

Ripon And Lower Dales Circuit Newsletter

Welcome to this Lent Special issue of the Herald. Over the last year it might have felt a bit like Lent. It might have felt like being in a wilderness place. You might have been having fasting days and coming to God in prayer throughout the Pandemic. This Lent Special issue seeks to offer a little encouragement as we enter a Lenten journey towards Easter. My prayer is for all people to experience the love of God in their daily walk of faith and share the good news of God's kingdom. Revd Gareth Baron.

'Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness, where for forty days he was tempted by the devil. He ate nothing at all during those days, and when they were over, he was famished.' [Luke 4:1-2]



Lent Resource review in 100 words



Methodist relief and development

Lent 2021 – Change Begins: Available to order as a physical copy for a small cost of £2 or as a download, ALL WE CAN have produced a daily devotional for Lent 2021. Inside you will find 'helpful prayer materials, excellent Bible reflections from a range of contributors, inspiring stories, an engaging family devotional you can work through with children of all ages.' If you are engaging with this great resource online, you can share in the videos too.

This devotional offers inspirational examples of how meaningful change can make a big difference and how lent can provide a place for such change to begin.

For further information and how to order visit www.allwecan.org.uk

GUS & TOM, you might be acquainted with GUS & TOM, if not may I introduce you. GUS and TOM are lent friends. GUS is a friendly reminder to Give Up Something and TOM encourages one to Take On More. These two lent friends have been around for some years to help promote greater engagement with the Christian Spirituality experienced during the season of Lent.

I think GUS is probably better known across society. People giving up chocolate during lent is seen widely, yet the reasons for giving up something is perhaps lost.

Fasting is not about demonstrating to ourselves or others how much self-restraint we have and wearing it like a medal. Self-control is a characteristic of the fruit of spirit and most would agree it's a good thing. Fasting is about making more time for God, it is about seeking Spiritual growth, deepening relationship with God and distinguishing priorities. For me it is putting God first and saying everything else comes in behind.

So then, what about TOM? I think TOM can be a little ambiguous. If we fast to make more space for God, then do we really want to Take on More? Perhaps not if it detracts from time spent with seeking the above. However, if the more is inspired by and given to God then it can be conducive to deepening a discipleship relationship. For example; giving extra to the local food share or food bank and praying for those who are in need or perhaps giving time to being creative and producing a piece of art or writing a poem.

How you chose to journey through this season of Lent, whether you say hello to GUS and TOM or not, may you be met by the love of God in our Lord Jesus and led by the Holy Spirit.



Have you ever heard of a Pancake Bell? Or perhaps you have heard the pancake bell rung?

Traditionally on Shrove Tuesday the Pancake Bell as it became known was rung to call people to confession. The origins of the pancake bell are found back in the Anglo-Saxon period, when Anglo-Saxon Christians went to confess their sins and were shaven, that is absolved from their sins.

Last year children and their families from West Tanfield and North Stainley attended a pancake party hosted by J.A.M. (Jesus And Me). J.A.M. is a local ecumenical partnership serving the communities through providing accessible, child and family friendly worship events. Like all gatherings of this nature, this year pancake parties are not possible.

In previous years I have been involved in throwing Flipping Marvellous Pancake Parties, which isn't me being arrogant but is the name of the CAP (Christians against poverty) awareness and fundraising event. I find the origins of the humble pancake and of CAP to share some helpful parallels.

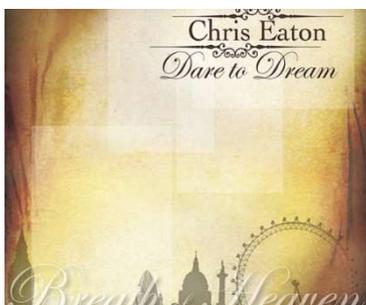
As is commonly known, the pancake is the result of using up those restricted foods before beginning the season of lent and a period of fasting. Those simple ingredients being used up to make something which is enjoyed by many with a variety of favourite toppings. CAP began with its founder John Kirkby only having twenty pounds but giving all that he had to God. John was in his bedroom when he encountered God which led to the beginning of CAP.

Today CAP can be found across the world in Australia, New Zealand, Canada, and America, as well as across the UK. CAP help people in poverty and in other difficulties, such as unemployment. They partner with local churches and through the missional work of CAP people have come to faith. All this from a humble beginning of a man with twenty pounds in his bedroom in Bradford. For me, this shows how God can do some flipping marvellous things when we give all we have to God. I wonder if when we have used up our ingredients and had pancakes on Shrove Tuesday, we are going to be ready for a Lenten journey with God transforming us. CAP reminds me too that for many people, poverty means there is no food to be used up. If you would like to find out more about the Mission work of CAP visit www.capuk.org



Worship Album Highlight – Dare to Dream (2008) by Chris Eaton.

