



the bridge monthly bulletin

December 2023



Ryedale Methodists

Dear Friends,

My birthday falls on December 1st, and this year I become a pensioner!
Hard to believe I know!!

When I was a teenager I would save any money I got for my birthday, add to it Christmas gifts, and then be able to afford something really good in the January sales. It was in a way a delayed gratification, but it was also pragmatic as I could buy something more than any individual gift would give me.

As a minister I have always tried to hold people back from enjoying Christmas starting on the first Sunday in Advent. Whether that is singing carols (which seem to start right after Bonfire night), eating Christmas food (my first Christmas dinner was on 29th November!), or even decorating the home (when will you see the first Christmas tree of 2023?). If we don't prepare, save up if you like, we won't get full value out of Christmas. I feel very sad for those people who put up their Christmas tree on 1st December but then take it down on the 26th. For Christians that is when Christmas begins not ends. We can enjoy the food, the gifts, the singing, being with family and/or friends, but only when those more secular aspects are over can we find time and space to really appreciate the true meaning of Christmas – the coming of the Christ-child, the Word made flesh who came to dwell with us.

This Christmas our celebrations will be tinted by the ongoing wars in Ukraine and Israel-Palestine. It will be hard to be happy when we see death and destruction, especially in that land where our scripture readings will focus as we retell the Nativity stories. Yet therein lies our hope. That is exactly why Jesus had to come. Time and again God had tried to encourage people to live in peace together: from the Covenant with Abraham (you will be the ancestor of many nations), through the Ten Commandments given to Moses (thou shalt not kill) and in the challenging words of the prophets, people had failed to follow God's urging and so to live in peace. As we know the baby of Bethlehem, the Prince of Peace announced by the angels with their song "peace on earth and goodwill to all", as an adult struggled to change people's minds and hearts. Ultimately Jesus suffered and died because he lived with pure love. Jesus teaches us two rules for life: love God and love your neighbour. May that be our gift this Christmas. The gift we prepare for, the gift we live by, the gift we share with others. Let our words and deeds be the most worthy (and valuable) gift of all.

May God bless you with love this Christmas, and may God bring peace to the world. *Rev Peter*



Advent Prayer

Lord of all time

Bless this season,

Come amongst us

In all we do.

