NEWSLETTER DECEMBER 2025

Today's reflection is by Rev. Tracy Birks:
Dear Friends,
As we prepare to celebrate Jesus' birth what stands out for you? Is it the Christ-child, the nativity, the presents, seeing family, a holiday? For me it's the carols, Hark the Herald a much-loved carol by Charles Wesley.

Hark! the herald angels sing,
Glory to the newborn King:
peace on earth, and mercy mild

It evokes beautiful imagery of the angels singing to the newborn King, the nativity image of baby lying in a manger with Mary and Joseph and the Angels singing.
Yet it was not an easy first Christmas. Mary was barely out of puberty, when she courageously and faithfully accepts Gods will. Whilst Joseph accepts his bride to be is pregnant. The journey to Bethlehem was gruelling for a heavily pregnant woman, then giving birth in a room with animals and no family support. A while later the Holy family flee to Egypt becoming refugees.

For many people around the world and in our own communities too this will not be an easy Christmas because of war, conflict, refugee, financial struggles, food and fuel poverty, illness, domestic violence, homelessness. Christmas is a time of joy and hope with the birth of Jesus but there will be people hurting in our communities possibly our own street.

So this Christmas as we celebrate the coming of the Christ-child, remember Jesus wants us to be their hearts and hands in our communities. We could give time to others, give to a toy drive, a local food bank, support the Methodist Charity 'All We Can' for their work abroad.
But do leave time to attend a Carol service or Christmas day service.

A Prayer for Advent and Christmas
Loving Lord Jesus born in a lowly stable but worshipped by angels send us your Holy Spirit as we prepare to wait in Advent and celebrate your birth at Christmas.
In this busy time of year help us to manage our time and to pause, to seek quiet spaces, and moments so that we might hear your voice in the noise at this time of year.
Let us be your light and hope in our communities so they too can celebrate the love that came down at Christmas, Amen

I pray you have a Christmas filled with joy, love, peace, and blessings
With love and peace, Rev. Tracy



Thank you to Bingley Brownies for decorating this beautiful tree!

<u>Friends across the circuit,</u>

I cannot thank you all enough for the support and kindness I've been shown during my pregnancy. My maternity leave is due to begin on Christmas day, so I am looking forward to still having time to be able to celebrate the joy of Advent and Christmas with you all.
Baby is due just after Christmas, I am sure that the staff team will pass on any good news in the New Year, and share via the newsletter when Baby arrives.

Every blessing, Pippa

Update from Pippa re the JPIT conference – 'For goodness sake'

Last weekend I was able to attend the national JPIT conference held in Derby, JPIT stands for Joint Public Issues team. It's an ecumenical group run by the Methodist Church, Baptist Church and United reformed Church, their aim is to work together and pray together for peace.

The conference day was made up of two key note speakers and two 'breakout' sessions where you could pick which topics were you wanted to hear more about.

The two keynote speakers (Rev Sally Foster-Fulton and Rev Dr Guli Francis-Dehqani) both addressed the general political atmosphere going on in the country today. We looked at what is 'ours to do', meaning what are we called to do as Christians, where can we make a difference? We were reminded that everything hinges on our love of God and our love of each other. Some of the topics touched upon such as Climate change, asylum seekers, the rise of the far right, debt, poverty etc all came down to one thing really, a lack of equality, a lack of love for our neighbour. The speakers discussed how we often have a tendency to wade in, to try to discipline and shun each other, to speak our own views louder than the other person. But perhaps right now in a country that has very clear divisions in it, our job is to turn the heat down, provide a less volatile space where people can come and be heard, be listened to, not be judged. Whilst it is sometimes clear who the oppressed is and who the oppressor is, we also acknowledge that life is messy and people are messy, sometimes things are not as clear cut as we might think they are. One of the speakers called this 'occupying the nuanced space between the two binary sides.' By the end of the second speech we were reminded that our public witness as Christians, showing people who Jesus is through our own words and actions is one of the most powerful things we can do, and by doing this we can live out the faith that we proclaim. We can help people see Jesus in us, by also making sure we see Jesus in every person.

We were given a large choice of breakout groups to attend, looking more closely at different issues that the UK is grappling with right now. It was hard to pick!! I ended up choosing to attend the sessions on 'The far right and rise of Christian nationalism' and a talk by the Trussel trust about debt and social justice.

'The far right and rise of Christian nationalism' talk was incredibly interesting, looking at what is fueling the uprising of the far right, including looking at the links with the quiet revival. We looked at how inequality over many years, especially for working class people, coupled with misinformation online and the finger being pointed at marginalised groups as the 'cause' of inequality is fueling a rise in racism, homophobia and Christian nationalism and how these things are now returning to being 'normalised' in a way that hasn't been seen in this country for decades. We talked about the people who no longer feel safe in this country. We then looked at how we can play a small role in combating this, whether by listening to people's concerns so that they feel heard, making sure our churches are safe places for all, or by something as simple as educating people on critically thinking about what they might read online.

The final breakout session from the trussell trust was really informative about the trap of debt, how people fall into it and how hard it is to then break out. We also talked about how Social justice and social action go hand in hand. Whilst it is great that so many of our churches provide foodbanks (social action) the Church also needs to be playing a role in making sure foodbanks are no longer needed (social justice).

