

Thursday
8 July 2021



Ryedale Methodists

the bridge bulletin

Dear Friends,

We normally think about September as the beginning of the new Methodist Church year, but this time it feels more like July. After Ken's farewell service at Helmsley (thanks to all who took part), we begin a tough year without a second minister. That has been relieved by the de Boltzes staying on a bit longer with us and help from other ministers, for which I am grateful. However just as we need to be stepping up a gear we are doing so whilst running with a flat tyre (if that is a suitable metaphor?). July also sees the Government restrictions over Covid being relaxed and we, in the churches, will have to consider how we proceed safely in the coming months. The decisions taken at this year's Methodist Conference will also need some time to digest and carefully and prayerfully work through. These include the news headline decision about marriage and relationships, but other changes on governance which will, in some ways, be an even bigger factor for us in Ryedale. The most significant change is that where the local church membership falls below twelve for four successive quarters, it will merge with and become a class of another church. This situation already exists in this Circuit where Kirby Misperton is a class of Pickering, and the two churches' business comes under the one Church Council. Again we will have to work this through in the Circuit in and after September when we have more guidance. See overleaf for more details on some of these issues.

So where does all that leave us? I have been pleased to see more people coming back to worship in church in recent weeks. We will continue with the Bulletin and written worship material at present, but less frequently. I would appreciate your thoughts on this, especially if you are not attending worship (for whatever reason). Other activities will, I hope, begin to build up, and we will need to consider what we restart, what will be no more, and what more we might need to do. I think we have yet to fully understand the impact this pandemic has had on our communities and how we might wish to respond to their needs. I am already working with two families to have a Thanksgiving Service of remembrance in July. Worship, evangelism, meeting space and community support will all need careful consideration as we move forward.

We have hard work ahead, but together and with God's help, we will fulfil the Kingdom imperatives.

God bless

Peter

FOR SUNDAY 11 JULY
2 Samuel 6:1-5, 12b-19
Psalms 24
Ephesians 1:3-14
Mark 6:14-29



**God of justice,
Help us to offer love and
hospitality to the stranger.**

**Work in us to transform this
world, where justice and
peace will ever flow in all the
nooks and corners of the
world.**

**Grant us courage: courage
and strength to make a
difference in this world.**

**Take us and use us to love
and serve you and all people,
in the power of your spirit
and in the name of your Son,
Jesus Christ our Lord.**

**May mercy, peace and love
be multiplied to us in the
name of Jesus Christ
(Jude 1:2).**

Prayer by Elizabeth Bishop,
Action for Children District Advocate
for Yorkshire West District

https://

www.actionforchildren.org.uk

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The Revd Sonia Hicks is the new President of the Methodist Conference. The Revd Hicks has served as a Circuit Superintendent in three connexions: Britain, the Methodist Church in the Caribbean and Americas and the Methodist Church in Ireland (MCI).



The new vice-president is **Barbara Easton** whose vocation has been the world of education. Before becoming Connexional Director of Education in 2014 she was an RE teacher, inclusion and interfaith specialist and secondary headteacher in various challenging contexts in the West Midlands. She is a longstanding local preacher, contributor to IBRA Bible notes and has a calling to chaplaincy, volunteering at 3Generate and Greenbelt.

Contrary Convictions 1

Even if you are not an avid follower of the Methodist Conference I expect you will have seen the news reports of at least one decision taken there last week. This follows the recent conversations we held on the Marriage and Relationships report, and many years' discussions and theological reflection on these complex issues. While the permission for local churches to hold same-sex marriage ceremonies has been the headline I want to draw your attention to the actual wording of the resolution: The Conference amends Standing Orders as follows:

011A Marriage (1) The Methodist Church believes that marriage is given by God to be a particular channel of God's grace, and that it is in accord with God's purposes when a marriage is a life-long union in body, mind and spirit of two people who freely enter it. Within the Methodist Church this is understood in two ways: that marriage can only be between a man and a woman; that marriage can be between any two people. The Methodist Church affirms both understandings and makes provision in its Standing Orders for them.

This comes under our understanding of Contrary Convictions, that is within the church people have different views and theological understandings which can run in parallel and enable us to continue to work and worship together.

In this Circuit not every church is registered for weddings at present, and those that are will be asked in the Autumn Church Council whether they wish to consider any changes to that. No Minister or church can be forced (by either state or church law) to conduct a same-sex marriage. I know this resolution will cause pain to some and delight to others, but I hope and pray it will not divide us, or our worship and witness across Ryedale. If you wish to have any further information, please look on the Methodist website (especially the FAQs) or contact me and I can let you see the full report.

Contrary Convictions 2

The Prime Minister's statement on Monday about the ending of Government Covid restrictions on July 19th probably came as no surprise, although I noted he said: "Covid is not ended".

We all look forward to not wearing face coverings, not having to keep a social distance, being able to hand-shake and hug, and to sing in church. While we await further guidance from both Government and the Methodist Church we need to continue to be sensitive to other people's feelings. Face covering for instance is less about keeping you safe and more about you keeping others safe. Therefore, in worship or other church activities please be aware that other people may have a different view from you, and will not feel comfortable sitting close or seeing you close up face-to-face. We will share further information with stewards when we have it, until then stay safe yourself and keep other people safe and feeling calm.

Book the Date -

Sunday 3 October 15:00 at Potter Hill, Pickering

Celebration service after the completion of the refurbishment and reopening of the sanctuary

**Preacher: Rev Richard Teal,
the recent outgoing President of the Methodist Conference.**

