



Ripon & Lower Dales Methodist Circuit

February 2022



Herald
Newsletter -
Issue No 26

God is calling us to come and join the story, to come and play our part.

When God asks: 'Whom shall I send?'

Can we say: 'Here I am, Lord, send me?'



Note From the Editor



On behalf of everyone at Ripon & Lower Dales Circuit, a huge thank you to our Ministers Gareth, Ian, and Nigel. Local Pastor Catherine along with the support of our excellent Admin Team Diane G, Diane A

and Pip for keeping our Circuit running through these most trying of times of the pandemic. The fellowship provided by the Circuit is highly valued and appreciated. Our gratitude is immense.

If you don't see anything in this issue of the Newsletter from your Church it probably means your Church doesn't have a "Roving Reporter", so if this is something you would be interested in, I would love to hear from you, my contact details can be found on the back page. The deadline for March's Edition is 18 February 2022.

Thank You – **Amanda Milner (Editor)**

Grandpa's Face

A little girl was sitting next to her grandfather as he read her a bedtime story. From time to time, she would take her eyes off the book and reach up and touch his wrinkled cheek. She touched her own cheek after she touched his. After a little while of thinking she asked, "Grandpa, did God make you?" He looked at her and said, "Yes, sweetheart, God made me a long time ago." She paused for a few seconds and then asked, "Grandpa, did God make me too?" He replied, "Yes, indeed pumpkin, God make you just a little while ago." Feeling their respective faces again, she whispered to him, "God's getting better at it, isn't he?"

Message from Revd. Ian

A sabbatical is the time for letting go of having to produce, and for considering how the Spirit leads.

Dear Friends,

One of the first letters I received after arriving in the Circuit a year last August was to remind me I have a sabbatical due in the church year 2021 – 2022. I thought taking it in my second year with you would feel fine, but with things across my eight churches only now beginning to blossom, going on sabbatical this month is a challenge for me. But sabbaticals for ministers are a gift and I'm open to what God might do in the three months I'm given to stop and reflect a bit more on his call on me away from diaries and demands. This will be my third sabbatical. In 2009, I looked at the ministry of welcome and in 2016, I focussed on rural ministry spending a lot of the time on Shetland which was fabulous. Oh, and while on retreat on Holy Island, I met my wife. I never expected that!

I'll be away from the Circuit from 1 February to 30 April. Our plans have had to be altered several times. We were planning to do a tour down the east coast of the United States, preaching each Sunday in a United Methodist Church, but that didn't feel sensible due to Covid. Instead I'll be looking at sacred space, visiting sites of importance in church history in the North East, North West, East Anglia and round my cousin's wedding in Dorset in April. We have Holy Week and Easter back on Holy Island and for a few days

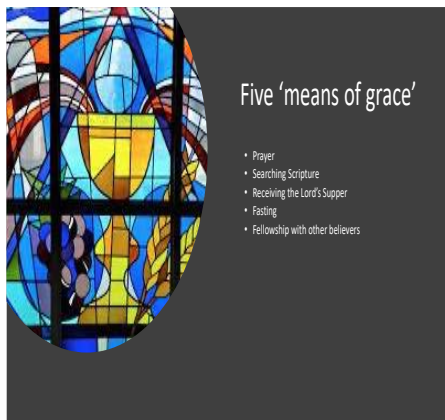
Five ‘means of grace’

A dictionary definition of a habit is: ‘a settled or regular tendency or practice, especially one that is hard to give up.’ Of course, there are some habits which are good for us and other habits which can adversely affect our lives. In the third chapter of his letter to the Colossians, Paul describes the change which is to take place in a person’s life when they become a disciple of Jesus. He uses the illustration of taking off old clothes, belonging to the old way of life, and putting on new clothes which are appropriate for the life of following Jesus. Perhaps we could say that this is akin to breaking old negative habits and creating new positive habits. Paul writes, *‘as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience’* (Colossians 3.12). As followers of Jesus, as the Holy Spirit continues his work within us, character traits like those highlighted by Paul should become more evident in our daily lives.

John Wesley talked about five ‘means of grace’ which, when they become positive habits in our lives, can help us to grow in the things of God. The five aspects which Wesley highlighted are: 1. Prayer; 2. Searching Scripture; 3. Receiving the Lord’s Supper; 4. Fasting (abstinence); 5. Fellowship with other believers. Wesley’s contention was that when each of these elements become regular habits in our lives, they help us develop as disciples and grow in our relationship with God and with one another. This in turn will help us to become more effective and fruitful in our lives of discipleship. In other words, we should be seeking to develop these five aspects of the life of a disciple as positive habits in our lives. Now might be a good time to take stock and consider how we are doing in each of the five areas.

