



The Methodist Church
DURHAM and DEERNESS VALLEY
CIRCUIT

(13/11)

www.durhamdeernessmethodist.org.uk

Plan 187 and Newsletter

January - March 2019

From the Superintendent

Dear Church Family,

First, I hope this note meets you all well having survived the holiday season and anticipating an even brighter 2019 than we can hope for and that growth in faith, discipleship and numbers will be a part of our expectation. As you can see on the Plan there are quite a few more joint services than in the past. I did this as a first action in making the plan to reduce the number of boxes that needed filling by the number a full-time preacher would likely be able to take. It was a direct response to having Andy on sabbatical and wanting to write my first Plan as if we had a full compliment of staff.

After sending a begging letter to our fine preachers to reduce the number of book services, they responded generously nearly reducing the original deficit by half. I truly thank you for your generosity, but we still have a ton of book services. I imagine that when you had 2 more full-time preachers, we would not have had a shortage. When you had even more preachers, the experience of Plan writing would have been creative, trying to decide where the preaching talents best met ministerial needs. I found this to be a puzzle trying to make fewer names fill more boxes. Our positive future is more easily reached when we can be creative.

I believe when a church is positive and asks to arrange its own service using tools we have at our disposal, like Twelve Baskets and our own creativity, it can be a very good thing. However, having many unplanned book services is a worrying sign. I think it is connected to other numeric worries like the Circuit running a budget that is expecting a significant deficit

before we even start, more jobs falling on fewer shoulders challenging some of our most committed members and the signs can continue. Significant change is needed.

Discovering a potion that delivers more money, leaders and fewer expectations has not happened. It takes hard, creative and prayerful work, extra giving and a heart for change to turn things around. Please understand that we will always encourage signs of growth and do not want to throw water on the sparks of something positive. However, we do need to prioritize where we believe sparks are likely to turn into a blaze. We must find more time and energy to nurture small blazes into raging fires. As with Moses, I am hoping to hear God's voice in the unlikely flame. Please keep your ears open too, minds and hearts also. God will be nudging us to a better future. Please be brave enough to suggest the necessary changes that will enable us to get there.

Peace in Christ,
Rev John

Circuit Newsletter

BEARPARK

As well as our regular events (ie Prayer Group, Craft & Chat Group, Shell Group) we continue to support various Charities having held one, like many others, for MacMillan raising £415 for a very worthwhile cause. Also, once again, we have sent 20+ shoeboxes on their merry way to be transported to children across the sea who may only get this small gift as their Christmas treat.

Since our last report, we have started two new initiatives in the village. At the beginning of 2018 we started a Prayer Mission and have been delivering Prayer Cards throughout the year to each household in Bearpark to let them know we are thinking about them and praying for them. The second initiative is that we have been going into the local Primary School once per month to do Open the Book. This is an ecumenical group of 8 people, led by Viv our Circuit Children's and Young People's Development Worker, who are telling the Bible stories, through drama, starting from Adam and Eve. We usually need volunteers from the children to help us and there's no shortage of offers. Even our new Superintendent joined the group for one of the events much to the children's delight. The idea is to work through the Bible as its written, so children can hear the many wonderful stories it contains in an educational but entertaining and fun way. This event is in addition to the Easter and Christmas Journey we have with the school in our

own building as well the Carol service they have with us on the last day of their Christmas term to which their parents are also invited.

We too, together with families and friends enjoyed some fun and friendship when we went on a coach trip to Hexham and Kielder in the summer. This also gives us an opportunity to ask others either in the village or elsewhere (who wouldn't normally come to church) to join us for a day out. This year we were especially blessed with the weather, the scenery and the company, leading one lady to say 'I think God took the day off himself and came with us today'

We continue to look to God to lead us and guide us where He will, now and in the future.

Carrville

The past year has, as ever, been eventful. Our congregation continues to flourish, although we have sadly bid farewell to several of our older, long-term members during this time. As well as normal Sunday morning worship we have a monthly Prayer Breakfast (first Saturday morning in the month), monthly Bible Study Group (first Wednesday morning of the month), Tuesday morning informal worship as well as House Study Groups. The preacher at the Church Anniversary Service on 28th January was Rev. Alf Waite. This was followed by lunch in the Church Hall, catered by Mary Robinson and her team. We were delighted to welcome back our former Lay Worker, Alison Maynard who preached at our Mothering Sunday Family Service. It was good to share in worship with her once again and a great time was had by all!

