



A week in Keld

A reflection as Minister in Residence

I'm just back from a week at Keld, staying in the Manse as Minister in Residence with my husband Carl.

It's one of our favourite places to rest and recharge as we spend the week adjusting to a different rhythm of living completely. I describe myself as a Rural Community Worker, and indeed I am, but then I get to Keld and it's a different level of rural living entirely. Single track roads with some sections that are nothing but a sheer drop on one side. There are sheep just chilling in the middle of the road, and at one stage we had to get out of the car and chase them onto the verge. Driving to Keld is always a new experience as I mutter prayers along the way to God saying *'I hope I don't meet anything, I hope I don't meet anything'*.

Keld is a small village in the parish of Muker, in North Yorkshire. It is in Swaledale, and the Yorkshire Dales National Park. The name derives from the Viking word Kelda meaning a spring and the village was once called Appletre Kelde – the spring near the apple trees.

It's also the crossing point of the Coast to Coast Walk and the Pennine Way long-distance footpaths at the head of Swaledale, and marks the end of the Swale Trail, a 20 km mountain bike trail which starts in Reeth. So there are always lots of walkers and visitors from across the country around.



After leading the service at Low Row Church on Sunday, I spent my time throughout the week ringing the bell at Keld Chapel for morning and evening prayer. I was particularly excited when I had some visitors join me one morning. People! Mostly it was just me, but I really did appreciate the time spent in prayer reflecting on my surroundings and the beautiful old church. How many prayers have been said before me? Prayers for the land, for the people, for the animals, for the livelihoods .

I also attended the Faith Mission group at the Keld Resource Centre. The new Minister - Rev Nadene Snyman who looks after Darlington, Northallerton, Low Row and Keld is steering the group to think differently. How can we make the most of the opportunities for Mission here in this place? There are lots of new ideas and projects in the works - I am very excited to see what happens next.

I led a study day midweek where I focused on Pilgrimage and Labyrinths - reflecting on my own experience of St Cuthbert's Way and the new Labyrinth that has been recently installed at Wooler URC. We had around 9 people in attendance who came along to find out more. We spent the morning reflecting on pilgrimage, discussing our own experiences and participating in some Bible study and then in the afternoon, we had more of a practical session where people could make their own labyrinths. Sadly, it was too windy to use the big outdoor labyrinth I had brought along - but after wrestling with the tarpaulin for 10mins outside - I think they got the idea that it was supposed to bring peace and tranquility!

We also spent some time walking, exploring the different waterfalls that surround Keld. There were lots of swallows about preparing their chicks for fledgling! We also saw Oyster Catchers, Lapwings, Herons and a hedgehog!

It was lovely to appreciate the work that goes into maintaining the beauty of Keld too. The Keld Community Orchard was created on waste ground behind the Manse by a group of local residents. They sought advice on what species of fruit trees were most adapted to the harsh Pennine climate, people were invited to sponsor trees. There are a huge range of trees there - apples, plums, gooseberries, and blackcurrants. How lovely.

It was great to spend time meeting local walkers, chatting to them about the area and reflecting on the beauty of the place. Overall, a wonderful week which was also a 'reset' on the business of life. Thank you for having us. Can we come again soon?

