



2016 ANNUAL REPORT

**GRACIOUS STREET
METHODIST CHURCH
KNARESBOROUGH**

2016

**The Annual Report
of
Gracious Street Methodist Church (Knaresborough)
Published April 2016**

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INTRODUCTION and MISSION STATEMENT

Gracious Street Methodist Church is one of fourteen churches in the Nidd Valley Methodist Circuit

GRACIOUS STREET METHODIST CHURCH

A growing church with a friendly welcome in the centre of Knaresborough

Believing that God has shown his love for all in

Jesus Christ we seek to be a:

- **worshipping church**
embracing a wide variety of styles both traditional and contemporary
 - **learning church**
providing biblically based teaching and opportunities to explore and grow in the Christian faith through small groups
 - **serving church**
responding to local and world needs with prayer, giving and practical action
 - **caring church**
offering a welcome and support to children, young people and adults of all ages
 - **witnessing church**
sharing with others by word and deed the Good News of God's love in Jesus Christ
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MINISTERS:	Rev Gail Hunt	863298
	Deacon David Hunt	861553
CONTACT STEWARD:	Mrs Jeanette Mowat	867511
CHURCH NOTICES:	Mrs Hilary Wilkinson	865545
BOOKINGS:	Mr Bill Rodham & Mrs Dorothy Rodham	865846
LEADERSHIP TEAM:	Deacon Ian Cooper	797197
	Mr Mike Hughes	864002
	Miss Sharon Inman	869588
	Mr Simon Pringle	868331
	Mr Bill Rodham (Treasurer)	865846
	Miss Sue Walkington	547086
	Mrs Sue Whalley	862252

MINISTERS' REFLECTIONS

Dear Friends,

At the annual Church meeting we will look together at the life of Gracious Street, elect our leadership team, worship stewards and representatives to church council, and see how we can best continue to live, worship and witness together.

Over the last 12 months we have been celebrating the 200 years of mission and ministry on this site, and what a year it was! So many events and activities took place along with an amazing amount of creativity. As we look back over the year we will all have different memories we will recall. One of the things which stands out for us is how the church worked together to raise over £11,000 for the All We Can appeal – which demonstrates a phenomenal effort by you all, far exceeding the target of £3000! We continue to partner with All We Can as our world church focus.

Alongside the celebrations, there has been a serious amount of thought and prayer as we consider the way forward and how we as a church can continue to be an effective presence in an ever changing world. In October, Simon Pringle and Sue Walkington joined us for a conference in Stoke on Trent which looked at growing churches, and the church council have agreed a 5 year mission plan to help us all focus our energies. Now is the time to consolidate what we do and identify priorities for the future mission and ministry of this church. Later in the report you will be able to read about the agreed priorities along with the development of a strategic communication strategy which will underpin all we are doing.

As ministers appointed to the Nidd Valley Circuit by the Methodist Conference, we have a variety of responsibilities in addition to serving at Gracious Street. David's ministry as a Deacon is one with a focus on witness and service in both church and community and this includes some preaching and worship leading. His time is divided between Gracious Church, Wesley Centre in Harrogate, developing the 2020 Vision focus for the Circuit and serving the Methodist Diaconal Order. Gail, as presbyter, has overall pastoral responsibility for three Churches, (Gracious Street, Kirk Hammerton and Kearby) and her ministry has a specific focus on opening God's word through preaching, teaching and leading communion and baptism services. From September she will have an active role to play in the formation and training of a probationer presbyter, Ann Fox who arrives in the Starbeck, Park Grove & Scotton section of the circuit, and she is currently spending time training for this new responsibility. Both of us also have representative roles in the life of the town and also Circuit and District responsibilities.

So it is together as lay and ordained we review the life of this Church, re-evaluate what we do and identify opportunities for personal service and spiritual growth so together we can be effective Kingdom builders in partnership with God and one another.

Blessings

Gail and David

**SHARPENING OUR FOCUS –
A PLAN TO DEVELOP THE MISSION
2016 onwards**

Having celebrated 200 years of mission and ministry on this site, we have a great responsibility to ensure that the witness by the people called Methodist continues for many years to come. Central to this is a commitment of bringing people to faith and an awareness of the great love God has for them so that they wish to join in with His mission in this town.

The Church Council has been clear that the mission development plan is *not* intended to create more things to do, but to help us *all have a clearer focus* on what we are doing. It has been agreed that our prime focus is *TO INTRODUCE PEOPLE TO JESUS CHRIST AND ENABLE PEOPLE TO DEEPEN AND DEVELOP THEIR FAITH.*

It is our desire that people will grow in confidence to speak about their faith; after all, the greatest form of sharing the good news of Jesus is through individual conversations and relationships, and it was a one to one conversation which resulted in the Methodist witness starting in this town.

To this end, the Church Council agreed that we will continue to develop the following over the next 5 years:-

A church which places great importance on Worship, teaching and developing disciples

A church where prayer is central

A church which seeks to provide pastoral care for all

A church which has a culture of invitation, welcome and integration

A church which seeks to serve the wider community

To facilitate these aspects of our church life it is essential we have an effective communication strategy, and later in the report you can read more about how this is taking shape and how you can play your part in helping to develop this further.

Over the coming months we encourage all groups to consider how these core themes in the Mission Development plan will shape their existing and future activities.

