



OCTOBER and NOVEMBER 2020

## Minister's Letter

Dear Friends,

Traditionally, this is the time of Harvest Festivals. In years gone by when people were much closer to the land this was a telling celebration of the year's yield after all the crops had been gathered in. In our urbanised and globalised community, though, Harvest has a different feel. What can it mean to us when the vast majority of us do not till the soil for our food (except perhaps for a few vegetables from the garden)?

Harvest could be just a nostalgic throwback to an agrarian lifestyle none of us are really old enough to know, like a re-enactment of life in a medieval village or in an eighteenth-century manor house. Or it could be just about local church traditions - 'we do harvest this way' - when it is just a matter of replicating what we have always done.

Or we might recognise the global nature of the food chain and make Harvest a time to remember producers in the developing world and how different their lives are to ours. We might hear the story of the cocoa growers who have never tasted chocolate and could never afford to buy any. Or we might hear accounts of how Fair Trade has changed the lives of farmers in Africa, South America, or Asia. We can make Harvest a Commitment for Life event. Yet again, we may turn our thoughts to closer to home. We may think of the people in the UK who struggle desperately, but fail through no fault of their own, to make ends meet. We may recall the growing need, even among people in work, to turn to food banks to put food on the table. And so Harvest may become about helping others by donating to the food bank.

Or we might think ecologically - yes even in our urbanised settings. The news of wildfires in California or devastating floods in the Caribbean, of record-breaking Spring temperatures and a wet Summer may underline for us the issue of climate change. David Attenborough's TV series may present us so visually with the message of various reports about the impact on biodiversity and the impending extinction of so many species unless we do something about it now. So we could focus Harvest on the green agenda.

Alternatively, we can see Harvest as a real celebration of what God has given to us. Yes, Harvest is about the recognition of this world as God's wonderful Creation entrusted to our care - a gift for us to treasure rather than to exploit ruthlessly and carelessly. Yes, Harvest is about justice and fairness in the economy of production and consumption - it is about truly loving and caring for all our fellow human beings, near and far. All this should be at the heart of the traditions we keep and at the heart of the traditions we begin. Harvest is not about reverting to a past, but about looking to a future - God's kingdom of harmony in Creation, and justice and care in human society.

Even in this Covid era, celebrate Harvest with thanks to God for all his gifts.

Yours in His love,  
Stephen

### **Update on Services at Low Row and Keld**

Low Row: As long as government guidelines allow, we propose holding services on the following dates. If you are not a regular member of our congregation but would like to attend one of them, please contact Sue Alderson or Anne Brown to make sure there is adequate room in the building:

4th October	10.30 am	Revd Peter Poulter	*Harvest
18th October	10.30 am	Revd David Hobman	
1st November	10.30 am	Mrs Mary Rose Kearney	
15th November	10.30 am	Miss Meg Thomson	
29th November	10.30 am	Miss Dot Thomson	

*\*For Harvest we are asking for donations of food to be brought to the service for us to pass on to the Food Bank in Richmond.*

**Keld:** There will be a Remembrance Service on 8th November at the War Memorial starting at 10.50 am. This will be taken by Revd David Wood.

Please note all Covid-19 protocols are followed within the church building including but not limited to; social distancing, face masks and hand sanitising.

### **Stephen and Hilary - A warm and heartfelt thank you from us all**

As Stephen and Hilary's time with us comes to its end, I would like to take this opportunity on behalf of our Church members, visitors and all those who have been part of the fellowship over their ministry, to thank them both for all they have brought to our worship.

We wish them both every happiness as they move into the next chapter of their lives and we hope the time they have spent with us is filled with fond memories.

From a personal perspective, we have been in the Dale since 2015, we have been warmly welcomed into the fellowship at Low Row by everyone. Stephen and Hilary have offered us; kindness, support and challenged our understanding of the scriptures, and consequently helped us deepen our faith and be more aware of God in the way we live our lives.

### **In this edition John Lloyd gives a reflective view from the pew**

Walking down the lane towards the church, chatting in the fresh Swaledale air, under trees, views of Whitaside, the three sisters and the meadows down to the river Swale. Through the iron gate, up the path between old grave stones, push open the heavy wooden door and into our Sunday church.

Welcome smiles hugs and kisses. Edward smart and smiling greetings. The church bell starts to ring. Conversations drifting from below as Duncan starts to play his tunes.

Hilary or Stephen in the vestry preparing for service. We grow silent ready for worship. Voices of varying quality fill the air as we praise our God with joyful singing. The sermon, thought provoking and challenging, often discussed over Sunday lunch. Prayers and conversations with God as sunshine streams down from the beauty of the hills above. We are privileged to worship in such a beautiful place and to be part of this wonderful fellowship.

The final hymn and teacups clattering as service ends. Conversations resumed over tea and biscuits, before the walk home to reflect and discuss. Oh how I have missed these Sunday mornings. The missing has highlighted the joy and spiritual peace they bring and I look forward to the day they resume in full. In the meantime, we thank God with even greater appreciation for the beautiful place we live and the fellowship we share.

## **FAREWELL ZOOM EVENT**

Dear Friends,

As you know, Hilary's and my time with you as your Ministers is shortly coming to an end. Our original plan for final services in each place combined with the Harvest Services will not be possible so this is to let you know the revised plan.

Our final Online Mini-Service will be circulated in the normal way for the 11<sup>th</sup> October. In addition, at 3pm on the 11th Hilary and I will host a short Farewell Event by Zoom for those who wish to 'zoom' in. We will send out the link closer to the date.

Due to the nature of Zoom meetings, this event must be quite limited in scope and strictly structured in the following way:

- So we can start at 3pm you would need to 'join' the meeting from 2.50pm.
- The half hour will comprise an opening by Hilary and closing remarks by Stephen, with short 'farewells' (no more than five minutes) by a nominated representative from each of the three churches, and the Moderator will lead prayers for us all as we enter a new phase in our discipleship.
- By the nature of online connections it will not be possible for anyone else to contribute verbally (so everyone will be muted to avoid technical feedback and interference).
- However, if you wish to add your own comment you can do so by typing a short note in the 'Chat' facility of Zoom - a text form of the handshake at the church door.

Clearly, this will be quite unlike what any of us might have expected, but we hope you will feel it is the best compromise in the circumstances.

With every best wish,  
Stephen and Hilary

We would like to congratulate Amelia Brown on being one of four students from Richmond School to win a national award in the 2020 Big Deal Enterprise Project. Sponsored by the University of York the project took students through a 3 month intensive programme of business planning tasks at the end of which they submitted their plans which were judged by business mentors and university leaders'

## **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