

# CONTACT

CHRIST CHURCH HALTON  
COLTON METHODIST CHURCH



**I am the  
vine...**

**...you  
are the  
branches**

**“If you remain in me and I in you,  
you will bear much fruit”**

**– John 15:5**

**April 2024**

## Nicola's Letter

One The Gospel writer, John, describes the first Easter over 2000 years ago: "Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark...". The first day of the week. The first day of something new. At this stage, Mary Magdalene, who arrives at the tomb, doesn't realise just how transformative that something new will be. "While it was still dark" – notice how the language points us to the bleakness of Mary's grief and lack of understanding.

Let's home in on Mary's point of view: She was there at the foot of Jesus' cross. She was there as his mother and the other women wept. I imagine she was there as the body was taken down, wrapped in cloths, and sealed up in the tomb. What did she feel as the stone was rolled into place? Can you imagine? Can you imagine the terrible darkness?

It is the darkness that eradicates hope. A suffocating, creeping darkness that erodes any belief in the future. It's the darkness of death. It's the darkness of illness. It's the darkness of struggle. It's bleak. It's desolate.

And yet... there is a competition going on in, in this first line: "Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark..."

Darkness dominates, but we are also alerted to the fact that dawn is coming – a powerful thought, worth tenaciously holding on to in those times and places when we wrestle with grief, illness and struggle.

Yes – darkness might surround Mary and each one of us at times – but with God, dawn will break through. Dawn always comes, following even the darkest, most desolate nights. Yes – the night hours are hard and long, but nothing can stop dawn. Just as with Mary at the tomb, in our lives and across the world, there are many situations and experiences which are deeply painful and frightening. Ill-health, grief, isolation, poverty, racism, ongoing wars, the climate crisis, all can create darkness and despair.

And yet, God calls us to trust that even when we cannot see or feel it ourselves, God never, ever leaves us. God is right there with us, going through it all with us. God is with us, nurturing new life from the very seeds of pain and fear. This is an utterly transforming hope which we can hold onto, and share, in the darkest times and places, at Easter and beyond.

## **East Leeds History and Archaeology Society**

On Friday 26 April at 2pm, Ann Lightman will deliver and illustrated talk, entitled "Royal Links in Lawnswood Cemetery".

As usual, the talk will take place in Cross Gates Methodist Church hall, and everyone is welcome.

Admission: £2.00 including refreshments.

### **As One Together**

**By Pauline Hardman**

We all have something to give  
we all have things we can do.

What is right for me  
may not be right for you.

That's how it's meant to be,  
that's the way of things.

The honeybee collects pollen  
the lovely nightingale sings.

All creatures great and small  
make up the circle of life.

We all must do our bit  
For the order to survive.

In all things we must divide  
The tasks that must be done.

All doing our separate things,  
to unite and be as one.



(Nightingale image: ©Vecteezy.com)

## Presbyteral Ministry at Christ Church LEP

Currently, Christ Church is fortunate to be served through 25% of Revd Edward's Circuit time and 25% of Revd Nicola's Partnership time. In July 2025, Rev. Nicola's term with us will have come to an end (though not in the Partnership) as will Rev. Edward's with us and the Circuit. Extensions to these terms are possible but not guaranteed and some reorganisation may take place. Work is ongoing within the Leeds URC Partnership and the Leeds North and East Methodist Circuit, to make plans as to how ministry time might be allocated to all the churches involved.

The Leeds URC Partnership is made up of 8 churches, including ours. Presently, there are 2 Stipendiary ministers, 2 Non stipendiary ministers and 1 Elder in local leadership in the Ministry Team. In the near future, the 2 non-stipendiary ministers will be stepping back from the team. Currently, the Partnership is looking to call another stipendiary minister into the team. To aid this process, each church is producing a profile to suggest ways we might support and be supported by another minister being in the team, whether or not they have responsibility for our church.

