

Gracious Street
Methodist Church



ANNUAL REPORT 2017

**GRACIOUS STREET
METHODIST CHURCH
KNARESBOROUGH**

2017

**The Annual Report
of
Gracious Street Methodist Church (Knaresborough)
Published April 2017**

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If you would like to know more about the church and our activities, please contact:

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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:	Mrs Libby Cook	867077
	Mr Mike Hughes	864002
	Mr Simon Pringle	868331
	Mr Bill Rodham (Treasurer)	865846
	Miss Sue Walkington	547086
	Mrs Sue Whalley	862252
	Mrs Sharon Wright	869588

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.

This is also an opportunity to look back at what God has been doing in the life of the church and also help us reflect on our own journey of faith, while at the same time looking ahead to where God is leading.

So please take this opportunity to take time and read these reports, give thanks to God for all he continues to do in partnership with his people and through this place.

God's peace be with you.

Rev Gail & Deacon David

WORSHIP

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

STEWARDS TEAM

We are fortunate to have a dedicated team of stewards who work together well to ensure that everyone is given a warm welcome as they arrive at church. The five Worship Stewards coordinate activities and take responsibility for preparing the building and smooth running of Sunday services. Our thanks go to Betty Hughes as she steps down after seven years of faithful service. We look forward to working with Anna Cooley if her appointment is approved by this year's meeting.

Brenda Paul does an excellent job in compiling the rota – always apologising if she has to give us consecutive duties. Paul Skeels works closely with those who operate the screen and sound desk. We need to thank them all for their efforts, both before and during the services. We need to pray now for guidance in recruiting more people to take on these roles and spread the load. With more volunteers, we would have fewer duties and everyone would feel the benefit. So, please consider if you could offer your time and speak to one of us for more information. Thank you.

Jeanette Mowat

WORSHIP GROUP/WORSHIP BANDS

Worship Group continues to thrive. Our 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 typically have around twelve singers meeting on a Tuesday evening at 8pm. However, we rarely have more than two or three 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!).

What was 'Tuesday@8' has now morphed into 'Connect' on the last Sunday evening of each month. These services, which have a major input from the Worship Group and Band, give people the opportunity to engage in worship, prayer and testimony in a free-flowing and contemporary way. Frequently new songs have been introduced at these services and then shared with the wider congregation on a Sunday morning.

It has been encouraging to witness the growth of the Worship Band(s) during the past year. We now have a rhythm section – drums, bass, guitar (+ keyboard). This nucleus is often augmented by melodic instruments – flute, sax, trumpets, violins – and, for All Together Worship and special festivals, includes our very talented young people (Family Band). Anyone who has been learning an instrument for about a year or more and would like to be included in the band should have a word with Mike Hughes (tel. 864002 or email mikehilhughes22@ntlworld.com). Although the music at Gracious Street has been traditionally keyboard led, it would be great to include instrumental variety more frequently.

Worship is a key element of our life together as a church and we as musicians are grateful for the encouragement we have received from so many of you.

Mike Hughes

CONSULTATION ON WORSHIP

The Mission Development Plan states we are a church which places great importance on worship, teaching and developing disciples. 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 and we ask that readers, worship leaders and preachers use the "Today's New International Version" of the Bible, which is on the lectern, or other similar translations.

The All Together Worship Team is now established within the life of the church and regularly leads on

the second Sunday of the month and it is wonderful to see our children and young people leading us in our worship and prayer and growing in faith.

We are also grateful to our Worship Leaders, who occasionally lead our worship, especially when we have visiting preachers who are not familiar with our church.

We continue to adopt a policy of all "learning together" and the Roots material is used to provide resources for our preachers and Sunday Club. During the summer we will be focussing on the book of James during our morning worship.

Tuesday@8 has now evolved into a monthly "Connect" service which is led by the Worship Group adopting a style of prayer, praise, testimony and reflection to help us "Connect" with different aspects of the Christian faith and the world in which we serve.

Rev Gail Hunt

PRAYER AT GRACIOUS STREET

Prayer has always been an important part of Christian life and it features strongly at Gracious Street in a variety of different ways. There is no doubt that many of our congregation take personal prayer seriously and many can testify to knowing that others have been praying for them.