Unless we are seeking to grow and develop as disciples of Jesus, both individually and collectively, then we are neglecting

something vital! One of the ways in which we grow as disciples of Jesus is to develop healthy spiritual habits, including those highlighted by Wesley. On the other hand, we also need to consider whether there are some aspects of our lives which have become habits which are adversely affecting our spiritual growth. With God's help, they need to be dealt with. Let's all seek to make the year 2022 one in which we work on creating healthy habits and ditching unhealthy ones. - **God bless, Amanda Milner.**



News From Canada

Well folks, we hope that you enjoyed the first edition of “News from Canada”. You are now familiar with all the characters that work on the farm. Time seems to have flown by since we first had the idea of this diary, but as I sit reading this second instalment, I feel it will be of special interest to our farming community. It is always interesting to hear how the other half live. I'm sure that there will be a different slant in subsequent issues.

Read on and enjoy-----

Hello from Ontario,

It's funny to think when you read this, not only are you 5000 miles

away, but it will be February! For me, writing this, it's between Christmas and New Year. There is a lot of discussion at the moment, as in most households, about what the old year held and what the new year will bring. A lot of people think farmers are “grumpy old men”, which they are a lot of the time, but I also think they are eternal optimists. No matter how hard and difficult things get, whether it's broken machinery, stock dying or an awful harvest, they always have the unwavering belief that next year will be better.

This year is no different. As a family and as a farm, we have been through some pretty tough times over the last few years. I won't bore you with the details, but needless to say, things are finally, very gradually improving. As I sit here there is a definite air of positivity for the New Year.

Harvest has been particularly difficult this year due to numerous, ill-timed breakdowns and the weather. Over the last few years, Dan has become a stickler for maintenance and can regularly be found either greasing a machine or giving it an oil change. Unfortunately, despite his meticulous attention to detail, our old combine still found a way to breakdown at the most inopportune moments! Namely, just as the weather started to dry up. Our other issue has been the weather, well more specifically rain, rain and more rain. Normally we would begin harvesting soybeans at the end of September, when it would be hot, dry and sunny. We would then directly follow that with corn/maize and hopefully finish over 1400 acres at some point in November. Not this year. It started raining in July and hasn't really stopped since. We haven't just had light showers either, 2 to 3 inches per shower has been quite common. One storm even produced 5 inches! As you can imagine the ground starts to get soggy. Unfortunately, these are not conducive ground conditions for combining. As I write, we

have finally managed to finish the soybeans at the beginning of December and have made a start on the maize. We will have to wait for the ground to freeze up before we can continue, but at least it is a more hardy crop and can better withstand the weather than the soybeans. Hopefully we will be able to finish in the next few weeks, but that is also dependant on the amount of snow we get. To be fair, we have actually been known to be harvesting one year's crop in June, while simultaneously planting the next year's crop!

However, despite all the difficulties that harvest has brought and still continues to bring, the menfolk can be found pouring over seed catalogues and fertilizer prices. This is because it'll soon be time to start planting the next year's crop and next year is going to be a better year!!

A belated Happy New Year to all our family and friends in Bedale.

There you have it. It is amazing to think that 5000 miles away, the weather has much the same effect on everyday working life. Fingers crossed that it treats us kindlier in 2022.



THE CONNEXION MAGAZINE

the connexion is a free magazine about the life and work of the Methodist Church, bringing together inspirational stories from Methodist people who are passionate about sharing God's love to change lives.

Following A Methodist Way of Life is central to our faith. The first *connexion* issue of 2022, **Living it out**, features inspirational Methodists living out their calling in many different ways.

[the connexion – issue 25 Winter 2022 – Living it out](#)



AN IMPORTANT NOTICE ABOUT DISTRIBUTION

The current mailing of the connexion is limited to one copy to each address. For more copies, order directly from [Methodist Publishing](#) while stocks last, or download the pdf on this page. Please feel free to share widely the online link www.methodist.org.uk/theconnexion.

Please **do not** make unnecessary journeys to distribute additional copies of the magazine – please stay at home and stay safe until after the coronavirus crisis is over. Then, we hope you will be able to use the magazine to reconnect with friends and community, and share the good news of what God is doing through the Methodist people around our Connexion.