Meanwhile, the recent Methodist Circuit meeting voted to reduce the number of Presbyters from 5 to 4 though it was also agreed that each church would continue to have a presbyter with pastoral charge. Thus, four Presbyters will have pastoral charge of 14 churches. This is in order to work towards a balanced budget and also address the national shortage of Ministers. As a church this means we will be asked to feedback ways in which we think the workload on Presbyters can be reduced. Options may include joint services, flexible service times and some lay post holder job sharing across churches to free up time for some to train in lay pastoral roles.

Please do appreciate that the details will take time to be worked through but we will discuss and share information when we are able. In the meantime Revds Nicola and Edward and our Stewards will aim to answer any questions you may have, so not hesitate to get in touch. We are here to listen and chat. We also ask for your continued prayers and support as we journey forward together.     **- Helen Lappage**

## Love Is... (Read: 1 John 4:7-21)



“Since God loved us so much, we also ought to love one another. Justice is spiralling, for it has after effects. Since God has revealed God’s love for a just world, God invites each of us to strive for justice by loving one another transcending all barriers and trespassing all boundaries. By loving one another, which is to affirm mutual self-respect and self-dignity in one another, we will let God live in us and allow God’s love to be perfected in us. By loving one another we will all strive for a just world, where God dwells and God’s justice thrives. Justice is imperative for Christian discipleship. Since God loved us justly, we ought to love one another justly, and there are no two thoughts on it.

Love for the ‘other’ particularly the ‘outsiders’, the ‘powerless’ and the ‘vulnerable’ is the yardstick to demonstrate the grace of God in each of our lives and communities. As churches we have been busy trying to keep up the status quo of our church memberships and have been engrossed in putting our energies into the survival of church buildings and properties. Feeding the hungry, giving a drink to the thirsty, welcoming the stranger, clothing the naked, caring for the sick and visiting the imprisoned – these hexagonal representative acts of love in action to the vulnerable should be the mission mandate of our churches.

When our mission engagements are in such a direction, we are truly serving Christ the love. Church is all about serving in love in the community, outside the walls of our church building, particularly vulnerable people. No one has ever seen God, but if we love one another, God lives in us, the Easter story becomes relevant and God’s love is perfected in the creation.”

[By Raj Patta. Taken from ‘The Vine’, compiled and produced by Twelvebaskets]

## Thank you

“We would like to thank everyone who helped with Dorothy Grant’s funeral in February, and supported us after the death of our mother. It was a lovely service and was made so much easier because we knew everything had been taken care of. It was nice to hear that everyone had such good memories of mum.” – *Denise and Keith*

## **A Prayer for Easter Season**

Risen Christ,  
for whom no door is locked, no entrance barred:  
open the doors of our hearts,  
that we may seek the good of others  
and walk the joyful road of sacrifice and peace,  
to the praise of God the Father.  
Amen.



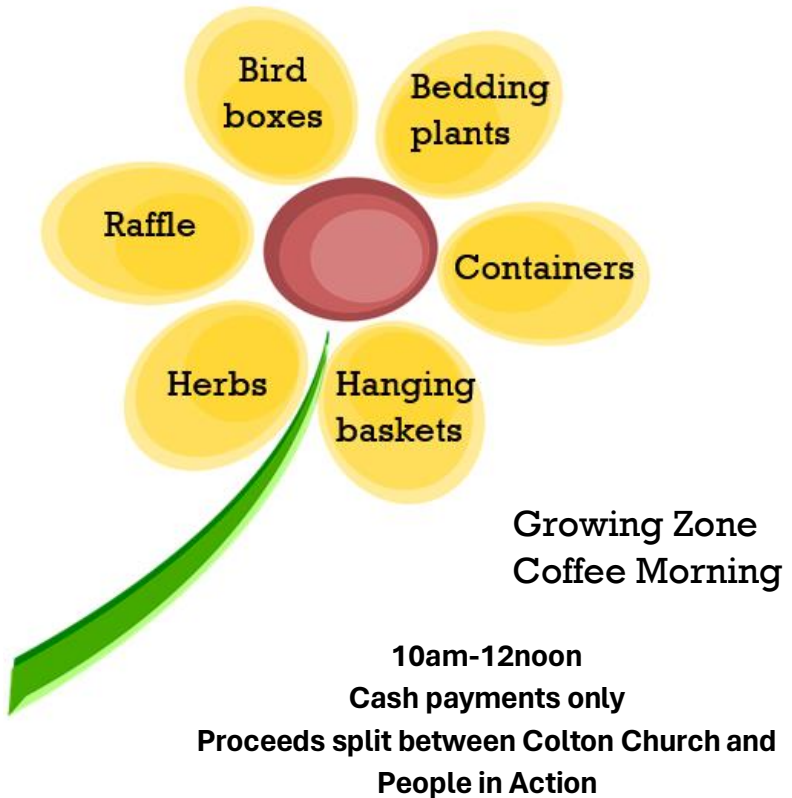
- **The remaining downstairs windows at Christ Church are being replaced in early April, thanks to everybody who has helped in the raising of the funds to allow us to complete this work. If you are able to help us out by washing a pair of curtains, please see Martin.**