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. 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 heartbeat 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 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.

Deacon David Hunt

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.

Over the last year there has been a specific focus on developing the best way we can offer effective pastoral care for the large number of people we have contact with. We have reviewed the whole of the community role, not just the members, and are working towards ensuring that everyone who is connected with the church here at Gracious Street has some pastoral contact and care.

In addition a small team has been created which visits and takes Home Communion to those members of our fellowship who are no longer able to worship with us on a regular basis.

The pastoral meeting has a specific focus on reviewing membership, appointing pastoral leaders and encouraging the practice of fellowship through class meetings 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 figure as of 31st October 2016 (the period in which Methodist Church membership figures are collated) was 186 members, plus nearly 450 on the community pastoral role.

Rev Gail Hunt & Deacon David Hunt

Pastoral Secretary: Mrs Shirley Shepherd

FLOWER TEAM

Gracious Street has a very dedicated and talented team of flower arrangers and flower distributors. Flowers are donated for worship every Sunday and then distributed on the Monday. These flowers are given to people both within and outside the church family. Flowers are given to celebrate special birthdays, anniversaries and achievements as well as for illness, bereavement, hospital stays etc.

Through the generosity of people the flower team delivered over 200 bunches last year (2016). This is a very important ministry and if anyone would like to help in any way, please contact Rachel.

I would like to thank all those who have donated flowers, arranged them and delivered them.

Rachel Watson

SAFEGUARDING

The focus and aims of Safeguarding Training are to promote awareness of possible safeguarding concerns. The training aims to equip all adults, both volunteers and paid, working in different roles in the Methodist Church to feel confident to share safeguarding concerns with the appropriate person. The Foundation Safeguarding and Refresher Training is for and includes Presbyters with active preaching or pastoral ministry, Deacons, pastoral visitors, church stewards, local preachers, worship leaders, church safeguarding representatives, worship group leaders, core teaching staff with direct links with children and vulnerable adults.

Dorothy and Bill Rodham and I have run several Foundation and Refresher courses here at Gracious Street and other churches within the circuit over the last six months. We have identified a large number of people from the above core list with an 'active role' at Gracious Street who either need to attend a Foundation Course or the Refresher Course and we are currently in the process of contacting and inviting them to attend one of these courses over the next few months.

We continue to process DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) forms 'on-line' by accessing the internet. The process takes approximately twenty minutes and anyone working with children or vulnerable people should have a current certificate. If you are a leader of a group and you have any new helpers/volunteers, please can you make Dorothy or Bill Rodham or me aware so that we can arrange for a DBS to be carried out as well as appropriate Safeguarding Training.

Val Coapes

Safeguarding Officer

GRAPEVINE

Grapevine continues to be produced by a dedicated team of four people and we are grateful for articles and photographs from several of our church members. Grapevine records what goes on at Gracious Street and advertises coming events. We try to reflect the life of our community through words and pictures. Recently we decided to produce ten issues a year, so that December and January are combined in a Christmas and New Year number and July and August will combine in our summer edition. We do not charge for the magazine but welcome donations. We see the magazine also as a means of reaching out to the community and would welcome copies being placed in the library, Friendship and Leisure Centre, surgery and dentists' waiting rooms, or just passed on to friends and neighbours.

Brian Souter

On behalf of the Grapevine editorial team

SUNDAY CLUB

Sunday Club continues to function well with a dedicated team of leaders and helpers. There are over 40 children on the register although not all of them attend at the same time. During the past year we

have welcomed four new members of staff. We all work on a rota basis apart from the summer when we have Open Sunday Club, and also at Easter, Christmas and All Together Worship. At present we have three working groups on a Sunday morning: Buds (age 3-5), Branches (age 6-10) and TOGS (age 11-14). Each group has to have two adults for Safeguarding reasons.

The children have started taking the offertory on a Sunday morning.

