



‘For I know the plans I have for you’ declares the Lord. ‘Plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future’. Jeremiah 29:11

Greetings from the Manse!

Well friends, we may have been in Lockdown since March 23rd, but the weeks, to me at least, seem to have flown by. However, with it having been so long since we have been able to meet together and worship together in person, and with much uncertainty as to when we will be able to do so again and in what format, it seemed right to put together a Circuit newsletter.

As we enter the Summer, there will be several things happening differently, but happening all the same. Rev Les Nevin and his lovely wife Norma will be leaving our Circuit, and whilst we will not be able to ‘give thanks’ for their years of dedicated ministry in the ways that we might have hoped, we can still mark their parting appropriately. Therefore, the Circuit farewell Service, scheduled for Sunday July 26th, will now be an online service at 4pm on that day. An email link will be sent out for the service and for those not on the internet there will be a home worship sheet made available. I know many of you would have looked forward to being able to express in words to both Les and Norma how much you have valued their presence in the Circuit and I still encourage you to do that by sending them a card or short letter.

Personally, the cards and letters that I have received when moving on from all my previous appointments have been the things I have treasured most, and I am sure Les and Norma will treasure yours. On the same note, it is currently unclear what restrictions will still be in place on August 20th when our new Minister, Rev Julia Reid, arrives and therefore, in order to give her a warm welcome perhaps a card or short note sent to the manse would also be appropriate. Julia’s welcome service is still scheduled for Friday 4th September, 7pm at Richmond, but, as I write, it is unclear whether we will be allowed to gather in person. As soon as I know anything concrete, I will ensure that the information is sent out to you.

Due to Covid 19 the annual children’s King’s Club will not be taking place in its usual format this year but as you will read in Rachel Pinkney’s report, the Circuit are enabling a postal version. In fact, there has been an increasing amount of children’s work carried out through using the post and online, and Rachel needs to be congratulated for being imaginative and proactive. I am also delighted to inform you, if the news has not already reached your ears, that Rachel was successful in her candidature for the Presbyteral Ministry and will commence her training part-time in the Autumn.

I would like to take a moment to offer my deepest sympathy to those of you who have lost loved ones during the Lockdown. With churches closed and hospital visiting not permitted it has been a challenging and stressful time for those experiencing bereavement. Some of you may wish to have Services of Thanksgiving for your loved ones at some point in the future and I promise you that I will do my very best to enable those, but I would also like, restrictions permitting, to offer some ‘Services of Remembrance for Loved Ones’, perhaps in November this year. These special services give us all an opportunity to remember someone who has died, give our thanks to God for them, hear their name read out, and light a candle in their memory. I will be looking at the preaching plan to see how these might be incorporated, but they can of course happen mid-week.

One of the joys, as well as learning curves, has been the increased use of social media for staying in touch, worshipping together, holding meetings, and reaching out with our Christian message. I never thought I would be a regular You Tube contributor, but just goes to show you should never say never! I am hugely grateful to the Media Team and especially Kevin Pellatt as we have endeavoured to upscale our use of the Circuit website and Facebook page. It has given us much to think about regarding continued future use, and how we keep and improve our much-appreciated social media presence. The virtual Easter Parade and the Lockdown Stories have, without doubt, given many of us joy and purpose.

So, until we meet again, may God hold you in the palm of His hand!

With Love

Rev Melanie

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Do you enjoy the newsletter ? Have a story or any photographs that you would like to include in the next newsletter?

Please contact: Julie Greenslade on 01969 663878 or email: julie@cornerhousewb.co.uk

A Courageous Day

In the dim and distant past, when people were allowed to gather together – face-to-face – a group of courageous young people from the North Yorkshire Dales ventured to Darlington to meet with others from across our Methodist District.

The theme for the day was “Courageous” and was part of the local response to the national 3 Generate Methodist Youth Assembly weekend held each year.

Our circuit group was made up of some members of West Burton’s after school club – ‘Tuesday Team’ and members of Richmond’s junior church, accompanied by Irene from West Burton, Kate from Richmond and Zoe, our circuit One-Opportunity Participant this year.

Groups from across the District met together at The Well, the newly established church in what was Northlands Methodist Church building. On arrival we were treated to bacon and sausage butties thanks to the catering of Darlington Circuit members, who also provided pizza and pasta for lunch.

