

North Shields and Whitley Bay Methodist Circuit

Welcome to our Circuit Newsletter—letting you know news from the Circuit, and Methodist churches at the coast—North Shields, Cullercoats Broadway, Fishermen's Mission, St John's, Seaton Sluice and Monkseaton

Summer 2024

A Message from Jona



Greetings from Ponteland, but not for long! As you are no doubt aware, I will shortly be taking on the role of Chair of the Newcastle District, and with it the family will be moving to the District manse in Fenham.

I never imagined that I would take on such a role, but when God calls there's not much else you can do! Chair was never a role I'd sought or considered, but when Stephen said he was stepping down I began to experience a 'divine disquiet' deep within; a sense of feeling unsettled, knowing that it wouldn't go until I submitted an application for the role. So I applied believing I was being obedient, but never expecting to be appointed. God works in mysterious ways! But this has been the story of my journey, God calling me a step at a time to take on a role I never particularly wanted or sought. God called me to be a preacher, then to ministry, then to Superintendency, and now to Chair. Had I been shown the full picture at my call to preach I would have run a mile, but God works in us, shaping us, and calling us to the next step when we're ready for it-whatever that next step might be. All I have done is continue to say 'yes.' Might God be calling you to anything? Is there anything you need to say 'yes' to?



I was asked about my favourite plant. I'm not a gardener, and don't really have a favourite plant but I have happy memories of strolling through olive groves in Italy feeling a deep peace within myself and with the world. So I'm choosing an olive tree.

God Bless you all, Jona

Image Pixabay

North Shields Wondering-a Progress Report by Rob Wylie

Background-I have been tasked with exploring what Methodism might look like in North Shields town centre, and making links within the community. Re-development of the town has, and is taking place. Renovation work has been completed in Northumberland Square, Howard Street and the new Transport Hub. Work is underway to link the town to the Fish Quay, and plans have been released by the council for changes to Bedford Street.

Hawkeys Lane (i.e. North Shields Methodist Church) finds itself situated on the edge of the town centre and as such its relationship to the town is somewhat limited, although there are links and the premises is used extensively by the local community and the church. Historically Methodism was very strong in the town centre (see the Lent reflections from 2023 'Where the Lost Things Go' for info).

The questions and musings in my mind as I have walked the streets, visited places, and spoken to people are, where are the gaps? What is happening? Where are the opportunities? Who are the people of peace? Who/what have potential resources to share?

So, contacts I have made

MAPPS/Little Community Hub is the main group I have become involved with. It is a small independent charity doing work around mental health, offering several sessions a week, including a general drop in and men's and women's groups.

Age UK have recently reopened their premises, although the cafe is not going to reopen.

Living Well With Cancer has a cafe downstairs and also has a room upstairs for activities

Oaktrees is the base for Changing Lives in North Shields. An addiction charity, it holds regular group and sessional work with participants and has a counselling service that goes out to people's homes.

North Shields Churches Together organises various events in the town around Christmas and Easter particularly. I have met with Revd Helen Young, Assistant Curate at St Peter's Balkwell and St John's Percy Main. She facilitates the group. I have been asked to take a lead in the Good Friday act of witness in Northumberland Square, North Shields.

North Shields 800 Year Anniversary I have attended this planning committee, which is chaired by Alan Campbell MP, on behalf of NSCT.

St. Columba's URC I met with the Minister but as he retires soon, there will be changes. They have been trying to employ a part time children's and youth worker with little success.

St. Cuthbert's Catholic Church are active in the community including facilitating a Citizen's Assembly.

North Shields Baptist Church ran a beer and Carols evening at one of the pubs before Christmas that I attended and supported. They are involved with asylum seekers through New to the UK and Nite Bite.

Enigma Tap micro pub is the venue for 'Mariners and Marras,' the community singing group I am part of. We sing at various events in and around North Tyneside-usually with a heritage angle

The Local Authority hosted an event to get local business and local people's thoughts on the future of the town, which I attended. **Cultural Quarter** based in Howard Street, North Shields is a partnership between North Tyneside Council and the North of the Tyne Combined Authority. They

have brought together entrepreneurs, artists and businesses and its aim is to celebrate North Tyneside.

Fisherman's Mission on the Fish Quay, North Shields has a long history of involvement with the fishing community. I have had ongoing conversations with them.

UP! Board (working with the Harry and Bridget Gallagher) is a community engagement charity which produces a monthly magazine which hosts positive news stories locally and further afield. I hope to widen the reach of this via the circuit.

Fish Quay I met with Anne Morrell and Eva Walker to talk and share about what and how we can collaborate. Anne has good links with the Low Lights centre.

I have also had a few separate interesting faith conversations with individuals I have met in these places over the last few months. There are also other venues and organisations I would like to connect with, so will do this over the next few weeks and months.

