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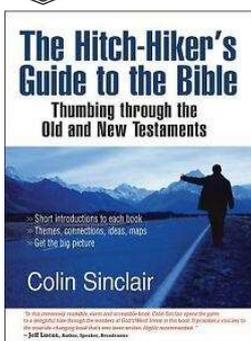
## Ripon And Lower Dales Circuit Newsletter

**Welcome** to this month'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.

*'Pursue peace with everyone, and the holiness without which no one will see the Lord.'* [Hebrews 12:14]



### Book review in 100 words



### ***The Hitch-Hiker's Guide to the Bible: Thumbing through the Old and New Testaments***

The Bible remains the best-selling book in the world and when we spend time with it open on a regular basis, know it to be more than just a book. The Hitch-Hiker's guide to the Bible by Colin Sinclair, published in 2008 is reader friendly, accessible and engaging for those wanting to hike a little to gain a greater perspective of the beautiful landscape of God's word, the Bible. An enlightening, helpful guide to understanding better the Bible, could be used alongside daily devotions or simply enjoyed by itself.

### **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 Resound Worship "Doxecology" Released 1<sup>st</sup> Sept 2020**

*"Resound Worship is a collective of British worship songwriters, established in 2006, seeking to resource the church with songs that engage heart, mind and soul".* A couple of years ago the group identified a scarceness in the worship song/hymn repertoire around the topic of ecology and the created world, and set about building a collection of especially written songs. The newly released album might never have happened as lockdown restriction blew all the carefully laid plans for arranging and recording the songs, but technology and determination prevailed!

The album consists of thirteen songs, all on the theme, but surprisingly varied in style and content. All will make you think, and have the potential to take us to a different place in worship of the creator God. Also available to accompany the album is a study book, service outlines, music book and backing tracks. A truly useful resource.

As only the Holy Spirit can do, this set is released at exactly the same time as the new Methodist Prayer Handbook – "The Earth is the Lords", and would be a worthy companion.

The links take you to the Resound Worship website <https://www.resoundworship.org/> and the song "Heaven's voice brings the dawn". <https://youtu.be/msWH0HQJTRQ>

All the word videos can be found on YouTube to watch and listen to.

## Memories of Ripon

### Introduction by Deacon Nigel Perrott.

A number of years ago, Sara worked in Kirby Malzeard, Bishop Monkton, and Ripon. She recently got in touch with us as she is interested in finding mission partners for her work with "Operation Mobilisation". Due to the sensitive nature of their work, I am unable to publish her full name or the location of where she is working. As you will be aware, there are many countries that persecute Christians and being openly Christian is illegal.

Sara is keen to reconnect with people who may remember her, and if you would like more information on her work, please do get in touch with me and I will be happy to assist.

I hope that when we find ourselves more settled, we can invite Sara to speak to us as a circuit, and see if there is some way we could help to support the work of this amazing group of people. If you have access to the internet this is the address: <https://www.uk.om.org/Pages/Category/about-us>

Sara writes to us:

#### The seeds that were sown

I have fond memories of Ripon and the surrounding area, of Kirkby Malzeard that was my home for nearly a year, and of Fountains Abbey where I spent many days serving food and cleaning tables. Many seeds were sown during that year, from 1998-1999, when I and 3 strangers came to live in the village and form a 'Seed Team'. I often wonder what came of those seeds, how many took roots and grew.

A central part of our mission year involved opening 'The Net' youth club and running a Youth Alpha group in Kirkby Malzeard, and launching 'Maximum Velocity' youth services that outgrew the Chapel and moved into Allhallowgate Methodist Church. I often wonder what happened to those youth who must now be in their 20s and 30s. Perhaps you are one of them!

I also remember visiting people in the village, sitting in their living rooms and listening to their stories, and the weekly coffee morning we held in our front room because the bus stop was just outside. Sharing the story of Daniel's friends in the fiery furnace for Bonfire Night at the toddler group will always stick in my mind – the looks on everyone's faces when we shared their funny names and how God saved them from the fire!

And meeting the youth group in Ripon, making friends, growing together as a team, allowing God to take me out of my comfort zone and to reveal things about me, my character and my skills that He could use. Seeds were sown in my own life that year!

For one, I saw how significant a small local chapel can be in reaching out to its community, and that planted a seed to encourage local churches in their day to day mission – I am now part-way through training as a local preacher and I hope that the services I lead are encouraging and equipping to be witnesses in our communities. Second, the year of mission certainly wasn't a 'year out' but a 'year in', in which a seed for mission was sown. I now work for mission organisation OM (Operation Mobilisation), encouraging people to partner in Global mission, through praying, giving or going. And third, I married a local boy from Ripon, and we have 2 wonderful children!

