



# ANNUAL REPORT 2018



**GRACIOUS STREET  
METHODIST CHURCH  
KNARESBOROUGH**

**2018**

**The Annual Report  
of  
Gracious Street Methodist Church (Knaresborough)  
Published March 2018**

Registered name:	Gracious Street Methodist Church
Registered Charity Number:	1133967
Address:	Gracious Street, Knaresborough, HG5 8DS
Telephone:	01423 860166
Email address:	knmethodist@btconnect.com
Website:	<a href="https://graciousstreetmethodist.org.uk">https://graciousstreetmethodist.org.uk</a>

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

Rev Gail Hunt

Tel: 01423 863298

Email: revgailhunt@yahoo.co.uk

Deacon David Hunt

Tel: 01423 861553

Email: deaondavidhunt@yahoo.com

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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
- 

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,

2017 was the start of a transitional time in the life of Gracious Street Methodist Church. In November a new minister, Rev Gordon Hay, was invited to succeed us. In the Methodist Church ministers have always been itinerant, and after ten years here at Gracious Street both of us felt it was the right time to move on, as hard as that will be.

This annual report gives us all the opportunity to look back over what we have been doing together in Christ's name over the last twelve months and to look forward to where He might be leading us next. The life and ministry of the church can only happen when each person responds to the call of God on their lives and plays their part in His mission. For some, this may be serving coffee, or offering a listening ear; for others, it may be using their administrative or business skills; while for others, it may be responding to the call to work with children or young people; or it may simply be to say "Here I am Lord, use me in whatever way you wish." There are many different ways in which people can respond and we all have a part to play. There is something wonderful about seeing the people of God working together.

During the last year the Leadership Team has worked hard on developing both the Communications Strategy and the Mission Development Plan. These are both vital as we think about how we serve present and future generations and enable others to hear the message of the Good News.

As you take time to look through this report, we encourage you to reflect on all that happens in the life of this church and notice how many people are able to contribute in such a variety of ways. It is also an opportunity to think about your own journey of faith and where God might be leading you.

It has been a privilege to have served as your ministers. We recognise the many changes and challenges we have experienced and engaged in on our journey together. As our path now *leaves* yours, we continue to hold you all in our prayers and pray God's blessing upon Gordon as his path *joins* yours.

Shalom

*Rev Gail & Deacon David*

## WORSHIP

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

### STEWARDS TEAM

Our team of stewards work well together to prepare the church for worship and look after anyone (and everyone) coming to the services. Our aim is to give a warm welcome and help with the smooth running week by week.

We were pleased that Christine Baker joined the team as a worship steward and Carol Squires and Keith Hunter as welcome stewards. Their help is much appreciated but we are always open to new recruits should you feel you would like to offer your talents. Brenda Paul has the unenviable task of preparing the rota each quarter. Our thanks go to her and to all the stewards who 'step in' at the last minute to help out in emergencies or at busy times.

This year we must especially thank Gail and David for the way they have led and encouraged all in these roles. Our best wishes go with them as they move on to new appointments and we continue to maintain the friendly approach for which Gracious Street is so well known.

*Jeanette Mowat*

### CONSULTATION ON WORSHIP

A high priority is put on the importance of worship here in this church and we enjoy a rich variety of music and styles of worship. Numbers attending the 'Connect' services on the last Sunday of each month have grown, and many people appreciate this alternative style. The Worship Consultation both affirms and encourages the participation of the Worship Group, Family Band and the G.Street Band.

Many of our worship leaders are now undertaking the new Worship Leaders Course. The Consultation was unanimous that to maintain continuity in worship styles, these people should be used to lead on the occasions when our own preachers are not planned. We are also delighted that Sue Whalley has responded to a call to preach and has now started her training as a local preacher.

The use of inclusive and accessible language has been adopted and we ask both worship leaders and preachers to use the Today's New International Version of the Bible and lead with the modern Lord's Prayer. (However, we stress that if people feel more comfortable in worship saying the traditional form of the Lord's Prayer, they should feel free to do so).

The All Together Worship Team continues to lead our services once a month in a creative and accessible way and is very much appreciated.

The Consultation reviewed and affirmed our current policy of 'all learning together' and as a church we will continue to ask preachers to use the 'Roots' material on a Sunday morning. Our evening worship adopts a variety of styles and themes.

*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 minister's 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 ensuring 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 meetings, small groups and other groups among the Church family. This 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 31<sup>st</sup> October 2017 (the period in which Methodist Church membership figures are collated) was 193 full members and over 400 (adults and children) on the community pastoral role.

The additional small team, which was created last year, has been focusing on those who have specific needs and are no longer able to worship with us on a regular basis.

The pastoral team will continue during the coming year to look at ways they can carry on offering effective pastoral care, both here at Gracious Street and in the community.

*Rev Gail Hunt*

*Pastoral Secretary: Mrs Nita Ayrton*

### FLOWER TEAM

Gracious Street has a very talented team of flower arrangers and flower distributors. The Gracious Street fellowship is very generous in their donation of flowers/money. The flowers are primarily to enhance our worship and then they are distributed to members of the fellowship, taking the love and prayers of the people in church.

