Ryedale Methodists

the bridge monthly bulletin

September 2026

Extending Our Family

How did you feel on the 15th of July this summer? The answer probably depends on both whether you are a football fan and/or English. It was of course, the semi-final of the world-cup, and though not quite our last game, the one that determined this was not the year football was 'coming home'. Those assumptions, of course, are far too simplistic. Belonging, tribe, clan, family, kinship or even membership and affiliations are not necessarily dependent on our birth, race or interests. Jesus said 'For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also', and conversely I'd argue for many of us, the thing we truly value is friendships, family and belonging. My wife and I, are teetering on being 'empty nesters'. I'm experiencing the new challenge of seeing my kids struggling at a distance and not being there. I shouldn't be surprised, I recall a 104 year old lady, whose main heartache, was knowing her 85 year old daughter had cancer, and feeling powerless to help. I wonder, therefore, if one way we might define 'family' or 'belonging' is when our heart calls us to respond to another. It would explain why we felt deflated on the 16th of July.

I'll be preaching from Nehemiah in the next few months. It is speaking to me in many ways. The book begins, with Nehemiah, receiving news, from his brother, of the struggles of the 'Jewish remnant' in Jerusalem. Nehemiah sits and weeps, mourns, fasts and prays. Despite his relatively secure and prosperous status, his heart calls for action. That speaks to me, of his seeing not just his literal brother, but the whole 'people of God', as his 'family'.

We often speak about our churches, as extended family, we express our belonging through membership, but what of Circuit, District, Connexion? Is that 'belonging' like a Doctor's surgery, or Dental practice; a security blanket, a necessity when the need arises, but demanding little of us? Can it mean more? Nehemiah's heartache catalyses a shattered 'people of God' to rediscover their 'belonging to one another' empowering them to rebuild and renew Jerusalem, and not just physically, but psychologically and spiritually. We aren't in physical exile, but I would contend we are perhaps a remnant in that very few churches now possess the resources they need to renew and rebuild on their own. That's the bad news. Maybe, I'm naïve, maybe I'm misguided, but I hear a trumpet call, to rediscovering our 'belonging' as God's people that transcends individual churches, and can secure and renew us as a Kingdom people. The question is, what does that look like, and do you share that call?

Rev Andy

We are our Saviour's body, Christ the head, first born of God, first risen from the dead. Dismembered, we debase his holy will; united, his intention we fulfil.

So guide us, Lord, and take us by the hand, and show us how to love and understand; reveal, within the differences we share, the pattern of your glory, grace and care.

And when our journey, here has reached its end and strangers are the pilgrims you intend, may we, with gratitude for all you've given, enjoy you in the harmony of heaven.

John L. Bell

(STF 675)

LECTIONARY REFLECTIONS - Rev Ruth Duck the Bridge magazine 21 (Sept 2017)

6 September MATTHEW 18:15-20

Photo by Hannah Busing on Unsplash

Communication and Reconciliation.

"Do you know what ***said to me/did to me?" The gossip starts here, growing in magnitude with the telling. By the time the reported 'sin' reaches the ears of the perpetrator, it may well be almost beyond recognition. The now mutual antipathy has become even harder to forgive and move on from.

Jesus here suggests a far better way.

1. If your brother (or sister) sins against you – face it. Acknowledge the hurt and see if a one to one conversation can sort it out. It may be a misunderstanding, unintentional thoughtlessness – try and give the benefit of the doubt. Perhaps you hurt them too. Be open to listening to one another, but don't talk about it to others.

2. If this fails, Jesus suggests drawing one or two trusted others into the conversation. Mediation is becoming ever more necessary both outside and inside the Church. A 3rd party who WILL listen to each of the individuals and help them to listen to one another can be very helpful.

3. If this too fails, only then does Jesus say that it becomes a part of the full Church's knowledge and responsibility to act. Not a matter for gossip, but prayer. Exclusion from the Church is rare, but the pagan/tax-collector was still honoured – remember Jesus ate with such folk, and encouraged them to be part of his community!

How often is conflict in the Church treated in this way? It is easier to ignore both sin and misunderstandings – and very often congregations are divided because of it. Let us instead be open to listening, forgiving, and praying together.

Pray that you will always be willing to take those first steps towards forgiveness and reconciliation. "Make me a channel of your peace".