I am now studying the Methodist Church's 'Church on the Margins' material to get some theological underpinning of any future opportunities. This course I think would be useful for the future in other contexts that we are operating in.

Themes from Church on the Margins are—

- Vision and Values
- Creating Connections
- Nurturing Communities
- Sharing the Gospel
- Seeing Transformation

I am also attending a fully funded coaching course through the District Mother House and will be in regular contact with Anne Morrell there.



Reflections

1. There are many ways that people are being supported in the town, but there are also many more people who do not access the various activities, or seek support.
2. There may also be other organisations working in the town that I haven't come into contact with yet.
3. There is lack of a neutral physical space in the town i.e. there is no community centre in the town.
- 4 The churches working together are strong, although unsure that they know about what's going on locally.
5. Lots of buildings are potentially 'mothballed,' up for sale or to let.
6. 'Gentrification' could be a real issue as the town develops.
7. A steady increase of the night time economy could happen.
8. There is a distinction between the Fish Quay and the town centre and not just geographically.

Rob Wylie

A Chance to Shape the Future of our Circuit



To quote from the Methodist Handbook: ‘The role of circuit steward is an important one in the life of the Methodist Church. It is also a personal vocation and part of an individual’s discipleship: how we respond to God’s love in Christ. Discipleship is—or should be—at the root of all that we find ourselves doing in the service of the Church and the world. This includes serving as a circuit steward.’

My name is Martin Shaw and currently I’m our senior Circuit Steward. I want to share a little of my story and what it means to be a Circuit Steward. I’m currently in my second stint in the role. Interestingly, there is no blueprint for becoming a circuit steward. Previously I’ve been a house group leader, but I’ve never held any other church role, steward or otherwise. What I do bring to the role is a passion for our circuit; a desire to see it adapt to new circumstances;

to grow and thrive. I’ve also spent a career in public service so am able to bring experience of project management and strategic planning to the table.

Not many of us are fluent in Methodist management speak so I think it’s worth setting out the general purpose of the role.

The circuit is a key structure in Methodism. It is to circuits, not churches, that presbyters and deacons are stationed. Methodism acknowledges that it is the circuit that is ‘the primary unit in which local churches express and experience their interconnexion in the Body of Christ, for purposes of mission, mutual encouragement and help.’(SO 500(1)). Together, the circuit stewards exercise a responsibility for the more practical aspects relating to this ‘interconnexion’ (such as property and finance), alongside a pastoral ministry to the ministers and their families. They share collective responsibility and oversight for the ‘spiritual and material well-being of the Circuit’ (SO 531(1)), alongside the Superintendent and other ministers in their circuit. Within our Circuit the main responsibilities of Circuit Stewards are—

- *Exercising a general pastoral care for the circuit staff and their families, and being an active member of the leadership team, which meets every two months or so*
- *Attending Circuit Meetings (approximately quarterly)*
- *Having a general understanding of the five churches in the Circuit*
- *Developing a vision and plan for mission within the Circuit, ensuring appropriate consultation*

There are also specific duties relating to circuit life that circuit stewards are expected to share between them:

- Finances and the circuit fund
- Invitations and appointments
- Manses
- Meetings, eg Church Councils, Circuit Meetings and District Synods.

I’m sure that as you read that list, you’re thinking the role of a circuit steward sounds pretty demanding. But it is a huge privilege to be able to support and shape the circuit in response to the needs and challenges of its local area.

We have an amazing leadership team, comprising our two presbyters (Eva and David), our Operations Manager and Treasurer (Colin) and our circuit Stewards (Roger and I, but we are thankful that Sheila Gibbon has offered to join the team from September). This is a team that works together, sharing and using our various gifts and skills. We support each other and share a common goal.

We need to be proud that we are part of a dynamic, exciting circuit. But let me be honest, having just two Circuit Stewards is just not enough. We are coping and getting by, but if we had a few more willing hands, the collective burden would be much lighter and we could do so much more as a circuit.

We take collective responsibility for the circuit, but there is room to grow specific skills and specialisms. No two Circuit Stewards will have the same skill set but combined with the skills of others, they enable the development of God's work in the circuit.

Whilst there is no blueprint for being a Circuit Steward, my personal belief is that we need people who:

Have a love and hope for our Circuit

Are willing to get stuck in and help drive our vision forward

Can bring basic organisational skills to the task

Are prepared to offer a few hours per week

Please, please, please give this your prayerful thought and consideration. If you think God is calling you to this challenge then please have a chat with myself or one of the leadership team. And if it isn't for you, can you think of some who might be suitable? Please show them this article and give them a nudge! We are on an amazing, exciting journey in this Circuit, but we desperately need a few more willing hands to help bring our vision to life.