The dates for Open Sunday Club during the summer are from 23rd July to 3rd September (inclusive). Promotion Sunday is 3rd September when children will receive their certificates. The following Sunday any children who need to move groups will do so. If anyone is interested in helping in Sunday Club, please contact Rev Gail Hunt or Rachel Watson.

On a personal note I would like to thank everyone on the Sunday Club team for all their work during the past year.

Rachel Watson (Sunday Club Coordinator)

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, 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.

In the last few months we have covered multiple topics including the refugee crisis & President Trump's current response, what it means to be young and have a place in the Church. We have also discussed Micah 6.8 and what this means to the way we live our lives as Christians.

Our young people at the moment are incredibly fired up by politics, both here and abroad, and I am a big believer in embracing their passion. We have talked in depth about the USA and Russia, and what their politics mean to the world at large, and how we as Christians respond with dignity. I posed the question to our young people as to why should we care about what is happening in other countries, and a young person said "Because we're humans, and they're humans!" I am constantly in awe of young people and how everything is so obvious to them. When do we develop that habit of overthinking?

Of course, we have still been doing our usual fun stuff and took a trip to Gravity at Xscape in Castleford with the Yorkshire Plus Region's DMLN Team.

We have also seen our bank of volunteers at gsYOUth* double in size, for which we have been praying for so long. It's definitely come at the right time for us too. However, we are always looking for extra bodies, if you can spare a Sunday evening to give us a hand.

Our focus areas for the future are almost identical to last year. We want to consider more options for recruiting young people and how better to nurture our relationships with the young people we currently have. We are also passionate about investigating ways to involve members of gsYOUth* in Sunday morning worship at Gracious Street.

We are so thankful for all the prayers and support from members of Gracious Street.

Poppy Winks

NOAH'S ARK PRE-SCHOOL

This exciting and privileged part of our work and witness in Gracious Street continues successfully. We have 38 children on roll, ten of these attend for the full day. This means we are full – a pleasing situation that should continue next year. The charge for each session is £4.20 for either a morning or afternoon.

We are currently seeking a further qualified member of staff to join the team.

New play equipment is being sourced for the outside space. This has been a successful fund raising effort by the parents and friends of Noah's Ark. We hope that it will be in place for the summer term.

The children, parents, staff and friends filled the church for our Christmas service and as I write the Easter service is planned. Later in the year, possibly in October, we are planning an open morning (Saturday) and a celebration of the work included in the Sunday morning worship.

We are part of the children's and family work done on behalf of the Church reaching deep into the local community. We thank you for your prayer support and encouragement. We are grateful for the positive support and comment from our parents. And we are grateful to the staff for their commitment and to an active committee for their detailed oversight of the work.

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 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 e.g. Mothers' Day, Chinese New Year and our Playbox birthday as well as the Christian festivals.

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.

Looking towards the future, we currently have only two people helping in the kitchen and we are in need of some more volunteers. Also, Sheila has now been leading the group for nearly thirty years and is looking towards stepping down at some point in the future. If you have a heart for pre-school work and would like to explore more about how you can support the work of Playbox, please speak to Vicki Taylor or Sheila Bradley-Smith.

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

EASTER CLUB

Each year, for three mornings around Easter time, the church is transformed for the Christians Together Easter Club for primary school aged children. Last year the church became a Sweetie Wonderland with an impressive array of giant-sized sweets which were used to bring out connections with the Christian message. It was an action-packed time with fun, games, cooking, crafts, singing and of course learning more about the adventure of following Jesus. Over 60 children attended together with a team of enthusiastic leaders from churches in Knaresborough led by Hannah and Dave Ferguson from Mowbray Church in Harrogate.

As I write this report, it is all about to happen again! This year's Easter club is called Rollercoaster and the church will be transformed into a theme park as we look at the ups and downs of the life of Joseph and introduce the children to a loving God who is always with us through the ups and downs of our own lives.

Libby Cook

CAMEO

CAMEO (Come and Meet Each Other) is a fortnightly meeting open to anyone who wishes to come. We meet on Monday evenings at 7pm in the Manor Room and are having a regular attendance of over twenty men and women.

