

# Knitting Pretty with our Community Projects

## **Keeping Premature Babies Warm with Fellside's Current Scheme**

For four months Fellside are supporting a charity providing premature babies with woollen hats for our local hospitals. The hats are vital to help newborns regulate their temperature during their hospital stays. Often shop-bought hats are just too big for premature babies so these knitted hats are the perfect size.

The pattern can be found on Fellside Church's website [www.fellside.co.uk](http://www.fellside.co.uk) or in the foyer of the church, where there is also a box to drop off the finished hats.

Once you have the pattern you will need a ball of double knit wool and two sized needles: 3 1/4mm and 4mm.

Donations from the whole community are welcome so please pass the pattern on to anyone interested in knitting!

If you are struggling to drop the completed hats off please email [admin@swtynside.org.uk](mailto:admin@swtynside.org.uk)



## **Starting Early to Spread Festive Cheer At Sunnyside**

Sunnyside had a busy December, starting with the Christmas tree being lit by the local councillor, Jonathan Wallace, where the community gathered and sung carols around the Christmas tree.

A children's craft afternoon followed and it was delightful that several families joined the event. The children decorated biscuits and made cards, angels, and decorations. It was great to see new faces and the children enjoyed going into Church to see our display of knitted angels.

The Carols by Candlelight service, now becoming a community fixture, with new and familiar faces attending, raised £300 for The People's Kitchen in the collection - which will help those struggling during this economic crisis!

With the help of local volunteers over **2000 knitted angels** were delivered, this annual project always goes down well in the community, with young and old thrilled when they find an angel around the village spreading festive joy.

Thank you to those who knitted for the 2022 campaign. If you would like to get involved, as thoughts turn to the 2023 Angels, new knitters are always welcome, please email [admin@swtynside.org.uk](mailto:admin@swtynside.org.uk) or visit the website <https://www.swtynside.org.uk/article/230127/sunnyside-christmas-angel-scheme> for a pattern - we even have a crochet pattern available!

## **Knitted Doves Have Flown the Nest in Greenside and Centenary**

In the run up to Christmas, friends of Greenside Café Church, Centenary Craft Club and the local Anglican church made Christmas tree decorations in the shape of knitted doves to give out in our communities as a gift of peace at Christmas.

Some were left around the village of Greenside for people to find and at Centenary, Crawcrook more were handed out at the Singing for the Brain session and to those passers-by who were enjoying listening to the Christmas Carols on the Steps service. We managed to bless over 150 houses in our community spreading peace and goodwill over the festive period.





South West Tyneside  
Methodist Circuit

# SPRING NEWSLETTER

2023

## Letter from the Superintendent

Inspiration can be found in unexpected places! I was reminded of this at a meeting of the church treasurers from around the Circuit earlier this week. We had gathered to look at the Circuit budget for the coming year, and how we will resource that together. Not the most inspirational of topics, you might think!

In January 2022 the treasurers' meeting had acknowledged the struggles of the previous eighteen months for all our churches, and the uncertainty we all felt about the future. However, this year there were already signs of hope to be seen, in the information provided to the Circuit before the meeting: new members made at some of our churches; greater attendance at worship in other places, compared to before the pandemic; and an increase in giving elsewhere.

This year we began the meeting by taking time to think about 2022. All those present were asked to share something from the life of the church for which we could give thanks to God. I wonder how you would respond if asked.

As we went around the room, some gave thanks for new ventures: Brick Church: exploring the Bible through Lego; and Singing for the Brain; others spoke of Warm Spaces open weekly to welcome members of the community. We rejoiced as we heard about new people coming to worship and closer links with community groups.

Before we moved on to look at the finance, we gave thanks to God for 'green shoots' emerging in the life of our churches. I suggested that this is why we do what we do, giving our time, talents and money so that others can hear the good news of Jesus, through word and deed.

Since the meeting I have continued to reflect on our shared experience at that meeting. I am reminded of the words of the prophet Isaiah, who wrote 'See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the desert and streams in the wasteland.' (Isaiah 43: 19)

This morning I noticed the first signs of snowdrops breaking through the soil in the garden. Just a small sign but an important one, that the winter will come to an end with the promise of spring to come. In the same way the green shoots of new life in our



churches are a sign that God is a work, bringing us into a new season that will bear fruit in the months and years to come.