The whole conference was incredibly powerful, it also provided me with hope!! Hope that the wider church is making its mark, is trying to play its part in healing what is going on in this Country, and that all the small roles we play in our own churches make a difference.

You can watch the two key note speakers on the website.
https://jpit.uk/conference

The Circuit is going through a Visioning process, discerning the next steps.

If you would like a reminder of where this process has been and is heading, all the 'Bright Hope for Tomorrow' updates are available on the website:

https://www.airedalemethodists.org/brighthope/

A Prayer for this Celtic Advent season

As I arise today in the shrouded morning light with the waning rays of sun, the leafless trees, come O Bringer of the New to this worn and weary season. Come to my hardiness of effort while the land is waiting to be reborn. Come to my sleepy eyes while my vision waits to be renewed. Come to my sluggardly limbs while I wait for a time to rest awhile. Come to my busy hands that I might learn to tend and take care. Come to my anxious heart that I might not be overwhelmed. Come to my soul in stillness Advent God, that I may discern the work that I must do to get ready, the work that I can let go, and the work of prayer that I might be attentive. Let me learn from the earth's quiet so I may relax in each moment and enjoy my task for now, untroubled by tasks for later, Let me receive the peace of your blessing as I wait and watch with you.

Tess Ward
The Celtic Wheel of the Year: Old Celtic and Christian Prayers

WHAT'S ON?



The Cobbydale Singers are

entertaining the
Silsden Thursday Club members with a
Christmas Celebration
on Thursday 11th December at 2.30pm
You are invited to come along and join them

Silsden Methodist Church

A Christmas Concert

with

Airedale Male Voice Choir

Saturday 13th December 2025 at 7.30pm

Refreshments included

Donations in aid of the local charity

Homeless, not Helpless

CULLINGWORTH METHODIST CHURCH
INVITES YOU TO OUR

CHRISTMAS FAIR

ON



SATURDAY 6TH DECEMBER

BETWEEN 10 AND 12 NOON

Refreshments (including bacon sandwiches)
Raffle
Cake Stall
Festive Stalls
Children's Craft Activities



EVERYBODY WELCOME TO JOIN US

CHRISTMAS SERVICES AROUND THE CIRCUIT

SUNDAY 7TH DECEMBER:
6PM RIDDLESDEN CHURCHES TOGETHER CAROLS AT ST MARY'S

MONDAY 8TH DECEMBER:
2PM CAROL SERVICE, OXENHOPE

SUNDAY 14TH DECEMBER:
10.30AM WVC CAROL SERVICE, LEES
3PM CAROL SERVICE, LONG LEE
4PM CAROLS SERVICE, BINGLEY
6PM CAROL SERVICE, STEETON
6PM CHRISTMASSY PRAISE SERVICE, ELDWICK

WEDNESDAY 17TH DECEMBER:
6PM CIRCUIT BARN SERVICE (CIRCUIT CELEBRATION, CRAGHOUSE FARM BD20 0NP)

THURSDAY 18TH DECEMBER:
CAROLS BY CANDLELIGHT, ELDWICK

SATURDAY 20TH DECEMBER:
10AM CAROLS AND COFFEE, CULLINGWORTH

SUNDAY 21ST DECEMBER:
10.30AM CAROL SERVICES AT CULLINGWORTH, CROSS HILLS, THE NEW PLACE
2PM NATIVITY, MARSH
2.30PM CAROL SERVICE, LEES
4PM CAROL SERVICE, SILSDEN
6PM CHOIR CAROL SERVICE, ILKLEY ROAD

WEDNESDAY 24TH DECEMBER, CHRISTMAS EVE:
3PM CHRISTINGLE, ELDWICK
6PM CANDLELIT NATIVITY, OAKWORTH

THURSDAY 25TH DECEMBER, CHRISTMAS DAY:
9.30AM CAROL SERVICE AT OXENHOPE
10AM SERVICES AT: BINGLEY, LONG LEE, SILSDEN, STEETON

Please keep this page!
If information needs to be updated, a new version will be sent out in a future

Opportunities to pray and worship together (outside of Sunday Mornings):

@ Steeton Methodist Church
Prayer and Praise on the first Thursday of the month, 7pm to 8pm

@ Silsden Methodist Church
Prayer gathering, first Monday in the month, 7pm

@ St Peter's Methodist Church, Cross Hills
Weekday Communion Service, first Wednesday in the month, 10am
Prayer Service, St Peter's Cross Hills every Wednesday, 10am
(followed by coffee at 10.30am)

@ Silsden Methodist Church
Praise Service, fourth Sunday in the month, 6pm

@ The New Place
Methodist Way of Life Quiet Reflection, fourth Wednesday each month, 6pm
Evening Cafe Service, third Sunday each month, 5pm

@ Lees Methodist Church
Café Worship, third Sunday in the month, 1pm

@ Cullingworth Methodist Church
second Wednesday in the month
9.30am Prayer
9.45am Communion

@ Silsden Methodist Church
'Born in Song', every Friday, 10.30-11am





Airedale Methodist Circuit
in the Yorkshire West District