BICENTENARY CELEBRATIONS

In 2015 Gracious Street Methodist Church celebrated its 200th anniversary and the following is a summary of events and special occasions throughout the year:-

Visits by a series of **special preachers**:

- Martyn Atkins (General Secretary of the Methodist Church)
- Former Gracious Street ministers David Ely, Henry Pittam, Alistair Newton and Tony Jeffries
- Roger Jones and his team (plus a Saturday workshop on music and worship),
- Paul Wilson (following our Bible School in November)
- Steve Wild (President of the Methodist Conference)

Other **special highlights** including:

- A 'Celebrate' Easter Flower Festival
- A Pentecost/Aldersgate Sunday visit by 'John Wesley' (actor Mark Topping)
- A popular bicentenary exhibition
- Our main celebration weekend with Pam Rhodes leading a 'Songs of Praise'
- A Harvest Ceilidh with Knaresborough Fiddle and Accordion Society

It was also a year of **concerts** including:

- Harrogate Male Voice Choir
- Show band 'Cabaret Plus' from All Souls, Langham Place for FEVA
- Our bicentenary concert by church members and others from the Knaresborough community
- Knaresborough Silver Band and the St Mary's Singers.

Some of these events plus others specially arranged helped to raise money for an 'All We Can' project to provide sanitation and clean water in Uganda. Our aim to raise £3,600 (ten times the cost of

the land on which our church was built in 1815) was exceeded with the magnificent total of £11,184.16. Our friends at Kirk Hammerton have given an additional donation of £60.

More **tangible outcomes** of the year include:

- an updated history of the church by Roy and Ann Emms
- booklet of the exhibition panels by Brian Souter
- Shirley Vine's bicentenary banner and her *tromp l'oeil* of John Wesley in an upstairs Chapel Street window

Brian Hoare

Mission Team (Chair during 2015)

WORSHIP

**The Church exists to increase awareness of God's presence
and to celebrate God's love.**

STEWARDS TEAM

We have 5 Worship Stewards who work to ensure the smooth running of the various services held here at Gracious Street. Each week, they act as a liaison between the preacher or worship leader and the volunteers involved in the service. The 13 Welcome Stewards and Communion Stewards provide essential support.

2015 was a busy time to be a steward with all the bicentenary events and special visitors. However the whole team worked together to share the load, ensuring that everyone received a friendly welcome and services were enjoyed. It is good to know that every member of our team is willing to step in at short notice should the need arise.

A special thank you must be given to Brenda Paul for her hard work in compiling the rotas. Her system is very efficient and each quarter she patiently waits for us to give our availability and then shares out the duties in a very fair way. The more volunteers we have, the fewer duties we would have to do. If you feel this is a role you could undertake, then please speak to one of the Ministers or Stewards.

Lynne Bullock is stepping down this year after 6 years as a Worship Steward and we thank her for all her hard work. We look forward to working with Celia Booth if her appointment is approved by this year's meeting.

Jeanette Mowat

WORSHIP GROUP

Worship Group continues to thrive and has welcomed still more new members during the past year. However, we rarely have more than 2 or 3 men singing with us. We would love to welcome any men with a heart for worship who enjoy singing (and can sing more-or-less in tune!)

We have been major contributors to Tuesday@8, held on the 3rd Tuesday of each month. These meetings give people the opportunity to engage in worship, prayer and testimony outside the normal Sunday services. Frequently new songs have been introduced at these services and then shared with the wider congregation on a Sunday morning.

Another musical venture has been the Family Band which has grown in size this year to include a greater variety of instruments. We have helped to accompany carols at the Christingle service and have contributed to the celebrations at Easter. Anyone who has been learning an instrument for at least a year and would like to be included in the band should have a word with Mike Hughes (864002, mikehilhughes22@ntlworld.com). Although the music at Gracious Street has been traditionally keyboard led, it would be great to include instrumental variety more frequently.

Our Tuesday meetings continue to involve the rehearsing of new songs and frequently include discussion of song lyrics, short bible studies and prayer, bringing a strong element of fellowship to our time together. We have also started to put into practice some of the elements that we learnt at the Worship Works workshops last year.

We feel that, along with prayer and Bible study, worship is a key element of our life together as a church and are grateful for the encouragement we have received from so many of you.

Mike Hughes

CONSULTATION ON WORSHIP

This group meets every few months and is open to everyone as we review and plan the various aspects of worship in the Church.

The Mission Development plan states that we are a church which places great importance on worship, teaching and developing disciples, and through our regular worship on Sunday and mid-week we are able to enjoy a rich variety of music styles in our worship both contemporary and traditional. We are enjoying the benefits of the Methodist hymn book Singing the Faith, as well as using other contemporary music and we are grateful to the worship group for the way they lead the congregation as we embrace new songs.

The use of inclusive and accessible language has been adopted for a number of years now and we ask that readers, worship leaders and preachers all use the "Today' s New International Version" of the

Bible. To help facilitate this, a new Lectern Bible has been donated for use in our worship.

All Together Worship and the Team who lead this is developing well, and it is wonderful to see our children and young people leading us in our worship and prayer.

We continue to adopt a policy of all "learning together" and the Roots material is used to provide resources for our preachers in the morning service and Sunday club. Earlier this year the 5 week focus on Prayer was greatly appreciated as we all took time to dig deeper into the Lord's Prayer and what we understand to pray without ceasing.

Tuesday @ 8 is now established as a monthly mid-week worship led by the worship group adopting a style of Prayer, praise and testimony.

Rev Gail Hunt

PRAYER AT GRACIOUS STREET

Prayer is an important part of Christian life and it features strongly at Gracious Street, and as you will see from the development plan is one of the areas which is key over the coming years.

Pause for Thought and Prayer the weekly prayer meeting which takes place every Wednesday at 11.15am continues to provide a great strength and resource for many, and with numbers continuing to grow it may be we will need to move into the church soon as the vestibule where we meet may not now be big enough! We are delighted that so many people wish to come together to pray for the church, the town, the world and individual needs. Prayer is the heart beat of a strong church and is a major part of who we are, so please come along whenever you can.

If you would like others pray for you, you will find some prayer request cards in the Bridge. Please use them and place your prayer request in the box outside the ministers' office in the Bridge. These requests are then transferred to a prayer book in the church vestibule each Sunday and prayers are offered by members of the church during the week. If you would rather not use the cards, requests may also be entered directly in the prayer book before worship on Sundays.

