

A 'Light' Christmas reflection by Revd. Gareth Baron.

For some the rush towards Christmas is too much and the adventure of reaching Christmas properly is where you will find them. Advent is not to be missed and for those of us who are able to travel it in a heart of devotion and worship expectant of the promised new-born King, this is a spiritually enriching time. Advent speaks to the coming of the Messiah and is the time we celebrate the promise of Our Saviour, Jesus Christ born on earth and that Christ will come again. For others the excitement of Christmas is ignited by the sight of tubs of chocolates for sale in the shops during October. Of course, Christmas is not about chocolates but for many it's a good enough reason to consume 'just one more' from the tub. Chocolate tends to run as a theme with millions of people understand advent through a calendar, counting down the days with a daily treat.

For me, I am happy to tell the Christmas story at any time of the year. God who is beyond time, beyond any measure of humanity, came at Christmas and comes to us daily. An ecumenical Christmas campaign that ran in Peterborough had the slogan 'Christmas starts with Christ.' Banners proclaiming this truth appeared along the major highways throughout the city. Billboards and buses announced it just the same. Even the airwaves saw a run of different adverts telling this simple but transformational message. Christmas starts with Christ quite literally in all ways.

One of my favourite things about the build up towards Christmas is all the lights that decorate the highstreets, homes and of course trees. It reminds me of the verse in the prologue of John's gospel that reads 'The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world.' I believe that as

Christians we are to be lights of the world because we belong to Jesus who is the light of the world. We recall that Jesus said, ‘you are the light of the world.’

What kind of lights are we to be? I would suggest, light that attracts by extending the grace, mercy and love of God; light that breaks through the darkness offering peace and showing compassion. And not least, light that points to celebrating God is with us and invites everyone to worship the true light that gives light to everyone. Whichever way you experience advent this year and no matter how many chocolates you enjoy, may you know God loves you, and may you become Christmas lights shining bright for Jesus. I wish you Merry Christmas! –

Revd. Gareth Baron

Note From the Editor

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 January's' Edition is Friday 23 December 2022. Thank You – **Amanda Milner (Editor)**



The word became flesh

God's Word is light shining in darkness; it is the source of all life and of all things. The Word was always in the world, rejected by some but received by others. This Word became flesh and, John says, we have seen his glory. And those who receive him, who believe in him, become children of God. Much of the time, Christmas may focus on Matthew and Luke's stories surrounding Jesus' birth. John's more poetic and visionary account, while making no reference at all to the baby Jesus or Bethlehem, helps us to put those stories in context, to unpack their meaning and, more importantly, their implications and consequences.

Who do you think you are? The popular TV show helps people explore their roots, often with surprising results. However, we have yet to see an episode that concludes 'and your ten thousandth great-grandparent is God'. But this is what John tells us. The Word of God, the true light of God, came into the world made thought him, that all who received him and believed in him could become children of God.

So, we are God's children. We are 'born...of God'. This sets us all on equal terms with each other, siblings, all precious and all loved, none loved more than any other. We know that the world often takes a different path, one that divided people, that raises some up and pushes others down. But that is not God's way, and that should not be ours. At Christmas especially, the Christian community is called to remember that God invites us to stand together as one family, in solidarity with one another and especially with those who are vulnerable or marginalised in our society.

So, what does that look like in our local community?

God bless you this Christmas – **Amanda Milner**

The Illuminations



The phone rang, it was my son. We're taking the children to see Blackpool Illuminations; would you like to come. Now I'm in my second childhood I jumped at the chance. It is something of a tradition. Sixty something years ago my parents took me to see "The Lights." The journey of several miles, from north promenade to south promenade, is a rite of passage, whether walked or viewed from a car. It culminates with fish and chips and possible in stormy conditions or fine.

I took my son when he was about eight years old. It was blowing a gale and rain lashed down. Coming out again after fish and chips, waterproofs head to toe, my son clutched his colouring sheet with one hand and my hand with the other. I held his balloon on a string. We probably resembled two drunks leaning into the wind. That little boy now in his thirties has not forgotten the excitement and illuminated illusion on a night out with dad.