Several Study Groups met during Lent in preparation for Easter and children from local primary schools joined us for an 'Easter Journey'. Holy Week began on Palm Sunday with a wonderful service, led by Anne Offler. Throughout the Tuesday the people of Carrville were invited to journey through 'The Labyrinth' with our Minister, Rev. Andy Longe. Rev. Nigel Johnson presided over a Faith Supper and Holy Communion on Maundy Thursday and Andy then led our acts of worship both on Good Friday afternoon and Easter Sunday.

During the year a number of our members have been visiting local primary schools as part of ecumenical 'Open The Book' teams, presenting stories from the Bible. Our Community Worker, Helen Hickson was also heavily involved in developing Prayer Spaces in schools. The success of this latter initiative was reflected in the number of young people who chose to write to 'The Prayer Ladies' during our Summer Holiday Club. This was again well-attended and provided both the children and supervising adults with fun and fellowship.

Our young people meet regularly on Sundays in two groups, 'Church Buddies' and 'CREW'. Up until August, they were led by Helen, but she was accepted for training as a Presbyterian and we sadly bid her farewell at the end of August and wish her every success and God's Blessing as she enters the next phase of her spiritual journey. Sandra Almeida was appointed to replace Helen from September but unfortunately has not yet been able to settle into her role due to ill health. We wish her 'all the best' and look forward to the time she is able to be with us. In the meantime, our Minister's wife, Deacon Esther Longe is overseeing the work with our young people and we are grateful to her.

During the past year we have organised a wide range of fund-raising events, including monthly coffee mornings for local and national charities. We continue to support two African children through the Compassion charity and collect filled shoeboxes for 'Operation Christmas Child'. Carville is an Eco church, committed to supporting Fair Trade and regularly collects donations for the Durham Food Bank.

Our Outreach and Development Group has organised a number of well attended events including a Car Treasure Hunt, Summer and Autumn Fayres, Afternoon Tea, Ceilidh, Quiz nights and Choral Concerts. The success of these and other such events is essential to our continued funding of a Church Community Worker and we are grateful to all those who organise and support these initiatives.

During October we had a month of 'themed preaching', focusing upon St. Paul's Letter to the Philippians, taking one of the four chapters each Sunday. The message from St Paul was interpreted by our own Minister Andy (chapter 1), Bill Offler (chapter 2), Anne Offler (chapter 3) and Rev. Colin Jackson (chapter 4). Members were encouraged to prepare for each service by reading the relevant chapter in advance and have enjoyed the experience of the spiritual journey. As this was a success, we may have more such services in the future.

Children from local schools will be taking the 'Christmas Journey' with us during the last week in November and we are grateful to Anne Offler for being our Guide. During December we continue our Christmas preparations, starting with our Christmas Fayre on Saturday 1st and a concert by Belmont Ladies Choir on Saturday 8th. The Nativity Service is on Sunday 9th and on Saturday 15th we will meet to share coffee and mince pies as we decorate the main church Christmas tree, together with a number of smaller trees representing different groups from the church and local community. The following Saturday, a group will be Carol Singing at our local shops. We also expect to distribute over 1000 angels (hand knitted by church members and friends) to pupils at Gilesgate and Cheveley Park Infants schools and at Cheveley Park shopping precinct. Our Christmas services begin with a

Candlelit Carol Service on 16th, involving friends from other churches and the local community. On Christmas Eve the church will be open from 4pm until 6pm so anyone can 'drop in' for a quiet time with music and carols. The church premises are used regularly by numerous outside organisations including Brownies, U3A Music and Reading groups, Yoga classes, Slimming World, Line Dancing and Photography group. If you wish to keep up to date with events at Carrville, further information can be found in our magazine, 'The Visitor', edited by Rosie Short or on our website (www.carrvillemethodist.org.uk) managed by Suzie Kitchin.

Pittington

We are very pleased to report that we have one of our members, Soo Illingworth, on note. She follows a long line of local preachers from Pittington, the last being Bill Young in 1991!

