NEWSLETTER SEPTEMBER 2026

This month's cover letter is actually a number of "hellos" and a big "goodbye"…

Let's start with our new Superintendent, Revd Dr. Phil Drake…

About me…

This summer we have moved house from Baildon to Bingley – which is all of four-and-a-bit miles! I have been in the Bradford North Circuit for 15 years, the first five of which was part of a joint appointment with the Bradford South Circuit, and the last five serving as superintendent.

Prior to living in Bradford, I was stationed in the Liverpool North Central Circuit (a mainly inner-city circuit) from 1997-2002, followed by nine years in Cardiff, with a large circuit of twenty-four churches covering the whole of the city. This coming year will be my 30th in ministry. At different points during this time, I have focused on a ministry based on work with children and families (including as chaplain to Girls Brigade and Boys Brigade companies), work with environmental issues (through the Eco-Congregation programme) and open spaces (with the Quiet Garden movement) and developing with others a ministry amongst people with learning disabilities (the 'All Together' service in Shipley, referenced by the new Vice-President of Conference in her Conference address in June).

I also grew an interest in interfaith matters, as a District inter-faith officer, as the secretary of a local branch of the Council of Christians and Jews, and as a representative on the Churches Inter Religious Network (with Churches Together in Britain and Ireland). In 2006 I took part in an exchange with a minister from the Uniting Church of Australia.

An important part of my ministry has been opportunity to learn and grow in the Christian life. I trained for church ministry at the Wesley Study Centre in Durham, studying for an MA with a thesis about 25–40-year-olds in the life of the church. I also contributed a chapter on 'membership and connectedness' to a book entitled Unmasking Methodist Theology (now retitled Methodist Theology Today), and whilst in Bradford I completed a PhD, a theological and ethnographic study looking at ministry in terms of its boundaries.



Originally, I am from Leeds, but Ruth and I met and married in Sheffield where we were both students. Ruth has just retired from full time teaching, having worked as an SEN coordinator at a school in Manningham for the last 15 years. We have three adult children: Becky is a drama therapist working with a Health Trust in north London and living with her boyfriend Akshay in Hemel Hempstead; Esther is a fashion graduate currently living with us in Bingley; and Aidan is a doctor working in a hospital in Belfast, where he has just bought a house with his girlfriend Olivia (who is also a doctor).

This year I have gone part time (my original intention was to spend more time with my 98-year-old mother until her death in January of this year), and I will be with you as superintendent for the period of a year working two-thirds time.

I look forward to meeting you as the new year starts!



And hello to Lydia Denno…

It is with great excitement that I look forward to stepping into the post of Mission Project Pioneer at Lees Methodist Church in September.

I moved to the area one year ago with my husband and two sons, and during this time have developed a real heart for the community of Crossroads into which we have integrated. It feels significant that on our arrival, I had an immediate draw to the building and garden at Lees and insisted we enjoyed fish and chips under the trees on the sun dappled lawn in our first week here!



My background is in the arts with a career that spans theatre and museum design, illustration, arts management and education. I am passionate about using creativity to build community and am looking forward to my artistic practice underpinning the pioneering work at Lees.

I am married to Adam who is pioneering The New Place in Keighley so am no stranger to the work of the Airedale Circuit to 'do church differently', a mission I find exciting and hopeful. I have a great desire to hold space for people exploring, questioning, doubting and believing.

Favourite things include walking in mountains, wild swimming in lakes, reading in sunny spots, the smell of eucalyptus, and dancing barefoot.

And, finally, a goodbye….from me, Esther Gregory-Witham!

I have been Circuit Administrator and Safeguarding Officer for just over four years and I am just as surprised as you to be leaving! I wasn't actively looking for a new job but it still found me…!
From October I will be working for Blackburn Diocese as the Events and Training Coordinator in the Board of Education. This means that my last day in the Circuit will be 18th September, as I had already booked my annual holiday for the two weeks after.

I hope that you all know how much I have enjoyed getting to know you and watching the amazing people of this circuit care for each other and their local communities with love, passion (dare I even say fiestiness?), optimism and bravery. The changes we have ridden together in these years have not been easy, and I know some members have really struggled. Yet, I have still seen within those emotions the same level of commitment to a Spirit-filled and flourishing future and a continued desire to share the love of God with those who don't yet know it. What an inspirational bunch you are!

