

Herald

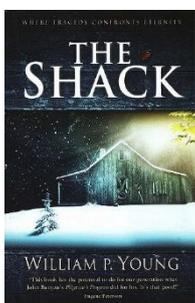
Ripon And Lower Dales Circuit Newsletter

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.

'God made the two great lights – the greater light to rule the day and the lesser light to rule the night – and the stars.' [Genesis 1:16]



Book review in 100 words



The Shack. by William P. Young. A re-read and review written by one of our Herald readers. A hard story facing the heartbreak of losing a child whilst keeping your faith. The agony and blame. I loved being immersed in the description of meeting with God when in a dark place, God as mother providing every comfort, food so delicious but indescribable. Jesus in jeans and a shirt, handyman, gardener, and counsellor. The Holy Spirit as a breath passing by, is she here or there.... but comforting and challenging at the same time. I am glad I read it again.

Lockdown Lookout! This week we hear from Julie Smith in Boroughbridge.

March is usually a very busy time for me with church preparations for Easter, getting my BHF Bookshop ready for the tourist season in Harrogate and also organising Pack Holiday for my Brownies. Of course, most of these things have not been able to take place.

We have celebrated a very different Easter with worship at a distance but somehow, we have managed to keep faithful and be connected to our church family.

My shop has been closed since mid-March, so we have been thinking of new and imaginative ways to raise funds for vital heart research. Hopefully, we will be allowed to open again soon with all the social distancing in place.

We were so looking forward to taking the Brownies away - for years we have been trying to book a trip to the seaside which we managed but of course this will not take place until 2021.

We will get through this time of uncertainty. I believe our lives, churches and businesses will take advantage of new opportunities and the practical acts of kindness shown to our neighbours and strangers will continue in the future. We may have had to find different ways of doing things, but we like a challenge! I never thought a few months ago that we would be holding a Brownie meeting on Zoom! One evening I saw 2 Brownie sisters with what I thought was a teddy on their knee. They informed me it was a hen that they had been drying with a hair drier after it fell in the horses' water trough and nearly drowned! This is not usual for a Brownie meeting.

On Sunday Worship from St David's the prayer of St David was used - Be Joyful, Keep the Faith and do the little things. Perhaps quite appropriate in these strange times.

2020 Ruth

Bible Month is all about encouraging a greater depth of Biblical understanding and is for everyone. The HUGE plus with getting involved with Bible Month is the great resources available from www.preachweb.org/biblemonth The digital download is free to order. On Monday we began the Zoom Bible Month study. It was great to share in the material written by Dr Rachel Starr and explore together with the group session. If you would like to share in a Zoom Bible Month study looking Ruth please email Pip Smith on riponlowerdalessup@outlook.com to book a place and receive your Zoom invitation. The next Zoom Bible Month study will be on Monday the 15th at 7.30pm, all are welcome.



Worship Album Highlight – Hymns for the Christian Life; Keith and Kristyn Getty.

The Gettys are well known and appreciated for their writing of contemporary Christian hymns, and for their fruitful collaboration with Stuart Townend. This album isn't new (2012), but it is a good representation of their work. Based on the concept of hymns and songs for daily life Christian living, it saw its birth in the Northern Celtic tour and a 6 track EP, later extended with six more new and reworked songs, including "In Christ alone". Stylistically the album draws on the Irish and American folk music tradition and features guest appearances from Alison Krauss, Moya Brennan and Ricky Skaggs.

Here is a link to one of the songs "Before you I kneel (A worker's prayer)"

<https://youtu.be/wdgY9sdCUBQ>

If you have a worship album you would like to recommend and review, please contact Graham on gpentelow@gmail.com or 07544484038



You have 1 new message, from the Revd. Helen Bell 'Musings from the Manse'

Dear Friends,

I bring you greetings from the Southern end of our Circuit via our new Circuit newsletter, and some news of my experience of lockdown so far. As many of you know my husband Fred is shielding and so we both remain largely confined to the Primrose Drive manse and garden, feeling blessed to have both a lovely home and a large outdoor space to appreciate.

It is possible to fulfil most aspects of my ministry through social media and the phone, but it is not my preferred option. Pastoral care needs ideally to happen face to face, watching for those nuanced non-verbal cues that come from both conversation and silence. My technical knowledge is not great, and it can be hard not to feel guilty about not being able to produce perfectly crafted online worship services or blogs galore. Indeed, I believe that most ministers feel a great deal of guilt at present and a permanent sense that we should be doing more for the people we are called to serve.

But in all this there is so much learning. Yes, I'm a whizz now at getting onto Zoom meetings, but I'm also learning about loneliness, the isolation that many face day after day in "normal" times. I have also had to get used to asking for help, something I find so very hard. Surely, I should be the one providing help for others! And yet, there is a profound sense that we can still be a community of faith, worshipping and praying together without a building to define us. A stronger, dare I say, kinder more caring community of the faithful who are finding all sorts of ways to show God's love and getting to know each other better even with limited communication.

