



## Preparing the Land—

Gathered round the lunch table at Shepherd's Dene Retreat Centre, we tried to work out what the meal would be- a spoon definitely meant pudding, but what sort, when only a teaspoon was provided? Larger spoons in the centre indicated we'd need to serve one another in order to be fed, and with knives, forks and hot plates arriving the puzzle was soon solved and we were all well fed indeed.

I wondered if visitors to our chapels experience similar puzzlement, as they enter a building and discover each unique interior as they're welcomed by equally unique and special individuals, gathering to worship God in numerous remote rural communities throughout the North Yorkshire Dales Methodist Circuit. This is why we- more particularly, you- are at the front line of helping the local church work well, demonstrating to others in your local community what Christ means to you, by your actions, and reactions, day by day. Thank you for all that you do in feeding the folk of the Dales with the Word of God, whether from a small teaspoon or large serving spoon!

However, there is a sense in which the pattern and familiarity of our worship life can begin to reflect the regularity and routine of the worshipping communities active during Jesus' lifetime- people who faithfully maintained the traditions of many generations, whom Jesus disturbed greatly, shaking them out of their habits, breaking new ground and crossing boundaries in so many ways.

In Coventry, at the Germinate 2016 Conference for rural mission and ministry, the opening devotions began with the words 'if we talk and nothing changes, then today will have been a waste of time'. We were subsequently challenged with a variety of practical mission initiatives grounded in theology recalling how kind God is through the words of Psalm 103, read alongside the call of Elisha from 1 Kings 19:19-21.

Since Elisha had been ploughing when Elijah called him, the image was drawn of how ploughing is a breaking up of packed earth- a churning up of what had grown earlier- to enable something else to grow in its' place. We were- in fact we are- tasked to participate in this process, to work with our communities to create something fresh, as the act of ploughing is understood as the time when disciples are called and made fruitful.

As I have travelled throughout the Circuit during the Autumn, I have noticed a number of fields ploughed, some left untouched, and others with cattle or sheep grazing the last of the grass to grow. By no means were all the fields ploughed- but those that were, are already showing new growth.

Some changes- 'ploughed fields'- are already apparent in NY Dales Circuit: with 2 Presbyters covering the same geographical area as 3 Presbyters did only a couple of years ago, and a number of empty chapel buildings moving through closure to sale. This is the ploughing to enable new growth, which we pray will come through new initiatives already begin undertaken- Prayerworks, Beer & Bibles, Swaledale Seed project, and outreach events in Richmond. We all need to be ready, not only for Christmas, but for Jesus to call us to new ways of being the people of God- Christians in community- in the North Yorkshire Dales.

During Advent we prepare for Jesus to be born into our lives once more- where are our routines, what habits do we have, that His arrival will disturb greatly this Christmas? Mary and Joseph are travelling round Richmond shops, sheep are inhabiting shops in Hawes, angels appearing along Swaledale, lights, carols and gifts will be lit, sung and shared as we pray that more folk will come to know and understand the Good News this Christmas. *Janet Park, December 2016*

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### Circuit Team

**Superintendent : Rev Janet Park** revjanetp@gmail.com - Leyburn, Harmby, Carlton, Middleham, Melmerby, Gayle (*inc Hawes*), Aysgarth, Bainbridge, Marsett, West Burton.

**Rev Les Nevin** lesnevin@icloud.com - Richmond, Barden, Brompton-on-Swale (*including Colburn*), Hunton, Scorton, Ravensworth, Reeth (*including Arkengarthdale*), Gunnerside .

