

THE RIVERFOLD NEWSLETTER



*Growing Disciples
with
Compassion, Confidence
& Courage*

A Letter From The Riverfold Time to Pause & Prepare

BY THE REV. LOUISE BEARDER
BLYTH, RANSKILL & SCROOBY BENEFICE



My name is the Rev Louise Bearder, and I am the Priest in Charge and Mission Associate in the Riverfold Cluster of Churches, with the privilege of serving the churches of Blyth, Ranskill, and Scrooby. I am very much looking forward to getting to know you, sharing in the life of our churches, and walking alongside you in faith and community.

As we enter the season of Lent, we are invited into a quieter, more reflective time in the church year. Lent is often described as a journey — a journey that helps us slow down, take stock, and gently turn our hearts and minds back towards God. In a world that so often feels busy, noisy, and demanding, this invitation to pause can feel both challenging and deeply necessary.

At the same time, as Lent unfolds, we begin to notice the first signs of spring around us. Tiny flowers push their way through cold and seemingly lifeless ground. Snowdrops, crocuses, and early daffodils appear almost without announcement, yet they bring with them a quiet promise of hope and new life. These small signs remind us that even in seasons of waiting, God is still at work. Jesus encourages us to pay attention to these everyday signs of God's care when he says: *"Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin."*

(Matthew 6:28)

The flowers do not worry about the future or question whether they are enough. They grow where they are planted, trusting in the rhythm of the seasons and the provision of their Creator. Lent invites us to reflect on our own lives in the same way — to notice what weighs us down, what distracts us, and where we might be called to trust God more deeply.

The words of Ecclesiastes remind us: *"For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven."* (Ecclesiastes 3:1)

Lent is not a season of rushing or of having all the answers. It is a time for honesty, prayer, and gentle preparation — preparing our hearts for the joy and hope of Easter that lies ahead.

Across the Riverfold churches, this season is one we share together. You are warmly invited to join us at our services, whether regularly or for the first time in a while, and to be part of our wider church life through coffee mornings, community gatherings, and other activities. Whether you come with deep faith, many questions, or simply a desire for connection, you are most welcome.

May this Lent be a time of quiet growth, renewed trust, and hope for us all, as we journey together through this season of pause and preparation.

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*"For everything there
is a season, and a
time for every matter
under heaven."*

ECCLESIASTES 3:1

The Riverfold Churches in Focus: A Blessed Beginning to 2026



The church team at All Saints Eaton was delighted to welcome back members of the community and visitors for their popular monthly 'Coffee & Cake' events which run on the third Saturday of every month from 10am to noon. Last year, these coffee mornings raised over £2000 to help fund improvements to the church building including new energy efficient heating and lighting.

As well as raising vital funds, the church team believes that events like these help to play an important role in combatting isolation in rural areas. Everyone is guaranteed a warm welcome alongside delicious homemade cakes and scones and a selection of hot and cold drinks.

St Nicholas Church, Bawtry recently held a joyful Pancake Day celebration to mark Shrove Tuesday, welcoming 37 children for an afternoon of fun and learning. Alongside learning about this special day, the children enjoyed plenty of delicious pancakes, making it a memorable and meaningful occasion for everyone involved.



Stories of Faith from the Heart of The Riverfold - Watoto Choir at Gringley on the Hill

BY REV LIZ MACK

Have you ever taken a step of faith which paid off in a way you could not have imagined?

When Rebecca Tasker, RE Teacher from St Peter's school told me about the possibility of the Watoto choir coming to our small Church of England school in the small rural village of Gringley on the Hill, I thought, well, it's just after Christmas, people will be busy and recovering from that, and there won't be time to find the host families we needed for the choir to go ahead.

Basically, I put the brakes on and thought it was a closed door, maybe for another time when we could be ready and well prepared. However, our amazing God clearly had other plans! Rebecca, full of faith and excitement for what could be, said, well, let's just see- I can send out a letter to parents and see if anyone is willing to host.



A PRAYER FOR LENT

Loving God,
as we journey through
this season of Lent,
help us to pause, to trust
in you,
and to grow in faith and
hope.

We place ourselves, our
churches,
and our communities
into your loving hands.
Amen.



So we waited, and to be honest, I didn't think anything would come of it.

But, within a couple of days, 3 host families came forward, then a couple more, then by the end of the week, we had 9! And not just what we needed, but two more families in reserve! Talk about God doing more than we could ask or imagine!