It's a strange one, being based behind a computer while building relationships and I have really appreciated the people who have taken time over the years to send me lovely things, to ensure I have cake and a cuppa at meetings and who have made sure to be encouragers.

Thank you to every one of you who believes in the Covenant of Kindness which was adopted by the Circuit a few years ago. Can I encourage you to hold tight to these words as the Circuit Team, Stewards and volunteers – and hopefully soon a new Administrator – fill the gaps for the coming weeks…

I am SO looking forward to watching what the circuit does next. I am now, and always, an Airedale Circuit fan and I will be cheering you on from over the border :)







WHAT'S ON IN SEPTEMBER and the coming weeks?

CIRCUIT SERVICE

WELCOMING SUPERINTENDENT PHIL DRAKE



AND COMMISSIONING... OUR NEWEST STAFF MEMBERS!

WEDNESDAY
2ND SEPTEMBER
6PM *REFRESHMENTS*
7PM *SERVICE*

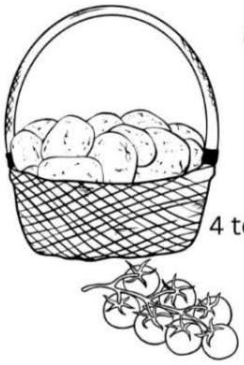
SILSDEN METHODIST CHURCH
BD20 0PR

Airedale Methodist Circuit
in the Yorkshire West District

Silsden Community Allotment Show 12th September 2026

Now is the time to start getting the seeds and planting.
Anyone can enter, you don't need to be an expert.
All we ask is that you enjoy watching the seeds grow.

Each entry will cost 50p and there will be prizes of
First: £2, Second: £1, Third: 50p



Collections of veg:

4 white potatoes
4 coloured potatoes
3 onions (over 8oz)
3 beetroot
4 tomatoes (medium - large)
9 cherry tomatoes
3 carrots (with tops)
7 runner beans

1 heaviest marrow
2 leeks
1 heaviest pumpkin
1 unusual veg
1 wonky veg - any kind
3 eating apples
3 sticks of rhubarb (tops trimmed)

1 vase, mixed flowers:



1 vase, 3 stems roses
1 vase, 3 stems dahlias
1 vase, 5 blooms sweet peas



Home made:

1 jar jam
1 jar chutney
1 jar pickle
6 fruit scones
6 cheese scones
1 fruit cake

1 traybake
1 lemon drizzle cake
1 knitted cushion
1 knitted baby hat
1 knitted matinee jacket
1 knitted pram blanket

There will also be the "Ron Ellison Trophy" for the most points in the show. Further details about the show and weekend will be announced nearer the time. Any questions, please contact: clairecorp@hotmail.com

Please note entry forms for the various classes at the Allotment Show will be available on the day

Messy Church

2nd Tuesday of the month:
Bingley Messy Church
3.45-5.30pm
Silsden Messy Church
3:30 – 5:30pm

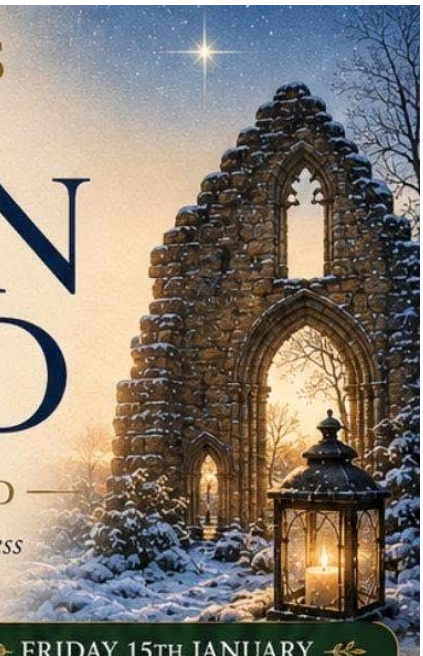
'Messy Church logo © Bible Reading Fellowship 2021. See messychurch.org.uk'

