage them to see a doctor.

Whatever kind of anxiety we face, the way to manage it is through connection. Encourage your friend to make these four connections (and I encourage you to do the same!).

**First, connect with God** – worship, meditation and prayer are deeply therapeutic. Tell God exactly how you feel, tell him what you are afraid of. Above all, trust him, he won't let you down. Holding on to the Lord in the dark times gets us through.

**Second, connect with others** – invest time in your family and friends. You need one or two people you can be honest with. Spend more time with the people you love and trust.

**Third, connect with the natural world** – get out and enjoy the open spaces near you. Stop and look; enjoy the scenery. You are built to be a part of nature. Remember too that every living thing on the earth is built for a 24-hour rhythm – you are no exception, make sleep a priority!

**Finally, connect with yourself** – remember what you are, the dust of the earth animated by the breath of God (Genesis 2:7). Look after your body and your mind. Get some exercise and push some boundaries to flex your brain. Learn to be still. Oh, and give yourself something to look forward to at the end of each day!

Dave Burke , Haydon Bridge

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## Question from the Autumn edition.

Where did the Hexham Wesleyan Methodists meet before they built their purpose built church on Beaumont Street (now Trinity)?



*Hexham Wesleyan Sunday School Teaching Staff (about 1882)*

Now a number of apartments in  
Hadrian House on Market Street



Originally an 18th century house which was converted into a Wesleyan Meeting House during 1839 until 1887 – 48 years. It then became the main Post Office and Telephone Exchange between the years 1887 and 1963. Then used as offices for the Ministry of Agriculture, then by Northumberland County Council. The portico was a later addition and the elevated main entrance from the street is now reached by short steps and a ramp.

Well done John Wilkinson (Acomb) and Kathleen Todd (Haydon Bridge) being the only two to get the right answer. Other answers confused chapels for the Primitive and United Free Methodists who also worshipped in Hexham at this time.



## **Tynedale Circuit Methodist Women in Britain**

Fifty-eight men and women gathered for Newcastle District MWiB Service at Brunswick Methodist Church in Newcastle where Lynne Graham of Prudhoe Methodist Church handed on the baton (the cross on a chain) to the new District MWiB President- Elect Alison Macleod, after her four year term in office. Retiring from the District MWiB Presidential roles held November 2021 to November 2025, Lynne said her greatest joy had been accepting all the invitations to the Church Fellowship Groups meeting around the District during the week and encouraging everyone to spread God's love and kindness. Lynne received the support of women around Newcastle District as she raised £15,340 for 'Children's Cancer North', £4,500 for 'All We Can', and £4,500 for 'Doctors Without Borders' in her time as President.



*District MWiB Service at  
Brunswick Methodist Church*



*Lynne Graham handing on her presidential role*

After consulting widely in Tynedale Circuit, it was agreed unanimously to close the Tynedale Circuit MWiB account held at Lloyds Bank, chiefly because Lloyds had changed the account to a one where transaction fees would be levied, although Lloyds would waive the £4.50 per month administration fee because MWiB had charitable status. Over the years, a small amount of money, £210.66, had accrued in Tynedale Circuit Network/MWiB account, and it was agreed to split this amount and send £105.33 to 'The World Mission Fund of the Methodist Church' (which was done via our Tynedale Circuit MWiB '02 account' with the Central Finance Board of the Methodist Church which still remains active) and £105.33 to 'Tynedale Hospice at Home', the charity of the current District MWiB President Rosemary Gray. Thank you especially to Sheila Lee who was Treasurer for Tynedale Circuit Network/MWiB for twenty years.



Lynne Graham and myself, both Past District MWiB Presidents, are happy to continue to organise two gatherings of Tynedale Circuit members and friends each year – namely the annual lunch at The County Hotel Hexham on the first Tuesday in February (we will next meet for 12 noon on Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2026 so please put the date in your diary and invite your friends: details will be emailed out to those with email addresses), and the annual Easter Offering Dedication Service with faith supper one Sunday evening after Easter (the Easter offering Envelopes will be made available to all church treasurers at the next Circuit Meeting for Church Treasurers on Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> February 2026).

We feel it is important to continue to meet up with members and friends around our Circuit Churches socially (for lunch), and to continue our financial contribution to The World Mission Fund (this year Tynedale Circuit sent £1885 to the World Mission Fund from the Easter Offering envelopes) for the valuable projects run by our partner churches around the globe. Please support these efforts.

Jane Dixon.

## FROM HAYDON BRIDGE

### Harvest Cross

8 October to 5 November

This stunning Harvest Cross created by Christine Thompson, Ethel Mason and Margaret Smith graced the railings in front of Haydon Bridge Methodist Church for four weeks. It was impossible to walk down Church Street without being drawn to the spectacle of delicious smelling apples and the huge variety of eye-catching greenery with hips, haws and berries. The Harvest Cross stood as a great reminder of God's bounty and goodness to us, not only in the season of crops and fruitfulness, but also in Jesus having victory over death on the cross and offering forgiveness and new life to all.

