

Dear Friends,

As I write this, I am indebted to some reflections shared at a meeting recently by Revd David Goodall. In his manse garden there were a couple of trees that were problematic. One was a tree that had, for some reason, developed poorly. It had grown up as several trunks and, in the process, it had restricted the growth of anything near or beneath it. It was not a tree of life, but one of division and competing trunks, and it was overwhelming other plants around it. The second tree was beside it, an apple tree that was clearly dying and not fit for fruit. What should happen to enable the whole garden to flourish? The final decision was difficult, but it was to remove those two trees. They were removed a few weeks ago, creating space and light, both of which were gifts to the shrubs and other plant life around. By taking away, by reducing the demand on the soil, other things would have the resources to grow.

This is one of many images that I have been reflecting through of late. I believe it has meaning for our own lives, but also for our churches and our circuits. What is it that takes disproportionate light, space, and resources in each of those contexts that we might need to re-appraise, and even remove?

It won't pass your attention that this latest newsletter arrives as we begin the journey of Lent. The season of Lent is a gift to us; an opportunity to stand back with God and look at what we do, who we are, and what governs us. It may be that in looking with God we see an amazing balance in all those things. However, it may be that we notice, as David Goodall did, that some things are growing, or dying, out of place. How radical can we be about addressing that? The easy decision for David, and for the trees, was to do nothing; let things carry on as they were and accept that the garden was not going to offer any more life for the pollinators, for the family, or for other new wildlife. The hard decision was to be radical.

If we want to think about this through the lens of Lent and Holy Week, Jesus had a choice to do nothing, to risk nothing and to change nothing. That was the easy decision for Jesus to make, and we all know that was not his choice at all. The hard decision was to act, to risk, to lose, to make space and to discover what would happen.

Let me, therefore, invite you to stand back with God, and gaze on your life, your church, your circuit and ask:

- **What does God help you notice?**
- **What does God suggest might be done?**
- **How will you respond?**

I thank David for his reflections on his garden, and I leave these questions with you as we each share in the journey of Lent.

God Bless,



Revd Kerry Tankard
Chair of District



CLIFF COLLEGE

COLLEGE EVENTS 2022

Cliff Festival 2022

Cliff Festival 2022 (1 - 5 June) will be an opportunity to gather as the church to explore the rule and reign of the King of kings, and what it means to live out the call of God to evangelism and justice. Our speakers for the weekend will include Revd Dr Sahr Yambasu, President of the Methodist Church in Ireland; Rachel Lampard, former Vice-President of the Methodist Conference; and Eunice Attwood, the Church at the Margins Officer for the Methodist Church.

Tickets, camping and accommodation are now on sale – book at: www.cliffcollege.ac.uk/festival-2022

Jubilee rule & reign

Courses in Pastoral Care at Cliff College

Many of us are only just starting to see the impact the pandemic has had on people of all ages, both inside our churches and in our wider communities. It's vital that we offer good pastoral care and support to those who need it. Cliff College offers both a day-long Introduction to Pastoral Care (19 March) and an in-depth five-day Certificate in Pastoral Care (20 - 24 June) that are suitable for church ministers, employees and volunteers who want to grow their skills in this important area.

Find out more and book now at: www.cliffcollege.ac.uk/study/courses/short-course-calendar



AROUND THE DISTRICT

AIREDALE

Airedale Circuit began with a completely new staff team in September 2021, which made for both exciting and challenging times! We had to find our way around the area, and get to know the people and the buildings that are our respective responsibilities. We had to make sense of the way the circuit had been set up to operate moving forwards, and of course, we needed to get to know each other, as well as the circuit stewards and other key people around the circuit. To say it was a steep learning curve would be an understatement, but we have worked hard at it, and everything is beginning to make some sense to us. Hopefully we are also beginning to make some sense to the people of Airedale too. Without doubt, a new minister takes a bit of getting used to, as does a new circuit, but with seven new staff all trying to make sense of it at the same time, across seventeen church communities, the challenges are multiplied.

So here we are in 2022, with five months of our appointment already behind us. We know much about the people within Airedale Circuit: their hopes and expectations, their fears and anxieties, their commitment and sense of God's calling upon them; and they are discovering the many and varied gifts and ideas that we bring to the situation. Change is inevitable; discomfort on all sides is part of the deal, but like a web of tangled threads, the mysteries of the circuit are being unravelled, and the jigsaw is beginning to take shape. It is far from complete, but the work of God's kingdom is always a work in progress!

