

# AROUND THE DALE

The Newsletter of the Calderdale Methodist Circuit

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Number 21

August 2020

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## From the Superintendent Minister

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Where have the last four months gone? At the beginning of 2020 we were made aware of a serious illness that was spreading around the world, but wasn't affecting us here. It wasn't long before our daily lives were turned upside down and all the familiar things that we took for granted were taken away from us. Some even had to deal with the pain of a loved one being taken away too.

Our way of being church has been turned upside down and many who were once 'technophobes' have embraced various ways of connecting to their family, friends and church family digitally. We are constantly reminded how we are now in a 'new normal' but the 'new normal' keeps changing!

As a Circuit, we are trying to ensure that we are up to date with all the appropriate requirements to enable our churches to open safely. For some of our churches this will be difficult to do because of their size and accessibility. At the same time, I am aware of many who have found a

variety of ways of connecting to sources of worship and praise that have enabled them to feel connected so may not be desperate to enter our buildings for worship.

In the next few months, we will be making some very difficult choices about our future as Calderdale Circuit depending on how the impact of the Covid-19 virus trickles through our membership and finances.

On a brighter note, I have been amazed at the skills and talents that have been uncovered over the last few months as people have made things, cooked things and enabled a variety of support systems to be set up to help others. I won't list the things I have baked for the first time which must have turned out OK as Linda and I are still here to tell you about it!

I trust that you enjoy the reading of the magazine and stories of what is happening in our Circuit. May the stories and resources within bring you joy and comfort.

Yours in Christ,

Rev Terry Keen



Here at Christ Church we have purchased two new banners as a way of showing everyone in the locality that the church is still here for everyone during the pandemic even though our doors are closed to the public.



The banners are bright and colourful and the message is very clear to passers-by.

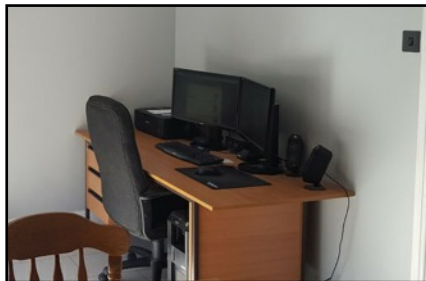


The church is the people who worship God, not the building and is still very active even during these unprecedented times.

Some members of our congregation have been very busy being creative! Two of our members created themed Pangrams.

A pangram is a sentence or group of sentences where each word is the next letter of the alphabet. I think you'll agree they've both done a sterling job!

Chris realised that by brushing up on using the latest technology he could be part of our Sunday morning Zoom catch-ups – this was the subject of his pangram. I'm sure many of us can relate to this.



Pangram 1.

All Because Covid's Deadly Epidemic Forced Granddad's Hand, I Just Knew Leadership Meetings Now Only Possible Quite Remotely; Sundays Too Use Virtual Worship eXploiting Youtube, Zoom!!

Margaret enjoyed getting out in the garden, tending the borders and this was the subject of her pangram.



Pangram 2.

Another Beautiful Cloudless Day, Every Flower Germinating, Hollyhocks Intermingle Jasmine, Kale Looking Magnificent, Nutritious, Onions Performing Quite Robustly, Soil Treated – Useful Vermiculite, Weeds eXterminated, Yippee, Zapped!

This month we said goodbye to our Minister Rev Patrick Taylor, who retired and is moving on to pastures new. We all wish Patrick a long and happy retirement.



To celebrate we held a socially distanced “bring your own coffee” coffee morning to say goodbye, on The Stray Sunday morning 26th July, with members of all his three churches – Christ Church, Northowram and Heywood URC.

As we step out of our houses,  
With our mask covering our face,  
Acknowledging each other  
But allowing personal space,  
Remember social distance  
Really isn't hard at all,  
It's our new “normal” way of life,  
Without it we would fall.  
The virus has not gone yet,  
The R rate must stay low,  
So keep your wits about you  
There's still a way to go.

