



The Teesdale Worm

Magazine of the Darlington and Teesdale Circuit

Issue 30 - March / April issue

A Ministry of Listening

In the present climate it can be of no surprise that so many are struggling both materially, spiritually and psychologically. So many carrying so many different burdens. So many seeking ways of lessening, off loadings these burdens.

I wonder how good are you at listening? In 1935, at the height of his career, the author, Earnest Hemingway wrote, *“When people talk, listen completely, most people don’t listen”*. Listening is not just about hearing, it is so much more. How often, when you meet someone or pass them in the street, do you say, “Hi, how are you?” You are only expecting, probably wanting, only one reply, “Good, thank you”. So often we do not pick up on the non verbal communication that all is not really fine. And even when we do we feel awkward and do not follow up with, “Are you really good, is everything really OK?”



Real listening takes the three ‘E’s’, effort, empathy enthusiasm. To listen to see all the signs. Real listening can be exhausting, and of course real listening takes time, the most precious of gifts, the most demanding of ourselves. Each one of us has a mission, a ministry, within our communities and a huge part of that ministry concerns listening and by listening we help release, ease, so many burdens people around us carry. The ministry of listening, of burden sharing cannot be underestimated, or understated. Christ himself is waiting for us to talk with him, and believe it or not, you can tell him anything. There is nothing he has heard before, nothing that will shock or horrify. He listens, as we all must with full attention and grace; that unconditional love for each one of us. He actively encouraged everybody to come to him, to talk with him. “Knock and the door will be opened”. I thankfully haven’t heard this for many a long year, “Children should be seen and not heard”. It was never, and never will be appropriate.

A Chaplain friend of mine gives all who will hear a simple model of Jesus’, and our listening ministry. He pulls up an empty chair and invites the person to imagine Jesus sitting in the chair. Just loving them, willing, wanting them to unburden themselves on him. And you can tell him anything, in any way, in any language. He will be listening and understand where you are. He recalls a young man who he visited in hospital who said to him, padre, he was ex services, I don’t think I belief in God or Jesus. To which he replied, “that’s fine, he believes in you”.

You know we are called to sit in the chair and be the physical presence of Christ and listen, listen with all our senses to anyone who is willing and ready to unburden themselves. Be prepared to be open and giving of that most precious of commodities, your time, because once spent you can never retrieve it.

Jesus says, *“Come to me all who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and YOU WILL FIND REST for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden light”*.

One of Jan Cossins' chosen charities as Mayor of Darlington this year is the "Listening Post", a project initiated by the Darlington Area Churches Youth Ministry. It seeks to be there for young people with mental health and well-being issues; so that in the listening to help to prevent these issues escalating into something long lasting, life defining.

A recent Princes' Trust report stated that 50%, half, of young people experience mental health and well being issues during their school and college years that severely prevent and restrict them from focusing on their studies. The aim of the Listening Post is of course to prevent these issues becoming intensified and life defining.

This is a response from a young person who had experienced the ministry of the Listening Post. *"Counselling never worked for me, but listening did. Being able to be fully in control of the conversation and what you wanted to talk about that day actually made it enjoyable. Some days you just want to focus on the positive, having someone there just to listen means that every session you don't have to talk about everything that's going wrong, you can be grateful as well, which I found rarely happened in counselling. This also let me build up a relationship with someone in school who I could talk to, which made me more likely to open up and sometimes even catch a problem before it escalated.*

Having somebody in school who wasn't a teacher to talk to, is a lot less intimidating as well. Some stuff you just don't want teachers to know. I know loads of people who struggle with things because they were scared if they told someone they would get into trouble. I never had this problem as I was given a safe environment which was the only place I ever got to fully focus on me. I wouldn't have got through my GCSE's without the support; just an hour a week to unload to someone stopped everything building up and seeming overwhelming. I had some one there to listen, not everyone is that lucky". A sixteen year old person.