For more information on OM: [www.uk.om.org](http://www.uk.om.org)

If you or someone you know, might be interested in taking a Gap Year, and seeing how God can use and shape you, take a look at OM's Gap Year Challenge: <https://www.uk.om.org/gap-year-challenge>

Sara

**NEW** Circuit Phone Prayer & Reflection

**Call: 01765 530700** Calls are charged at a local rate.

*The Prayer & Reflection will be updated weekly with a new prayer & reflection recorded by local preachers, worship leaders and Methodist Ministers from within the Ripon and Lower Dales Circuit.*

A heartfelt **THANKYOU!**

Thank you to everyone who have been making special efforts and giving extra time to helping ensure that churches are re-opening in COVID secure ways. Completing Risk Assessments as been a steep learning curve for some, along with all the other changes to the stewarding of services. Thank you to the Circuit Support group for continuing to offer support to local churches and helping everyone to navigate the ever-changing government guidance.

Thank you to all the treasurers who have been keeping finances in order and made it possible for members to give their offertory. Thank you for continuing to support the witness and ministry of the Church as we continually seek to join in with God in Mission.

Thank you to the Circuit Leadership Team for their commitment and serving the circuit diligently, regularly going the extra miles. Thank you to the staff team for sourcing protective equipment, producing posters and working extra hours at odd times to complete the many things including all that go on behind the scenes. Not least, for setting up the new circuit prayer and reflection phone line, enabling another way for us to connect with God and each other.

Thank you to the local preachers and worship leaders for rising to the challenge of leading and resourcing worship in new ways, often stepping out of comfort zones. Thank you to the circuit tech team, who support those recording services and prayers, and spend hours editing the service content to enable everyone to come to God in worship in their kitchens, living rooms, and gardens.

Thank you to everyone for continuing to be faithful in loving and serving God through the storm of this pandemic. There are so many people to say thank you to and I give thanks to God for everyone.

Gareth

Revd. Gareth Baron

## 4 Making space for playfulness with God



Some years ago, someone told me how they like DOG because backwards it spelt GOD. They were being playful of course whilst expressing their love of God. Last month I spotted this on the wall outside a shop in Scotland. I noticed it first for the name of its sponsor 'The Herald' and then smiled at the thought of trying to park a dog, I mean, I witness some dubious attempts of people trying to park cars, never mind dogs.

Smiling, I recalled the person who had said why they like the word DOG and suddenly and find myself pondering what a GOD PARK might look like, in the sense of a play park. Lots of dubious links here, 'I know', please bear with me. A God play park, a space for playfulness and fun with God.

We see some of this with Godly play when people, young and old are invited to imagine. We see playfulness at Messy Church, Family Time Specials and other similar church services. Often collective worship in schools includes an element of playfulness to help keep both children and teachers engaged. In recent months we might have found it challenging to make space for playfulness and fun, but then we have seen many who have given it go, using their creative gifts in a bid to raise peoples spirits. I believe God welcomes playful times, time to have fun and to be creative. If nothing else, it causes one to stop and look to God. I believe it can help people to look beyond self and help people to be more open to the inspiration of God Holy Spirit. Sometimes, it can be for no other reason than having that time with God who loves you more than we can know or imagine. I wonder, when was the last time you made space for playfulness and fun with God? You might consider spending a little time at the God park and in response to the greatest Commandment to love God with our all, give that part of your life to God too.



**You have 4 new messages**

### **Message from the Revd. Ian Pruden.**

Lis and I would like to say a huge word of thanks to everyone for making us feel so welcome as we join the Circuit family. Your visits, cards, gifts and the preparation of the manse but most of all warm greetings have meant a lot. It's been fun over the last few weeks to join in Zoom Circuit meetings and coffee mornings, a Church Council in a car park and meetings with people other than on a tablet screen! As my churches reopen I look forward to sharing worship in a building again, but also I remain committed to making sure those who cannot join in a service back in church are included. If I haven't met you yet, either in the flesh or on a screen, I look forward to doing so soon.

It's a great joy to be amongst you.

Ian

### **The Church didn't close, only the buildings.**

This month churches within the circuit have begun opening the doors to their buildings once more and welcoming people to gather physically distanced for acts of worship. Other churches continue to prepare for the time that is right for their context, with plans in place for reopening in October. Some have been able to attend services, whilst others continue to shield themselves or another.

Many have drawn upon the blessings of the locally written worship at home service, valuing the shared prayers, hymns and reflection whether online, at home or in a church building. The sense of a community of faith across the circuit ever deepens as we support and pray for each other.

