



Ripon & Lower Dales Methodist Circuit



December 2022

Herald
Newsletter -
Supplement

Living God, as we light the
Advent candles,
and the flicker of your coming is
kindled in our hearts,
may the flame of our desire for
justice and peace
burn brightly within us,
releasing in our lives, our
churches, and our world,
the transforming power of your
Holy Spirit.
Amen.



A message from Revd. Ian written on Holy Island just before Advent.



I am writing this blog on Holy Island. We love it here and come as often as we can. For many years now, I've been coming here for a pre Advent retreat time. I picked my hymns for my two Advent Sunday services this morning!

We need time to be before busy times in life. Advent is a time to think deeply about how God is, to prepare ourselves for divine intervention, the dawn from on high breaking in on us. It is a time to remember that God promises to come, not maybe, but definitely. Next Sunday's Old Testament reading from Isaiah chapter 2 doesn't say "the days might be coming when I..." they are "surely coming."



At a time of uncertainty, we need to be sure of something else all is lost. We are living at a time of deep despair: people taking hard decisions whether to eat or have heat; we all having to face paying more tax and have our energy bills rise and items in the shops becoming more expensive, the rich getting richer and the poor poorer.

We are living at a time of war and disharmony with the situation in Ukraine not getting any easier, an uprising of ordinary people in Iran which may be quashed, a return of Netanyahu in Israel, new stirrings from Trump in America, a corrupt and anti human rights country hosting the World Cup, and people voting to keep Matt Hancock in the jungle when he shouldn't be deemed a celebrity anyway. And tonight we've learnt who has bought the cottage next door to where we are!!!

https://www.chroniclive.co.uk/news/north-east-news/dominic-cummings-buys-rare-holy-25389551?int_source=amp_continue_reading&int_medium=amp&int_campaign=continue_reading_button#amp-readmore-target



We need a different way. It's so easy to despair. The good news is where we are isn't where God wants us to be. He will intervene. He can't stop Dominic Cummings buying the house next door or people voting for Hancock or give us a general election today but he can work in us to get us to see what is right and what is not. And at the right time things will change. He is a God of justice and levelling up. In his Kingdom, there are no rich and poor, haves and have nots, those who do wrong will be accountable and those who feel no good news around them will be enfolded by the good news of a Saviour. For in Jesus God becomes one of us.



After a long journey of pain and more pain I today have texted my Superintendent to say I can return to work next Sunday. I can see now my eye has healed and I have new lenses in my glasses, my haemoglobin levels have returned to normal after my internal bleeding from ulcers and the costachondritis pain is less severe although I still can't lift heavy cases or go round a roundabout without wincing but it's an improvement! I'm grateful to those who have walked the last two months and a bit with me. On the bed in hospital I felt helpless and directionless. My two stays in Harrogate over 21 days weren't easy. I'm also aware I will return next week not knowing what's been happening in my churches - if you are reading this and are a member of one of my eight churches can I ask you to be patient with me?



At evening prayer in St Mary's tonight, I was struck by two phrases in the Magnificat. The mighty will be "toppled from their thrones" and God has "filled the hungry with good things." People are in need of help - now. I know in my absence three of my churches have opened warm spaces for people to come to. This is one way we can help. But there is also spiritual need: everyone needs health and healing and peace and saving from themselves. Everyone needs that Saviour who came to the mess of the world and will come afresh into the mess of this one if we open our eyes and hearts to receive him.

We love this place because no matter how many times we come, there is always something new and refreshing to experience. The view across to the mainland changes every day and gladdens the heart. My wife told me just a few hours after arriving here she'd noticed my spirits had lifted. That's good. And tomorrow there's more to discover here: they are filming Vera here so I'll be out Vera searching... you can't miss her hat, can you?



Sam, the curate here shared a blog post by Jan Richardson at evening prayer tonight to remind us with God we are always on the edge of something amazing happening. I came back to our cottage and looked up some of her poems. I like this one. God works with us from where we are and beckons us to a different future. Maybe my time out of work, even being in hospital, was given me for me to lean on God a bit more... though I could have done without excruciating pain and scary bleeding ulcers, thank you God!

***Go slow
if you can.
Slower.
More slowly still.
Friendly dark
or fearsome,
this is no place
to break your neck
by rushing,
by running,
by crashing into
what you cannot see.***

*Then again,
it is true:
different darks
have different tasks,
and if you
have arrived here unawares,
if you have come
in peril
or in pain,
this might be no place
you should dawdle.*

*I do not know
what these shadows
ask of you,
what they might hold
that means you good
or ill.*

*It is not for me
to reckon
whether you should linger
or you should leave.*

*But this is what
I can ask for you:*

*That in the darkness
there be a blessing.
That in the shadows
there be a welcome.
That in the night
you be encompassed
by the Love that knows
your name.*

*from Jan Richardson's blog, [The Advent Door](#)
© Jan Richardson, janrichardson.com*