

# Herald

## Ripon And Lower Dales Circuit Newsletter

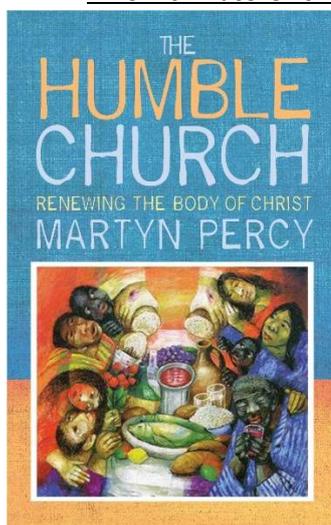
**Welcome** to this month's issue of the Herald. Our vision is to provide a helpful place for connecting with some of what God is doing across the Ripon and Lower Dales Circuit. To give voice to those experiencing the love of God in their daily walk of faith. To celebrate and share the good news of God's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

*'While he was blessing them, he withdrew from them and was carried up into heaven.'*



### Book review

#### The Humble Church: Renewing The Body of Christ by Martyn Percy - Canterbury Press, 2021



We are all beginning to ask questions about what the shape of Church should be as we emerge out of this pandemic. We need some help because the world has changed since we last did "normal" in March 2020. We cannot simply put back what was. This fabulous book written by the Dean of Christ Church, Oxford, was recommended to us at a recent District Synod. Percy sets us a challenge: can we stop obsessing about ourselves and how we manage decline and magic younger people into our fellowships who will do all our jobs, and can we instead have an earthy and engaged vision for how we should be. He argues we should stop beginning our conversations with the Church, but with God. How do we grow the Church? He suggests one, by listening to God again and two, by humble service. I really recommend this book as good study material in these times. It's a challenge to rethink what we think matters in church life, but maybe this is the right time, God's time to do just that. Ian



### Stories from around the circuit.

#### Adapting to the pandemic - Ian's churches

The last fourteen months have seen how church has changed very quickly. But I want to say the folk in the eight churches in the southern part of the Circuit have done amazingly well to adapt to a new world. Some churches have found holding a zoom service at 10.30 in the morning has kept those on line together and some have grown through this ministry. For those who haven't been able to join us, we've worked hard to get written material out to people and the phone has been used a lot for pastoral care. One church has held a weekly coffee morning for over a year, two churches did a Lent group on zoom, some Church Councils have also been done online, others by phone consultation or outside. We've also begun a monthly zoom fellowship on a Sunday evening across the churches which will continue, and my weekly written reflection on the Sunday lectionary goes out to people who have asked for it and with the notices in four of the churches. The biggest change I guess across the churches has been to cope with a change of minister. Unless I am not being told otherwise we seem to coping with that! Ian

## **God has been with us and has done something new.**

The last 12 months have been some of the most challenging in living memory. We could scarcely have imagined a year ago the all-encompassing, global impact that coronavirus would have, and is still having today.

More than 2 million people dead. Huge economic implications, particularly for those who were already vulnerable. Friends and loved ones kept apart for months on end. A whole way of life turned upside down.

Yet the response has been extraordinary. As the challenge of coronavirus rose, the church rose to meet it. As darkness spread, the church did not shrink back, but instead stepped forward to shine the light of Christ.

From countering misinformation around vaccines, to providing mental health support to people struggling with lockdowns, to helping meet people's most basic needs – the church has been spreading hope and love in practical ways all around the world.

The last year has been a time of loss, separation, and pain for everyone. Not always being able to meet together for prayer and worship has made that even more difficult and I long for the day when we can gather together before God.

Yet amid all of this, God has been with us and has done something new which we could not have imagined a year ago.

Our Circuit Ministers and Local Preachers have faithfully produced written inspiration and worship resources every week along with providing a service on our Circuit YouTube Channel every week.

However, we at Bedale the week before Easter decided we would try Zoom Worship (Why didn't we do it sooner?) it was lovely to see some of our Church Family and worship together collectively. As long as you remember to mute yourself through the hymns you can sing and praise the Lord as loud as you like and the other plus point to Zoom Worship is every Sunday Morning is Café Style you just bring your own mug of coffee. It's interactive too! different voices can read the Bible readings or lead prayers from the comfort of your own sofa. The Lord is also still able to challenge us too, and especially over the last 3 weeks the Lord has been prompting me through both the lectionary readings and the sermons, perhaps I just need to say yes Lord!

It's wonderful that we will soon be able to gather again for worship in our churches.

During lockdown we've found new ways to walk together with Jesus and love our neighbours. As we give thanks to God that we will soon be able to gather again in churches, let's reflect deeply on what God has taught us over these months.

As we prepare to gather together again, we do so knowing that many will be returning bearing new burdens of grief and anxiety. Others will be filled with hope and excitement.

