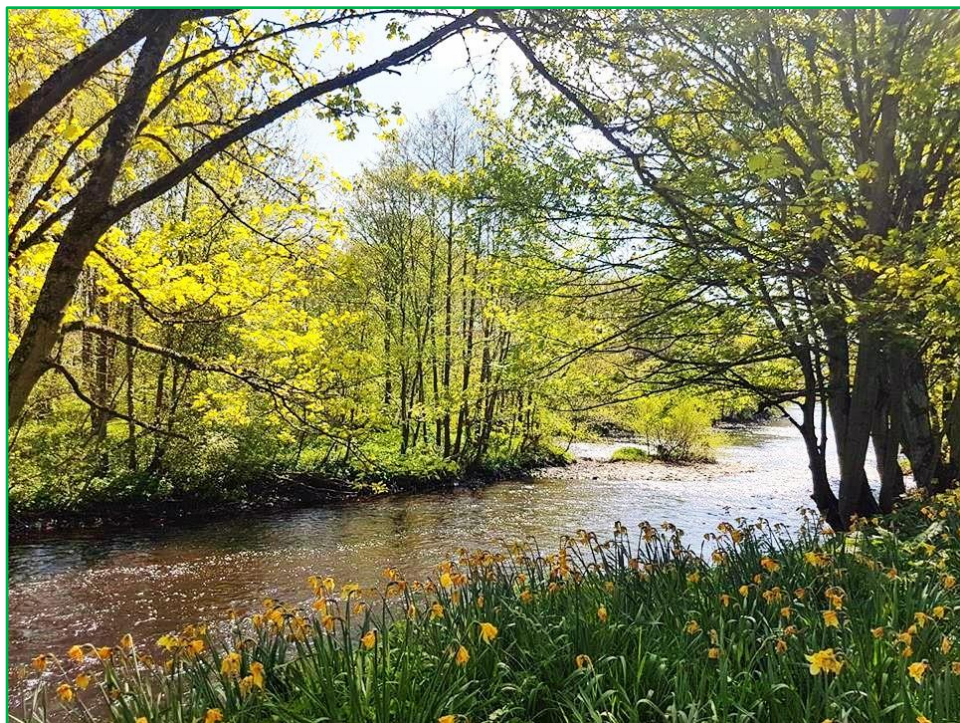


# ***LIVING WATERS***



River North Tyne below Wark

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

***SPRING 2024***

Dear friends,

As I write the first signs of spring are appearing which means it's time for church councils again! Recently I've been reflecting on Peter's declaration that Jesus is the Messiah:

**15** He said to them, 'But who do you say that I am?' **16** Simon Peter answered, 'You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.' **17** And Jesus answered him, 'Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father in heaven. **18** And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it. **Matthew 16: 15-18** (NRSVA)

I will build my church...and the gates of Hades will not withstand its advance!

You may remember that a few years ago, the Methodist Conference, our governing body, adopted a notice of motion encouraging every church council to annually address and answer the question: 'Do you have a growth plan or an end of life plan?'

Lots of work was done up and down the country in many church councils thinking about the realities of their situations and futures, but the reality of Covid lockdowns and the closure of our buildings during that time knocked everything sideways and many of our plans were put aside while we dealt with the immediate impact of lockdowns.

However, the issues forcing us to consider whether we have a plan for growth or end of life have not gone away and we know that many of our societies and chapels are vulnerable to the changes we see all around us.

Yet, just as the snowdrops have appeared, heralding the promised spring I can see some positive signs of God doing things in the church and in people's lives. The question of whether we have a growth plan or an end of life plan is a question, not simply about our understanding of church but also our understanding of God the Father, Jesus the Son and the Holy Spirit. If Jesus says He will build His church what does that mean for us? Does God want a dying church? There is an argument that it happens when we stop being church, or certainly stop being God's church. While we celebrate in our Church's Deed of Union that, 'in his providence God raised up Methodism to spread scriptural holiness through the land by proclamation of the evangelical faith,' we need to be mindful that this occurred in a time when the Church of England had lost its way and was failing its people in its ministry. If the church of its day failed to live up to its calling God raised up another. He builds HIS church.