If you would like someone to pray with you, then there are a number of volunteers in the Bridge whom you can ask. In addition, there is the Wednesday prayer meeting discussed above; we also offer a period of prayer ministry after the Sunday morning worship.

Prayer Chain

Prayer needs can be circulated amongst church members by telephone or email. If this is something in which you would like to participate or if you have a need for prayer then please contact Marion King, Alan Middleton or Joyce Hoare.

LEARNING AND CARING

**The Church exists to help people to grow and learn as Christians,
through mutual support and care.**

PASTORAL

The pastoral committee meets with a specific focus of reviewing the pastoral needs of those in our community here at Gracious Street, and making sure that all people are welcomed and supported. Although the minister will respond to specific pastoral needs, the Church recognises that it is the ministry of the whole people of God to support and visit one another, and that all are equal in this role.

The pastoral meeting has a specific focus on reviewing membership, appointing pastoral leaders and encouraging the practice of fellowship through class meeting, and other groups among the Church family. The meeting is for the minister, church stewards, class leaders, pastoral visitors and others who have pastoral responsibility for a group within the church community. It is by gathering together that members are also able to support one another.

The Church membership figures as of 31st October 2015 (the period in which Methodist Church membership figures are collated) was 186 members, plus over 600 on the community pastoral role. (This includes Lunch Link, Noah' s Ark and Playbox). On Easter Sunday we welcomed new members into the life of church as well as celebrating Baptism for an adult and young person.

As part of the Mission Development Plan, the pastoral group will focus during the coming year on the best way we can offer effective pastoral care for the large number of people we have contact with.

Minister

Rev Gail Hunt

Pastoral Secretary

Mrs Shirley Shepherd

FLOWER TEAM

Gracious Street is very fortunate to have a very enthusiastic and talented Flower Team. During the year the money for the flowers for each Sunday is kindly donated by members of the congregation. The flowers are bought and arranged by different people on the team on a rota basis. On the following Monday the flowers are distributed to people within the congregation. Special Birthdays, Anniversaries are celebrated; thanks are given; illness, hospital stays and bereavement are acknowledged.

Working on the Flower Team is a real joy where we can share the church's love, care and prayers with many different people.

New arrangers and distributors are always welcome.

Rachel Watson

SAFEGUARDING

We continue to place great emphasis on ensuring that young people and vulnerable adults who come onto our premises find a welcome and are kept safe. I am happy to say that there have been no significant safeguarding issues to report. There are a steady stream of DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) forms being completed as new people come forward to work with young people and vulnerable adults, as well as renewal of current workers. It was good to see new people coming forward to help with Easter Club for which DBS forms have been completed.

We intend to hold another "Creating Safer Places" training session after Easter to bring things up to date in readiness for handing over to Val Coapes. Bill & I intend to attend a refresher course later in the year so that we can support Val and continue running training courses for Gracious Street and the Circuit.

I would like to thank Margaret Grant for her help with our safeguarding by sending out, collating and vetting DBS forms.

Dorothy Rodham

Safeguarding Officer

GRAPEVINE NEWS

- It has been another busy year for the Grapevine and its Editorial Team of: Brian Souter, Jeanette Mowat, Hazel Clark and Hilary Hughes.
- As we write this, we have realised we have just produced our 50th edition since we took over the Editorship.
- Many favourable comments on the production and its quality in terms of appearance and various items of content are made to members of the team on a regular basis.
- Our aim is to be representative, informative, authentic, thought-provoking and to reflect the broad mission of the church.
- We have tried to vary the kind of articles included but are sometimes left still looking for copy at the deadline stage. However, we acknowledge the timely submissions of regular contributors – features such as Minister's Letter, Bridge, Worship, View from the Allotment, to name a few.

- We were pleased with how the 200th Anniversary of GS was reflected through GV.
- Grapevine magazine, together with ALL communication within the church community is under scrutiny for the best way to move forward in terms of our mission. We await further conversation and coordination from the Leadership Team to enable this to happen. (See Sharon Inman & Simon Pringle).
- In the past few months we have said 'Goodbye and Thank you' to Michael Borkett, a very valuable and supportive team member who has stepped down. We have thankfully also welcomed the ideas, methodical approach and initiatives of Hazel Clark – the new member of our Ed team.
- The costs of production are £165/month for 280 copies. Income is quite sporadic but averages £17/month. We've not made a big thing of paying for copies as in many ways it's a gift, and paid for through other income etc.
- Distribution - getting people to collect their copy regularly is frustrating. There are sometimes quite a number of uncollected copies at the end of the month. We are in the process of contacting as many as possible on our list to establish a realistic 'customer base' whilst also accommodating a number of requests from new people wishing to have a copy.
- We would still welcome a wider contribution base for articles, testimonies etc. There is some reluctance/apathy? on the part of members to 'own' their magazine by contributing content – see short article in APRIL GV.
- GV is distributed by post to a wider readership - at home and abroad and is to be found in various waiting rooms in the town etc. This latter 'wider community' mission is an area we'd wish to expand on, and would appreciate a volunteer or two to coordinate this. A 'Share your GV' article may help?!
- Thanks to all the team for their hard work and persistence, especially to Brian who fits all the parts together.

Hilary Hughes (on behalf of the Editorial Team)

SUNDAY CLUB

Sunday Club continues to meet every week and is led by a very enthusiastic team of leaders. Since 1st January we have been joined by 3 new team members and would always welcome anyone else (especially men) to come and join the team.

The 2nd Sunday of every month is All Together Worship when everyone stays in church to worship. We continue to have 3 groups, plus the crèche, most Sunday mornings, except when numbers in one group are low. For Safeguarding we have to have 2 adults with each group. The 2 older groups follow the Lectionary using the Roots material and the youngest group learn all the foundation Bible stories. We always have a very enjoyable "late Christmas Party" and when we have Open Sunday Club during the summer holidays lots of exciting activities are planned.

