



The Methodist Church
DURHAM and DEERNESS VALLEY
CIRCUIT
(13/11)

www.durhamdeernessmethodist.org.uk

Plan 191 and Newsletter

January - March 2020

From the Superintendent

The Plan is never easy to construct. In the course of the year and a bit now there have been many decisions that I would like to have made differently. There is a trend, however, that gives me some pleasure.

In all communication, what you intend is not always what is received. I imagine that as you read this note you will also be looking for what is underlying the words. With the Plan, I have had conversations where churches have thought they were being closed down because during Bible Month the Circuit Meeting agreed that every service may be shared. Some churches only saw their own pews once. As I explained it was a shared decision, unanimous at the meeting, well that was little salve.

I have planned particular preachers to particular churches. More weight has been given to the larger churches when preachers are allocated. My own time has been divided up unfairly at times. There are things I truly regret, but we are dealing with fewer preachers than services and a need, if we want to grow, to offer something that can be invitational. If you were confident that every Sunday you would have the chance to get closer to God in worship, that fun was being had not just among your friends who are already committed to your church but for anyone that comes, I think you are more likely to invite people to your church. If we want every church to be growing, we need to be as consistent as possible

with our care and preparation, our delivery and welcome, and most importantly, what people hear underlying the words we share. The unspoken communication is important. We want all people to find God's Love easily in our churches. When our love is genuine, people know it as they experience it. When they are truly valued for who they are and not how we expect you to be, we are stumbling near the right path. When we remove the barriers to worship and all people are included, well you can invite anyone to come.

Despite always planning myself in the wrong place, joining too many services together and "Fred, why haven't we seen Fred on this Plan!" More people have said how wonderful that they had a fantastic service, the other churches came and sang loud in their pews. I took real pleasure when one member who I thought was going to fuss with me about the missing Fred date said, "I knew it would be a good service. I brought my friend. She lost her husband. She enjoyed

coming because she felt closer to what she loves in our church. She had been feeling all alone."

How the churches come together so that we can offer something invitational every week is up to you to be inspired, to decide, to catch a vision and to make happen. God will make sure good comes from good decisions. Apologies for all the bad ones that get made along the way.

Peace in Christ,
Rev John

Circuit Newsletter

Bearpark

We continue to have Shell Group each week during school time for children of Primary School age. This has benefited from us going into the local school to do Open the Book in a couple of ways. Firstly, one of the young ladies who is part of the team now helps with the running of Shell Group and is good support to those who have been doing it for many years now. Secondly, the children at the school are more familiar with who we are now and some have joined Shell

Group. The links with the local school are very good and as well as Open the Book in school, Easter and Christmas Story and the Carol service in our chapel, we now get invited to other events in the school such as their Harvest event. We are fortunate that the Head Teacher is a Methodist and very open to links with the local Christian churches. Staying with children, we had a Holiday Club during the Summer Holidays in 2019. This was well organised with adult leaders/helpers from the new local Church of England Mission Team and others from St John's Neville's Cross and St Margaret's. It was promoted as a joint venture with ourselves and was advertised at the local school with their full support. It was well attended by the children (and some of their parents as well), usually between 15-20 each Thursday, most there every week.

We have also continued our Prayer Mission which we started in 2018 but in a slightly different way. Once we finished delivering the Prayer cards, we then looked at what we could do next. Now, each week, one of our members does a Prayer Walk along a specific street thinking and praying for the residents there. We include this street in our Prayer Book on a Sunday, on our Prayer Mission noticeboard inside chapel and the general noticeboard outside, as well as in our weekly Prayer Group and individuals in their own personal prayers.

Like other churches in the circuit, we now have more joint services. We already joined with Esh Winning on special occasions and with the local Church of England in the past but more recently have also joined with Brandon and New Brancepeth. This does help us to build relationships with other local Methodists and most of our members are willing to be flexible, although some would prefer to worship in their own local church or another one in the village.

Whatever challenges we have to face in the future, we know that God will be with us to help us and guide us through them and we trust Him to do so.