- **There is still an urgent need for all food stuffs for food banks across our city. Contributions from Christ Church are taken to the one at St Wilfrid's each Wednesday by Sue Guy. All items are welcomed. Please consider adding items to your weekly shopping basket and putting these into the box at the back of the church. Sue will take any contributions of fresh meat or will buy some with any donations.**

- **What could you contribute for Contact? Our magazine is available on the Circuit website, it can be picked up in our churches, and it's shared via email. Is there an event you want to publicise? A favourite bible verse or hymn you could write a few words about? A recipe, poem, joke or handy hint that you'd like to share? Or just any requests about the kind of things you'd like to see? Andy's contact details are on page 15 of this month's magazine.**

**Plant Sale**  
**@Colton Methodist Church**

Coming up on **May 18<sup>th</sup>** – get the date in your diary now.



"I just burned 2000 calories! (That's the last time I leave a chocolate cake in the oven while I take a nap)...."





## Reduce – Reuse – Recycle

If you're looking for some new, clever ways to help save the planet, why not try some of these ideas?

- Don't throw it out, repair it! From bikes, to sewing machines, to laptops and anywhere in between, the volunteers at a Repair Café might be able to fix it for you. On the third Saturday of every month, 11am-3pm, the East Leeds Repair Café is held at Cross Gates Methodist Church.
- Did you know empty crisp packets can be recycled into things like flooring and fence posts? You can save your packets and drop them off at the Whitkirk Co-Op or Sainsburys at Colton for recycling.
- No need to use chemicals to clean and freshen your microwave. Pop some lemon slices in a bowl of water and heat until the inside of the microwave is steamy, then just wipe down inside.
- Nice and simple – cut down your energy use by switching appliances off at the socket. You'd be surprised how many still use energy even when you think they're turned off.
- Tea bags are actually full of plastic. Switch to loose-leaf tea or plastic-free bags which are more biodegradable.



## **Musings of a Wayward Pilgrim**

### **“Here and Now”**

Watch children at play. Away from the shackling oversight of adults, children are uninhibited celebrants of the bounty of the Here and Now.



They can entertain each other with the simplest of activities. Without trying, they frolic. Such practitioners of wonder and glee, children elude the constraints of Time to enjoy themselves unselfconsciously in ways which hallow the simple gifts of creation.

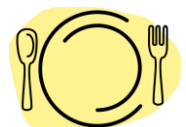
We adults would be wise to emulate the unfettered mirth children express so naturally. For through the worship of play, children raise an exuberant "thank you" for the kind of ordinary blessings from which we adults are too often estranged.

(From “Musings Of A Wayward Pilgrim” by Mark Zenick and reproduced with the author’s kind permission.)

