



## Sharing Stories

It seems that Spring has made its way to North Yorkshire with warmer, sunnier weather. It feels a relief after the recent cool and damp weather the UK is famed for, but we need the rain! Some of us, I'm sure, are avid viewers of the Repair Shop on BBC television. Every precious item brought to be scrutinised by the experts comes with a story, and often tears, relating the item to memories, sometimes happy, at other times poignant. Some of you may have heard of Rowan McCabe from Newcastle Upon Tyne, the Door-to-Door poet. He does theatre nights with his journey around England resulting in thirty poems composed for individuals he met, largely on their doorsteps, during his travels. Each poem emerged from an aspect of the conversation and articulated a part of that person's story. If you have chance to hear him, don't miss the opportunity to enjoy his unique gift and style. All this talking of stories imparted and received has made me think about our Easter celebrations, and how indebted we are to those first witnesses of the Risen Christ, even though it didn't necessarily show them up in the best light! Some doubted or even disbelieved, Mary mistook Jesus for a gardener, and they were all full of fear. Their willingness to admit this perhaps adds to the authenticity of their stories, particularly when their doubts and fears were overcome with faith and joy as they met Jesus in an upper room, on the road or by the seashore. And the gospel writers, listening to the stories and committing them to a written record so that we, too, can be sure, in these days of uncertainty, that Jesus is risen (John 20 v30f) Each of our stories is unique. Our experience of God, and our journey through life have contributed to the individuals we are, and each is of utmost value both to ourselves and to one another. Learning to share our stories, with their humorous, and like those first disciples sometimes less than perfect sides is an

important aspect of faith – traditionally we call it ‘testimony’, which sounds an unnecessarily frightening description, but it’s just our story. Equally important is listening, giving one another a sense of worth as we receive what is shared with us and allow it to encourage us on our own journey, also bringing us closer together, as Charles Wesley encourages us: see StF 676, Christ from whom all blessings flow. The approaching festival of Pentecost is all about story-sharing, empowered by the Holy Spirit, which brought about a transformation in those first storytellers, the now bold and confident apostles, and the city and country where they lived. This continues to spread in breadth and time to our own day, where the story of faith in its myriad colours continues to change lives and bless our world.

– **Amanda Milner**



## **Note From the Editor**

Welcome to May and the Flourish 23 edition of THE HERALD. It really is a bumper edition, with news, and reports back from the Yorkshire North & East District Event at Scarborough. Thank you again to all who have submitted articles, there’s been no shortage this month and there has been lots of juggling done to squeeze it all in, but please don’t let that stop you from submitting something for next time it really is great to have this problem and makes the editing role feel very worthwhile. The deadline for June’s Edition is 19 May 2023. Thank You. – **Amanda Milner (Editor)**

## **A seed reflection by Revd. Gareth Baron – I felt my heart strangely warmed – expressing Christian spirituality.**

The month of May sees Methodists and others who appreciate Christian history note a significant time in the life of John Wesley. John Wesley had gone unwillingly to a society in Aldersgate Street where there was a reading of Luther's preface to the Epistle to the Romans. It was here at 'about a quarter before nine, while he was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed, I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone for salvation; and an assurance was given me that he had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death.' – John Wesley expresses Christian spirituality here and it's this which I want to ponder with you.

I wonder what images come to mind when people talk about Christian spirituality. Does it hold negative connotations due to the overzealous Christian or perhaps it's something you think doesn't relate to you for whatever reason. I have always rejected the overzealous expression Christian spirituality and if your experience is similar to mine, it can sometimes seem more performance than authentic. I also reject the idea that someone who displays a more outwardly expression of faith as more spiritual than someone who quietly and faithfully lives a devotional life with God. Both are valid expressions of Christian faith and spirituality, furthermore, the expression usually relates to one's personality. But let us remember that a river that looks quiet on the surface, can run deep with great force. Contrast that with a babbling brook and you can draw your own conclusions. I am mindful of Jesus' teaching about

going into those quiet private places where God sees. I believe expressing Christian spirituality in helpful ways is something we should be doing. Whether that is akin to John Wesley and writing it down, or speaking about it, or even through our holy habits shaping our daily living. For this month we also celebrate Pentecost, a time when we retell the story of when the Holy Spirit came, opened the mouths, hearts and minds of the Apostles and the crowds who had gathered together for the Feast of Pentecost. God equipped those gathered in the house to clearly speak the good news message of Jesus Christ. The language barriers not just removed but is transcended to become a sign to listen to God Holy Spirit who enabled those speaking in languages not of their own mother tongue. In the same way today, God will equip and enable the church, people like you and me to express their faith, showing that God is active in all our lives. That is an inclusive 'all' not just those who would acknowledge and positively respond, because we always come back to the grace of God. After all, were would any of us be without God's prevenient grace? God is our beginning, our centre, our source, our future and is our all. Whatever our experience of God Holy Spirit might be, if it's similar to John Wesley's heart strangely warmed or something else, may we express it confidently. We have faith in a living and active God which makes all the difference when it comes to spirituality. The distinguishing heart of Christian spirituality is our loving God, full of grace, who is willing us all to know salvation and love, regardless of our unwilling nature. So might expressing our encounters with our loving God offer others encouragement and might we all know the assurance of salvation with Jesus. It is from being in this place with God that the Church exists, that we hold before each other that "all need to be saved. All may be saved. All may know themselves saved. All may be saved to the uttermost." Now this is certainly Christian spirituality worth expressing. What's more if we are



## The Road to Emmaus: walking the wrong way with God.

I'm writing this sharing in a quiet day for the two churches in Boroughbridge. We are meeting at Holyrood House in Thirsk on a wet day and I'm sitting in the chapel. We are thinking today about the Emmaus Road story in Luke 24.

I love the Road to Emmaus story. It gives me permission to take time to understand what is going on around me and in my head. It gives me permission to ask questions and ponder the divine answer. It reminds me of the need to create time to break bread with others representing Christ and to have bread broken for me by others, taking in Christ. It challenges me to go and tell when I am re-energised. It reassures me there is nowhere on the journey he is not.

William Barclay in his old, but trustworthy commentary on Luke's Gospel reminds us that travellers here walked into the sunset on that Sunday evening, their hopes fading. But they are captivated by the stranger on the road so much, so they invite him into their home as it is getting late. They want more of him despite not knowing who he is. Remember they were going home as there was nothing else to do. Had they a bed made up? Hospitality to strangers, remember, was a huge thing back then. And it still should be...