**Deacon Joy Sykes** jascmc@aol.com - Catterick Garrison (*Currently unavailable*)

**Circuit Stewards:** John Ridley, Tony Simons, Angie Bailey, Graham Di Duca, *Vacancy*

**Circuit Treasurer:** Pauline Beckett pal.wegber@outlook.com

**Circuit Admin Asst :** Kevin Pellatt, nydcpaperclip@gmail.com

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We are always looking for stories and photographs about who we are and what we do. Publishing them on our website and in the newsletter is a great way to share our faith and reflect the love of Christ for the people around us. Contact: Kevin Pellatt on 01748 886963 or nydcpaperclip@gmail.com

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## Diary Dates

for full listing see: [www.nydalesmeth.org.uk/calendar.html](http://www.nydalesmeth.org.uk/calendar.html)

Sun 5th Feb Circuit service day

10.30am Richmond morning service- preaching service led by Rev Ruth Gee

10.45am West Burton Shake Up service

6.30pm Harmby evening communion service- Rev Janet Park

Wed 15th Feb 7pm for 7.30pm start- CLT meeting in Dove Cottage, Leyburn

Thu 23rd Feb 7.30pm Circuit Property meeting in Dove Cottage, Leyburn

Thu 9th Mar 7.30pm Local Preachers Meeting, Leyburn Church Hall

Mon 13th Mar 7.30pm Circuit meeting (Richmond)

Sun 7th May 2.30pm Circuit Songs of Praise with Leyburn Band, in the Garden Rooms at Tennants

Sun 4th Jun Pentecost Circuit service day

10.30am Richmond morning service- preaching service led by Rev Stephen Lindridge

6.30pm West Burton evening communion service- Rev Janet Park

Sun 27th Aug Circuit Service Day

10.30am Leyburn morning service- preaching service (led by Rev Dr Roger L Walton, TBC)

3pm Singing hymns on the green in Reeth, with Reeth band

3pm Semerwater open air service on the shore, with Hawes band

6.30pm Richmond evening communion service

8pm Marsett singalong

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## Germinate Conference — Putting out shoots and starting to grow...

Over 250 delegates with a heart for rural mission gathered in Coventry in October. The day had key note speeches, presentations and workshops that evidenced that God is alive and working in rural locations.

Roger Walton, President of Conference this year, spoke of God being at work in the everyday things we do; how we act and what we say shares what God is about with the people we meet. Our service starts when the Sunday service ends.

Pete Atkins spoke about the features of a genuine church; **Authenticity**, our faith needs to work out in daily life; **Community**, we need to belong rather go to; **Encounters**, where people meet rather than just hear about God; and **Space**, there needs to be room to ask questions.

There were many case studies and workshops, ranging across Messy Church, Dementia friendly churches and setting up businesses to create jobs in the area. The event was organised by the Arthur Rank Centre who provide resources, courses and support for Christians in a rural setting.

Personally I came away with a reminder that we need to pray, we need to take risks one step at a time and we really need to find out how our own communities work and where God is at work in them already.

See a video on the circuit website news page.

Kevin Pellatt

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## Out to the World — From the comfort of your settee...

Over the last three or four years we have been developing the communications across the circuit; the continued growth of social media has created great opportunities for us in our widespread and isolated communities. The circuit website has been refreshed with a brighter public face and behind this sit it are a lot of features that make it easier to keep up to date and make our services and events more accessible to our communities and those who visit the Dales.

'What are the benefits for me?' you may ask. The details of every event sent to the Circuit Admin Assistant will go on to the circuit calendar; and can be broadcast through Facebook and Twitter; advertising your event to potential visitors as well as the local community. Those who want to know what is happening can subscribe to the calendar and automatically have dates, times and locations of the events appear on their laptop, tablet or smartphone.

We have a lot of services and frequently the details published in the paper plan are amended; these changes can be publicised, generally immediately, through the website, the calendar, Facebook and Twitter ensuring as many people as possible are up to date as soon as possible.

We ask for stories and pictures for the newsletter and website because many are discovering that sharing these through social media channels opens up discussions and conversations with people that we do not see in our buildings; these conversations are held at all times all week and not just the couple of hours when church services are on. There are people 'out there' interested in how our faith works out in daily life. So you may not 'do computers'? The website calendar will be sent out each month outlining events for the next two months; we have a network of hard working people who are able to get messages to all chapels and the local press. We are grateful to them for this work they do. They will be informed each week of any additions or changes in the monthly bulletin so you should be fairly up to date.

