

S<sub>outh</sub> E<sub>ast</sub> D U<sub>rham</sub> M<sub>ethodist</sub>

# NEWSLETTER

for Bowburn, Shincliffe and  
Elvet Methodists

Sedum:  
a family of  
small plants  
with fleshy  
l e a v e s ,  
found on  
rock or bare  
ground.



“....I tell you  
Peter; you are  
a rock, and  
on this rock  
foundation I  
will build my  
church.....”

FEB. - MAR. 09

## *A letter from our Minister*

*Dear Friends,*

On the 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Christmas (4 January), the Gospel reading prescribed in the Lectionary recounted the story of the Presentation of the infant Jesus in the Temple, where he was greeted with joy and rapture by Simeon and Anna, elderly people who had long been waiting for God to act, and who recognized in this baby the fulfilment of their hopes. In the course of my sermon, I briefly referred to the role of the elderly within the life of the Church, and I was surprised by the number of appreciative comments which my words evoked. This encouraged me to develop the point a little in this letter.

The Church is, of course, a community which ought to encompass people of all age-groups. When you think about it, there are not many such communities in the modern western world. Generation gaps are all too apparent. In this, we stand against the prevailing culture. I have often thought that the facility with which my own (now grown-up) children are able to relate to people both younger and much older than themselves is a direct and very happy result of their involvement, almost from birth, in the life of the Church.

A great deal of effort has been expended over many years in Methodism in work with children and young people. This has taken many forms, and at some times it has been more obviously successful than at others. Both our churches continue with such work – we think of the Junior Church and the Uniformed Organizations at Elvet (together with the now-annual pantomime, which draws together children, teenagers and adults), and, at

Bowburn, of the Thursday Drop-In, together with the Kids' Club and 'Messy Church'. Our Circuit is fortunate to have a Children's and Young People's Development Worker, who is doing much to support, encourage and develop this sort of work. All of this is admirable.

But our churches also have many people of 'riper years', who sometimes feel undervalued or forgotten. Many have given years of sterling service to the Church, sometimes holding office(s), and some, who are no longer able to do so, when they see how difficult it is nowadays to find volunteers to take on such roles, wish fervently that they could do more than, realistically, they can. Not only because of my own advancing years, but because I fervently believe it to be true, I want to state my conviction that the old are as important to the Church as the young (just as in a human family grandparents and great-grandparents are rightly cherished, as are babies, children and young people) and that people of all age-groups have a part to play in the Church's life. No one should ever reach the stage where he or she feels able to do nothing. When active participation is no longer possible, we can still pray for those who 'bear the burden of the day' and for the advancement of God's kingdom; and we can share our accumulated wisdom with those who are younger.

Let the story of Simeon and Anna be a comfort and an inspiration to those who are getting on in years, and a reminder to others that a Church that is genuinely for all people cannot neglect its senior citizens.

Yours sincerely,

*Neil Dixon*

## WORSHIP IN FEBRUARY

### Bowburn

- 1st 10.30 a.m. Mr John Scott  
8th 10.30 a.m. HOLY COMMUNION  
Rev Neil Dixon  
15th 10.30 a.m. Miss Dorothy Hale  
22nd 10.30 a.m. Mr Bill Offler

### Elvet

- 1st 10.45 a.m. Holy Communion  
Rev Neil Dixon / Rev Nigel Johnson  
6.00 p.m. Rev Julie Lunn / the Very Rev Michael Sadgrove  
8th 8.30 a.m. Holy Communion  
Rev Neil Dixon  
10.45 a.m. **All Age Worship and Parade**  
Rev Kenneth Mankin  
6.00 p.m. Rev Julie Lunn / Dr R. Song  
15th 10.45 a.m. Rev Neil Dixon  
6.00 p.m. Holy Communion  
Rev Julie Lunn  
22nd 10.45 a.m. Rev Neil Dixon  
6.00 p.m. Rev Neil Dixon / Rev Julie Lunn (TAIZÉ)