If we were each to draw a graph to depict the course of our lives to date, the line would have peaks at when we felt confident and happy, and low points when we felt in the depths. Some people mistakenly associate God with the high spots only. Really, he is with us at every point and turn, even when our depression makes it difficult for us to believe in him or feel him to be present. His power at work inside us can help us turn the corner. Belief in the resurrection makes us expect



and look for turning points in our lives, but they sometimes come after what seemed to be the point of no return. And that transformation comes when Jesus breaks bread and they recognise him.

I love the fact that Jesus was recognised as he broke bread. The two of them must have known about the last supper. We recognise Jesus in the breaking of bread as we kneel to receive it or if we are clergy people, we place it in the hands of the people we are charged to care for. Those times when we eat together can be times when, in the middle of what we do, we recognise the risen Lord, as the two did in their home.

The library of Marygate House on Holy Island was a transforming place for seven years ago this week. I fell in love with my now wife over cheese in that room when it was just the two of us in there when others had gone. I wasn't expecting to start a new relationship again after a divorce, I wasn't expecting to propose to her seven months later! I fought it this week seven years ago, but I now know, even with bumpy bits and that we really DRIVE EACH OTHER MAD, the risen Lord, who promises new life out of death, and hope out of despair, was there for us both as we broke bread...

So, take time to break bread with others, be companions literally, people who share bread, take time with others to feast and let Jesus in, invite him to your table to be renewed by him again. Tomorrow night I'm at our High Ellington chapel, and they have the old hymn book and, in that hymn, book is an old hymn about Emmaus, which they will sing to end their service.

Perchance we have not always wist  
Who has been with us by the way;  
Amid day's uproar we have missed  
Some word that Thou hast had to say,  
In silent night, O Saviour dear,  
We would not fail Thy voice to hear.



Day is far spent, and night is nigh;  
Stay with us, Saviour, through the night;  
Talk with us, touch us tenderly,  
Lead us to peace, to rest, to light;  
Dispel our darkness with Thy face,  
Radiant with resurrection grace.

The Emmaus Road story is our story. It is a story of hope recovered. The joy of the walk away from all we think has destroyed us, is that you never know what might happen on that journey to open your minds to new possibilities. – **Revd. Ian**

## **Pentecost**

In these next few weeks a lot of our energy will be focussed on celebrating the Coronation of Charles III, and rightly so. Last year saw us celebrate the Platinum Jubilee of HRH Elizabeth II. We thank God for her remarkable, faithful service, leadership and Christian faith offered to the Kingdom and the Commonwealth. The same weekend as the main jubilee celebrations was also the important Christian festival of Pentecost.

This year sees us celebrate Pentecost at the end of the month, but I hope that in the midst of some good memories of coronation celebrations, you won't have lost sight of the wonder of God's gift of his Holy Spirit and his vital leading involvement in the mission of the early Church. Pentecost was a wonderful event, a time when God came to people in a whole new way, something to really celebrate... which we do. The difficulty some of us find with Pentecost is that it is all a bit supernatural and kind of tricky to explain and - let's be honest - makes us a bit nervous. So how do we handle that? Is it better not to think about it too much and focus on other things

in the story? I don't think so! When we see signs of the Holy Spirit's presence we need to celebrate, even if it "throws" us for a moment and it isn't quite what we had planned. We need to celebrate not so much the signs themselves, but that God is here with us, showing us that he is here and that he is powerfully at work for good, equipping his church to love his world. Before the Spirit came, the disciples were confused and overwhelmed by the prospect of the mission. When they received the Spirit, they became bold and courageous, full of faith in following the moving of the Spirit to go after the mission. In the days and weeks that followed Pentecost, the Church grew rapidly. Several times it is reported that 'the Lord added to their number, those who were being saved'. One of the most important things for us to remember is what Jesus said to the disciples before he left: they needed to wait for the Holy Spirit to empower them to be his witnesses. I don't think they knew much about evangelism programmes or growth action plans, important and helpful as these can be. The early church simply knew that they were dependent on God to bring new people into faith in Christ and so we find them very often at prayer seeking God's help and leading. It is really important to review our mission and outreach plans: I'm not "knocking" that at all. We really need to ensure that mission, evangelism and making disciples are top priority in what we do and plan as Church. A church without mission and evangelism at its heart would be like Coca-Cola aiming to run the cleanest, most perfectly tuned factory and forgetting that the purpose of the factory is to produce fizzy drinks! A vital part of the process of bringing other people to Jesus is that, just like the early Church, we depend on God to touch people's lives. We need to pray asking for His help and trusting in Him, being careful not to put our faith solely in any of the latest techniques, or a "tried and trusted" method or just working harder at it i.e., human effort alone. Remember that it is the

Lord who 'adds to our number those who are being saved'. When we pray for God's help and leading in outreach, and step out as his witnesses, he opens up opportunities in which we can simply share our faith. Our role as witnesses is more like a "midwife" to people, encouraging and helping them another step or two further along the way of faith toward their new birth in Christ, and that's where our training and mission plans etc. come in. So, I invite you, encourage you, challenge you, particularly as we move forward in the age of Pentecost, to pray more, to seek more of the working of the Holy Spirit, especially in our mission and outreach as Jesus' Church and to be open to receive, to go with and to celebrate whatever the Holy Spirit is doing. – **Blessings Amanda Milner**



## Kathy's Corner

Many of our contributions this month are from the folk who enjoyed spending time at the Flourish Weekend, so you may be glad to hear I didn't go and therefore need to write about something else!

As it's springtime, my garden is starting to flourish, though, but Kathy's Corner always needs a few things doing to help it along! "Let's get the pond emptied before the frogs arrive" says Malcolm. The water was very brown, so the pump was set in action and an hour later, three-quarters of the liquid has fertilised our fruit bushes – and the toads are not looking so happy, they can't get up the sides. Actually, the fish didn't seem impressed either, as the toads are in mating mode, and some seem to have trouble distinguishing species! It takes a bit longer to refill the pond with the hose pipe, some 7 hours, but at the end of the day the creatures in our pond seem a bit happier, although the water is still brown. Next day, Malcolm sprinkled Sludgebuster over the surface, turning it white for a while, then a week later set the pump and filtration system going. We like this part of the process. As each day passes, you can see a bit further into the depths, so spot frogs, toads - and newts. It just means the filters are clogging up with mud, so need cleaning twice a week! But this year, it didn't seem to be clearing. Bethany, on a visit to find toads, pointed out that it was very green. That made us realise the UV lamp couldn't be working. We had a spare bulb ready to replace it, so Malcolm went to turn it off – only to realise, he'd not turned it on in the first place!