My grandchildren after a three hour car journey were chattering excitedly, look at this, look at that mummy. My daughter in law, son and myself were carried along with the children's excitement.



They saw Alice in Wonderland, Winnie the Pooh, Treasure Island and much more, larger than life, animated characters,

dancing before their eyes. A long car journey for these children is, when done at night, a precursor to visiting Germany. The five-year-old little girl was disorientated. “Mummy”, she said, “Why don’t we have this in England?” In the middle of jollity, her mother informed her that we were in England. She replied spontaneously, “I’d like to live here!” The evening was finished off at Pablos, with fish and chips, three generations at the table. Behind the bright lights and cars of visitors, hidden in the night, is an area especially in South Shore of poverty and deprivation. In the past I’ve worked in Blackpool as a Pharmacist and know personally people working in ministry in Cleveleys and South Shore today. However, for those two children surrounded by safety, full tummies, brightly lit superheroes, snoozing in a warm car, heading home to bed, it was another world.



We approach Christmas and celebrate the birth of a child in appalling conditions, life endangered, born in poverty, the Son of God. Imagine a little girl, seeing the bright lights at the 'Shepherd's Field' and hearing the choirs of angels. "Mummy this is amazing, can we live here?" "Why are those three Kings visiting next door, do you think they will come here?" God is with us, the Kingdom of Heaven has come, no lights, no illusion, Merry Christmas to you All. - **Deacon David**

A thankful Superintendent, a small note of big thanks from Revd Gareth Baron

Over recent months Revd Ian has unfortunately been on sick leave but thankfully is back with us. During this time, I am sure, like me, many have been praying for Revd Ian. Also, I have been assured of prayers being given for me too. Prayer support means a lot and makes a big difference. I always feel humbled and blessed to know I am being held in prayer. My first thank you is to everyone who have been generous with their prayers.

My second thank you is to all who have been tremendously caring during these last few months. People have given extra support in so many ways from offering additional time to leading services to making extra efforts to offer pastoral care. I have greatly appreciated how compassionate and understanding everyone has been. If I start to list people and the many ways people have given extra time, gifts and care, a small note will become an essay. So, I conclude my note to say how thankful I am to be the superintendent of a circuit that repeatedly puts love into action.

May you know the peace, joy, and love of God this Christmas and always. **Gareth.**

P.s, be assured of my prayers for you too.

News From Canada

The news from Canada this month is written by Rhianne as Jayne and Posie have been enjoying a very hectic but enjoyable holiday over in Bedale. The farm over in Canada seems to have been ticking over quite steadily, with Marc, Dan and Chris busy with the soybean harvest. I understand that the weather has been very kind to them this Autumn, with relatively easy access onto the fields and a good harvest. So here is Rhianne taking the soybeans to the Cereal Merchant.

I took a step outside and looked up. The sky was perfectly clear, Orion and the Big Dipper shone clearly. The hens were still sleeping as I unlocked the coop and checked the water. I took a deep breath of cool, crisp air, fresh and rejuvenating - which was exactly what I needed at 5.30am!!

I'm not much of an early bird. I don't mind getting up early, but I like taking the morning slowly, sipping my water, journaling, putting the washing on. Today was not one of those days though. Today, I was going with Andrew to Hamilton in the transport truck to deliver soybeans, so I needed to be up and "at 'em" and somewhat with it. So, I poured an extra-strong cup of coffee, pulled on my "farmer's wife" clothing, and we headed out the door.

Harvest-wise, this year has been easier than some. The weather has mostly cooperated, and we've had some really good yields, which means lots of trucking for Andrew. A lot of farmers will get custom truckers or the elevators to organize trucking but as we are lucky enough to have our own truck and there is a large premium if we deliver, we do it ourselves. Plus, it keeps Andrew busy!

Hamilton, the "Electric City", sits on the edge of Lake Ontario and is home to the busiest Canadian Great Lakes port with

over 700 boats and 12 million tons of cargo annually. It boasts 4 different grain terminals amongst its businesses: P&H, JRI, G3, and Bunge. Today, we went to Bunge although Andrew has been to all 4 on different occasions. Their location on Pier 11 dates to 1946 when it was Canada Vegetable Oil Products. Bunge bought it in 2008 and it has been known as a “fun” place to deliver to ever since!