One of the problems we have faced is opting for a growth plan without major changes to the way we do and be church. Paul Nixon in his book, *I Refuse To Lead A Dying Church*, argues that a lot comes from the choices we make and encourages us as church leaders and members to be active in the decisions:

- Choosing life over death
- Choosing community over isolation
- Choosing fun over drudgery
- Choosing bold over mild
- Choosing to live on the frontier over retreating to the fortress
- Choosing now rather than later

The working out of the practice of these choices will rattle some people - our members and if we're honest, our leaders and staff, as it requires us to do something different and not get drawn back into what we have become accustomed to and comfortable with. We wrestle with a model of church that is located around our buildings, but we are ever mindful that while sometimes these are assets and resources supporting our ministry and mission, sometimes they become liabilities draining our time, energy and money. We may need to see the end of some things for new life to flourish.

Revisiting our plans will require a some tough decisions but we know that we are not alone - we are a connexional church bound to one another in love and support but also we know - in the dying words of John Wesley, - 'Best of all, God is with us'.

With grace and peace,

Michael

Rev Michael Holland

Cover picture courtesy of Wynne Potts

## Church Mice

Copyright Karl A. Zorowski





## Christmas Day Special

Monday 25th December

Christmas Day

Methodist Hall from 10.00am-4.30pm

We would like to invite everyone, not just elderly people on their own but also families, therefore the 'day' would be opened up to all. We believe this event will make a difference to people for a variety of reasons.

- **Doors open from 10.00a.m. – 4.30p.m.**

- 10.00a.m. Tea / Coffee /Hot Chocolate / Mince Pies / Biscuits
- 11.15a.m. Carols

- 12.00 noon **Full Christmas Dinner available**

Soup / turkey, beef / roast potatoes / trifle / Xmas pud. & custard.  
Rolls/bread / cakes / mince pies / tea, coffee, juice etc.

- **3.15p.m. Tea - come for tea and enjoyed the company whilst listening to the King's speech**

Previous years some people came and had coffee/tea and mince pies after church, some came and had dinner, some came for tea and some stayed all day (isolation/loneliness is worse over the holidays),  
**it's what you would like to do.**

If **anyone wishes to help on the day or volunteer to pick people up/ take them home**, please contact **Ellen Walton** by emailing [ellenwalton@haltwhistle.org](mailto:ellenwalton@haltwhistle.org) , or **telephone 07719 958 627**.

**Everyone is welcome to come along on the day but if possible, could you let us know prior to Tuesday 19th December if you are coming for catering purposes. If there will be any children tell us so we can let Santa know.**

**We are grateful for the support from local organisations, businesses and individuals when organising events such as this.**



## Christmas Day Special.

Last Christmas we were treated to a traditional lunch, in the Methodist Hall, served up by Ellen Walton and volunteers with support from the church and local businesses.

A Christmas Day Special first took place in 2014 to support those who would otherwise spend the day alone, or families finding it difficult to manage austerity and the cost of living.



This year, instead of a service in church, Marie led the gathering congregation in singing a selection of carols.

Most people come for the meal served around noon, while others drop in at other times to see friends and have a slice of cake or a mince pie: and this year some just came for the carols.

### **Marie Lighting the Christ Candle on Christmas Day**

About thirty stayed, including Marie and her family, to tuck in to the turkey and trimmings (or a vegetarian alternative). We then concluded with Christmas pudding or trifle, cake, and tea or coffee.

A few remained to listen to the King's Christmas message at 3pm, before returning home, having enjoyed the good food and fellowship.

Ellen also runs the Drop-in which is open on Tuesdays throughout the year and is involved with the Warm Space that is run in the Methodist Hall, two days a week in the winter months.



The church appreciates her hard work and the support she gets from volunteers, local individuals and businesses.

*John Clark*

*Pictures: Louise Ainsley*

## HIGH FOREST PRAISE @ High Forest Community Centre, Sinderhope



High Forest Praise, grown out of the Sparty Lea Fellowship, gathers together on the first Sunday of the month at 2.30pm, from all over the Allen Valley and particularly from the area of Sparty Lea, to worship God. We meet in High Forest Community Hall, which looks out across the stunningly beautiful valley. We worship God and then fellowship together over an afternoon tea of delicious sandwiches, cakes and much more, provided by the community team.