I ask you to join with me in giving thanks for God's steadfast love and faithfulness that has brought us to this moment and look forward to where God will lead us in the days ahead.

Rev Ann Varker

## A Note from Rev Janet Capstick



*A very big thank you to all those of you across the circuit who have sent cards, flowers, plants... and good wishes, during my sick leave.*

*I am sure your encouragement and especially your prayers have helped me through, and will continue to do so as I learn to live with the almost confirmed diagnosis of Meniere's Disease.*

*Thank you, it is a privilege to work in such a caring and supportive circuit. God bless you all.*

# Celebrating those Making A Difference

## April's Angel Award



At a ceremony in the Metro Centre on 19th November, April Lancaster was presented with an 'Angel Award' from Liz Twist MP. Each year Liz gives these awards to those who have gone above and beyond to support their community over the past year, as a way of showing gratitude & support for the work they do.

April accepted the Award saying it was on 'behalf of Café Church'. Liz then spoke of the many things which April and Café Church have done in the village of Greenside. Thank you to April and the supporters of Café Church for their hard work & dedication.

It's great to have this public recognition as well as the gratitude of all us at South West Tyneside Circuit!

## Raising Funds for The People's Kitchen at Christmas



At Spoor Memorial over the Christmas period funds were raised to support The People's Kitchen totalling £781! The church held their Annual Christmas Tree Festival, with local businesses, charities and schools decorating (or in some cases making!) their own Christmas trees. The trees were on display in the church, with festive treats, cakes and hot drinks served to visitors who were also asked to vote for their favourite tree.

Spoor Memorial also held a Christmas party which also contributed to the funds donated. For further information or to donate please visit <https://peopleskitchen.co.uk/>



## The Real World Effects after Virtual Youth Group

At the start of Advent, Junior Church on Zoom welcomed a speaker, Carol, from Gateshead Foodbank. Carol interactively talked about what foodbanks do and how they work. Sam set the group a challenge, to support Gateshead Foodbank during Advent. Sam suggested they could just collect four items to represent the four Sundays in Advent or offer prayer support that is also vital, the help didn't only need to be in donations.

One member of the group, Eva, took on the Advent challenge to the max. She created a box for donations at her church, (Fellside). She encouraged everyone to help fill up the box. Eva got lots of support and the box filled up fast! Eva had so many donations that a visit to Gateshead Foodbank's Warehouse was arranged.

Eva says, "I collected a lot of food and Christmas treats myself and at church and took it to the food bank. We weighed the food on the scales and it weighed 25.63kg! The volunteers were very kind and gave me a tour and told me all about the work they do. I hope to continue collecting after Christmas too."

Sam is very proud of the initiative that Eva showed. We thank all the families who took on the challenge for their donations and prayers. The Foodbank values every donation and each donation helps to make a difference. Well done everyone!

For more information on how you can support Gateshead Foodbank, do look at their website. <https://gateshead.foodbank.org.uk/>



# Community Outreach

## Burnopfield Supporting Ukranians with Link to Hope

The Wives and Friends group at Burnopfield meets fortnightly, and in November dedicated a meeting preparing shoe boxes for Ukranians. Some were filled for families and some for older people using the lists provided and as the donations had been very generous the group managed to fill 14 boxes. The boxes were taken to the donation point and Jim Thompson, a representative from Link to Hope took the boxes, and others donated, to Moldova, on the Ukranian and Romanian border. Jim came back to Burnopfield on 25th January with a video, showing places he visited, including the village, and school children in Cosnita as well as refugee accommodation and refuge in the Church of Jesus the Saviour in Chisenau (Moldova's capital). It was amazing to see the reactions of those helped from all the way in the UK.