13 September MATTHEW 18:21-35

Photo by mark tulin on Unsplash

Forgiveness again…and again…and again …Easier said than done!

We are reminded here about the lavishness of God's grace and forgiveness. There is no comparison between how much God has forgiven us, and what we may need to forgive others. Forgiveness is not a 'one off' either. As we keep on letting God down – he graciously keeps on forgiving us – we don't deserve it, we cannot ever earn it - but his love keeps on. I love the Message paraphrase of 1 Corinthians 13:

Love… "Doesn't keep score of the sins of others..." or the NIV "keeps no record of wrongs". God wipes the slate clean every time for us – but we find it hard to offer that same opportunity to those who hurt us. Once maybe, but time after time – we think 'they don't deserve my consideration or forgiveness'.

Out of gratitude to the one who forgives us, and with the help of His Holy Spirit, may we continue to pray: "Forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us".

Praise God that through the cross of Christ your sin is forgiven and that full reconciliation with Father God is possible as we come to him in faith. Allow His grace to fill you, that you may be 'grace-full' in all of your relationships.

20 September MATTHEW 20:1-16

It isn't fair! It IS Grace!

This parable has caused much discussion over the years. It simply doesn't seem fair that those who have worked all day in the heat, are paid the same as those who have only laboured for a single hour. Jesus told the story, however, so that we may think about the latter not the former. Those who were selected last, would have been the weaker and less desirable workers (remember picking the rounders/ football team at school – the best players were always picked first). They needed a day's wage in order to survive themselves and provide for their family. Those who had worked all day had earned their pay, but the latter had not been given that opportunity.

https://brokenredeemed.org/2012/07/09/workers-in-the-vineyard/

The story is about grace. Following on from the previous verses, we are reminded again that we cannot earn God's love or forgiveness – it is freely given to us – but at what great cost to Him. Are we like those who have slaved all day and begrudge the blessings enjoyed by those less deserving – rather like the elder brother in the story of the Lost Son in Luke 15? We are all dependent on the undeserved favour that is God's grace.

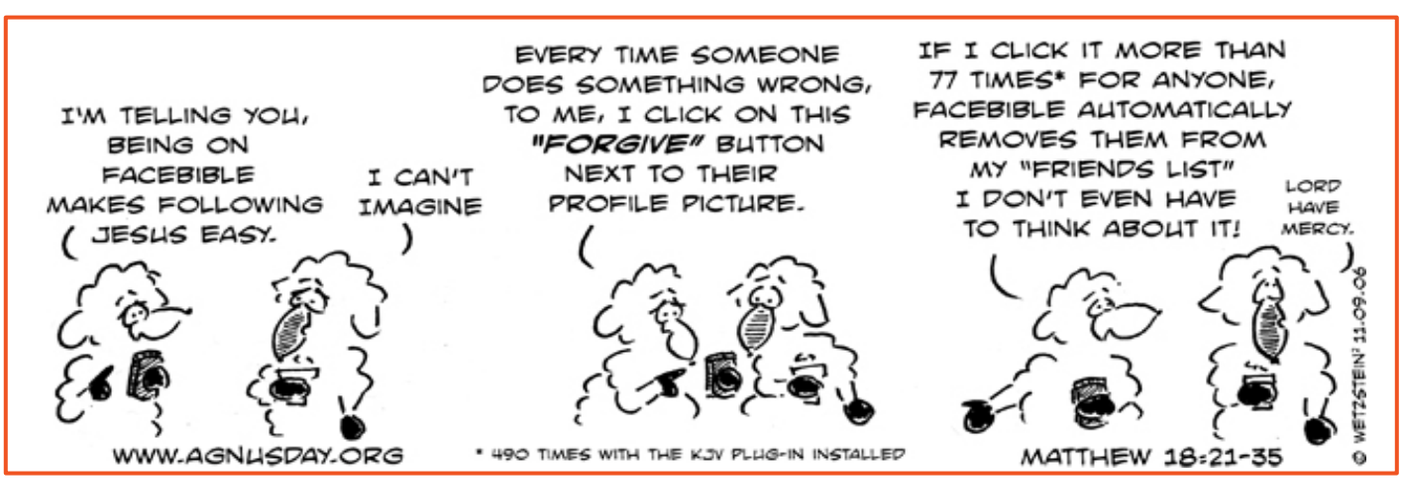
Pray that you may experience afresh the wonder of God's grace in your life…and as you receive…so may you give indiscriminately and lavishly as God does to us.