The pond is now clearing, but it's still a problem for our frogs and toads. You may recall me writing that the pondweed hadn't survived the winter, so there's nowhere safe in our pond for frog/toad spawn. I put some in a bucket to let tadpoles develop, the rest has been eaten by our ravenous

fish... I'll add the tadpoles when they are big enough to get out of their way, and less likely to be eaten. Meanwhile, Musing Vic has come to our rescue with some pondweed from his garden, so hopefully that will soon grow and spread ready for next season.

I'm now watching for my wildflower garden to flourish, seedlings are popping up all over it – but how many are plants I want, and how many I will regard as weeds, remains to be seen. I hope it does as well as last year. I shall watch with interest!

I wonder if you have anything you're watching to see if it will flourish, too? – **Blessings from Kathy Lowrie**



## Vic's Monthly Musings

As most readers know, my wife Jenni broke her hip some weeks ago now. We were confined to barracks for a while afterwards, but I am now happy to say that she is making steady progress and we are out and about again. Shopping, coffee mornings, doctors and hospital appointments seem to dominate a large part of our lives. As we travel about, one of my most recent observations has been how much mobile phones seem to have taken over the lives of so many people. Wherever you go there are school children and adults alike with their heads down, frantically swiping and button pressing. I have also noticed and heard in the media how the video game market is booming. So many young people spend hours texting their friends or playing games on their phones or computers.

As I observed and pondered, my mind went back to my own childhood.

(School days and of course the long summer holidays) There were seemingly long days of warm sunshine spent playing cricket, football or cycling through the woods----dirt tracking---- or climbing trees. (And of course, falling out of them). Then there would be the odd wet day when we would all gather in a friend's house to play games. Mostly board games; Draughts, Ludo or Snakes and Ladders.

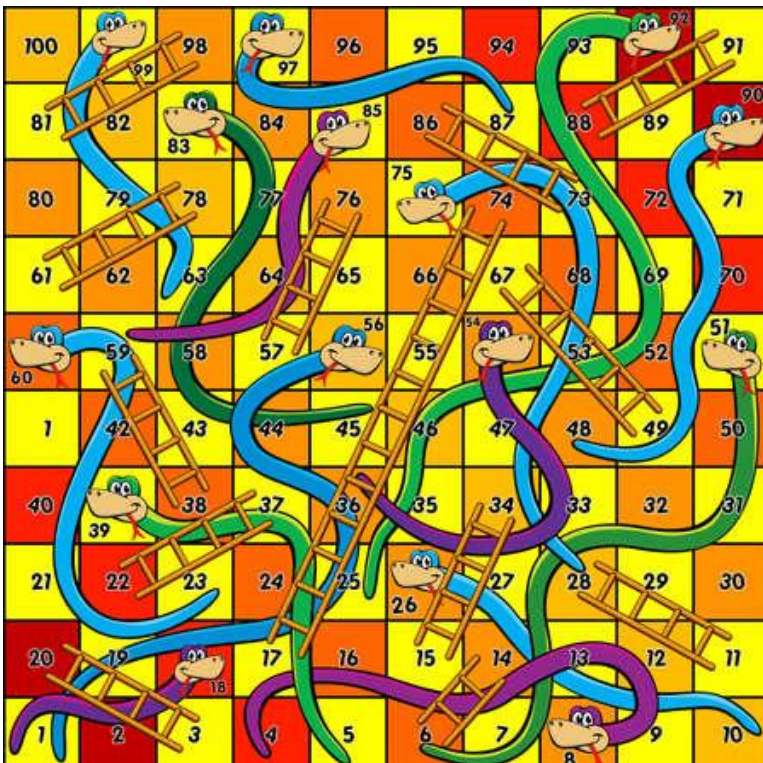
Ah yes, Snakes and Ladders----- that took my thoughts in yet another direction. What a pattern for life Snakes and Ladders is. The delight and success of landing at the bottom of a ladder and being allowed to overtake all your friend's counters and then, of course, the frustration and sometimes upset of landing on a snake and having to go all the way down and start your game way behind where you had hoped to be. You just had to pick yourself up, throw again and start over again. What lessons we learned from these childhood experiences



-----how to deal with disappointment and frustration, but we WOULD throw again and continue to chase our friend's counters around the board.

THAT'S LIFE How often do we have to go down a snake (fortunately, it may be quite a short one and at other times a much longer one) then start our life all over again.

BUT (and as Rev Susan Richardson often used to say, there is always a but). As Christians we have a companion to help us pick up the pieces and start again. Jesus Christ our Saviour and friend. Working through the power of the Holy Spirit, he is always with us to comfort, encourage and guide us through the "Down the Snake Days" We are so lucky. We must try our best to pass this wonderful message on to all we meet.





## **An hour in heaven. Reflection by the Revd. Gareth Baron**

I sometimes get concerned at how a culture in the life of some parts of the church seem to be obsessed with things not going beyond an hour. Worship services need to be done in an hour, any meeting irrespective of its importance or the number of items on the agenda needs to be done in an hour. When did the church become caught in the grip of measuring the time they give to God? I appreciate that society is shaped by a plethora of competing screens all screaming 'look at me!' I appreciate that despite the many time saving machines and supposedly time saving devices, we are a society shaped by the need to run faster, governed by the financial economy that ever threatens to take away creature comforts.

The church environment should be different don't you think. The church gave rise to so many vital organisations both culturally and socially. Sports clubs, schools and hospitals all have roots which show beginnings were with the church. A church less concerned with an hour and more concerned with developing sporting enterprises to build up communities and camaraderie within those communities. A church concerned with increasing the educational opportunities, giving structures to children's growth through learning. A church that not only believed in a God who heals but put into practice the good Samaritan efforts providing otherwise inaccessible health care. Admittedly many, if not the majority of these sports clubs, schools and hospitals tend to have grown beyond their early origins. The point I am making is that churches had ambition, they invested fully into their local communities. In a post-Christendom society, which sees plurality of personal beliefs as the cultural norm, it is indeed a vastly different landscape which the church finds itself today. We know that our congregations are significantly smaller, and the age demographic is typically, but not exclusively of the older

generations. It is no longer the norm to see three generations of one family in the same church or to see them attend church at all. Other activities, whether work or social inhabit all days of the week and Sunday is no exception.