Carrville

The past year has, as ever, been eventful. We prepared for Christmas in many ways, starting with a 'Christmas Journey' for local schools (led by Anne Offler) from 26-28 November. Our Christmas Fair was on Saturday 7th and the Nativity Service on Sunday, 8th December. On Saturday 14th we met to share coffee and mince pies as we decorated the main church Christmas tree, together with a number of smaller trees representing different groups from the church and local

community. On that same day we enjoyed an afternoon of Christmas words and music in aid of our church charity. The entertainment was provided by church members and included Carrville's 'Top 10' Christmas carols. We also saw a group Carol Singing at our local shops and also to the housebound. This year we distributed about 1000 angels (hand knitted by church members and friends) to people in the local community. Many of the congregation also responded to the request from MHA to write Christmas cards to people living alone or in care. Our Christmas services began with our Carol Service on 22nd December, involving friends from other churches and the local community, with music provided by Pittington Brass Band. There was a traditional Christingle Service on Christmas Eve as well as our Christmas Day Family Service.

Our congregation continues to flourish, although we have sadly bid farewell to several of our older, long-term members during the past year. As well as normal Sunday morning worship we have a monthly Prayer Breakfast (first Saturday morning in the month) as well as Bible Study (first and third Wednesday in the Church Meeting room from 10am – 11am) and House Study Groups. The preacher at the Church Anniversary Service on 27th January 2019 was Adam Wilkinson. This was a combined service, following which we welcomed friends from Bowburn and Pittington to join us for lunch in the Church Hall, catered by Mary Robinson and her team.

During this quarter there are Lent Study Groups planned in preparation for Easter. We plan to organise an 'Easter Journey' for local schools during the week beginning 1st April. During Holy Week we have 'Labyrinth' on Tuesday 7th April from 9.45am until 11am and on Thursday 9th April from 5pm until 7pm. The Good Friday service is at 10.30 am and we have our normal Easter Day service at 10.30am.

During the past year we have organised a wide range of fund-raising events in aid of our chosen charity, Marie Curie Cancer Care, raising in excess of £2000. In addition, we host monthly coffee mornings in aid of other selected charities and church funds. We continue to support two African children through the Compassion charity and collect filled shoeboxes for 'Operation Christmas Child'. Carrville is an Eco church, committed to supporting Fair Trade and regularly collects donations for the Durham Food Bank.

We have a team of dedicated volunteers who, together with friends from other churches, deliver 'Open the book' bible stories to children in local primary schools. Anne Offler co-ordinated a successful 'Backpackers' Holiday Club together with a large and dedicated team of volunteers. Our young people meet

at Church Buddies and CREW on Sunday mornings. CREW also meets on the First Saturday evening of the month, attending Charged events.

Added to this, the church premises are used regularly by a number of outside organisations including Rainbow Guides and Brownies, U3A 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 Williams.

Pittington

We were very apprehensive when we received the plan which showed that we were to be without services at our church on a number of occasions when we were planned to join with other churches in the area. However, after having services at Bowburn, Carrville and Sherburn Hill we have had some wonderful times of fellowship. It was lovely to see our church full when these churches joined with us. Unfortunately it's a long time since our church was full for a service. We also had a bonus on the 4th August when we had a call from Sherburn Hill asking if they could come to Pittington as the road outside their church was closed. A little later we had a call from the Salvation Army at Sherburn Hill asking the same question. As a result we had a wonderful service with Rev. John Squares preaching and the Salvation Army Band providing the music – the Lord moves in a mysterious way! After the service the Salvation Army suggested that we might join again. The Rev, John informed us that he had received a letter from a young lady who was training to be a deacon and was visiting the church. Apparently she stated that it was one of the best services she had ever attended.

Services like this inspire us to carry on with our small congregation.

We still have our weekly coffee morning and Ladies Circle meetings every fortnight.

Sacrison

It is good to have yet another opportunity to bring to the Circuit our news from the church in Sacrison. We are well into the "rhythm of life" in terms of our faith and events throughout the Christian year. We had a glorious celebration of

harvest with wonderful flowers and music and then, on the Friday evening following, a pie and peas supper with a fun quiz, a game of beetle and a short illustrated talk by the teenage grandson of one of our members about his experiences at the International Scout Jamboree in New York.

Unfortunately, we have still not been able to re-start a children's group and continue to pray about this, but we are still able to have Messy Church services, the next one being on 2nd February. We always welcome children, whatever the occasion, and there are always toys and activities close at hand. *(Continued from previous page)*

We have a thriving Toddler Group which meets on Monday mornings during school term time.

