

# Could you be more Eco-Conscious?

It can seem daunting trying to make a difference to Climate Change by yourself, this can lead you to question how beneficial your small changes can be to the big picture when the news and headlines can make it seem insurmountable. BUT if we all make the small changes where we can, then the combined effect adds up and we can make a real difference together. We have summarised some small ways you or your church can help at both local and international levels, if you would like help to get involved with any of these schemes, please contact Jenny, on [admin@swtyneside.org.uk](mailto:admin@swtyneside.org.uk) who has further details.

## ***Twin Your Toilet and Save Lives!***

Toilet Twinning is a charity that use your donation of £60 to fund a toilet in a vulnerable community overseas (you can pick from a list of destinations the charity works within) - providing vital sanitation where it is most needed.

When you twin you receive a certificate to hang in your toilet and the GPS coordinates of the twin so you can look up the location should you wish. This

makes for an interesting talking point and opens discussions about sanitation and water, both things we have readily available so could easily be taken for granted while providing real help for those communities in need.

This charity could be the chosen charity for your coffee morning, or be sponsored by a specific group within your church community, or if this resonates with members they could twin their home toilets! You can twin the toilet block or individual cubicles should your fundraising exceed the £60 donation needed to fund and twin one toilet.



## ***Fixing not Replacing at a Repair Cafe or FixIt Event***

Repair cafes have been running up and down the country, bringing those with expertise and those with broken or damaged items together. This is to limit the need for people to replace repairable items which reduces those items being sent to landfill and saves you some money!

TWiG recently ran a FixIt session in Blaydon Library repairing often well loved possessions. Please follow their Facebook page for details on future events: [facebook.com/transitionwestgateshead](https://facebook.com/transitionwestgateshead)

## ***The Hidden Energy Cost of Your Inbox***

Email is considered free, but in reality it has an associated cost. Each email is stored on a server, and these servers heat up when storing data, so need a lot of power to cool them down (just think how many emails you receive a day, multiplied by all email addresses!).

One simple solution, instead of deleting emails without reading them, is to scroll down and unsubscribe - there is usually a link at the bottom of the email - which reduces the clutter in your inbox and means the data is never sent to you, reducing the storage needed.



## ***Strathmore Road Fundraising for an Eco-Christmas***



Led by volunteer Gail, Strathmore Road held a Christmas Wrap making event at a Coffee Morning. Everyone was invited to bring along their own recycled brown paper (with some rolls available to buy) and were helped in decorating the paper and gift tags with festive stamps. It combined a fundraising event, with encouraging attendees towards an Eco-Christmas as the paper is fully recyclable after wrapping presents!

Next year Gail is hoping to reuse old Christmas cards with a card making workshop, so please keep any cards you get this year!





South West Tyneside  
Methodist Circuit

# WINTER NEWSLETTER

2022

## Letter from the Superintendent

As I sit down to write this letter, my mind is full of conversations had this week: the young mum speaking about the increase in shoplifting happening in her workplace; the grandmother concerned at the level of anti-social behaviour on the estate where she lives; and the kind neighbour concerned for the wellbeing of a family along the road. Behind each of these situations, when you dig a little deeper, is the impact being felt in the lives of ordinary people by the cost-of-living crisis and the cut in public services.

As I reflected on how we can respond to these situations, the words of the prophet Isaiah came to mind –the inspirational poem in chapter two that had been part of the lectionary readings on Sunday:

*“In days to come the mountain of the Lord’s temple will be established as the highest of the mountains; it will be exalted above the hills, and all nations will stream to it.”*

It is a message of hope, talking about a time when people everywhere will come to learn the ways of God so they can live according to that teaching. The commentator, Gene Tucker, points out that the prophet is expecting a radical transformation of history ... *“Circumstances will change dramatically, and the Lord will reign, fundamentally as judge and peacemaker among nations.”*

It seems to me that we need that same expectation of transformation, for we have good news to share, especially at Christmas time. We believe that God sent his son Jesus into the world to transform lives as he invited people to turn back to God. Many responded to his message, and to that of the first disciples as they continued Christ’s mission.

The early church described by Luke in Acts chapter two devoted themselves to learning from the apostles and saw how they could support one another in times of hardship. As they built a loving, supportive community so others were drawn to the teaching of Jesus and the church grew daily in number. Isaiah finishes his poem with a challenge to the ‘descendants of Jacob’ to the people of faith who he was addressing. They were people who had a particular role to play, living according to the ways of God, that others might be inspired by what they see. Isaiah issued a rallying cry:

*“Come, descendants of Jacob, let us walk in the light of the Lord.”*

As the winter continues, let us walk in the light of the Lord, living faithfully in the way of Christ, who teaches us to love God and love our neighbour, that we too may build a loving supportive community in the name of Jesus.

May God bless you all in the days to come, Ann Varker

## Why are you a Methodist?

*A Poem by our Children and Families Worker written as part of her Local Preacher Studies*

My task at hand to pose a question,

Each person asked, why are you a Methodist?

Thought provoking it proved to be,

Humbling to read, it was for me.