Rachel Watson

GsYOUth (Youth Fellowship)

gsYOUth* is a well-established, Sunday evening youth group. It works with young people from a number of different denominations in Knaresborough and Starbeck, including both the URC & St John' s (Anglican). Through gsYOUth* the young people have a chance to grow in their faith, explore Christianity and study the Bible. Besides this, they all have chance to relax together, socialise with one another and just take time to themselves.

The young people who attend gsYOUth* currently are incredibly conscientious; they are deep theological thinkers and enjoy exploring and questioning the Christian faith. They are also inquisitive, but relatively quiet and calm. The group is quite unique in their dynamic, but is very welcoming to new people.

The last year for gsYOUth* has seen a boost in numbers, but the loss of Graham Taylor as a leader, which was tough for us. This has led us to work to recruit new leaders from St John' s and Christians Together in Knaresborough. We have also had Claire Renshaw, the Curate from St John' s, come and join us as a regular leader, which has been brilliant to make more connections across the town. We also spent 10 weeks doing Youth Alpha, which was brilliant and we feel our young people developed massively during that time.

We have currently planned our activities up until the end of July and they include thinking about the unanswered questions from our time doing Youth Alpha, raising money for our young people' s chosen charity and leading the evening worship at Gracious Street.

Poppy Winks

NOAH' S ARK PRE-SCHOOL

One of the most important ways our Church contributes to the wellbeing of our community is through the work of Noah' s Ark.

Our new staff team are settled in and working together well. A monthly staff meeting looks at the learning objectives and individual progress of all the 38 children on our role. No increase has been

made to the fees charged this year. We have held successful fund raising events notably the Curry night and the Christmas fayre. Many thanks for all who helped or contributed.

We receive positive comments and support from our parents in many ways. The Christmas nativity service for the under-fives was a wonderfully joyous worship experience.

Staff training has included work on the Makaton signing programme, accessing other nursery provision to encourage best practice and safeguarding. Laura Gallery – the District Safeguarding Officer - has recently visited the pre-school and will continue to work with the staff on this vital element of work in nursery.

We continue to support our parents and families through Playbox [Vicki Taylor] and we encourage networking and mutual care.

The Committee now has Doreen Whittaker as Chair, with Vice-Chairs, Helen Garrett and Sarah Munday; the treasurer is Michael Borkett and Suzanne Coulson is secretary to the committee.

Look out for updates on our work in the Grapevine.

Doreen Whittaker

PLAYBOX

Playbox Toddler Group continues to meet every Friday morning during term-time in the church hall. The aim of Playbox is to provide parents, carers and grandparents with a place to meet new people and have fun with the children, have a coffee, share problems and provide a Christian outreach into the community. We hold short child-centred services for Easter, Harvest, Christmas and the end of the summer term for our families and the children at Noah's Ark. We try to link activities to important dates eg. Mothers' Day, Chinese New Year and our Playbox birthday as well as the Christian festivals. In the last twelve months, we have raised money for Children in Need and Sport Relief by having special activities in the sessions and joined with Noah's Ark to raise over £300 for Uganda by holding a treasure hunt round town.

Playbox is a very popular and fun group and we are often praised for our welcoming and caring atmosphere. Although we usually have a waiting list we will always try to find room for mums with first babies or that are new to the area as it can be difficult to make contacts and friends in these situations. We currently have around 35 families with places at Playbox although we only usually have between 20 and 25 at each session. We have had a lot of new families join us this year; everyone seems to have settled in and been made welcome. Playbox also has good links with the Bridge; several families meet for lunch after the session on a Friday and take over the Priory Room, often meeting parents whose children have moved on to school or nursery to maintain friendships.

In the future we would hope to have more help to set up the sessions and to make drinks during the morning. We currently have only 3 people helping in the kitchen and as ideally we have 2 people on

each week, it is quite a commitment for those involved but one that is appreciated not only by Sheila and Vicki but by all the mums who get to enjoy a hot cup of tea. Our aim for the group is to keep doing what we are doing, to encourage new families to join Playbox and to provide a welcome place for families with young children to experience church.

Vicki Taylor

CAMEO

Cameo (Come and meet each other) meetings take place at 7pm in the Manor Room on the 1st and 3rd Monday of the month. These meetings are open to anyone who wishes to come and if any one meeting appeals they will be made very welcome.

Last year we had a very successful Victorian tea party and the money raised went to All We Can, the church' s bi-centenary project. We continued with this theme this year when we had a Leap Year afternoon tea party when we supported the Town Pastors. Matt Lunn had given us a very informative talk on his work in Hull which had brought this outreach in the community to our attention. We had a talk on the hearing dogs for the deaf, professional actor Michael Wardle, music from Malcolm Hughes as well as being well travelled around the world through various people' s holiday pictures. Jeanette kept our brains working with a quiz and Ann and Madeleine demonstrated the skills of the flower team. We also managed to squeeze in a pre-Christmas meal out.

Janet Smith

MEN' S BREAKFAST

The Men' s Breakfast continued successfully throughout the year, meeting on the first Saturday each month and attended by between 14 to 20 men regularly. The previous year we had broken with tradition by inviting our minister, the Rev Gail Hunt to speak. This year we had two women speakers – Sue Whalley and Jeanette Mowat – both giving excellent presentations.

Responding to popular demand a Women' s Breakfast was held in October attended by 70 women. The speaker was Joan Sargent, former Cliff College evangelist, missionary and manager of the Spurriergate Centre in York. The morning proved a great success. Ticket sales totalled £420, with the men meeting the cost of the food, flowers for the tables and the speaker, and contributing a further £80 from our funds, to make a donation of £500 to the "All We Can – Uganda appeal."

We continue to try to broaden our membership, but so far we have had a lukewarm response from our brothers in the Harrogate arm of the new circuit.