A few of us go into Sacriston Academy (Primary School) to present Open the Book, an international scheme for bringing Bible Stories to school assemblies.

We look forward to hosting the village Remembrance Sunday service on behalf of our local Churches Together before the outdoor Act of Remembrance around the War Memorial. Another Churches Together event will be an Advent Sunday service (Dec. 1st) at 6.30 pm. This will be held in St. Bede's Roman Catholic Church. That brings us almost to Christmas – on Saturday 21st December at 10 am we will be singing Christmas Carols as Churches Together outside Tesco in the village, raising money for Durham Night Shelter. The times of our own church Christmas services, including the beautiful Candle-lit Carol Service at 5.30 pm on Sunday 22nd Dec, and the Christmas Day service at 10 am, are given in the September to December Circuit Plan.

In January we meet as Churches Together to mark the Week of Prayer for Church Unity – 19th January at 6 pm in the Salvation Army.

As we approach Easter, we will be presenting Easter Journey in church for our local primary schools – during the week beginning Monday 23rd March.

Tuesday's Coffee Morning and Wednesday's Craft & Chat will still be taking place during that week.

We will continue to hold our regular Tuesday morning coffee mornings and Wednesday morning Craft & Chat groups to which all are welcome.

One slight change we will be making is that we plan to hold our monthly Soup Lunch on the second Wednesday of the month instead of the first.

Towards the end of the quarter, we look forward to a particular "high note" in the form of our Chapel Anniversary on March 15th with Rev. Richard Andrew, Chair of Darlington District, as our guest preacher. We will be having lunch in church that day and will be joined by friends from Langley Park, Witton Gilbert,

and Framwellgate Moor. This is a day to feel confident about inviting family and friends.

Our Minister, Colin, is happy to talk to anyone who would like to explore their faith further and may be thinking about Membership. To talk about this or any other matter to him, his number is 0191 3845223.

Lectionary Readings

5 January (2nd Sunday of Christmas)

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

12 January (1st Sunday in Ordinary Time)

Principal Service: ISAIAH 42:1-9, PSALM 29, ACTS 10:34-43, MATTHEW 3:13-17

19 January (2nd Sunday in Ordinary Time)

Principal Service: ISAIAH 49:1-7, PSALM 40:1-11, 1 CORINTHIANS 1:1-9, JOHN 1:29-42

26 January (3rd Sunday in Ordinary Time)

Principal Service: ISAIAH 9:1-4, PSALM 27:4-9, 1 CORINTHIANS 1:10-18, MATTHEW 4:12-23

2 February (4th Sunday in Ordinary Time)

Principal Service: MICAH 6:1-8, PSALM 15, 1 CORINTHIANS 1:18-31, MATTHEW 5:1-12

9 February (5th Sunday in Ordinary Time)

Principal Service: ISAIAH 58:1-9a(9b-12), PSALM 112:1-9(10), 1 CORINTHIANS 1:1-12(13-16), MATTHEW 5:13-20

16 February (6th Sunday in Ordinary Time)

Principal Service: DEUTERONOMY 30:15-20 OR SIRACH/ECCLESIASTICUS 15:15-20, PSALM 119:1-8. 1CORINTHIANS 3:1-9, MATTHEW 5:21-37

23 February (Sunday before Lent)

Principal Service: EXODUS 24: 12-18, PSALM 2 OR PSALM 99, 2 PETER 1:16-21, MATTHEW 17:1-9

1 MARCH (1st Sunday in Lent)

Principal Service: GENESIS 1:15-17; 3:1-7, PSALM 32, ROMANS 5:12-19, MATTHEW 4:1-11

8 March (2nd Sunday in Lent)

Principal Service: GENESIS 12:1-4a, PSALM 121, ROMANS 4:1-5,13-17, JOHN 3:1-17

15 March (3rd Sunday in Lent)

Principal Service: EXODUS 17:1-7, PSALM 95, ROMANS 5:1-11, JOHN 4:5-42

22 March (4th Sunday in Lent)

Principal Service 1 SAMUEL 16:1-13, PSALM 23, EPHESIANS 5:8-14, JOHN 9:1-41
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

29 March (5th Sunday in Lent)

Principal Service: ISAIAH 43:16-21, PSALM 126, PHILIPPIANS 3:4B-14, JOHN 12:1-8

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	WL	Worship Leader
L	Local Arrangement	X	Carol Service
LC	Ladies' Circle	ac	Air Cadets
M	Messy Church		Readers' Service-
MWiB	Methodist Women in Britain		Own Arrangement
N	Nativity		

Church Schedules and Preachers' Plan Dates

Please return copies of these to **Revd John Squares and Sue Smith**
before January 31st 2020.