Kathy's Corner

Here we are, the end of January already. Does 2022 still seem a New Year? Probably not, as we aren't any better than last year as far as Covid goes. My 8-year-old granddaughter is glad she can still go to school - she missed her friends so much during Lockdown. But she is not happy. Bethany has 9 chickens, and that means they are in lockdown to avoid bird flu. "Grandma", she complained, "I could play in the garden during Lockdown, but my chickens can't". They are cooped up in the former Kennels in Londonderry, so plenty of space, but she's named all nine, and Kentucky and Spot are both males and keep fighting. Grandad's suggestion she choose one for Christmas lunch to stop them, didn't go down too well – "We're not eating my pets, grandad!". We told her that's what happened when her mummy and uncle had chickens as children, but she's not having any of that.

For me the start of 2022 has been beset by financial concerns. Our gas supplier at Bedale & District went bust at the end of last year. It's not nice for treasurer's when bills double on last year's figures. At home, we have all-electric heating (no gas supply in Londonderry) and having just received our renewal quote for March onwards means Malcolm and I are facing £100 more a month on our direct debit. At least we can economise and still be warm and eat. I just feel so concerned for those on low incomes. How do you find £100 extra when you are already down to the last £1 by the end of the month? Foodshare are already seeing an increase in footfall. 2022 is going to be extremely difficult for many.

So, I urge you to check on family and friends, to see if they are coping – and if you are worried about your own circumstances, please, talk to someone. Don't worry alone, there could be help available.

Lord God, we pray for those experiencing financial concerns,

we pray for our government to do all they can to help, and we pray for a generosity of heart, for all those who can support Foodshare and charities such as Age UK helping the vulnerable in our society. Amen.

Blessings Kathy Lowrie



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Now these  
THREE REMAIN:  
FAITH, HOPE & LOVE  
BUT THE  
greatest  
OF THESE IS  
Love  
1 Corinthians 13:13

## News from our “Roving Reporters” from around the Circuit

**Masham** - It was happening to everyone in the weeks before Christmas - STRESS. I thought I was managing quite well with all my lists!

Then one week, nothing went right. Things out of stock, not in the size you want. Forgetting things, losing things. I was really feeling sorry for myself.

Strangely enough - that particular week I met lots of people - had a phone call - or a Round Robin note in a Christmas card, and everyone mentioned a problem.

I can't begin to list the stories I heard, but in all of them there was - sadness.

By the end of that week, I was nearly in tears. What problems did I have, compared to these people, who were having to deal with really difficult situations and intense pain.

Most of all I gave thanks that I have the Lord in my life to give me strength and hope.

REMEMBER: Luke 12 vs 32 Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has been pleased to give you the kingdom.

A STRESSLESS NEW YEAR TO YOU ALL!!!

**An invitation from Harrogate Road** - Harrogate Road recently held a church review meeting at which it was agreed we start a monthly coffee morning on the first Friday of the month from 10am to 12 noon. Despite omicron, we held our first one last month and around twenty people came. If you are in the vicinity of Harrogate Road on the first Friday of the month, we would love to see friends from the Circuit join us. This month we meet on Friday 4 February.

**Grewelthorpe** - Unfortunately, we had a very large tree that came down in the church yard between Christmas and the New Year. As a result, the churchyard and church had to be closed until it was safe to reopen.

Thank fully, it didn't fall onto the church roof, but damaged some very old gravestones.

On another note, due to the uncertain times of Covid, we decided to postpone our Epiphany Party on the 6<sup>th</sup> January. However, we are planning that this very popular event will take place in March. Please look out for further details.

On a happier note, **G-Club is back!** - The children's monthly club at St James and the Methodist Church Grewelthorpe is called G-Club and is open to all children of primary school age.

Come and join us at Church for fun, games, singing, stories, and a snack. We'd love to see you.

Next G-Club Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> February 6-7pm

If you would like further details, please contact Susan Rizos on 07740703868 or email [susan.rizos@btinternet.com](mailto:susan.rizos@btinternet.com)

We are also looking forward to our **Lent Lunches that will start 7<sup>th</sup> March for six weeks. Grewelthorpe church 12.00 – 13.30**

Please join us for homemade soup, with tea or coffee

Donations will be divided between Christian Aid and church funds.