Not a new album by any means but worth a mention as Chris may not be a name known to you. He is a contemporary singer song writer who has written songs for other artists including Saviours Day for Cliff Richard and for Amy Grant. Amy Grant fans will recognise the Breath of Heaven chorus and melody



on this album but otherwise different words as she changed the lyrics when she recorded Mary's Song. Chris has taken some older hymn ideas such as Jesus Lover of my Soul and I Know the my Redeemer Lives and reworked and modernised them with new melodies and lyrics and other songs such as I Will was one he wrote for personal worship. This album contains a fusion of 10 songs which are refreshing and full of encouragement. Here is link to Breath of Heaven <https://youtu.be/oXvactRwM>
Janet Pentelow.

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.



Let us continue to be a people of prayer.

Merciful Lord, when I am found in a wilderness place, may I be found by Your sustaining grace.

Faithful God, as I travel each day through lent, may I encounter Your presence with me by Your Holy Spirit.

In the precious name of Jesus Christ. Amen

Lent Reflections: The Poet's Gospel – A Gospel in Blank Verse with Rhymed Parables

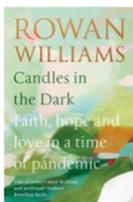
You are invited to share in 5 weekly hour-long sessions. The sessions will take the format of listening to a recording of a section of The Poet's Gospel followed by a time of reflection, discussion, and prayer.

There will be two sessions each week:

- **Monday 22nd February weekly to Monday 22nd March at 2pm**
- **Thursday 25th February weekly to Thursday 25th March at 7.30pm**

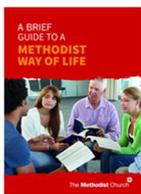
If you would like to attend, please email Catherine Clowes at riponcircuitenabler@gmail.com by Wednesday 17th February and you will be sent the Zoom link for the sessions. **Don't have Zoom? Don't worry you can still join in the sessions using your phone. Contact Catherine Clowes for further details.**

As well as 'The Poet's Gospel' reflections, Rev Ian Pruden will be leading:



Four Lent reflections using Rowan Williams Candles in the dark: Faith hope and love in a time of pandemic.

Tuesday 9th, 16th, 23rd and 30th March at 8pm – 8.15pm



A Quiet Day exploring the themes of A Methodist Way of Life

Saturday 13th March 10am – 2pm

Zoom meeting details have been circulated with the local churches. Please get in touch if you would like to join in the above.

'O give thanks to the LORD, for he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever' – 'who led his people through the wilderness, for his steadfast love endures forever' [Psalm 136:1 & 16]

Note from the editor – Thank you to all who have contributed to this Lent Special issue of The Herald and thank you for reading. I hope you have a good lent, and I would love to hear from you if you have an article, a book worth a 100-word review or a newsworthy story to share, please contact me at: Gareth.baron@methodist.org.uk.

Ideas for lent:

Journaling – jotting down thoughts, prayers and bible verses which have meant something to you is a great way of introducing another dimension to your lent journey devotions.

Doodling – it is said that a picture is worth a thousand words and if you find images help you engage and develop your reflections; doodling is a great way to convey those meaningful images.

Home environment – Our surroundings can provide a means to inspire our prayerful reflections. It might be everyday household objects, for example using a mirror whilst meditating on 2Corinthians 3:18.

Daily exercise – Celtic Christian expression often draws upon the inspiration of creation in prayer and worship of God its creator. Spending time with God in this way introduces a sense of movement and physical travel. Taking inspiration of the elements as you pray along the way.

A nutritious read – There are many good Lent books with helpful reflections for daily devotions. It might be that you look to one of these or alternatively pick up that book which you find gives life, an old favourite. And of course, we have the Bible, and it is always worthwhile spending time prayerfully reading and being read.

Garden Wilderness – As signs of spring begin to emerge, spending time in the garden can provide the perfect place for prayerful reflections. For example, confessing our sins to God whilst weeding or seeking God to remove the weeds from our own life.

A Knitted Cross – If knitting is your passion or you have been wanting to pick up the needles then spending your time in Lent to make a knitted cross could be for you. Whilst knitting consider your Christian walk with God. You might think about encounters with God, recalling those who have played influential roles in encouraging and supporting you. You might prayerfully think about what God is doing now and how God is leading you. At the end of this you will have a knitted cross, a symbol of Jesus' sacrifice, love, and victory and a reminder of your lent journey.

Fasting – Fasting looks different for everyone and is something between you and God. It might be you have a fast day each week or that you fast one type of food throughout lent. Sometimes fasting from food is not advised on health grounds or perhaps there is something else more suitable to fast from. For example, a tv programme, or a magazine, the idea being to use the time and space these things would have for coming to God in prayer.

A Scriptorium – found in a monastery, the scriptorium was a room set apart for writing, copying of manuscripts, the gospels etc. Some of the pages were illuminated with artwork. Setting apart a time and place, copying out your Bible could be something you find enlightening. If art is your thing, why not create illuminated pages too.

A phone or zoom lent group – Lent provides a great opportunity to share together. Whether you join with an organised group or simply arrange with others to meet via the phone or zoom. Reflecting with others helps to bring new perspectives whilst seeking to deepen our relationship with God.

In Wilderness Went

Foodless Jesus Spirit led

Tested Without Sin