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.

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 ring Silvia Dawson



Prayers from around the Circuit

Prayer is where the action is - John Wesley

Lord we pray for Unity of the Spirit through the bond of Peace
In the Name of Jesus
God WITH us
Let us be Together
As God's community Amen

Lord Jesus open our eyes that we may see
Open our ears to truly hear and listen to you
Open our hearts to your Great Love
Our wills to your commands
We pray for wisdom and understanding of your Word. Amen

Prayer is where the action is - John Wesley

Prayer of Thankfulness

*Father we come before you with so much to be thankful
for.*

*We rose from our beds this morning, drew back the
curtains and looked out. There were no flood waters
rushing towards us, no volcano fire seeking to destroy us.*

All was calm and peaceful.

*We went into the bathroom and turned on the taps and
there was water and we cleansed ourselves. We had
clothes to shield our body from the elements.*

*We went into the kitchen and there was food on the
table and we have eaten. We have made our way to
worship you, we did not have to run the gauntlet of
bomb or bullet. We had not to hear the cry of the
wounded and dying or avoid the outstretched hands of
the starving and thirsty.*

*When we reached your house no one forbade us to enter
or forced us to do so, for we are a people who live our
lives in freedom and dignity.*

*Forgive us father if we take these precious gifts as a
right, as something we are due to without any thought,
when there are those who would look on these things as
the very ingredients of heaven.*

*Father grant us the grace to so live our lives that one day
all people will live as we do.*

Ray Gibbon 1929 - 2015

Church Assessments (2019-2020)

Church	£ / quarter	Church	£ / quarter
Bearpark	1613	Langley Park	1312
Bowburn	1651	Newton Hall	4671
Brandon	3303	North Road	11972
Carrville	7244	Pittington	957
Elvet	14013	Sacrison	2663
Esh Winning	2182	Sherburn Hill	1004
Framwellgate Moor	1531	Witton Gilbert	1384

Circuit Diary

January

- Mon 13th **Brandon** – Monthly Bible Fellowship – 3.30pm
 Wed 15th **Brandon** – Global Care Quiz – 7pm
 Thurs 16th **Framwellgate Moor** – Quiz – 7pm
 Sun 26th **Elvet** – Leeds University Union Brass Band – 10.45am
 Wed 29th **North Road Cottage** – LP&WL Monthly Bible Fellowship – 7.30pm

February

- Sat 1st **Elvet** – Chinese Banquet for Mary's Meals Project
 Tues 4th **Brandon** – Circuit Leadership Team – 7pm
 Thurs 6th **Bowburn** – Local Preachers & Worship Leaders Meeting –
 7.15pm for 7.30pm
 Sat 8th **North Road** – Circuit Mission Forum – 10am
 Mon 10th **Brandon** - Monthly Bible Fellowship – 3.30pm
 Mon 11th **Brandon** – Circuit Leadership Team – 7pm
 Fri 14th **Elvet** – Valentine Concert by The Rock Choir for Mary's Meals
 Mon 17th **Framwellgate Moor** – Circuit Finance Team – 7.30pm
 Wed 19th **Brandon** – Global Care Quiz – 7pm
 Thurs 20th **Framwellgate Moor** – Quiz – 7pm
 Wed 26th **North Road Cottage** – LP&WL Monthly Bible Fellowship – 7.30pm

March

- Mon 9th **Brandon** - Monthly Bible Fellowship – 3.30pm
 Wed 11th **Carrville** – Circuit Meeting – 7pm
 Tues 17th **Witton Gilbert** – Lunch
 Wed 18th **Brandon** – Global Care Quiz – 7pm

Thurs 19th **Elvet** – District Supernumeraries' Day – 9.30am to 1.30pm

Thurs 19th **Framwellgate Moor** – Quiz – 7pm

Wed 25th **North Road Cottage** – LP&WL Monthly Bible Fellowship – 7.30pm

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

All information and dates for the Circuit Diary by **31st January 2020** to
Sue Smith

Email: susansmith0007@btinternet.com