Alan Middleton and Geoff Rogers

METHODIST WOMEN IN BRITAIN (MWiB) / TUESDAY FELLOWSHIP

The Tuesday Fellowship meets in the Manor Room at 2pm followed by refreshments in The Bridge. We meet to share and care for each other and the communities we serve. Members come from at least five areas of our circuit.

We support Methodist Women in Britain (MWiB) offering support and encouragement at home and overseas with prayers and finances.

We provide two circuit services, one in September and one in Holy Week.

Through our members' afternoons, and with the encouragement of various speakers, we seek to build each other up and find joy in our place in God's world here in Knaresborough.

Josie Burdon

HOME GROUPS & CLASS MEETINGS

Small groups of people choosing to meet together in relaxed and informal settings are a really important feature of Gracious Street. We run a wide variety of fellowship groups, Bible studies and home groups both during the day and in the evening.

The groups provide a great opportunity to get to know each other better and build friendships. They also allow people to explore the Christian faith and expand opportunities for conversations about the things that matter.

If you would like further details about joining a small group please contact Deacon David Hunt or Rev Gail Hunt.

ALPHA PLUS GROUP

There are 11 people in our group and we meet monthly in homes usually on Thursdays when generally there are 8 to 10 of us.

Last autumn we used a course based on the film 'The King's Speech' which encouraged us to 'find our voice' as Christians. We would recommend this course to other groups. Our evenings in January and February on prayer have contrasted well; first 'When I pray, what does God do?' based on a book by Minister and Scientist David Wilkinson and second 'What a Friend we have in Jesus'

exploring the words and the story of this well-known hymn. We incorporate church events such as Holy Week and Carols by Candlelight into our programme.

Sadly, Edna Stewart, one of our members died in the autumn and we miss her as she was a remarkable and well-loved Christian lady. We're really delighted that another member, Sharon Inman, is to be married soon and wish her and James every happiness in their life together.

We enjoy the study and social side of our group as we deepen our Christian faith and share our experiences – both sad and happy!

Joyce Hoare and Alan Middleton

BAKER' S DOZEN

Baker' s Dozen Home Group meets every other Wednesday in Christine Baker' s home. We have been very pleased to welcome some new members so now we have almost reached a 'baker' s dozen' ! During the autumn we studied Paul' s letter to the Philippians and since Christmas we have been enjoying a detailed look at the Lord' s Prayer. We have also enjoyed some social occasions including a summer barbecue (despite heavy rain!) and a lovely meal together at the beginning of the year.

Libby Cook

DIAMONDS HOME GROUP

The Diamonds Home Group meets monthly on Mondays in members' homes. We enjoy studying the Bible together, we pray for one another, and we share fellowship and friendship.

Since September we have studied selected passages from the Book of Acts seeking to discover what they teach us about the life of the church today. In December we had a Christmas evening with readings and music chosen by members of the group. Then from January, like other groups, our focus has been on the Lord' s Prayer. After Easter we plan to look at several of the Psalms.

On the social side we have enjoyed two Sunday lunches out as a group. These are very friendly occasions and help us to develop our fellowship. We are a small elderly group but the bond of friendship between us is strong.

I would like to record my gratitude to Alan & Margaret Shankster who now have responsibility for pastoral visiting within the group.

Marion King

KING JAMES' ROAD CLASS MEETING

We aim to blend Bible study, testimony, prayer and pastoral care. Between seven and nine of us meet regularly. On the third Tuesday we eat together at Wetherspoons before going as a group to 'Tuesday@8' and this has been a special blessing. We have been studying Romans and at present

The Lord's Prayer. From time to time we share Bible passages which have spoken to us in our daily readings. We will continue this varied pattern and value specially the time of free prayer, and the support we receive from and give to each other, and the service we give with other help in serving coffee.

Colin Lake

NEW SHOOTS HOME GROUP

The focus of New Shoots is to meet regularly to encourage and support each other in our discipleship with sharing stories and open discussion on a variety of topics.

We are an informal Home Group meeting in each other's homes and anyone is welcome to come and share and develop their faith in this small group.

During last year we had Bible Study, discussions, prayer, talk, sharing and social events such as our Christmas get-together- where we challenge each other with a quiz- and a summer BBQ. We organised a concert with Harrogate Male Voice Choir to raise funds for our Bicentennial project raising money for better sanitation in Uganda. We aim to meet once a month in various homes and we enjoy both the formal and informal times sharing fellowship, problems and laughing along with each other.

We aim to continue meeting monthly, sharing our faith, learning, upholding and enjoying each other's contributions and company.

Sue Whalley 862252 sue.whalley@gmail.com

OPEN DOORS HOME GROUP

Open Doors has a membership of 19; of these 5 are non-attendees for a variety of reasons. The remaining 14 attend regularly – meeting once a month at Shirley Shepherd's. The non-attendees are visited regularly by a number of different people. In 2015 we were pleased to be able to welcome Joan Raybould back, after a long illness that she is still not fully over. Despite her continuing problems Joan has been a regular attendee.

During the early part of the year we followed the "Taking shape together course" as set by management for all Home Groups. Several of us attended the interesting feedback session in Church on April 29th.

During the remainder of the year we

- studied John's Gospel (David Pawson video)
- planned and hosted the Bi-centenary musical evening organised by Mike Wilkins, raising almost £1500 for All We Can – Uganda appeal
- had a "spiritual check-up" .

Our winter meal out together, which we now have in January to avoid the hectic Christmas period, was held again at Wetherspoons, with a total of thirteen attendees.

Alan Middleton

CHARLIE' S ANGELS HOMEGROUP

Our home group comprises fourteen members all of whom attend our monthly meetings as regularly as they are able. We meet by turn in four different homes and various members of the group take turns to lead our meetings which always include prayer and some form of Bible study as well as more general pastoral conversation. Various members of the group also meet socially from time to time and we always have an annual New Year meal together as well as an informal summer barbecue or other event. Studies during the year have included the material prepared by David Hunt in early 2015, several one-off studies, a series on the work of the Holy Spirit and latterly, again in common with other groups, the Lord' s Prayer.

