

Ripon & Lower Dales Methodist Circuit



Herald Newsletter -Issue No 27

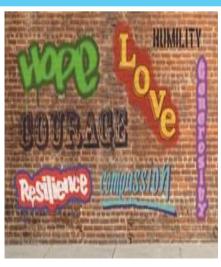
March 2022

Come together to seek God. Come as you are with your joys and sorrows.

Come with your thanks and doubts.

Come with your fears and hopes.

Come together to seek and worship God.





Welcome

Hello, I am Diane Ashby, I am the Circuit Finance Officer, I deal with all things Finance related for the Ripon and Lower Dales Circuit and am the point of contact for all Church Treasurers and their Church Councils should they need my help or guidance

Tel: 07423504872

My normal working pattern is Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday

NOTE FROM EDITOR – It is wonderful Diane to welcome you to our Circuit and I know you will be a great addition to the Team. Our Church Treasurers are waiting with eagerness to meet you and share your ideas I am sure you will be a wonderful asset to them.

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 April's Edition is 25 March 2022.

Thank You – Amanda Milner (Editor)

Message from Revd. Gareth

My Grandma would always say that if March comes in like a lion, it will go out like a lamb. Well, if any have been at an all-age worship service with me here in this circuit, you might have met LEO the

Yorkshire lion. And if you are interested or before you criticize the stereotypical lion's name, LEO acts as an acronym for Love Each Other. Whilst a lion might not be the first creature you think of when it comes to love, unless you are a fan of the C.S. Lewis book 'The Lion, the witch and the Wardrobe, from The Chronicles of Narnia'. A lion reminds us that love isn't all soft, fluffy and heart shaped, that love takes courage.



Setting aside the weather, the beginning of March is the start of Lent, with Ash

Wednesday, also known as the Day of Ashes, provides a solemn reminder of one's mortality and space to focus one's heart and mind on repentance and prayer. Holding before us our need for reconciliation with God. The call to 'Repent and believe in the Gospel' sets us off on the Lenten path towards Holy Week and Easter. The Lenten season is an opportunity for embarking on a Spiritual journey, which might include fasting. Fasting as part of our Christian discipline is accompanied by an increase in our prayer life. We give something up to make more time and space for spending with God. I believe this is an outworking of one's love for God, just as when we give in service of God comes from a place of love for God.

Furthermore, let us not forget the reason for lent, that following the baptism of Jesus, 'Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. He fasted forty days and forty nights, and afterwards he was famished.' (Matthew 4:1-2). In the gospel according to Luke, chapter four, we read that Jesus was full of the Holy Spirit and was led by the Spirit. Will lent be a

time when we are open to being led by the Holy Spirit. Jesus was and is victorious over the devil; over evil and over death. A victory which we see runs throughout Jesus' life on earth, tempted in everyway as we are, yet without sin. When fully man, when he was famished, and when he had been in the wilderness being tempted for forty days and forty nights, Jesus remains fully dependent upon God. Jesus does not turn to the easy path, turning stones into bread for a quick, temporary satisfaction but remains sustained by God. Jesus doesn't put God to the test, He has no reason too, nor would he be deceived to forgo the Scriptures. Jesus both fully man and fully God remains fully committed to the purpose for which He came to earth. His Mission was the Mission of God, the devil failed, "Away with you, Satan!' for it is written, "Worship the Lord your God, and serve only him,"

I have only dipped into these two passages from the gospels according to Matthew and Luke. They are worth spending time with, prayerfully considering firstly, what Jesus went through for you and secondly, how we respond to the temptations in our own lives. How do you pursue God in your life?

Do we look to God to satisfy and feed our spiritual hunger? Do we rely upon God, trusting in God to provide or do we look to our own strength, which is weakness compared to God.

Are we open to God and prepared for our relationship with God to be shaped by God? Or do we put obstacles in the way, making excuses in attempt to justify our ungodly behaviours which neither reflect Christ nor give glory to God?

Will we consider what worshipping God means, putting away the traits of a consumer to allow ourselves to be emersed in the loving presence of God and being led by the Holy Spirit. Will we reflect on who we serve, seeking God to guide the where and how?