We were very pleased to be invited to St. Laurence Parish Church for the installation of their new vicar and to join with them for their patronal day service in August. Members of St. Laurence joined us for our Harvest Festival service and we look forward to being with them for the village carol service.

Our annual pie and peas supper for Harvest Festival was well-attended and we were entertained by the Easington Ukulele Band.

We still have our weekly coffee morning and are delighted that our minister, Colin, visits on a fairly regular basis. His presence is appreciated by those attending who do not worship at St. John's and also, of course, by those who do. Our Ladies Circle meets every fortnight and there is always a variety of speakers and interesting things to do. A warm welcome to anyone who comes along to either of these meetings.

Unfortunately, our heating system has been causing problems and at present we are considering what can be done to repair or replace it.

We are looking forward to a visit from our new Superintendent Minister and wish him and his family well for their future in the North East.

We go forward in faith and 'praise Him for all that is past and trust Him for all that's to come.'

Sacrison

We have been delighted to welcome our minister, Colin, back from his sabbatical. He wasted no time in getting down to work amongst us again, supporting events in our church and bringing insight and wisdom into pastoral situations as well as into our worship services. We continue to share one morning service a month with our friends in Witton Gilbert and Langley Park. It is good to worship with a larger congregation from time to time and to be able to support one another in fellowship.

Harvest Festival was a joyful occasion and sharing lunch after the morning service made it very special. Our Harvest celebrations concluded (almost a month later!) with a pies & peas supper, followed by a game and a fun quiz. Occasions such as these provide opportunities for sharing with our wider church family.

We continue to welcome friends to our Toddler Group (Monday mornings), weekly coffee mornings (Tuesday) and Craft & Chat (Wednesday mornings). We have a regular Soup Lunch at 12 noon (no need to book) on the first Wednesday of the month.

At the time of writing, we are preparing for our village Remembrance Sunday commemorations where our local Churches Together group, working with the British Legion, will hold a church service followed by an open-air Act of Remembrance at the war memorial. We have been knitting poppies to be displayed on a tree in the village Remembrance Garden and this year we will “plant” small wooden crosses as well as laying the usual wreaths.

We look forward to Advent and Christmas – as well as our own Christmas services, there will be an Advent Songs of Praise (a Churches Together event) at 6 pm on 2nd Dec. in the local Salvation Army hall. We will be serving Christmas Afternoon Teas in our church at 3 pm on Saturday 1st Dec. to which everyone is welcome. We will be welcoming children and staff from local primary schools to Christmas Journey.

2019 will soon be here! Another year and, we trust, another year of service, witness and worship. We pray that we continue to play our part in community life, making the most of our opportunities to care for others, witnessing to and speaking of the good news of the Gospel. Our evening service on Sunday 20th January will be a Songs of Praise service followed by refreshments, arranged by Churches Together and led by our minister – this is to mark the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. As we approach Easter, we will, once again, present Easter Journey to local school children. Also, we join with other local churches in Lent study groups, yet to be arranged.

We are very close now to being ready to start a new fortnightly Tuesday evening children’s group and also to go into our local primary school to

present Open the Book at school assemblies. We would value the prayers of the Circuit for these new ventures.

We remain grateful for the support of the Circuit and enjoy welcoming people from across the Circuit who occasionally come to worship with us.

TUESDAY INFORMAL WORSHIP AT CARRVILLE

Each Tuesday at 9.45 am you are invited to join us for worship followed by tea and scones.

For further information please contact Silvia Dawson

Lectionary Readings

6 January (Epiphany)

Principal Service: JEREMIAH 31:7-14, PSALM 147:12-20, EPHESIANS 1:3-14, JOHN 1(1-9) 10-18

13 January (Sunday after Epiphany)

Principal Service: ISAIAH 43:1-7, PSALM 29, ACTS 8:14-17, LUKE 3:15-17, 21-22

20 January (2nd Sunday in Ordinary Time)

Principal Service: ISAIAH 62:1-5, PSALM 36:5-10, 1 CORINTHIANS 12:1-11, JOHN 2:1-11

27 January (3rd Sunday in Ordinary Time)

Principal Service: NEHEMIAH 8:1-3, 5-6, 8-10, PSALM 19, 1 CORINTHIANS 12:12-31A, LUKE 4:14-21