What we have in the church is something that can be found everywhere but it is in our gatherings together that we give witness to our lived experiences. God is everywhere and some have become despondent towards the church whilst remaining open to God in part at least. For others the question of God doesn't even factor into their belief system, so waking up on a Sunday morning, they don't consider attending a worship service at their local church as even an option. There are of course many others who would fit within their own specific expression of who they are and refuse to wear a label or even give any sign of their personal beliefs. What is plain, is that people are not choosing to attend church for acts of worship. People are more receptive to attending other things at church, be it a foodbank or community larder; a warm hub or friendship social group; or even club meeting be it yoga or local history, etc. Entering the premises isn't a problem when the activity doesn't require any Christian faith engagement. Crossing the threshold therefore isn't a barrier for some, though it can be for others. I recently spoke about the world population in the context of a sermon and thinking about how the church might respond to the fact that God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son that whoever believes in him, may not perish but have eternal life. That Jesus said he did not come to condemn the world but that the world might be saved through him.

Eight billion people make up the world's population, with a growth rate of one hundred and forty babies born each minute. Last year there were just over sixty-seven million deaths, but when set against the one hundred and thirty-three million births its clear to see how much the population is continuing to

grow. The majority of our churches have reached their centenary celebrations with others much younger having been birthed in the sixties and seventies. When we look at the beginning of the twentieth century the population was fewer than two billion people on the planet. That is a tremendous difference with the course of one hundred and twenty-three years.

So, what of the holy hour, the church culture which promotes confining worship and meetings within this time prism of 'supposed' best practice.

Whilst the population is higher in the world, we are seeing less people engaging with on-site church. Is this really surprising, if we insist on an hour of worship once a week, we are asking a lot to be achieved within that hour. It needs to be all things to all people, but it isn't. It isn't because we tend towards recreating what has been the habit, or practice, or tradition (whatever), of the Christian act of worship for the last hundred years. We might have screens to project words, but the words are still of the old English. We might have tea and coffee around tables, but the structure of the service is no different. I am not against holy habits, let's seek God to develop these within our lives. I'm not even against inherited expressions of worship. Yet seemingly we are not developing holy habits, instead continuing in our own 'old habits' or sometimes 'bad habits and our engagement with inherited expressions of worship is without true awakened consciousness. In other words, we've always done this, that or the other. Which translates to this comes from others in the past who we trust sought after God to lead them.

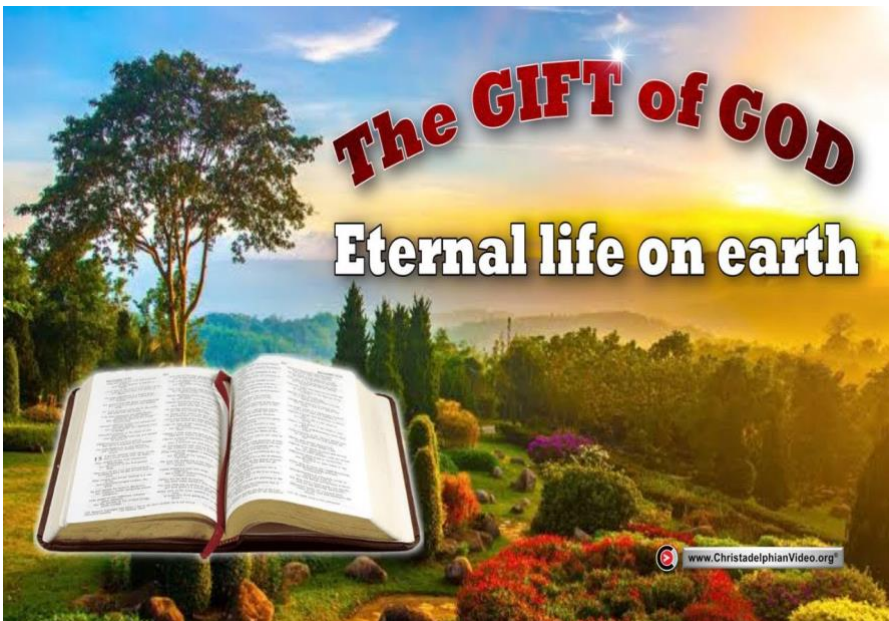
What if we just imagine for a moment that God might just want to do a new thing with the church. That God might have many ways of worship, of holiness, of building relationships, of being church. What if we gave God more than an hour and really waited upon the Lord our God to inspire ambition within us.

The number of times I hear churches claiming they need or want vision but are not prepared to even stand still for long enough to look with God at what the vision might be. We can talk about change, but can we act. We can talk about God, but can we listen. We can talk about faith, but can we walk humbly with our God and follow God's lead.

An hour in heaven would be worth a lifetime on earth but we are given eternal life through Jesus Christ. So, if we are to share in Jesus' inheritance, because Jesus came to earth, lived and loved without sin, who was obedient to the point of death on the cross. Suffered not only crucifixion if that wasn't enough but took the weight of the sins of the world, all eight billion living now, plus all those before who have lived and died. Jesus who rose from the dead to newness of life and who ascended to be seated at the righthand of the Father. Who prays for us, who hasn't ever abandoned us. Who is there for us at any time day or night. But we give an hour, we watch the clock, we limit what we give to God who has a limitless overflowing abundance of grace and love for us. Perspective is everything, we are not God, but are we children of God?

We could explore what it means to be children of God, but I'd sooner consider it simply. Children of God are not only dependant on God but are in relationship with God. Whilst relationships come in different shapes and our relationship with God is exceptionally precious and we are shaped within it. It is like no other relationship because there is no other like God, yet all relationships require the same thing to keep them healthy, they need time. God is beyond time because God is beyond all measure. The time we give does matter, yet in many ways it is not actually about the amount of time we give but how we give it. I believe the difference in how we give time is around 'doing' and 'being', with the latter speaking much more of relationship.

Being with God and being in relationship with God then guides and shapes are doing. The time we are called to give is our lifetime, we give our lives to being with God and what amazing hands to be held in. But that is why the 'how' is significant, because we want to be found in God. A funny little quote say's we are human 'beings' not human 'doings.' I always endeavour to show my appreciation for all the generosity of people doing things to serve God across the life of the church. We cannot neglect the many wonderful, enabling and often critical 'doings' and whilst important, it is the being with God in such acts of service that should motivate us as Christians, as children of God. Ultimately, being with God will shape our Church culture, which will be counter-cultural to the secular society at times and see the church show what life in all its fullness looks like. An hour in heaven, no, we are given eternal life that begins now on earth, lets live it well with God. Amen.



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

**Carthorpe** - We started April with our Palm Sunday Donkey walk. A bit different this year as we went from Burneston to Carthorpe, it was lovely to see so many, it was standing room only! Steve Laugher gave a warm welcome and wonderful introduction and led the service, and our Rev James Glyn Thomas gave a challenging address, most of the congregation stayed for hot cross buns in the school room afterwards. We welcomed Cathy on Easter day for an uplifting Service and were so pleased that she brought Harriet with her who hadn't been to Carthorpe for a long time, so had a lot of catching up to do.

