Letter from the Superintendent

Dear Friends,

December is a month when the days are short and the nights are cold and dark.
But in the midst of this season, we are reminded of a truth that *the Light of Christ still shines.*

From the very first Christmas, when angels proclaimed joy to shepherds and a star guided wise men, God's light broke into the world's darkness. That light was not just a moment in history—it is a living presence today. Jesus Himself said, *"I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."*

This December, we are invited to carry that light into our homes, workplaces, and communities. It may be through a kind word to someone feeling lonely, a prayer for those in need, or a simple act of generosity. The Light of Christ is not diminished by the shadows around us—it shines brighter because of them.

Let us remember that light is meant to be shared. Just as candles can ignite one another without losing their flame, our faith and love can inspire others. And I was very much inspired by the testimonies of the young people who took part in a mission trip to Romania during half-term week. Please read the article about it.

When we reflect Christ's light, we become part of God's ongoing story of hope, peace, and joy.

As we celebrate Advent and Christmas, may we see His light in the faces of those we love, in the beauty of worship, and in the quiet moments of prayer. And may we be bold enough to shine, so that others might see and know the One who came to bring light to the world.

Love and prayers,

Rev Brigitta Steele





Romania 2026: Meeting, not just helping

Back in January, I felt God was asking me to take our young people to Romania, and to do it this year. That left nine months to arrange flights for 19 people, consent forms, risk assessments and fundraising. Some people wondered whether it was too soon, and that was a fair question. I could not shake the feeling that this was right, and sometimes it is worth listening even when others do not hear the same thing.

In October, 14 young people and five leaders from Strathmore Road Methodist Church travelled to the Oradea area in Romania to work alongside the Smiles Foundation. We wanted our young people to see faith in action, not just talk about serving others.

The trip would not have happened without the generous giving of many. The coffee morning, the cake auction, the promise auction, the donations and the prayers all made a difference. Many people who never boarded the plane were part of this trip, and we are very grateful.

Each day, minibuses took us to our base for the day. Almost every day was a different task. We ran games and crafts for children, painted a Lego-themed house, and spent a day pushing older residents in wheelchairs so they could spend time reminiscing. That day included a main road and a very steep hill, which tested everyone's nerves.

Another day, part of the group visited families supported by Smiles. What we saw was difficult at first. We were not there to see how people live, but to meet them where they were and to help. We took food and clothes. One older man had been knocked down by a car and could not afford the operation to repair his leg. We found a pair of crutches in the back of the minibus that none of us remembered packing. He told us he had been praying for crutches all week.

In the evenings the group played pool, danced and ran several games of The Traitors. Every night we held an encouragement circle, where each person said something positive they had seen someone else do that day. It became one of the best parts of the week. I watched the young people step out of their comfort zones and grow in confidence, and I am proud of every one of them.

I went expecting to help. What I found was that we were looked after by the Smiles staff, taught by the people we met, and served by our own group, in one case with a cup of tea every morning. One young person discovered that the energy he is sometimes told to tone down was exactly what a small child needed.

Jesus washed his disciples' feet, and Peter found it hard to accept. I think I am a bit like Peter. I am more comfortable helping than being helped. We did not go to Romania only to help people. We went to meet them, and when you meet people properly, everyone gives and everyone receives.



Two questions for the circuit:

- ***who are you busy helping without ever meeting?***
- ***And who might you need to let serve you?***

Keith Crulley



Blaydon

- **Wednesday 16th December** THE WAY 7pm
- **Sunday 20th December** Café Church 4pm Rev D Charter

Burnopfield

- **Saturday 5th December** Christmas tree blessing 5:30pm at the Brewery field. This is a joint community event with the Anglican church. Refreshments served afterwards.
- **Thursday 10th Decembe**r Christmas Celebration 7pm. This includes videos and songs.
- **Friday 25th December** Christmas Day 10:30am Mrs A Walker

Centenary

- **Sunday 13th December** Christmas All Age worship 10:30am
- **Saturday 19th December** Carols on the Steps with Coffee and Mince pies 10am – 12noon
- **Sunday 20th December** Carol Service 10:30am

Carol Service on the Phone 6pm for details please contact info@centenarymc.org.uk

- **Thursday 24th December** Christmas Eve Carols by Candlelight 7pm, Rev T Buglass
- **Friday 25th December** Christmas Day Christmas Family Worship 10am Mr D Campbell

Fellside



- **Tuesday 1st December** Advent Christmas Nativity "Find 24 houses in Whickham"

(Details can be found at www.fellside.co.uk)

- **Saturday 5th December** Christmas at Bouncy Church

3-4pm Sensory Church, 4:15pm – 5:30pm Bouncy Church & 6-7pm The Hangout.