**West Tanfield Homemakers** - group was formed many years ago as young Homemakers. The members are now slightly older but still very much young at heart!!!

The group meet the 3rd Monday of the month in the old Chapel at 7.30pm or sometimes out and about.

Our meetings are varied with speakers on a variety of subjects, visits to gardens, walks each year we have lunch out and at Christmas we often meet in a member's home. The group is

ecumenical and new members can be assured of a warm welcome

On Monday 21st February Sue Godden will speak about the Ripon Community Link at Ripon Walled Garden. RCL supports young people and adults with learning difficulties to help them develop new skills and grow in confidence.

Every year we support a charity. On Saturday 21st May we are holding a coffee morning in the village hall in aid of Macmillan Cancer support. Make a note of the date and come along if you are able.

**High Ellington Chapel** - As we start a new year, we reflect on the previous advent season and due to the nature of our chapel this means we don't get many advent services. This year we only got one.

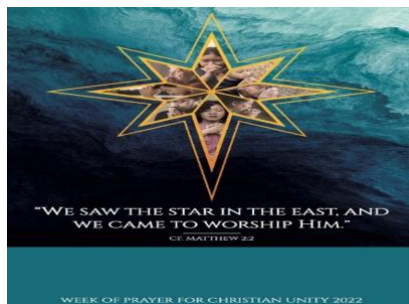
The carol service was taken by John and Rachel Duck and was attended by nearly a full chapel of friends, relatives, and current members of Ellington Chapel. We had a mixed program which included a friend playing carols on violin, members singing a duet acapella and poems by my daughters all which led to a fantastic celebration, and we continued after with afternoon tea in take home packs, but many stayed for fellowship inside and out. In these strange times we still need fellowship together and if that means a cold chat outside in December then so be it. This year it seems the true meaning of Christmas has been wider acknowledged. My Preferred radio station plays a wide mix of songs all year but being a local although secular and Digital they have less restriction on play list and this year choir music was followed by modern pop followed by songs by Pentatonix a strange mix but carrying the true meaning of Christmas. This was backed up on Christmas morning by several bloggers I follow on social media (all agriculture based) professing their faith. This is not rare in US based blogs but rarely seen elsewhere. As we turn

into a new calendar year, schools have returned to class, but the pandemic still rages, as I write this from isolation. We hope Chapels still feel safe to meet as it can be folks in rural settings that suffer loneliness more keep safe and God Bless.

**Bedale & District Methodist Church** - Did Unity Week Pass You By? Well, it nearly did for some of us in Bedale. But a 'God-prompt' set things in motion, and with the benefit of zoom we met with our ecumenical friends from St Gregory's, St Mary & Josephs and our Anglican friends from Thornton Watlass and Leeming for a time of prayer led by Revd. Gareth.

But if Unity week DID pass you by, then it's not too late to take advantage of this opportunity to meet together, and to use the excellent resources provided online. This year the theme was prepared by the churches of the Middle East, the history of which was, and still is, characterised by conflict and strife, tainted with blood and darkened by injustice and oppression. The Christians of the Middle East offer these resources conscious that the world shares many of the travails and much of the difficulties that it experiences and yearns for a light to lead the way to the Saviour who is the light that overcomes darkness.

These resources can be used at any time, but you might like to consider using them in the lead up to Pentecost. Don't miss this opportunity to share together in prayer, reflection, and fellowship!!



**Boroughbridge Community Fridge** - The Lions Club in Boroughbridge were a few months ago looking for a home to open a community fridge for the town. A community fridge is a place where food past a sell by date from supermarkets and other food outlets can be sold for a donation to the public. The fridge isn't just about meeting need for those who might find budgeting for food and meals difficult, but also is there to promote the fact we just shouldn't waste food. I saw an article in an online newspaper looking for a space and talked to folk in our church as we have a room doing nothing. The Church Council in February unanimously agreed we would give a space for this project. Over the last few months, I've been working with the Lions, Boroughbridge Community Care and Morrison's in Boroughbridge to get this going. We hope to open in April. Please remember this project in your prayers. It will bring a new focus to the Methodist Church in Boroughbridge as we will be open every week. Working in partnership with others we have shown we can do something exciting and worthwhile for the good of all.

**Snape** - At the outset of this year we are having a month of services on a theme.

The theme is 4 Pillars of faith. Steve Laugher started us off really well, with Scripture, we are then following with Prayer, Fellowship, then finely Discipleship. We are also meeting midweek during these services and sharing more together on the previous weeks theme.