Of course, we are doing all of this in the context of moving on this summer to my new station in the Leicester West Circuit. In any move in ministry there is loss, a grieving for folk left behind who welcomed

you into their lives in times of sorrow and great joy and who, for the most part, supported you in your ministry. There has been a huge amount of grief for us both over the past five years we have served here; the deaths of both my parents, a much-loved Uncle and sister-in-law; cousins and family friends. And we are also moving away from Yorkshire where many of Fred's family still live and Harrogate where my parents had lived since I was eighteen. With the added complications of how it is going to be possible to move safely if shielding continues, it's a challenging time.

Whilst there is still plenty of opportunities for goodbyes I want to assure you of our on-going prayers for those who are really struggling at the moment and for the Methodist church connexionally as we all try to discern the news things that God has planned for the church on earth, and to truly understand the lessons of this time. God bless you all, Helen

Lockdown and Christianity By Margaret Smith – Circuit Steward

The lockdown has been described to me as a sabbatical where we have time to think, to take stock of what has been good, what we have missed, or just how uncomfortable it has been. It's also a time to reflect upon what we do as a church, both within and without the building. We have certainly seen and felt the spirit moving in different ways: acts of kindness, words of encouragement and exploring different ways to worship. The building may be closed, the church not. There is evidence that far more people, using the internet, television and radio, have shared in worship than fill the pews.

Ministers have provided services, bible studies, prayers and meditations from their homes and we have received them in ours, sometimes with other members of the family not church goers but able to appreciate the message through a different route.

On Pentecost Sunday, Rev Leslie Newton (Chair of York and NE Methodist District) led a very interesting evening on 'Zoom' (an online meeting space) attended by 100 people. It was entitled 'What is The Spirit saying To Our Churches?' and can viewed on the District website www.yorkshirenemethodist.org. How I wish there was a way to share this, for those not able to access the internet. Our spiritual lives are being fed but we must not trap the spirit only on the internet!

One of the presenters shared this poem found on Facebook

**God snuck home. No longer bound by the expectations of a consecrated building,
She concentrated her efforts in breaking out
Now in the comfort of a well-worn dining table she shares some bread with some friends and she
laughs and she weeps in the sacred space of home.**

Six presenters gave food for thought as we look into the future. Points raised include:

- Are we tied to a building as church? Are we tied to Sunday worship?
- Are our services too 'samey'?
- Are we happy to invite others to services or would they not understand or be bored?
- One speaker talked about the G factor: time spent with God; can it encourage others to see the love of God?
- What is our gospel? Are we really inclusive? Is the language we use suitable for the present time?
- Do we need to leave the status quo behind? What is essential to our worship?
- Is it all too comfortable for us but irrelevant to society?

Stimulating questions as we grapple with just how to spread the Gospel in this rapidly changing world. I invite you to ask more questions and help in the work of constructing answers.

Thank you, Margaret, for sharing your reflections. You might want to note down some of your thoughts around these questions and perhaps they could form the basis for some of your prayer time with God. Perhaps you have some of your own questions which have arisen from viewing the Pentecost zoom gathering. I hope to organise a similar platform with a Zoom gathering for the Ripon and Lower Dales Circuit to help develop our understanding around some of these themes.

Let us continue in prayer and pray for each other –



#BLACK LIVES MATTER

We pray for peace; for change; for healing and a new world which sees black lives matter. May all eyes be opened to the reality of racism and all hearts filled with the courage needed to make it history.

Also, we pray for all those in the margins of society; praying especially for the homeless; refugees; and those living in poverty. For shelter; for belonging; for provision and a new world which places greater value on meeting the needs of the most vulnerable.

We continue to pray for all those who have lost loved ones during the pandemic. May they know the comfort, peace, and love of God at this time.

We also pray for those most exposed to the dangers of the virus. May they be protected and kept safe in exercising care for others.

Lord in your mercy, hear our prayers.

Note from the editor – Thank you to all who have contributed to this week's issue of the Herald and thank you for reading. It really would be lovely to hear from you if you have a lockdown lookout story or news item to share. Perhaps you have read an inspiring book and would like to write a review in 100 words. If any of these ring true with you then please can I encourage you to get in touch. Please note that Graham Pentelow is the contact for submissions of Album reviews and my thanks to Graham for joining the Newsletter team. 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 contact Revd Gareth Baron on Tel: 01677 989169 or email: Gareth.baron@methodist.org.uk

'Therefore, since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand; and we boast in our hope of sharing the glory of God. And not only that, but we also boast in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us.'

[Romans 5, verses 1-5]



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