3 February (4th Sunday in Ordinary Time)

Principal Service: JEREMIAH 1:4-10, PSALM 71:1-6, 1 CORINTHIANS 13:1-13, LUKE 4:21-30

10 February (5th Sunday in Ordinary Time)

Principal Service: ISAIAH 6:1-8 (9-13), PSALM 138, 1 CORINTHIANS 15:1-11, LUKE 5:1-11

17 February (6th Sunday in Ordinary Time)

Principal Service: JEREMIAH 17:5-10, PSALM 1, 1 CORINTHIANS 15:12-20, LUKE 6:17-26

24 February (7th Sunday in Ordinary Time)

Principal Service: GENESIS 45:3-11, 15, PSALM 37:1-11, 39-40, 1 CORINTHIANS 15:35-38, 42-50, LUKE 6:27-38

3 March (Sunday before Lent)

Principal Service: EXODUS 34:29-35, PSALM 99, 2 CORINTHIANS 3:12-4:2, LUKE 9:28-36 (37-43)

10 March (1st Sunday in Lent)

Principal Service: DEUTERONOMY 26:1-11, PSALM 91:1-2, 9-16, ROMANS 10:8B-13, LUKE 4:1-13

17 March (2nd Sunday in Lent)

Principal Service: GENESIS 15:1-12, 17-17, PSALM 27, PHILIPPIANS 3:17-4:1, LUKE 13:31-35

24 March (3rd Sunday in Lent)

Principal Service: ISAIAH 55:1-9, PSALM 63:1-8, 1 CORINTHIANS 10:1-13, LUKE 13:1-9

31 March (4th Sunday in Lent)

Principal Service: JOSHUA 5:9-12, PSALM 32, 2 CORINTHIANS 5:16-21, LUKE 15:1-3, 11B-32

MOTHERING SUNDAY: EXODUS 2:1-10 OR 1 SAMUEL 1:20-28, PSALM 34:11-20 OR PSALM 127:1-4, 2 CORINTHIANS 1:3-7 OR COLOSSIANS 3:12-17, LUKE 2:33-35 OR JOHN 19:25-27

Plan References

A	All Age Worship	P	Parade Service
B	Sacrament of Baptism	PC	Parish Church
C	Covenant Service	Q	Choir
CA	Church Anniversary	R	Remembrance Service
D	Discussion or Café Style	S	Sacrament of Holy Communion
DP	Digital Projection	T	Transport Required
E	Eco Group	TZ	Taizé-style Service
F	Farewell Service	Th	Themed Preaching
G	Gift Service	U	United Service
H	Healing Service	URC	United Reformed Church
HF	Harvest Festival	V	In Village Hall
J	Junior Church	W	Welcome Service / Back to Church Sunday
K	Mission Service	X	Carol Service
L	Local Arrangement	ac	Air Cadets
LC	Ladies' Circle		Readers' Service-
M	Messy Church		Own Arrangement
MWiB	Methodist Women in Britain		
N	Nativity		

Church Schedules and Preachers' Plan Dates

Please return copies of these to **Revd John Squares and Sue Smith** before 30th January 2019.

Preaching Appointments and Expenses

It is the responsibility of any preacher who is unable to fulfil an appointment (1) to find an accredited substitute and (2) to inform the local church and the Superintendent Minister.

Preachers are reminded that they are entitled to claim expenses at the rates agreed by the Conference.

Church Assessments (2018-2019)

Church	£ / quarter	Church	£ / quarter
Bearpark	1784	Langley Park	1645
Bowburn	1412	Newton Hall	4890
Brandon	3233	North Road	11142
Carrville	7270	Pittington	930
Elvet	14629	Sacriston	2547
Esh Winning	2219	Sherburn Hill	1005
Framwellgate Moor	1550	Witton Gilbert	1371

Circuit Diary

February

Thurs 28th Local Preachers Meeting
7.15pm for 7.30pm

March

Thurs 14th – 7.30pm **Bowburn** – Circuit Meeting

Contributions for the next Circuit Newsletter are invited from
Brandon, Langley Park and Newton Hall

All information and dates for the Circuit Diary by **30th January 2019** to
Sue Smith,