Help us prepare

For Your coming,

Not merely to scuttle

To and fro,

In a frenzy

Of cooking and shopping,

Parties and glitter,

Worthless waste

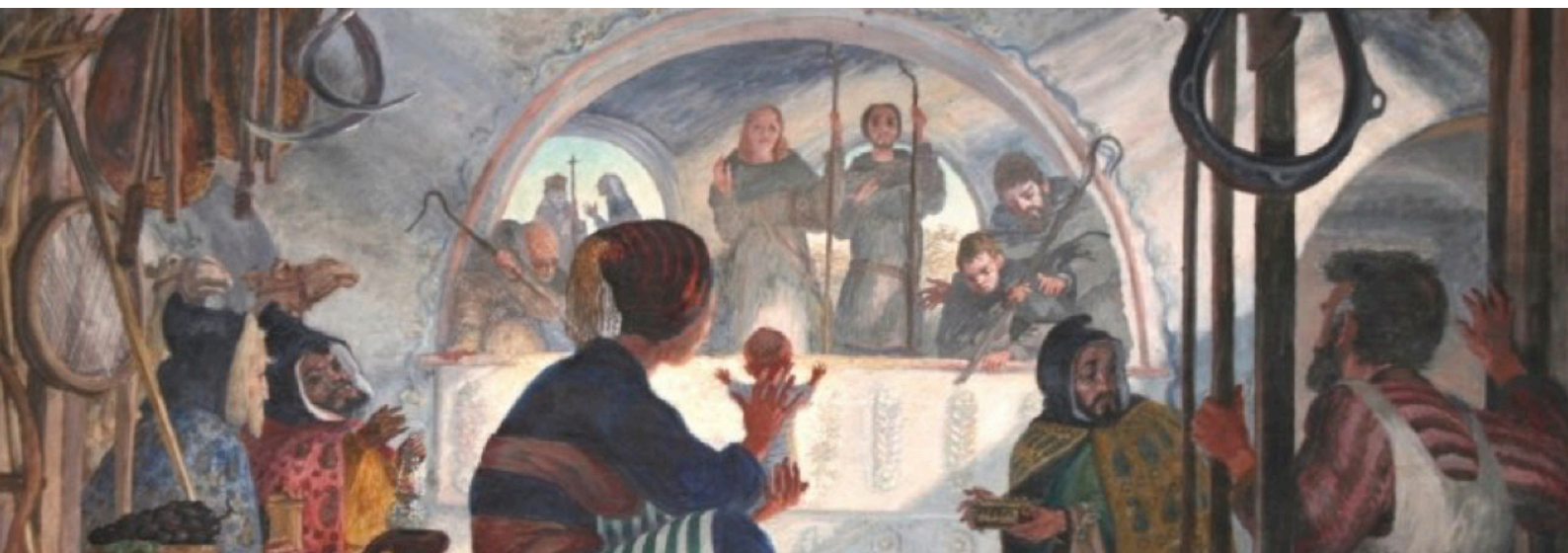
Of precious time

Given by You.

Lesley K. Steel from Scotland

*In Shine on, star of Bethlehem,
published by Christian Aid*

*Part of the altar piece painted in 1985
By Henry Bird for Charwelton Chapel*



Stationing

This "Methodist" word is the process of finding a new minister, and the Ryedale Circuit is currently seeking someone to follow Rev Peter when he retires next summer. Unfortunately, there are fewer ministers than Circuit placements available. Not surprisingly then, in the first round of stationing, in November, the Circuit was not offered a match. There are further matching meetings at the beginning of December, January and February, so we pray and live in hope that someone will be matched and visit the Circuit. We will keep you in touch with developments.

HOW FAR IS IT TO BETHLEHEM? Advent reflections from Rev Peter

Sunday 3rd December, Advent 1 - Bethlehem



This Christmas as well as thinking about the Holy Land 2,000 years ago we will also focus on the conflict going on there right now.

We begin our Advent pilgrimage to Christmas and make our journey to Bethlehem, and will travel through Israel-Palestine as Mary and Joseph did before.



We start our journey in Jerusalem, the Holy City, shared by different faiths. The name Jeru-Salem means city of Peace (like Shalom). Today the city is home to Israelis (who are mainly Jews), Palestinians (some of whom are Muslims and others Christians who trace their roots back to Jesus and his disciples) and many other Christians (who have moved here from all over the world). Sadly, it is not a peaceful city but one divided by religion and politics, so we pray for its peace, as well as our own.

But it was not in a big city that Jesus was born but a small country village, a place of peace.

Psalm 122 NRSV

- 1 I was glad when they said to me, "Let us go to the house of the LORD!"
- 2 Our feet are standing within your gates, O Jerusalem.
- 3 Jerusalem — built as a city that is bound firmly together.
- 4 To it the tribes go up, the tribes of the LORD, as was decreed for Israel, to give thanks to the name of the LORD.
- 5 For there the thrones for judgment were set up, the thrones of the house of David.
- 6 Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: "May they prosper who love you.
- 7 Peace be within your walls, and security within your towers."
- 8 For the sake of my relatives and friends I will say, "Peace be within you."
- 9 For the sake of the house of the LORD our God, I will seek your good.

Light a candle to pray for peace and to show us the way to Jesus Christ, the Light of the World.

Let us pray:

As we seek again the Prince of Peace, Jesus, born in Bethlehem, we pray for peace:
Peace for the cities of Jerusalem and Gaza, and peace between people of Israel and Palestine,
peace between different races and religions; peace wherever this is conflict.
Peace too for our families and friends, especially remembering any who are sick or anxious;
As we travel through Advent may we find ourselves closer to God and filled with his peace. Amen

Reflections images - Unsplash: Laura Siegal, Shalev Cohen, Juli Kosalapova, Jorge Fernandez Salas



Sunday 10th December, Advent 2 - Nazareth

The next stopping point on our journey to Bethlehem is Nazareth in Galilee, which was to become Jesus' home in his childhood. Nazareth is a small town, not unlike Bethlehem, built by a spring for water and surrounded by hills. From there we believe that Mary and Joseph set out to go to the census in Bethlehem. Later it was there that Jesus learnt to be a carpenter from his father Joseph and was surrounded by his mother Mary's love.