We cannot but acknowledge the difficulties, the doubts, the fear and anxieties known past and present. Nor can we ignore the government guidance which determines the do's and don'ts, quite often leaving one feeling like we a being met by a heap load of 'can not's'.

Yet, we have made new discoveries in ways of being church and living out our faith. We have discovered a new path in the written and recorded worship services, with its origins being in a response to worshipping in the pandemic but now being about developing worship on the 'www' (world wide web). Might we begin to see the www dot, to represent something else for the church, perhaps, worship word welcoming-witness. Okay, a cheeky hyphen used on the last one, but nonetheless, we a treading on a path less travelled previously by the circuit.

The possibilities and potential of how God can use this is great. Maybe it is a way of sharing with other family members who otherwise would not usually attend a physically gathered church service. I would encourage everyone to raise a torch for these services, that we would point people towards God and commit to praying for those new to, seeking or exploring the Christian faith.

**The Synod of Yorkshire North and East District** took place online on Saturday the 12<sup>th</sup> of September in the form of a Webinar. All the circuit representatives were log on and present for what proved to be an excellent and inspirational time. Revd. Ian Pruden was welcomed to the District's Synod along with others beginning new appointments. We heard powerful testimonies which led us to think about diversity, social action and how God uses the creative arts with poetry being recited from a young person at Brimham Rocks. Synod began with worship that was led by the North Yorkshire Coast circuit which set our hearts and minds upon God. We voted by raising our hands at the push of a button and felt a sense of belonging to something bigger and of God. Not least, in response to the Climate Emergency, Synod made a commitment for the District to become a net zero Carbon District, working towards 2040 for this goal but starting from now. So inspired, I bought a wooden toothbrush with natural fibres instead of a plastic one and now I am the proud owner of a green smile. More information about Synod and the encouraging resources for local churches will be shared over the coming month.

## **Watch out for 'A Methodist Way of Life'**

As disciples called by name who also go by the collective name Methodists, I would like to flag up a new resource to encourage those within the day to day of discipleship. On the way are commitment cards, along with various resources to be shared over the coming year, beginning with Advent. These are 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.

## **Let us continue to pray for the world and each other...**

*We pray for the world,*

*...praying for children of all ages and young people as they navigate returning to nursery, school, college and university. Also praying for all staff who teach, manage, cook and provide care.*

*...praying for all those unemployed and struggling to find a way into work in these uncertain times.*

*...praying for all those who hunger and for those providing relief support, through social charities and aid agencies.*

*...praying for all refugees, that each person known by name and loved by God would know healing and wholeness in their future.*

*We pray for peace and justice to prevail, hope and compassion to abound in a world transformed by God's mercy and grace.*

*Lord, graciously hear our prayer.*

*We pray for the Church,*

*...praying especially for those who faithfully devote themselves to loving and serving God in places rife with persecution. We pray to for the mission and ministry of Operation Mobilisation.*

*...for the Circuit meeting on the 8<sup>th</sup> October and all the representatives from the church council meetings.*

*...for church council meetings, for inspiration, wisdom and discernment to know God leading.*

*...for the Mission of God in the City of Ripon, the towns and villages across the circuit.*

*...for the new Mission and Ministries Meeting and the representatives from each church.*

*...for the Circuit Stewards Team and for those being led to offer to serve God as a Circuit Steward.*

*Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer. Amen.*

**Note from the editor** – Thank you to all who have contributed to this month's issue of The Herald and thank you for reading. If you have an article, a book worth a 100-word review or good news to share, please contact Revd. Gareth Baron on email: [Gareth.baron@methodist.org.uk](mailto:Gareth.baron@methodist.org.uk)

*'Let everything that breathes praise the LORD! Praise the LORD!' [Psalm 150:6]*



### **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

## Prayer Finger Labyrinth



**To begin:** place your finger at the opening of the labyrinth and either in silence or aloud offer your prayer of confession. As we say sorry to God in prayer, we allow space to hear God speak forgiveness into our hearts through Jesus Christ Our Lord.

**Entering:** slowly trace your finger along the pattern of the labyrinth and as you journey towards the centre, prayerfully reflect about your journeying with God. You might want to consider a particular time in your life or even focus upon something in your life which you are seeking God for guidance.

**At the centre:** stop, pause and sit awhile, simply be with God. Take time to breath and listen for God speaking. Possibly in words or images, or by giving you peace.

**Return journeying:** once again, slowly trace your finger along the pattern of the labyrinth and this time as you journey outwards, let your prayers be outward looking. Offer your prayers for others, near and far.

**Going:** to conclude your time of prayer journeying the labyrinth, consider saying a prayer of praise and thanksgiving. Go in peace.