

Dear Friends

By the time you read this, we will be well into 2024 and my retirement will finally feel like a reality, within reaching distance. However, as I sit to write this, I have just had a large skip delivered to our Scottish house and we are wondering how the builders are getting on converting the kitchen and dining room into one large kitchen. I have also just ordered 2 new radiators and associated valves to be delivered on a day when I will be at the Scottish house to receive them. Although this is both an exciting and anxious time whilst a lot of the work is being done when we cannot be there, it is also a lesson in trust. You will have worked out by now that I am a very organised person, and I know myself well, I do like to have my hands on the reigns so to speak, so not being in situ when these important alterations are being carried out to what will be our retirement/forever home, is challenging. I have no choice but to trust the builders to do what they have been commissioned to do, trust the plumber, trust the electrician etc. I confess we have a wonderful neighbour directly opposite who holds a key and keeps a close eye on things, but it is still a strange feeling not being there and attempting to project manage from a distance. So I trust that all will be well and our new old home, for it is an old cottage, once a post office, will be exactly as God intends it to be, a place of love, peace, and joy. But for now, there is still work for me here within the North Yorkshire Dales Circuit amongst you lovely folks which I will continue to do to the best of my ability, as like you, I trust God for each day.

I confirm that Carlton Methodist Chapel went up for sale on the 8th of December. For the first six months the Circuit is required to advertise it for community use. If after that period there are no credible community use bids, it can then be advertised for sale on the open market. Sales details can be obtained from Norman F Brown's office in Richmond, and if anyone approaches you for information, please ask them to contact Norman Brown's office.

I am pleased to say that subject to confirmation at the Methodist Conference this year, a new Superintendent has been appointed to the Circuit starting in post on 1st September 2024. Please pray for Rev Joanna (Jo) Brown and her partner Charlotte as their thoughts turn to moving and settling into a new Circuit whilst saying their goodbyes to all those they have grown to know and love in their current Circuit. They too will be trusting God for the next stage of their journey.

Putting this preaching plan together has proved to be even more challenging than any time since my arrival with you back in September 2019 and I would like to say a huge 'thank you' not only to our small number of, but dedicated, Local Preachers, and Supernumerary Ministers, but also to the Church Stewards and Worship Leaders who cope so admirably with the Local Arrangement Services. There has been much talk about the decline of Methodism across the whole of the United Kingdom and we see huge evidence of that here in our beautiful Dales, but on a visit in December to York Minster, I was privileged to meet an Anglican colleague who put everything into perspective by stating the truth that God is not in decline and so he was not worried. I have reflected on his words, and confess, as your Superintendent, I often feel responsible for our dwindling numbers and do get concerned, but my colleague is right, God is not in decline. So I invite you to join me as we look to God for the future and dare to trust.

'Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not rely on your own insight. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths.' (Proverbs 3: 5-6 NRSV).

With Love in Christ.

Rev Melanie Reed (Superintendent).