I very briefly want to make three observations:

- Firstly, listening is not just listening to someone's issues problems but also a time for sharing their joys and their positives. How great is that? That is also a vital and important part of prayer, real communication. I wonder how often we encourage those around us to share those highs of the week, to see and hear the joy; how often in our prayers do we share the joys of being community, being happy, being loved? Because, as the person said, "some days you just want to focus on the positives". As far back as the early 50's an American pastor, the Rev Norman Peake, wrote a book called, *"The power of positive thinking"*. The book is based on his Christian faith and often quoted in psychological works. He argues that so often speaking of our joys and positives can drastically reduce our negative thoughts and anxieties. He stated that each day he regularly says to himself, *"If God is for me, who can be against me"* and *"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me"*, *"I am in God's hands"*.
- Secondly, in the listening the young person was so grateful that the focus was fully on them. It wasn't about the listener's agenda but their agenda or thoughts. You are important, so I am listening completely.. Jesus listens with one agenda, to focus on you, where you are. So 'your' sorrows and joys, you!
- Thirdly, Yes young people can be so vulnerable, but so are so many other people of differing ages and backgrounds, no one is immune. The Samaritans are an incredible organisation whose sole purpose is to listen, completely and in doing so bring healing. I read that the Samaritans telephone lines receive 400 calls per day by people consumed by money worries.

Do not underestimate or undervalue your listening Ministry because Jesus doesn't. Jesus is waiting, sitting in the chair, listening. Are you as his disciples waiting too?

Rev. Colin Roberts



Deadline for items for the May/June issue is: 26th April 2024
Please send to admin@dandtcircuit.org.uk or
Circuit Office, c/o Elm Ridge Methodist Church, Carmel Road South, Darlington. DL3 8DJ
Thank you!

The Pathway through Lent to Easter



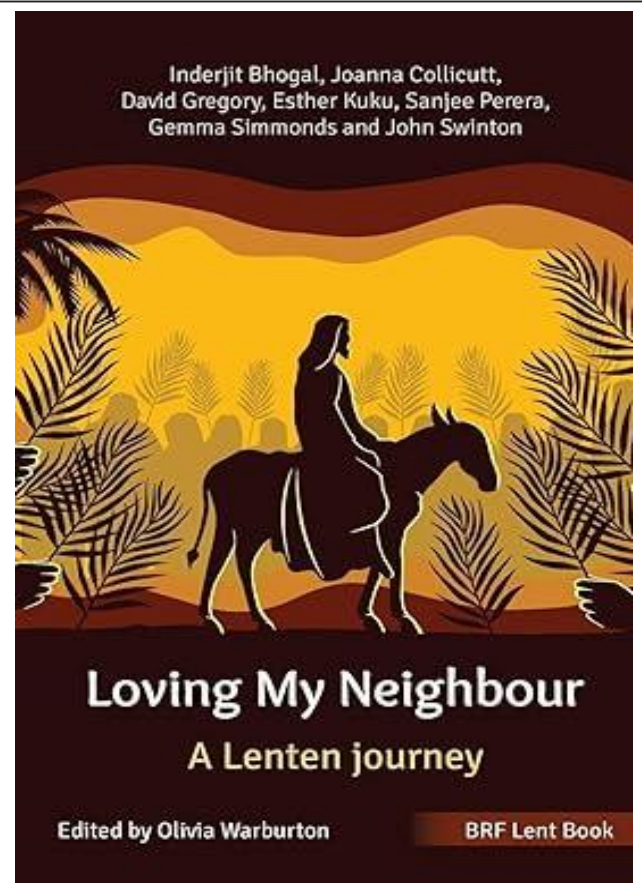
Half Term Lego Church

During the half term break we had another fabulous Lego Church session. We heard the story of the Wise Man and the Foolish Man and how important it is to build on firm foundations. Here are some of the amazing models we made.



Lent Groups

About 15-20 from Upper Teesdale Churches have been gathering @ The Pathway on Thursdays 12-2 during Lent for a light lunch together & study/discussion using the British Reading Fellowship book: 'Loving my neighbour – a Lenten journey'



Bags of Peace

Recently we delivered Bags of Peace to every home in our community. The bags contained sunflower seeds to plant as symbols of hope and peace, a bible reference and a message from The Pathway.