I began this reflection in true a British fashion, by talking about

how the weather comes in like a lion during March. There is a plethora of references to lions, lionesses, and cubs in the Bible. With many of the references recognising their fierce roaring nature as predators. We also have the image of the lion eating straw like the ox, together with the calf. We have an image in Isaiah of wild beasts tamed, of destructive natures transformed. The prophesy of Isaiah is pointing to Christ Jesus bringing peace on earth and of God's Peaceful Kingdom. Christ died; Christ is risen; and Christ will come again. Christ Jesus is the way; and the truth; and the life, no one comes to the Father except through Jesus. It is through Jesus Christ that we have reconciliation with God. So, this lent, may we know the grace of God and journey through it with courage to love God, to let go and let God lead, that we too would know the transformation that Christ brings into our lives. Regardless of how the weather comes in during March, we always go out following the Lamb of God. And might we remember LEO the Yorkshire lion and Love Each Other, Amen.

New Beginnings

Have you ever wished that you could have a new life? Whether it is the reality of your present circumstance, the ghost of your past, or the uncertainty of your future, sometimes it is appealing to wish that you could wake up tomorrow with a brand-new life. All of today's problems gone and a future full of promises.

Too good to be true?

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here! (2 Corinthians 5:17)

When Jesus died and rose again, He promised to send His Spirit to dwell within those who declared Him Lord and Saviour. When the Spirit comes to live inside believers, they are made into "new creations" – made clean spiritually from their sin and shame.

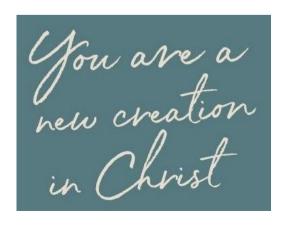
How can we understand this new creation? The gospel of John says that the new birth that comes with faith in Jesus is similar to the creation of the world. God took nothing and breathed new something into the darkness, full of light and life. It is the same for us! Through Christ, God doesn't only clean us up – He creates our lives brand new. Our old sins are gone forever, forgotten by the God who alone can destroy evil.

What does our new creation life look like? The things of the world that filled our lives – pride, sin, lust, gossip, habit, and passions – all are gone and replaced with the new person in Christ Jesus. As new creatures, we live our lives for God rather than ourselves. The old things have died and are now nailed to the cross along with our sin nature.

In writing to the Corinthians, Paul wanted to remind these young believers of their status as a new creation. While the world around them seemed dark, they could take hope and courage knowing that before God they stood clean and pure.

If you are a new creation, how will you live your life differently? What old habits and addictions can you leave behind, now that you have been made new in Christ?

When you understand your status as a new creation, tomorrow is full of promise and hope! - **God bless, Amanda Milner.**



News From Canada

How time flies. It does not seem very long ago since I was discussing with Amanda the possibility of a letter from Canada being published in The Circuit Herald and here we are at episode three. This month it has been written by Rhianne, my granddaughter, as Andrew, her husband is responsible for the sheep side of the farm. Here in North Yorkshire we are very familiar with seeing sheep in every other field, but in Canada sheep farms are few and far between, so it should be interesting to hear about their experiences. Read on and enjoy.............

"I think we're ready to start milking now."

It was 7.30am. I was in the middle of whipping up some eggs for breakfast while checking that Posie hadn't left her lunch in the fridge (again!). Andrew was still in the barn penning up more ewes and new lambs. He had just realised that sufficient ewes had now lambed to enable him to get the milking parlour into action. His text came through to me at the most inopportune moment of the morning!

It was the culmination of almost 8 months of preparation. The idea started as a casual conversation in a farm shop and had now turned into a very real, hopefully profitable, division of the farm. Once lambing was complete, we could be milking 170 ewes in 3 different batches. All the milk going to a local, artisan dairy shop. Interestingly, it is also owned by another ex-pat family! It was an easy decision as Andrew is obsessed with sheep. Being a sheep farmer is his passion, so having this opportunity is a once in a lifetime experience. Despite all the huge time and commitment involved, he is very excited. We already had the milking parlour set up for goats which needed minimal changes to accommodate

sheep. Lamb prices also being at an all-time high and the sheep industry in Canada rapidly increasing, it seemed a good time to embark upon this venture.

By far the hardest step was to find the sheep. They're not as readily available as they are in Yorkshire, but we had some insider knowledge. The Mennonite community had decided to buy some land in Wisconsin and were moving away, but---- they weren't taking all their sheep with them.