Last week we were delighted to welcome John Foster back with us after his nasty fall before Christmas, so good to see him and his stick back in his usual seat. We had another good service with Rev Ian Pruden.

John has arranged the next joint service at Melmerby Village Hall for

May, we realise that this is the day after our King Charles III coronation but as John pointed out, our Queen Elizabeth II was still reigning over us when he arranged the date!

We hope that you will be able to join us for that and for our Chapel Anniversary led by Joyce Bainbridge the following week.

**Snape** - Thank you to all of you who were able to come along and join us at the Easter Day evening service. It was certainly a night of worship and praise, and we were so blessed as individuals, and grateful to God.

We look forward to the up-and-coming summer.

We are having a month of Themed Preach, were the

preachers are kindly taking different parts of the theme that we chose, which is 'Sharing Jesus'.

We have various AAW services planned, and other outdoor ones, during summer.

We are making plans for Holiday Club, which will be held from, July 25th- 27th July, each morning. More info will follow.

If you feel that you are able to help in any way, with crafts, offering to come along one morning to be alongside other helpers, or help with refreshments at any point, Elaine or Joy would be delighted to hear from you.

Please encourage children to come along. Registration forms will be available from Elaine.

### **Finghall** - A reflection - Road Closed.

The road in Finghall has been closed at the top of the hill for the last five weeks and there are large road signs to inform motorists and delivery drivers that there is no access between certain times of the day. Even when there is access it is limited by the width of the roadworks. Do people take notice?

Even when they see the signs? Apparently not because many have been turned back down the hill and the articulated lorries have great difficulty in reversing such a long way back.

There are diversions signs in place, but they are ignored.

Signs are there for a purpose. To guide people to reach their destination safely. So why do people take no notice of these signs? Why do we think we will get through anyway because we know the way we need to go and where we are going? Why do we think we know best? It can be a little frustrating to be diverted the long way round, especially when your destination is just a hundred yards past the closure. So obviously we don't know best. And when we reach the unassailable blockage, we get annoyed and blame someone else, in this case the road workers.

It's the same in life. We often make our own plans regardless



of what else is going on in the world around us and when we cannot do what we want to do, or should be able to do, we get annoyed, angry even, and try to find someone to blame.

Usually those in authority. In our own lives, especially when we grow older and less active and we cannot do the things we used to do regularly without some painful effort, we tend to blame ourselves.

But have we taken notice of the signs that have been there for us and have we ignored them. Have we noticed that we are not as flexible as we used to be, not as agile. Have we noticed that we are not as sharp as we were. And if we have, have we ignored these indications and taken steps to adapt or improvise and create diverse ways to achieve our goals in other ways? A little longer perhaps but successful.

And sometimes when we are really stumped by the problems in our lives and our spirits are at a really low ebb, who do we blame?

Do we say, “Why me God”? “Do I deserve this”? “What have I done wrong to be like this”? Or do we ask ourselves, “Why didn’t I see and take note of the warning signs”?

Do we ask for His help in prayer? AND LISTEN. And take note.

The roadway of our lives may have a variety of hazards and stumbling blocks in our way but if we look for the warning signs and if our faith in God is strong and we look for the guiding hand of Jesus we will reach our goal. Because no roads to Him are closed.

AND LOCALLY

The Friends of Finghall Christian Home group met again in March at Rose Cottage, and we were guided by the Anglican Reverend Chris Lawton of St Andrews Church discussing the truths and meaning of the open tomb. With songs and prayers, we had a very interesting and informative discussion on this occurrence. This was of course followed by refreshments. We

meet again on Sunday 30th April at Oak Lea Finghall at 2pm. Roving again took us to Pateley Bridge for the Easter weekend, staying on the show ground with about two hundred other units. Lots of people sharing parts of their lives with each other. A variety of spontaneous entertainment for all ages including a Duck Race in the stream. I have never seen so many grown-ups get so excited about watching plastic ducks float down a stream. Our two chosen ducks got lost in the throng. In fact, I think they may have climbed out and flown off! We joined the local Churches in the Walk of Witness and Stations of the Cross down the main street which was well supported. It was made very solemn by the inclusion of the regular beat of the big drum on the route. We were pleased that the walk came down the hill and not up it as it is quite steep! Visiting the Coffee morning at the Methodist Church is always a must for us as is the sharing in the worship at the Easter Day service and meeting up again with friends. One of whom some of you may remember was a lady called Janet, I forget her second name, but she was a Deacon who occasionally preached in our circuit many years ago especially at Snape. She is now in her mid-nineties and mentioned our sister Pat Ashford. So, hello to Pat from Janet. And lastly, hopefully our road will be open again soon, before the annual village Barrel Push event which is to be held on Spring Bank Holiday Monday for the first time since covid. There will be signs posted to guide people to the event so they can reach this destination.

**Harrogate Road** - Coronation Coffee Morning, Friday 5th May 10am - 12.00 - You are invited to joins us to celebrate the Coronation of King Charles III. Come and enjoy a drink with cakes and biscuits and share stories about meeting the Royal Family. A perfect way to prepare for the Coronation the next day. Everyone is welcome. We are looking forward to seeing you.

During the winter months Harrogate Road Church have been delighted to host a warm space every Friday from 10-12noon. On average we welcomed 15 guests every week for great 'get togethers' with lots of chat, laughter, and discussions. John Wilson kindly supplied a weekly quiz which did bring about lots of laughs whilst refreshing the brain cells. The Quiz Queen must be awarded to Muriel who has such an amazing general knowledge.

By popular demand it has been decided to extend our warm space Friday Coffee Mornings through to May. So please if you are in our area on Fridays between 10-12 you are most welcome to drop in and join us.

Keep safe everyone, keep smiling and enjoy the beautiful spring/summer displays in the gardens and the countryside. God Bless and hope to see you.



**Grewelthorpe** - Thanks to all of you that joined us at our recent Lent Lunches. Those that came I am sure that you will agree that the community atmosphere was brilliant. We mustn't forget that without the volunteers that help weekly, provide delicious soups, and do a great job of organising everything, this event would not happen. We are delighted to say that through your generosity £561 will be donated to the DEC appeal for the earthquake in Turkey and Syria. Thank you once again.

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 17th May 6-7pm.

Our Easter services were well attended. Our Palm Sunday service begun with a procession from school led by a donkey (only pretend) with members of the congregation singing, shouting Hosanna and waving palms!!!! There were a few strange looks from people walking their dogs!