Martin Shaw

Senior Circuit Steward



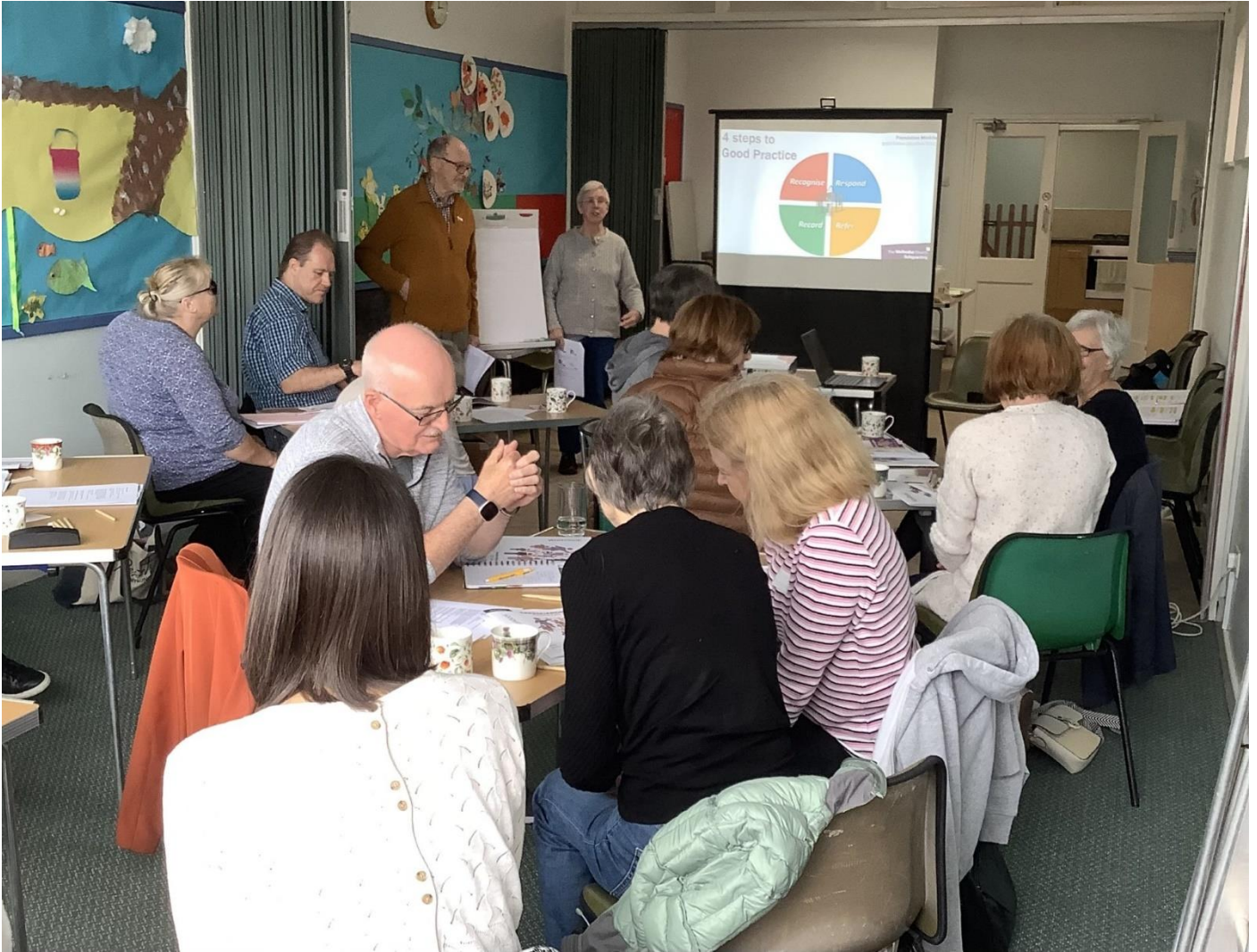
'Sea Soul' is the name of a new Pioneering project overseen by the Newcastle District Mother House as part of the New Places for New People strategy. The focus of the work is to explore spirituality with people connected with the sea—those who visit the beautiful Northeast beaches for walks, swimming and other activities. Rob & David are helping me to develop this.

Along with many others I took up sea swimming during the Covid pandemic & have been addicted to it ever since. I sea swim in shorts (or 'skins') 2+ times per week, all year round for the past four years.

I have been a lay-worker in the Bede Circuit for the past twelve years, and currently work solely at a drop-in coffee shop three days per week in South Shields called Grace Place where I support guests and develop faith expressions.

Ian Stimpson

Safeguarding Training



Safeguarding Training Session at Fishermen's Mission, Cullercoats

WHY DO I NEED TO DO SAFEGUARDING TRAINING?

.....is what many ask before the Training, but afterwards , many know why .

Some who have come to a session reluctantly and are feeling anxious about what it will involve , have later said that they were surprised to have enjoyed it, and were glad they came.

From all the feedback we have received over many sessions, the majority of people feel much more aware of the issues and more confident after the session, in knowing what our policies are, and how to respond if ever a Safeguarding situation arises.

