

His disciples failed to the need for his death, despite being told repeatedly. And we can sympathise: we're promised a new world in the end, when death is defeated (Rev 21:1-4), but we can't imagine it. God delights to do new things, but only with hindsight do they become clear to us. Faith in his word is essential.

Walk up to the side of the Church with a strip of garden, in which are preserved many old varieties of apple. Traditionally, Adam and Even ate an apple, although the Bible merely says 'fruit' from the forbidden tree of knowledge of good and evil (Gen 3:3). Reflect on your own inclinations to step over boundaries set by God, instead of faithfully believing his word – and his warnings of the dire consequences of disobedience.

Back to The Stocks

➡ When you reach Newton Way, turn right and walk down to the roundabout. Cross The Grove by the zebra and return to The Stocks.

Ponder and perhaps share your thoughts on your walk, and thank God for his gracious mercy and strong love. Pray for people or problems the Lord calls to your mind.

Be cheered by the tubs of flowers, reminding us of the brighter future now available through Jesus. Next week, in the Easter Life Walk, we shall look at the churches' floral crosses, to which you will be very welcome to add your own flowers.

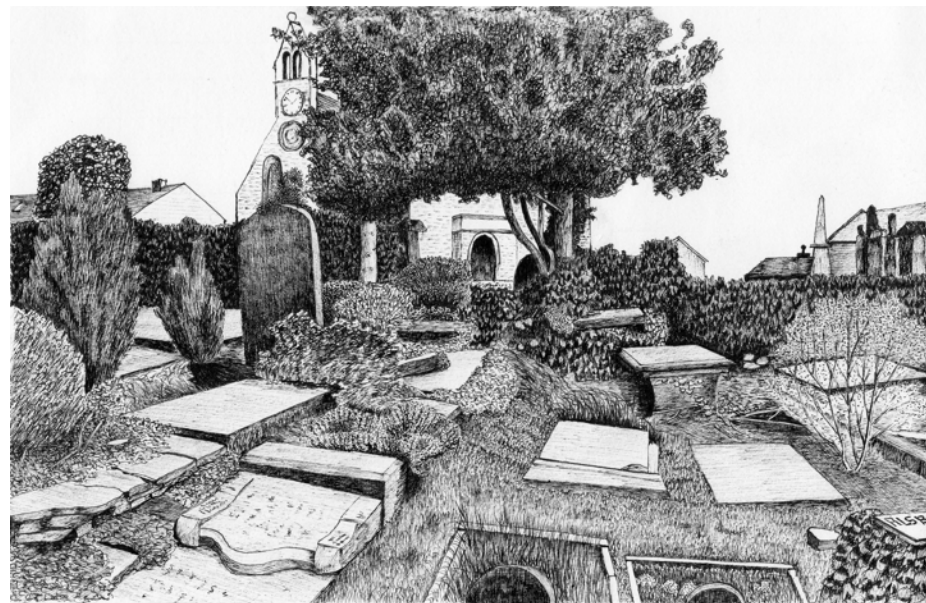
May you be blessed by the Spirit of Easter to come,
throughout this season and beyond.



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Churches Together in Baidon The Graveyard Walk

A walk between some of Baidon's Churches,
for reflection during Holy Week



The week before the first Easter was a time of gathering clouds, ending in death. Jesus was crucified – cruel and horrible, and utterly unjust.

And, as his followers and the disciples thought at the time, with him died hope: hope of forgiveness, liberation, and a new way of living – all the things which Jesus had promised and begun to bring about.

In this walk we aim to recapture some of their feelings as a way of deepening our grasp of just how important Jesus is, to us and to our world today.

Start at The Stocks

Stand and look around you. Stocks were for punishment, and remember that Jesus was brutally flogged before he was crucified.

The stone column here is thought to be the remains of a cross, and it was on a wooden cross that Jesus was crucified – nailed by his hands and feet and left hanging till he died.

Ponder not only his agony, but also how his followers must have felt as they watched, with no way of preventing it. Think particularly of Mary his mother – who had been told when Jesus was little, *and a sword will pierce through your own soul also* (Lk 2:35). Surely that must have happened then, to a depth unimaginable to most of us.

And yet, Jesus' death was essential to his mission of saving the world.

➡ Cross Northgate by the zebra and walk up Hall Cliffe to the Parish Church lychgate.

The Parish Graveyard

The pathway from the lychgate to the Vicarage steps is paved with gravestones commemorating past Baildon citizens, and more stones stand on both sides of the church.

Follow the path away from the Church which passes a large holly tree, and stand for a moment among the crowded graves – mute evidence that death is the enemy of our earthly existence (1 Cor 15:26).

From the Church lawn look over the wall down the steep bank towards Butler Lane, where the gravestones are overgrown with brambles, ivy and scrubby young trees, and let its desolation speak to you of the disciples' depth of despair on that Friday.

And yet, as we know now... the story does not end in despair, and nor does ours when we believe in Jesus .

➡ Go back to through the lychgate and turn left down Hall Cliffe past the Potted Meat Stick, and cross Browgate by the zebra opposite the pharmacy. Go up to the Moravian Church by the steps between the Nail Lounge and the tiny garden, or walk a little further down past the church

notice board and through the Moravian gates (or walk up to the roundabout, turn left up Westgate, and left again just past the Bulls Head pub along West Fold). Make your way past the church and through the two wrought iron gates into the Moravian graveyard.

The Moravian Graveyard

At first this place may not seem to be a graveyard, because the stones are hardly visible. They're all laid flat on the ground, to symbolise our equality in death – and before God too: *There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus* (Gal 3:28).

But we know, which the disciples could not yet grasp, that death is not the end for those who follow Jesus, and the unusual sense of peace here could symbolise the eternal rest promised in Jesus, beginning now and to be completed and perfected when he comes again at the end of time.

The area affords views both across to Bradford (until the trees come out in leaf), and also more intimately into the backs of some houses. We can take this as a reminder that God is all-seeing and all-knowing: he sees us from afar; he also looks behind our public front into our hearts. We cannot hide from God, even if we want to.

➡ Retrace your steps past the church and walk along West Fold to Westgate. Cross over and go up the hill till you come to Binswell Fold on the right, up which you can see the Methodist Church. Walk up here to the little green lovingly-tended garden in front of the church.

The Methodist Garden

A WW1 Commonwealth war grave has recently been erected by the wall, but this whole area was once a cemetery with tall imposing gravestones. At some date, more than half a century ago, those were removed and a smooth lawn created.

Often on war memorials is the phrase, *Lest we forget...* and we must never forget Jesus, however the world may seek to gloss over his radical words, and the uncomfortable fact that his death was a necessary offering to God for human sin, to gain our forgiveness and restore a loving, ongoing, creative relationship with him as Father God.