The dentists have reopened,  
Pubs and shops are on the mend,  
But sadly for the House Of God  
We cannot see an end.  
No singing, no communion,  
Keep your distance – what a pain...  
There'll be no grand reunion  
It just *will not* be the same.  
Things will return to normal,  
But this will be a task,  
And one thing is for certain,



## Northowram Methodist

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Patrick's last service was certainly different from the one planned as a joint service for his three churches at Christ's Church.

Patrick hosted a safe distance, bring your own coffee and a bun' morning on the Stray in Lightcliffe. Representatives from all churches managed to attend and wish him well on the next journey in his life.



We thank him for his time spent with us at Northowram and we do hope he keeps in touch with us and tell us of his adventures in South America.



We were very sorry when Ann Hodgson had to give up doing her Newsheet, due to failing eyesight and other circumstances. People decided voluntarily to give a donation to the NHS Charity in thanks for the work Ann had done and £550.00, including £150.00 Gift Aided. We are very grateful for these donations and Ann is overwhelmed.

Our Pastoral Visitors are keeping in regular touch with members and friends.

We are looking forward to working with our new Leaders. Our first Zoom and Telephone meeting is on 5th August and we ask for your prayers for our future.

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## St Matthew's Rastrick



We have continued to keep close contact with our members during lockdown, with our weekly newsletter sent out by email.

Each week, a service has been printed in it and has been posted on our church website and Facebook page with prayers and hymns and a homily from Revd Stephen.

Support for the Central Foodbank has continued. The building repairs to the tower have been completed, and the church has been deep-cleaned and safety precautions put in place.

## Brighouse Central

Greetings from Brighouse Central to all our friends across the Calderdale circuit.



Lockdown has affected us all and unfortunately our church doors remain closed except for the work of the Foodbank which has continued to support many individuals and families throughout the pandemic. Taking the lead as Calderdale's Lower Valley Food Hub has meant Rebecca, our Foodbank manager, and her volunteers have been kept very busy reaching out to those most in need. Due to the extra work load her hours of work have been increased from 20 to 25 hours per week. She now organises a team of 25 volunteers from the local community to help support this vital work.



From the beginning of lockdown in March our weekly services have taken place via Facebook.

The 30 minute service is led by Rev Mark or Rev Graham Smith. This form of worship has engaged with the majority of our congregation and with others who have appreciated a chance to tap in to a church service, albeit online. To those who cannot access social media, work is in progress

to provide an audio DVD of the recorded service which will then be widely available to reach more people.

Our Pastoral Team continue to keep in touch with all members and adherents making sure they get any help or support they may need. We appreciate the work undertaken by our Pastoral Secretary Janet for making sure this happens.

An electronic form of the notice sheet goes out weekly to members and adherents which helps them keep connected and reminds them of the links to access virtual happenings involving church. Once again those who cannot access social media can request a hard copy which is then delivered by their Pastoral Visitor. At the beginning of lockdown an additional newsletter was produced, again online, which included news articles, quizzes, competitions, funny stories and a 'Thought for the Week' written by one of our Local Preachers or Supernumeraries. This has been withdrawn for the time being as things proceed to a bit more normality.



Other online services include Time for God on Friday mornings, which is a short service led by either a Minister or a Local Preacher. Our Children and

Families Worker has a midweek slot with a short inclusive Christian reflection and Christian based activity plus music from the Worship Band. Teen Church have a Sunday evening slot for discussion and debate on the challenges of being a young adult and how to meet those challenges as a Christian. Our Junior Church volunteer has been putting together a weekly Junior Church offering for children and families to engage with Bible stories, prayers and art work. All of these are on Facebook.

Virtual coffee mornings are held on Wednesday and Sunday mornings via 'Zoom'.

Prayer Groups and House Groups continue to meet regularly on 'Zoom'.



Brighouse Central Music Adademy continue online where possible as does 'Abi Ukelele' on Saturday mornings. This is a baby/toddler music group with over 100 participants online.

We at Brighouse, under the leadership of our Minister Rev Mark, have embraced the difficulties caused by Covid 19 by engaging with new initiatives and challenges to keep Brighouse Central alive and kicking in our community. Our Children and Families Worker Jodi has also done an amazing job of coming up with various initiatives that reach out into the community.