It was touching seeing a young child tug on the hand of their parent walking by, compelling them to stop and take it all in, and in that moment be blessed.



## Harvest Offering 12 October



As well as sending £120 from the 'All We Can' Harvest Envelopes to support projects run by our partner churches in some of the poorest communities around the world, Sunday morning worshippers at Haydon Bridge Methodist Church brought and displayed along the foot of the Communion Rail, tins, jars and packets of food in an amazing show of gratitude to 'the Lord of the Harvest'.

The photograph shows this produce of land and sea donated to West Northumberland Food Bank, being received at their depot in Hexham the following day, with food parcels behind ready for delivery to households in the area stretching from Haltwhistle to Prudhoe as a short-term measure before recipients can be signposted to the financial help they should be receiving.

## Prayer Walk 1 November

Thank you to our minister Michael Holland for organising such an extra-ordinary experience.

Twelve men and women arrived in Haydon Bridge chapel, and after a hymn, scripture and prayer, two remained praying in the chapel, four walked North of the railway line up the North Bank, three walked around Strothers Close Radcliffe Road and Church Street, and three walked South of the Tyne around the back of the alms houses. We re-grouped back in the chapel, shared our stories over teas and coffees, and sung the blessing over one another.

What a profound and uplifting adventure to walk in threes and fours, continually talking out loud to Jesus, blessing every person, situation, business, church, facility, school, surgery, care home, field, farm, activity in the village, just as we noticed something that would trigger the need. Those we met, young people, dog walkers, were all so very agreeable to receiving a blessing, and both enjoyed and appreciated the Aaronic blessing spoken over them: *'The Lord bless you and keep you, make his face shine upon you, and be gracious to you. The Lord turn His face toward you and give you peace'*.



Haydon Bridge, on that glorious sunny morning with light showers and rainbows, felt a very special place to be, and not only was the spiritual atmosphere / temperature in the whole village raised that day, but we who took part were greatly inspired and encouraged.

We will be doing this again – please join us the next time.

## **Christmas Shoeboxes 2 November**

Our great organiser, Kathleen Armstrong, this year as every year, summoned up the support of generous folk to fill ten shoe boxes with fun toys, school supplies, knitted hat/gloves, and an extra special item like a doll, cuddly toy, deflated football with a pump, finger puppet, or skipping rope.

During Sunday morning worship, Kathleen explained this year the shoeboxes were going to Ukraine, Malawi, Moldova, Central Asia and The Balkans. Rev Michael Holland prayed a blessing over all who had prepared and filled the boxes, and a blessing over the children who would be the recipients, reminding us of the indescribable joy when a child lifts the lid and peeps inside. Joy to the World, the Lord is come.

## **Quiz Night 4 November**

Our minister, Michael Holland, warmly welcomed 34 to our quiz night with pie and pea supper.

Quiz master John Harrison tested our grey cells with rounds on Bible geography (whoops, even church folk didn't know the locations in very familiar New Testament stories and events), puppets and sing-along-songs (all fun questions), saints names, pictures and general knowledge. Ram's pies (supporting our local Premier store) were very tasty, along with a homemade non-alcoholic punch (thank you Cathie Burke). All the proceeds of the evening, £220, were donated to DNOP, Michael and Sheila Holland's small project in Togo making a huge difference to the lives of ten or so severely disadvantaged children, over the last fourteen years – God Forgets No one.

We also had a concert by **Hexham Brass** 11 October which raised £440 for the Northumberland Domestic Abuse Services.

The Circuit Meeting members met on 18 September at Prudhoe Methodist Church.

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

After accepting the minutes of the June 2025 meetings as a proper record, the Circuit Meeting members went on to discuss the future of the Circuit and a possible restructuring of the Circuit Leadership Team (CLT). Both of the items are to be discussed at Church Council meetings.

CLT is currently under-resourced and lacks a voice from all corners of the circuit. The aim of the restructuring would be to have a Circuit Steward from each church included on CLT.

The future of the Circuit inspired considerable discussion, including considering what the One Church Circuit model would look like and evaluating experiences of other Circuits throughout the Connexion which have adopted this model. Questions and responses are to be fed back to CLT for collation and to help them direct future discussion.

The meeting then adopted the Circuit Safeguarding Policy 2025-26 and Safer Recruitment Policy 2025-26.

**Financial matters** were then considered with a report on the various monies held by Circuit. It was mentioned that funds had been supplemented by the sale of Barrasford Chapel and a property at Otterburn. It was agreed that the Circuit Model Trust Fund will subsidise the general fund account by no more than £50,000 for 2025-26, with Circuit expenditure expected to reduce from September 2026 due to a reduction in ministerial provision.

A new formula for calculating church assessment figures is still being considered but it was reported that the Methodist Connexion is running a deficit so the District Assessment paid by the Circuit may have to increase.

A Financial Risk Management Policy & Strategy was document and amendments discussed. This document is designed to enable the Circuit to move to a more sustainable financial future. As part of this, it was agreed that a Deputy Treasurer be appointed, together with a deputy Property Officer.