## Keeping our Communities Warm



**South West Tyneside Methodist Circuit**

**Warm Spaces**

**Monday**  
Blaydon 10-12  
Fellside 9-12  
SRMC 9:30-1


**Tuesday**  
Ryton 10:30-2:30  
Greenside Café Church 1-4pm  
(from 1st Nov)

**Wednesday**  
Whitehall Road 9:30-2

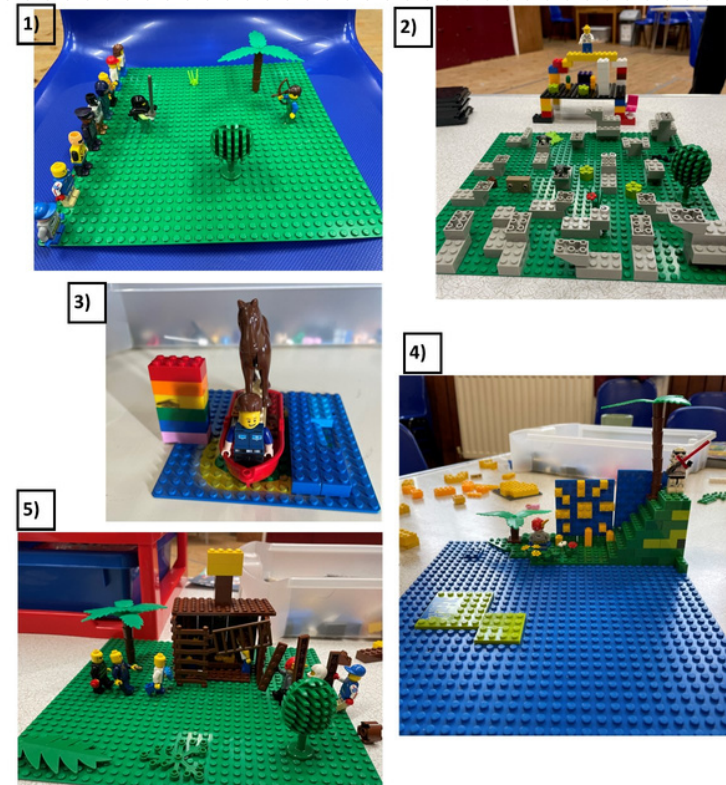
**Thursday**  
Dunston Hill 1-2:30  
12th Jan, then fortnightly  
Ravensworth Road 1-2:30  
19th Jan, then fortnightly

**Friday**  
Fellside 9-12  
Greenside Cafe Church 9-11

PROVIDING SPACES WITH RESPECT, DIGNITY & WARMTH



Our Warm Spaces are still running after a brief Christmas break. We have somewhere open every weekday and our poster is now up in Asda (by the Metro Centre) after their community champion got in touch with us - spreading the word and hoping to reach those in need of a hot drink and a place to sit as the cold spell continues. Everyone is welcome, no questions and no conditions, pop on in!



## Brick Church Building Extensions throughout the Circuit

Brick Church is now hosting sessions at two of our churches with a third in the pipeline! With monthly sessions at Centenary (continuing on Monday after school), Whitehall Road (which began in January on Saturday mornings), and Burnopfield being planned. The group, which uses lego-bricks to teach Bible stories includes building challenges interpreted by the children and is led by Sam, our Youth and Families Worker. Sam recently incorporated the creations from Brick Church into the Zoom Quiz - do you think you can work out which stories have been built in the images numbered 1-5? Please spread the word with your communities to anyone who would be interested in attending, and if you would like to launch a group at your church just drop Sam an email on [sam.cree@swtynese.org.uk](mailto:sam.cree@swtynese.org.uk) - she would love to hear from you!

Answers: 1 - David & Goliath. 2 - The Lost Sheep. 3 - Noah's Ark. 4 - Creation. 5 - The Nativity

## Greenside Café Church Brightening the Day

Greenside Café Church, with support from Gateshead Council, held another successful Brighten the Day event at the Community Centre on 7th January. 15 families enjoyed an afternoon of games, craft activities and a hot meal. The families chose books to take away, supplied by Borderline Books at Pelaw, and each family was given a recipe and the ingredients to make tomato and carrot soup at home, providing another hot, healthy meal for all attendees.