I would like to thank all the members of the flower team for their work; and if anyone is interested in arranging/distributing flowers, they will be very welcome to join the team (contact Rachel on 866323).

*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.

The Methodist Church approved a new Safeguarding Policy implemented in April 2017. It is a thorough and lengthy document bringing about some changes to safeguarding children and vulnerable adults within the Methodist Church. The policy is available online on the Methodist Church website. One paper copy of the policy will be kept in the office for reference purposes only.

There have been several Foundation and Refresher Courses held across the circuit since the last Church Council; they have been well attended and feedback good. I am happy to report that we have completed almost all the outstanding training for volunteers at Gracious Street to date including the new volunteers helping with Messy Church.

Please can you contact Chris Rawson or Val Coapes when you have a new volunteer join your group so we can carry out the necessary training and complete the checks required as soon as possible. I thank you all for your ongoing co-operation.

Following a circuit Safeguarding meeting on 18<sup>th</sup> January 2018 further training dates have been agreed as follows: 10<sup>th</sup> March, Refresher Course at Gracious Street 10am; 20<sup>th</sup> March, Foundation Course at Woodlands 7pm; 6<sup>th</sup> June Refresher Course at Bilton 7pm; 12<sup>th</sup> September Refresher Course at Killinghall 7pm; 4<sup>th</sup> October Foundation Course at Trinity 7pm, 17<sup>th</sup> November Refresher Course at Gracious Street 10am.

**DBS – Disclosure and Barring Service** As from 17<sup>th</sup> November 2017 the Methodist Church is using DDC (Due Diligence Checking). We no longer submit paper applications – DBS are completed online and sent electronically to DDC for checking. The new system is quicker and more 'user friendly'.

*Val Coapes and Chris Rawson  
Safeguarding Officers*

## **GRAPEVINE**

Thanks to all the team: Hazel, Jeanette and Brian (& me!) for all their hard work – editing, compiling and researching for the Grapevine. Thanks too to all the 'regulars' who commit to providing articles, reports and useful information. Gail – in particular we would like to thank you for your support and the thought-provoking letters you have written over the years.

This year there have been plenty of events and topics of interest to include eg the CAKE & CUPPA

event, and we promise to be more forward-looking in this regard. **However**, many times we are scratching around for copy from others rather than pieces from ourselves and this is an **ongoing challenge and issue**. We ask people and groups for possible short articles and even offer to help/interview but seldom have responses. We will try and feature more from the User Groups as we go along this year.

**How much of GV is on the website?** (currently nothing as at 13.3.18) or should be on the website? (Especially if it is part of our 'PULL' strategy? Are we promoting the GV enough among user groups? The DEC/JAN and JULY/AUG changes have been approved of generally.

When sending articles, PLEASE use the **formatting requested** in the front of the magazine.

We shall review the effectiveness and purpose of the magazine in the future, I am sure, and value prayers in this regard

THANKS.

*Hilary Hughes (on behalf of the GV Team)*

### **COGS CREATIVE WRITERS**

◆ Cogs Creative Writers are so pleased at the response to their latest production, A JOURNEY THROUGH ADVENT, which was used in December 2017 as a prayer resource for church members, the local community and beyond ... even around the world! This book began as a challenge from our minister Gail, and we took this up over the summer, working hard at (mostly) new material, matching scriptures to the pieces we had written and composing suitable short prayers also. Our collection was then edited and ready to go to print in November so that as many as possible could use the resource during Advent. Alongside this, Sue Whalley undertook to set up prayer stations around the church worship space, each one based on a poem or piece from the book. These interactive displays were used during the Christmas Fair weekend, as a Circuit Prayer Day resource and by individuals and groups throughout a two-week period. We know that God spoke to people through these Advent readings and prayers; we gave the opportunity for people to share how God has been speaking to them in the last GRAPEVINE and also in the February Connect service. Two of the main themes were: DO NOT BE AFRAID and BE READY!

◆ Writing as an expressive art form has a significant place in each of our hearts and lives; we are motivated by events, personal experiences, Bible verses or books, people, places and a thousand other sources. Writing can be therapeutic and can help us clarify our thinking. It is also a gift to share and we have been privileged to do this. Our work always benefits from being read aloud and we seek opportunities for this to happen.

◆ All of us have been busy writing this year, and some of the pieces we have worked on will be used on Palm Sunday evening and also during Holy Week. It is great how we each have different styles.

◆ As writers this is a humbling experience. We do not consider ourselves holy or special in regards to our work, but we do recognise that each is unique in our Christian journey, our age, our stage of life, our successes and failures.

◆ We want to record our deep gratitude to Gail and David, Gail especially, for their endorsement, encouragement and challenge to us as we have pursued this ministry. We value prayers for us as we write also, that we may hear God' s voice, that we encourage one another and that we can take our writing to a wider audience.

*Hilary Hughes on behalf of COGS CREATIVE WRITERS:*

*Hilary Hughes, Christine Baker, Sue Walkington, