

Letter from the Superintendent

I've lost count of the number of times I've spoken to someone in the past couple of weeks and been told that the person concerned, or a close family member has "had the vaccine". Each individual has spoken with hope in their voice as we've talked of what this means to them. The rollout of the vaccination programme does seem to offer us the best hope for the months to come, that we will be able to meet and interact in ways we've missed so much over this last year.

Hope is a fundamental part of our Christian faith; a sure and certain hope, as a member in a previous congregation liked to remind me. Over the next few weeks, we are invited to be 'Inspired by Hope' as part of a Circuit-wide Bible study that will be offered on Zoom or on the phone. The introduction to the material we shall be using reminds us, "Easter Hope is more reliable than even the best political programmes, public health initiatives and economic packages. Lent is the church's gift to us for creating space in our truest selves for more of this hope, in its inexhaustible depth. Lent is, as it were, about putting our hopes in their place, to make room for the Hope of all creation".

We still do not know what the future will hold but we know who holds the future. I encourage you all to take time during these weeks of Lent to ponder the hope offered to us in Christ, the Hope of all creation. In Paul's letter to the Romans he writes, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword?" He concludes that "[nothing] will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord". This love will sink deep into our hearts, if we will allow God to work within us, and overflow to others as we respond to God's prompting.

At a District gathering this week, I heard about the 'Covid-19: Help deliver History' appeal, launched by UNICEF. It was suggested that we might choose to express our gratitude for the vaccine we receive free of charge in the United Kingdom by donating to this appeal. (More details can be found at <https://www.unicef.org.uk/donate/coronavirus>). It seems so important at this time that we recognise how privileged we all are, living as we do in a country with free health care and a rapid delivery of vaccines which will be offered to the whole population. As we make our way through Lent again may God be at work in our hearts, reminding us of the blessings we receive and enabling us to be a blessing to others in the name of Christ.

Yours in Christ,
Ann

Inspired by Hope

A weekly bible study led by Circuit ministers based on material from Embrace the Middle East (formerly known as Biblelands).

This year perhaps more than ever we need to be inspired by hope as we make our way through Lent in preparation for the joy of Easter. You are invited to join with others in a Circuit Bible study to encourage and support one another.

Offered on Zoom at 7.30pm on Tuesday evenings starting on 23rd February 2021 or dial-in on the phone at 2.00pm on Thursday afternoons starting on 25th February.

Free books will be provided for all participants.
Please contact admin@swtyneside.org.uk by 16th February or phone 07485 645892 to ask for a copy and details of how to join.



Churches are currently closed once again due to national Covid-19 restrictions.

For most recent information on what this means for church services please see our website www.swtyneside.org.uk or visit Facebook pages for the circuit or individual churches.

Further information about arrangements will be issued following the end of lockdown.

Our online service premiers via our Youtube channel every Sunday morning at 10.30am and there are phone services every Sunday at 11am and 6pm.
E-mail admin@swtyneside.org.uk or call 07485 645892 for details.

LENT STUDY GUIDE 2021



Inspired by Hope

Sam Cree, Children and Youth Worker

Junior Church

Wednesdays, 6.30-7.15pm

'Junior Church on Zoom', for primary aged children from around the circuit, has now become part of a new weekly routine for many. The group, run alongside volunteers, started in November and has developed well. It came about from the circuit wanting to cater for the children during this time of church closures. Each week a group of around 10 children join us for a time of fun, friendship and exploring faith. There is often much laughter and competition in the games; deep thought and discussion about faith; and creativity in the crafts. The children attending represent different churches from around the circuit and most had never met before the group started. It is wonderful to have children from across the circuit come together and share in fellowship. In person this may not have been practical. Hopefully it will make the children feel encouraged about the bigger picture of church.

Craft packs have been sent to the children which has created much excitement. One of the children said, "I like watching the videos and presentations and seeing my friends. My favourite bit of the call is the craft. One thing I have learned is that friendship is the best way to solve an argument." Rev Janet Capstick who has been supporting the groups says, "It is a delight seeing the children so engaged with Junior Church on Zoom, and a privilege to share in their thoughtful prayers and comments".

There is always space for more people so please do share about 'Junior Church on Zoom' with children you know. It would be great to have more children join in all the fun. If you are older and you feel like you want to join, extra adult volunteers are always appreciated!

If you are interested, please email Sam Cree for more details: samrytonmc@gmail.com



Lucy Zwolinska, Community Development Worker

He is Risen! Easter and Mission around the Circuit

3rd March 7pm - 8:30pm, on Zoom

Before Christmas some of us met to discuss the different ways that we could engage our community over our strange Covid-Christmas. It was a really encouraging time together sharing plans, ideas and possibilities for mission. It was fantastic to hear about the amazing things that so many of you got up to at Christmas to share the story of Jesus' birth. As a result we've decided to do the same for Easter! We'll share some ideas coming from other places around the District and think about what it means to share the good news that He is Risen - whatever stage of lockdown we find ourselves in. All are welcome for a time of sharing, encouragement and prayer. A Zoom link will follow closer to the time.

Food, fasting and justice: Lent videos

Will you be giving up anything particular this Lent? What impact will that have on the community around you or on the environment? What could our faith and the Gospel have to say about how food is grown, produced and distributed?