Psalm 113 NRSV

- 1 Praise the LORD! Praise, O servants of the LORD; praise the name of the LORD.
- 2 Blessed be the name of the LORD from this time on and forevermore.
- 3 From the rising of the sun to its setting the name of the LORD is to be praised.
- 4 The LORD is high above all nations, and his glory above the heavens.
- 5 Who is like the LORD our God, who is seated on high,
- 6 who looks far down on the heavens and the earth?
- 7 He raises the poor from the dust, and lifts the needy from the ash heap,
- 8 to make them sit with princes, with the princes of his people.
- 9 He gives the barren woman a home, making her the joyous mother of children. Praise the LORD!

Later in Nazareth people would refuse to listen to Jesus teaching them about God his heavenly Father.
Light a candle for hope in the darkness, in Israel-Palestine and here in Ryedale as people worry about the financial challenge of Christmas.

Let us pray:

*As we seek again Jesus, our brother, born in Bethlehem, we pray for love:
Love in the world, that peace may come in place of conflict and bloodshed;
Love in the community, that people may listen to the cry of the poor and needy and respond;
Love in our homes, for parents caring for their children, and children for their parents;
As we travel through Advent may we find ourselves closer to God and filled with God's love. Amen*



Sunday 17th December, Advent 3 - The Jordan river

The next stopping point on our journey to Bethlehem is the River Jordan.

This is the life-blood of Israel, flowing through the country to bring fresh water to the fields, crops and people. John the Baptist used the river to baptise those who had repented of their sins. People would travel from Nazareth and Galilee in the north of the country to Jerusalem and Bethlehem in the south by following the river.



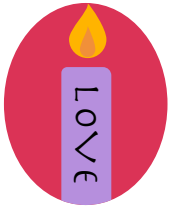
Psalm 114 NRS

- 1 When Israel went out from Egypt, the house of Jacob from a people of strange language,
- 2 Judah became God's sanctuary, Israel his dominion.
- 3 The sea looked and fled; Jordan turned back.
- 4 The mountains skipped like rams, the hills like lambs.
- 5 Why is it, O sea, that you flee? O Jordan, that you turn back?
- 6 O mountains, that you skip like rams? O hills, like lambs?
- 7 Tremble, O earth, at the presence of the LORD, at the presence of the God of Jacob,
- 8 who turns the rock into a pool of water, the flint into a spring of water.

Jesus promised to be the Living Water – Light a candle for refreshment as we prepare for Christmas.

Let us pray:

*As we seek again the Water of Life, Jesus, born in Bethlehem, we pray for new life:
Life for the planet, that we might work for a better environment and clean water for all;
Life for all who worry about the future, and are concerned for people they love;
As we travel through Advent may we find ourselves closer to God and filled with his life. Amen*



Sunday 24th December, Advent 4

Through the wilderness to the city on the hill.

The next stopping point on our journey to Bethlehem is the Wilderness.

This is a harsh region between the Jordan and the populated area of Jerusalem and Bethlehem. It was here that Jesus faced his temptations - would he follow God and good or the Devil and evil?

Psalm 107 v 1 - 9 NRSV

- 1 O give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; for his steadfast love endures forever.
- 2 Let the redeemed of the LORD say so, those he redeemed from trouble
- 3 and gathered in from the lands, from the east and from the west, from the north and from the south.
- 4 Some wandered in desert wastes, finding no way to an inhabited town;
- 5 hungry and thirsty, their soul fainted within them.
- 6 Then they cried to the LORD in their trouble, and he delivered them from their distress;
- 7 he led them by a straight way, until they reached an inhabited town.
- 8 Let them thank the LORD for his steadfast love, for his wonderful works to humankind.
- 9 For he satisfies the thirsty, and the hungry he fills with good things.

We must make our choice at this crossroads on the journey, are we committed to follow Jesus this Christmas? **Light a candle to help us find the way.**

Let us pray:

*As we seek again the Way, following Jesus born in Bethlehem,
we pray for hope and peace in the wilderness:*

Hope that the desert places of people's lives may be refreshed by God's Spirit;

Hope that the dry places of people's lives may be renewed by faith;

As we travel through Advent may we find ourselves closer to God and filled with his hope. Amen



RE:Uniform at Trinity Methodist Church Hull

RE:Uniform is a project based at Trinity Methodist Church in Hull. The project collects and redistributes preloved school uniform across Hull and surrounding areas to those that need it.