With the website we can share our stories and pictures immediately and attractively; the ability to share our faith worldwide or with the isolated and lonely people nearby has never been greater.

Send us your stories and pictures and plant a seed.

Kevin Pellatt

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## Letters from the Adriatic

Rev Les Nevin looks back on his sabbatical sojourn

Maybe some of us will be travelling a lot this Christmas and New Year. Perhaps we can take these words with us as we journey.

Psalm 46:10 "Be still, and know that I am God". Autobahnkirche St Christophorus - The Motorway Church of St Christopher; after well over 3,000 miles of driving across Europe, having visited churches and cathedrals in many different settings we encountered this beautiful oasis of peace on the motorway a few miles before the German/France border, near Strasbourg. It is a truly sacred space, tucked behind the motorway services. A steady stream of people were breaking their journey, some to stop and pray, others to take in the beauty of the stillness. Whatever their motive for visiting, God's invitation is always there: Be Still and Know that I Am God.

Most will be very familiar with that line from verse 10 of the psalm. The line is preceded with this assertion about God:

"He makes wars cease  
to the ends of the earth.

He breaks the bow and shatters the spear;  
he burns the shields with fire." verse 9.

And it is followed by this assertion from God.

"I will be exalted among the nations,  
I will be exalted in the earth." verse 10b.

Wherever you travel or remain this Christmas and New Year, be invited, be assured, be still, be at peace with God and with one another.

Les Nevin

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## Toy Story Too — To Colburn and Beyond

Major Barrie Sampson and his wife, Maria, from the Salvation Army at Catterick came to the Gayle Toy service to receive the Christmas toys brought by the folk from Hawes, Gayle and the surrounding area.

The gifts will be re-distributed amongst families initially in the Colburn area.

Rev Janet Park led the service, on behalf of the Upper Dales Churches Together with around 60 folk present, including members of the local Brownie pack who gave a memorable rendition of the 12 days of Christmas, with actions, and the congregation provided the 'backing group; including Rev Dave Clark, in attendance for his first Toy service, after being inducted into his post only a couple of weeks ago.

Many folk stayed for refreshments served in the schoolroom afterward- with Barrie & Maria being most grateful for the generosity of the local people.

A rewarding afternoon someone commented.

We have since received a thank you letter from Barrie and Maria:

*To Reverend Janet, all the congregation, Brownies and friends of Gayle Chapel.*

*Dear friends,*

*Maria & I just want to say a very big 'thank you' for the invitation to come and to share with you on the first Sunday of Advent and share in your toy service.*

*We of course want to say thank you for donating the toys to The Salvation Army Christmas Appeal 2016, and offer our thanks in advance on behalf of the families who will receive them.*

*We wish you all a very Happy Christmas and a peaceful start to the New Year 2017.*

*God Bless you all,*

*Kind regards*

*Barrie Sampson. Major*

*The Salvation Army Catterick*

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## Reeth and Gunnerside Schools Remember

Friday 11 November the Key Stage 2 pupils of Reeth Community and Gunnerside Methodist schools led their Armistice Day service. Having worked with Reverend Janet earlier in the week, they shared artwork, poetry and prayers with the rest of school. Older pupils spoke with confidence and showed great respect, along with younger pupils who listened really carefully. They held two minutes silence together.

Afterwards adults and pupils commented on how the powerful the service was.

*"It reminded me to have respect for what other people have done to help me."*

*"It made me feel really grateful for everything that we have today."*

From 'Communique' the newsletter of Reeth Community and Gunnerside Methodist Schools.

Ed: I also heard *"This was the most moving remembrance service I've been to this year."* I understand that children had a part to play and then moved to the sides of the room and as the words "They shall not grow old as we grow old" were spoken at the end those remaining were left to reflect on the gap left by the others. A poignant reminder of the gap left by those who did not return.