Those who have previously attended safeguarding training in a different context appreciate the value of the training as it specifically applies to the Church .

Some people prefer to do the training 'on line ' provided by the region, others prefer to come to a 'Face to Face 'session at a local Church, but however you prefer to learn , you should become more confident in how to keep everyone safe. Please do take the opportunity to attend a session if you are asked to do so. If you are asked to 'refresh your training after four years you won't be doing the same training twice. The training is revised and updated every few years. The current training recognises the importance of keeping our volunteers safe .

All the Trainers are grateful for the way that everyone has responded so positively to the training , for all the practical and administrative support, and for the generous hospitality offered by our churches so that we can offer the sessions locally .

SAFEGUARDING IS EVERYONE'S RESPONSIBILITY.

and I hope we will all do whatever we can to keep everyone safe in all churches and projects .

If you have any questions, please do ask.

Thank you

Linda Eccles (Circuit Safeguarding Officer)

Situations Vacant



Do you know anyone who can help with Circuit Property?

Dear friends.

In the last edition of Circuit News, we included an article explaining how we are working together as a Circuit to make the most of the people and skills we have, to better manage our property portfolio. Setting up our Circuit Wide Property Group is really helping us to

understand what work is needed and more importantly to share our experience, knowledge and good practice. We've created a circuit trade directory, which we are updating on a regular basis, based on our experiences of the contractors we use. This is helping us to find recommended professionals when we need them. Working together as a Circuit Team is definitely showing benefits.

With six church buildings and three manses to manage, there's quite a lot of property work to do in our circuit. But as a group we recognise that all those involved in managing our circuit property are under pressure. It's a reducing pool and it's often hard to find help.

We are currently looking at several ways to improve this, including closer links to our District; exploring the possibility of cooperation with the wider voluntary sector and even the possibility of contracting in private sector support.

But we also need to fully explore the possibility of encouraging more of our own church family to lend a helping hand. We'd like to start the ball rolling by trying to identify all those who have a heart or skill in property issues.

Just as we have produced a trade directory, it would be wonderful if we could produce a similar list of folk who are happy to do the odd job around the circuit. It might be you can only offer support to one particular building, or you might feel you are able to work more widely across the circuit. We really need to know who's out there and what you feel able to offer.

This is just the start of the process. But if you have a practical skill, you feel you can offer, or just as importantly, if you would be happy to help with some administration, please can you let us know?

For now, all we need to know is:

- Who you are
- Your contact details
- Skills you feel you can offer
- Whether you might be tied to one location or happy to work more widely

Please send your information to Colin Raistrick, our Operations Manager at

stjohnsmethodistoffice@gmail.com or call on 0191 251 2355

This won't be tying you to anything, but just starting the conversation.

Please give this your prayerful thought. We need all the help we can get!

Many thanks

Martin Shaw, Senior Circuit Steward

Prayer Dove



What does friendship mean to you? Who comes to mind when the word is mentioned. For many of us the word brings memories of Joy alongside sadness both for those we have loved and lost. Jesus speaks of friendship highly putting it at the heart of his death on the Cross giving his life for others.

A group of Prisoners of War were working on the infamous Burma Railway during World War II when one of the Japanese guards shouted that one of the shovels was missing. The soldier demanded to know which prisoner had stolen or hidden the shovel. "All die! All die!" he shrieked, cocking and aiming his rifle at the prisoners. At that moment one man stepped forward, and the guard clubbed him to death with his rifle while he stood silently to attention. When they returned to camp, the tools were counted again, and no shovel was missing. (*Ernest Gordon, Miracle on the River Kwai*)

As we remember and give thanks for friends and friendship, we give thanks for Jesus a friend who is always true.

Amen

John Morley, Layworker amongst older people

Celebrating the Gardens in the Circuit

St John's



We now have two volunteer gardeners—myself and John Cuggy who spend a lot of time attending to the garden here at St John's Methodist Church, and we do try hard to ensure that it always looks its best. Because it borders onto Ilfracombe Gardens we feel that it is very important to keep it looking as good as possible. Passers-by have been known to comment on how nice it looks, and we have even had the odd offer of gardening jobs if we have any spare time..... we don't!

We both find it very satisfying - especially in the fine weather— but if (as sometimes does happen!) the weather is not on our side, we join the maintenance team who concentrate on inside jobs and we give them a hand. Strangely, the reverse doesn't seem to happen, and there is never any obvious burning desire on their part to help us pull weeds up, etc!

The worst job? Without any hesitation the worst job is getting rid of all the weeds round the perimeter of the car park. The best job? Difficult to choose, but either trimming the hedges at the front, or getting new plants established as we try to get even more colour into the garden.

There are several shrubs which have been donated over the years in memory of loved ones who are no longer with us. There are some very special memories in the garden. Not many people may know this but there are several tubs in front of the church hall facing the road which have many different types of herbs growing in them and these can be used as required.