### WORSHIP



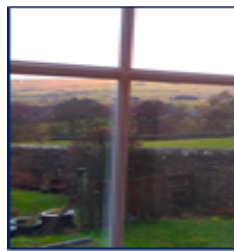
In the colder months we are kept warm by the log burner and of course our fellowshiping together too.

The worship is led by Mrs Joyce Short and Rev Michael Holland. Visiting preachers are invited too. Music for worship is provided using music from iSing and sometimes we are blessed by Derek Archer playing his accordion.

## FELLOWSHIP



## FOOD



The view!

*Sheila Holland.*

FOCUS ON:

# ENCOUNTER

West End Church. Hexham.

ENCOUNTER offers an alternative format to a traditional Sunday morning service. A relaxed informal worship evening that creates space to linger in God's presence, which deepens our relationship with God through the Holy Spirit. Most people who attend experience spiritual refreshment.

ENCOUNTER is facilitated by a team of people from Hexham West End and Trinity Methodist churches and doesn't have a set order of service.

Those that come along will encounter both praiseful and reflective worship, Bible references, readings, reflections, prayers and inspiring testimonies.

Live music is also provided by a group of talented musicians from both of the churches, with spirit filled modern worship songs, alongside some traditional ones.

You will experience West End Church within in a colourful visual, relaxed setting.

Refreshments are provided, with hot drinks & cake.

Everyone is warmly invited, all ages, whether from the circuit or other denominations. Please feel free to invite a neighbour or a friend or someone that would like to explore faith. We would love to see you all.

**Encounter evening services usually take place on the first Monday of each month, starting at 7:30pm at West End Methodist Church, Hexham.**

**Please note:**

As part of Churches Together during Holy Week, the next **ENCOUNTER** meeting will take place at **Trinity Methodist Church, Hexham on TUESDAY 26th MARCH, starting at 7:00pm.**

For more information please email;  
susan.paterson78@gmail.com or intodstephen@gmail.com





# ENCOUNTER

## AN EVENING OF RELAXED INFORMAL WORSHIP

Trinity Methodist Church. Hexham  
Tuesday 26th March.  
7:00pm -

Live Music  
Refreshments  
Everyone Welcome

## FROM A BRIEF GUIDE TO A METHODIST WAY OF LIFE

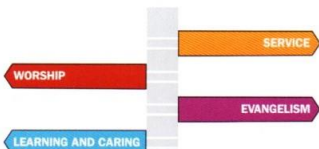
### WORSHIP

#### COMMITMENTS

- We will pray daily.
- We will worship with others regularly.
- We will look and listen for God in Scripture, and the world.

#### CONSIDER:

- What is the pattern of your prayer life?
- How easy or hard do you find it to pray?
- What has spoken to you recently in worship or in the Bible?
- When, lately, have you felt close to God or distant from God?



### SHARED JOURNEY

A *Methodist Way of Life* uses the framework of *Our Calling* to further shape and suggest a rhythm for the life of the Church and its people.

It encourages a deeper relationship with God through daily worship and Bible reading, as well as through service and faith sharing.

A *Methodist Way of Life* is best lived out with others. Individuals are encouraged to use it with a partner, soul friend, or in a small group. Methodism has repeatedly affirmed the way in which small groups can enrich an individual's faith.

Groups and individuals may also find journaling a helpful tool to aid reflection.



I know how much I need others to help me to grow as a disciple. A *Methodist Way of Life* encourages us to be accountable to each other in our walk with Christ. (Elaine)



# met

Methodist  
Evangelicals  
Together

## *Revive*:<sup>ME</sup><sub>UK</sub>

*NEW SEASON; NEW FOCUS*

**JOIN US ON TOUR AT A VENUE NEAR YOU  
AS WE PREPARE FOR, PURSUE AND PRAY FOR REVIVAL TOGETHER!**

**INSPIRATIONAL WORSHIP AND PREACHING  
PRAYER FOR REVIVAL AND PERSONAL RENEWAL**

**SPEAKER**



**REV DR DAVID A. HULL**

285 years ago, the greatest revival these nations have known began.  
It birthed our Methodist movement.  
It has shaped our national life to this day.  
Both church and nation now stand in need of revival again.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION AND TO REGISTER,  
GO TO [REVIVE.ME.UK](https://revive.me.uk)**

