Airedale Methodist Circuit
in the Yorkshire West District

NEWSLETTER MARCH 2026

This month's reflection is by Rev. Clare Stainsby:

Those of us who are strong and able in the faith need to step in and lend a hand to those who falter, and not just do what is most convenient for us. Strength is for service, not status. Each one of us needs to look after the good of the people around us, asking ourselves, "How can I help?" That's exactly what Jesus did. He didn't make it easy for himself by avoiding people's troubles, but waded right in and helped out. God wants the combination of his steady, constant calling and warm, personal counsel in Scripture to come to characterise us, keeping us alert for whatever God will do next. May our dependably steady and warmly personal God develop maturity in you so that you get along with each other as well as Jesus gets along with us all. Then we'll be a choir, our very lives singing in harmony in a stunning anthem to God. May the God of hope fill you up with joy, fill you up with peace, so that your believing lives, filled with the life-giving energy of the Holy Spirit, will brim over with hope!
Part of Romans 15: 1 - 13 (The Message)

Imagine a glass with water in it. Are you someone who sees a glass that's half empty or half full? Do you look at the world and life around you and see that all is doom and gloom? Are do you see the positives, the hope, the possibilities?

We are still in the early months of this year, and while there is much turmoil, anxiety and uncertainty, in the world as a whole, in our nation, in our communities and in our circuit, there is so much to be positive about. Noel Coward once said - "No one likes changes except a wet baby!" But change is inevitable, because everything in life is always changing And we are changing too - inevitably growing older. We've seen change in our congregations, as people grow older, as our numbers dwindle, as our energy for action is depleted. The changes in the circuit over 4 years ago, and the changes that are coming are all about recognising the challenges we face, and finding a future with hope in it. Of course, we always have hope because God is with us. And it's clear wherever you go that the Methodist Church is seeing that God is doing a new thing. Our changes are because we want to be part of what God is doing, rather than leaving things to decline until the last person out closes the door.

So what are the changes that will happen imminently or are already underway? In the next few months, we will celebrate the mission completed in four of our buildings. No one wants to belittle the pain and loss and grief of letting go for the congregations of Marsh, Ilkley Road, Long Lee and Eastburn. Those things are very real. But there is much to celebrate of a faithful and faith-filled past. Those buildings will no longer be places that serve God's purposes here. But the church of which they were a visible and tangible presence will continue in the people who will continue to worship and serve God in the Circuit, in whatever way they discern God is leading them. And all our prayers and support is with them in this.

Three other buildings: Bingley, Lees and St. Peter's Cross Hills are already in Circuit hands, as we seek to build up these places for God's purpose and mission moving forwards. They will still be places of worship, though not at 10.30 on a Sunday morning. And they will very much be places of mission, outreach and new hope. It is expected that lay leaders for those three projects will be appointed soon, and some of the dreaming about what the future could look like in all of them has begun. We are in a bit of a waiting period still, and that is never comfortable for anyone, but the next steps will be taken soon. We don't have an end point in view for any of these places, because God's will, purpose and mission will develop there over time, as it has at The New Place. We are committed, both financial and in terms of support for all four buildings moving forward.

Our other church buildings, Cullingworth, Oakworth, Oxenhope, Silsden and Steeton, along with our ecumenical partnerships in Cononley and Eldwick, will continue to be places where the people of God can meet to worship God at on a Sunday morning. We hope that having fewer places of worship happening at that time, will allow those centre to be places where God is met, and people are encouraged in their journey of faith. Those places will also be places where God's mission continues to be worked out, and lived out in both buildings and nearby communities. All of those church communities also need to be praying and seeking their next steps towards building God's kingdom.

We remain committed to everyone who is part of the family of Airedale Circuit. We are currently working together to look at the pastoral systems across the circuit, building them into something that is truly robust for the coming era. We are also looking at how our financial matters and property matters can best be managed moving forwards. Safeguarding of all our buildings remains a top priority.

Can you see a glass half full, and filling, until it runs over with God's grace, hope, love and blessing?
"May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. Romans: 15: 13

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/**

Explore Sessions:
All are welcome: Worship Leaders, Local Preachers, and all members of Airedale congregations!

2nd Monday of each month, 7pm on Zoom. Please let Rev Nel know if you're hoping to attend and she will email the Zoom link to you.