27 September MATTHEW 21:23-32

Who does He think He is?

Jesus was now in Jerusalem, after the 'triumphal entry' and the overturning of the money - changers tables. Not surprisingly we find the question "By whose authority…?" The religious folk of the day seemed unable to recognise in Jesus the one whom they had been waiting for – the one 'sent by God'. Their scepticism had placed a barrier of blindness so that they would rather attempt to trip Jesus up than consider the possibility of His identity and authority as the Christ. The parable challenges their attitude. Lip-service religion is never enough. Trust and obedience; word and deed; saying and doing. Background is irrelevant – our relationship with God through and in Christ is what matters.

Thank God, that because of who Jesus is, we too can be children of God. Pray that your speech and action will be in full accord with His will.



EDUCATION SUNDAY 13 SEPTEMBER

Churches are invited to reflect on the theme "Living Well Together". Drawing on Scripture's vision of reconciliation, forgiveness and mutual responsibility, consider how we can build communities where people from different cultures, backgrounds and beliefs can flourish together. At a time when society is often marked by division, hostility and mistrust, education has a unique role in bringing people together. Schools, colleges and universities are places where children, young people and adults learn not only alongside one another, but also from one another. Education shapes habits of thought, patterns of judgement and ways of relating to others.The question is not only what we learn, but what kind of people we are becoming.
https://cte.org.uk/educationsunday2026/

Fairtrade Fortnight 2026 is just around the corner!

From 21 September to 4 October, people across the UK will come together to celebrate fairer trade and support the farmers, workers and communities behind the products we rely on every day.

Throughout the two weeks, we'll be focusing on the theme of Fair Pay and encouraging people to remember a simple truth: fair pay matters because everyone deserves the chance to live well. However we earn a living, we all deserve to be paid fairly. Supporting Fairtrade helps support fairer pay for the farmers and workers behind the products we love.

https://www.fairtrade.net/uk-en.html

Hello, let us introduce ourselves – we are the **Wilderness Pioneers** for Ryedale working in conjunction with the Kairos movement. You may have seen us in our bright orange T-shirts at Ryedale Show and Thornton Le Dale Show. Kate has a background in education including the outdoors, conservation and local preaching, while Trudy has a background in Art, farming and all things creative.

Our aim is to engage in the community surrounding our existing chapels and to grow our faith community in this area and beyond. We will be offering a range of activities under the following headings:

Wild Wonder Walks under this banner, we will offer a monthly **Framing the Wild** session, using cameras and mobile phones to reconnect with the world around us. These are planned at 3 locations, 4 times a year, enabling us to reflect on the changing seasons in these locations. We will also be offering a **Routes and Reflections** walk which will be shared across the circuit once a month; this will be a short walk with some liturgical content and some form of participative worship along the way. Finally, we are offering monthly **Creative Wanderings** these will consist of a very short wander followed by a creative activity using sketch books, and other creative materials.

Our big project is creating a **Wesley Way** Pilgrim trail which will start at Rievaulx and initially finish at Thornton le Dale. The route will take in all our chapels along the way. The plan is to launch the Wesley Way on Aldersgate Sunday 2027. In addition, we are planning **Woven Hedgerow** walks which will start at all our chapels and will be self- guided reflections.

We will be offering **Wild Pilgrims get Messy** at Sinnington on the first Tuesday of the school holidays. All events are on the circuit website and we can be contacted at wildpilgrims@ryedalemethodist.org.uk
See you soon, Kate and Trudy

SAFARI WELCOME SERVICE - Starting 9:00 at Malton MC. Please let us know for catering where you expect to attend, but please come anyway. Email: tickets@ryedalemethodist.org.uk Sunday **13 September**

RYEDALE CIRCUIT MEETING - at Kirkbymoorside Methodist Church at 19:30 on **17 September.**

MARSKE FISHERMEN'S CHOIR - Concert at Thornton le Dale MC at 19:30 on **18 September**

DISTRICT CHAIR: Rev Romeo Pedro will lead morning worship at Malton Wesley Centre **27 Sept at 10:00**

Contacts: **Revd Andy Lindley:** superintendent@ryedalemethodist.org.uk
Revd Graham Ransom: 01751 471501 graham.ransom@methodist.org.uk
Revd Jane Brown: jane.brown@ryedalemethodist.org.uk