The day started with worship, led by Benji and Millie from other One-Opportunity projects across the region. We had some silly games to help us get to know one another and some serious discussion questions so we could get to know people a little bit better. We listened to stories of being courageous as Millie from One-Opp, Verity from 3 Generate and our District Chair, Richard, shared how their faith had impacted their lives. Roxanne and Verity from 3 Generate encouraged everyone to share their stories and make their voices heard about things they would like to change.

In the afternoon there was a whole range of activities from gardening to a photo booth; creating a play list to designing a bandana; writing articles for a magazine to relaxation techniques. The magazine, decorating a bandana and the photo booth all proved popular.

The day finished with some more worship – including ‘pass the prayer parcel’ and listening to songs from the specially created play list.

It was a great day. The young people were courageous to go along to something new and get to know new people and the leaders were brave to take them – thank you Irene, Kate and Zoe.

Rachel Pinkney
Schools and Families Worker
North Yorkshire Dales Circuit



THE KELD RESOURCE CENTRE

For many years our Methodist circuit has supported the Keld Resource Centre. Situated in the heart of the village, the Centre is based on the old Literary Institute, the former school and the old manse. It is an ecumenical venture with close links to Keld and Low Row United Reform Church.

Following a major restoration project, the Centre offers a permanent exhibition on Upper Swaledale, open daily, and a beautiful multi-functional events space. This space, called the “Upper Room”, is available to hire for a diverse range of activities – church, family, business and community. We also run an annual programme of events, including guided walks in the area (especially for lovers of waterfalls, birds and flowers) and lectures on various topics.

The Centre also supports a “Minister in Residence” scheme. During various weeks of the year, especially at the major Christian festivals, we invite ministers of all churches to come and spend a week in the old manse, offering daily worship in the chapel and other activities. And you can also book the manse for your own holiday!

Please visit our website for further information or contact:

Rev. David Wood at david.wood4@btinternet.com.

Most of all, please pray for the work and outreach of the Centre

Confessions

I'm watching a church service, or I'm at a church meeting on the computer at home riding my exercise cycle, just to see my top half you would not know this; equally the speaker I'm listening to is wearing their tatty jeans and trainers; you and I wouldn't know this either. This story may not be true... what is true though is that from now on we will have many more ways of walking, worshipping and witnessing together as the body of Christ than we have used in the past.

Many churches are finding that attendances at their online services are greater than they usually see; people it seems want what Christianity offers and prefer to access this online rather than enter a church building on a Sunday.

With our lockdown we have come to realise that God is not cloistered in our buildings and is talking to the world through social media and we need to follow that lead.

Recently I was reading Acts 17:24 which says, 'The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples built by human hands.'

The lockdown has closed our church buildings and we have been unable to meet as we do usually.

The challenge has been to stay in touch with each other to support each other, to learn from each other, to worship and witness together.

The churches and Christians responded quickly and creatively. Telephone services and prayer lines are available. I receive anything up to 5 services each week that can be printed off for use at home. Many churches have recorded 'video' services and made them available through social media channels or a website. Some churches have 'live streamed' their services which works like a TV show but on a computer, tablet, or smartphone.

Personally, living in an isolated rural community I have benefitted from several initiatives using online facilities, and see many advantages by adopting this approach.

'Skype' bible study: this is an opportunity to meet and discuss the Bible with a group of people.

'Daily reflections': we might use 'daily notes' for our quiet time; now people we know are delivering this with a personal touch.

'You tube': Like a TV channel with programmes made by anyone who wants to make one; these videos can be the weekly fellowship talk, or the Sunday service; they might not replace these events but will allow others to enjoy them if they were unable to be there for whatever reason.

Business meetings: I've saved at least two hours per meeting in travel alone and kept the business of the circuit moving. It is possible to 'phone into the meeting as well; a computer is not essential.

Webinars: talks on a specific subject of interest; learn a new skill or maybe listen to someone expand on a Bible reading. Some are recorded so they can be viewed at a more convenient time.

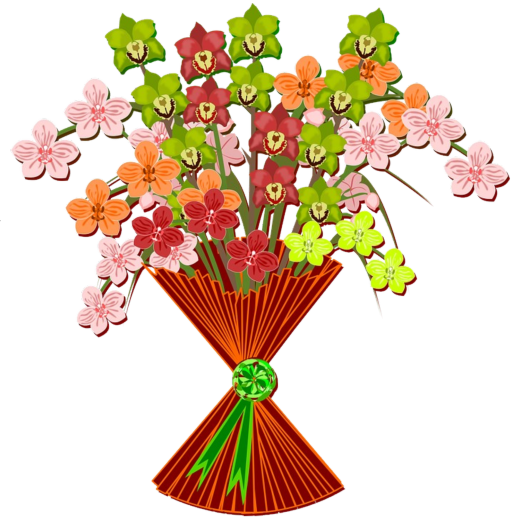
'Video' phone calls: yes, we could just use the phone and talk. But to see a smiling or reassuring face brings us closer together and the ability to show off our latest art or cookery effort is priceless.

