



December and January 2020

Minister's Letter

Dear Friends,

O little town of Bethlehem,
How still we see thee lie!
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep
The silent stars go by;
Yet in the dark street shineth
The everlasting Light;
The hopes and fears of all the years
Are met in thee tonight.

This carol was very much in my mind as early one morning I made the journey from the Palestinian family home my sister and I had been staying in in Beit Sahor – an area in Bethlehem Municipality – up into Manger Square.

It was a warm sunny day! The cool of the Church of the Nativity was welcome, even at 8 o'clock in the morning. Already pilgrims and tourists were wandering around drawn to this place 'where it all began'. Although unable to go deeper into the supposed cave of the Christmas story as there was a service going on, I joined a group of French pilgrims singing 'Gloria, in excelsis deo' with two ladies in saris, 4 ladies with lacy hats, several men of various nationalities all drawn to this place. The hopes of all the years met together in this moment.

However, the eldest daughter of our hosts, a 24 year old science teacher, told us a few days into our visit of her encounter with Israeli Defence Forces who held a gun at the car window directed at her head as she was leaving her fiancé's house telling her to go back to his house. She was still quite shaken. Her father had to be at the checkpoint every morning by 5 to try to get through to his work as maintenance man at a Church in Jerusalem – sometimes (although not when we were there) waiting hour upon hour – or even being turned away. The farmers whose olive crop we were picking were so glad to have Internationals visible in the fields as Illegal Settlers have been allowing farmers to pick their crop, then coming to steal the olives at the end of a hard day's toil. The week before we went a group of 'Rabbis for Human Rights' had also been a protective presence in a Palestinian field and they had been beaten up – including an 87 year old Rabbi. The fears of all the years were also present in my mind as I reflected quietly in the Church.

As I thought about all of this – and many more experiences – I reminded myself that the very reason Jesus was born in Bethlehem was because the occupying force ordered a census to be taken.

A few days before I had sat outside the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem, again surrounded by pilgrims and tourists, contemplating the end of Jesus's life and his weeping over Jerusalem. At times it can seem that the darkness of the world can block out even the glimmer of hope. Yet the very scheme we had gone out under is called 'The Olive Tree Campaign – Keep Hope Alive'. Perhaps those middle lines of the carol are those that we should hold onto:-
'Yet in the dark street shineth
The everlasting Light;'

As Christmas approaches and then recedes into the memory let us keep the everlasting light before us so that the hopes of all the years can become tomorrow's reality.

A very blessed Christmas to you and yours and to those you pray for in this season.

Yours in service
Hilary

WORSHIP DURING DECEMBER and JANUARY

DATE	(Low Row 10.30 am)	(Keld 2.00 pm)
DEC	1 st Revd Phil Clarke of the Bible Society	
	8 th Revd Hilary Collinson	Revd Hilary Collinson
	15 th Daphne & Peter Clarke 'Carol Fest'	
	22 nd Village Carol Service at Holy Trinity, Low Row	Revd Stephen Collinson Carol Service
	25 th Revd Stephen Collinson	
	29 th No Service this Sunday	
JAN	5 th Mrs Maranny Jones	Mrs Maranny Jones
	12 th Revd Hilary Collinson	
	19 th	TBC
	26 th Revd Stephen Collinson (HC)	Revd Stephen Collinson

News from Low Row with Keld United Reformed Church

We welcomed several visiting preachers during the autumn; Bishop John Pritchard joined us in October. Synod Moderator, Revd. David Hebert led worship early in November, preaching on what it is to be a Saint. Some familiar faces returned to our church to lead worship. We thank

Dot Thomson for her sermon on the wonders of the moon including how our harvest moon can remind us of our faith and commitment to God.

We celebrated harvest at both Keld, and Low Row, we thank everyone who decorated the churches and donated items for the auction. We also gave a donation of fresh goods to the Food Bank in Richmond following the Low Row service. This year Hilary led the annual remembrance walk from the War Memorial in Keld and we enjoyed refreshments in the Keld Resource Centre following the service.

We are thankful and grateful for the speedy recovery of Edward Brown, following a short spell in hospital. He has now re-joined us and was greatly missed.

We look forward to celebrating the birth of Christ and the festive season in our churches. We will enjoy our 'Carol Fest' lead by Daphne Clarke on the 15th December. The local village carol service will be held at Holy Trinity on the 22nd in Low Row. Keld will also have a carol service that same afternoon at 2pm. All are welcome and we hope you can join us.

Date for your Diary - Next Bible Study at Low Row on Thursday 12th December 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. Thank you to Susan Miller, who has provided this edition:

In September Peter Clarke, gave a thought-provoking talk which contrasted the way in which scientific enquiry proceeds – using models and theories to provide evidence to understand the world – with the concept of faith that is central to Christianity. As an academic I was very aware of the 'sense-making' involved as we tried to understand our data – in many ways research is an act of creation where meaning is not given but has to be constructed by the researchers.

While some see tensions between science and religion, I think they are probably more complementary than many admit. As the former Chief Rabbi Jonathan Sacks so eloquently put it: "Science takes things apart to see how they work. Religion puts things together to see what they mean."

Jonathan Sacks: 'The great partnership: God, Science and the search for meaning' Hodder & Stoughton, 2010

Susan Miller

As 2019 comes to its end, thank you to everyone who has contributed to the link over the past year and to those who work to preserve our churches, organise our services and welcome visitors.

We wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Peaceful and Restful New Year

CONTACT DETAILS FOR THE SWALEDALE CHURCHES

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

Ministers: Revd Stephen Collinson (email revscollinson@outlook.com)
 Revd Hilary Collinson (email revhcollinson100@outlook.com)
 Manse telephone 01748 821586

LOW ROW UNITED REFORMED CHURCH

Secretary - Dr Peter Clarke, 1A Reeth Road, Richmond, N. Yorks., DL10 4EH\

Tel: 01748 822651 email clarkerichmond@btinternet.com

Treasurer - Mrs Anne Brown, The Old Mill, Low Row, Richmond, N. Yorks., DL11 6NH

Tel: 01748 886181 email anneedward@f2s.com

KELD UNITED REFORMED CHURCH

Secretary - Mrs Marina Whitehead, Kison, Muker, Richmond, N. Yorks., DL11 8DN

Tel: 01748 886354

Treasurer - Mrs Christine Clarkson, c/o Kison, Muker, Richmond, DL11 8DN

Tel: 01748 886354

LINK MAGAZINE CONTACTS

Editor and contact for Low Row and Keld newsletter contributions:

Mrs Jo Lloyd, Brass Nappa House, Low Row, Richmond, N. Yorks.,DL11 6NA

Tel: 01748 886009 email Brassnappahouses@gmail.com

Northern Synod Website: www.urc-northernsynod.org.uk

Tees & Swale Pastorate