- **Saturday 12th December** Coffee Morning with Craft Stalls 10am – 12pm
- **Sunday 20th December** Christingle Service 11am Rev B Steele Refreshments from 10:30am

Carol Service 6:15pm Rev B Steele Coffee & Mince Pies after the Service

- **Thursday 24th December** Christmas Eve Nativity Service 5:30pm Rev B Steele
- **Sunday 27th Decembe**r Celebrate Christmas with the team behind Bouncy Church

Sunday Morning Service starting at 10:30am with Tea, Coffee & Croissants 11am Sunday Morning Service.

Ryton

- **Thursday 26th November** - Christmas lights switch on at 4pm Crookhill & Ryton School Choirs Singing Carols and Christmas Songs. Afterwards Refreshments and Crafts for Children.
- **Saturday 5th December** Breakfast with Santa 10am-12pm - £5 to be booked in advance.
- **Sunday 6th December** Service Rev D Charter 10am Jan Pallas will talk about the work of the NSPC.
- **Sunday 20th December** Carol Service 10am Rev J Musiyiwa
- **Thursday 24th December** Carols in the Lanehead pub at 6pm followed by a service in church at 6.30pm
- **Friday 25th December** Christmas Day Service 10am Rev D Charter



Spoor



- **Thurs, Fri & Sat 3rd/4th/5th December** Christmas Tree Festival 10.00am – 4pm. Refreshments available
- **Thursday 24th December** Christmas Eve Carol Service 5pm Rev D Charter

Strathmore Road Methodist Church

All events are held at Strathmore Road Methodist Church, Rowlands Gill, NE39 1HX unless stated otherwise.



- **Monday 7th December** Journey to Bethlehem 1-2:30pm
- **Thursday 10th Decembe**r Carols at Coalies 7:30pm
- **Saturday 12th December** Extravaganza 10am - 2pm
- **Sunday 13th December** Carol Service 6pm
- **Wednesday 16th December** THE WAY 7pm - Blaydon Methodist Church
- **Saturday 19th December** Chopwell's Christmas Cracker 10am - 12 noon
- **Sunday 20th December** Carol Service 10:45am Rev S Lindridge
- **Sunday 20th December** Christingle Service 5pm Rev S Lindridge
- **Sunday 20th December** Chopwell Carol Service 6:30pm
- **Monday 21st December** Winter Solstice, Land of Oak & Iron 3:30pm
- **Thursday 24th December** Christmas Eve, Carol Singing in the Village 10am
- **Thursday 24th December** Midnight Communion, Christmas Eve 11:30pm Rev S Lindridge
- **Friday 25th December** Christmas Day Celebration 10:45am Rev S Lindridge

Unity



- **Saturday 5th December** Afternoon Christmas Tea 2pm
- **Sunday 6th December** Gift Service 10:30am Rev B Steele. Gifts going to the Larder
- **Thursday 10th December** Carol Singing at Wallace House Care Home 2.30pm
- **Sunday 13th December** Community Carol Service at Dunston Community Centre 2:00pm Rev B Steele with the Dunston Silver Band providing the music.
- **Sunday 20th December** Carol Service 10:30am
- **Thursday 24th December** Christmas Eve 4pm Rev B Steele
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Whitehall Road

- **Sunday 20th December** Carols by Candlelight 4pm, followed by refreshments Rev J Musiyiwa
- **Friday 25th December** Christmas Day Family Celebration 10:30am Rev J Musiyiwa
- **Sunday 27th December** Family Carol Service 10:30am

Circuit Event

Monday 28th December BETWIXTMAS CAROL SINGING at the Land of Oak & Iron 2-3pm
Everyone Welcome, bring your voice, your Christmas Cheer and Festive Dress encouraged



The South West Tyneside Methodist Circuit
would like to wish you all a blessed Christmas and a joyful New Year.
As we celebrate the birth of Christ, may His light shine in your homes,
His peace dwell in your hearts, and His love guide us into the year ahead.
May this season bring hope, comfort, and renewal to you and your loved ones.