Bradford North Circuit Church Walks

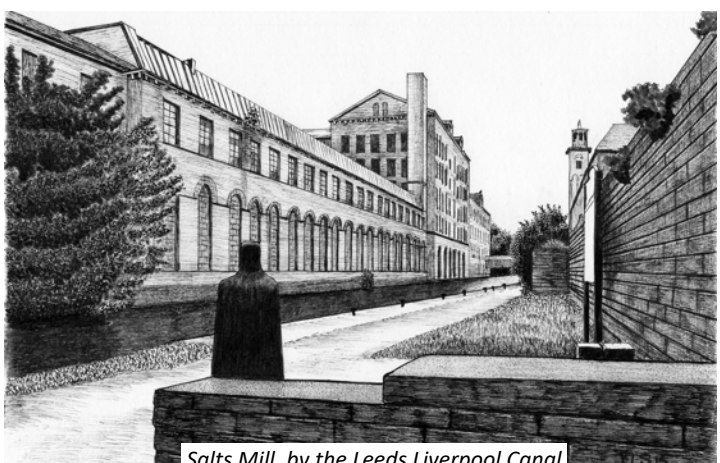
A prayer walk from Baildon to Saltaire

Mostly we pray with our eyes shut, using our imagination to bring people or problems to God. But imagination is helped by information: our vision is sharpened, requests focused and prayers enriched. That's where prayer walking can help.

The route of this walk is from Baildon Methodist Church, through Baildon Green and Roberts Park, and finishing at Saltaire Methodist Church.

These notes provide suggestions of what to think about and pray for: asking God for blessings on people and places we see on our way, but also thanking Him for his goodness to us, and praising him for all that he is and all he promises. We are also reminded of some challenges which come with following Jesus as our Lord through every day of our own lives.

We can physically walk the route (directions are given), or we can imagine our way round – with the aid of a street map if we're unfamiliar with the area. Either way, we can walk alone or with others, though always in the company of Jesus, ministered to us by the Holy Spirit within us, who will guide and teach us, inspiring our thoughts and prayers on the way, to the praise of God the Father.



Salts Mill, by the Leeds Liverpool Canal

1. The call to journey

And he said to them, Let us go on to the next towns, that I may preach there also, for that is what I came for. (Mk 1:38)

Wherever you were when Jesus called you to follow him, we're now going to travel with him – learning from him and about him, experiencing encounters on the way, and praying.



Baildon Methodist Church

The first town we come to is Baildon, and as Jesus (and Paul) often began in the synagogue, we begin at Baildon Methodist Church. Imagine we have heard Jesus preached, and seen the reactions of all those there, including ourselves. Picture the scene.

Now we prepare to move on, following him. Praise God that he has enabled you to hear the call to follow Jesus, and that you have responded with a Yes, however bold or timid.

Thank him for today's journey, and ask that you may be alert to all the Spirit may teach you from Jesus' words. Thankfulness is always God's will for us in Christ Jesus (1 Thes 5:18).

From the church entrance on Newton Way, we follow Jesus down to the town centre roundabout, and then round the corner up into Westgate, and then forking left into Bank Walk.

But let's take our time as we go; take in the scene: streets, shops, and houses; people moving around, shopping, or doing business, and perhaps wondering who we are, if they notice us at all.

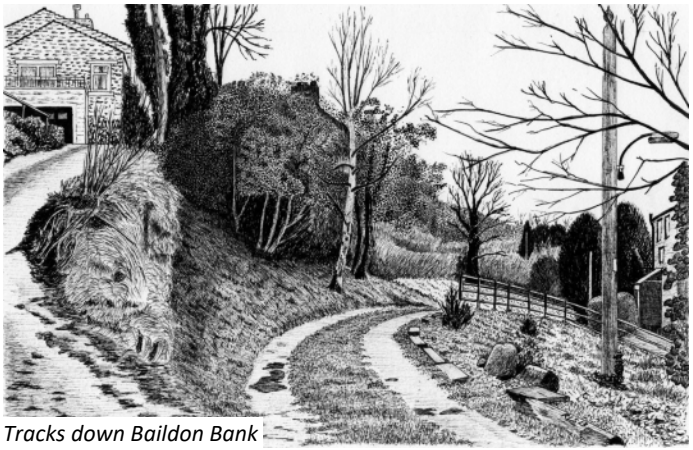
But we can notice them, and pray as we pass. What should we be asking for?