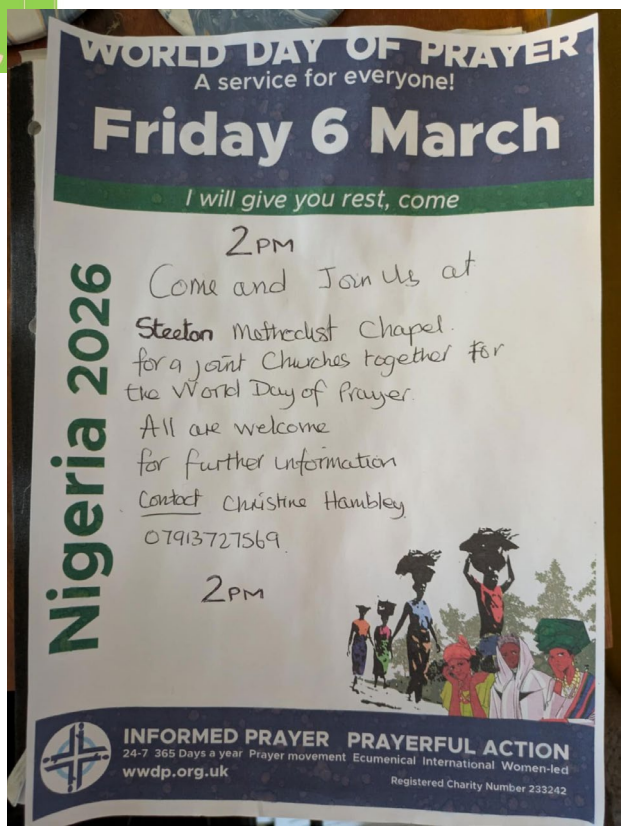
The next is on: 9th March

WHAT'S ON IN MARCH?









Lent Courses

'Christ in the Wilderness'
Tuesdays 7.30-9pm, starting 24th Feb
Steeton Methodist Church

'Put Yourself in my Shoes'
Mondays 2-3pm, starting 23rd Feb
Bingley Methodist Church

'On the Way' (MWOL)
Thursdays 12.30-2pm, starting 26th Feb
The New Place

'Embracing Justice'
Mondays 12.30-2pm, starting 23rd Feb
St Mary's Meeting Rooms, Riddlesden

'Images related to the ministry and mission of Jesus'
Weekdays online starting 23rd Feb
Fresh Aire Facebook Page

ALL WELCOME!

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Additional Services during Lent

30TH MARCH

7pm Stations of the Cross at Our Lady of Mount Carmel

2ND APRIL MAUNDY THURSDAY

6pm Communion at Ilkley Road Methodist Church
7pm Communion at Silsden Methodist Church

3RD APRIL GOOD FRIDAY

10.30am Silsden Churches Together Walk of Witness
(starting at Our Lady of Mount Carmel, via St James' and finishing at Silsden Methodist Church)
11am Bingley Churches Together Open Air Service at Bingley Market Place
7.30pm Choir-led Service at Ilkley Road Methodist Church

5TH APRIL

6.30am Sunrise Service
Meet at Farnhill Moor at 6am

Celebration Services
over the coming months

Celebrating Marsh Methodist Church
2pm, 8th March 2026

Celebrating Ilkley Road Methodist Church
2pm, 10th May 2026

Celebrating Long Lee Methodist Church
10.30am, 7th June 2026

Celebrating Eastburn Methodist Church
10.30am, 28th June 2026

Celebrating Aire Valley Methodist Church and Farewell to Rev. Nel Shallow
2pm, 28th June 2026,
Cullingworth Methodist Church

Retirement Service for Rev. Clare Stainsby
2pm, 19th July 2026
Silsden Methodist Church

Please keep in your prayers those involved in the upcoming changes as we approach these dates.

Stationing News:

As you may know by now, Airedale Circuit has not been successful in the 2nd round of stationing. However, the process is ongoing, so please do keep all involved in your prayers.

Here is a message from Kerry Tankard, Chair of the District:

Dear Friends,

We often feel most hopeful when we are in control, when we know all the answers, and when we can see what is going to happen next. In many ways that seems a normal human response, but in what way is the holy, Christian, faith-filled response? Is faith more about embracing the unexpected than controlling everything before us?

There was a hymn I discovered as part of a Lent Collection in the year 2000. It was, at the time, over 150 years old but I had never come across it. The hymn is, "We Walk by Faith" and its first line is "We walk by faith, and not by sight . . " It is written as an Easter hymn and I have put the full words below, but in this moment I offer it as an encouragement. The way of faith is one we walk not seeing or controlling everything before us. As Hebrews 11.1 puts it: "Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen."

I am crucially aware, at this point in the stationing process, I still do not have the name of a new minister for you to come and serve as Superintendent. I realise that in a time of change that that can cause some concern for you, and for me. This will feel demoralising if we are people defined by the worldly need to control, rather than the faithful need to trust in God.

You are a Circuit committed to a Bright Hope, one filled with encounters with God, one filled with an openness to the possibilities of God, and one that orientates itself to faith rather than to human control. To turn from today to tomorrow knowing you are not in control is costly. The loss of what is being given up and left behind is added to the uncertainty of what will be. However, I want to suggest to you that that is everything the Gospel is about. Fishermen and tax-collectors leaving their lives to follow Christ; Paul leaving his persecution of the Christians to become one of them; God, emptying himself in Jesus, becoming human, and dying, only then to reveal the possibility of resurrection his disciples could not imagine.

There is uncertainty before us in what will happen, but there is the certainty that God is with us, and in that we can trust. If the right person does not emerge in stationing for us this year, we will trust God in that. I will work with the Circuit more closely for a year as we wait on God together to see what he is longing to give us.

Yours,

Kerry

1. We walk by faith, and not by sight;
No gracious words we hear
From Him who spoke as none ne'er spoke,
But we believe him near.

2. We may not touch His hands and side,
Nor follow where He trod;
But in His promise we rejoice,
And cry, "My Lord and God!"

3. Help then, O Lord, our unbelief;
And may our faith abound,
To call on you when you are near,
And seek where you are found.

4. That when our lives of faith are done,
In realms of clearer light,
We may behold you as you are,
With full and endless sight.

Henry Alford (1844)

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





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