We also try to keep the 'Flower Ladies' supplied with suitable greenery for their floral creations. Certain shrubs are left to suit their requirements. The trick is to remember which ones!

So—on a Monday morning—if you are passing and see a couple of dedicated men busy in the church garden it will be us. Unless, of course, we are having a tea break!

Charles Hedley

Cullercoats Methodist Church



I first joined the CMC gardening team in response to a stewardship 'Time and Talents' appeal in the early 1980's. Reverend Philip Beuzeval was Minister at the time and was the inspiration for much of the planting structure of the CMC garden with its many trees and shrubs. Subsequent team leaders have all added something to the garden—one favoured bedding plants; another coniferous shrubs and shrub roses. My favourite planting has been spring bulbs, namely snowdrops and tete a tete daffodils—both signs that winter is ending and spring is just around the corner.



Three of the current team with greenhouses overwinter some of the tender plants and grow many of the summer bedding plants and perennials. All the team members over the years (several no longer with us) have made their mark on the garden in a variety of ways, some taming runaway shrubs, some adding favourite plants, and all of us engaged in the never ending task of weed control! Probably the most challenging aspect this year!

Some areas of the garden are special. We have a border of Silver Jubilee roses, to mark the church's 25th anniversary and a small border of Golden Anniversary roses to mark the church's 50th anniversary. There are also trees, shrubs and roses planted in memory of past church members, several of whose ashes are buried in the garden.

Over the years we have been fortunate to win awards, firstly in the Northumbria in Bloom competition and more recently in the North Tyneside in Bloom competition.

How does the current team operate? We meet around 10am on a Tuesday morning throughout the year. This has been the practice since 1981, so why change? We seemingly have a division of labour: the menfolk tend to prefer hedge cutting, shrub pruning and lawn mowing where they can play with their mechanical tools, whereas the female gardeners, plant, weed, hoe and fork over the borders.

We reward ourselves with a coffee/tea break and biscuits after gardening and celebrate birthdays with a cake or scones. Some people think this is the best part of the gardening!

In conclusion, Tuesday mornings have become almost sacrosanct and we all enjoy working together. Our reward is the knowledge that passers-by comment on how much they enjoy and feel their spirits uplifted by the colour and beauty they see, as it brightens up the gloomiest of days.

Lynda Prosser

From Rob Hufton

Mark 8:27-30

Peter gets it wrong again and again but each time he gets put back together again.

Last week I went to the annual Spectrum Conference (SPECTRUM usually comes up first if you Google it). It's a gathering of supernumerary ministers, their spouses or widows, as well as ministers who are still in the 'active' work, together with lay people who are being paid to work for the church or who are volunteers.' The idea of Spectrum is to offer a time and space where we can think about our faith and discover new insights into what we do and don't believe and try to plot a course in a changing world.

We had a busy three days and were challenged to think radically about the future of the Church. In one of the sessions we thought about Discipleship and our speaker Michael Wakelin (ex-head of BBC religion—Google for his CV) made five suggestions about what being a good disciple might look like. Very briefly they are—

Spend time with Jesus—This means placing ourselves in the presence of Jesus. Michael told us about Christopher Jamison who is a monk who became well known for his TV series called The Monastery in which people explored whether they had a calling. Now he is in charge of the Benedictine Order in this country. Years ago Christopher decided to deliberately spend five minutes every day with Jesus by reading the gospels, praying, meditating. Soon five minutes became ten and so on. Now he says it was the most colossal decision of his life

Be expectant—Michael compared this idea with bird watching where nothing seems to happen. The secret is to remain observant and alert because God is talking all the time. It's a matter of looking and listening to what's going on around us. Be on the edge of your seat. It is demanding but if we remain expectant and attentive things do and will happen.

Do something—Michael told stories of two people who had taken on remarkable things. A former colleague at the BBC went to South Africa to research the work of the Winnie Mabosa Foundation which feeds thousands of orphans in South Africa. Lisa was so impressed that she left the BBC and went to work for the foundation.

The Rev Inderjit Bhogal was raised a Sikh, but when he and his family moved to England in the 1960s, there were just two Sikh temples in the whole country—and none near his home in Dudley. With no prospect of being able to attend a gurdwara, he found the nearest place of worship, which happened to be a Methodist chapel. The church made him 'feel really welcome,' a stark contrast to the racism he experienced from other parts of British society at the time. He started attending regularly, becoming 'captivated by the story of Christ' in the process and ultimately, converted to Christianity. What stood out most to Inderjit was Jesus' love for those on the margins. 'Jesus spent most of his time with those rejected by others, the most excluded.' Christ's expectation is that his followers should support 'the least of these brothers and sisters of mine.' Inderjit realised that the most unwanted are refugees, fleeing danger yet often feared as 'other' by those who understand little of where they come from or what they have endured. So twenty years ago, Cities of Sanctuary came into being and now more than 150 towns, cities, villages and local authorities are committed to being places of welcome. Of course these are big things but we can all do something.

