

A growing number of children are receiving lunches during the school holidays provided by a 'Places of Welcome' network supported by churches in South Tyneside, as families feel the impact of the cost of living crisis



Around 150 picnic lunches are being given out from Monday to Thursday during the summer holidays at churches in the parish of Jarrow and Simonside, part of a 'Places of Welcome +' network set up in January this year.

Families can pick up the meals or stay to take part in activities including crafts and games.

"We have found that during the holidays families love coming into the Places of Welcome. We provide simple activities and picnic lunches," Revd Lesley Jones, Rector of Jarrow and Simonside, said.

"Every school holiday demand has grown and we expect this to be even higher in the half term in October.

"It was tough for families before and during the pandemic and it is even harder now. There are families where the parents are working flat out but they are still struggling.

"We can only provide this service through the generosity of our volunteers and partnership working with other organisations."

St Peter's and St John the Baptist churches in the parish are also hosting Friday Holiday Clubs during August funded through the Government's Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) programme providing food and activities such as circus skills and crafts for children.

- The Places of Welcome + network provides refreshments, pastoral support and debt advice. During the holidays it is also used by families and children.
- The network includes St Simon's Church in South Shields and St Peter's and St John the Baptist churches in Jarrow. It was set up with support from Communities Together Durham, the partnership between South Tyneside Churches Together and the Diocese of Durham.
- The picnic lunches are made by Jarrow Morrison's supermarket community champion, with funding for the lunches and activities provided by the parish, South Tyneside Council and Communities Together Durham.

Source URL: <https://www.churchofengland.org/media-and-news/stories-blogs-and-features/churches-meet-rising-demand-meals-during-summer-holidays>