



**CROSSGATES
METHODIST
CHURCH**
Newsletter
February 2026

MINISTER: Rev Janet Titterton

Approaching Lent

It's February already! No sooner have we got Christmas out of the way, we are looking at Lent. After all that extra eating and drinking, we turn to fasting and reflection.

Some years ago, my daughter-in-law, Eleanor, had a job as a student worker in the chaplaincy at Leeds University. One Lent time, she set the students a challenge: "This Lent, will you be a 'GUS' or a 'TOM'?"

The challenge set was either to be GUS and **Give Up Something** or TOM and **Take On More**. To give up chocolate, biscuits, or chocolate biscuits, coffee, meat, or whatever it is that we enjoy but is not good for us. This is a Lenten tradition, to **Give Up Something**.

Or we might prefer to **Take On More**. To get into a new habit, reading the Bible daily, praying regularly, journaling, walking, swimming, or whatever it is that will be of spiritual or physical benefit to us.

Of course, we can do both, we can be both a 'GUS' and a 'TOM'. Both are good ways to observe this special time of year. Both are good ways to keep our own Lenten fast. Either or both will benefit us in many ways. But what does God want from us? What kind of fasting does He prefer?

Through the prophet Isaiah He said this:

"This is the kind of fasting I want:

Free those who are wrongly imprisoned;

Lighten the burden of those who work for you...

...Share your food with the hungry,

and give shelter to the homeless.

Give clothes to those who need them,

and do not hide from relatives who need your help." (Isaiah 58: 6,7 NLT)

No mention there of giving up biscuits or of reading the Bible. Do those things, but as you do them don't forget that what God really wants us is not for us to be a 'GUS' or a 'TOM'. God wants us to be a 'LEO'. What God really wants from us this Lent, and Easter, and always, is that we should **Love Each Other**, and go out of our way to do something that shows it. So let's all try to be LEO's this Lent.

I wish you all God's blessings as we approach Lent 2026.

With love, Rev Janet

February Services

1 February – 10.30am		Deacon Adhelia Da Silva
1 February – 4pm	Circuit Service	At Oakwood
8 February – 10.30am		Mr Michael Prince
15 February – 10.30am		Mr Ted Britton
18 February – 7pm	Ash Wednesday	Revd Norma Davey
22 February – 10.30am		Mr Grenville Jensen

Communion Stewards for February are Denise Durkin & Keith Westbrook.

Church Flowers

Happy New Year to everyone.

On the 18th January flowers were donated by Alison Lambert for **birthday memories** and by Deborah Carter in memory of her dad **Keith Tingle**.

As there is only me arranging the flowers now, to make it easier and in talking with Barbara, we have decided that in future we will place bouquets of flowers in vases instead of using oasis. They will last longer as they are in water and will be much easier to arrange but still enhance Church as only fresh flowers can.

However, I will still do more formal arrangements for special services like Easter, Harvest, Remembrance Sunday and funerals if required.

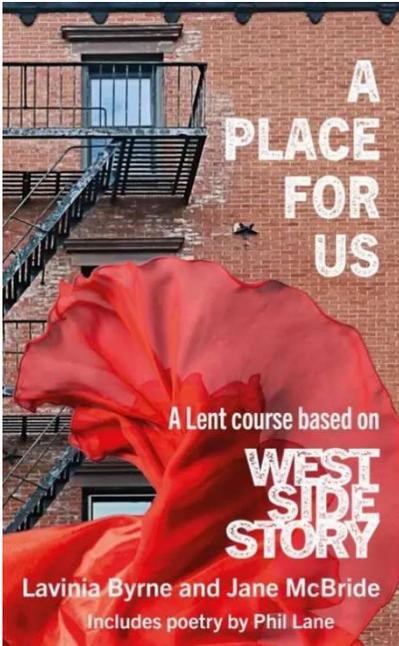
We do hope you will continue to support us, make donations and sponsor arrangements for your particular memories.

(In between requests artificial flowers will be used).

Please contact either me or Barbara Leeming Thank you, Georgina Cressey.

LENT 2026 – “A place for us”

Five sessions of bible study, discussion and reflection based on the new movie “West Side Story”.



Garforth at 7.30pm

Feb 23rd

Mar 2nd

Mar 9th

Mar 16th

Mar 23rd

Colton at 2.30pm

Feb 24th

Mar 3rd

Mar 10th

Mar 17th

Mar 24th

All are welcome at any or all of the sessions.

World Day of Prayer Service 2026

This year's World Day of Prayer service will take place on **Friday, 6th March at St Mary's Church, Whitkirk.**

The World Day of Prayer is a world-wide ecumenical women-led movement. The World Day of Prayer enables women all over the world to share the ideas and concerns of the writing country. It is prepared each year by a different country. **This year's service has been prepared by a team of Christian women from Nigeria.**

Look out for further information on the posters which will be displayed in Church and in the next newsletter.