Open table and all are welcome, a strength felt precious, like the Presidential message.

Discipleship and study, a place to learn and grow.

With a variety in worship, less formal and diverse.

Injustice we challenge and hospitality we give.

Responding to the gospel, to show that we care.

Singing out our faith, with wonderful hymns.

Prayers and preaching too, let’s worship God as one.

Methodism, Our Calling, part of a Connexion.

Gives a sense of purpose, to express God’s love for all.

*By Sam Cree. Written in 2021*



# News from Around the Circuit

## ***A Visit from the President (of the Methodist Conference)***

The Rev Graham Thompson spent some time in our Circuit on his recent visit to Newcastle District on 21st October. He visited the Community Larder, Blaydon, seeing for himself the practical help for the community our Circuit provides during this cost of living crisis.

He continued his visit by guest speaking at Open Doors on the theme of "What is the Spirit saying to the Churches?". Open Doors is a weekly ecumenical group (usually just for ladies, but this time, it was open to all) at Strathmore Road - new members welcome.

Afterwards he enjoyed a lunch with some of the Circuit Stewards. We were thrilled that South West Tyneside was able to host the President on his visit.

*Image Right: From The Methodist Recorder*



## ***Welcoming Riverside Primary with Godly Play***



This term, after successful Easter visits, Sam and Brigitta invited Riverside Primary back to Ravensworth Road, this term's session used Godly Play to look at the story of Creation. The session used tiles to talk about the gifts of each day and the children were fully engaged in the discussions and posed interesting questions about the environment and whether you could have a week without the day of rest. The session ended with free play of the materials to continue thinking about the Creation story using their chosen medium (lego, playdoh, drawing or books). Each class brought something new and different to the session and the volunteers from the church are looking forward to when Riverside Primary are next invited back.

## ***Introducing our new Churches Together Community Worker, Rachel***

Hi, I'm Rachel Charter and in Summer I started as Blaydon Churches Together Community Worker. I work with Trinity Methodist, St Joseph's Catholic and St Cuthbert's C of E Churches in Blaydon. I also work with the Salvation Army Community Worker for Blaydon. The Churches Together run a Community Larder twice weekly providing a mixture of fresh, tinned and dried food for a donation. One of my main roles is running the Community Larder relying on food donations from churches, the community and surplus food from Fareshare. I also work alongside the churches in other community work which includes 'Warm Spaces' as well as Lunch clubs and community programmes. The denominations really do work together in Blaydon and it's a joy to work together bringing Jesus' light into people's lives. Just before Christmas we will be singing Carols in Blaydon Precinct and the Churches Together will be providing around 50 Christmas Dinner Hampers for those in need in Blaydon and Winlaton. Please do pray for our work here in Blaydon and if you, or your congregation, would like to support the Community Larder with any food donations then please do contact me. Thank you.  
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# Marking Notable Dates



## ***A Parade of Poppies***

Our churches showed their respects this Remembrance Sunday by adorning their buildings and gardens with swathes of poppies, in many instances matching community wide decorations extending throughout the villages. Many of our ministers were in attendance at services at War Memorial and Cenotaphs on Sunday 13th November as part of the commemorations as we remembered those who fell in the pursuit of peace.



## ***A History of Ladies Club on their Diamond Anniversary - Strathmore Road***

The Ladies Club was founded in 1962 when Margaret Teare, the then Ministers wife, suggested there was a need for a meeting of the younger women in the Church hence the Young Wives was formed. This later became the Ladies Club. It was designated the Ladies be responsible for arranging two services per year. Over the years there have been many activities: An Annual Dinner Dance held every January when the ladies prepared a meal in the afternoon then returned home to "dress up" and later cleared up (at the time we were young and energetic!!) We later arranged Tea Dances which took place on an afternoon. We have produced, arranged and participated in pantomimes and concerts. We have also hosted many coffee mornings and enjoyed the camaraderie of organising these events and baking cakes. At our meetings we have many interesting speakers covering numerous topics.

We have celebrated our Ruby, Golden and Emerald Anniversaries. This year, 2022, we have, throughout the year celebrated our Diamond anniversary - 60 years. We have had an afternoon at the Golf Club and are due to have a Christmas Lunch in December. In June we arranged special entertainment followed by tea and cakes in celebration of the Queen's Jubilee. We hosted a Songs of Praise Service in May and our Annual Service of Fellowship and Friendship in October when Mavis Foster was our Preacher.

We still have two founder members, Sheila and Elsie. We are strong group of friends who have loved, laughed and cried together over the last 60 years. We have seen our children married, grandchildren and great-grandchildren born and sadly loved ones have died but the support and care has been unwavering. The next milestone will be our Platinum Anniversary in 2032!

*By Anne Robson, Ladies Club Member*

**LADIES CLUB RUNS STRATHMORE ROAD, EVERY OTHER FRIDAY, 2PM.  
NEW MEMBERS WELCOME**



*Above Both: At the Queen's Platinum Jubilee Celebrations  
Below: Ladies Club Diamond Anniversary Group Photo*