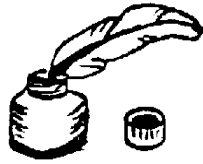
## WORSHIP IN MARCH

### Bowburn

- 1st 10.30 a.m. LENT 1 Rev Kenneth Mankin
- 8th 10.30 a.m. LENT 2 HOLY COMMUNION  
Rev Neil Dixon
- 15th 10.30 a.m. LENT 3 Mr C. S. Cockling
- 22nd 10.30 a.m. LENT 4 **Mothering Sunday**  
All Age Worship: Mrs Anne Offler
- 29th 10.30 a.m. LENT 5 First Sunday of Passion  
Mr Eric Watchman

### Elvet

- 1st 10.45 a.m. LENT 1 Holy Communion Rev Neil Dixon  
6.00 p.m. Rev Julie Lunn
- 8th 8.30 a.m. LENT 2 Holy Communion Rev Neil Dixon  
10.45 a.m. Rev Rosaria Leto  
6.00 p.m. Rev Dr J. V. Craske
- 15th 10.45 a.m. LENT 3 Miss Alison Stacey-Chapman  
6.00 p.m. Holy Communion Rev Angela Long
- 22nd 10.45 a.m. LENT 4 **Mothering Sunday**  
**All Age Worship and Parade**  
Mrs Margaret Wadge  
6.00 p.m. Rev Neil Dixon
- 29th 10.45 a.m. Rev Neil Dixon  
6.00 p.m. Mr Bill Offler



## **EDITORIAL**

Dear Friends,

I've been thinking a lot about people who are alone. As many of you will know, I live alone, and have done so for many years. Other people find themselves alone after years of marriage - or even feeling alone, despite there being others around.

I am just back from a trip to Italy. Why do I go there so often? Because good friends who I got to know whilst I worked there have decided that I am not just a friend, but a part of the family. My friends could not bear the thought of me being an orphan and without children. I cannot describe their kindness and hospitality.

However, whilst I was out there (shopping in Como, admiring the view of the snow-capped Alps - not that I'm trying to make you jealous, you understand) I met two other people who are alone and thought about our reactions to loneliness. Let's call the first Renata. She is quite severely disabled and is so grateful for any time you spend with her - too grateful: her repeated thanks become a burden. I shall call the second Marisa: she never stops telling you how depressed she is, never seeming to realise that we are doing our best to make her life more cheerful.

I'm not sure where I fit in in the loneliness/gratefulness spectrum. Please remember how difficult it is to be alone. For those of us who are alone, people outside our immediate families often receive the burden of our cares. Let us pray for the lonely. AMEN.

Yours in Christ,

*Jackie*

## Supporting Northumbria's historic churches

In town or village **historic churches** are often at the heart of the community, providing both a visible and a spiritual focus. After the Romans left Britain Northumbria was at the heart of Christianity in England and the region produced some outstanding churchmen, artists and scholars. At Escomb the region has arguably the oldest church building in England still in active use as a place of worship.

But churches face a **real problem**. Settlement patterns are changing and congregations are often small, but the congregation is still responsible for the upkeep of the church building. Old buildings are costly to maintain, and there is less financial help available.

Since its formation in 1980 the **Northumbria Historic Churches Trust** has been raising funds to provide grants for repairs to churches in Northumbria. It has offered over £700,000 in grants to more than 200 churches, making an important contribution to the preservation of the North-East's heritage. The NHCT is independent of other grant-making bodies but works closely with them, with the common aim of preserving our places of worship for the future.

**You can help the Trust** to do this. Supporter numbers are important when we apply to major trusts for donations. To show your support why not become a subscriber? For a modest sum (less than the cost of an evening out) you will be helping the Trust.

In turn **you will be kept in touch** with our activities through an occasional newsletter, and will have the opportunity to attend events (talks, trips etc) that we organise.

You'll find **further information** and a subscription form on our website, [www.NorthumbriaHCT.org.uk](http://www.NorthumbriaHCT.org.uk) or you can contact: The secretary, 20 Aykley Vale, Aykley Heads, Durham DH1 5WA (0191 383 2704).



## WEDDINGS

The following have celebrated their marriages at Elvet.

