



February and March 2020

Minister's Letter

Dear Friends,

'I've never seen that before!' Have you had that experience? Perhaps travelling down a very familiar road, a road you've gone along countless times, and suddenly seen something for the first time? Not something new, but something that must have always been there, but you just had not noticed it? Or like those optical illusions where for some time you see one image, but then suddenly a new image snaps into view? Maybe you've had a similar experience in understanding. Perhaps you've suddenly seen a new way of understanding a very familiar Bible story, or the meaning of a passage you've never really understood suddenly became clear. It's as though you've suddenly seen the light – an epiphany.

Although we in the Western Church associate the season of Epiphany with the coming of the Magi (and the revelation of Christ to the Gentiles), in the Eastern Church, where the Feast of Epiphany originated, it was a celebration of the Baptism of Jesus. Was this something of an epiphany moment expressed in the Gospels by the heavens opened, the dove alighting, and the voice saying, 'You are my beloved Son, with whom I am pleased'?

Soon, the church calendar will move into Lent, that familiar time of preparation. Recalling Jesus' time in the wilderness after his baptism by John, this time has traditionally been used to prepare converts to Christianity for their baptism and entry into the church at Easter. More often now it is often used as an opportunity for a series of ecumenical study groups to encourage the faith journeys of those already in the church.

Whether from seeing something for the first time, or gradually discovering, testing, thinking around and developing a deeper understanding and faith, there is always change in life and in the life of faith. A year of change has begun for us all. As I write this, the day the UK 'leaves' the EU is still a couple of weeks away (and the new relationship is further away still). 'This year' Hilary and I retire, with all that means by way of change for us and for the churches of the pastorate yet to be fully recognised and worked out.

May God guide us all, revealing his way, supporting and encouraging us as we ask our questions of the future.

Yours in his service,
Stephen

WORSHIP DURING FEBRUARY and MARCH

DATE	(Low Row 10.30 am)	(Keld 2.00 pm)
Feb 2 ND	Revd Hilary Collinson	
9 th	John Lloyd	
16 th	Revd Stephen Collinson	
23 rd	Revd Hilary Collinson	Revd Hilary Collinson
Mar 1 st	To be Confirmed	
8 th	To be Confirmed	
15 th	Revd Alan Coustick	
22 nd	Revd Stephen Collinson (HC)	
29 th	Revd Stephen Collinson	Revd Stephen Collinson

News from Low Row with Keld United Reformed Church

We celebrated the birth of Christ over the Christmas period with lots of well attended services. The village carol concert at Holy Trinity was very atmospheric with candles lighting the steps up to the church and the wonderful decorations in the interior. We also had a lovely 'Carol Fest' at Low Row.

The new year was welcomed in by Maranny Jones who held the first service of 2020, this is something she has done for the last 10 years and we are very grateful. She preached on the journey the 'wise men' followed to see the baby Jesus and gave some historical insights into this well-known story.

We continue to pray for Hilary who has been unwell over the past few weeks. We hope she is soon feeling back to her old self and we do miss her at our services. We are thankful for the extra time and efforts of Peter and Daphne have been able to step in to provide our services.

Date for your Diary - Next Bible Study at Low Row on Thursday 30th January at 2pm.

A **View from the Pew** will be a new feature in our regular Link Magazine. I do hope that in each edition one of our readers will supply a short piece to be included. This edition it's my turn:

Each year we are asked by Daphne to give her our favourite carol or hymn. She also wants to know why it is important to us. Taking these suggestions, she then creates our annual 'Carol Fest'. This is always such a lively, bright and positive service. This year we had dancing from some pews as the calypso carol was expertly played by Duncan on the organ. We had so many carols suggested, we could only sing a few verses from each and I was so interested to hear the research she provided for each one.

Carols are songs that I have always just sung, they have always just been there. I have never really thought more about the history, tune, composer or even the words. I think that maybe because many are learnt from childhood and as we only ever sing them at Christmas, they become synonymous with christmas trees, presents and turkey dinners. So, it was wonderful to hear more, the history and why they are special to each of us. It helped me to see them in new light this year.

Jo Lloyd

CONTACT DETAILS FOR THE SWALEDALE CHURCHES

We have two ministers in the Pastorate serving four churches – Darlington (Northgate), Northallerton (Zion), Low Row and Keld.

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Tees & Swale Pastorate