Brian Hoare

SERVICE & EVANGELISM

The Church exists to be a good neighbour to people in need, to challenge injustice and to make more followers of Jesus

MISSION TEAM

The majority of the Mission Team' s energies in 2015 were taken up by planning and overseeing our **BICENTENARY CELEBRATIONS**, outlined at the beginning of this report.

Other Mission Team activities during last year included:

- A 'Holiday at Home' for our older members in the summer
- A highly successful Alpha course (see separate report)
- Collaboration with Age UK in organising a weekly Thursday walk from The Bridge

It should be noted that Peter Whittaker has now taken over from Brian Hoare as chair of the Mission Team.

Brian Hoare

'ALL WE CAN – UGANDA'

As our bicentennial charity project for 2015 we challenged the church to support an All We Can project in Uganda by raising £360 within our groups, which equates to the amount the church paid 200 years ago for the land on which our building was built. Our aim was to raise £3,600. The money was to go to a project in Uganda (in partnership with VAD) which works to **provide improved water and sanitation facilities, promote good hygiene practice, lobby for better services and set up community groups to monitor and promote these activities.**

The challenge was taken up with enthusiasm by many church groups and the ways in which they raised their contributions were extremely varied and far too numerous to mention individually, but all were creative and very enjoyable.

In the midst of our activities we welcomed All We Can worker Tim Baker to Gracious Street and news of our activities has since appeared in All We Can literature. Following on from that Brian and Joyce Hoare took part in a focus group meeting in Leeds and Sharon Inman was invited to report about our work to a church in Leeds.

After only a few months it became clear that our target of £3,600 was going to be quickly surpassed and at the end of our bicentennial year we have raised the fantastic total of £11,184.16. A huge thank you goes to everyone who helped in any way.

Gracious Street support for All We Can will go on into 2016 even though our special appeal has finished, and we will continue to back their work to abolish poverty, inequality and injustice.

Margaret Mason

ALPHA

The focus of the Alpha Course is to present the basics of the Christian faith in a friendly, non-threatening environment to both Christians and non-Christians alike.

It is open to all those who have questions about faith, God, life and purpose.

The course started with 14 guests at the Welcome Supper last September. The format of the evening continues as it has proved successful and we meet in the Forest room for coffee and cake followed by a talk and discussion. It has been very relaxed and informal although we have all been challenged and learned much from each other. It has been good to 'share stories' with each other, learning and listening as we explored our relationship with God and we have been blessed to have such inspirational speakers to teach and challenge us.

Friendships have once more been made and it has been a privilege to journey in faith with some delightful people. The course continued after Christmas following the new course from the Bible Society – 'getting the bigger picture' – and we looked at the Bible from beginning to end with time

lines, different genres of writing and putting it into historical and cultural contexts. The course aims are to 'learn, live and love' the Bible. It is hoped that some guests will be able to continue in fellowship within various different home groups and continue to meet regularly. We aim to run our twenty fourth Alpha Course starting in September 2016.

The team would like to thank the church family for all the support both practical and prayerful.

Sue Whalley, Alan Middleton, Sue Lightfoot, Lynn Blanch, Libby Cook, Hazel Clark, Rosemary Coggrave.

THE BRIDGE COFFEE BAR

The focus of the Bridge is to provide good quality, good value food and drinks in an informal and friendly Christian setting, engaging with both our customers and the wider community in a variety of ways such as meeting and greeting, listening, offering prayer for any concerns if requested and having a wide variety of literature and information available. It is open and available to anyone who needs food, company and a relaxed setting.

We are open 5 days a week with Harrogate College providing meals on Mondays, Thursdays and Fridays from 10-2 pm. On Tuesdays and Wednesdays we are open from 10-12 with Henshaws helping us on Wednesdays – a very busy morning.

All usual activities continue – Book Clubs, Piano Bar, Chatty Crafts, Pause for Thought, Charity stalls, Fair Trade and the Bridge is an outreach into our community in so many ways. We continue the Family Eating and Play space on Fridays in the Priory room and Mondays have now become popular too with mums and children. The monthly Drop-in by the Safer Neighbourhood Police Team also continues. There are now many regulars – some of them groups - who come along and it is good to get to know and welcome them.

Our aim is to build more links into the community, explore more faith sharing ideas and build on what we have. We do still need some more volunteers on the rota – to be 'listeners' , help serve on non-college days and generally become involved with new ideas, enthusiasm and encouragement for the on-going work. At the moment the Bridge is running with the minimum amount of volunteers and some folk have to put in 'double shifts' occasionally! Please consider joining the team.

Please pray for the Bridge volunteers as we seek to share God' s love with all who come in.

Sue Whalley - Bridge Link/Contact 862252 or sue.whalley@gmail.com

LUNCH LINK

Lunch Link is held on a Tuesday at 12.30 pm. every week for Senior Citizens living on their own. (we close for the Christmas & New Year Holidays). We provide a hot lunch for an average of forty guests per week - we have 47 guests on the books. We continue to welcome new members when others move

on. This is the first Report I think I have done when we haven't had a waiting list, but I am sure there are people out there who would appreciate a hot lunch on a Tuesday.

There are five teams of six people, who prepare and cook a meal on the premises, in our very much-admired kitchen. Each team has its own menu, so that means the same meal comes round every five weeks. We work to the Food Standards Agency's Practices for Hygiene and making food safe. A Harrogate Council Environmental Officer inspects us, and we have been awarded 5 stars.

At Christmas we have a Christmas Lunch with all the trimmings, and afterwards carol singing, led by Gail our Minister. All the Teams are involved in the preparation and serving of the meal, and we all sit down and share with our guests. Last Christmas we served 90 meals to guests and helpers.

