



the bridge monthly bulletin



April 2026

Dear Friends

As many of you will know, this spring marks a change for me in ministry. I have been part of the Ryedale community for some time, including during my curacy in Kirkdale. In November 2023 I was appointed to serve as the authorised presbyter for the Methodist churches in Helmsley and Rievaulx, while also serving as Priest in Charge of the Church of England parishes of Helmsley and Upper Ryedale. It has been a privilege to share in the life of these communities and to work alongside many generous and faithful people across the churches of this area.

Over time the relationship between the churches in Helmsley and Upper Ryedale has grown stronger as we have shared worship, ministry and mission together. When it proved difficult to appoint a replacement Anglican colleague to support the work in Upper Ryedale, the Anglican churches began to consider how that growing partnership might take a clearer shape for the future. As a result, the decision has been made to formalise that relationship and I will now be licensed as Vicar of Helmsley, serving the parishes of Helmsley and Upper Ryedale.

Although my formal role within the Methodist Circuit will come to an end, it is bittersweet to be stepping back from that ministry. I hope very much that the friendships and connections we have formed will continue to flourish. In rural places like ours the life of the church is often sustained by simple acts of generosity and cooperation. Many of the relationships we share have grown naturally through working alongside one another in our villages and communities.

One expression of that shared life is the developing Saint Aelred's Pilgrim Trail. Pilgrimage invites people to walk at a human pace, noticing the landscape around them and the stories held within it. As people pass through fields, villages and ancient places of prayer they often find space to reflect, to talk, or simply to be still. My hope is that the trail will continue to offer welcome and hospitality to many who travel through this beautiful part of the world.

I am also encouraged by the plans for the pioneering ministry based in Sinnington. It is an exciting step for the circuit as it explores new ways of engaging with people and connecting faith with the landscape and heritage of this area. I hope this work will help build further friendships and connections between churches, communities and those who might not otherwise find their way into church life.

We will have the opportunity to gather and mark this transition at the circuit service in Helmsley at 3pm on Sunday 26 April, giving thanks for what we have shared and praying for the future of the circuit.

The Easter season reminds us that God is always at work in times of change. Again and again the story of faith shows us that new life often grows in unexpected places. My prayer is that we may continue to discover that hope wherever we are called to serve.

Thank you for the kindness, encouragement and friendship you have shown me. It has been a privilege to share part of the journey with you.

Every blessing, **Revd Melanie Burnside**

**May the road rise
up to meet you.**

**May the wind be
always at your
back.**

**May the sun shine
warm upon your
face;**

**the rains fall soft
upon your fields
and until we meet
again,**

**may God hold you
in the palm of His
hand.**

Traditional
Irish Blessing



Lectionary Reflections *from Roots on the web*

5 April Matthew 28.1-10

Two women, disciples of Jesus, visit his tomb and find it empty. They are sent by an angel to tell the rest of the disciples that Jesus is raised. As they run, they meet Jesus himself who repeats the angel's message that he is risen.

This is an opportunity to enter into the drama of the first Easter Day and recognise the presence of Jesus in the midst of events that shake us. We will think about how life can surprise us, but also how God always whispers in our ears, 'Don't be afraid' as the bewildered women heard through an angel when they had faithfully gone to the tomb early on Sunday morning.

Matthew's account of the first Easter Sunday morning is very dramatic. An earthquake, a dazzling angel and guards falling to the ground like dead men. Matthew is a skilled writer, and his account clearly aims to grab the hearers' attention. How much of what he describes actually happened is a matter of great scholarly debate. Whether Matthew's descriptions are literal or metaphorical, what he does make clear is that something truly groundbreaking happened that morning. Jesus, who was crucified, dead and buried, is alive. That is the message of the angel. Like the petrified guards and the wondering women, we might not know exactly how the resurrection happened, but we can know the glorious truth that Jesus is risen.



**Lord Jesus Christ
you have come to
us, born as one of
us, Mary's son;**

**Led out to die on
Calvary, risen from
death to set us free;**

**Living Lord Jesus,
help us see you are
Lord.**

© Roots for Churches Ltd (www.rootsforchurches.com) 2002-2026. Reproduced with permission.

12 April John 20.19-31

Peter, a disciple of Jesus, becomes a wise and inspiring leader of the Early Church. He writes to Christians who are living in scattered communities across the eastern Mediterranean area. Peter encourages them to stay faithful in the face of lots of difficulties and persecution.

Peter writes to Christians in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia, who are experiencing persecution, a test of their faith – faith that is clear even without having seen the one in whom they believe. This prompts questions about how we know Jesus. Though we haven't seen Jesus, we know him. We all have different ways of knowing and growing in our faith. As a church community, we can share our experiences, supporting each other in our journeys of faith.



19 April 2026 **Breaking bread** Luke 24. 13- 35

Two disciples walk back from Jerusalem to their home in Emmaus. They are in despair about the death of Jesus. Jesus appears and walks beside them, but they do not recognise him. He teaches them from the Scriptures, and they see who he is when he breaks bread with them.

The Gospel passage prompts questions about how we know Jesus: Cleopas and his friend only recognised Jesus when he blessed and broke bread. This act, whether eucharistic or in everyday hospitality, is profound. This week, we explore knowing Jesus in breaking bread and hospitality and consider the stories Jesus was telling before they recognised him.

Minister and theologian Inderjit Bhogal shared a moving story where he encountered a homeless man named Albert, who visited a bakery at the end of the day. Albert would accept bread and share it with others. He shared some with Inderjit, who spoke of what a profound experience it was. As a minister, he was used to serving, sharing bread and providing for others. It was also important to him to receive, regardless of however marginalised in society the donor may be. Receiving hospitality in the church can be hard when we are used to providing it, but it is important as this brings people together and breaks down divides.

