Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.

Hebrews 13: 8

A message from Rev. Clare Stainsby, Superintendent, with exciting news and an update:

I wrote about change being imminent in Silsden Mast a couple of months ago, as well as in the Circuit news. I just want to reiterate some of that information.

Since I wrote, a number of exciting things have happened which enable us to move towards a positive future.

In the past week we have met with a prospective superintendent who has accepted the invitation to lead this circuit over the coming year.



He is Rev Phil Drake, and he will move with his wife, Ruth, to the manse in Bingley, and will be minister of Craven Church, Eldwick and Cononley, as well as Circuit Superintendent. Phil will be taking up the appointment in September on a part time basis.

He is currently Superintendent in Bradford North Circuit, and so may be known to some of you. It is hoped that another person may take up a part time appointment as well, but there is no firm news on this so far.

As you are aware, three church buildings have been earmarked for a mission focus and investment in the Circuit, alongside The New Place where this type of work is now two years old. They are Bingley, Lees and St. Peter's Cross Hills.

For two of them, Bingley and Cross Hills, a Pioneer lead has been appointed and has started work, getting to know the people, the buildings and the community. It's early days for them in their work here, but we have been very happy to welcome Kim Brown and Kara Horrix to the staff team. We hope that a third lead for the work at Lees will be appointed soon.

Kim and Kara come with a wealth of experience in this kind of project, some great ideas, and a commitment to listening both to the church family and to the community in the coming months.

I know everyone will make them both feel very welcome among us.

Some of the changes we have talked about in the Circuit have already happened, and other are imminent. Marsh held its final service in March, and Ilkley Road had theirs in May. Long Lee, and Eastburn will follow in June, with Eastburn's final service as a Craven Service on June 28th. It will be followed by a catered lunch to which everyone is invited.

That same day, in the afternoon, it will be the final Aire Valley service at Cullingworth as well as the official farewell service for Rev Nel Shallow.

There will be no Praise Service at Silsden that evening - it will be deferred to the following Sunday - July 5th.

If you have seen the June to August plan you will see that it is gradually changing shape. From July there will be services each Sunday morning in Craven Church, at Silsden and Steeton, and in Worth Valley at Cullingworth, Oakworth, and Oxenhope, as well as at our LEP at Eldwick. There will continue to be the established pattern of joint church services, as will be shown on the plan.

Bingley are continuing to have services to the end of August. From July, we have a section of the plan headed “Project Churches”, where acts of worship happening in those buildings through the week can be displayed.
St. Peter’s, Lees and the New Place already have acts worship on there and more can be added. And Bingley are looking at possible ways of worshipping from September.

I mentioned already that Aire Valley Church, which is the congregations of Bingley, Cullingworth, Ilkley Road and Long Lee, will close at the end of June. This is because the Circuit will from that time comprise just two churches: Craven and Worth Valley. For those whose church is actually ceasing to worship, a decision is required if they wish to remain Methodist members.
The options are simple: Craven Church, Worth Valley Church, or The Eldwick Church. The choice of where they will worship is very much theirs of course, as it is for those of Marsh, Eastburn, Ilkley Road and Long Lee, and also the Bingley family from September. We know already that some of those members will transfer into Craven Church, and others will make their decision in the coming weeks. Some will worship in the church of their membership, while others may choose for their membership to be held by one church, but largely worship elsewhere.
Each person needs to find their own place within the restructured Circuit, and nothing is set in stone. We may find people want to test the water a little before settling into a pattern.

This is a time of change for us all, as we get used to a new reality, but there is no doubt in my mind that the way forward for is God’s plan, as we work together for the building of God’s Kingdom here.

In the changing appearance of the Methodist Church across our nation, which will involve fewer ministers, fewer buildings, but regular opportunities for worship, prayer, service and care, mission and faith-sharing, we in Airedale are leading the way into new possibilities, all of it underpinned by prayer.

We sang this hymn in a Craven service recently, and I will quote part of it now, whilst recognising that “nothing changes here” refers to our God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, in who we place all our trust.

“In heavenly love abiding, no change my heart shall fear;
And safe is such confiding, for nothing changes here:
The storm may roar without me, my heart may low be laid;
But God is round about me, and can I be dismayed?

Green pastures are before me, which yet I have not seen;
Bright skies will soon be o'er me, where darkest clouds have been;
My hope I cannot measure, my path to life is free;
My Saviour has my treasure, and he will walk with me.”