**Project Smile** - was launched at the beginning of lockdown and has been co-ordinated by our Children's Worker and Pastoral Secretary. Currently 35 children and their families are connected to 33 elderly/vulnerable people.

Each child/family has been paired with an elderly/vulnerable person to receive mail each week in the form of a letter along with pieces of art work by the child, thus offering the hand of fellowship and friendship during a lonely time. This project has now grown to include both new families and older people from the community getting involved. It has proved to be a huge missionary success in supporting the mental health and wellbeing of both young and old.





**Project Hope** - is another initiative co-ordinated by Jodi. She has been working with a family from each of our seven J&I schools and three High schools to create a banner that portrays a message of Hope, Faith and Love to our community. It is now displayed on our external church notice board and is in full view as you enter the town centre.

The second stage of Project Hope is to produce a video called 'Central Sing'. The preparation work to put together a compilation of songs for our children's worker to share with children in the community so they can sing along has been undertaken by our music intern and our uni music volunteer. This again will send a message of Faith, Hope and Love to our community.

Jodi has been checking in regularly with all our local schools in a Pastoral role, offering compassionate support and a listening ear particularly for families who have needed Foodbank support. Her work has been instrumental in finding a way to set this service up in schools so that those using it for the first time feel comfortable.

**Project Angels** - an opportunity for

anyone who can knit or crochet to make an Angel. Nearer the end of the crisis children will also be invited to make paper Angels that will represent either a loved one that has passed or a community Angel/key worker. Later in the year the Angels will be a visual celebration of our community and placed around the community as a gift for people to take home.



A full programme of events has been planned for the school holidays including a virtual Holiday Club based on 'Looking after God's World'. This is being promoted through social media to invite children from our whole community.

Our younger church children will be offered a holiday camp run for four weeks through a closed zoom group. This will include various activities to take part in.

Our Children's Worker is currently planning a small virtual group with the older teens and adults using the Verve material. Our Church Intern is currently working on setting up 6/8 small groups.

There are several planned talks with our teens that will invite different Christians to chat to them about the chosen career they have taken or a topic they can give a unique insight to. This follows on from a very successful talk from a Diplomat with 13 teens present virtually.



The strap line 'RESETS' used as an acronym is the foundation for our future vision:

- R** - Rejoices
- E** - Engages
- S** - Shares
- E** - Explores
- T** - and Together we
- S** - Serve

*Love and Blessings to you all*  
Susan Yates



The Methodist Podcast returns this week. With discussions on the impact of Covid-19 on the work of Action for Children, the relaunch of the British Methodist Youth Choir and we hear about Church in North and South Korea. Go to the Methodist Church web site -

<https://www.methodist.org.uk/about-us/news/podcasts/>



After a pause for 18 months, the British Methodist Youth Choir is now back up and running and rebuilding its membership. The current age range is 14-27 but this will shortly be increased to an upper age of 30.





## Hebden Royd Methodist Church

We continue to worship in different ways and with different congregations as well as meeting up via Zoom at Kathie's Sunday Evening worship and Kathie's weekly Zoom coffee mornings / afternoon tea / quizzes. We also keep in touch via Kathie's newsletter *Kindling Flames* and the Church's *How Are You?* updates. Our Monday Fellowship continues via Zoom. We have a mix of worship, prayer and bible study focusing on the gospel reading for the upcoming Sunday services.

### Virtual Sunday Club:

Members of Hebden Royd and Blackshaw Head Sunday Clubs have been meeting most weeks for a virtual

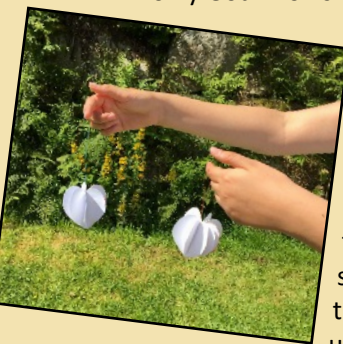
Sunday Club on Zoom. We enjoy having a bit of a catch up and a chat about what we have been up to before moving on to a Bible story followed by simple games or craft and a closing prayer.