The circuit's new church structure launched in September, as three groups of chapels committed themselves to becoming three new churches, with shared resources and direction of travel, as well as a sense of shared and supportive responsibility for one another. It's still very early days, but we are inching forwards with this plan. The challenges of Covid continue to disrupt our lives, and there is still a long way to go before we feel confident in being together as larger groups of worshippers, as well as those who share resources, leadership, purpose and vision. Many plans and visions are yet to be realised, while others are gently unfolding.

The good news is that we as a circuit are very much alive with possibilities and ideas for moving forward. It's still too early to celebrate our re-emergence after the pandemic; many are still shielding and remaining away from larger gatherings, and the churches have much to do to become reinvigorated after these two difficult years, but God is at the heart of who we are and what we do. We have no purpose but to serve, and to work with God for the building of the kingdom here. We look forward to sharing the evidence of good news in the way our mission and purpose unfolds over the coming months and years.

*Revd Clare Stainsby
Airedale Circuit Superintendent*



The 2021 - 22 District Prayer Handbook

Priced at £2.00 including p&p.

If you would like a copy, please contact the
District Administrators on:

01274 392628 (Tuesday to Thursday)

or

admin@ywmethodist.org.uk

to make arrangements for payment.

AROUND THE DISTRICT

GOING GREEN IN AIRE & CALDER

Over the past six months, the Aire and Calder Circuit has been focusing on climate change and considering how we can become a more environmentally friendly circuit.

After discussions amongst the circuit staff and with the circuit stewards, five proposals were brought to our Circuit Assembly in September. These were:

- To establish a fund to be used to provide grants to individual churches to make their buildings more environmentally friendly.
- To only support re-development schemes from churches where there is clear evidence that the environmental impact has been considered.
- To hold a special environmental themed service at every church in the circuit on the same Sunday during the autumn of 2021.
- To encourage each church to appoint an enthusiastic volunteer to be their eco-ambassador, and for this person to take a lead in reviewing their church's environmental impact using the eco-church scheme.
- To find ways to encourage church members to make changes to their individual lifestyle to become more sustainable, through e-news, church newsletters/notice sheets, and the circuit YouTube channel.

All five proposals were unanimously passed and we have been busy trying to put these into action.

A fund has now been set up to support churches in making their buildings more eco-friendly, and it has been agreed that each church can bid for a grant of up to £3,000. Each church held an environmentally themed service in October, and is being encouraged to hold such services on a regular basis.

Some churches have now appointed an eco-ambassador and are working towards the eco-church awards.

A series of YouTube videos were created in the autumn, and articles about sustainable lifestyles are now being published in the monthly circuit newsletter.

Individual churches have also been responding in other ways - in the Thornes area of Wakefield, the City Council have recently planted over 10,000 trees, and members at West Wakefield (the local Methodist Church) have been encouraged to be part of this initiative. Wakefield Methodist School have also been involved with this, planting two new trees in their grounds: one to celebrate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee, and the second to remember a former pupil at the school who several years ago died of cancer whilst still a pupil there.

Lakeside Methodist Church in Newmillerdam is currently in the early stages of remodelling itself to become Lakeside Creative Arts Centre. 'Evolution', a very successful pre-launch event, was held in late November. One aspect of the redevelopment work that will be done there is to turn a small area of shrub ground at the side of the building into a reflective garden, with planting to attract bees and other insects.

Matt Burland

AROUND THE DISTRICT

BRADFORD SOUTH

2021 marked the special anniversary of two of our churches – Ebenezer, Dudley Hill (200th) and Horton Bank (150th). Although celebrations might not have been as originally hoped and planned, still there was opportunity to remember and celebrate the “faithful cloud” who have witnessed and worshipped in these places. Inevitably, looking back always prompts thoughts of “what next?”, leading to conversations of how the faithful witnesses of today and tomorrow can continue making God’s Kingdom known in their communities.

For Clayton Methodists, part of the answer is through “Ping!”

In 2017 Table Tennis England made contact with the circuit asking if we could help them in their “mission to bring Ping! to the people”. With them providing tables, nets, balls, bats, banner and anything else that might be needed, all we needed to provide was the space and the people. Initially opening with just one table for a morning session, demand soon meant it extended into the afternoon with three tables.