World Day of Prayer

On March 1st we joined the other Upper Teesdale Churches at Holy Trinity Eggleston



World Day of Prayer
England, Wales & Northern Ireland

Material by the Christian women of Palestine

1st March 2024

World Day of Prayer

**I beg you, bear with
one another in love**

Palestine

Holy Trinity Church, Eggleston. 1:30 pm

Last day of Lent, Palm Sunday & Holy Week in Upper Teesdale churches

Saturday March 23rd 7pm @ The Pathway: 'Seven last words' – a meditation in music & poetry for the last day of Lent by Kenneth Wilson: poet & cellist.

Palm Sunday 10.30am @ The Pathway Churches Together Worship Together led by Rev Graham Cutler

Monday: Easter Lego Church @ The Pathway


Monday-Wednesday 7pm @ Holy Trinity Eggleston: Evening Prayer

Maundy Thursday 7pm @ The Pathway: service led by Rev Dr Jim Coleman, Peter & Jennie Colins
Good Friday from The Pathway forecourt: Hot-Cross-Bun distribution; followed by continuation of 'Street Egging' – leaving chocolate eggs with message on a couple more of our village streets!

Good Friday 10.30am @ Holy Trinity Eggleston: 'Watching & Waiting'

Good Friday 2pm @ The Pathway: 'Last Hour of The Cross' led by Pathway members & preachers

Easter Sunday Worship 10.30am @ The Pathway & also at Holy Trinity Eggleston



Upper Teesdale Churches Together

Seven Last Words

A meditation in music and poetry
on the words of Christ from the cross.

by
Kenneth Wilson, cellist
at
**The Pathway Methodist Church
Middleton-in-Teesdale**

7:0 pm Saturday, 23rd March

Admission: Free (donations welcome)



Come and join us for
Easter Lego Church
at The Pathway Methodist Church
on Monday 8th April
2.00pm—4.30pm

Please contact Debbie to book a place
developmentworker.thepathway@gmail.com
(all children to be accompanied by an adult)




Please feel free to join us at any of the above or our regular Coffee Morning on Friday mornings 10.15-11.45. Contributions by Debbie, Peter & Ian

BREAKING NEWS: DARLINGTON CHURCH AWARDED £12,000 TO INSPIRE AND INVOLVE COMMUNITY IN NATURE CONSERVATION OF HIDDEN WOODLAND ON SLOPING HILLSIDE LINKING TOWN AND COUNTRY ON WESTERN EDGE OF DARLINGTON.

Wouldn't it be wonderful if that were true?.....Well we have news for you - it is!

Elm Ridge Methodist Church has received a grant of £12,400 from a charitable trust at the Community Foundation Tyne & Wear and Northumberland "for development of relic woodland and wetland on the premises for ecological and community benefits." The grant has been given on the understanding that our intention is to work with the Durham Wildlife Trust and involve the town-wide community. To measure the outcome of the project, a number of objectives have been set including the establishment of a voluntary group to deliver and sustain the project which would continue beyond the one year life of the grant. Information would be assembled as to the number of people involved in the project, with a record of people's experiences and photographs of site works and events, to show the changes and improvements brought about by the project.

Through their generous donation, the Trustees have put their faith in us. Now the opportunity and the challenge is for us to put our faith into practical action and to demonstrate our commitment to care for God's creation on the land in our stewardship, in ways which inspire and involve the community in enjoyment and on-going care in the years ahead.

We begin with a get-together on Sunday afternoon 17 March with the "Ready to Roll" event to which YOU are invited. Friends and Families will be very welcome too! We had a good turnout for the site visit in October. Let's have an even better one for this event.

John Wearmouth

Elm Ridge News

As you may know, we hold a coffee drop in on a Monday morning at Elm Ridge and some of our regulars suggested holding chair based exercise classes would be beneficial. Lyn Cookson arranged for a qualified instructor to come on a weekly basis and she gently takes us through a series of movements suitable for individual levels of mobility. We meet on Tuesdays at 2pm for about 45 minutes of exercise followed by a welcome refreshment break.



