

# Herald

## Ripon And Lower Dales Circuit Newsletter

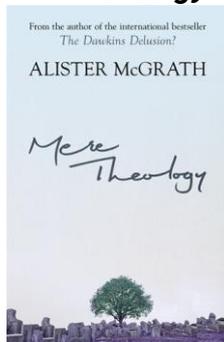
**Welcome** to this week's issue of the Herald. Our vision is to provide a helpful place for connecting with some of what God is doing across the Ripon and Lower Dales Circuit. To give voice to those experiencing the love of God in their daily walk of faith. To celebrate and share the good news of God's kingdom.

*Jesus said: 'Do not let your hearts be troubled, Believe in God, believe also in me.'* [John 14:1]



### Book review in 100 words

#### **Mere Theology: Christian faith and the discipleship of the mind by Alister McGrath**



'Mere Theology' is one of the favourite books in my library written by a contemporary theologian Alister McGrath. First published ten years ago by SPCK, it still offers helpful learning for theological engagement today. The book is presented in two parts: part one looks at 'the purpose, place and relevance of Christian theology' and includes a chapter engaging with the work of Martin Luther and C.S. Lewis for example. Part two looks at 'engaging with our culture' and provides insights which build bridges for healthy Christian engagement. I believe theology is and should be for all people, not simply something held by the few. This is an accessible read whilst maintaining significant theological depth.

### Christian Bookshop; supporting with our prayers

This week I learnt the sad news of about 'Cornerstone' a Christian Bookshop in Skipton which have announced that they are to cease trading at the end of September. They note how prior to the COVID-19 crisis it had been becoming increasingly difficult to break even as a business.

I wanted to give voice to this news about Cornerstone Christian Bookshop in Skipton for several reasons. They are our brothers and sisters in Christ, our neighbours, and a Christian resourcing presence within the area of Skipton (not a million miles away).

With the surge of internet shopping, many local businesses have faced greater pressures to keep going and often local businesses 'such as Christian bookshops' provide shape to a community.

Across the country many Christian bookshops have faithfully opened its door to all, including those seeking to find out more about the Christian faith. Furthermore, Christian bookshops have and do provide support to local churches. Therefore, I would like to invite you to join me in praying for the bookshop and everyone connected with it. It is still possible to place orders with them, either by email or by phone and details are below. Also, on the website you will find their prayer requests. <http://cornerstoneskipton.co.uk/>

**Email:** [books@cornerstoneskipton.co.uk](mailto:books@cornerstoneskipton.co.uk) **Phone:** 01756 793673

### Circuit Coffee Morning over Zoom – Friday's @ 11am "A place of friendship and welcome"

The circuit coffee morning over zoom is a great place to catch up and connect with familiar faces and make new friends.

**Everyone is welcome**, so why not make a cup of tea or coffee just the way you like it and pop along to the **zoom coffee lounge**. If you would like attend, please contact Margaret Smith at [margsmit@yorks21.plus.com](mailto:margsmit@yorks21.plus.com) for details.

*\*Please note: Help is available for those wanting to engage online with Zoom.*





## Worship Album Highlight “Sanctus Real – The Face of Love.”

Sanctus Real’s “The Face of Love” was my first foray into the genre of Contemporary Christian Music (CCM). Sanctus Real are popular CCM pop/rockers from Ohio and this is their 3rd album. At the time I was feeling challenged about what media (songs, tv, films) I was allowing to influence my life, to infiltrate my subconscious. I’d like to say I’m (eventually) fairly responsive to God’s promptings, but Christian Music?

Really?? Wasn’t Christian music awful? Tame, at best? On investigation, I found a whole array of Christian singers, of all genres, producing songs that whilst not all of them “worship music” per se, were wholesome songs about life and love from a Christian perspective, songs of faith and doubts, songs of love and hope. And some of them actually very good! “The Face of Love”, for example, is an honest, passionate, even worshipful album, starting from a place of struggle (“I’m not Alright” <https://youtu.be/E5oY2oYKHFY>) and directing us to Jesus - The Face of Love.

Clare Nelson

**Free offer.** I have one more copy of the album by **Philippa Hanna “Stained Glass Stories”** to **give away** to the first person who sends me a Worship Album review for printing in The Herald. It might be contemporary worship, traditional or classical, anything in fact that has blessed you and you think may bless others.

Please email me at [gpentelow@gmail.com](mailto:gpentelow@gmail.com)

Graham



## I believe in the sun even when it is not shining

Sat with the rain falling and considering the analogy which has been used throughout the pandemic of being in a storm but in different boats, my mind went to the poem written during WW2 on the wall in the Cologne concentration camp. To be clear, I am by no means likening the pandemic to the evil atrocities’ which took place but simply drawing upon the strength conveyed all those years ago. Here is just part of what was written; ‘I believe in the sun even when it is not shining. And I believe in love even when there’s no one there. But I believe in God even when he is silent. I believe through any trial there is always a way.’

Just like when we look back to the great storms people faced in the past, I can only imagine and seek to empathise with what it as been like in the different boats during recent months. I do continue in prayer, seeking God and seeking to help the best I can. Another quote which references the sun is from the well-known author and Christian theologian C.S. Lewis. C.S. Lewis is quoted for saying ‘I believe in Christ like I believe in the sun – not because I can see it, but because by it I can see everything else.’ Even when it is raining, though it is not bright like on a sunny day we are still able to see things. In the same way, we have seen so much love, care, kindness, and generosity being shared within local communities across the world.

In terms of finding our way through this storm, I believe Jesus remains the way, and the truth and the life. That through Jesus we can come to the Father who made the sun and the rain. Earlier Christians would refer to themselves as being followers of ‘the way’. I too seek to belong and inspire others in being a follower of ‘the way’. Following the way of Jesus is not always easy but is marked by love. I believe in love and give thanks to God because God is love.