After both Palm Sunday and Easter Day services refreshments were served.

Our services are advertised in The Fountains magazine and can be found on the website.

<https://fountainsgroupofchurches.co.uk/services/>

We are now looking forward to other celebrations as most churches and villages will be for the Coronation of his Majesty the King.

Everyone is invited to a Church Commemorative Service to mark the Coronation of His Majesty the King on Sunday, 7<sup>th</sup> May 10.30am at St James and the Methodist Church Grewelthorpe. The Grewelthorpe Branch of the Royal British Legion will parade, and we would encourage any children who would like to come in any youth organisation or school uniform to do so. The Service will be followed by a Loyal Toast, drinks, light refreshments, and the unveiling of two benches at 1pm

on the Village green. The local branch of The British Legion have kindly renovated these benches on behalf of the Parish Council to mark the King's Coronation. There will be a plaque on each bench to that effect.

**Bedale & District** - We at Bedale spent Holy Week journeying to the cross with Jesus, ecumenically meeting for meditation type services at our own church then Leeming and Burrill Church of England churches. Then on Maundy Thursday some of our friends from around the Northern part of the Circuit joined us sharing in Communion and Good Friday joining West Tanfield Methodist Chapel.

On Good Friday we opened our church up for private prayer offering a Labyrinth in church. Which was a very effective use of a prayer rope and the maximising of the space available for the creation of a circular labyrinth. We know from the comments we received on the day that those who attended were very appreciative and we also offered Prayer Stations in the Hall. **If any of our Circuit Family would like to borrow the labyrinth you are more than welcome to do so, please get in touch with Amanda or Sharon.**





**Flourish – the enduring love of God.** Flourish proved to be an inspirational, joyful, God love fuelled weekend. This is but a brief reflection on my experience, not least that I am someone for whom pictures speak much more than words often do. I am sure others will tell you about how good the worship, the preaching, the bible studies, the workshops, and fringe events were, because they were indeed good. However, I would like to share about what God showed me whilst at Flourish. It was during the Friday worship that I had a picture of 'no dig growing' a gardening practice which has gained greater momentum in recent years. The idea is exactly what it says and the benefits are for both the gardener who saves time and energy, and for the earth, the soil that doesn't get disturbed but nurtured by good compost that is put on top and planted. With this picture, I felt God asking what this approach might look like for the church. What if instead of pouring energy and resources into digging, we simply put the good compost on top and planted. What if instead of getting caught up in, tired out with and despondent to the digging practices, we simply don't. And instead, we put ourselves to growing in the good compost

we have. This picture felt liberating and exciting, this picture offered a perspective of growing, of planting and of flourishing. Flourishing, what does it mean to flourish? This year's theme for Flourish 23 was 'rooted in love'. This theme ran through the weekend, that we are rooted in God's love. As well as exploring being rooted, we explored God our firm foundation. Another picture which I had was on the Sunday and came in response to the above question, what does it mean to flourish? Flourishing can bring visions of blossoms, of flowers and fruits. It is easy to think of flourishing with the warmth of the sunshine on your face, the beauty of a blue sky and vivid colours of spring and summer. But what of the other seasons when in the autumn plants and trees drop their leaves. What of the winter months when the fruit trees look lifeless and questionable of their ability to produce fruit. Yet we see all these different plants and trees blossom, and flower and produce delightful fruits. Flourishing doesn't just happen in the spring and summer; flourishing happens in the autumn and winter too. Whilst it might not always feel like flourishing, we need all the seasons. It was this picture of flourishing throughout the seasons, of flourishing in all the elements, sunshine and storm, that it was clear that flourishing is about **the enduring, the lasting love of God**. Being rooted in love, means flourishing through all the seasons.

Since returning home I have reflected further on this picture. I have considered the seasons and how in the life of the church we seem to always be full of activity. Even if it is deemed good activity, it is activity non-the-less. Whilst we are humans not plants or trees, what might we gain from being more in season with the seasons, especially when we consider what flourishing really means. When do we like the autumn give up our leaves to preserve energy to prepare for the winter. When do we like the winter have periods of resting ready for the spring? I don't suppose to have all the answers, but I do know



that God who created us and created the rhythm of the seasons is faithful always. Perhaps we need to become more aware of the seasons and in doing so, become more aware of God with us, whose love endures forever. Perhaps we need to celebrate the resting in flourishing as much as we celebrate the blossoming flowers. For me these were helpful pictures and something which I hope to share going forward in ministry serving in God's flourishing Church. – **Revd. Gareth**

As a steward at this event, I perhaps saw a different aspect to the weekend. It was busy about 1000 people attended. Our role was to ensure that each of the areas where we were posted went smoothly. The Spa is a huge place and the whole venue was used by our Methodist District. I met many people in person who I have seen on zoom or know their names from the 8.00 morning prayer that Nidd Valley circuit provide every weekday at 8.00am. The marketplace was always busy lots of books to buy! The queues for tea and coffee a good place to chat!

Leslie Newton the chair of our district is a great inspiration at these events and is full of energy.

The worship on the first night was full of worship songs played by Matt Beckingham and his band and the address was by The President of Conference.

A great Bible study on Saturday, by Dr Paula Goodyear, urged us to really look at Ephesians 3 14-21 and really take the text to pieces. In another talk she raised issues about preconceived ideas that we have imagined, an example was the innkeeper in the Christmas story. How art, through the years, has coloured our understanding. Can you imagine anyone sitting alongside one side of a table for a meal as in the Leonardo da Vinci picture of the last supper!

A very meaningful Iona communion led by John Bell took place on the Sunday morning, with about 300 people attending, with our own Andrew Roberts playing the

keyboard.

At the end of the weekend a rose was given to each circuit, hopefully deep rooted and ready to flourish, Amanda received this on our behalf. Perhaps in true Methodist style we need a committee to decide where it should be grown!! -

**Margaret Smith**



Wonderful organization,  
inspiring speakers, good  
music, varied programme,  
friendly happy people, a treat  
and a blessing. Flourish 2023.  
- Heather Garbutt.



I have been asked to try and put into writing how my weekend was at Flourish.

Perhaps it will be too long but here goes what I did and experienced at Flourish 23:

### **Friday**

Opening celebrations with lots of worship songs old and new. A speech from the Methodist President, Graham Thompson. He gave a very good speech, and I was impressed with his Love, Care and Enthusiasm.

I then attended the Hope and Anchor for late night conversations which was led by the Northumbria Community and Karios movements.