16th November      *Mark MASON* and *Hayley FRANCIS*

*Congratulations*



## FUNERALS

### **In Memoriam**

Our loving sympathy is extended to the family and friends of

Mary ROSS

whose funeral service was held at Elvet on 14 November

and

to the family and friends of

Ann CARRICK

whose funeral service was held at

Rosa Street Methodist Church, Spennymoor on 30 December





**SARAH MALIK NAMED FIRST SALARIED YOUTH PRESIDENT**

Sarah Malik was elected Methodist Youth President at this year's Methodist Youth Conference. From January until September 2009 Sarah will work full-time to serve as an advocate and spokesperson for young people in the Church.

This new role is the first to be appointed in the Church's new Youth Participation Strategy, launched at the Youth Conference in Northampton last month. The Youth Participation Strategy will also see 32 young people employed in new, part-time salaried posts as District Youth Enablers across the Methodist Church in Britain. It is the first time salaried positions have been specifically targeted at 16 to 23-year-olds in order that young people help guide the direction of the Church.

For more information about Sarah go to <http://www.methodist.org.uk/index.cfm?fuseaction=openogod.newsDetail&newsid=306> and details about the Youth Participation Strategy visit.

<http://www.methodist.org.uk/index.cfm?fuseaction=churchlife.content&cmid=2196>

**An interesting conundrum**

Does anyone know an area of Durham known as Garside Moor?

A reader has contacted me because her great-great-grandmother, Mrs Bell, was born there. Yet she can find no trace of the place name. Has it been changed? Has it been misheard?

If "Garside Moor" rings a bell with you, please contact the editor and we will publish your suggestions and ideas in the next issue.

Thank you.

A TRIBUTE TO THE REVD MICHAEL J. SKINNER  
(Feb 1919 - Sept 2008)

*This tribute has been forwarded to us by our former minister,  
Rev Stuart Rhodes.*

Many Elveteers will remember with much affection and gratitude Michael Skinner's ministry at Elvet, Bowburn and Shincliffe, 1951 - 57. He came to Durham from being Assistant Tutor at Handsworth College, Birmingham and, during his 6 years in the circuit, was known as a wonderful pastor (visiting his people regularly) great encourager and good preacher. He started many housegroups and was instrumental in preparing candidates for the ministry. Methsoc grew and grew to become one of the largest in the Connexion.

I was one of Michael's candidates, who trained at Wesley House, Cambridge. Of the 11 freshers in my year there, 6 of us were from Durham Methsoc. So, it's not surprising that many of us always regarded him as our father I God and invited him to be our sponsor at our ordination services.

He never lost touch with us. Indeed, I discovered that he had a hand in 3 of my appointments! (Durham, Oxford super and District Chairman).

Very reluctantly, being the obedient minister he was, he went from the Filey superintendency (1957 - 9) to Wesley House, first as Tutor (1959 - 74) then as Principal (1974 - 80). His pastoral theology lectures and tutorials were always earthed in his years at Elvet.

But he ended his active ministry in what was his first love - being a circuit minister in Leicester (1980 - 85). He continued to serve in so-called retirement as a much loved pastor and preacher in Woodstock, Oxford.

He came to Durham as a bachelor before marrying Peggy, who supported him in so many ways. They had 4 children - David, Martin, James and Rosemary. What a tribute to Peggy's and Michael's influence - the 3 sons are all ministers. This must be something of a record.

**MUSIC AND MEDIATION**  
The thoughtful use of music and words  
Led by Rev Neil Dixon  
Every Wednesday at 1 p.m. (after Lunch Stop)



March 4th  
March 11th  
March 18th  
March 25th

## INTERESTING THOUGHTS FROM JAMES NAUGHTIE

Some of you, like me, may listen to the *Today* programme each morning. I have, in addition, subscribed to presenter, James Naughtie's, newsletter for the *Bookclub* programme. The book to read for January seems very interesting. It is an assessment of the way we live now: Oliver James's "Affluenza".

Oliver James has noted an extraordinary fact: that there seems to be a correlation between societies where the accumulation of wealth is given a high priority and the incidence of mental illness.

As his researches led him all over the world, he uncovered evidence of unease and unhappiness that often tipped over into something more serious and debilitating, and concluded that he had been correct to identify a kind of disease in English speaking countries such as the USA, Australia, New Zealand and the UK. He traces the origins of this disease to an absorption with money, wealth and particularly excessive material self-improvement.