We offer for those on their own, a good hot meal, company and someone to chat with, in a warm Christian environment. Christmas and birthday cards are sent; some have said that it is the only card they receive. Many have started going to the Tuesday Fellowship, which follows the Lunch and from there been encouraged to go to Church. Lunch Link is an outreach into the Community, as it is not just for the Church people but also for those in the community who have a need. For some it has been a way back to Church. At Christmas time we have many cards of thanks and appreciation from our guests.

Without the commitment and dedication of over thirty team leaders and helpers this would never happen. Some of us have been there for a very long time, perhaps nearing retirement, so we are always looking for new, perhaps younger helpers or you could be on the reserves list to help out during Holidays. If you can help - it is only one morning every 5 weeks - please contact me. Remember one volunteer is better than two pressed men; we are not sexists.

If you know someone who would like to be a guest, or you may like to come yourself, please contact Pauline Murray 863188 and she will give you further information or ask for a form from one of the Leaders. Likewise if you would like to help we would be pleased to hear from you.

In God's service

Pauline Murray

SATURDAY WALKERS

The focus of our group is to enjoy walking, talking, laughing and taking in the fresh air in lovely surroundings. Our group is open to anyone who has adequate walking gear, can happily walk from between 5 to 8 miles and doesn't mind getting wet and muddy at times!

Once again we have had some wonderful walks around our local area in a variety of weathers!! We have explored some lovely footpaths and bridle ways around our area – in all weathers! We always

manage to cut one walk short and turn up for a BBQ at mine instead of our usual packed lunch! The walks range from 5 to 8 miles and it's good to walk along chatting and admiring the views.

We arrange car shares so transport is no problem.

Our aim is to continue exploring the footpaths and bridle ways of North Yorkshire and look forward to new people joining the group. Our next walks are 9 April, 14 May and 18 June - venues to be confirmed.

More information from Sue Whalley 862252 or sue.whalley@gmail.com.

LEADERSHIP, PROPERTY & FINANCE

MANAGEMENT TEAM

We as a team continue to meet regularly to oversee the administration and maintenance of our premises. Over the last twelve months we have seen a constant demand to use our building from organisations outside the church as well as our own use. This we feel has enabled us as a team to support the church's mission strategy of outreach into the community. However at times this has created some challenges with room bookings and Dorothy has employed great skill so that the various demands are accommodated. With the usage of the building at these levels it is essential that we keep our building in good condition and that will obviously incur some costs from time to time.

The fixtures, fittings and various pieces of equipment that we use in our building need to be reviewed on an ongoing basis so that forward planning can be made to meet replacement needs at the appropriate time. With this in mind we need to examine the seating in the church. This will involve careful investigation into what is suitable for our needs. Of course before any decision is made our findings would be presented to Church Council for approval.

Ian E. Cooper

LEADERSHIP TEAM

Being a large, vibrant and diverse church brings with it a combination of opportunities and challenges. In common with most complex organisations, one of those challenges is to maintain an effective communication culture. Whilst culture is really important, we also know that the way in which some people communicate, or like to receive information, is changing.

Church Council has identified communication as an area that requires attention and so, over the last year, it has been the main focus of the Leadership Team. In this context 'communication' means

any way in which we share information and engage with people. This means that rather than being an ‘end in itself’ , we are treating communication as an important set of tools and techniques to allow us to deliver the vision and mission of the church.

To make sure we understood the perspectives of the church family, we created as representative a group as possible in terms of age, gender and relationship with the church. Through questionnaires and face-to-face engagement sessions, we sought the views of these 25 people, whom we hoped would provide balanced insight with respect to the communication agenda. A number of recurring themes emerged which the Leadership Team reviewed and discussed.

A set of recommendations was presented to the January 2016 Church Council. The 9 priorities that were agreed by Church Council are shown opposite:

Priority	Recommended actions for a small engagement team focused on each priority area
To build an active and growing culture of communication within GSMC	Rather than being a sequence of tasks, we see good communication as stemming from a healthy culture. A focus is required to develop this culture right across the church, to give people ‘permission’ to get engaged, unlock potential and become empowered.
Use the building we have as part of our communication strategy and as a route to mission	The use of the building as a catalyst for mission by gaining access to user groups and those with whom we have a relationship. It is suggested that we focus on developing a vision for how the building may be further used to optimise mission and ensuring that we have a relationship with each user group so that they are aware of what we can offer them over and above the building itself.
Ensuring our communication evolves to become relevant for some people without leaving others behind	Our overarching communication strategy should be further developed by a small team and should map out the evolution of content and delivery channels. This will include a review of the website and Grapevine and notices in light of ‘twin track’ approach. It should also include a review of our PR/local media activity.
Make ourselves as accessible, visible and easy to engage with as possible (including for people with whom we do not yet have a relationship)	A team is required to undertake a review of the website and undertake an overhaul of the design including structure, content links and “brand”. A separate Social Media strategy is required.

<p>Be consistent, purposeful and effective in the way we communicate using all available channels</p>	<p>There should be a specific review of brand and positioning (including the premises and how they are presented) – who are we?</p> <p>The core messaging should be consistent but it should be framed for certain audiences and across all channels.</p> <p><i>Continued overleaf</i></p>
<p>Keep in touch during the week</p>	<p>Develop the potential for a virtual group and/or some other form of ‘keep in touch’ programme.</p>
<p>Make sure that we address/communicate issues that are relevant to people’s everyday lives.</p>	<p>As part of our communication, engagement and mission work it is recommended that we:</p> <p>Show how we are active in areas of social justice</p> <p>Continue to use common interests to attract people (e.g. music, film etc)</p> <p>Communicate to wider community</p> <p>Emphasise Methodism as force for social good rather than ‘just religion’</p>
<p>Posters</p>	<p>The way that notice boards are used sends a strong signal and so they should be used carefully.</p> <p>External notice boards not to be forgotten.</p>

These actions are not intended to be exhaustive or prescriptive – but are suggestions for review and follow up by working groups set up to look at a specific area.