People come for a number of reasons; enjoying the exercise and the fellowship, with those of little skill enjoying it as much as those who are more accomplished. They come from different churches and none, across a wide geographical area. They support one another, looking forward to meeting and networking. Sometimes people come, not necessarily to play, but simply to meet with others, wanting to share company and a cup of tea, this being one of the few opportunities they have to meet others during the week.

Table Tennis England’s mission may be to help people’s physical and mental wellbeing, but it also offers us the opportunity to care for their spiritual wellbeing. It offers us the opportunity to be alongside people who are in need; to discover what those needs are; to address how we might meet those needs; to create an environment which is welcoming, warm and friendly; to journey with people who find it hard to cross the church threshold; to improve the quality of life for people in the community; to provide helpful information; to use the church building more effectively, and broaden the range of activities available to the community.

Whilst some have come to worship from time to time, the greater desire is simply to share the love of God through our words and actions; drawing people into God’s kingdom not necessarily into church. If, however, that *does* happen, then we are doubly blessed.

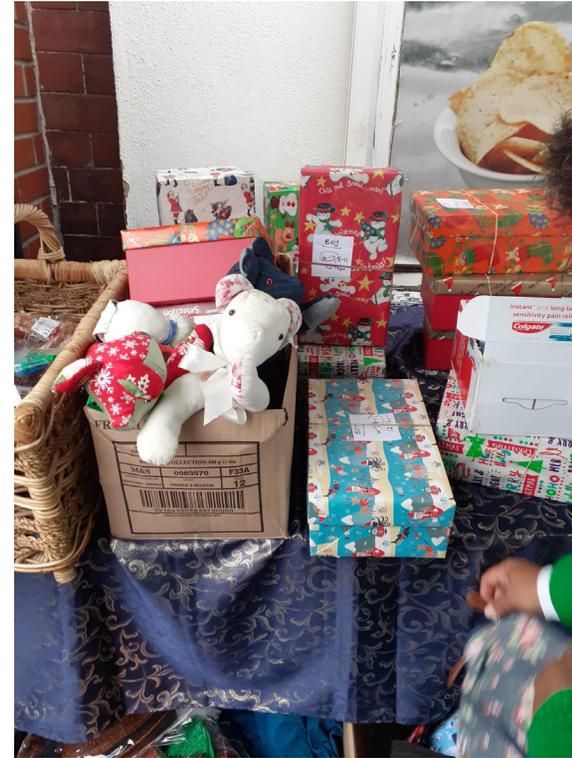
Revd Albert Gayle



AROUND THE DISTRICT

LEEDS NORTH & EAST

Christmas at The Meeting Point Café in Harehills was quite special this year; the idea of holding an event to celebrate the birth of Christ from our community café was very exciting, but where would we start with the organisation from our small premises, keeping Covid regulations in mind? On 23 December we were to have Carol Singing outside to reach as many people as possible out in the community. The idea grew and grew and it turned into a successful morning, beyond what we could have hoped for.



Celebrating outside of the café was a safer way to proceed and as the weather can be unpredictable, we needed to borrow a couple of gazebos in the event of rain. We were able to give everyone some non-alcoholic mulled wine or hot chocolate, with mince pies which had been kindly donated. We were also in a position to give out Christmas hats to many people and due to the very generous donation of beautiful, handmade toys and amazing Christmas shoeboxes put together by the team from Alwoodley Park Methodist Church, we were able to give out boxes full of presents to all the children. Deacon Liesl planned to put something together for everyone to take home with them so that they had the Christmas message at hand, and I sent her a copy of a poem I had written which told the whole Christmas story.

The café was open to those who wanted to go inside and partake of maybe a bacon sandwich, full breakfast or just a cup of tea and listen to the singing outside. It was a very busy morning and it did brighten up the day of people very much in the hustle and bustle of their Christmas preparations.

Meeting Point is in the heart of a very diverse community and all enjoyed the morning together: the café workers, carol singers and everyone involved irrespective of their different walks of life. It turned into quite a successful community Carols event, though we did not have the luxury of the keyboard as the musician was isolating, so we raised our voices even more in Christmas praise. Bringing joy to everyone and sharing the Christmas message was all that we could have hoped for and the morning exceeded our expectations.