Recently we have looked at some of Jesus' parables about seeds. We made flowers following the Parable of the Sower to remind us that when the

seed of faith is planted it can grow into great things. We also looked at the Parable of the Wheat and Weeds and made hidden hearts to remind us that only God knows what is in

the hearts of others.

It is always a fun session that keeps us feeling



connected to each other and God.

### Supporting ours:

During this strange period of lockdown Hebden Royd have strived to continue supporting our links with *The Morning Glory Clinic* in the slums of Nairobi, Kenya where we have some family contacts. We have managed to send two sums of £600 after having to open a new account which proved difficult! Our concern now is to find ways of raising more funds during restrictions.

Secondly, we have been part of local *Christian Aid* workers raising funds for supporting Syrian Refugees in Iraq and Lebanon. We are aiming to reach £2,500 by December this year but still need over £900 to qualify for 6 to 1 match funding which would make £17,000 for our suffering sisters and brothers in the Middle East.





## Message in a Minute

If he'd stopped to think about it, a man called Darly O'Rourke might never have been a hero.

Mr O'Rourke heard screams coming from a rain swollen river near his home. Then he saw a young woman inside an upturned canoe being whirled downstream and he plunged into the icy water. Clinging to some branches he reached the canoe, grabbed the woman and fought his way back to the bank from where she was taken off to a local hospital suffering from shock and exposure.



"I don't know how he did it, that river was a raging torrent." reported a witness. "Actually, I'm a terrible swimmer," replied O'Rourke, "I just didn't think about it."

In emergencies people do amazing things. And it usually involves self-forgetfulness and that's a hard lesson to learn. Jesus made the same point

centuries ago when he said, "Unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit." (Jn.12.24.) In other words if we are willing to forget ourselves we can do great things for God...and each other.

*Rev. Jake Watson*



John and I have been keeping a watch on this Mother Goose on our walks along the canal. She has been nesting on the side of the canal and we checked daily on progress. This week we have been rewarded by seeing her with her seven "babies". Thank God for new life in all its forms - it is uplifting and gives us hope and reassurance of the renewal of life. We have been blessed with that these last few weeks despite the virus threat - glorious sunshine, the trees bursting forth with their leaves and blossom, bluebells in the woods, birds singing etc. Nature at its best.

*Jane Godfrey*

## Dial-a-Prayer

Do you know someone who is not internet savvy but who would like to hear a prayer and catch up with our news? Find out more about our free phone lines helping to keep people who are isolated connected with church:

FREE phone lines for prayers and news from the **Methodist Church**



**Listen to a prayer: 0808 281 2514**

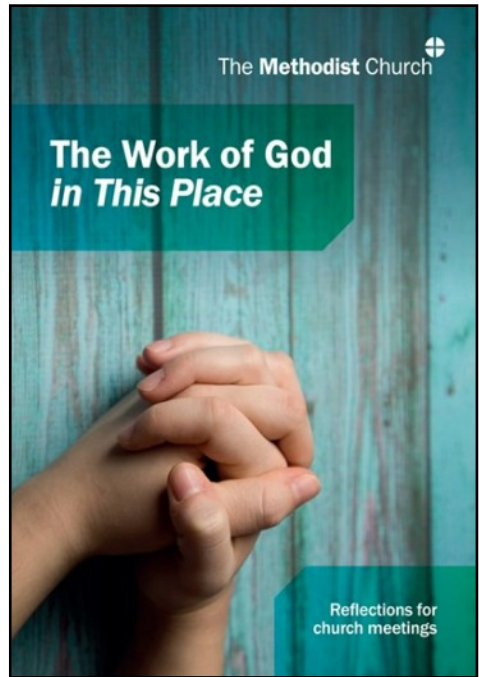
**Listen to news: 0808 281 2478**

Content is updated weekly on Thursday afternoon.

## God is in this place

*"... It also seems to be true that the more time given to listening to God, the more quickly a meeting goes."*

That's true, whether your church meeting is being held in a single place or via dispersed computer screens. *The Work of God in This Place*, a Methodist Resource developed within the North West and Mann region, is designed to help us integrate our committee discussions and decisions with conversation with and about God.



Questions and thoughts are offered under a range of themes. Singing the Faith Plus contributed hymn suggestions for each theme, together with inspiring images for this attractive publication.