And to bed at 10.45pm. What a long day but starting to buzz.

### **Saturday am**

So, from the buzz of the later night conversations, I decided to attend the Iona Worship led by John Bell. What a treat, it was interactive with songs from the Northumbrian Community and stories from the Bible. (Perhaps a few technical issues but it did not make the slightest difference). I want more of this.

Because I was so impressed with John Bell, I continued my morning studies with him. Again, not disappointed, I am

learning so much and having fun. The depth of knowledge and enthusiasm for God's word continued to make me flourish.

Yes, I know that is a bit of a pun but that was what appeared to be happening to me.

### **Lunch**

Time for lunch and look around the stalls. Yes I bought a couple of books.

### **Saturday pm**

Part 1: So, the choice on deciding which workshop to attend was the worst part of the weekend. However, I decided on Inhabiting Scripture through imagination led by Paula Gooder. Paula is a well-known writer with lots of knowledge. A different style to John Bell's teaching but very good. It made

me start to think about different things in the Bible.

Part 2: My second workshop was “A Methodist Way of Life”.

This really helped me focus on what the difference are between CofE and Methodism. I actually gained a lot from this session learning about the 12 commitments and practices that make a better Methodist Way of Life.

### **Tea**

Yes, a couple of hours to eat and reflect on today’s theological offerings.

I found myself wishing the time away wanting events to start again.

### **Saturday Evening**

Back to the Ocean Room and another session with John Bell on the “Hidden Humour within Scripture”. The room was packed, and we had fun and laughter within the room. Yes, learning but again having fun at the same time.

I finished at the quiz and bed again at 10.45pm

### **Sunday**

Started with an Inter-generational style Communion worship with lots of interaction from the children attending Flourish. So nice to see so many young people wanting to worship God.

The Final Celebration was again, lots of worship with songs old and new, interactions again from the youth groups and a final wrapping up from Leslie Newton.

So was it worth?

**Yes, when is the next one**

**I want to book – NOW –**

**Sue Nicholson**



**A fabulous weekend of teaching, inspired preaching and worship to glorify God. The workshops were many and varied, all (or most tastes) catered for. - Anonymous**

What an amazing weekend exploring the theme “Rooted In Love”.

**Friday evening** worship was led by Matt Beckingham and the Revd. Graham Thompson (President of Conference) led us on Luke 10 25-37 The Good Samaritan.

I choose on Saturday morning to attend Iona Worship led by John Bell from the Iona Community followed by John leading Bible Study where we explored the riches of Ephesians 3 14-18.

**Saturday afternoon** you could attend various workshops; the ones I chose were, Inhabiting Scripture through Imagination: Storytelling and Biblical Interpretation led by Paula Gooder. We all use imagination when we read the Bible. Helped by centuries of art, we imagine what various events in Jesus’ life might have looked like but what happens when we use biblical scholarship to help? It can help to fill in some of the gaps in our imagination as we try to understand the New Testament. Then I went to Experience Lego Church hoping for ideas to only end up giving more than I received, but God is Good and obviously put me in that space and time for a reason.

**Saturday evening** worship was led by Philippa Hanna and Rachel Gardner speaking on Psalm 1 1-3.

**Sunday morning** you could choose from 3 styles of worship. I chose Inter-generational Communion led by The CYF Team (Children Youth and Families) and Matt Beckingham. So glad I wasn’t Communion Steward a logistical nightmare! But it ran smoothly and all 300+ received.

**The final Celebration** was led by Leslie Newton, and we looked at John 12 20-25.

The speakers and worship throughout the weekend were recorded and will eventually be online. I would encourage those that are able to listen and share in the material to do so as I have only given you a brief encounter of my weekend and

could have gone into more detail of what every speaker said then I would have filled the whole Herald this month!!! and if you speak to others that attended, I know they will have had a different experience.

At the final Celebration Service each Circuit was presented with a Rose Bush and encouraged to plant it somewhere in the Circuit where it can be nurtured, and the roots can get a firm foundation and spread the Love of Christ in our Circuit. I have allotted the task of caring for this Rose Bush to our friends at Snape Chapel and once it is established asked them to take cuttings and root them passing on the Love of Christ to our other Circuit Churches so the love of Christ can blossom around the Ripon & Lower Dales Circuit. - **Amanda Milner**

Flourish was great and inspiring. Meeting up with old friends, meeting new friends, exchanging ideas, gaining new insights, learning new information and knowing that God was there with us and God is with us each day as we return to our homes. – Pam Roberts



# B I B L E

## EMERGENCY NUMBERS

When in sorrow.....	John 14
When men fail you.....	Psalms 27
When you have sinned.....	Psalms 51
When you have worry.....	Matthew 6:19-34
When you are in danger.....	Psalms 91
When God seems far away.....	Psalms 139
When your faith needs stirring.....	Hebrews 11
When you are lonely and fearful.....	Psalms 23
When you grow bitter and critical.....	1 Cor. 13
When you feel down and out.....	Romans 8:31-39
When you want peace and rest.....	Matthew 11:25-30
When the world seems bigger than God .....	Psalms 90
When you want Christian assurance.....	Romans 8:1-30
When you leave home for labor or travel.....	Psalms 121
When your prayers grow narrow or selfish.....	Psalms 67
When you want courage for a task.....	Joshua 1
When you think of investments/returns.....	Mark 10
How to get along with fellowmen.....	Romans 12
For great invention/opportunity.....	Isaiah 55
For Paul's secret to happiness.....	Col. 3:12-17
If you want to be fruitful.....	John 15
If your pocketbook is empty.....	Psalms 37
If your losing confidence in people.....	1Cor. 13
If people seem unkind.....	John 15
If discouraged about your work.....	Psalms 126
If you find the world growing small, and you great.....	Psalms 19

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# Pentecost

## Acts 2



V T L K Q T Y M H J X C J J T S A M W X  
H K R D P G I Q S L E K M N P X H T K P  
C S E U G N O T J J P M T I U H Y R N D  
S U S E J V F P B E E I R I T M F O X O  
J U U L X V O J E Y K I F S T E R Z S E  
B F R N M O E T X T T C U D U L K P P E  
V H R R C K Q Q L W E S O K F A H D D D  
N C E F K X E P G U W R G K J S P M Z M  
P R C V P V C U I C L U A D O U D Y A U  
H U T K Z S G B G Y G O R E Y R A T X L  
L H I G Q R L I Z V P I S J F E Q C O Z  
B C O U S S X O G H Q Y F O Q J W Q Q Q  
E V N R O V U S F J T T F S G C X J Y K  
X U H X D I H U F F F J H E X E N C I J  
B R P E Z Y F Q I T I L M G A W L R O L  
R C H Y O Q E F Q Z S R M U Q S P Y W V  
H A Q L T L G A Q C E M E R N G T Y S W  
S E L O C J L V V J I A K R Z V F M B N  
C B W H R C A O R R W D I S Y A D L X F  
U B P S W W B P W U Z D H R N D B C P Z