The programme is very varied with some light-hearted topics and others of social concern. We have also shared social get-togethers; in June we shared fish and chips at a restaurant and at Christmas we brought and shared food and finished the evening singing carols.

Through a weekly collection we are able to support various charities as well as making contributions to church funds.

Janet Smith

MEN'S BREAKFAST

The Men's Breakfast continued successfully throughout 2016. Average attendance continued to be in the range 14-20 on a regular basis, and included some welcome newcomers: Ron Hicks, Dennis Watson and David Barker; and the return of an original member, Geoff Walkington.

The year saw the addition of a fourth woman speaker, with Libby Cook joining the select group of women speakers whom we use.

To celebrate our first 15 years a review of our origins, founder members, a tribute to our ever present chef Robert Aspin and our fundraising activities was published in the Grapevine during the year.

And finally, discussions have already begun for the return of the immensely popular Women's Breakfast later this year. Watch out for further announcements!

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 Mondays when generally there are 8 to 10 of us. We aim to deepen our Christian faith and support each other through the many different experiences of life.

Since the autumn we have been using the booklet and DVD of 'The Bible Course' presented by the Rev Andrew Ollerton who is a minister and theologian. This interactive course shows the big picture of the Bible story from Genesis to Revelation, helping us read and apply the Bible to everyday life. The mix of DVD teaching, discussion and readings means each session is pretty full but our group found it manageable. Andrew Ollerton is an excellent speaker, the booklets are user-friendly and well-illustrated with maps, diagrams etc and the discussion questions are challenging and concise. All in all a good course which other groups are welcome to borrow.

From time to time we join together for meals and outings, our latest being to the recently developed Boston Spa Methodist Church for a concert by Stuart Townend which was a wonderful evening. We incorporate church events such as Holy Week and Carols by Candlelight into our programme.

We plan to continue our studies and the social life of our group, encouraging and helping each other as much as we can.

Joyce Hoare and Alan Middleton

Baker's Dozen Home Group

Baker's Dozen Home Group meets every other Wednesday usually in Christine Baker's home and at last we really are a 'baker's dozen'! We enjoy a time of fellowship, study and prayer and also have regular social events including meals in each other's homes and visits to Wetherspoons!

During the autumn we followed 'The Bible Course' – a series of talks on DVD which present the big picture of the Bible from Genesis to Revelation. We have also taken a special interest in the refugee crisis using the 'All We Can' material as a focus with some members of the group being involved with the local Syrian refugee families. We have been meeting every week with Ron leading a Lent course – 'Living an Authentic Life' which explores discipleship.

Libby Cook

New Home Group

Our first meeting was in January – we have not yet given ourselves a name! There are eight of us in the group incorporating what was 'Diamonds Home Group' with others expressing interest in joining us at a later stage. We meet monthly and are about to embark on 'The Bible Course' which gives an overview, the 'big picture' of the Bible. We are praying it will strengthen our faith and give us a greater love for God's word.

Rosemary Coggrave

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 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. Some of our folk have had ill health recently and the support from the group has been invaluable.

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 18; of these 6 are non-attendees for a variety of reasons. The remaining 12 attend regularly, meeting once a month at Shirley Shepherd's home (or at Joan Raybould's when Shirley is away). The non-attendees are visited/seen regularly by a number of different people.

During the past year we have completed "The Bible Course", an eight session DVD series covering the "Big picture" of the Bible from Genesis to Revelation. It picks out the key themes/issues/timelines in an easy and understandable way.

We went out for a meal as a group as usual in the summer 2016.

In the new year we started an in-depth study of Romans, which will take us, at least, the rest of the year to complete. Rev Colin Lake has agreed to speak at one of our meetings later this year.

A new initiative – singing praise to God together at the start of each session – has just been introduced, and we continue to share God’s love, and support and uphold one another.

Alan Middleton

Charlie’s Angels Home Group

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 a series on women of the Bible, one or two one-off topics and latterly we have been looking at Paul’s letter to the Colossians. Instead of our May meeting this year we are holding an open meeting on 24th May at church to show the DVD ‘John Wesley: the man and his mission’ which we hope will be supported by others in the church.