- In general, their wellbeing (shalom), and also,
- Peace in their hearts, especially if they look troubled; or help in any need we perceive,
- Patience, if children are acting up, or there are obvious disagreements, and
- Anything else that occurs to you, prompted by the Spirit of Jesus within you.

2. Down Baildon Bank to Green Road

At the end of Bank Walk are two of Baildon's many snickets. We take the one straight ahead, at first between two high stone walls, and then into a more open area, following a gently sloping track. Admire the views, and pray for those whom you see.

This area of Baildon, called 'The Bank', is an old sandstone quarry (once a major industry in the Bradford area). It's not so obvious here, but as we walk on we shall catch glimpses of the old rock face.



Tracks down Baildon Bank

Around you and all along the Bank are trees, but old maps show this area to be bare of woodland. Thus gradually, decade by decade, nature is reclaiming a place which used to be busy with industrial activity. And as it does the whole character of the area is changing. Praise God for his gift of trees – pleasant to the sight and good for food (Gen 2:9), and ponder that we are called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he may be glorified (Is 61:3). How might we become better trees?

Baildon includes many old hamlets within its current boundary. We have been in the original Baildon Village centre, and down the track (take neither of the turns to the left), at the junction with Green Road is a road sign: 'Lane End'. This is almost all that remains of a once-thriving hamlet of that name. Take a moment to ponder: God is the God of all history, and even through profound and long-term changes (quarries, tree growth, hamlets), we are still in his care (Heb 13:5). Then cross Green Road, with due care.

3. Baildon Link, Recreation Park, and Peace Garden

Turn right and make your way along Green Road past a building with ridged roofs (initially a laundry, then a worsted mill, and now a rug importer). Pray for those who work there, and their customers.

Next below you is Baildon Community Link, with its turf roof for insulation. The Link caters for social caring, especially for vulnerable groups, and has a very active programme of events. Pray for those who work there (paid organisers or volunteers), and the many for whom they care.



Baildon Community Link

Next door to the Link is a recreation park, with a children's play area at one end. Pray for families who use these facilities, and as you pass the swings focus on our growing awareness of the need for child protection and safeguarding issues. You may feel the need to cry before God at society's crimes, past and present. And perhaps listen to your own conscience too. But remember also that with God there is forgiveness through Jesus when we're sorry and repent, and the promise of deep healing – in each person, and in society as a whole. Pray for this to come about, and ask God for the protection of all his little ones, especially the more vulnerable.

The small enclosure between the play area and the bungalows is a Peace Garden, established in August 2014 (the centenary of the outbreak of WW1), on the site of a WW2 Gas decontamination centre – which latterly housed the Link before it was demolished. The information board in the Garden shows the location of some places in Baildon with wartime connections. Pray for peace, at all levels: from international to domestic; and also personal peace with God, in yourself and those who come to mind.



The old Link building

4. Baildon Green Village

Walk on and cross over to the corner of Green Road and Cliffe Lane West, opposite the building with an squint chimney (a former chip shop). Walk down Green Road, with the open area of Baildon Green common on your left, and Baildon Bank on your right. There is woodland growth all around you, and plants of many sorts in the meadow beyond.