The exercises and activities are suitable for all ages and abilities, our eldest member is 92 and we can accommodate walking aids and wheelchair users. The building is fully accessible.

In addition we hold other activities, including CAMEO, come and meet each other, on Thursday mornings where we can hold and host various craft activities such as bread making, making poppies at Remembrance time, angels for Christmas etc. Our activities can be of general interest, but may be themed to seasonal and church activities.

Polly Vernon



Anyone for coffee and a freshly baked scone?

It is a well know fact that people get to know each other better when they break bread together – sit down and eat together. In our time here at Elm Ridge, we have found that sharing a meal such as Harvest or a Burns' supper is when we have chatted to those at our table and begun to feel part of the church community.

Every Monday morning (except Bank Holidays) there is a 'Coffee Drop In' in the Church Hall from 10am to midday. If you have never been, it is a great way to meet up with old friends and to make new friends. Julie and Ali are always there to greet you with a friendly face and some lovely 'treats' – freshly baked scones, cakes and tea cakes. There are many regulars who are not church members but they have joined in with the meals we have had and attended some of our special church services, as well as coffee. There are quite a few people from E. D. Walker Homes as well as others who live nearby who 'drop in'.

On Probus mornings many of the members have coffee before they go to their talk in the Harroway Room – busyness reigns whilst they are there and once they have gone, the chess game begins and the scrabble group settle down. Others of us just chat and laugh!! Around 11am the Monday Morning Gang have a break for coffee and cake before resuming their DIY tasks – everything from vacuum cleaning to climbing down the bank at the back of the church grounds or out on the church roof! The local community police also often drop in and it is a great opportunity to just chat to them in a social environment. There is a great feeling of fellowship and general togetherness.

Although we are not actually eating a meal together, it is a great way to get to know others better, so if you are free some Monday morning then 'Drop-in'. You will always be made very welcome.

Sheenah Adkins

The Beacon of Hope Prayer from Christian Aid

How to create your own Beacon of Hope prayer:

The diamond-shaped structure of the Beacon of Hope prayer allows you to create your own individual prayers. By selecting one phrase from each line, you can focus on different aspects of injustice each day.

God

We strive We yearn

For ourselves For those in need For your kingdom

To be free from To overcome To understand To fight against

The pain of hunger An unequal world Preventable illness Climate injustice Oppression

Give us strength Show us how Help us now Let us try

To use our power To spread your light To live your word

So that we may become So together, we shine as

A beacon of hope

Created by Laura Mead, Christian Aid's Community and Events Fundraising Advisor.

The diamond-shaped structure of this prayer was inspired by the poem 'Obligations 2' by Layli Long Soldier from New Poets of Native Nations (2018)