The Mennonite community is very similar to the Amish community. They lead very simple lifestyles; no electricity, no internet, and many of them don't own cars. They choose to get around with a horse and buggy. They are always quiet and reserved, and they speak with gentle German accent. Their dress is also simple. The women are typically attired in long dresses and bonnets, while the men wear shirts with braces and have very long beards. Their community revolves around the church. The move to Wisconsin was a community decision. Not all the Mennonites we spoke to agree with the move, but as a community, it was to be a majority decision, so they were eventually persuaded that it was for the good of all. Dealing with them has been a completely new experience!! To start with, they don't use telephones, so the only point of contact was going to see them (most of them were about 40 mins drive away) or calling at a neighbouring farm and asking them to pass the message on. Marc and Andrew began by driving round to their farms and leaving our business card. That was all it took!! Two days later, Andrew had over six different Mennonite farmers call him and ask if he could stop by some time and see their sheep. Even when we had bought all the sheep we wanted, the calls didn't stop!

At the time of purchase, the community wasn't planning to move until much later in the autumn, which worked perfectly for us. We could get most of the harvest done and more importantly to me, we were in the middle of planning our wedding and I didn't want

him taking time off that!!! But you know what they say about the "The best laid plans of mice and men". The Mennonites decided to move early and wanted the sheep gone ASAP. Specifically, the week before our wedding!!!

For those of you that don't know, we were married in August last year. We had the service in the woods on our farm and the reception in our garden. As you can imagine, with all the preparations, the last thing I needed was Andrew heading off to pick up multiple loads of sheep!!

We had no choice. Marc and Andrew collected the majority, but I went with Andrew for the last load. I remember sitting in the passenger seat of the truck with the trailer backed up to an old barn. There was no-one around – a bit like "The Marie Celeste". A neighbour had needed some assistance, so the entire family had disappeared to help. We were just sat waiting---and waiting. Then I noticed some movement out of the corner of my eye, and down the hill came a group of about 20 men in huge wellies, straw hats, shirts with the sleeves rolled up, and some of the biggest beards I have ever seen. It was quite a sight and certainly brought home to me the diversity in culture that we are lucky to live in here. Once the sheep were all home, peace descended. I remember thinking "We're ready to start milking now."

Well, there you have it. The sheep have all been bought and the scene is set for the milking to start. Rhianne will be writing about their first experience of "sheep milking" in the April edition.



Kathy's Corner

At Bedale & District, our children's work used to revolve around Messy Church, which I enjoyed being involved with – but it's hard work. You need a good team of volunteers if you want to prepare 6 activities, and a meal too. By the time Gareth arrived in our Circuit, the few volunteers left were feeling somewhat jaded and weary. Gareth suggested we try Lego Church instead, but Covid got in the way. Finally, we've been able to begin this new initiative - after I spent several weeks ordering Lego bricks from Ebay. That had my postman querying what was I up to, with all these rattly parcels!

Lego Journeys began last November, and I love it as much as the children do. We have settled into a format which seems to work well, beginning in the church with an introduction to the theme before telling a Bible story. The children are getting confident at reading the words too, which is good, especially when some scripture can be done as a drama reading. We suggest a few ideas for building the story, then head off into the hall to get creative with the Lego – or Duplo for the younger ones. The adults seem to enjoy it too.



We bring our completed models into church, to place on the Communion table for a short act of worship, song and prayer. Then it's time for refreshments and home-made cookies – the chocolate cookies and shortbread (dairy-free) being most popular.

We have a delightful toddler, who quickly realised we bring our models to Jesus – he fetches his through without being told. And the older ones have been so creative, making their own Advent lights, a Nativity scene at Christmas; hearts for 'Love your neighbour', a Temple for Jesus to hide from his parents in, which was so large it just about filled the table – I reckon Solomon would have been impressed with our skills! Our last session had them making very large fish to retell Jonah's story. (We have a budding engineer who designed a whale with hinged mouth to open wide!)

It's great to see their imaginations leading to some interesting models – and good discussions are developing too, as we talk about the scripture. It is proving to be a good way of introducing Jesus to young families, encouraging them on their journey of faith – one brick at a time. - **Blessings Kathy Lowrie**



News from our "Roving Reporters" from around the Circuit

Masham - IMPORTANT NEWS - Masham Chapel has made an arrangement with The COOP shop in Masham, that it can collect any unwanted stock.