*Mrs Anne Kirkland
Circuit Steward and Meeting Point Management Committee*

LEEDS SANCTUARY

NEW YEAR, NEW DEVELOPMENTS

It's been a busy few months since we officially changed our name to Leeds Sanctuary, and we have been so grateful for all the support we received for our new branding, website, and blog posts elaborating on our values and introducing our team. You can find those at <https://leedssanctuary.org.uk/tag/leedssanctuary/> if you'd like to have a look.

In January, we ran our first "5 Ways to Wellbeing" course at Leeds Dock with a small group who not only found the course beneficial, but made some new friendships, and we are hopeful that their mini-community will keep in touch and come to future events. We also ran an Enneagram Retreat Day in the centre of Leeds which was really well attended by a mixture of both Christians and those who don't practice a faith, and enjoyed by all. By the time you read this, we will be halfway through our follow-up 5-session course which was fully booked!

We continue to build relationships with individuals and organisations in Leeds City Centre, as well as creating free resources which can be shared from our social media or downloaded from our website. For example, Leeds Craftivists will be focussing on Climate Justice in 2022, and if you can't gather with us, you will find our latest craft activity and a template letter for your MP which can be downloaded. We are also releasing free mindfulness tracks through our podcast at least once per month.

Much of our attention in the next couple of months will go towards the launch of our book, "Everyday Sacrament"; a collection of Art Meditations which we released through our website weekly during 2020. We hope the book will be a terrific resource for people processing the grief and hope found through the Covid19 pandemic, and if you would like a copy for your church, please do get in touch.

We are also really excited by the appointment of a Wellbeing Practitioner! We are delighted with the appointment of Sam and really excited to work with her in building more communities and further supporting the people of Leeds. We would really appreciate your prayers as we continue to break new ground and work towards building God's kingdom in the centre of Leeds.

*Anna Bland
Development Officer*



LEEDS SANCTUARY

THE METHODIST CHURCH
IN THE CITY CENTRE

MEET THE PEOPLE



Name: Adrian Mitchell

Role Title: District Data Champion

What does your role involve?

Contrary to popular belief, I am here to help everyone! The role is here to protect people by giving the District a single point of contact for all the GDPR enquiries that are arising. GDPR isn't going away, and simplifying the process is certainly my aim for everyone.

How can you be contacted?

Email: YWdistrictdata@merlindesignbureau.com or telephone: 07950 950562

Which church do you attend?

At present I am floating around, though the Church I am a member of is St. Paul's in Sowerby Bridge. During lockdown other avenues of worship were opened (as I am sure they were for many of us), and I am quite enjoying the variety of options that are now available to us all. After all, Church is more than just bricks and mortar.

Tell us a bit about yourself:

I grew up in Hull (yes, I was one of the few escapees!), and following many moves around the country, settled just outside of Sowerby Bridge 12 years ago with my wife and 2 children. During this time, I have set up my own graphic design business, and will be putting together this newsletter in the coming weeks. At the age of 46, I started training in Karate, which has now become a major passion alongside my Ten Pin Bowling, however I had to take a break from both when I snapped my Achilles tendon last July.

Tell us something that few people know about you:

Due to my links with Hull City AFC, I was able to assist a teenage terminal cancer patient's family in raising £28,000 in 2016. Sadly, she lost her fight in the September, however due to the money raised we were able to ensure her final weeks and journey were memorable for her and the family, the final balance was split between 2 cancer charities, Candlelighters and Eckersley House.

I also came second on Ken Bruce's Popmaster (on Radio 2) with 27 points 2 years ago, beaten by 33 points in November 2020, so I now proudly own a 1 year out T-shirt.

SPECIAL DAYS

6th March
First Sunday of Lent

15th April
Good Friday

3rd May - 6th May
Methodist Diaconal Order
Convocation

24th May
Wesley Day

27th March
Mothering Sunday

17th April
Easter Sunday

15th May - 21st May
Christian Aid Week

26th May
Ascension Day

10th April
Palm Sunday

1st May
Vocations Sunday

22nd May
Aldersgate Sunday

5th June
Pentecost

14th April
Maundy Thursday

Items for inclusion in the Summer 2022 issue of the District Newsletter should reach us by 12 noon on 15th May 2022

The **Methodist Church**
Yorkshire West District



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