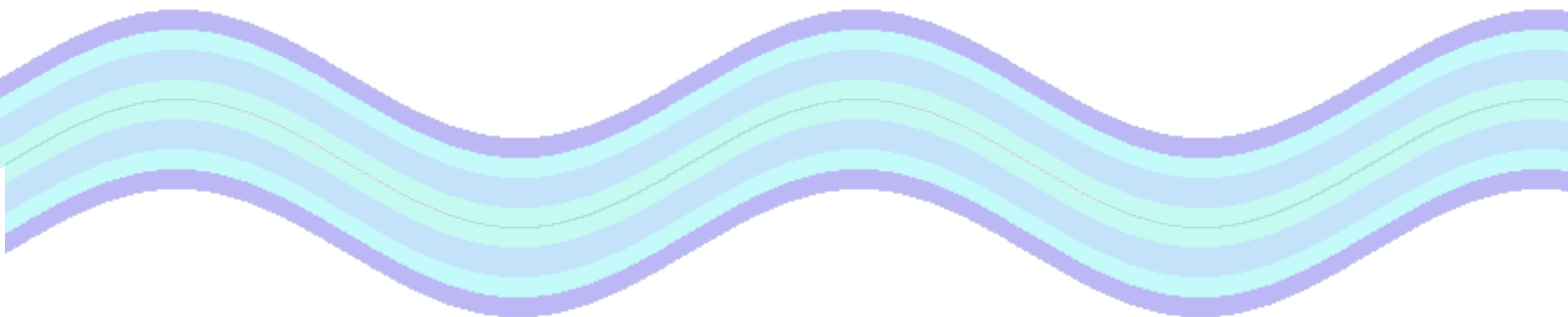
Submitted by Rev. Alan Coustick

Cockerton

Every Wednesday throughout Lent there is a Lent Lunch at one of the 3 churches in Cockerton. All are very welcome to join. There is a brief service at 12 noon, then a light lunch of soup and bread as fellowship between the 3 churches continues. The first one (at the Methodist church) on 21st February was very well attended. We move to St Mary's on 28th February, then Holy Family on 6th March, Cockerton Methodist again on 13th March before finishing at St Mary's on 20th March.

On Maundy Thursday, Rev Colin Roberts is leading a service @ 7pm

On Easter Sunday there is an Easter Breakfast at 9:30am. All are welcome to this, but for catering reasons, please let a Steward know if you are planning to come. The service at 10:30am will be led by Rev Colin Roberts and will include communion.



Inclusive Coffee Morning

'With not for'
to encourage mixed ability socialising and friendships

Saturday, 23rd March
10-12noon

St. Andrew's Church Hall

Parking to the rear of building



WAVE
FOR CHANGE

Contact Marion for further details:
07770 792 419

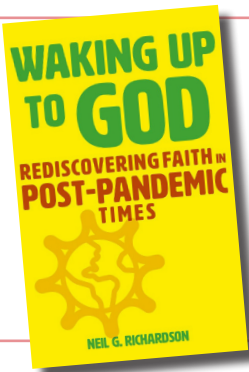
Darlington Methodist District

The Methodist Church

The President and Vice President are presenting
Hidden Treasures
@Elm Ridge Methodist Church
9 March 2024; 10 - 3:30pm

This event is open to all forms of leadership teams in a Circuit, church or a project.

Please register your leadership team to take part!



The Darlington and Teesdale Book Club meets next at Elm Ridge at 7pm on Tuesday 30th April. We'll be sharing our reflections on Neil Richardson's book, *Waking up to God: Rediscovering Faith in Post-Pandemic Times* (Sacristy Press). At 149 pages it's a good read and an opportunity to reflect on what our faith means now and for the future.

Come along and join us - everybody welcome!



'As the day draws to a close, may you be reminded that God's grace has carried you through the last 24 hours and that God's grace will carry you through the next 24 hours. Often anxiety rises in us because we cannot control the world around us - so don't try to'.
#niteblessing

Methodists for World Mission (MWM)

Bethlehem Appeal

Charity No.243221



President: Rev. Inderjit Bhogal.

Treasurer: Rev. John Howard
Tel. 01833 640823
john_d_howard@hotmail.com

Recognising the very difficult situation for the people of Bethlehem in early 2024, and especially the Christian Community - MWM is launching an appeal to support the people there. Working through organisations in the West Bank, which Methodism already supports we are able to get money to people with the minimum of administration (and costs borne by MWM). We anticipate that this fund will be open for a limited time.

Please support this appeal:

On line donations can be made to: Methodists for World Mission A/C 32545445
Virgin Money 05-02-42

Cheques payable to Methodists for World Mission can be sent to 13 Meadow Close, Middleton-in-Teesdale, Co Durham. DL12 0TW

Donations can be gift aided:
To gift Aid you donation either e mail or send the following wording:
(Please only complete this if your gift is eligible for Gift Aid).

I confirm that my donation of £ xxx to Methodists for World Mission is eligible for gift aid.