Say yes—This draws on the story of the angel Gabriel visiting Mary to tell her she will have a son. Michael asked what would have happened if she had said 'no.' Countless people through history have said 'yes' when they have responded to the challenges of being human –caring for the suffering, the lonely, the sad, often in the simplest of ways. The church is good at that.

Be Faithful—Michael told us two more stories of women he knew who had experienced disastrous things in their lives. One had married for love but her husband began to abuse her violently and the relationship ended in divorce. Another was a successful business woman but through no fault of her own, the business failed and she ended up bankrupt. She eventually was able to pay her debts but it was a dreadful experience. Throughout their ordeals both women affirmed that God had always been with them and they continued to have faith in God.

These things broke both women. But Michael reminded us that being broken is part of life. We are designed to be broken but we can mend. He then told us about kintsugi. It's the old Japanese art of mending broken pottery and means 'golden joinery.' Broken pieces of pottery are stuck together with a precious liquid resin which acts as a lacquer and then gold dust is applied. The mend deliberately draws attention to where the broken pieces of the pot were brought back together. The result is a bowl or vase that is more beautiful, more complex and more valuable than the original piece. The repair becomes part of the story of the object, rather than something to hide. Kintsugi not just repairs the object but highlights the damage. Rather than being rejected and thrown away, the imperfections of the broken piece are acknowledged and used to create a work of beauty and greater worth.

We can and do break for many reasons. We all have been broken at one point or another in our lives, our hearts crushed and being let down, even betrayed. It's part of our story as individuals and the story of our faith.

For disciples like Peter, again and again he is broken because he doesn't understand what Jesus is doing. He is restored but the marks of what happened live with him and that allows him to move on and deepens his relationship with Jesus.

Soon we will be remembering the first anniversary of our minister John Mason and his wife Sue and the family. It wasn't just his family and friends who were broken by his long illness and death. As a church community we were broken too. With the passing of time, we have begun to heal. But we remain marked by what happened. John's life among us remains part of us. The repair is part of our history.

So it is with our imperfections and flaws. The story of our faith is about healing and renewal. Brokenness comes with being human. We are marked by it but through those experiences and the work of God's grace in us our discipleship can be affirmed and deepened but still carry the scars.

Rob Hufton, May 2024



AROUND THE CHURCHES

ST JOHN'S

The **Methodist Church** 



St John's hosted a summer meal on Thursday 4th July—an auspicious day not just for that! Over eighty people from the church, the local community and other churches attended and many sent their thanks for the delicious food afterwards.

Noreen



CULLERCOATS METHODIST CHURCH (CMC)

Since Easter we have been busy at CMC. At our Easter Sunday morning service there was a treasure hunt for tiny little Jesus figures. We were challenged to 'look for Jesus in unexpected places.' We have gone on doing that being surprised by Jesus and finding him in and outside CMC.

There have been changes in the last few months.



On Sunday April 14th we said a big thank you to Julie Esson our Church Administrator on her retirement. As Julie, Andy and Anna were moving to Lincolnshire a month later it was also a goodbye and thank you to all three of them. Carolin Maule joined the Church Team as our new Church Administrator, and we have all enjoyed getting to know her and her younger son who is in the Church Playgroup. Karen Morley has been a big encouragement to our Family Work. At the start of May, Karen and her team began a new Toddler group on Friday afternoons. The Property guys worked hard to provide new storage for toys and equipment and we have been delighted to meet lovely parents and carers with fun toddlers and gorgeous babies. Karen organised a Family Picnic on Sunday June 23rd in the garden and on the carpark. It was a beautiful day and families from church, Toddlers, Uniformed Organisations and the community joined together to play games, chat, eat and have fun.

Representatives from North Shields, St John's and CMC met for the first time with Eva and Karen to plan content across the three Messy Churches. We hope this will help Karen's work but also give support and encouragement as we share together.

We have a beautiful Prayer Room at CMC which is open every morning for private prayer. It is just inside the entrance foyer. Recently it was decided that this would also be our pre-service Vestry. Our Techy boys have fitted it up with audio visuals so that it can be used during the service too and one visiting Mum and Baby has given it a trial run. When Earsdon Methodist Church closed, we were pleased to take some beautiful china and Flower vases.

We open our doors to the Community in many ways—

On Saturday 11th May our Art Club held its Annual Art Exhibition. It's always a delight for the excellent work on display and the lovely refreshments. It was a very busy morning with lots of people enjoying time together. On Sunday 19th May, Pentecost Sunday, All-in-Worship had a Café-style Birthday Party Service with surprise gifts to represent the Holy Spirit; a water feature, a wind machine and a flaming Bible. As usual AIW brought many people together from the church family to worship, celebrate and eat cake.