Leeds South & East Foodbank (Trussell Trust)

This winter, tens of thousands of people will need an emergency food parcel from a food bank in the Trussell community – many for the first time.

Over 90% of the food distributed by our local foodbank is donated by the public – that is why our support is so vital.

This month the foodbank particularly needs donations of UHT milk, biscuits, custard, cooking sauces, tinned/packet mash potatoes. However all types of non-perishable food and toiletries are most welcome.

There is a box in the Galilee for your donations or please contact John Best, email jvbest39@hotmail.com who will gladly collect.

Table Top Sales - 7th February & 7th March 9.30am to 12noon

Why not come along for a drink and a chat and then browse round all the items for sale. You might just find the item you have been looking for at a good price.

If you would like more information or to book a table, at a cost of £5 for Church funds, please contact John Smith on 0779904472.

Come along and pick up a bargain!

Monday Coffee Morning

Please come and join us between 10:00am and 11:30am if you would like someone to talk to while you enjoy a drink. Biscuits, toast, crumpets and toasted teacakes are also available.

There is also a wide selection of items for sale in aid of Church funds.

Ladies Friendship Group

Meetings are at 2.30pm in the Wesley Room on the 2nd and 4th Tuesdays of the month. *All welcome.*

27/01/26 – Bring & Buy (an auction for charity)

10/02/26 – The Salvation Army (Rev Janet Titterton)

24/02/26 – Montague Burton, Tailor of Taste (Jacki and Bob Lawrence)

Men's Fellowship Group

Meetings are held at 2pm in the Wesley Room on the 1st and 3rd Tuesdays of the month. *All welcome.*

03/02/26 – Beautiful German Towns on the Romantic Road
(Christine Holdstock)

17/02/26 – Comedy Hour (John Blyth)

Spotlight on.....Beryl Gledhill

I was born in 1934 and have one sister. Our father came from a religious family and when mother married dad she joined the Church too. It was a loving home but quite strict – Church every Sunday morning and evening.

I was five when war was declared. I remember food was difficult to obtain and if mother heard the shop had rabbits for example, we had to leave our games and queue, amongst adults, for a long time – no telephone in the house! How different today.

At eleven I attended Roundhay High School, after passing the entrance exam. I left at sixteen with a poor School Certificate and started work as a junior at the Electricity Generating Board with one day at college and three evenings at night school. At nineteen I met Eric, a foreman, and we married in 1956, buying a house in Cross Gates for £1,700. We had two children, a girl and a boy and when old enough they joined the guides and the scouts.

As a family, we became more involved with the Church. I taught at the Sunday School and Eric became a Steward. We joined the Wednesday at Eight group and enjoyed social evenings on a Saturday and also Fire Brigade dances.

Then very sad times – Ruth our daughter died in 1983 and Lesley our niece was killed in a road accident in 1986. Over time, with love and care from family, the Church and friends and continuing to work in the office at Parklands High School, life gradually became more ‘normal’.

We were members of the Walking Group, Brian Dean had organised and we enjoyed the Saturday walks. Also, we became involved with ‘Compassionate Friends’, a group for parents who had lost a child. It sounds sad and yes there were tears, but also laughter, fun and care. We met monthly and had some happy weekends in the Dales.

Eric’s health began to deteriorate, sadly he died in 1999. I continued with the Walking Group, enjoyed the walks, the weekends and the holidays in various beautiful places.

Gradually I began to find living on my own more difficult and now I am living in a care home near my son and daughter-in-law in County Durham. The staff are excellent but sadly most residents suffer from dementia. Yes, I miss friends, the Church and relatives in Cross gates but I have settled here and am grateful for all the times I have shared. **Beryl Gledhill**

If you would like to join in and offer a few words about your life to feature in future newsletters, please send them to Tracy Dick (see the back page for contact details)

*May you be blessed in your waking days
And your sleeping hours
In your grieving and in your rejoicing
In your loving and in your remembering
In all the places of your heart
May you be blessed.*

Thank you for the Donation

We received the following letter from All we Can following our donation in December 2025:

Thank you for your generous support of the Hurricane Melissa Appeal. Your compassion and willingness to help in a time of crisis means more than words can express.

Hurricane Melissa tore through coastal communities with devastating force leaving thousands without homes and livelihoods. Powerful winds and torrential rain have destroyed critical infrastructure, uprooted families and left many struggling to access necessities.