**Lord Jesus Christ, we
would come to you,
live our lives for you,
Son of God.**

**All your commands we
know are true; your
many gifts will make
us new;**

**Into our lives your
power breaks through
living Lord.**

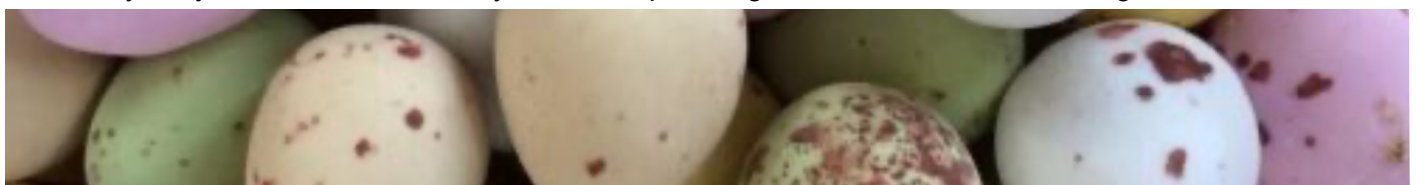


26 April **Gateway to life** John 10.1-10

Jesus talks about the safety and dangers of caring for sheep. The shepherd calls his sheep by name, and the sheep know the shepherd's voice, but will run away from strangers. The Pharisees do not understand that Jesus is referring to himself. Jesus also says that he is the gate of the sheepfold, and whoever enters by him will be saved.

This passage invites us to reflect on listening to Jesus' voice, as the sheep follow him alone. The image of Jesus being the gate is very powerful and leads the sheep, and us, to an abundance of life. We consider how we might follow Jesus' voice to the life we are in need of.

A group of friends decided that, once they retired, they'd like to keep sheep. They rented a field near their village and moved their small flock in. Everything went well for the first few years, but during a particularly wet winter some of the sheep suffered from foot rot. The following lambing season was particularly demanding, with more ewes and their new-borns needing attention. Then two of the friends became unwell, which added to the pressures on the others. The friends realised they were all getting older, and that rearing sheep was anything but the romantic pastime they'd imagined. 'We don't have to do this,' they said to each other and, reluctantly, they decided to call it a day. Good shepherding is sacrificial and demanding.



Changes in the West of the Circuit...

As you will have seen in the letter from Revd Mel there have been some changes in the West of the Circuit since the start of this Church year. In September, Revd Mel was looking after Helmsley and Rievaulx churches and Revd Sue Binks was the vicar of Kirkdale LEP. Revd Sue retired in October and those who worship at St Hilda's are waiting to see what happens next. We have loved having Revd Mel with us and are sad to see her go too - the good thing is she's not going far!

We said goodbye to Rev Sue Binks, a faithful vicar and friend to so many in the Kirkdale Benefice. She worked very hard to facilitate the ecumenical partnership in Kirkdale Parish, supporting Rev Melanie Burnside in her curacy before she took on her responsibilities in Helmsley. Susan has worked tirelessly to support individuals and community events in the five villages in her care.

Since we had to say goodbye on her retirement, the service and buffet lunch in Harome, were a fitting tribute to her work amongst us. The church was packed and the service, led by Susan, was joyful and sad in equal measure. At Susan's request, I was privileged to be able to lead 'You shall go out with joy!' to the beat of the drum at the end of the service. The Harome ladies choir, of which Susan was part, sang a blessing and at the village hall they sang ABBA's 'dancing queen' and Aretha Franklin's 'say a little prayer for you'.

*Sue and her husband have moved to Kent and we wish them both a long and happy retirement. It will not be long before Susan finds opportunities to serve and help in her new surroundings. She leaves a rich legacy here in Ryedale. She was an inspiration and a delight and will be sorely missed. **Daisy Barnes***



The Circuit is seeking approval from the district to recruit a local lay pastor for Helmsley and Rievaulx who would also assist Revd Andy. A supernumerary minister from a nearby circuit has offered help too.



and in the East...

If you have looked into the plan recently, you will have seen it split into sections and, right at the top, four churches: Ebberston, Allerston, Sinnington and Thornton Dale. The rest of the plan is divided geographically, but this particular group cuts across boundaries. This is because, as churches found it harder to find people ready, willing and able to take on jobs, we sought to look to work together as a church. As a result, we have formed a single church in four different communities: The EAST church, a name which reflects the location within the circuit of the churches, but also uses the initial letters of the villages,

*EAST church has a church council, which meets twice a year, and each church may have a church meeting once a year to discuss property issues. The churches still worship as they used to, but do have a united service on every fifth Sunday of the month when we travel around to each others' churches for worship. EAST church is still in its early stages, and we are still finding our way. Please pray for us as we seek to work together in the Lord. **Revd Graham.***

Circuit service at Helmsley 3pm on Sunday 26 April

As Revd Mel moves on we give thanks for her ministry as well as celebrating our local preachers.

Christian Aid Week 10 - 16 May 2026



is our shared moment to come together – across churches, communities and households – to stand alongside people living in poverty.

For one focused week, thousands of people across Britain and Ireland give, fundraise, pray and act together. This year, what will you do?
<https://caw.christianaid.org.uk/>

Contacts: Revd Andy Lindley: superintendent@ryedalemethodist.org.uk

Revd Graham Ransom: 01751 471501 graham.ransom@methodist.org.uk

Revd Jane Brown: jane.brown@ryedalemethodist.org.uk



ryedalemethodists@gmail.com

<https://www.ryedalemethodist.org.uk/events.html>
for further information



49