Informal services: I confess I like informal; I've found all the elements of a 'full on' service with the opportunity to contribute using a 'chat' facility to ask questions or offer prayer about situations.

Paul used the Roman roads in his time to spread the word; he went to certain towns along the routes where God led him; we too can travel down the routes social media provides; we just need to listen and hear where the Spirit is leading us.

Dear Friends,

Norma and I would have liked to have thanked all of you in person for sharing in our Christian journey as we have travelled with you over the past 7 years. However, sadly, in the current circumstances that is not proving possible. When we learnt that I had been stationed to The North Yorkshire Dales Circuit we were both delighted and felt privileged to be 'sent' here.



Norma very quickly found her 'spiritual home' among the good people of Scorton Methodist Church and is grateful for the friendship and support she has shared in that place. It is always a wrench to leave folk and move on, and sometimes painful, but that is the nature of itinerant ministry and its impact on the wider family of the minister being stationed.

I am thankful for the way in which I have been accepted and encouraged across our Circuit, and even forgiven when some of the changes we have made in our churches were not unanimously welcomed at the time. It has been a great privilege to walk alongside you in some wonderfully joyous times and some immensely difficult ones. I have found grace and growth in all of those moments and thank God for taking us through them together.

I know that God will continue to bless you as the Body of Christ as you face the challenges and changes ahead. I wish to encourage you to continue to be faithful to God's leading and to continue to be loving towards each other.

The past weeks of lockdown have been difficult for us all. It has been a very strange way to bring my ministry to a close in this Circuit and it will be a very strange way for Julia Reid who will take up her first appointment as a Probationer Minister here. Please do pray for Julia, I commend her to you and I'm confident she will be a blessing to God and to those He is sending her to serve.

If you are ever in Durham (no Dominic Cummings jokes please) please do look us up and call into 45 York Crescent, Newton Hall, Durham. DH1 5PT. There is much gardening to do.

God bless

Les and Norma.

Hello!



Firstly, let me say how delighted I am to be given the privilege of serving my probation with you all in the North Yorkshire Dales Circuit. I know that it will be an enriching time for me; and I trust that God will use my service among you to good effect.

Covid19 has made my introduction to the area a little different than I expected. Following my formal 2-day visit to the circuit in January, my intention was to have spent a few weekends in the area by now, so I could hit the ground running, so to speak, on 1st September. Unfortunately, that has not been possible, but I'm sure I will get up to speed on the local area in good time.

My faith journey to this stage in my ministry started long ago. In fact I can trace my calling to ordained ministry

back to my teenage years. But somehow, as often happens, life took me in a few different directions...for 30 years! In that time, after gaining a degree in Business at Edinburgh University and beginning my career with what was then General Accident Insurance (as a statistician/data analyst and Chartered Insurer), God called me to the vocation of motherhood to my three, now grown-up, children: Kirsty, Iain and Alasdair. Having opted for redundancy when the Insurance sector was going through one of its many reorganisations, I then trained as a Chartered Management Accountant. After working in industry I left to set up my own small practice, serving small businesses in my local area, which allowed me to achieve a healthier work/family balance.

Almost 10 years ago I found myself in a position where I was, for the first time, able to share my calling to ministry with one of our local preachers in Perth, where I had been attending the Methodist Church since 1990. Since then things have moved at pace. There has been a lot of reading and sermon preparation and more reading and assignment writing and yet more reading and evaluations; and I now find myself a probationer minister ready and willing to serve the NYD circuit.

Although my sons currently live with me (when not at university) they will not be moving with me full-time and instead will visit when they can. But I will have my dog, Oskar, as companion - a 5-year old yellow Labrador. Walking him (or occasionally jogging) is a real pleasure and I'm looking forward to starting up a few other interests now my nest is going to be largely empty.

I look forward to meeting you all in the fullness of God's time and when covid19 permits. In the meantime, I pray God's blessing on you all.

Julia Reid, 13th June 2020