**VENUE:** Haydon Bridge Methodist Church  
Church Street, Haydon Bridge,  
Hexham, Northumberland, NE47 6JG

**DATE :** Wednesday 15th May 2024, 7:00pm



## Methodism was birthed in revival

When asked why God had raised up the Methodist movement in England's last great revival, John Wesley replied he believed it was:

*'To reform the nation, and in particular, the church; to spread scriptural holiness over the land'*

Methodist Evangelicals Together (MET) is the biggest independent organisation in British Methodism today. The Three Core Purposes for MET are:

### **Advocating**

Promoting and representing evangelicalism within Methodism, and Wesleyan evangelicalism within the wider evangelical world.

### **Equipping**

Providing resources through publications, conferences and our website for evangelicals within British Methodism.

### **Supporting**

Offering pastoral support and advice to evangelicals, who can often feel isolated within Methodism and face particular pressures.

MET is a fellowship for every Methodist who shares our desire to:

- Uphold the authority of Scripture
- Seek Spiritual Renewal
- Pray for Revival
- Spread Scriptural holiness
- Emphasise the centrality of the Cross



On Thursday, 7 December 2023, an exceptionally rainy evening, Circuit Meeting took place at Stocksfield Methodist Church, a change of venue to that originally agreed.

Rev Marie welcomed everyone to the meeting, including Rev Roberta Ritson, the URRC minister for the North Tyne section. Opening devotions followed and then the minutes of the previous meeting agreed.

The Trustees adopted the 2023/24 Safer Recruitment Policy and heard that training and meeting sessions on Safeguarding and EDI were being arranged, with details to be confirmed in the New Year.

A Property Report and the Annual Manse Reports were submitted to the meeting for consideration, and the Corbridge Princes Street Lease, together with the initiatives taking place there, were discussed. The authorised signatories, to sign legal documents on behalf of the Trustees, were agreed.

The Local Preachers' Meeting Report considered flexibility in service times and the use of this year's thematic Lent Series, focussed on Wesley's hymn 'Love Divine, All Loves Excelling'. The Local Preachers intend to follow this series; further information is available on the Methodist Church websites [www.methodist.org.uk](http://www.methodist.org.uk)

The meeting then heard that the Connexional Funds Treasurer and Circuit Archivist roles are still vacant and Rev Marie asked that information about these vacancies continues to be shared and people encouraged to consider taking on these vital roles.

The final item of business was a discussion about how often, when and where, to hold Circuit Meeting. Rev Marie proposed that from September 2024, three Circuit Meetings be held each year (in September, February, and June) with additional meetings called if needed. This proposal was carried unanimously.

The next meeting will be held on **Thursday, 14 March at 7.30pm**. The meeting then closed in prayer.



The Rev'd Dr. Stephen Lindridge, currently Chair of the Newcastle-upon-Tyne Methodist District is presently discerning his plans for the future. The new Chair's role was advertised in February and interviews will be taking place in March. Stephen and the District will appreciate our prayers in this time of change.



**Sunday** – Jesus rides into Jerusalem from Bethpage on a donkey, being welcomed by a large crowd shouting 'Praise God – bless the king who comes in the name of The Lord'. Jesus clears The Temple of traders and money changers. The Roman Governor Pilate arrives in Jerusalem on horse with an escort of Roman soldiers from Caesarea to be 'in town' for the busy period of the Passover festival. (Assumed)

**Monday** – Jesus returns to The Temple from an overnight stay in Bethany to teach, mainly in parables, and His authority is challenged by the leading priests.

**Tuesday** – Both Pharisees and Sadducees meet separately to try and trap Jesus into saying something that they could accuse him of either politically or of Jewish law.

**Wednesday** - The Jewish authorities plot as to how best to capture Him and put Him to death before Passover. Judas Iscariot does a deal with them. Jesus is anointed with expensive perfume by a woman at the home of Simon – an ex leper in Bethany.

**Thursday** – Jesus asks His disciples to prepare the Passover Meal in the city. The Last Supper. Jesus is betrayed and arrested by the Temple guards after the meal while with His disciples at the olive grove outside Jerusalem's walls called Gethsemane.