THIS FOOD IS STILL USEABLE. - It includes Bread, pastries, fruit & veg.

It is being put on a table, in the side entrance porch, where it can be collected on a SATURDAY MORNING - 10.30 -12.00 pm No donation is required.

Grewelthorpe - The New Year in Grewelthorpe has certainly got off to a busy start and with a refreshed enthusiasm. We said our farewells to Revd Ian Pruden as he sets off on his travels. We wish him well.

Our first community event of the new year– the' Epiphany Party' was postponed due to covid, we are now happy to say this has been rearranged for the 18th March, 7pm in church. Join us for a spectacular evening where we showcase the talent of Grewelthorpe and local area. Also, an excellent supper will follow. Donations to church funds.

We are also looking forward to our Lent Lunches that will start 7th March for six weeks. Grewelthorpe church 12.00 – 13.30 Please join us for homemade soup, with tea or coffee. Donations will be divided between Christian Aid and church funds.

G-Club is back! The children's monthly club at St James and the Methodist Church Grewelthorpe is called G-Club and is open to all children of primary school age. Next G-Club Wednesday 16th March 6-7pm If you would like further details please contact Susan Rizos email susan.rizos@btinternet.com

Allhallowgate - Mid-February and as I prepare this news item for March edition of the Circuit Herald, I can't help but look at the increasing number of spring flowers displaying colour in the garden. Happily, it reminds me of the increasing number of congregants returning to services and filling the pews with colour and hope as we start to prepare for lent and all that follows from it.

Below you will see information about the work of The Ripon City of Sanctuary group which is based at AHG. It is also flourishing and doing wonderful work. Any contributions of the required items would be very welcome. The collection boxes are in the Victoria Grove foyer

The Ripon City of Sanctuary Group - has been collecting clothes for asylum seekers and refugees for over 6 years and is now collecting for centres in Hull (2 centres), Leeds, Middlesbrough and Wakefield. Each centre receives a carload approximately monthly. The greatest need presently is for male winter clothing. Those receiving clothes are typically young with roughly a 70% male 30% female ratio. There is a lesser need for clothing for children. We are not collecting bedding because of lack of storage space in the centres. We are most grateful that Ripon has the reputation at the centres of providing good quality clothes and shoes. This notice is one of thanks for the wonderful response year after year, but also a request that a further search for good quality winter clothes might lead to our making deliveries in March. I am very happy to answer any query. John Mellor a Member of Allhallowgate Methodist Church and of Ripon City of Sanctuary Group.



Bedale & District - Sunday 13 February saw us host the first section service since the start of the Covid Pandemic. It was wonderful to have a full Church! and we were introduced to the work of Compassion UK by Clare Nelson. We were challenged and encouraged in equal measure. There is something totally special about worshiping and praising God together as a Circuit Family.





This is a new group that is starting at Bedale and District Methodist Church for the older generations to come and enjoy a time of good company, activities, a short time of worship and tea and cakes.

Come along and join in the fun at our first meeting on:

Monday 11th April 2pm-3.30pm at Bedale and District Methodist Church

We will then continue to meet monthly on the second Monday of the month.

We look forward to welcoming you there!

At our last Church Council, it was agreed to set up a 'Discipling Presence' Group using some past experiences of 'Discipling Presence' we would set up the group on one of Bedale's Housing Estates. It was felt to be a good starting point as there are several members of the church already living on the estate. The idea is to feed back on their experience to see how it might be adapted and used more widely in the outlining Villages i.e., the district part of our Church. So please pray for us as we start this new and exciting opportunity and watch this space for the exciting opportunities that lie ahead.

Snape - We have appreciated our month of themed services on the 4 pillars of our faith. We've also appreciated the follow up midweek sessions, which have been a time of sharing.

Sunshine Corner (the children's after school group) is going well with up to 20 children aged 5 to 11 every other Friday. We have lots of noisy fun, with crafts, games etc etc all based around a children's story. Each session is so varied, from making sheep's masks and then using them to act out the story of the good shepherd to making biscuits etc etc.......... All good fun. It's amazing how the children surprise you and some of the noisiest little ones who you think haven't taken anything in, then surprise you with the most amazing questions or answers. We're thankful for each one of them.