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**An invitation...** to join a great wave of prayer between Ascension and Pentecost.

**'Thy Kingdom Come'** a time of focused prayer between 25 May and 4 June 2017. In 2016 hundreds of thousands joined the wave of prayer in churches of many traditions and denominations around England and around the world. For 2017 the vision is even bigger.

The three aims are:

To join in prayer with the whole family of God the Father

To pray for the empowering of God the Holy Spirit

That we may be effective witnesses to God the Son, Jesus Christ.

Every day Christians all around the world offer the prayer that Jesus gave us; the prayer we call the Lord's Prayer. Within it we pray for the coming of God's kingdom and in doing so we express our longing for Christ's transforming grace to bring hope and joy, love and peace, holiness and justice to all.

Dr Roger Walton and Rachel Lampard wrote "Through 'Priorities for the Methodist Church', we are committed to developing confidence in evangelism and in the capacity to speak of God and faith in ways that make sense to all involved. 'Thy Kingdom Come' resonates strongly with this and so we encourage the whole connexion, in partnership with others wherever possible, to prepare for and engage in this work of prayer in the days from Ascension Day to Pentecost 2017.

You will be joining with thousands around the world, praying that our friends, neighbours, colleagues and workmates will come to know Jesus Christ. Jesus reminds us that "with people, this is impossible, but with God, all things are possible" (Matthew 19:26).

Over the coming months, you'll be able to download the wide range of resources from the 'Thy Kingdom Come' website, which will include:

Resources to help run a 24/7 prayer room in a church, chaplaincy, retreat house or school;

Guides to hosting other special events, such as Beacon Events

Blogs on topics including how to pray for others, how to get started in prayer, encouraging others in prayer etc.

Downloadable inspirational videos

Booklets, 'pray for five' bands, posters and more to use during the ten days of prayer

As with all great movements, praying is the most effective way to prepare for 'Thy Kingdom Come'. Be assured of the prayers of many others as you plan, prepare, pray and act.

[thykingdomcome@lambethpalace.org.uk](mailto:thykingdomcome@lambethpalace.org.uk)

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## James book of the month — June 2016

How on earth did James get into the Bible? His book requires us to **do** things and they are not always that easy! From the very first verse of the first chapter he says "Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds..." James sets us challenges and later in the year we plan to study the book of James together with many others of the Methodist connexion. Please read on if you want to know more...

In June 2017, the Methodist Church is encouraging churches and circuits across the Connexion to run a 'Bible Month', 30 days focused on the letter of James. The Bible Month will involve two key elements

Preachers preparing and preaching a series of sermons on James over the four Sundays of June.

Small group leaders running a 'Bible Month' group that focuses on James, but which also helps those attending engage the Bible in fresh and innovative ways.

By focusing on a single biblical book, Bible Month aims to help all in church engage more deeply with Scripture. A pilot project showed that the Bible Month model could be effective in raising biblical literacy, and the majority of those who took part were keen to hold another Bible Month in the future!

Bible Month training days will be run across the Connexion, in early 2017, for preachers and small group leaders.

A resource to guide your Bible Month will become available in winter 2016.

'How can I get young people involved in the Bible Month?' you may ask. Suggestions for involving young people will be included in the Bible Month magazine. On helping young people in general to engage with the Bible, you might also like to check out 'Navigate', a joint-resource produced by the Methodist Church and the Bible Society ([www.methodist.org.uk/navigate](http://www.methodist.org.uk/navigate)).

The Bible Month will be held over the next few years, tackling several different books of the Bible. The 'Bible Month magazine' that will support the 2017 Bible Month, however, will also be available for any church interested in running a Bible Month on James at a future date.

The Bible Month will be run by local churches, but support will be provided by the Discipleship & Ministries Learning Network and LWPT. The Methodist Church is also working with ROOTs to produce the 'Bible Month' resource magazine.

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James 2:14 (NIV UK) What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if someone claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save them?

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