This stepping up of people within the community and school to offer their homes to strangers made a way for us to host a wonderful time of worship, sharing stories and supporting a wonderful charity that transforms lives. 165 people came to fill the

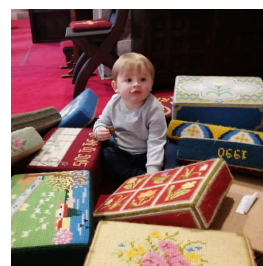
church and share in a unique time of joy, to hear the lived experience of children whose lives have been changed through the love of God at work through the charity, and it gave me a picture of the future. A future where the love of God and joyous worship held in love of neighbour reaches out to new generations and those outside of our current church family. A picture of what God is doing and what he will do if we simply step out. What are you being asked to step out in faith for?

Growing in Faith with Our Riverfold Schools: Journeying with Jesus

BY LUCY MCCANN
CHILDREN & FAMILIES LEAD

Well, what a few weeks it's been for our incredible Riverfold children and their families. Such an encouraging time of growth for our young people in their journeys with Jesus. It's a struggle to know where to start! Collectively, the team has visited an amazing seven primary schools, with visits to further schools already in the diary. Visits have included 'Big Bible Question' assemblies, the launch of the 'Journeying with Jesus' Lent series at St Peter's Primary in Gringley-on-the-Hill, and also walking alongside the wonderful children of St Mary and St Martin's Primary in Blyth for their Clumber Park well-being walk (even the rain stayed away!). Furthermore, we have shared 'Draw Near for Lent with 40 Acts' within schools and our groups such as Little Lambs and Sundayz Cool.

The build-up to this Lenten season included a hugely successful Pancake Party on Shrove Tuesday (additional pancakes were required!). Now, as we journey deeper into Lent, we reflect and look ahead to hearing what our children will share with us at the forthcoming Easter events. What a privilege it has been to serve these inspirational young people as we share the awesome nature of God and how much He loves each one of them! I am excited to see what the next weeks will bring as our Riverfold children's and families' work continues to mirror the joy of spring as creation awakens in the world around us.



SHARE YOUR RIVERFOLD FAITH STORY

The Riverfold is looking for people of faith in the benefices to share short video testimonies for Living Hope Stories on the Diocesan website. Your story could encourage others and help them explore faith.

Contact Laura Korczyk at laura@theriverfold.com or 07802 480 869 by the end of March to take part in April.

Not-to-miss news:

Adult Full Immersion Baptisms at the River Idle — Welcoming Souls into God’s Family



We’re delighted to share some wonderful news! St Nicholas’ Church, Bawtry will be holding a full adult baptism by immersion during the Living Waters service on Sunday 8th March 2026 at 9:30am. Four adults will be taking this special step of faith and joining God’s family. Everyone is warmly invited to come along and celebrate this joyful occasion with us.

Support in The Darkest Times: At St Barnabas’, Ranskill

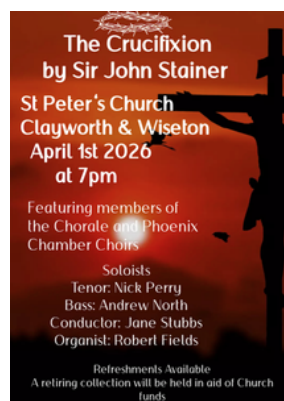
Rev Louise Bearder will be launching a new group focused on bereavement. Meeting every two weeks on Wednesday afternoons at St Barnabas’ Church, Ranskill, starting 15th April at 2:00pm, the sessions will explore the Bereavement Journey through a series of short videos. There will also be refreshments and time to talk, offering information, support, and companionship. In times of bereavement, faith can be a gentle source of comfort, reminding us that we are not alone in our grief and that God walks beside us even in our darkest moments.



An Evening Performance of The Crucifixion, St Peter’s Clayworth & Wiseton

St Peter’s Church, Clayworth & Wiseton warmly invites you to a special musical evening on 1 April 2026 at 7:00pm, featuring a performance of The Crucifixion by Sir John Stainer. The presentation will include members of the Chorale and Phoenix Chamber Choirs, with soloists Nick Perry (tenor) and Andrew North (bass). The performance will be conducted by Jane Stubbs, with Robert Fields accompanying on the organ.

Refreshments will be available, and a retiring collection will be taken in support of church funds. All are welcome to attend this moving and reflective event



Summer in Bloom: Explore Open Gardens and Classic Cars at Gringley-on-the-Hill



Have you ever dreamed of exploring the hidden ‘secret gardens’ of Gringley-on-the-Hill, or are you a classic car enthusiast eager to admire some beautiful vintage vehicles? Join us on Sunday, 7th June 2026, from 11:00 am to 4:00 pm for a delightful day out! Tickets go on sale from 2nd April at £6 per adult, or £7.50 on the day. Children attend free. Purchase via www.wegotickets.com

There will be homemade cakes, refreshing Pimms, live music, and street food to enjoy as you wander and take in the sights. Don’t miss this special community event!



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