Brian Hoare

MARK THE DATE – Bible Day

A day of Bible teaching at Gracious Street. Lots of people come from all around Yorkshire and beyond for this annual day of teaching and inspiration. Give them a warm Knaresborough welcome and join in the event.

It really is open and accessible to all.

Date: **Saturday October 14th**

Time: **from 10.00am until 3.30pm**

Theme: God’s Presence – Our Presence

- Exploring the incarnation and mission

Speaker: **Rev Ruth Gee**

- Chair of the Darlington Methodist Circuit
- President of the Conference 2013-14

Held in association with Methodist Evangelicals Together.

See you there!

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

What do you do with the weekly notice sheet? You may collect it as you enter Church or it appears in your "inbox" with all the other email messages.

I see it as the weekly report of the "Mission Team" as it catalogues our work and witness. And each one of you belongs to the "Mission Team". Notice the outreach, the pastoral care and worship opportunities that form the work of our church, week by week, day by day.

Please use that sheet as a guide to prayer support for God's Mission expressed through our church.

On the inside cover of the "Grapevine" – our excellent church magazine – you will find our Mission Statement. It states that we are a:

- worshipping church
- learning church
- serving church
- caring church
- witnessing church

Another way to use the weekly notice sheet is to ask which of these objectives is being addressed by any particular activity. Do we live out our mission statement in the activities of the community, week by week?

It is God's Mission in which we are called to participate. We are always open to new ideas or initiatives that help our work and witness. The Leadership Team working on behalf of the Church Council is the body that gives permission for new initiatives or one-off events in Church life. So, if you have the germ of an idea to help forward the mission and witness of the church, and a sense of who might be involved, let's hear from you.

Peter Whittaker

FAMILY EVENTS

Family Film Nights

Family film nights have become well established now with the aim to hold five each year from autumn through to spring. They are held on Saturdays at 5pm starting with everyone enjoying hot dogs, drinks and popcorn. The evenings are proving very popular with around 80 people attending each time including lots of families who don't generally come to church, giving us a good starting point to build

relationships. The film is shown in the church but also in The Bridge where we have a few toys and this is really appreciated by families with young children who can opt in and out. Film nights are free but we have a donations box which more than covers our costs.

Who Let the Dads Out? (WLTDO)

WLTDO at Gracious Street started in September 2016 for dads/granddads/male carers and their pre-school children with meetings on the second Saturday of each month from 10.00-11.30am. WLTDO provides an opportunity for dads to spend some quality time with their children, while meeting other dads from the local community. There are plenty of toys to keep the children amused as well as a craft corner and a story time.

WLTDO encourages dads to feel valued and welcomed whilst they munch on a bacon sandwich and have a chat about anything and everything – life, work, family, football! Meanwhile mums have an opportunity to relax or do the shopping in peace while the dads take over!

The first six months have been very encouraging with over 15 dads on the register – most of whom are not members of Gracious Street Church. There is a lovely atmosphere and everyone is getting to know each other. We want to build on these relationships and to encourage more dads to come along.

We would still welcome more helpers (regularly or just occasionally) to make bacon sandwiches, serve cups of coffee and just generally chat to the dads and make them feel welcome.

Thula Mama

Thula Mama is a weekly informal singing group for women and their babes-in-arms where mums learn songs and lullabies from around the world in a-cappella harmony. Mums are made comfy on warm cosy sofas and are served tea and biscuits and homemade cakes while they make friends and sing beautiful and uplifting songs to their babies. The group has proved popular since it started in November 2016 – usually attracting around 8 mums and their babies each week. We have already had some lovely feedback with some mums saying the group is 'brilliant', 'the highlight of my week' and 'has got them through difficult times.' Our aim is to nurture and empower mums, find new ways to bond with and soothe their babies and celebrate motherhood together. There is a small charge of £3 per class which includes refreshments. See www.thulamama.co.uk for more information.

Libby Cook

ALL WE CAN

Gracious Street's support for All We Can continues to be strong and is increasingly embedded into the life of our church. We support All We Can as we always have by taking collections in church services to respond to appeals at times of specific crises such as the Syrian Refugee crisis, but also we are gradually finding other opportunities to become involved.