## **Pop Up Restaurant**

Thank you to the Scouts at Colton for a wonderful meal at their recent Pop-Up Restaurant evening. The Scouts did a fantastic job of serving and clearing away. The proceeds will go towards their two planned camps, and what’s more, the Scouts involved gained some new badges for their hard work.

We also want to say congratulations to Madeline who received confirmation of becoming a Scout Leader. Well done to all involved in putting on an excellent evening.



## Colton Church Annual General Meeting Update

Our meeting took place on Sunday 17 March after worship over a welcome cuppa, chaired by Revd Becki. Minutes of the meeting will be circulated shortly but the main points from the meeting were:

- **Church Stewards:** Elaine, Kathryn, Sijmen and Frank all agreed to continue as church stewards which the meeting agreed to!
- **Representatives to Church Council:** it was noted there are a number of vacancies on Church Council, so if this is something you'd like to explore, please speak to Becki or one of the stewards. The reps who were due to stand down this year agreed to continue for a further 3 years. Mary Curl volunteered to return to Church Council and this was welcomed.
- **Church Reports:** A document containing reports from the Minister, Treasurer, Senior Stewards, Pastoral Visitors, Junior Church & Wednesday Coffee Morning had been circulated prior to the meeting. A short time was spent in small groups to pick out any highlights and feedback. Thanks were expressed to all those submitting the reports and those involved in all the various roles to support the work of the church in Colton.
- **Church Charity of the Year:** after discussion it was agreed that our main fundraising from September 2024 to August 2025 should be for a Colton Methodist Church Repair and Renew Fund, due to the level of property related work required, alongside the continued collection of items for the Foodbank and Meeting Point.
- **Circuit News:** a summary of items discussed at the recent Circuit Meeting was passed on, including the decision to reduce the number of presbyters from 5 to 4 from September 2025.
- **The Way Ahead for Colton:** a sheet summarising the new priorities for Colton was circulated with the reports. These had been accepted by Church Council and the AGM welcomed these. Two new JAM (Jesus And Me) initiatives are in the pipeline – one to follow on from Wednesday Coffee Morning fortnightly and the other geared to families with children 12 and under, to take place monthly on a Sunday afternoon.



## **Circuit Summer Workshops**

**What do people know and believe about Jesus? What do they really think of us, His followers? Are we talking about Jesus enough? And when we do, are we drawing people closer towards Him, or pushing them further away?**

**The Talking Jesus course has been inspiring thousands of Christians to share their faith. The six video-based sessions give practical suggestions to help encourage natural and relevant conversations about Jesus. The sessions include short films, inspirational short testimonies, and real-life examples from people who are talking Jesus.**

**The circuit are hosting 3 sets of the 6 week Talking Jesus course – all are invited, bring a friend – let's get talking about Jesus!**

**Christ Church - Monday Evening 7.30pm**

**On 8<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup>, 22<sup>nd</sup>, 29<sup>th</sup> April & 13<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup> May**

**ON Zoom – Wednesday Evening 7.30pm**

<https://zoom.us/j/92092458021?pwd=VUZWeDRrVG84Y0Z6alRxdE9Uc1h5Zz09>

Meeting ID: 920 9245 8021

Passcode: Wesley

**On 17<sup>th</sup>, 24<sup>th</sup> April & 1<sup>st</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup> 22<sup>nd</sup> May**

**Lidgett Park – Wednesday Afternoon 1.00pm**

**5<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup>, 26<sup>th</sup> June & 10<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup> July**



## **Christ Church Table-Top Sale**

Saturday 19 April, 10am – 12noon

Come and browse a wide range of stalls, with plenty of fabulous products and great deals on offer!

## **Christ Church Guild Update**

It doesn't seem two minutes since New Year and here we are with Easter and the 64th session of the Guild behind us. We have had some interesting speakers and, in spite of difficulties with parking since the yellow lines were painted on surrounding streets, we are pleased with the attendance. Thank you to all our loyal supporters.