Because of your gift our regional partner, the Methodist Church in the Caribbean and the Americas (MCCA) is able to act swiftly to provide emergency shelter, clean drinking water, food and medical support to families who have lost everything. With every blessing, Catherine Park, Supporter Engagement Administrator, All We Can.

Alison Lambert, Church Treasurer

Offertory envelopes

New offertory envelopes for the next 12 months starting in March will be available from the **8th February**. Please collect them from me at Church or contact me and I will try and organise delivery if you are unable to attend Church at the moment.

If you donate on a regular basis and would like more information regarding offertory envelopes, please have a chat with me.

We were able to claim £7440 in Gift Aid for the tax year 2024/25 which is a significant and very welcome contribution to our Church finances, especially in these difficult times.

So, if you are a taxpayer and do not have a gift aid declaration with the Church or if indeed your tax status has changed, please contact Deborah Carter or myself.

Many thanks for your generous and continued contributions.

Amanda Brow, Church Assistant Treasurer

Get Weekly Updates from the Methodist News: Sign up to receive updates and stories from across the Methodist Church, delivered straight to your inbox. Each week the Methodist News shares highlights from local Churches and key developments in our shared mission. It's a great way to stay connected with the life and work of the Church, wherever you are. You'll find links to articles, blogs and films – all from the comfort of your armchair! Sign up at **methodist.org.uk/SignUp**

Our Memories of Jean Drake..... (and Harry)

Around 44 years ago we were living near Lincoln and enjoyed caravan holidays at Sutton-on-Sea. Two years in succession we attended a Beach Mission run by students from a Methodist Training College, which our three daughters really enjoyed. At the end of the second year, we told the organisers that we were moving to Cross Gates. We got the response from one student 'You will meet my Mother and Dad then – everybody at Cross Gates Methodist knows Jean and Harry Drake.'

In the years that followed Harry had two 4 year spells as Church Steward and Jean served with him, working in the background. Jean was one of a group of ladies who always could be relied on for organising the food for such things as the Harvest Tea – famous for apple pies. Jean always attended when the Social Committee planned a 'bowling' evening and then it was back to the Drakes for tea and scones. Jean loved Church Socials particularly barn dances and quizzes in which she always took part. She was an active member of the Ladies Group and in the Pastoral Visiting Team, as well as teaching in Sunday School.

Jean loved all things American and together with Harry crisscrossed the States, not using a package holiday but one they planned and organised themselves. Everything they needed went in a single suitcase as they travelled by train and bus and had to carry the luggage themselves.

Besides being a Leeds United fan, the highlight of the year was always the Scarborough Cricket Festival, where Jean could be seen supporting her beloved Yorkshire. Jean was immensely proud of her sons Philip and John together with her grandchildren.

We remember all those years previously when Philip Drake had said 'Everyone at Cross Gates Methodist knows Jean and Harry'. **How true this proved to be. John and Cynthia Best**

***If you have any memories of Jean Drake (and/or Harry) for the March newsletter, please send them to Tracy Dick.
Contact details are on the back page***

Good News Stories: You can read uplifting stories by visiting the dedicated Good News Stories page on the Methodist Church website, where inspiring updates are shared. Visit methodist.org.uk/Blog

Condolences: to the family and friends of Jean Drake who has recently died. Now at peace with her lovely Harry.
A thanksgiving service for her life will be held in Church on **Monday 9th February at 12 midday.**

Congratulations: to Jackie (formerly George) and Steve Leaverland on the birth of their first grandchild, Eloise Maeve, born to their eldest daughter Grace. Mum and baby doing well and grandparents thrilled.

Please remember in your thoughts and prayers: All those people in our prayer book and those we know who are unwell, in hospital, in Nursing Homes, going for tests at Hospital, recently bereaved and who find this time of year particularly difficult.

Service Options: Please do contact one of the Stewards if you would like to receive details of worship via email or would like to have printed worship sheets delivered.

Websites:

Circuit: www.leedsnandemethodist.org.uk

District: www.yorkshirewestmethodist.org.uk

Your Financial Contributions: Thank you to all those who continue to contribute to the Church's running costs. If you are unable to attend Church in person, please continue sending them to the Church's address.

Spotlight On: Please consider writing a few words about your life for inclusion in a future Newsletter, as have many of our Church family already. Please send your contribution to Tracy Dick (contact details below).

Newsletter: Please email contributions for the Newsletter to Tracy Dick tracylouisedick@gmail.com Deadlines coming up: Sunday 15th February, Sunday 15th March, Sunday 19th April.

CROSS GATES METHODIST CHURCH MISSION STATEMENT

We are a group of people who are seeking to celebrate and share God's love for all.

Through Worship, Witness and Service in the Community we aim to follow Christ's example of open arms, hearts, minds and doors