

Rev. Richard Teal

Richard is a Methodist presbyter and was brought up in a small Yorkshire Dales village, where his father was a farmer.

After leaving school, Richard worked in textile management and during that time he candidated for the Methodist ministry. He attended Wesley College, Bristol, and left a year early due to the shortage of presbyters at that time.

His first circuit was Blaydon in the Newcastle-upon-Tyne District and he was then sent as Superintendent to what in those days was a priority appointment in Berwick-upon-Tweed on the English-Scottish border.

Nine years later, Richard returned to East Yorkshire and served as Superintendent of the Beverley Circuit. In each of these appointments there was significant church growth. After circuit ministry, Richard served for 11 years as Chair of the Cumbria Methodist District and his experience of rural ministry came to the fore.

His understanding and appreciation of rural issues helped considerably when Cumbria was devastated by two county-wide floods. In 2010 a gunman killed 12 people on the west coast of Cumbria and Richard had a significant role in leadership and pastoral responsibility.

In his time in Cumbria, Richard had at least two other very significant roles: first in enabling the region to become the first ecumenical county in Great Britain.

Second, he formed a strong agricultural chaplaincy team to bring pastoral support to the agricultural community and beyond. Richard greatly values rural communities and encourages rural churches to take risks and do new and exciting faith activities.

For Richard, a small rural chapel is not a failed large church. Small communities are important and significant in building the kingdom of God. Richard was also contributor to *A Discipling Presence*, a workbook that promotes an effective Christian presence in rural communities (Methodist Publishing, 2017). Richard is married to Susan, and they have two children and two grandchildren.