Bunge is quite an interesting place. Usually, one of the busiest grain terminals on the port. Today it was quiet as we took our first lap around the building to scale (check) in. Next step was probing, where they take a sample of beans and test them for moisture and quality; (ideal moisture is under 14%) and they should be clean and as free from dirt as possible. After that, we took another lap around the building to wait in line for



the pit. Luckily for us, we were the only ones there so we could drive straight over the pit and “let her fly!” Our trailer is a belt trailer, so it takes longer to unload than if it was hopper bottomed. The belt moves the beans and there’s a small door at the back that we use for older pits; the more modern ones have enough power for us to just lift the whole back door. Once we were fully unloaded, we got back on the scale (check in), had a quick bathroom break and then it was back on the road heading home.

The drive to and from the port wasn’t too bad; (it’s about an hour and a half by car and a couple of hours in the truck). The kicker (nuisance) is that Hamilton was built around the port back in the early 19th century, so the port is located right in middle of downtown. With one-way streets, city drivers on their



morning commute, and lots of road construction. It can be very difficult and frustrating to navigate. On the positive side, I wasn't the one driving so I enjoyed looking at a new city from a higher vantage point!

Overall, I really enjoyed the trip! I'm writing this article in the truck and the only real complaint is how bumpy it is - it's taking forever to type!!

Did you know? It takes approximately 500 trucks to load a boat! Most of Canada's soybean exports go to Asia.

Well, there we have it. One truckload of soybeans safely delivered to the next stage of production. It sounds like an interesting journey (except for the start time), but I would imagine that most people in the farming world are familiar with 5 30 in the morning, so it will be considered to be "all in a day's work".

500 truck loads to fill one boat!!! That is hard to imagine. It must be one VERY large boat. Our thanks Rhianne.

A thought for the day offered by Revd. Gareth Baron.

As soon as the horrid Halloween tv adverts disappear for another year, the Christmas adverts begin in full swing. They tend to be pitched in one of two ways. Either they attempt to showcase the 'perfect Christmas' which of course you can buy from whichever company is advertising or they seek to connect and move its audience emotionally. Some of the Christmas ads have become famed and are eagerly awaited, with reviews and discussion held across the wider media platforms.

I must confess that some of the adverts do occasionally move me. They skilfully tell a story within a very small window of time and promote the more wholesome sides of life, with themes of love, family, friendship and even being a good neighbour. The better one's in my opinion would give recognition of the nativity but then Christmas without the story of Christmas is like summer without sunshine. I sometimes wonder what kind of tv advert I would make and what would be the key message given within the very small window? How best could I convey the heart of Christmas to such a broad ranging audience?

In many ways each Christian is a living advert seen daily in by the audience in the home, workplace, school and the community which we live. I wonder what messages are being conveyed. Does knowing Jesus who was born to bring salvation life make a difference? Not all Christians are called to make tv adverts, but all Christians can be Christmas adverts. I wonder what kind of advert you will be and what will be the key message others receive?

Kathy's Corner

As you read this, you'll be in the Advent season. As I write this, the Remembrance weekend has just passed, and I'm starting to prepare for leading Advent services. Advent means "Come" and is the time when we think about how God came to earth as a baby born in a manger – Emmanuel, God is with us, but also makes us think about the time when Jesus will come again. When will that be – and would we be ready if he came tomorrow?

I think many of us look at Advent as being a time of preparation, probably because most of us are busy preparing for our Christmas celebrations – cards to write, gifts to buy and wrap, meals to plan, or meals out booked, and family gatherings to arrange.

Usually, Malcolm insists on our Christmas being fairly quiet. He's not getting that this year! His step sister is going away for Christmas, so we have his step mum coming to stay until Boxing Day - which means two guests, as the dog will be coming too! Millie is a lovely collie, but has never been to our house, so I'm not sure how she'll behave - although she might chase the neighbours' cats from our garden, which I wouldn't mind. There are 4 regulars, who have a high-rise access to our garden avoiding next doors dogs, by using the fences and a greenhouse roof to come and see if they can catch a fish, or a bird taking a drink by the pond. At least with the plants dying back there are now less places for them to hide.