**For Property**, the meeting heard that the sale of Ebenezer Chapel and the Corbridge Chapel lease were progressing and would hopefully be resolved soon.

Other matters presented to the meeting included news that two local preachers had recently passed away and that Hexham Trinity are seeking new funding to continue provision of their Community & Family worker role.

The next Circuit Meeting will be held on **Thursday, 12 March 2026, at 7.30pm.**

**Venue: The Chapel at Acomb.**

The meeting then closed in prayer.



Once again the Allen Valleys Church hosted the TEARFUND Big Quiz Night, supporting TEARFUND's work of transforming the lives of people living in extreme poverty. Seven teams of friends, family and neighbours gathered together at Catton Village Hall to pit their knowledge of trivia against one another.

This year, once again, it went all the way to a tie breaker with the Village People just edging out the Catton Kittens.

It was good to see the Village Hall full of folk from the community to hear a little bit of the work being done around the world by the church in the name of Jesus.

We raised an amazing £385.75 for TEARFUND's work and had a great fun time doing so.



Could you host a TEARFUND Big Quiz Night in 2026? For more information contact Sheila Holland ([sheila.holland29@gmail.com](mailto:sheila.holland29@gmail.com))

"It cannot be that the people should grow in grace unless they give themselves to reading. A reading people will always be a knowing people."

"When a man becomes a Christian, he become industrious, trustworthy and prosperous. Now, if that man when he gets all he can and saves all he can, does not give all he can, I have more hope for Judas Iscariot than for that man!"

From 23 sayings of John Wesley

# HOPE for SOUTH AFRICA'S CHILDREN



## Charity Celebrates 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

'Hope for South Africa's Children' in conjunction with Prudhoe Methodist Church, where the charities trustees worship, held a 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration supper recently when more than 90 supporters & friends enjoyed a typical South African meal which included Boerewors (a local South African Sausage) and deserts including Milk Tart and Koeksisters. While not the intention, £1366 was raised on the night

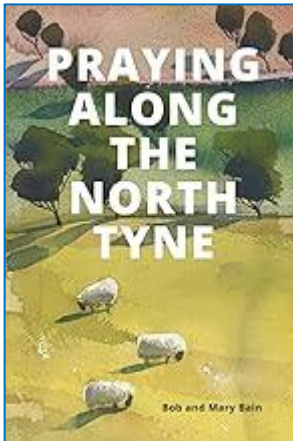
HFSAC was first registered in 2004 by David & Glen Smith to support the work of Rehoboth Children's village which they helped set up in 2001 in the rural area outside of Port Shepstone, Kwa Zulu Natal.

David & Glen had newly retired and felt called to mission, committing to 6 months to help start a village for children who were dying in hospital of HIV/AIDS's. We were able to find a smallholding of 22 acres and put down a deposit, funded by family & friends. The plan was to build Small homes with 4 children and a Zulu housemother as funds allowed. David & Glen have continued to be part of the journey spending 3 to 6 months a year in South Africa supporting the work. David commented that "although we have not be able go since 2020 when we had to leave early prior to lockdown we are still able to keep in touch with the projects we support".

Today the village had some 20 houses and up to 80 children, although with the availability of ARV's children are no longer dying as was the case. The charity registered in 2004 was initially set up to support the village with a sponsorship programme but has diversified into supporting a number of other projects in the rural area around Port Shepstone. These include support for rural food programmes, Education & Training for Crèche's, a school for children with SEN and support for the children leaving the village.

The charity continues to raise some £40 to £50000 year and is on course to reach £1million in the next year.

David Smith



## PRAYING ALONG THE NORTH TYNE

For those living or working in the North Tyne valley, this book gives support, encouragement and hope as we read of God's plans and purposes here.

Bob and Mary Bain along with others, spent a year on a prayer journey down the North Tyne valley in Northumberland looking at what God is doing there, and drawing on features in the landscape and the local history to bring spiritual wisdom and insights.

Available on Amazon

**'Come up here'** - a morning to pray, reflect and explore what God might be saying for the North Tyne valley.

**Bellingham Town hall, 9.30am to 12.30pm Saturday 24<sup>th</sup>. January 2026**

Bob and Mary Bain, (Welcome Network) will be hosting.

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Bethlehem's Church of the Nativity Christmas Tree with the Nativity crib in front. This is an annual event and a focus of pilgrims who come to Bethlehem at Christmas



# **Tynedale**

## **Methodist Circuit**

Bellingham and North Tyne MURC  
Wark Joint Partnership

***Rev Roberta Ritson***

Hexham Trinity  
The Chapel@ Acomb

***Rev Gareth Sherwood***

Riding Mill  
Corbridge with Slaley JP  
Haltwhistle

Wylam  
Prudhoe  
Stocksfield

***Rev Marie Beard***

***Rev Fiona Calverey***

Allen Valley  
Haydon Bridge  
Fourstones with Warden

***Rev Michael Holland***

[www.tynedalemethcircuit.org](http://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 2026 edition, please send to: -

**John Martin,**

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

**By Monday 16<sup>h</sup>. February 2026 please**



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