I believe in the sun even when it is not shining. Do you?



**You have 3 new messages from the Superintendent Minister**

**FAREWELL SERVICE.** A little note but big Thank you to everyone who prayed on Sunday at 3pm around the circuit for Helen and Fred during their Farewell service. Continuing that big Thank you for all who joined online and those who led different parts of the service. Helen and Fred appreciated the service.

**The Listening Post – some of what has been shared.**

Thank you for all the responses which I have received through the mail, email and during the live online event. I really appreciate the courage taken in providing honest reflections and I would like to include some of those most shared themes by people, recognising the space limits here to include everything.

To begin, there has been expressed a feeling of not being included if you are not online or unable to access online gatherings for whatever reason, preference/not having technology etc.

There have been various meetings taking place online and for some it has become a space to enter acts of worship. In the most part, all worship resources have been circulated via email or print and this will continue. However, I fully appreciate how not having access to the internet can be limiting and everyone is different in how they connect with worship when we are physically distanced.

The responses also confirmed what the staff team had begun sense and having begun to explore developing a phone line access to prayer and a short reflection, we are now pressing on with that. There will be more details about this phone line worship access once it is in place. It will take some time to get organised but will be circulated as soon as possible. The main difference between this initiative and the phone lines for prayers and news from the Methodist Church, is the local/familiar voice which will be leading the prayers and sharing the reflections. Watch this space.

There has been expressed a feeling of being free to worship; to be creative; to discover and share with other styles and expressions of worship. Many people have enjoyed having more time to spend in prayer and being able to meet with God in the outdoors, either in the garden or on a walk. With the various worship at home resources being prepared and offered by different people, we have been able to value the different approaches and styles offered too. The word format of these service for email and print will be continuing in the future and it is hoped will help to keep up the contact with those physically unable to attend church services. Furthermore, with discovering other styles and expressions of worship, I will be encouraging the Local Preachers, Worship Leaders and Local Congregations to consider ways together of creating spaces in the times of worship to welcome a more eclectic approach.

To conclude on this short reflection on The Listening Post, there was an overwhelming expression received for the church, (you, me, we), to reflect properly on how God is seeking to shape His Church and build His kingdom. So, may we keep listening to God and each other as we look forward as disciples of our Lord Jesus Christ.

**A Methodist Way of Life** – As disciples called by name who also go by the collective name Methodists, I would like to flag up something which is going to be arriving with this next years Membership tickets. There are going to be commitment cards and various resources shared over the coming year to support engagement with 'A Methodist Way of Life' which draws upon 'Our Calling' as members of The Methodist Church. Our Calling you will note is around the themes of Worship; Learning and Caring; Service; and Evangelism. Watch this space and if you are someone who surfs the web, why not find out more by visiting The Methodist Church website.

Love and Peace be with you, now and always,  
Yours in Christ, Revd. Gareth.



### **Flourish with God**

Here is a photo of one of the Sunflowers which are growing in the wild meadow garden at our home. The sunflower seeds came from the District Flourish event which took place in Scarborough, during October last year.

I sowed the seeds with my daughter when I attempted to provide a forest home-school day of learning activities. We then planted them out in a position which would enable our neighbours and passer-by to enjoy their beauty. It is funny when you are waiting and watching for things to grow, it can feel like nothing is happening. And then it feels like a surprise when suddenly a bright bloom burst forth.

We have the parable of the mustard seed and a parable about the farmer who scattered seeds teaching us something about the kingdom of God and how God can grow his kingdom. I know that a sunflower produces more seeds, but the only way they will grow into more sunflowers is by being sowed again, by falling into the ground. Jesus used that image when explaining what was to come with his death and resurrection. Sometimes I make mistakes and sometimes fall, but God teaches me to get up again, that I can have new life with Jesus. Sometimes it can feel like nothing is happening when we are growing with God, but then we have those moments which surprise us, when suddenly we experience the Holy Spirit active like a bright bloom bursting forth. The thing I have noticed is that the bloom would not be able to come without the initial growth of the stem, without the sunflower plant taking root and taking in nutrients.

I long to see God's kingdom come and thank God for being my substance. For providing nourishment essential for my life and growth in faith. I want to be someone who cultivates a culture where we love each other and create environments for all to find nourishment from God to grow in faith. I sometimes imagine how beautiful and marvellous it will look for each person in families, communities, and churches to all bloom with the Holy Spirit. Imagine the transforming love of God shaping the world and the good news making the headlines. I want therefore to look for those green shoots of growth where God is active and growing his kingdom. I want to encourage and nurture and watch and pray with anticipation for the surprise that God has in store.

I pray all will Flourish with God.

**Note from the editor** – Thank you to all who have contributed to this week's issue of the Herald and thank you for reading. **NEXT WEEK!** I am delighted to announce and welcome a new editor Deacon Nigel Perrott for next week's issue of The Herald.

I want to emphasise again that The Herald is a Newsletter which seeks to hear different voices and perspectives from across the Ripon and Lower Dales Methodist Circuit. It welcomes first time writers and published authors alike. Please be encouraged to consider contributing to the newsletter and please contact Deacon Nigel Perrott on Tel: 01765 279161 or email: [nigel.perrott@methodist.org.uk](mailto:nigel.perrott@methodist.org.uk)

*'The earth is the LORD'S and all that is in it, the world, and those who live in it; for he has founded it on the seas, and established it on the rivers.'* [Psalm 24:1]



### **Dial-a-Prayer**

**FREE** phone lines for prayers and news from the Methodist Church

**Listen to a prayer: 0808 281 2514**

**Listen to news: 0808 281 2478**

Content is updated weekly on Thursday afternoon