The moment I get mum-in-law back home, it's a quick change round as I prepare for my extra special visitor. After nearly 5 long years I can finally hug my sister. Anne lives in Perth, Australia and was due to visit just as Covid restrictions started. It will be wonderful to see her again, but also rather poignant too. It is a year since our mum passed away, and Anne could.



only join the funeral by live-streaming as they were still in a Lockdown in Australia at the time. But we have a family reunion to look forward to and she will be able to meet her great nephew and niece for the first time, aged 4 and 1 respectively. So, I think we are in for lots of tears and laughter this Christmas. And I shall thank God for the chance for us to do that.

I hope whatever plans you have this Advent/ Christmas season bring you great joy, and in amongst the busyness and celebration you remember to prepare some time for the coming of Christ into your hearts at this special time of year. Happy Christmas everyone. **Blessings from Kathy.**



**Ripon
City of
Sanctuary**

OUR NEW CAMPAIGN!

We're collecting quality used school uniforms for asylum-seeker children in North Yorkshire. Without school uniform, they can't go to school! And the cost of living crisis means schools have run out of their second-hand stocks. We have a webpage about what we're collecting

<https://ripon.cityofsanctuary.org/.../donate-school...>

and we're also asking for donations towards new school shoes

<https://www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/refugee-school-shoes>. If you can help, we'd be so grateful

School uniforms for asylum-seeker children in North Yorkshire



News from our “Roving Reporters” from around the Circuit

Carthorpe - We have had a good month of Services at Carthorpe and are grateful to those people who give of their talents and time to prepare and bring them to us. Our Christmas Get Together is on 6th December at 2pm and we give you a warm welcome to join us for Carol's and cakes.

On 18th December we have our Carol singing beginning by meeting at Chapel at 6pm and singing at the top of the village until 7pm when we have a well-earned rest in Chapel for a short service led this year by Mrs Gwyn Thomas, our vicar's wife, please come and join us and continue to enjoy carolling round the rest of the village.

Harrogate Road - Church in Ripon opened their first Warm Space last week 11th November when a group of 14 were welcomed into the hall. There were chatting groups sharing their news, sharing laughter and smiles in a warm and cosy atmosphere.

The adjoining Happylands Nursery children came through to sing a song to the group before the 11 o'clock Remembrance Silence was observed.

It was encouraging to welcome so many on our opening and hope this trend continues.

Thank you to all who joined us and to those who supported this new venture. If necessary, and there is a need, we will extend to serve a light lunch. **ALL ARE WELCOME IN THIS PLACE**

**You are invited to pop in to
Harrogate Road Methodist
Church
For
Free Coffee/Warm
Space**



**Every Friday
10am to 12noon
All are Welcome**

Bishop Monkton – Going Forward thanks to a potato (or two) November 11th saw another ‘Spud and Pud’ Lunch held at the Methodist Church and, as usual, tickets were totally sold out well before the meal date. Forty people gathered in the schoolroom with ages ranging from a few months to over 90 years to enjoy the locally grown potatoes and the wide variety of fillings. These were followed by a range of delicious puddings which led easily to requests for seconds. The conversations were wide ranging and covered everything from village life to national events.

A very special thanks must go to those who prepared the food, served at tables and cleared-up afterwards, without them it could not happen.

The event raised £384 that will be split between Dementia Forward and the Methodist Church Redevelopment.

More importantly it gave people a chance to meet, to counter loneliness, learn more of their village, welcome newcomers and share ideas for the future of our delightful and very special community.



Finghall - A bit Novemberish in Finghall this month so not getting out much. Grey, wet, cold and drab. However, on the Tuesday which was the wettest and most drab of these days we popped in to Bedale and had a cuppa in the Chapel. There were only a few of us but what an enjoyable time we had. In the background there was the Ukulele group singing and playing away. Lots of personal hilarious stories of our experiences on different subject were offered from the group and we all had a great time. We can recommend a visit there if you can make the time. We also made a home visit to a neighbour last week as the man of their house is not in good health. We thought we would pop in for about half an hour to cheer them up in the early afternoon, but as we had not seen them for a while, the half hour lasted till about 6pm! Always a good thing to catch up on each of our family's activities.