With the Covenant service also being in the middle of these services, January has certainly been a challenging month for us. The different groups are up and running again, and the children's work at the Under 5's and Sunshine Corner are going well.



**Allhallowgate.** - After the joy of the Christmas story and message and the enjoyment of dressing the worship area and the vestibule on Victoria Grove with Nativities and scriptural depictions, the new year had a sad start for us with the death of 2 wonderful ladies who each attended and contributed to the life of this Church fellowship well into their 90+ years. Now we are preparing to celebrate their lives and be thankful for their contribution and companionship over such a long time.

Dark mornings and evenings are beginning to give way to the promise of Spring. Daffodils were included in the altar arrangement recently and we all commented upon how uplifting they were at a time of sadness and news of illness amongst the Allhallowgate family. They told us that the circle of nature and life goes on and we must believe and have faith in the Lord, so we continue to apply ourselves to our community outreach and proclaiming the presence of God in Ripon.

Supplies have already gone to the refugee reception centre in Wakefield and collection continues. The soft play group spearheaded by Nigel has re-opened after the Christmas break and the 'Vision' charity group are about to reopen on Tuesday mornings with the activity group in swing on Tuesday afternoon. Lunch is served between the sessions for those going to the activity friendship group. All this in addition to the longstanding usage of the building.

Our attendance numbers increase each week, and we have 3 new congregants, one of whom has transferred membership from another Church.

So, we take heart, dig deep, and move into 2022 with the Lord.



**A Morning at Soft Play!** - The soft play group began in July last year and sees lots of little ones and their grown-ups get together for a morning of coffee and fun.

During the lockdowns, many parents found themselves isolated and alone. Many parents who gave birth during this time were unable to meet other new mums. The arrival of this new group gave them the opportunities to finally meet up and make new friends.

The day actually begins the night before, when the giant jigsaw of soft floor is laid, and all the soft play equipment is made ready.

The doors open at 9.15am and lots of parents start to arrive. This usually means they head straight for a table to get settled, and then over to the kitchen to grab a freshly brewed coffee. There is a real buzz as friends meet and catch up on what's been happening during the week. The large ball pit is usually the busiest area, and where most of the deep and meaningful conversations take place! As the morning progresses, more people arrive and the noise from the play area gets louder. It is not unusual to see up to 40 people attending.

In amongst this hustle and bustle of activity I can spend my time keeping a watchful eye of the goings on and spend invaluable time chatting.

This is a fun group but there is a serious side, it is a place where relationships are made and forged. It is a space where we can share our faith and show the love of God in real and practical ways.

By 12 pm, little ones are ready for a nap, and the group starts to get quiet., it is now time to clear away after serving countless tea cakes, bacon rolls, and jugs full of coffee. Our volunteers, many of whom are young mums, clear away, ready for the next week of fun.

This year we aim to start a soft play church, and also special sessions for dads and grandads. Watch this space to see how it all goes!

Soft Play runs like a café, it is open to anyone. If you fancy a coffee one Friday morning, you are most welcome to pop in and say hello.



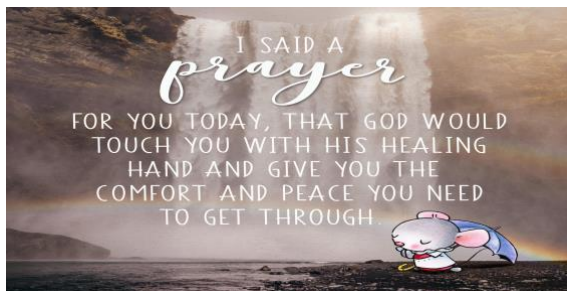
## Circuit Healing Ministry

The circuit healing team was started around 40 years ago in what was then the Bedale Circuit. Consisting of both ordained and lay members, the team conducted monthly services for healing and were committed to daily prayer for those in special need of God's healing power. Today the team members are Pat Ashford, Lynda Blackburn, Pauline Collins, Elisabeth Hogerzeil, Norman Iveson and Robin Jennings. It is some time since we were asked to lead worship and we do miss the opportunity to meet and pray with people on a personal level but the commitment to daily prayer continues.

Throughout the pandemic the group has continued to meet monthly, mostly on zoom; and as individuals to pray for those whose names are given to us. We normally have around twenty names on our list, and we remember the physically ill, recently bereaved, and all in need of emotional or other healing.