Our annual Green Market on Saturday 24th May included an enormous plant sale which was very well supported. We are a Silver Eco Church and encourage each other to green our environment, repurpose, recycle, and reuse. Half the profits from this went to ALL WE CAN. One of the highlights of our Worship and Learning has been the Methodist Church's June Bible Month study of Genesis. We made use of the daily Bible reading notes and Preaching and Cell group materials.



A Hustings for the General Election was held on Sunday June 23rd in the Church. It was organised by the Whitley Bay and District Churches Together. Many came from the Churches and area to hear six of the local candidates answer questions.

These are some highlights; from week to week through the Worship, Life and Mission of the Church we learn, share, love, and reach out to God through groups and as individuals. July has begun and we look forward to August and September.

Some of our members participated in the Cullercoats Festival in bands and choirs and lots of us enjoyed the varied programme. Our building hosted dance classes and presentations. CMC is on the Cullercoats Festival Tapestry which is at present on display in the front window of Church for the Summer. Do come and see it close up.

On Sunday 7th July we held our Morning Service and General Church Meeting where we celebrated people who were retiring from offices—John Brown and George Chapman as Stewards, Andy Esson as Church Treasurer and Peter Hutton as Property Secretary. We welcomed and thanked God for Lorraine Crowther, Carolyn Forrest and Pat Maddison who became Stewards, Chris Brown Treasurer, and Dave Wilson Baker Property Steward. We also thanked Gillian Tullock for her long service as a Music Lead. She is stepping back but will continue to contribute to music in CMC.



On Thursday 18th July 7-9pm the Church singing group and band will hold their Summer Praise Evening. Many people are working hard preparing for Summer Special 24 our Annual Holiday Club July 23rd-26th. This year we have a Science based theme WONDERLAB. Summer Special is probably the biggest event of our year bringing in families and volunteers for four mornings of mess, madness, crafts, singing and Bible stories, videos and drama, as we all learn together about our wonderful God who made our wonderful world for us to enjoy!

Our Church Anniversary is on September 15th. We have invited Rev Dr Peter Webster to preach. He and his wife Janet who were former CMC members. We plan an Anniversary Family lunch and an evening Talent Show too and so another Methodist year will begin.

Sue

FISHERMEN'S MISSION AND COAST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

At the end of March a coffee morning was held at the Fishermen's Mission, organised by our Coast Congregational friends. This was well attended, both by friends from the Circuit and the local community, and all proceeds were donated to North Tyneside Carers' charity.

On Saturday 15th June, the Fishermen's Mission acted as one of the venues for the Cullercoats Festival (the first in 100 years!), and we hosted Family Board Games plus refreshments. In spite of a poor forecast, it turned out to be a mostly dry day and there were lots of visitors and locals out and about throughout the day, visiting the various venues. Lots going on, something for everyone!

It was good to see parents, children and sometimes grandparents, sitting down together to play board games, which seemed to be enjoyed by all and the games were available to purchase afterwards if desired. Quite a few people came in saying they had passed by lots of times but had never been in the Mission, and could they please have a look around. So it was a good opportunity to welcome them in and show them around, and give a short potted history of how the Mission started in 1905, although not in the present building.

Our numbers attending on a Sunday have been depleted slightly recently due to several members of our congregation being under the weather and unable to attend for various reasons, but we hope and pray they will all make a good recovery and be back with us before too long. We are blessed to have the ministry of our local preachers, as well as our two ministers and a few visiting preachers, and hope this will continue well into the future.

Pat

NORTH SHIELDS

The church family and friends continue to work enthusiastically for our chosen charities which this year are the Northumberland Mountain Rescue Team and our recently improved heating system. We are delighted that the new heating system will be cost effective and best of all it can be managed remotely by Terry from the comfort of his own home. How clever is that!!

Since the last magazine we have seen an increase in people coming to worship as they have felt loved and welcomed. Only these past weeks we have welcomed an Iranian family with their children who are attending Sunday school and again, feel loved and supported by our church family. This will be the third Iranian family we have had the pleasure to serve and care for.

Once a month Rev Linda Eccles leads a short service in Kingfisher Residential Care Home. There are a few of us from church meet with Linda to help with the singing of hymns. It's a joy to be part of this service and to watch some of the residents join in.

We are delighted to welcome Dave Wilson-Baker, our recently appointed caretaker/cleaner and who is doing a fantastic job. Nothing is a bother to Dave and he just quietly gets on with what he has to do. Thanks for all you do Dave and welcome to the North Shields church family.

Summertime Discussion—

Four Wednesday mornings to think about what Faith really means; An introduction to the thinking of some modern theologians.

Each week at 10am there will be a simple introduction to a captivating book, followed by time for discussion (accompanied by tea/coffee and cake).