As you walk, praise God for his gifts of nature. Allow your eyes to roam, and open your heart to the Spirit to prompt you as you pray. You might wish to include some aspect of confession, for our mismanagement of nature – which we were created to steward, not selfishly and unfeelingly plunder. (Gen 1:28; Ps 65)

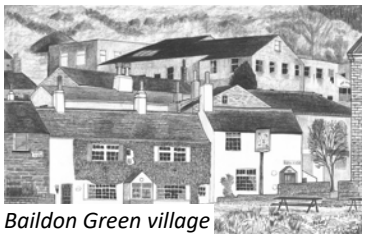
Continue till you reach the Church on the Green. It used to be Independent Methodist, but is now an independent evangelical church (here illustrated before its new extension was built).



The Church on the Green

Pray for your fellow Christians who normally worship here, asking a blessing on each and all, even though you may well not know any of them.

Just down from the church, is the compact village: **pray** for good neighbourliness among those who live here. Above the church is an old mill, now home to a miscellany of small businesses, as the signs indicate. Pray for enterprise and employment opportunities in these volatile and uncertain times.



Baildon Green village

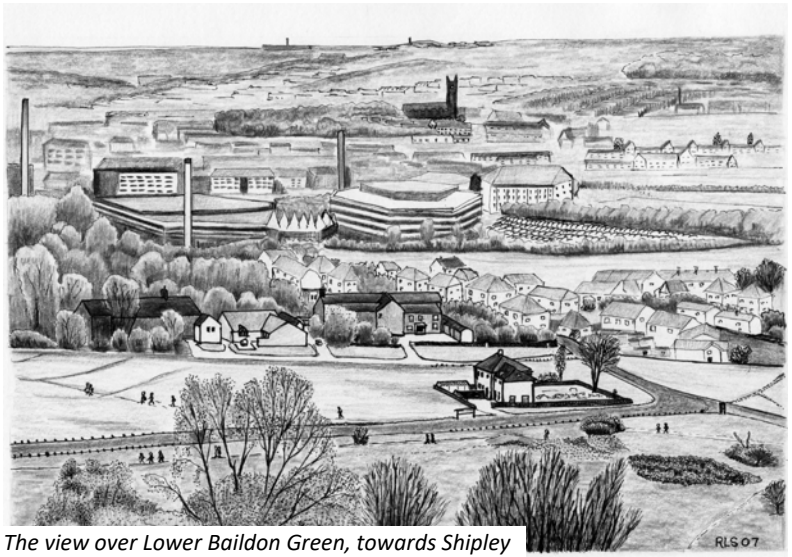
Opposite the village is the Cricketers pub. Think of the bar staff and customers, but pray also for those tempted to excess, or even addiction.

Behind the pub is the open land, with rough and often muddy paths running across it – very different from with the smooth pavements you have been using. Which best depicts your walk with God?

5. Lower Baildon Green

From the village there is a good open view down across Lower Baildon Green and over to Saltaire. Take a few moments to let your eyes explore the scene, reflecting on what you see and letting your thoughts turn into prayers, as you feel led.

From the top of Baildon Bank there is a bird's-eye view of Lower Baildon Green, where you now are.



The view over Lower Baildon Green, towards Shipley

Which kind of view best represents your understanding of God's care in your own life?

- Does he look down on you from above?
- Or walk with you on the way?
- Or, being God, does he do both at once?

And while thinking about the nature of God and views from high ground, we can recall that somewhere in the vicinity of a high mountain, Jesus asked his disciples: Who do you say that I am? (Mk 8:29-31) What is your answer?

- The one sent by God (the Christ)?
- God in human form (His Son)?
- The God who must suffer, be rejected by those who should know better, be killed, and rise again?
- Or do you prefer another sort of answer?

And are you comfortable with his teaching that if we want to follow him we must take up our cross of self denial? (Mk 8:34ff). What particular aspect of self do you have to deny most often as you follow Jesus?

6. Thompson Lane

Walk down to the end of the Green and turn right into Thompson Lane. Continue along this road to the junction of Higher Coach Road. Pray for those who live here, or who visit for whatever purpose.