We believe that this ministry is needed and is blessed by God; and would welcome any who feel led to join us. The commitment to this form of daily prayer is not a light one but one for which we feel there is an ongoing need.

Do please contact a member of the group should you feel called to join in this rather special ministry. Requests for prayer should go to either Pat Ashford or Lynda Blackburn. All names and personal information shared with the team is completely confidential.



## Prayer Page

Here we are, Lord,  
with our gifts and our gaps,  
our successes and our failures,  
our enthusiasm and our doubts,  
our passion and our unworthiness.  
Help us to hear your call  
and to have the courage to say,  
'Here I am, send me.'  
In Jesus' name. **Amen.**

As we draw near to you, Lord God,  
we remember how you approached your first disciples by the  
lake;  
we follow you as they did  
captivated and in awe at being caught up in your story.  
**Amen.**

We adore you, O extraordinary God,  
who came among us as the Son of Man,  
miraculous in your birth,  
miracles marking your passage through this world,  
casting your nets to draw us in  
and drawing out the extraordinary in us.  
We praise and adore you.  
**Amen.**

Our Father in heaven forgives us  
for being less than we might be;  
for following half-heartedly when his son calls,  
skulking in the shadows,  
afraid of the power of the Holy Spirit  
to transform us, and the world,  
and to bring out the extraordinary within our nature.

Accept then this forgiveness, and this call to shine;  
step from the shadows now and follow.

In Jesus' name.

**Amen.**

Lord, we confess that we fear getting in too deep. When we feel you drawing us to you, calling us to leave the safe confines of life as we know it and plunge into the depths of life with you, we are afraid. What will you ask of us, Lord? For we are ordinary people; we have no tongues to talk in clever parables, we have no miracles to perform. And, the fact is, we're quite content as we are; we're happy to serve you from the wings, we don't want the spotlight. Yet you have drawn us into your story, and you call us to be all that we can be. We confess that we are afraid of our potential; afraid to unleash your power within us. Forgive us, and grant us the courage to overcome our fears and follow you.

**Amen.**

Father, we praise you for allowing your kingdom to break through into our lives;  
for the things that to you are ordinary,  
but to us are extraordinary;  
and we thank you that you have called us  
to be part of your story,  
ordinary people caught up in the extraordinary tale  
of your plan for salvation,  
the base metal of our tarnished natures turned to gold  
in your hands.

**Amen.**

Jesus wants us to get involved in God's story. So, I ask you:  
Are we ready to listen to Jesus?

**Yes, we are ready.**

Are we ready to learn new ways of living?

**Yes, we are ready.**

Are we ready to use our skills and gifts to help others?

**Yes, we are ready.**

Are we ready to say thank you to Jesus,  
for being our friend and Saviour?

**Yes, we are ready.**

Let's say it again!

**Yes, we are ready.**

**Amen.**

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### **Prayer Commitment by the Circuit Meeting:**

- Please pray for those experiencing financial difficulties.
- Please pray for the people of Afghanistan.
- Please pray for the Revd's Ian and Gareth as both have their sabbaticals over the coming months above that they may encounter the living God in the places, the people, the noise and the silence and that you may return refreshed and renewed to continue the exciting ministry here in the Circuit.



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

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

Listen to **news**: 0808 281 2478

*Content is updated weekly*

# Newsletter

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Contact details for Circuit Office Team:

Diane Gaskill: 07765 486213

Pip Smith: 07901 173082



**Minister – Rev. Gareth Baron**  
**Telephone: 01677 989169**  
**Email: [revgbaron@gmail.com](mailto:revgbaron@gmail.com)**



**Minister – Rev. Ian Pruden**  
**Telephone: 01765 698288**  
**Email: [ianpruden@btinternet.com](mailto:ianpruden@btinternet.com)**



**Minister – Deacon Nigel Perrott**  
**Telephone – 01765 279161** **Email: [nigel.perrott@methodist.org.uk](mailto:nigel.perrott@methodist.org.uk)**



**Local Pastor – Catherine Clowes**  
**Telephone: 07377 614581**  
**Email: [riponcircuitenabler@gmail.com](mailto:riponcircuitenabler@gmail.com)**

Please Check out the Circuit Website for Prayer Space, plus poems and resources from The District: [riponlowerdalesmethodists.org.uk](http://riponlowerdalesmethodists.org.uk) – [yorkshiremethodist.org](http://yorkshiremethodist.org)