



the bridge monthly bulletin



May 2025

Welcome to this edition of the Bridge as we move from our Easter celebrations and encounters with the risen Jesus, through the mystery and uncertainty of Jesus' ascension, the physical absence that I am sure was equally as confusing and disconcerting as his death. The disciples cast around and it always feels to me, that they sought to re-establish a familiar pattern by electing Matthias to fill the hole left by Judas. It is almost as if this act might somehow restore things to how they were. What they hadn't realised, was that although he seemed absent, Jesus was still at work, and the experience of Pentecost transformed everything. It must have been an incredible time as they rode the wave of the Spirit outpouring, equipping and transforming people's lives each day.

I was going to write that, "it must have been an incredible time", but I don't wish to use the past tense, as I believe this move of the Spirit continues to occur today. We have to learn to emulate the surfers, who it seems endlessly paddle out from shore into deeper water to catch that perfect wave as it forms, but new surfers are often slightly out of sync and fail to catch the wave. Of course, perseverance, repetition, and careful observation of the rhythms of the water, mean they get better and better, and find it easier to identify, and ride those perfect waves. I think tuning into God's mission, His/Her ministry in the world, is a similar process. When we start, we'll make the same mistakes, we'll see the potential, but not be quite ready, or not quite aligned, but eventually we will catch one, and understand what it is to ride the Spirit's wave.

We are all learning how to do this, and I hope you'll join me, in discerning and scanning for these tiny ripples of God's love that we might follow. I'm also hoping you'll check out the next set of ideas that have been percolating in this newsletter. By the time you read this, a fuller version of the talk I gave at the circuit meeting will be available to read or watch on the circuit website. Please do once again sign up, as churches, or as individuals. Let me know what excites you, or how you feel you might be involved. That's part of the way, the circuit leadership are discerning where the Spirit is leading us, so we'd appreciate your assistance. in that process.

Rev Andy

**We can't always see
the way love
flows through our hearts
into the world
around us,
the way it creates
invisible ripples
that extend on and on,
the way it
travels faster than light
across time and space
into eternity,
the way it pours
down from heaven
like rain and gradually
soaks us
through and through,
wins us over,
melts our hardened hearts,
teaches us
to understand each other
and brings us together
in a spirit of unity.**

Nicky Gant for <http://www.uniteinprayer.org>



Lectionary Reflections from Roots on the Web.

4 May A change of perspective Acts 9.1- 6,(7-20)

This is the well-known story of the conversion of Saul of Tarsus, later known as the Apostle Paul. Saul is on his way to Damascus to persecute followers of Jesus. On the way, he is felled by a blinding light and Jesus asks why he is persecuting him. Meanwhile, God speaks to a faithful follower, Ananias, who, despite his misgivings, goes to Saul, greets him as a brother and lays hands upon him. Saul's sight is restored and he is baptised.

This week we explore changes in perspective – whether we can change ours, whether we allow others to change and how God changes how we see things.

Actors become so well known for playing one particular role, such as Daniel Radcliffe as 'Harry Potter', that it is hard for them to be seen as anything else. Perhaps it is the same for us when people won't let us forget a mistake we made when we were young. Saul was well known for hating and targeting Christians, yet through a dramatic encounter with Jesus he was transformed and became known as Paul, the great Christian missionary. Similarly, in the Gospel reading, Peter might have been stuck with the label of the 'person who denied Jesus in his hour of need'. But Jesus restores their relationship and commissions Peter for a new ministry. The perspectives of both Paul and Peter are both radically changed. How has encountering Jesus changed us and how we live? Can people see a difference in us?



Image from Roots on the Web
"Restored" – Inspired by Acts 9:1-20,
Rev. Lisle Gwynn Garrity



image from Roots on the Web

11 May Called to live Acts 9.36-43

A disciple called Dorcas demonstrated her faith by caring for and befriending vulnerable widows in her city of Joppa. When she dies, Peter is sent for. Peter prays and calls for her to live and she is raised from the dead.

This week we explore how Jesus calls us to live, sharing eternal life and making a difference in the lives around us.

Here we have an interesting interplay between human life and eternal life. Dorcas put her faith into action, devoting her time to doing good works serving others. People were devastated when she died. What impact will our lives

have on others? How can we use our lives to give life/worth to people? Why was Dorcas raised back to life? Was it to do more work as there was no one else who could? Was it to show Peter's apostolic succession? This is the start of Christian Aid Week, and they are known for their slogan 'we believe in life before death'. Where is real life to be found? How can we play a part in that?

18 May Acts 11.1-18

Peter recounts his vision and encounter with Cornelius to the Jewish Christians in Jerusalem, explaining that God is clearly working among the Gentiles, as evidenced by the work of the Holy Spirit.

God is making all things new, and like Peter we discover that the old boundaries of Jew and Gentile, separation based on culture, race, food or language, are now obsolete and barriers to the new thing God is doing.