Visiting other neighbours who have returned to the village after a few years away is good because we always get a hearty welcome no matter when we go. The difficulty is trying to escape in time for tea!

It's amazing how much there is to discuss at these visits. Very pleasant too to have a visit from Pip and Sharon to prepare the Worship Leaders service for Christ the King day and thanks to them for inviting us to take part.

With regard to a Christian presence in Finghall we had a planning meeting at home with Norman and Gareth to fix meeting dates for the next two months with plans to canvass the village with information about these. The meetings will be open to all and will be held at both Normans home and ours on alternative dates.

We did manage to get away for a weekend to visit the son of Kenneth Alton who some of us may remember. Living in Leicestershire it is a joy to visit his family. They have always kept in touch with what is happening in Finghall, the village being close to their hearts. Their three boys who were the last

three people to be baptised at the Chapel are delightful to be with.

Visiting the local Methodist Church with them for Remembrance Sunday was an experience as the Church was full of groups of Beavers, Brownies, Cubs, Guides and Scouts who led the parade to the cenotaph after the service. Oh looking forward to Advent so blessings to all.

HARROGATE ROAD METHODIST CHURCH

CHRISTMAS FAIR

SATURDAY 3RD DECEMBER 2022

From 10am – 1pm Free Entry

Christmas Treats Craft Stalls

With Live Music from
Pandemonium
Singing Group

A Special Performance
From
Ripon Hand Bell Ringers

If you wish to book a table (£10) please call
07875 032025



Bedale & District – The 5th November saw the relaunch of Men’s Breakfast when 9 Men met in our Hall and shared Food, Fellowship and Faith, we meet the first Saturday of every month at 9am and it would be lovely if you can join us. Men of all ages are welcome.

Remembrance Sunday our worship was Café Style and led by Lynda Phipps when we gave thanks for “Tall Poppies” those that stood out and gave the ultimate sacrifice that we may live in freedom...

At November’s Sage & Time we had a lovely time thinking about seeing God in His amazing creation and the light that Jesus provides in a dark world. We decorated our own little candle holders to remind us of Jesus’s light. A light that can never be put out and of course we had tea, coffee and cake!



We invite you to join us on **MONDAY 12 DECEMBER** – for our Memorial Carol Service here at Bedale & District Methodist Church at 7.00pm led by Revd. Gareth Baron – Come a remember those loved and we have lost and will be much missed over Christmas.



Masham Methodist Church

CHRISTMAS COFFEE MORNING +

Saturday, December 3rd
10-30am to 12-00noon

COFFEE & MINCE PIE £1-50

Christmas cards

Hand knitted clothes & toys

Bric-a-brac

Marmalade

Home baking



Grewelthorpe - Our monthly G Club continues, with a consistently good turnout. This remains a popular monthly event, with children of primary age exploring biblical themes through fun activities. Next G-Club Wednesday 14th December 6-7pm, which will be a Christmas themed G- Club. We are now looking forward to a fundraising event which will be the

Christmas Do and Christmas Raffle Draw to be held on the 10th December 2022 in the Village Hall. This will include a Christmas Dinner and three sweet choices. Tickets will be available for £20 per person. Contact Susan Rizos on 07740703868 or email susan.rizos@btinternet.com if you would like to attend.

We are very fortunate to have an excellent fundraising team, who are very enthusiastic and extremely hard working. Unfortunately, as with many churches we need a new church roof alongside other areas of refurbishment. We are hopeful that with the help of the village community this will be achieved at some point.

Our Christmas services will be.....

Christingle service, 11th December, 6pm.

Methodist Carol Service, Mulled wine and mince pies to follow, Date and time to be confirmed.

Christmas day with communion service, 25th December 10.30am

Please join us if you can.