The project was set up over 4 yrs ago to help stop the amount of uniform sent to landfill and help families in the HU postcodes to obtain preloved, and sometimes new uniform for free.

We have a dedicated team of volunteers who collect donations of uniforms from our drop off points around the Hull area, they then carefully sort the uniform into age ranges, pulling out any uniform that needs washing or mending (a volunteer will take this home to do) Then from the requests we receive via our Facebook page, they will pick the uniform required and place them in recyclable bags which then will be delivered by our volunteer delivery drivers to families addresses.

The project has made a huge difference to the families of Hull over the last 4 years, especially this last year with the cost-of-living crisis, where we have seen our requests more than double. We have had many thank you messages from families saying we have been a lifeline and have taken the stress away and they can now sleep at night knowing they have school uniform sorted.

The Ryedale Circuit has supported this project by buying them a laptop to help with their administration.



CHRISTMAS SERVICES 2023 RYEDALE CIRCUIT

in Methodist Churches unless otherwise stated

CAROL SERVICES

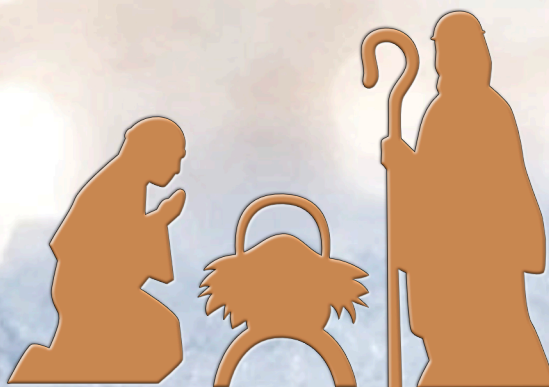
10 DECEMBER	RIEVAULX	10:30	Christingle Service with Ruth S
	SCAGGLETHORPE	10:30	with Rev Peter
16 DECEMBER	RIEVAULX	13:00	Carols from 13:00 Rievaulx Abbey grounds <i>usual admission prices apply</i>
17 DECEMBER	KIRKDALE LEP	10:00	at Wombledon village hall with <i>Daisy B</i>
	MALTON	10:00	with Rev Peter
	KIRKBYMOORSIDE	10:30	Community Carol service with Rev Penny
	EBBERSTON	15:00	Rev Mark and Helen L
	NORTON BETHEL	15:30	All Age Carol Service followed by Afternoon Tea
	SINNINGTON	16:00	United Village Carol Service
	SLINGSBY	16:00	
	ALLERSTON	16:30	Candlelight Carols Rev Peter
	RIEVAULX	18:30	
18 DECEMBER	THORNTON DALE	19:00	Community Carol Service at PC
19 DECEMBER	NORTON TRINITY	18:30	with Rev Peter
23 DECEMBER	RIEVAULX	17:00	Barn Service at Bungdale Head Farm YO7 2HH

CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES

HOVINGHAM	10:30	with Margot T
HELMSLEY	10:45	with Rev Brian
EBBERSTON	15:00	Christingle in barn Back Lane, Ebberston.
NORTON BETHEL	15:30	Christmas Eve Praise
LEAVENING	16:00	Open air crib service in Jolly Farmers car park
PICKERING	16:00	Carol Service with Rev Graham
KIRKDALE LEP	18:00	at St Hilda's. Blessing of the Crib, Rev Graham

CHRISTMAS DAY SERVICES

KIRKDALE LEP	9:30	at St Hilda's
KIRKBYMOORSIDE	10:00	God in Us
NORTON BETHEL	10:00	Family Friendly Christmas Celebration
NORTON TRINITY	10:00	United with Malton
EBBERSTON	10:30	with Rev Mark
PICKERING	10:30	with Rev Graham
THORNTON DALE	10:30	
HELMSLEY	10:45	with Rev Mel



Christmas Day 25th December - Journey's end Bethlehem

Through Advent we have journeyed around Israel-Palestine, following in the footsteps of Mary and Joseph 2,000 years ago but also very aware of that land and the war there today.