I am a UK Tax Payer. Name

Post Code

Address Date

**When you
can't sleep
at night,
have you
ever thought
that maybe
it's God
saying "We
need to
talk and
now you
have time."**

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GOD HAS GIVEN EACH OF
YOU SOME SPECIAL
ABILITIES; BE SURE TO USE
THEM TO HELP EACH OTHER,
PASSING ON TO OTHERS
GOD'S MANY KINDS OF
BLESSINGS.

1 Peter 4:10

**Do not
limit God.**

Luke 1:37

TWELVE STONE ART

YOU ARE INVITED TO A NATURE AND COMMUNITY EVENT

for

The Elm Ridge Nature and Community Partnership Project

on a hillside woodland in Methodist
Church grounds

Sunday 17 March 2024 at 2.30 – 4 pm

at Elm Ridge Methodist Church

Project Presentation by Jodie Morgan
Natural Communities Officer



Durham
Wildlife Trust
From Tees to Tyne

Learn about the project

Add your ideas

Hear how you could help

Meet others

Event info : 07818 231 630

Follow our Facebook page to find out what is going on
around the Circuit.

Darlington and Teesdale Methodist Circuit

<https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100069981818167>



Come and join us for
Easter Lego Church

at The Pathway Methodist Church
 on Monday 8th April
 2.00pm—4.30pm

Please contact Debbie to book a place
developmentworker.thepathway@gmail.com
 (all children to be accompanied by an adult)



NEW
 PROGRAMME



Inclusive worship
 at Haughton Methodist Chapel
 3pm

Sunday, 18th February	Showing Love
Sunday, 17th March	Remember - you are loved!
Sunday, 21st April	Finding peace
Sunday, 19th May	Fishing for people to love
Sunday, 16th June	Building together
Sunday, 21st July	Having a good time
Sunday, 18th August	Kindness
Sunday 15th September	Harvest



- During the service, a visual timetable is used - this is explained at the beginning of the service.
- The service is a short, simple one with songs using Makaton as well as the words projected on a screen.
- There can be drama, art and craft activities taking place, the whole service is simple, interactive and fun!
- The service is always accompanied by coffee and cake!

You are very welcome to join us!

For more information, please call one of the Team on: 07770 792 419

LET JUSTICE ROLL

Easter Offering 2024



Take a fresh stand for justice and support
 the World Mission Fund this Easter

The service will be held at
Elm Ridge Methodist Church
 on Sunday, 5th May
 at 6pm

 **Methodist Women
 in Britain**
 for women, for justice, for Christ

 **The Methodist Church**

CHURCHES TOGETHER DARLINGTON



GOOD FRIDAY

**11AM - 29TH MARCH
PEASE MONUMENT**

YOU ARE INVITED TO AN EVENT
REMEMBERING THE GREATEST ACT
OF LOVE IN HISTORY, AND A HINT
OF HOPE TO COME.



SCAN ME

For more information: churchesdarlington.org

HARROWGATE HILL METHODIST CHURCH
LOWSON STREET, DARLINGTON.
presents

AN AFTERNOON OF FASHION

Well known ladies High St brands up to 70% off
Famous Chain Stores
M&S . NEXT and many more.



We cater for all sizes and payment is by cash, debit or credit card.

Venue – HARROWGATE HILL METHODIST CHURCH,
LOWSON ST, DARLINGTON

Date – SATURDAY 9TH MARCH 2024

Time – 2PM - PROMPT START.

Ticket Price - £3 includes refreshments
Telephone for tickets – 01325 264145
All for Church Funds

Chance to win up to £50 worth of Clothes Vouchers.

Rev. Brian's Daily Devotions

Have you listened to one of Rev. Brian's Daily Devotions yet? You are missing out if not!

Would you like to have a listen?

Send me your email address or your mobile number to receive them by Whatsapp...
(admin@dandtcircuit.org.uk)

The devotions are sent to you Monday-Friday (excluding Bank Holidays) early enough
to have a good start to your day. They last 3-4 minutes - easy to listen to
whilst you are having your breakfast coffee!

Magazine of the Darlington and Teesdale Methodist Circuit
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