Consider how food can be part of our identity – staple foods vary across cultures and some faiths have rules about what you can and can't eat. However, food can also exclude if people don't know the rules about what can be eaten and how (just think of going to a posh dinner and being presented with an array of unfamiliar cutlery). Jesus has given us a new identity, but this takes time to work out, step by step. Consider the significance of the numbers contained in the Acts passage (three times, six witnesses, which was double the usual number needed normally to verify something as true). How can we distinguish as a community between rules that protect us and rules that we need to be liberated from?

25 May Not all plain sailing Acts 16.9-15

Paul has a vision of a man from Macedonia urging him to come over to help them. Paul and his companions set sail immediately, but, when they arrive in Philippi, instead of meeting a man, Paul encounters a God-fearing woman named Lydia.

Though we may have a sense of God's will and direction, following that call is not always plain sailing. There is a need for trust in God's provision and voice, particularly during turbulence, trusting that God has gone ahead of us and will guide us.

God works in unexpected ways. Will we follow God through the unexpected? Paul, expecting to find a group of men in the leading city of the region, found a group of women by a river instead. This group was led by Lydia, an unbaptised Gentile believer, and she was on the edge rather than the centre of the group. Perhaps this group of women was an original Fresh Expression of church! Paul went expecting to offer, but he ended up receiving. What expectations do we have of how God works that perhaps need changing?



OPPORTUNITIES *continuing with the ideas presented at the March circuit meeting by Rev Andy.*



Child/Youth/Family Ministry

We obviously have some level of family ministry across Ryedale. Several toddler groups, a messy church, and ecumenically fledgling youth clubs. There is opportunity, for a more strategic working together, date synchronising and signposting between us. There also options ecumenically to share resources, stop duplication, and ensure there are centres of worship equipped to embrace families in their worship and life.

The present Methodist focus for family worship from toddlers to all-age Sunday worship is Pickering, developed with Karen's assistance, but we have the option to link with

Hendrick and Mavis Klaver – CofE pioneers in Malton to expand this, and evolve our other groups to connect into a wider discipleship stream.

Self Service Spirituality Stop

On entering a chapel, the TV screens fire up with a welcoming message, and a touchscreen offers a variety of media options...

1. Spiritual walk video with reflections, History of the space, Worship in the space, Taize worship, Lectio Divina guided session, Quiet music, Trad Hymns, Compline / morning Prayer Northumbria, Praise service from local Methodist, Nooma style reflection
 2. The space could also offer hybrid engagement with either services at Wesley (streamed), or those offered by Kairos.
 3. When services are online / zoom then OWL webcam technology could bring them into the meetings
 4. Prayer stations would be available to interact with.
 5. Rolling screens with local methodist activities / signposts to other local events.
 6. Local art could be displayed /commission taken. Security would need to be considered.
 7. Local walks / spiritual guides for walks available.
- Where possible self serve hospitality or serve drinks and welcome people.



In Person Hangout for Hybrid Workers & Young Adults

With potentially 30 -40% of people working online (and with full fibre now to villages this will increase), the experience of a few people I have met is that they are looking for a place to meet people, socialise , but don't feel they can linger in local coffee shops for a long time, and evening hangout spaces are mostly alcohol based.

I've spoken to single young adults, who would also be interested in a meeting place, which is not expensive, in early evenings.

It feels there is a potential to offer an evening café environment – maybe around teatime, OR a daytime workspace, where people can bring laptops and work alongside others.



Inclusive Church


Could your church, sign up to be an Inclusive Church –‘a church which celebrates and affirms every person and does not discriminate.’ This would include LGBTQ, ethnic and neurodiverse communities, and offering same-sex marriage.

It may be that none of our existing churches would be comfortable to do this, but the option remains for us to plant a New Place for New People with this outlook, in partnership with Kairos.

Kairos Partnership

There is a gap in provision, locally, for an in-person, or better, hybrid version of Kairos. Those who wish to, could already engage with Kairos online, but, an opportunity exists to create a hybrid group, drawing on some of the rhythms and groups within Kairos, in Ryedale, starting from scratch. My suggestion is to use ‘The Chosen’ as a possible gathering conversation point – it is now on Netflix, but showing and discussing it would be a great option. This would be a great combination with a young adult / hybrid worker hangout space – and be aimed at early evenings, and serve hot pizzas.





**Lord, you are faithful to your promises.
Through the Spirit you bless us
with **abounding hope**.
When power seeks to silence justice,
give us the courage to raise our voice.
When an end to poverty seems far off,
renew our faith in your kingdom come on earth.
When our neighbour reaches out,
inspire us to respond with overflowing love.
In Jesus' name, Amen**

11-17 May 2025

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**Thornton Le Dale
Methodist Church**

Invite you to
**A Musical Evening with
MALTON MALE VOICE CHOIR**
Friday 20th June at 7pm.
Refreshments to Follow.
Collection for Church Funds.

All Welcome.