As we greet Jesus, the Prince of Peace again, we pray for peace in every place of conflict.



Read - Micah 5 v 2 - 5a CEV

2 Bethlehem, you are one of the smallest towns in the nation of Judah. But the LORD will choose one of your people to rule the nation — someone whose family goes back to ancient times.

3 The LORD will abandon Israel only until this ruler is born, and the rest of his family returns to Israel.

4 Like a shepherd taking care of his sheep, this ruler will lead and care for his people by the power and glorious name of the LORD his God. His people will live securely, and the whole earth will know his true greatness,

5 because he will bring peace.

Today we complete our journey, like the shepherds following the directions of the angels, we have climbed up the hill and reached our destination, Bethlehem, which means the city of Bread:

"Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom God's favour rests."

It was here that Jesus, the Bread of Life, was born, humbly in a cave where the animals were kept. The journey had been long and hard for Mary and Joseph, and had taken all their strength and faith. Now we have reached this journey's end, but as one adventure ends another begins.

Light a candle to remember the journey, and to show us the way forward as we find there is still far to go. To walk with Jesus, we will need strength and faith to follow him.

Let us pray:

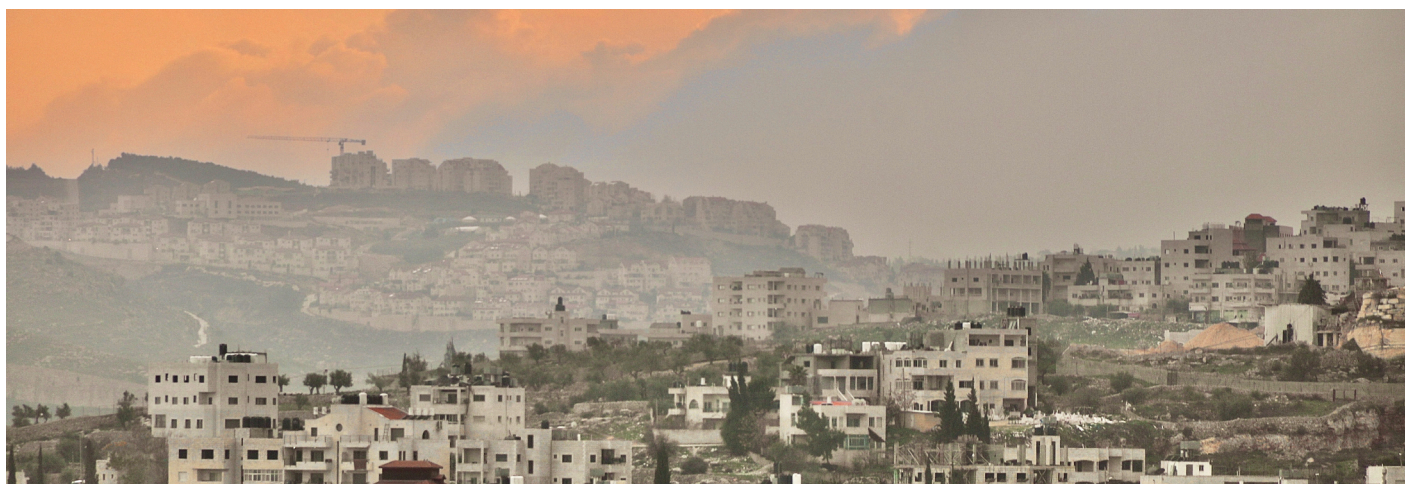
As we have found again Jesus, the baby born in Bethlehem, we pray for strength:

Strength to stand up for Jesus, to announce his presence to all the world;

Strength to make the world a better place with peace for all,

Strength to share the Good News so that we can help the weak feel strong;

As we travel on with Jesus may we find ourselves closer to God and filled with his power. Amen



Contacts

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Advent Art Studies

Rev Peter will be running two evening online Zoom studies this year for Advent.

Monday 4 December 7.30pm Advent Art – Angels

Monday 11 December 7.30pm Advent Art – Light

The studies will end by 9pm

As well as showing some art works there will be a reflective time and opportunity for discussion. Contact Ann for zoom link.



ryedalemethodists@gmail.com
<https://www.ryedalemethodist.org.uk/events.html>
for further information



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