One of the themes in the book is his discovery that people in Denmark suffer less from 'affluenza' than the Americans or the British. He thinks he has the answer - that they have

spent a good deal of time working on how to maintain a homogenous society, in which the gap between rich and poor is determinedly kept under control, for example, and where they have quite consciously argued as a society against over-consumption.

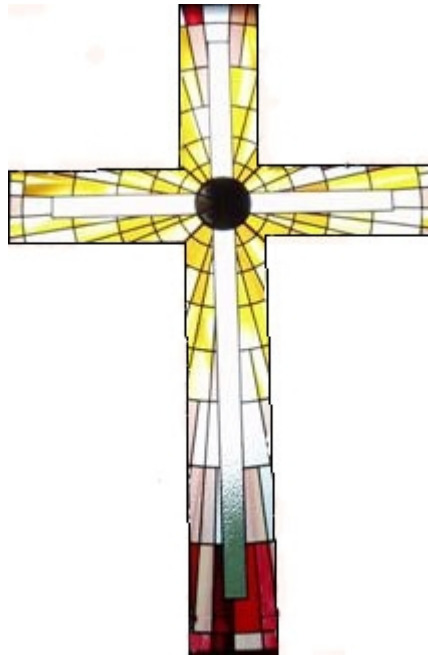
*Affluenza* is a book that can have a dramatic effect when it is read for the first time, a feeling that a veil is being lifted. And the interesting thing is that he seems to be talking about the question that's starting to challenge us. How do we respond psychologically to recession and the reordering of the financial landscape? Do we change the way we behave towards each other, and think about our society, or do we just hunker down and try to survive as best we can? This is not to underrate the practical horror of personal disasters – losing a job or a home – but to put it in a broader context. Are we at some kind of turning point, or have we just hit a bump in a long straight road?

By the way, for those of you who wonder if there is a vaccine against 'affluenza'? Here is a clue. Forget that new car; don't pull your kitchen apart; enjoy what you have.

*I think this review of 'Affluenza' will lead me to seek out the book. What about you?*

## COVENANT SERVICES

"I will be their God and they shall be my people."  
(Ezekiel 37, 27)



On January 4th Bowburn Church held its Covenant Service and on January 11th Elvet held its as a United Service with St Oswald's Anglican Church.

The annual tradition goes back to the time Wesley himself. Realising that people need to grow in relationship with God, Charles Wesley developed the service of promises and renewal in 1755. The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper (Holy Communion) has always been integral to the Covenant Service.

The Covenant Service is not an end in itself, but a reminder to us all of the difference that having a relationship with God makes to our lives. Because we all fall short of the ideal, we need to renew our promises year by year. Each year the service, to me, is both the same and new. It is a marvellous tradition observed throughout Methodism, as any Google search for "Covenant Service" will reveal.

Of course, we do not just renew our Covenant so that we can feel good about ourselves. A true Covenant leads to action. If we know God, then others should know and feel that we know Him. "He has no hands but ours."

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### Buttons Wanted



Sue Harrison asks you all to donate any buttons you have to spare to her. Any size, any shape.

Over the summer holidays she intends to turn them into craft objects and sell them for the Elvet Project.

Search through your sewing boxes - or down the back of the sofa!

**A message from  
Mary and Cecil Claxton**

Cecil and Mary from Berwick thank all our friends from Elvet for their greetings and letters for Christmas. Unfortunately we were both poorly in December and our cards remain unwritten. Pleased to say we are on the mend now. We send you our love and best wishes, that the peace and joy of Christmas will remain with you throughout the New Year.

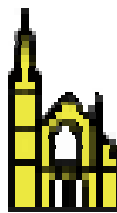
Every blessing. C & M.

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**The Methodist Church's Music Resource Group** has been working to prepare a new collection of hymns and songs to present to the Methodist Conference in 2009. The first shortlist of items for inclusion is now available for public comment from across the Connexion and you are encouraged to make your views known.

Please visit [www.methodist.org.uk/newhymnbook](http://www.methodist.org.uk/newhymnbook) to see the list and to post your responses online.