It has been a pleasure to welcome All We Can worker Tim Baker and his colleagues into Gracious Street on several occasions this year, culminating in our involvement in an ITV programme on the subject of the East Africa famine: a television crew recorded our response to the crisis by filming the church service, interviewing Gail and finding out about our activities to raise money for the All We Can Appeal. At the last count we donated a total of £1,337.85. In December we were privileged to meet Benedict Male, director of VAD, the partner organisation of All We Can in Uganda. At the local supporters' day in York he spoke at length about the sanitation project that we supported in our special Bicentennial Appeal last year, and then at the weekend he visited Gracious Street Church with Tim to share in our Sunday services.

This year a variety of resources produced by All We Can have been used individually, in services and in house groups, with the most recent being 'All Together for Justice' materials during Lent.

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 6 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 will continue after Easter following the new course from the Bible Society – 'getting the bigger picture' – as we look 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. Please contact me for further information if you would like to join us. 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 fifth Alpha Course starting in September 2017.

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 and Fridays from 10-2 pm. On Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays we are open from 10-12 with Henshaws helping us on Wednesdays – a very busy morning. Recently sixth formers from Springwater School have been helping us on Thursdays.

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. We welcome the Age UK 'Staying Steady Strollers' on Thursdays – short easy strolls on the level.

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.

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.

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

WALKING FOR HEALTH and SILVER BOWLERS – MARCH 2017

Nearly two years ago we were asked by Age UK Knaresborough to join with them to set up a weekly Walking for Health group which now meets each Thursday at 10.30am starting and finishing at The Bridge. This has developed into a very friendly and sociable group and about 15-20 older people enjoy a 30-40 minute walk on the flat round the Castle Top, swimming pool or Crag Lane each week. (There are 30 names on the list in total). This free group is to help folk stay or become more mobile and to provide company and social contact. It is now known as 'Staying Steady Strollers' and has become a valuable link between the church and the community. New walkers and helpers are always welcome.

Following the success of the walking group Age UK Knaresborough asked us to collaborate with them in establishing a 'Silver Bowlers' group. This began in March and meets in the Castle Hall at 11.00am each Monday that The Bridge is open. Carpet and Street bowls are both played at the same time and 12-15 people currently come along. This is very much a fun activity with lots of laughter as the bowls seem to have a life of their own! The aim is to help folk keep fit and provide fun and friendship. Others are very welcome to come along on a regular or occasional basis. Sessions are £2 each week.

Full details for both groups from Brian and Joyce Hoare (860750)

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 explored some lovely footpaths and had some wonderful walks around our local area in a variety of weathers! The walks range from 5 to 8 miles and it's good to walk along chatting and admiring the views – the view from Roseberry Topping was a particularly fine one on a warm day in September! A number of us also did the Rotary Club charity walk in the Nidd Gorge – to support Martin House Hospice.

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. (I have had to stop the walk briefly due to personal reasons but hope to be walking again very soon).

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

LEADERSHIP, PROPERTY & FINANCE

MANAGEMENT TEAM

I begin this report by paying tribute to Ian Cooper who unfortunately had to stand down as Chair of the Management Team during this year, following his recent ill health. We are enormously grateful for Ian's calm and wise leadership over recent years and I know it was a tough decision for Ian to make – typically concerned that he didn't want to let anyone down.

The role of the management team is to ensure that the building is operated and run for the benefit of all users. This includes taking care of the property (including the cottages), Health and Safety, keeping an eye on finance and managing enquiries and bookings. We work closely with the Bridge team and worship stewards, represented on the management team by Sue Whalley and Jeanette Mowat respectively.

Key activities completed this year were an annual "deep" clean during the summer, including some redecoration; the purchase of a new projector in the Church; sourcing and purchasing of new chairs. We administer annual maintenance contracts for the heating, the lift, fire alarm and extinguishers and the burglar alarm.

In all our discussions we are particularly focused on making sure that the first contact we have with users, the welcome they receive on arrival and the condition and upkeep of our premises demonstrate

our Christian values. In short we want people to see the Church in action. Please help us to this end by reporting any concerns to us so that they can be dealt with promptly and by working together to maintain to a high standard.