There are some much older buildings: pray for planners as they decide what can be developed and what should be conserved for posterity.

On the right are allotments: many people work the land in these small plots – more than gardening but not quite farming. Pray for those who till and sow the land, reaping harvests of various kinds as their small but important crops grow, and for all who benefit from such 'gladsome toil'.

In this section of the walk there are several play areas: across the field is the Glen Tramway to Shipley Glen, for long a place for family recreation; by the junction a small kiddies' play enclosure; and on the other side of Coach Road is a much bigger one with many facilities including a skateboard park. Pray for fun and safety for all.

We pass a Primary School, and over to the right beyond the field we can see Titus Salt School. Here are some prompts for prayer (if you need them):

- Teachers and support staff
- Management and administration
- Classrooms and educational facilities
- Outdoor and sports activities
- Children and parents; families; child minders
- Nursery places; moving up as children grow
- Getting to and from school
- Parking of vehicles; conflict with local residents
- Knowledge and responsible citizenship

Pray also that children may be enabled to learn about Jesus while at school.

At the junction, cross over Higher Coach Road (there is a pedestrian crossing) and make your way into Roberts Park.



Midgeley Farm, Thompson Lane

7. Roberts Park

Take time here for a short rest before crossing the river into Saltaire and completing the walk.

He brought me out into a broad place… (Ps 18:19)

There are broad avenues, a bandstand, seats, and shelters in case of rain. The lower plain has a well-used cricket ground, and a grassy area for more general recreation. There is also a cafe, though its opening hours are somewhat restricted.

Wander round and admire the trees, some of which are majestic and tall. The hollies form a national collection – a legacy of Sir Titus Salt.

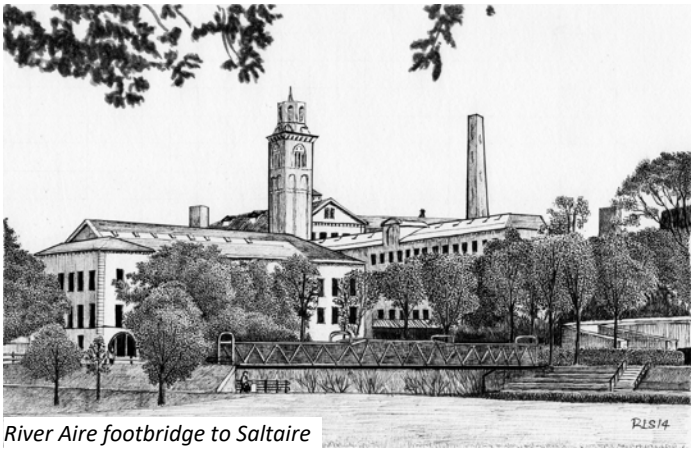
Pray for the many visitors who enjoy this oasis, and praise God for the fruits of collaboration between himself as Creator and humans as stewards.



Roberts Park

And also thank God for inspiring benefactors such as the Roberts family who gave this park to the public. Let it challenge your own sense of generosity, however big or small you may feel yourself to be.

But Roberts Park is not our destination: when you are ready we must press on. Cross the footbridge over the River Aire, with the weir on left which once powered the gigantic Salts mill, and make your way up the slope by the Leeds Liverpool canal.