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**Don't forget to visit the Elvet website:  
[www.elvet-church.org.uk](http://www.elvet-church.org.uk)**





**CRADLE ROLL BIRTHDAYS**

**FEBRUARY**

- 2nd Ryan Jackson (Elvet)
- 9th Helena Ruby Davison (Bowburn)
- 10th Kyle Caiden Corner (Bowburn)
- 16th Thomas Churchman (Elvet)

**MARCH** 20th Alfie Jayden Chilver (Bowburn)

**JUNIOR CHURCH BIRTHDAYS**

**MARCH**

- 4th Lisa Cave (Elvet)
- 8th Callum Hall (Elvet)
- 24th Ella Rose Ferguson (Bowburn)
- 25th Rebecca Carter (Elvet)

*A Happy Birthday To You All*



## Elvet Communion Collections

Communion collections at Elvet will be donated to the following charities. Please give generously.

**February - People's Kitchen** - The aim of the People's Kitchen is to provide friendship, food and support to the needy, lonely and homeless in and around Newcastle upon Tyne. This is made possible through an enthusiastic team of volunteers and generous support. Alison Kay, the founder, believed that it is important that all the people in all the world should be aware of what is happening around them. The People's Kitchen motto is "**We are NOT here to see through one another - we are here to see one another through**".



**March - Grace House** - The Grace House North East Children's Hospice Appeal is raising funds to build, equip and run an eight bed children's hospice for children across the North East. Over 1,200 families in our region require hospice care and Grace House will provide a home from home, loving environment where children and their families may turn for support. At present the government does not provide long term funding for children's hospices and this means that charities like this rely on the goodwill of dedicated fundraising teams and the generosity of the public.

**THE WEEK IN BOWBURN**

Sundays	<b>10.30 am</b>	<b>Morning Worship</b>
Tuesdays	5.30 pm	* Kid's Club
	5.30 pm	"Messy Church" (1st in month)
Wednesdays	2.00 pm	Women's Fellowship (1st and 2nd in month only)
	<b>2 - 3 pm</b>	Prayer & Fellowship Meeting <b>last Weds of month.</b>
Thursdays	9.00 am	* "Drop-in" * <i>term-time only</i>

**THE WEEK AT ELVET**

Sun	8.30 a.m.	Second Sunday, Holy Communion
	<b>10.45 a.m.</b>	<b>Morning Service &amp; Junior Church</b> , including crèche
	<b>6.00 p.m.</b>	<b>Evening Worship</b>
	7.30 p.m.	MethSoc (term-time)
Mon	2.00 p.m.	Prayer Meeting (2nd & 4th Mon)
	6.00 p.m.	Cubs (Open Group) [Boys and Girls 8-10½]
	7.30 p.m.	Guides (Open Group) [10-16] <b>meets at St Giles'</b>
	7.30 p.m.	Explorers (Open Group) [Mixed 14½-18]
	7.45 p.m.	Housegroup at Newton Hall (alternate wks)
Tue	10.15 a.m.	Halliday Grove House Group (alternate wks)
	5.30 p.m.	Beavers (Open Group) [Boys and Girls 6-8]
	7.10 p.m.	Scouts (Open Group) [Boys and Girls 10½-14½]
Wed	2.30 p.m.	Women's Fellowship (1st & 3rd wks)
Thurs	10.00 a.m.	Arts & Crafts Workshop
	7.45 p.m.	Thursday Club for All (alternate wks)
	7.45 p.m.	Housegroup at Shincliffe (alternate wks)

**ELVET and BOWBURN METHODIST CHURCHES**

**Minister:**

Rev Neil Dixon BA MPhil

Tel: 384 8755

and

**University Chaplain**

Rev Julie Lunn, BEd, MA

Tel: 384 7950



**DON'T FORGET**

Copy for the **April - May** Newsletter  
should reach Jackie Fielding by

**1st March,**

via the pocket in the rear entrance hall at **Elvet,**

by phone on Durham 384 7305

or by e-mail at [fielding@durhamcity.org.uk](mailto:fielding@durhamcity.org.uk)

Alternatively, those at **Shincliffe** can contact

Jim Harper on Durham 386 4360.

Those at **Bowburn** can contact

Liz Atkinson on Durham 377 0687.