As well as our regular users we have a steady stream of enquiries from a variety of bodies including hosting courses for Tees, Esk & Wear Valley NHS Trust, The Yorkshire Dales Rivers Trust, Age UK and UBU. We also have a steady stream of children's parties.

I am pleased to say that David Simpson has recently agreed to help us bring our risk assessments up to date. We would also be pleased to welcome one or two more people onto the team to help spread the workload. If you feel you have the skills and enthusiasm for this work, please have a word with one of us.

On behalf of the Management Team: Rev Gail Hunt, Deacon David Hunt, Eleanor Borkett, Pauline Murray, Dot Rodham, Jeanette Mowat, Sue Whalley, Bill Rodham, David Simpson.

Bill Rodham

LEADERSHIP TEAM

We have seen changes to the membership of the team this year. Ian Cooper has decided to step down from his role on the team and we thank him for his hard work and invaluable contribution. We are pleased to welcome Libby Cook onto the team. Libby brings with her many skills and lots of experience as well as a passion for children's and families' work.

In November Gail and David, along with some of the Leadership Team, attended the national "Navigating Change" conference to explore how local churches can engage contemporary thinking on Church growth and development. We will be taking ideas from the conference to see how they can be used in our mission and development.

At last year's AGM nine priorities, which had been agreed by Church Council as part of our Communication Strategy, were endorsed. Despite a lack of volunteers to form working groups to further these priorities, we have been able to make significant progress in some areas:

- The weekly notices have been re-launched in a new and fresh format and are available in hard copy and electronic versions.
- The construction of a new church website is well underway, with a view to launching it in May.
- Juliana, our administrator, is helping to update and maintain our church database.

Our work on communication within the church will continue.

We invited members of the congregation to share with us their Passions, Skills and Talents earlier this year. We are keen for everyone to be able to contribute to the life of the church, not just to support our mission but also help us all to develop as disciples. If you haven't already completed the form, please do return it to us as soon as possible.

Sharon Wright

On behalf of the Leadership Team

TASK FORCE

Aim - The preservation of Church premises by carrying out reasonable repair or rectification of defects on a monthly basis in an effort to save time and money.

Objective – Through the provision of a Register in a prominent position (currently on the table in the Church front porch), to provide a way for any member of the Church to report any structural or fabric defects which require investigation.

Activities – Projects are completed which affect the care and upkeep of Church premises.

During 2016 attention was given to:

A broken strap to a baby changing table, descaling coffee machines, unblocking and repair of sanitary fittings, maintenance of the vacuum cleaner, tightening of screws on door hinges, attention to light fittings and replacing bulbs, repair of door handles, fixing coat and other hooks, freeing seized windows, table repairs, weed control and repairing games tables.

Future: We expect the requirement for maintenance to be ongoing.

Alan Shankster

TREASURER'S REPORT

Our finances remain in a stable position with our Church community continuing to give generously not only financially, but also of their time and talents to support a range of fundraising activities. Our current funds as at 30th March 2017 are as follows:

Yorkshire Bank	£7,888
Yorkshire Bank (COGS Account)	£501
Trustees for Methodist Purposes	£864
Central Finance Board	£51,864
Total Funds	£61,117