JESUS  
DAYS  
SPIRIT  
TONGUES

RESURRECTION  
FEAST  
PETER  
FIRE

FIFTY  
HOLY  
JERUSALEM  
CHURCH

## **Lucinda Taylor - Harpist**

Born in North Yorkshire, Lucinda studied harp for 10 years under the guidance of Georgina Wells, which led to playing the harp and studying at Hull. Before going into University, Lucinda studied Music, French and German at Harrogate Ladies' College. She was awarded the Harp Scholarship at Hull and studied with Rachel Dent-BMus(Hons) Grad RNCM. She graduated in July 2016 with a 2:1.

Being a part of Ripon Cathedral Girls' Choir meant she was given lots of amazing opportunities such as singing in a variety of Cathedrals and Minsters such as Chester Cathedral and St David's in Wales and all the cathedrals in North Yorkshire. She is a founding member of the Cathedral Consort and sang in the choir for 1 year before heading to university.

From January 2014-July 2016, Lucinda has helped accompany and conduct Bilton Community Choir, a community choir that meet once a week on the outskirts of Hull.



## **Lucinda Taylor**

**will give a Concert at  
Bedale &  
District  
Methodist  
Church**

**Saturday 10 June 2023 –  
7pm**

**All are Welcome.**



**Keep Sunday 11 June free from just before  
12 noon and on in to the afternoon!**

## Open the Book

Presents

# Noah's Ark

As part of the Ripon Theatre Festival

Entry is free and there are loads more activities and events to see and take part in.

Bring a picnic and have a fun day out – supporting Open the Book at the same time.

**Noah's Ark starts at 12 noon.**



Scan QR for Theatre Festival info



## Prayer Page

Lord, be here with us today.  
Let us hear you speaking  
with words we understand deep in our being.  
As we hear your voice,  
comfort, encourage, challenge and motivate us.  
May your Holy Spirit inspire us, unite us and guide us.  
Breathe on us afresh.  
Renew our hope in your love and resurrection.  
Speak new life to everyone,  
wherever they are in the world.  
**Amen.**

Praise the Lord, my God! How great you are!  
You meet us this Pentecost day  
in words and visions and light and flames and fire.  
We come before you and you illuminate our need of you,  
and your desire that we should know you.  
We are transfixed by your greatness and your glory.  
Praise the Lord my God! How great you are!

Almighty God, your being lightens our darkness.  
It melts our cold hearts and warms us to the core.  
It reveals truth to us and shows us the way.  
It leads us on and speaks in ways we can know and feel.  
Almighty God, your being is the essence of our being,  
the source of our life, the purpose of our living,  
the cleansing of our sin, the justification of your creation.  
Almighty God, you are the one we adore –  
faithful, unshakeable, for ever.  
**Amen.**

O God, despite our failings, you welcome, embrace, and  
enfold us.

Despite our deaf ears, you continue to speak to us.  
Despite our blind eyes, you continue to show us the way.  
Despite hearts hardened to the world's needs, you always love us.

Despite our uncertainty, you trust us with your message.  
Despite our faltering and mumbling, you entrust us with your Word.

Despite the fact that we are unworthy, you see worth in us.  
In our wanderings and wonderings, you stick with us.  
All this and so much more, O God: you offer us your forgiveness.

**Amen.**

We fail you O God,  
yet loud and clear you speak words of acceptance  
and forgiveness to us:  
my child, your sins are forgiven.

**Amen.**

On this day of Pentecost,  
we give praise to you, Almighty God.  
For the glorious gifts of your Spirit:

**we give our heartfelt thanks and praise.**

For dreams and visions of life, light and truth:

**we give our heartfelt thanks and praise.**

For tongues of fire and gleaming light:

**we give our heartfelt thanks and praise.**

For lightening dark corners in our lives:

**we give our heartfelt thanks and praise.**

For warming our cold hearts:

**we give our heartfelt thanks and praise.**

For all you enable us to do and so much more:

**we give our heartfelt thanks and praise.**

For the frisson of excitement your Spirit brings:

**we give our heartfelt thanks and praise.**

For the comfort the guiding the support it offers us:

**we give our heartfelt thanks and praise.**

**Amen.**

Holy Spirit of peace,

we pray for homes and nations where there is discord and conflict.

Pour out your breath of peace that people

may listen to each other;

may respect one another;

may honour each other.

Holy Spirit, hear us.

**Come, Holy Spirit, come.**

Holy Spirit of hope,

we pray for those who live in despair;

for those who can see no purpose in their lives;

for those who cannot see a way ahead;

for those who feel completely alone.

Holy Spirit, hear us.

**Come, Holy Spirit, come.**

Holy Spirit of unity,

we pray for your Church,

for its ministry to the faithful;

for its mission to the world.

May the Spirit of Pentecost breathe upon us,

that we may witness to the world

the comfort, meaning and love that you offer.

Heal our differences and make us one in you.

Holy Spirit, hear us.

**Come, Holy Spirit, come.**

In the name of our Saviour, we pray.

**Amen.**

Loving Lord,  
thank you that you speak to us in  
language we understand.  
With love and grace, forgiveness and  
hope in our hearts,  
help us to speak to others – with or  
without words –  
so that they might hear you speaking  
through us.  
**Amen.**



**Reproduced from ROOTS for Churches  
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**Prayer Commitment by the Circuit  
Meeting:**

- Please pray for the Summer Holiday Club at Snape Methodist Chapel in July, especially for volunteers to help, and the children who will come and their families who will be reached with the Christian message.
- Pray for our current Circuit Stewards, and that the Lord will call more to join the team that are visionary, caring, supportive and mindful of our circuit's needs. We as a Circuit ask your prayers also for the Revd. Gareth, Heather and Isabella and the Invitation Committee as we enter the stationing process for 2024.
- Pray for Bishop Monkton Chapel as they take their building alteration project forward, especially as they choose their preferred Builder to carry out the work.



# 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](mailto:milnera68@gmail.com). OR the Circuit Office.

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Please Check out the Circuit and District Websites:

[riponlowerdalesmethodists.org.uk](http://riponlowerdalesmethodists.org.uk) - [yorkshiremethodist.org](http://yorkshiremethodist.org)