Week 1, 31st July 2024

Joyce Firth will introduce the book 'What's the Point of Theology?' by Alister McGrath

Week 2, 7th August

Rob Hufton will introduce 'Cranky, Beautiful Faith for Irregular (and Regular) People' by Nadia Olz-Weber

Week 3, 4th August

Richard Firth will introduce 'Do I Stay Christian?' by Brian McLaren

Week 4, 21st August

David Wynd will introduce 'Velvet Elvis' (Repainting the Christian Faith)' by Rob Bell

Jean

MONKSEATON

The fellowship at Monkseaton continues to flourish. The atmosphere on a Sunday morning always feels warm and relaxed, a place among friends to share worship.

We once again joined with other churches to share the story of Good Friday outside in the village. Before the service the children met and made various crafts which Eva incorporated into the service. It was a beautiful service and well attended, then it was back to church for refreshments.

In May we celebrated our Anniversary with a coffee morning—scones, cake and a quiz. It was a great opportunity to catch up with friends and Families. We were blessed on the Sunday by a very emotional service led by Linda Eccles. Our church premises are still being used on a regular basis—Toddlers, Uniform Organisations, Ladies Group, Scottish Dancing and occasionally a Music Group. A very recent request was made to use the church once a month on a Saturday as a surgery by the local Councillor.

The Vaccine Clinic finished at the end of June, but Sami will be back doing more vaccines and flu jabs in the Autumn.



Monkseaton Fellowship were very kindly invited to a Community Meal hosted by St. John's on Thursday 4th July. Six of us attended and were given a very warm welcome. The variety of dishes and desserts catered to the dietary needs of everyone. Well done and many thanks. On a Wednesday morning five members attend a Bible Study Group at a member's home. During one of the meetings we were able to listen to Rev. Eva speaking on Radio Newcastle. She spoke of how she found God and where her Christian Journey took her. Amazing! We at Monkseaton are so blessed to have her as our Minister.

God Bless, Margaret.

SEATON SLUICE



Seaton Sluice Methodists are a bit out on a limb literally. We are part of the North Shields and Whitley Bay Circuit, but sit in Northumberland outside the North Tyneside area of the rest of the circuit. So at times this perception of disconnection can be felt negatively and sometimes makes us self-reliant and determined. Here in Seaton Sluice as exists in other congregations, in churches of all denominations, we are small in number, but persist with the Christian life we are called to lead. Sometimes there is a dismissiveness of the existing congregations, ways and expectancy of change. All parts make the whole and it needs to be a joint journey together. Technology and new is not always the way, but change is. We need to be bold ourselves and also hold the hand of those taking the risk of change.

The chapel has a regular coffee morning every Saturday between 10-12 and is well attended. The Saturday Special was an idea for giving something special to the people of Seaton Sluice and it has been so once month (roughly). To connect with our local area and the community we are called to serve. We need to give love (unconditionally) in whatever form we can. In sharing what we have and can provide, we are doing Jesus's work. In doing this we will grow our church family and own faith. We are created in the image of God to do good.

Seaton Sluice is a fishing village and Christian life has been equated to fishing many times. Fishing is a act of faith, it is about persistence. Fishing is uncertain and unknown. The not knowing but trusting in your instinct and knowledge that you will catch something. So we need to spread our nets and have faith and perseverance to catch God's love and pass it on. Saturday Special is just a small part of us casting our nets in faith in Seaton Sluice

The first Saturday Special event was in February in the chapel hall and originally was going to be pancakes on Shrove Tuesday. However, it was decided that due to the dark evenings, availability of members and timings it would be better to join it to the existing Saturday coffee morning. And so it was, and Pancakes were served and enjoyed, and it was decided to do another event. Hot cross buns followed, breakfast buns then cream Scones, the last event being sausage/bacon butties. So there you have it, just a small piece of Christian life. As a side note we also produced a prayer slip so people can give their trouble and joys to the chapel to pray for (also GDPR friendly as they give you the request.). The Chapel is just a building, but it is a way of meeting and providing Christian faith for our community. We have Saturday Special visitors who don't attend services and identify as atheists, but this does not matter, we just need to be there and serve and if/when they need us, we can provide God's love. It is about the building AND people. In a world of disconnected Information Technology, meeting together with other human beings is what we are called to do. Creating events together teaches us about each other and how to get along (not always easy but that is life). It is difficult to step outside our perceived ability and inexperience. Age and restrictions exist, but we need to not just do what is easy, or what we can get away with and step out of comfort and yet further. So Seaton Sluice Chapel thanks for the work done and the love spread



I go to chapel to feel Gods love and I hope others can too..

Gareth

Published by—
North Shields and Whitley
Bay Methodist Circuit
Reg Charity No 1132438

Do you have a story/article for the next circuit newsletter? Please email it to noreenrees@hotmail.com

or send a hard copy to Noreen C/O St John's Methodist Church, Ilfracombe Gds, Whitley Bay NE26 3ND