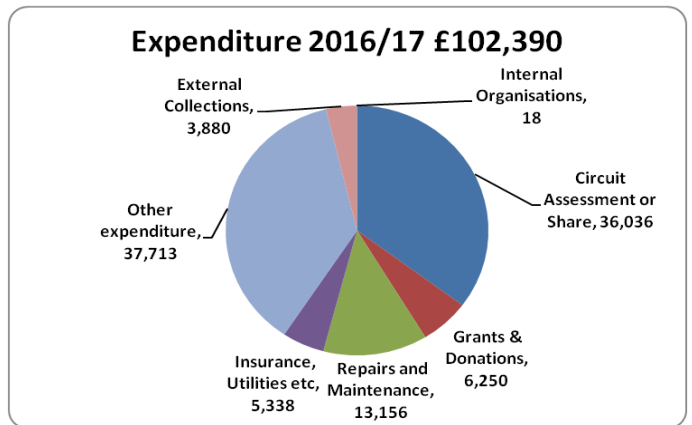
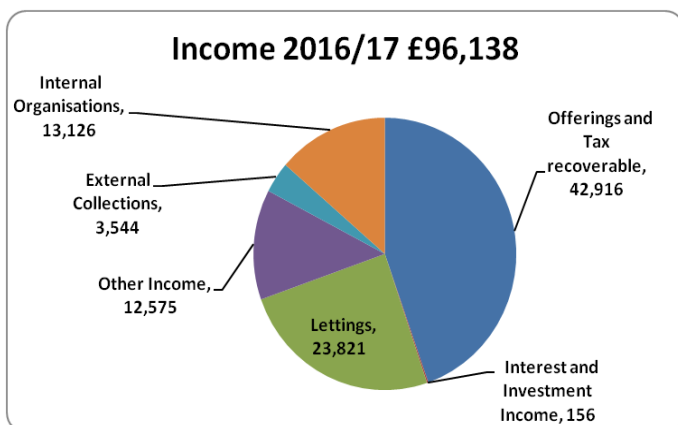
Generally our income and expenditure remain in step, but the recent payment of the balance for the new chairs means that expenditure to date is slightly ahead of the income, as can be seen from the charts below. I anticipate income and expenditure to come back into balance by the end of the financial year. We hold in tension the needs of our internal running costs against the need to be

outward looking. This year to date we have made donations and collections totalling just over £10,000. In the last two and a half years we have given just under £41,000 in collections and donations.

We will continue to face the challenge of an increasing circuit assessment as we are likely to continue to be the Church with the largest income. It is our circuit assessment which funds the ministers, their accommodation and other circuit staff, and we must note that we benefit from a significant proportion of Gail & David's time. Alongside our assessment we also need to fund our mission in the community and continue to provide opportunities to bring people to Christ. We therefore need to remain diligent in our giving and fundraising activities.

I would once again like to take this opportunity to thank all those involved in looking after 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 as treasurer of Noah' s Ark; Alan Middleton who looks after the Bridge takings and all those who count the money week by week or are involved in looking after funds for our internal groups. My special thanks go to Harry Murray who does a great job banking all the cash week in week out.

Summary of Income & Expenditure to date



Bill Rodham
Treasurer
30th March 2017

Church Council Membership & Managing Trustees April 2017

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 Val Coapes
Property Secretary	Mrs Eleanor Borkett

Leadership Team

Mrs Libby Cook (2017)
Mr Mike Hughes (2013)
Mr Simon Pringle (2013)
Mr Bill Rodham (2013)
Miss Sue Walkington (2015)
Mrs Sue Whalley (2013)
Mrs Sharon Wright (2013)

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

Mr Michael Borkett (2015)
Mrs Celia Booth (Worship Steward, 2016)
Deacon Ian Cooper (2017)
Mr Marc Greenwood (2016)
Mrs Joan Greig (2014)
Mrs Betty Hughes (Worship Steward, 2016)
Mrs Margaret Lancefield (2013)
Mr David Rochester (2016)
Mrs Dorothy Rodham (2016)
Mr Paul Skeels (2014)
Mr Tim Webster (2014)
(4 vacancies)

Church Council Appointed *(max 15)*

Alpha	TBA
CAMEO	Mrs Janet Smith
The Bridge	Mrs Lynne Bullock
Grapevine	Mrs Hilary Hughes
Lunch Link	Mrs Pauline Murray
Men's Breakfast	Mr Alan Middleton
Mission Team	Rev Peter Whittaker
Noah's Ark	Mrs Doreen Whittaker Mrs Vickie Wrigglesworth
Playbox	Mrs Vicki Taylor
Sunday Club Coordinator	Mrs Rachel Watson
Contact Steward	Mrs Jeanette Mowat
Task Force	Mr Alan Shankster
Tuesday Fellowship	Mrs Vonni Wilkins
Youth Group	Miss Poppy Winks

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