Ideally the working groups will comprise a range of members and that some of the ideas and “detail” will come from members being consulted, getting involved and taking ownership. It would be great to involve those with an interest / expertise in a particular area to get involved in the relevant working group. So, if you have an interest, skills or experience gained in any part of your life then please do step forwards!

Simon Pringle & Sharon Inman
On behalf of the Leadership Team

TASK FORCE

Group' s Aims – to assist in the preservation and maintenance of the Church buildings and fabric.

Work carried out – Refurbishment of Christmas crib, replacement of light bulbs, cleaning garden patio, descaling coffee machines, refixing towel dispenser, replacing coat hooks, repair of door and handrail furniture, affixing hooks for banner, maintaining drainage and sanitary fixtures and fittings, refixing Church chair fixings, treatment for weeds and to remove ants, maintenance of carpet and vacuum cleaners, replacement of clock batteries, refixing wires, repair of bookcase and provision of lockable box for donations, and modifying Church window blackouts to enable easier fitting.

Future plans – work is ongoing and is expected to continue.

A Record Book is available in the Church for anyone to register any defects found.

Alan Shankster

TREASURER' S REPORT

Summary of Position

It has been another satisfactory year for the finances of the Church which have kept pace with the running costs of our modern set of premises. The figures below show the position on the general funds at 12th March 2016.

General Fund

CFB	46,638
Yorks	9,084
TCMP	859
COGS	551
Total Funds	57,132

Known Committed Expenditure

Quarterly Circuit assessment (due May)	-16,768
Miscellaneous Repairs	-5,000

Net Position

40.364

Our finances have continued to stabilise and so far this year our income is running broadly in line with expenditure. I am delighted to be able to report that one of the most significant items of expenditure this year so far was our donation to the All We Can Uganda project, which raised the magnificent total of £11,184. I'm pretty sure that every member of our Church community has contributed in some way to this total. Not only did we raise funds to support the people of Uganda, we had a lot of fun doing so and we strengthened and made new friendships along the way. As a leadership team we are keen to support events that will not only directly provide mission opportunities at home and abroad but also events that raise funds to support all of our mission activity. Please let us have your ideas.

It is pleasing to note that the number of people choosing to make their offering by standing order continues to grow. This helps us to plan our finances with more confidence. I would continue to urge members who are taxpayers to make full use of the opportunity to gift aid all donations made to the Church, this does make a very significant difference to our finances.

We have also benefitted from a number of donations and legacies once again in this financial year.

Our finances continue to rely on our lettings of the premises, income from which accounts for almost 25% of our total income. I am grateful for all who support the letting of the building, by opening up, setting up rooms, making refreshments etc. If anyone is available to help with this work, Dorothy Rodham would be pleased to hear from you.

Looking to the future, our circuit assessment is set to rise as we continue to transition into the Nidd Valley Circuit methodology for calculating the assessment. We will see the assessment rise by £5,000 in each of the next 2 years. As we begin to implement our five year mission plan we need to be prepared for the financial resources that may be needed to fulfil that plan. Linked to this we have agreed with the circuit that we will pay for 6 hrs of additional administrative support specifically for Gracious Street as part of the role of the new circuit administrator. We therefore cannot afford to be complacent with our income generating activity.

As in previous years I would like to thank all the people who assist with the Church finances; Geoff Rogers who administers the regular giving scheme via the envelope system; Paul Blanch who does the gift aid return; Michael Borkett for his support and advice, for all those who count the money week by week. My special thanks go to Harry Murray who does a great job banking all the cash week in week out and to Alan Middleton who does it when Harry is away.

I would also of course like to thank all members for continuing to give generously to enable the work here at Gracious Street to flourish.

Bill Rodham

Treasurer

Church Council Membership & Managing Trustees April 2016

Office Holders

The Superintendent	Rev Mark Godfrey
The Ministers	Rev Gail Hunt and Deacon David Hunt
Circuit Steward	Mr Peter Gambles
Church Council Secretary	Mrs Hilary Wilkinson
Church Finance	Mr Bill Rodham
Pastoral Secretary	Mrs Shirley Shepherd
Safeguarding Adviser	Mrs Dorothy Rodham
Property Secretary	Mrs Eleanor Borkett

Leadership Team

Deacon Ian Cooper (2013)
Mr Mike Hughes (2013)
Miss Sharon Inman (2013)
Mr Simon Pringle (2013)
Mr Bill Rodham (2013)
Miss Sue Walkington (2015)
Mrs Sue Whalley (2013)

Church Meeting Elected Representatives *(min 6, max 15)*

Mr Steve Ainsley (2013)
Mr Michael Borkett (2015)
Mrs Lynne Bullock (Worship Steward, 2010)
Mr Marc Greenwood (2009)
Mrs Joan Greig (2014)
Mrs Margaret Lancefield (2013)
Mrs Betty Hughes (Worship Steward, 2010)
Mr David Rochester (2010)
Mrs Ruth Schofield (2011)
Mr Paul Skeels (2014)
Mr Clifford Taylor (2013)
Mr Tim Webster (2014)
(3 vacancies)

Church Council Appointed *(max 15)*

Alpha	TBA
CAMEO	Mrs Janet Smith
The Bridge	TBA
Grapevine	Mrs Hilary Hughes
Lunch Link	Mrs Pauline Murray
Men's Breakfast	Mr Alan Middleton
Mission Team	Rev Peter Whittaker
Noah's Ark	Mrs Viv Ainsley / Mrs Doreen Whittaker
Playbox	Mrs Vicki Taylor
Sunday Club Coordinator	Mrs Rachel Watson
Contact Steward	Mrs Jeanette Mowat (2012)
Task Force	Mr Alan Shankster
Youth Group	TBA

(Term of office for elected reps is 6 years maximum)