High Ellington Chapel - It is at this time of year that we finally begin to see the signs of oncoming spring. The daffodils are beginning to poke through the soil, the days are gradually getting longer, and the birds are starting to sing a little louder. For farmers, this time of year marks the onset of the busy period. Sheep, now heavily in lamb, need constant care and attention, feeding and monitoring. Within a few weeks, the lambs will start to arrive and then the work really sets in. It is important to take time out when things get busy to contemplate what really matters and to recharge. Often church provides this brief relief from our busy lives, giving us time to sit and reflect. At Ellington chapel, we pride ourselves on the beautiful location of our church, where you can hear the birds singing, sheep bleating, and the occasional car attempt to get past. As time goes on, our chapel needs constant maintenance, and the time has come to repaint the outside so that all May view our church for its full beauty. To fund the decorating, we are holding a concert on Saturday 12th March at **Masham Methodist Chapel** at 7:30pm. As always with our chapel, food will be provided, and fantastic fellowship will be found. We do hope that you can come and join us.

West Tanfield - Sorry nothing to report this month - except to say a big thank you to our local preachers. We do appreciate the time and effort they put into bringing God's word to us on a Sunday.

NOTE FROM THE EDITOR – Please never apologise for not having anything to report as you have just reminded us of one of the most **important** things we can do, and that is to say, **THANK YOU!** Every Church in the Circuit is eternally grateful to all our Ministers, Local Preachers, and Worship Leaders for all the preparation they do in leading of our Worship Services.

Our Worship Leaders and Local Preachers also continue to train and develop the ways that they work regualrly. It was lovely to be part of a good number of us at Bedale last month for a session led by Revd. Gareth on Hybrid Church. We found it very encouraging, and it got some of us quite excited about the possibilities for the future!

Submitted by our friends from Finghall

Me: Hello God. God: Hello...

Me: I'm falling apart. Can you

put me back together? God: I'd rather not.

Me: Why?

God: Because you're not a puzzle. Me: What about all the pieces of my

life that fall to the ground?

God: Leave them there for a while. They fell for a reason. Let them be there for a while and then decide if you need to get any of those pieces

back.

Me: You don't understand! I'm breaking up!



God: No, you don't understand. You're transcending, evolving. What you feel are growing pains. You're getting rid of the things and people in your life that are holding you back. The pieces are not falling down. The pieces are putting in place. Relax. Take a deep breath and let those things you no longer need fall down. Stop clinging to pieces that are no longer for you. Let them fall. Let them go.

Me: Once I start doing that, what will I have left?

God: Only the best pieces of yours.

Me: I'm afraid to change.

God: I keep telling you: YOU'RE NOT CHANGING! YOU'RE

BECOMING!

Me: Becoming, Who?

God: Becoming who I created you to be! A person of light, love, charity, hope, courage, joy, mercy, grace and compassion. I made you for so much more than those shallow pieces you decided to adorn yourself with and that you cling to with so much greed and fear. Let those things fall off you. I love you! Don't change! Become! Don't change! Become who I want you to be, who I created. I'm gonna keep telling you this until you remember.

Me: There goes another piece. **God:** Yes. Let it be like this. **Me:** So... I'm not broken?

God: No, but you're breaking the darkness, like dawn. It's a new

day. Become!! Become who you really are!!"

Author John Roedel Jenny Spain

NOTE FROM THE EDITOR – Finghall Chapel, are looking to cease worship and await the decision of the District Synod. Finghall intend to continue to be an active Christian presence in the village becoming a Class of Bedale and District Methodist Church. Please pray for Finghall during this time whilst they follow how God is leading them.

Reflection from Revd. Gareth

Lent can see a time of giving something up, fasting from chocolate or choosing to make a lifestyle change in pursuit of self-development or self-improvement. The motivation for entering a period of self-denial is different for each person. Ultimately for Christians the practice is firmly connected with recalling how Jesus, led by the Holy Spirit, spent forty days and nights in the wildness and was tempted by the devil. And whilst many enter the Lenten season with a prayerfully considered approach, for many people their circumstance determines their experience of wilderness. I have written the following reflection/poem in response to my thoughts of others needs and how important it is not to judge one another but instead seek to understand and show compassion. It's offered for reflection and prayer. Grace and Peace, **Revd. Gareth**

To each a wilderness

To the parent with limited supply a mountain of demand. To the housebound a home that's become a wilderness that surrounds.

