

Making a Difference Near and Far

Sharing is Caring for the Community at Fellside

Our SHARE community coffee morning at Fellside Church, Whickham runs the last Saturday of each month and this is the eighth year. Each month we nominate a charity and encourage people from the community to help and work with us during the morning. Last month we supported a local youth basketball team, in July we raised funds for our new initiative Bouncy Church and in September we will be donating to Daft as a Brush. Our coffee mornings are well supported by the community including our local MP Liz Twist and we have made connections with local charity groups and organisations.



Coffee, Cake & Chat at Centenary

We held our first Coffee, Cake and Chat morning at Centenary, which was very well attended and we sold out of cakes, but there was plenty of chat to go around. We raised £116 which was very encouraging and we are looking forward to our next session (and we will bring more cake!)

While this is a good fundraiser it is also part of our community outreach, and we hope to engage with our neighbours positively and strengthen our community relationships.

In June, the service at Whitehall Road was moved forward to 9:30, in response to the Circuit's appeal for more flexibility. After the service the congregation stayed behind for refreshments – something that we have not done since lockdown. We think it was a great success as it gave some of the new families the opportunity to chat with church members informally. It is nice to see children in the church again as it has been a while since we had a regular group of youngsters.

Our new friends come mainly from Africa are starting to settle in and feel at home. We hope that they feel welcome in our congregation.

New Ideas Working at Whitehall Road



A Little Support Goes a Long Way

A few years ago, members at Whitehall Road Methodist Church contributed towards buying a laptop for a student in Gambia when his was stolen from his room. His name is Pa Modou Jatta.

A member continued support by paying for Pa's university fees for several years and on Monday 19 June, he finally graduated as top of his class.

Pa has not had an easy life. His father deserted the family when Pa was quite young. Over the years, his mum struggled to pay for his primary and secondary education, but it soon became obvious that Pa was a very bright student.

He has now been offered a place at a University in the USA to do a Master's Degree. However, he needed to obtain a visa to take up the place. On Tuesday 20 June, he had to attend an interview at the American Embassy in Banjul (the Gambian capital). Of all the interviewees that day, only two were granted visas and Pa was one of them. Without help, he would not have got this far – so thank you!



South West Tyneside
Methodist Circuit

AUTUMN NEWSLETTER

2023

Letter from the Superintendent

During Sunday worship over the past year the focus has been primarily on Matthew's gospel. Time and again Matthew tells his readers that Jesus went away to pray, in "a certain place" or "up a mountain". This was clearly a significant part of the relationship Jesus had with his Father God. So much so that his disciples came to him one day and said "Lord, teach us to pray." They had been brought up in the Jewish faith, no doubt attending synagogue each Sabbath and visiting Jerusalem for significant Festival occasions. They would have known, and taken part, in prayers offered in worship, so their request may seem rather strange. As I reflect on this it seems to me that they noticed the particular quality of Jesus' prayer life, and the difference it made to Jesus; they wanted to deepen their relationship with God in a similar way.

Jesus responded by teaching them a pattern that they could use for daily prayer, words known to us as the Lord's prayer. This begins with words acknowledging God as our father, whose name is holy. From that starting place we are encouraged to pray – "Your Kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven." This is nothing less than a prayer for Jesus' mission to continue in and through his disciples, until "At the name of Jesus every knee will bow".

Here in the South West Tyneside Circuit we have summed up our part in Jesus' mission with a simple strapline: 'Share the Love of Jesus: In this time, in this place.' We are all encouraged to pray for one another as we seek to serve God in this way, and to play our part in this ongoing task.

As we start a new church year, I'm writing to ask every member and friend of our Circuit to join in prayer with others in whatever way you can. This could be in a small group in your local church or in a home, joining with others online or on the phone, or making use of printed resources made available to us all.

The Circuit will be going through a period of significant change over the next twelve months, and we seek to do so in response to God's leading. Taking time to step aside from the busyness of life, to spend time with God, as Jesus did, will be fundamental as we seek to discern God's purposes.

With this in mind, a new prayer Zoom will be starting on Wednesday the 6th September at 9am. The Zoom prayer room will be open each week for half an hour. This time will begin with a short introductory prayer and reading, followed by time for individuals to pray as the Spirit leads, closing with a prayer around 9.30am.

In addition, a Circuit prayer diary has been prepared with a different prayer focus for each day. My thanks go to Janet Capstick for her work on this. A copy of this is included with the newsletter for you to use in your own prayer times at home.

This is my prayer, that we will discover more of the love of God, revealed in Jesus in the coming days, and be filled to overflowing with the Holy Spirit, who enables us all to share that love with others.

Yours in Christ, Ann Varker

Children and Youth Work Across the Circuit



In June reps from across the Circuit got together to talk about the children and youth work in our churches.

The evening of encouragement and support highlighting where and how God was working across the area was truly inspirational, with stories of growth in group numbers as well as in faith being shared.

We are hoping our Winter newsletter will have a focus on Children and Youth work across the Circuit so watch this space for more inspirational stories and ideas to use in your churches!

A Focus on Prayer

Zooming to Prayer

As part of the Reimagine Circuit process the team began meeting on Zoom on a Wednesday morning to pray together for the future of the Circuit.