**Friday** – Jesus is brought before the Sanhedrin (the leading priests and teachers of the law) at the Chief Priests house in the early hours where he is eventually charged with blasphemy for admitting to be the Messiah. Peter denies knowing Jesus. The Jewish leaders bind Jesus and bring him to Pilate on charges of sedition. The Governor recognises all the charges laid against Jesus are religiously motivated. Being informed Jesus was a Galilean, Pilate sends Him to Herod Antipas who had the jurisdiction of Galilee and also happened to be in Jerusalem during the festival for an adjudication (according to Luke.)

Herod finds no case against Jesus of leading a revolt either and is returned to Pilate. Pilate offers to release Jesus as part the governor's custom to release one prisoner at Passover time. In desperation the Jewish leaders demand the release of the murderer and insurrectionist Barabbas instead and incite the crowd to call for Jesus to be crucified. Although the Governor finds no cause against Jesus, he hopes a flogging would be sufficient to appease the crowd. With the continued call for the death penalty – and the claim by the Jewish authorities that they have no king but Caesar – and seeing that a riot was about to break out – Pilate hands over Jesus to the soldiers to be crucified. Judas Iscariot tries to hand back the thirty pieces of silver once he recognised what he had done. As this was not accepted he commits suicide. Having been flogged and mocked by the soldiers Jesus is then made to carry his cross to a place outside the city walls called Skull Hill (or Golgotha – in Hebrew or Calvary – in Latin). It is 9 o'clock in the morning when Jesus is crucified with two criminals. The sky darkens over the land for three hours from midday until 3pm when Jesus 'gives up His spirit' with a loud cry and with a resultant earthquake, the curtain in the temple separating the Holy of Holy's is torn in two.



A painting by Andres Ramos of the crucifixion

Joseph from Arimathea, a respected Council member, asks Pilate for Jesus' body so that he could lay Him in his own tomb. As time was pressing before the start of the Sabbath at sundown, Jesus is covered in a single sheet without being embalmed before the tomb is sealed with a stone. Both Mary Magdalene and Joseph's mother see where Jesus was laid.

**Saturday** – When the Sabbath ends the women go and buy burial spices so they can embalm Jesus early on the Sunday morning – while the Jewish leaders go to ask Pilate to have guards posted on the tomb to prevent Jesus' disciples coming to remove his body overnight as Jesus had claimed that he would rise on the third day.

## Sunday – RESURRECTION DAY

The tomb's stone is rolled away and it is empty. The women meet angels who tell them Jesus has risen from the dead. Mary Magdalene meets Jesus and thought him to be the gardener (according to John). The guards report what has happened. The Jewish authorities bribe them to stay silent.

The rest, as they say, is history changed.



**“For God so loved the world, that he gave His only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him will not perish but have eternal life. God did not send His Son into the world to condemn it, but to save it”. John 3: 16/17. (NLT)** Jesus took our sins upon himself on the cross so that all who believe and accept this by receiving Christ into their lives have the assurance of a restored relationship with God, the Father.

From the Newcastle District - Harvest Hand Prayers Group

### Prayer for the Chair

Loving God you have placed us at the centre of your creation to love and serve each other with humility and grace. We pray, knowing that all the days are in your hands, and that you have a plan for your people to flourish, your kingdom to grow and all people to be reconciled to you.

So Lord we pray for the new Chair of our Newcastle-upon-Tyne District. We know you go ahead of us in this process and that you have already been working in the hearts and minds of those who have the right character and skills to fulfil this role. We pray for those who are discerning your will that they may respond with clarity, enthusiasm, and commitment, being guided by Your Spirit in all wisdom and truth.

We pray for the nomination committee who will meet with candidates. May they too know the guidance of Your Spirit leading them in all wisdom, truth and compassion. We pray for open minds and a sense of clarity for those who will interview, assess and support candidates through the recruitment process. We pray that they would clearly recognise your will and identify the right person to take on the role of District Chair and lead the people of this District in its next phase.

Loving God, Your will be done. Your Kingdom come. Amen





**Tynedale**  
Methodist Circuit

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

Hexham Trinity  
Hexham West End  
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 Summer 2024 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 Friday 17<sup>th</sup>. May 2024 please**