Copies of this booklet are available priced £1.49 from Methodist Publishing

<https://www.methodistpublishing.org.uk/>



## St Andrew's

I write this on the 129<sup>th</sup> day of 'Lockdown' – where have all these 129 days gone?

At St Andrew's we have continued with our Zoom Sunday Services and Coffee and Chat morning get-togethers and WhatsApp groups which are now very much part of our lives as we know them at the moment. This has been for us a great way of keeping up with each other and sharing in each other's highs and lows.

Again during lockdown we have been lighting candles in our homes on a Sunday evening at 9.00 p.m. and this is a picture of 'Our Candles of Hope' together with a prayer written by the Revd Terry.



Lord we have lit candles in the stillness and darkness, we have glimpsed your light in the warmth of the flame and we have felt your love.

As we have lit the candle, we have offered prayers for those we know and love and for those strangers we have heard about.

We pray that they will see your light in their struggles and feel the warmth of your love we hold them before you... Amen

As a 'family' we have tried to be in touch with all our church family members via pastoral visitors through phone and WhatsApp messages and during the better weather and following lifting of restrictions many have socially distancing visited friends in their gardens which has been a real chance to meet and catch up in the flesh, so to speak. Friends have also met up for coffee in the town centre and found this another good way to see people. During all this time we have been mindful of those who do not have access to computer and WhatsApp facilities.

Our recently started 'Cottage Industries' have continued to be well used with the sale of facemasks and wooden planters going very well with a sudden surge in the sale of facemasks when the necessity to wear a mask inside shops, etc came into being

recently.

Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> of July was a lovely day as we were able to partake of wonderful 'Afternoon Teas' due to a great idea by one of our church family members to provide and make them to sell and allowed friends to socially meet

outside, chat and share a meal together with friends we had not seen for quite some while and at the same time raise funds for our Church Development Scheme.



All the preparations were made using socially self-distancing and hygiene rules, with a wonderfully efficient 'Meals on Wheels' delivery service – a really happy and refreshing time was had by all who took part in this great initiative which gave us a chance to meet with dear friends who live alone and have missed the company of church family friends. Thank you to Margaret and 'all her little helpers' for sharing this idea with other church family members and friends, it was a

huge success.

We are still, like all our local Methodist Churches, unsure of what the future holds for starting to meet together for Worship in our Churches and we leave that decision in God's hands at this present time until we can see a clear and

safe way forward for the future.



As I finish the St Andrew's contribution for the Circuit Magazine we

have just heard of the local lockdown restrictions starting again in the Calderdale area with a ruling that we cannot meet with friends or family members in our gardens which is a big blow as this has been a life-saver in the past months, so once again I end with the words **'We'll praise him for all that is past and trust him for all that's to come'** as we ponder on these new regulations. Until next time we send our love, thoughts and prayers to all friends of the Calderdale Methodist Circuit.

## Have you read the Good News Stories?

- What has inspired you from these stories?
- Do you think you could do something similar? If so contact the relevant church to see how they went about it and learn from their experience.
- What is God calling you to do to engage with your local community?

## Busoasis Update

We continue to do our regular prayer drives around Calderdale, and have a few more Covid story interviews set up to do over the summer. Sharon is now also one of the Circuits Mission Enablers who is working as part of a team to look at mission beyond lockdown, and how we can build on what we have done and learnt through the pandemic.

Please check out the new Circuits Facebook page, where you will be able find all sorts of different things going on around circuit as well as worship videos from our churches, bus prayer drives and interviews and meditations. Please contact myself or Paul Welch if you would like more information.

*Sharon Longman*

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"The best I can do for Christmas Eve is three together in the ninth row"

Be assured the **Methodist** people are praying for the **world** at this time



The **Methodist** Church   
[www.methodist.org.uk](http://www.methodist.org.uk)



It is hoped that Issue No. 22 of this News-letter will come out soon. The Circuit Office is currently closed but material can still be sent to [office@calderdalemethodists.org.uk](mailto:office@calderdalemethodists.org.uk) Please send items as soon as you have them available

### Around the Dale

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