Over time the team realised that this was a convenient way for more of us to pray together, fitting prayer into our busy lives, without the extra time of travelling to meet. We can log on, wherever we are, and spend time together in prayer, before getting back to our everyday tasks.

We hope you will join us weekly on Wednesdays at 9am.

Wednesday 9am

Zoom log in

<https://zoom.us/j/96401530487>

Or Dial In

0300 088 5830

Meeting ID: 964 0153 0487



Stopping Point Shows No Sign of Stopping

"When one day rolls into another, it is good to have a focal point."

Rev Trevor Capstick has been hosting a regular fortnightly session on Zoom - Stopping Point. The aim of the group is to join with others for a time of reflective silence to focus on God. Each session begins with a short reflection, an opportunity to share, moving into contemplative silence with an image to focus on and concludes with a prayer.

This group meets on Zoom the 2nd and 4th Wednesday of the month at TIME TO BE CONFIRMED BY TREVOR? and email trevorcapstick88@gmail.com for the Zoom link.

Find A Quiet Space Together, at Rowlands Gill

Silent prayer, contemplative prayer, contemplation, monastic prayer, centring prayer, Christian meditation, are all terms for what is essentially the same thing, a means of seeking to draw closer to God in stillness.

This is a spiritual practice as old as Christianity itself with many references to meditation in the bible.

To John Main, founder of Contemplative Outreach, 'The important aim in Christian meditation is to allow Gods mysterious and silent presence within us to become more and more not only a reality but a reality which gives meaning, shape and purpose to everything we do, everything we are.'

<https://www.contemplativeoutreach.org/centering-prayer-method/>

The group meets on the 3rd Monday of the month at 7:30pm.



Two or Three at Centenary

Every first and third Saturday of the month, two, three and more, gather at 10am for thirty minutes of prayer, led by various members of the congregation.

There is a simple format, with a reading to reflect on and a loosely structured order, which is often but not always used, praying for our community, the world, mission etc. Once each theme is mentioned, there is then a time for silent or spoken prayer by anyone. We conclude with a blessing, then go and have a cuppa at the coffee morning! Though that's not obligatory.

Those who attend greatly value this time of silence and prayer for others. You are welcome to join us in Centenary, Crawcrook's vestry any time we meet.

Fellside Sides with Prayer

Fellside has new launches in the pipeline but their new in person prayer group has already started to meet!. Giving attendees a place to get together and pray. The group meets weekly on a Monday at 10am and anyone is welcome to join the group.



Groups New & Established Open to New Members

Over the years it has become clear that people learn in different ways, whether reciting the times tables over again, working out chemical formulas with music blasting away, or using mind maps and so on. Wandering and Wondering is an attempt to plug into that knowledge and give people an opportunity to engage with the Bible in a different more visual way. Not everyone has to speak, but all are invited to think with the hope that some conversation will flow.

Each session will begin with a welcome as well as an opportunity to focus on what is about to be shared. After the sharing time the refreshments will follow. Talking of following, if you discover that this style of learning is a good way for you to explore God's word then you are more than welcome to wander to the next session and maybe even invite a friend along, so that hopefully, like Cleopas and his companion on the road to Emmaus, we will walk and wonder about the scriptures as we deepen our faith and understanding of the God who loves us.

Wandering & Wondering

A journey with God around the Circuit, engaging with the Bible in a new way!

Thurs 14th Sept 2:00pm Ravensworth Road
Thurs 28th Sept 7:30pm Strathmore Road
Sun 15th Oct 3:00pm Blaydon Café Church
Thurs 19th Oct 7:30pm Dunston Hill
Sun 5th Nov 10:30pm Greenside Café Church
Wed 22nd Nov 2:00pm Burnopfield
Tues 5th Dec 7:30pm Ryton

With sessions on a different theme every time, so you can wander the Circuit and wonder with us



Boys Brigade Award Achievements

The Boys Brigade has been bringing the word of Christ to young boys in Dunston for 98 years.

Its Captain, Paul Dixon, has been part of the organisation for nearly 50 years, joining when he was 8 years old before becoming Captain around 20 years ago. Paul and his small group of leaders run 4 sections with lads from 5 years old to 16 years old. The BB meets on a Friday night and the lads work towards gaining badges through activities in different categories including Get Active. Get Creative and Get into the Bible.

The older lads work to gain the BBs top awards the Presidents Badge and the Queens Badge with six lads achieving the top award this year. We also run the Duke of Edinburgh award scheme. We also have annual holiday weekends to either Whittonstall or Broomley Grange in Stocksfield.

New members welcome - email admin@swtyneside.org.uk for the details.

Circuit Youth Night Restarts after Summer Break

On the second Sunday of the month, term-time, those of Secondary School age from across the Circuit are invited to join the Circuit Youth Night. Led by Sam Cree the group includes games, activities, a social space and occasional trips!

The group is hosted by Ryton Methodist Church and runs from 6:30-8pm, with a £1 session donation. The first meet up will be on 17th September and we hope to see some new faces here.

If you have any queries please email sam.cree@swtyneside.org.uk

Youth Night

SUNDAY 17TH SEPTEMBER

SUNDAY 15TH OCTOBER

SUNDAY 12TH NOVEMBER

SUNDAY 17TH DECEMBER