WELCOME SERVICES 2026

Tuesday 1 September	7 pm	Leeds S & W Circuit, New Whingate Methodist Church	Revd Nicholas Witham
Wednesday 2 September	7 pm	Airedale Circuit, Silsden Methodist Church (refreshments from 6pm)	Revd Phil Drake
Sunday 6 September	10.30 am	Huddersfield Circuit, Almondbury Methodist Church	Revd Revd Dawn Saunders
Sunday 6 September	3.00 pm	Bradford North Circuit, Baildon Methodist Church	Revd Revd Graeme Dutton and Revd Jane Cook



THREE QUIET DAYS *for the* SEASON AHEAD



PAUSE • LISTEN • BE RENEWED

Three special days to step away from the busyness of life and draw closer to God.

TUESDAY 20TH OCTOBER



WAITING *for the* LION

A QUIET DAY AT RYDAL HALL

A gentle day of reflection on longing, hope, and the quiet coming of Christ.

With space for prayer, stillness, and attentive listening in the peaceful surroundings of Rydal Hall.

Come and rest, listen, and be renewed for the path ahead.

COST OF THE DAY **£20** LUNCH INCLUDED

FRIDAY 20TH NOVEMBER



WAITING *for the* LION

A QUIET DAY AT WHALLEY ABBEY

As Advent draws near, this quiet day offers space to pause and listen for God's gentle coming.

Through Scripture, silence, and reflections inspired by C. S. Lewis' *Narnia*, we will explore longing, hope, and the gift of waiting.

In the stillness, we may begin to notice the quiet signs of Christ drawing near.

COST OF THE DAY **£37** LUNCH INCLUDED

FRIDAY 15TH JANUARY



THE JOURNEY BEYOND THE STAR

A QUIET DAY AT WHALLEY ABBEY

As the light of Epiphany lingers, this quiet day offers space to reflect on how Christ continues to be revealed in the ordinary rhythms of life.

Through Scripture, silence, and reflections inspired by C. S. Lewis' *Narnia*, we will explore attentiveness, trust, and the journey of faith beyond the season of celebration.

Come and rest, listen, and be renewed for the path ahead.

COST OF THE DAY **£37** LUNCH INCLUDED

OPEN TO ALL, WHETHER NEW TO RETREATS OR EXPERIENCED IN QUIET DAYS.

RYDAL HALL
Rydal Hall
Ambleside
Cumbria, LA22 9LT

WHALLEY ABBEY
2 The Sands
Clitheroe
BB7 9SS

TO BOOK A PLACE
Email:
bookings@whalleyabbey.org
(mail@rydalhall.org for 20th October)

LED BY
Rev'd Mike Green

REST • LISTEN • RENEWED

Be still, and know that I am God. PSALM 46:10

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):

Sunday 1pm:
Picnic Worship, first Sunday @ St Peter's Methodist Church, Cross Hills
Picnic Worship, third Sunday @ Lees Methodist Church

Sunday 2pm:
Sanctuary: reflective gathering with prayer spaces, second Sunday @ The New Place

Sunday 2.30pm:
Praise Service, first Sunday @ Lees Methodist Church
Worship and Fellowship, third Sunday @ Bingley Methodist Church

Sunday 3pm:
Riddlesden Worship and Fellowship, third Sunday @ St Mary's Hall, Riddlesden

Sunday 6pm:
Praise Service, fourth Sunday @ Silsden Methodist Church

Monday 7pm:
Prayer gathering, first Monday @ Silsden Methodist Church

Tuesday 3.30pm:
Messy Church (term time) second Tuesday @ Silsden Methodist Church
Messy Church (term time) second Tuesday, 3.45pm @ Bingley Methodist Church

Wednesday 9.30am:
9.30am Prayer, 9.45am Communion
second Wednesday @ Cullingworth Methodist Church

Wednesday 10am:
Prayer Service, every Wednesday (followed by coffee)
Weekday Communion Service, first Wednesday
both @ St Peter's Methodist Church, Cross Hills

Wednesday 5pm:
Way of Life meal and reflective gathering, fourth Wednesday @ The New Place

Thursday 6.30pm:
Fellowship Group, first Friday @ Steeton Methodist Church

Thursday 7pm:
Prayer and Praise, first Thursday @ Steeton Methodist Church

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