But we do not gather just by ourselves. We are gathered in the embrace of God who holds our griefs, fears, and hopes, and who walks with us into this new and uncertain future, lighting our path along the way.

So please pray, not just for our return to our beloved buildings - with all the safety precautions that we must get right - but also for our return to each other. As we meet again, pray that we do so in the knowledge that God is calling us anew to be communities that truly care for one another, support those in need, work for justice and the common good, and boldly proclaim the good news of Jesus.  
– God Bless Amanda Milner.

## Keeping the fellowship going.

“It’s a shame the church is closed!” is a phrase that I am sure we have all heard during Lockdown, but this is not true. The Church has never closed.

For all Chapels and Churches, the lockdown has challenged how we keep the fellowships together and throughout the circuit we have found ways to keep the Church open in both meetings and fellowship, just not on a building as such.

In this Digital world many churches have gone ‘On-Line’ with Zoom church, but here at Masham, we realised that many members of our fellowship are not so ‘tech-savvy’ and that there was a danger of some members of our fellowship being left out, so we adopted a more analogue approach to keeping the Church open by holding a Sunday Phone service.

Each Sunday between 13 and 20 of our fellowship dialled into Free Conference Call to be Church. As Phones are not designed to play music through, one of our members would read out hymns and a different member would read the scripture, we prayed together and there was a short reflection. Before and after the ‘service’ there was opportunity to chat and swap news.

Together with this, each week, we have printed and distributed over 25 copies of the written service that has been so well crafted by our local preachers each Sunday.

This has proved to be a real lifeline for those that don’t have access to the more digital world. Steve.



## Worship Artist Highlight – Called Out Music

We take a slight diversion this month by reviewing an artist rather than an album.

Samuel Nwachukwu was born in Nigeria in 1995 and moved to Britain with his family at the age of twelve. Raised in a Christian family he took part in the leading of worship in the local church at an early age. A natural musician, singer, songwriter and committed Christian, his songs bring a refreshingly different style of worship song. In many cases they are very personal and express a longing for more of God and a deeper relationship with him. Even so his songs express feelings in a manner that we can easily identify with.

Musically his compositions are deceptive. Seemingly simple but often with complex rhythms that reflect his African heritage. Because he is so prolific, and with much more emphasis on the download than the physical CD, it was difficult to settle on an album. Therefore, here are two links to two quite different songs. I hope you enjoy them.

<https://youtu.be/8MHakULM28I>

**There’s no better way.**

<https://youtu.be/5-kNb14Xy3w>

**I am free.**

**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.**

We pray for the Israel-Palestinian conflict. We pray that the ceasefire would make way for peace-making and healing.

We pray for India and all countries that are severely overwhelmed by the spread of the Covid virus. Whilst the deaths are reported as a number, each person is known by name to you. We pray for all those whose loved ones have died.

We pray for all those serving and caring for others in hospitals, care homes and within communities.

We pray for each person who has taken a Try Praying booklet, that all may they know Your loving presence through prayer.

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



**You have 1 new message!**

### **Methodist Way of Life**

Part of the Methodist Way of Life ideas coming from the Connexion this year is a challenge to rediscover the power and joy of small groups. Methodism was built on them, where people met to study and pray and give testimony and be accountable to each other. Let me share a Lenten story with you. The Diocese of Leeds prepared an online Lent course this year called Rhythm of Life. Its aim was to get us thinking about a disciplined rule of life and a healthy spirituality every day. In Boroughbridge we did the six week course ecumenically on zoom. There were two Methodists and me, Georgina, our associate minister from the URC, Karen, the vicar and one Anglican with her. Over the six weeks, being a very small group, and able to fit on one screen, we grew in trust, in faith, in confidence. We learnt of each other's traditions, we laughed a lot and we enjoyed being together, so much so, Karen and I are planning a quiet day later in the year. We began as relative strangers, we are now fellow pilgrims on the journey of faith and we are talking about how we reach out and serve Boroughbridge together. So can I recommend maybe a few of you simply get together, pray together, read a Bible passage maybe, share some experiences. You never know how God might bless you. Oh and by the way, if you missed my quiet day on Methodist Way of Life and would like to do it, I'm repeating it on Saturday 26 June from 10am to 12.30pm on Zoom. All are welcome. Get in touch with me for the joining details. Ian

**Note from the editor** – Thank you for reading this month's issue of The Herald. If you have an article, a book worth a 100-word review or a newsworthy story to share, please do get in contact on email: Gareth.baron@methodist.org.uk or **Could you write a Worship Album Highlight Review?** - Please email Graham at [gpentelow@gmail.com](mailto:gpentelow@gmail.com)

***'All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability.'***

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

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

Listen to the **President and Vice-President**: 0808 281 2695

Listen to **news**: 0808 281 2478