To the lonely a deafening silence and gripping lack of touch. To the homeless an obscene amount of consumerism, and others that have enough.

To the unemployed a wrestle with a sense of value, purpose, and self-worth.

To the ill an invasion threatening limitations of how life is lived.

To the business owner a bunker in an economic storm.

To the worker in poverty a landscape of despair, wondering why and how, whilst asking if anybody cares.

To the poor an empty plain, no opportunity, no voice, no nowt.

To the refuge a hostile stare, a camp locked in hopelessness whist carrying memories and emotional injuries of what life was before.

To each a wilderness, different in how it looks, feels, smells and sounds.

All our senses exposed to its elements which by its very nature is uncontrollably wild and devouring emotions.

We often can only imagine what another's wilderness place is like.

We struggle sometimes to have empathy as we ourselves are overwhelmed by the wilderness which is ours.

Whilst others may not hear our cry for help, or we hear the cry of another.

And when it's a track we must travel, May we know the comfort and strength of God

And let our prayers be the words we have and if we become lost for words for emotions run too deep, May the Holy Spirit intercede.

And may we hold fast to the faith we have been given, drawing strength to rejoice when it is but the size of a mustard seed. For to each a wilderness and to each May God be found.





Prayer Page

God of the mountains and the sky, of our minds and our hearts: we look up to you in awe; we reach out to you in longing; we worship you in gratitude; we sing to you in joy. For you are our God, and we are your people – today and always.

Amen.

Living God, creator and sustainer of the world, we pledge to live well and with humility, in harmony with your creation; we pledge to look to your Son for truth and guidance; we pledge to make time for prayer and to be open to your Holy Spirit; we pledge to read your Word, and to be guided by the example of your Son. We give you our lives to be transformed as we worship and adore you, and we thank you for your love.

Amen.

God of all creation, forgive us when we lose perspective and our world shrinks to our size, not yours. Forgive us and nourish our vision. Forgive us when we look away from you when we feel empty and grasp what is not ours to take. Forgive us and nourish our vision.

Forgive us when the choices we make are self-centred, and we are indifferent to the needs of the wider community. Forgive us and nourish our vision. In Jesus' name we pray.

Amen.

God of all, you transfigure our smallness with your greatness; you unlock our limitations with your grace; you calm our confusion with your faithfulness; you forgive our mistakes with your generosity; you inspire our dreams with your love – enabling, empowering and encouraging us to serve you and your whole creation with all we are and all we have. In Jesus' name.

Amen.

Generous God,
we thank you for Jesus
who points us towards your glory and your kingdom.
We thank you for those who through the ages have spoken
your truth and engaged with your mystery.
We thank you for giving us each a place,
a purpose and a plan for our lives,
and for blessing us with a measure of your great love.
Amen.

To those who exercise power, to decision makers in politics, business and industry, to those who have wealth, and to all whose lives affect the lives of others: grant wisdom and compassion.

To the vulnerable and the weak, to those with little or nothing, to those subject to the will of others, and to the very young and the very old: grant wisdom and compassion.

To us as we look at what we have, to us as we consider what to do, to us as we relate to the world, and to us as we seek to be faithful to you: grant wisdom and compassion.

In the Saviour's name, we pray. **Amen.**



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Prayer Commitment by the Circuit Meeting:

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



FREE phone lines for prayers and news from the Methodist Church Listen to a **prayer**: 0808 281 2514 Listen to the **President and Vice-President**:

0808 281 2695

Listen to **news:** 0808 281 2478 Content is updated weekly

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.

Contact details for Circuit Office Team:

Diane Gaskill: 07765 486213 Pip Smith: 07901 173082

Diane Ashby: 07423 504872





Minister – Rev. Gareth Baron Telephone: 01677 989169 Email: revgbaron@gmail.com



Minister – Deacon Nigel Perrott Telephone – 01765 279161 Email: nigel.perrott@methodist.org.uk



Minister – Rev. Ian Pruden Telephone: 01765 698288 Email: ianpruden@btinternet.com



Local Pastor – Catherine Clowes Telephone: 07377 614581 Email: riponcircuitenabler@gmail.com

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