It will soon be the New Year and it is always good to celebrate with our Annual Epiphany Party. This will be held on Friday January 6th, 2023, at 7pm the Church. This is a very popular event and has been running for many years. It is the opportunity for Grewelthorpe's musical talent to sparkle and for those with clever or beautiful readings to share them. If you would like to take part, please contact Liz Witton (658670) or Peter Beresford (658098). We do love to

welcome new talent and your contribution would be much appreciated. In addition to the excellent entertainment, we also offer a wonderful supper and wine. Donations are gratefully received and will be for Church funds.

Looking forward to seeing you on the 6th January.

Wishing you all a very Happy Christmas and a healthy New Year.

A Movie I Missed

The film *How the Grinch Stole Christmas* is about an old hermit who lives in the mountains. He was so jealous of everyone in the village having a good time he decided to sabotage their Christmas, by adopting the role of a reverse Santa Claus and steal all their presents. But because of one little girl who goes on loving him - despite his un- loveliness, his heart melts, and he ends up giving all the presents back. But not before the surprised residents of the village discover that just spending time with each other, without the benefit of the presents, is really more in keeping with the true spirit of Christmas,



Prayer Page

God of glory,
in the beginning your love was alive,
and it lives still.
In the beginning you created all things
and you love them still.
In Jesus the word became flesh,
and is with us still.
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

Amen.

Lord Jesus, forgive us when we forget that –
in the midst of all our Christmas presents,
you are the gift.
in the midst of all our partying and noise,
you are the word made flesh.
in the midst of all our angst and conflicts,
you are the Prince of Peace.
in the midst of all our darkness,
you are the light of the World.
in the midst of every moment of our lives,
you are our Emmanuel – God with us.
Amen.

Gracious God,
in you no one is insignificant,
no one goes unnoticed,
no one is turned away,
no one is forgotten,
no promise that you make is broken,
no plan is unfulfilled.
So, with confidence, we can lay down all that burdens us
and step out boldly, confidently and forgiven,
in the name of Jesus.
Amen.

Lord Jesus, we praise you that your birth transcends all time and unites heaven and earth, past and present. May we in response to your care for us reach out beyond our comforts and privileges and embrace the needs of all people, that this Christmas may be a time of prayer and action for the world's poor and vulnerable, in whom your love was fully revealed at Bethlehem.

Amen.

Lord, we pray, especially on this day,
for those who are lonely;
for those for whom Christmas is hard to bear;
for those who associate it with loss, tension or relationship breakdown;
for those who struggle year after year;
for those for whom this year is the first Christmas without a loved one.

We pray that your light will shine into the deepest dark places, into the lives of those who are struggling to cope, into the hearts of those who are desperate for hope, and surround those in need of your protection and shelter.

We pray for those for whom there has been no room, no welcome, no understanding – those without home or family, those whose lives have been turned upside down.

Give us grace and compassion, help us to remember your love for us and our calling to reflect your light to the world. May we be light bringers, taking the flame of your love into the dim and ugly places, giving a little bit of light to those who need it.

Amen.

How silently, how silently the wondrous
gift is given.
So, God imparts to human hearts the
blessing of his heaven.
May this candle be a sign of that blessing.
May Christmas be a time of new
beginnings,
and we each find room in our hearts today
for the Christ child,
and all those in need.
Amen.



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Limited**

Prayer Commitment by the Circuit Meeting:

- Pray for the Royal Family as they continue to mourn the loss of a mother, grandmother and great grandmother. We pray for King Charles III that God will enfold him, Christ will uphold him, and the Holy Spirit will guide him in all things.
- Pray for the World Day of Prayer Committee in Taiwan (World Day of Prayer 3 March 2023) as the world begins to look at their service. Pray that they start to feel the wave of prayer coming their way leading up to the Day of Prayer 2023.
- Pray for the Churches of our circuit who have lost their buildings; Melmerby, Finghall and Kirkby Malzeard as they seek to be new ways of being church in their communities.

Newsletter

If you know someone who would like to receive a postal copy of this newsletter, please let Amanda Milner know on 01677 427909 or 07805 623464, email milnera68@gmail.com. OR the Circuit Office.

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