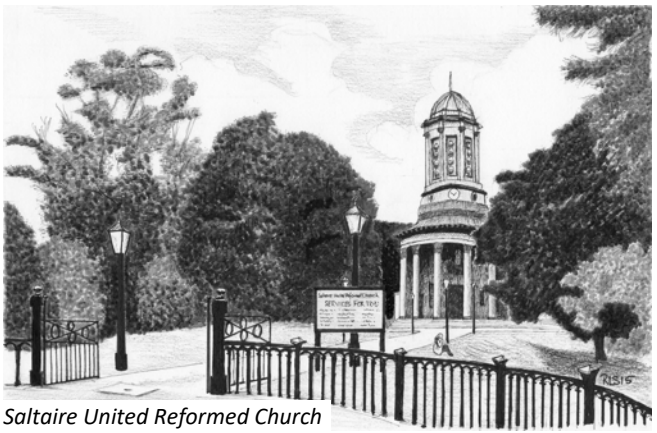


River Aire footbridge to Saltaire

8. Victoria Road

Go up Victoria Road and cross the canal. On your left is the vast Salts Mill. Once a textiles mill prosperous enough to fund the development of Saltaire as a model village, it now houses a gallery dedicated to the artwork of David Hockney, restaurants, and several retail outlets. Pray for those who work and visit or shop here.

A little farther up is Saltaire United Reformed Church, of great grandeur. Pray for all who worship here, and those who minister from this place.



Saltaire United Reformed Church

By the railway station pray for all travellers, using public or private transport. Also ponder before God the mixed blessing brought by cars (parked all around you): convenience, but also congestion.

There are quite extensive allotments on your left, and further up you can see the work of Sustainable Saltaire to maintain the Sunday School Garden in the Caroline Street car park. Read the notice and pray for community initiatives like these.

Up the road are shops and businesses catering for diverse needs: use them as prompts for prayer, as the Spirit moves you. Consider also what's lacking.

As you pass Shipley College: pray for all staff, and students on the numerous courses, all with hopes for the future. And on the left is the imposing Victoria Hall, an important venue for many events. Pray for organisers and visitors – talking of which, pray also for Saltaire's role in tourism as a World Heritage Site.

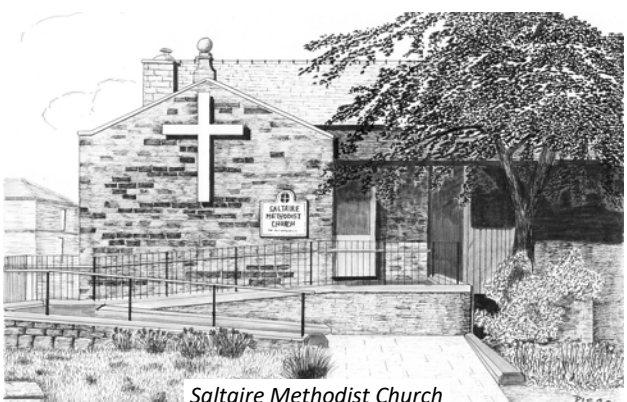


Saltaire Lion

9. Saltaire Methodist Church

Turn right when you come to Titus Street, and then immediately left into an unnamed street. There on your right is our destination: Saltaire Methodist Church. The main entrance for worship in normal times is at the top of the slope on Saltaire Road.

Many of the streets in Saltaire were named after members of the Salt family, thus recorded for posterity, but this one has no name – being just a back lane for houses in Victoria Road. It's no less important for that, and it affords us an opportunity to reflect on humility, which the Bible so frequently commends. Many of us may leave no name recorded in rolls of worldly fame, but we are known by God just as much as anyone else. And we can remember the promise that those who humble themselves before the Lord he will exalt. (Mt 23:12)



Saltaire Methodist Church

We have walked about 2 miles (3k), plus any wandering about on the way, in Roberts Park or elsewhere. And we have journeyed with Jesus, allowing his Spirit to lead us in prayer for all those who lived, worked or played, wherever we walked or looked.

It may have made us feel small. It must also magnify our sense of God's greatness – that he knows about all, and is nowhere absent. But also it makes us realise afresh the extent of his love and concern for each person in every place, and we remember that Jesus said to his disciples: *Let us go on to the next towns, that I may preach there also, for that is what I came for.* (Mk 1:38)

Let us conclude our walk as we began, with praise and thanks, imaginatively.

All drawings by Roy Lorrain-Smith