This Lent I'll be producing 6 videos sharing good news stories of where people are working towards food justice across our circuit and beyond. This will be accompanied by a short reflection on what this means for us as Christians journeying through Lent towards Holy Week, and a personal challenge for each of us each week. I hope it will provide an opportunity for us to learn, reflect, and pray about community, food and justice throughout Lent. I'm looking forward to sharing these with you. They'll be released on the Circuit YouTube and Facebook each Thursday at 10am starting on 25th February. You can watch them live or they will be available afterwards to watch at your own leisure.

God bless, Lucy

Growing into New Life, celebrating Easter in Greenside

A couple of weeks ago I was asked if I had any knitting ideas for Greenside at Easter. My initial thought was Butterflies – signs of new Life for Easter day. However, my thoughts then developed further. What about using the whole life cycle of a butterfly to convey the Easter message!

On Ash Wednesday across the village small knitted/ crocheted caterpillars will appear in a little bag, and with it a leaflet. Every week in Lent where that caterpillar was hung, another leaflet will be placed, with the image of an ever-growing caterpillar.

In Holy week, in the bag with the leaflet there will also be a chrysalis shape.

Then on Easter Sunday, there will not only be the leaflet with a butterfly, but many butterflies scattered around the village as signs of New Life!

Rev. Janet Capstick

With the resurrected Jesus we walk on into new life, with eyes to see and hearts that are open!



GROWING INTO NEW LIFE



Picture by Jhanette Gordon 2020

**Join us this Lent on
Zoom.**

Each week we will be diving deeper into the Bible passages that have been shared around the village.

It would be great if you joined in the conversation.

Please let April or Janet know you are interested, and we will send you the link.

Growing into New life Lent Group

8 – 9 pm every Wednesday in Lent starting on 24th Feb contact minister@centenarymc.org.uk for further details



Reset the Debt (North East)

17 February, 2pm led by Hannah Brown and Paul Morrison from the Joint Public Issues Team (JPIT)

JPIT have been researching the impact of the pandemic on our communities and will share with us some of their understanding, stories and concerns. What can we do to change the story for the poorest in our communities? Join us to learn more of the realities behind the headlines and to consider what your church might do to make a real difference for those struggling at the margins.

You can book online via Eventbrite using the following link: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/reset-the-debt-north-east-tickets-138573132971>

No Computer? Can't get to church?

Why not try our District Phone-In Worship this Lent and Easter?

Follow these three easy steps:

- 1) Dial 0333 0164757 on any mobile or landline phone.
- 2) When asked for your room number, dial 60952306 and press the key marked #
- 3) When asked for your PIN dial 8114 and # and you're in! (Calls charged at your normal rate.)

Lent and Easter Worship:

Lent Course: 24.2.21, 3.3.21, 10.3.21, 17.3.21, 24.3.21 all at 2pm

Good Friday Service: 2.4.21

Easter Sunday Celebration: 4.4.21 (times to be confirmed)



MHA Communities Gateshead West

Methodist Homes (MHA) was founded in 1943 by a group of Methodists who wanted to improve the quality of life of older people in the time before the creation of the Welfare State. Enabling people to live later life well, whilst maintaining independence, is at the heart of what we do. Our local scheme has been running for 22 years now and in September 2020, we changed our brand name MHA Chopwell & Rowlands Gill Live at Home Scheme to MHA Communities Gateshead West. This better reflects the extension of our services into West Gateshead and a commitment to work together in our local communities.

To find out about becoming a member please call Scheme Manager Katherine Nichols on 07568 611992



Help us to help our own community!



Volunteers needed to support our expanding service:

In light of the Covid-19 outbreak, the incredible support our valued network of inspiring volunteers provides has never been more important. If you feel you can join us in continuing to make a positive difference – both at this difficult time and in the future – we’d love to hear from you. There are a variety of volunteering opportunities currently available, so whatever time you’re able to give, we can work together to find something both suitable and flexible for you and the needs of our local community. Details of the types of available opportunities can be found below. **If you’d like to volunteer your time, please get in touch through emailing us at gatesheadwest@mha.org.uk or calling Deputy Manager Hannah Rowan on 07568 612108.**

In particular we really need telephone befrienders offering a supportive, listening ear to those feeling particularly lonely or isolated (once a week to 3 times a week), digital support volunteers (helping members with online shopping, joining zoom calls, using email etc), administrative support, online guest speakers and delivery drivers to deliver essential shopping and prescriptions. Looking ahead, if you would like to help in a group setting with one of our lunch/activity groups or organised day trips then we would also be keen to hear from you. We can give you the relevant training so you are all ready to go when it is safe to do so.

If you use Co-op services, you can also help us by joining the Co-Op membership for £1 and choosing our local cause in our community. If you can encourage others to do, that would also be great and the money we raise will support our activities here in West Gateshead.

Just Finance

At the moment many more people are experiencing financial hardship, some for the first time in their lives, often leading to mental health concerns as well as practical difficulties.

The Just Finance Initiative are running online training to equip those attending with the information they need to support people struggling with low income, high costs, budgeting, debt etc. It will not make you an advisor but it will give the confidence to at least signpost people in the right direction. **For more information or to sign up contact Keith Stamp on keith.stamp@outlook.com or on 07931521465**

Find out more at:

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- 🌐 peertalk.org.uk
- 🐦 @peer_talk
- 📘 @peertalk1
- ✉️ enquiries@peertalk.org.uk
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