We held our AGM on 19th March and this was well attended. Tony and Peter remain as co-presidents, Joe as treasurer and Sheila as secretary. The committee is pleased to welcome two new members, Elizabeth Moll and Peter Maskrey. The question of whether to change to an afternoon meeting was discussed but no-one was keen for this to happen.



The committee will begin planning the next programme at the end of this month. In the meantime we have our usual summer programme. The first coffee afternoon will be held at church on Tuesday 7th May from 2-4pm. All are welcome to this: it doesn't matter whether you count yourself as a Guild member or not. The dates for the spring plant sale are Thursday 16th, Friday 17th and Saturday 18th May. Do please tell friends and family about this.



## **“Cries of Distress”**

### **From Our Daily Bread**

Trapped under two floors of collapsed rubble caused by an earthquake, five-year-old Jinan, a Syrian girl, called out to rescuers as she shielded her little brother from the debris surrounding them. “Get me out of here; I’ll do anything for you,” she called heartbreakingly. “I’ll be your servant.”

Cries of distress are found throughout the Psalms: “When hard pressed, I cried to the Lord” (Psalm 118:5). While we may never experience the crushing weight of earthquake-collapsed buildings, we all recognise the suffocating fears from a challenging medical diagnosis, economic hardship, uncertainty about the future or relational loss.

In those moments we may offer bargains to God for deliverance. But God doesn’t need to be persuaded to help. He promises to answer, and while it may not be relief from our situation, He’ll be with us and on our side. Nor do we need to fear any other peril—including death. We can say with the psalmist, “The Lord is with me; he is my helper. I look in triumph on my enemies” (v. 7).



We’re not promised as dramatic a rescue as Jinan and her brother experienced, but we can trust our faithful God, who brought the psalmist “into a spacious place” (v. 5). He knows our situation and He’ll never abandon us, even in death.

How has God shown Himself faithful when you’re in distress? How have you recognised his presence during difficult times?

(Read Psalm 118)

## **Forthcoming Services at Christ Church**

7 April	Mr John Summerwill
14 April	Rev Dr Nicola Robinson
21 April	Mr David Laycock
28 April	Rev Edward Sakwe Holy Communion
5 May	Rev Dr Nicola Robinson

### **\* Messy Church \***

At a loose end on Saturday afternoons, and never tried Christ Church's fabulous Messy Church? What are you waiting for? It was great to see what was quite possibly a record number of children join us for our Easter and Mother's Day session last month!

We meet again on Saturday 13 April, between 2 and 4pm with crafts, music, stories, dancing, worship and refreshments – there's something for all ages, yes, whether you're 5 or 85! We'll be thanking God for making us all different and thinking about how we are all welcome in God's family.

All children must be accompanied by an adult, and all we charge is whatever you feel able to pay, with a suggested donation of £1 per child.

It's a great help with our catering if you book a place in advance – please contact Sue on 0113 2647510 or Helen (details on the back cover of Contact), or send a message via our Facebook page. We hope to see you there.

## **Forthcoming Services at Colton**

- |          |  |
|----------|--|
| 7 April  | Worship for All Ages<br>Led by Church Stewards |
| 14 April | Mr Michael Prince                              |
| 21 April | Mr Grenville Jensen                            |
| 28 April | Rev Becki Stennett<br>Holy Communion           |
| 5 May    | Rev Becki Stennett<br>All-Age & Parade Service |

### **FOR THE CHRIST CHURCH WINDOW FUND.....**

**You are invited to afternoon tea  
on Saturday 4th May, from 2pm.**

**£10 – inc. free prize draw!**

**To book a place or a table, please phone Sheila  
on 0113 2602553 or 07899 687792.**

#### **“Contact” Deadline**

Please let Andy have any articles or contributions for April's Contact by 7pm on Tuesday 28 May. Many thanks.  
andybirkett76@gmail.com or 07952 861316.



*Just occasionally,  
Rev Morgan  
wondered if he  
had gone too far  
in his quest for  
publicity.*

**Senior Steward**

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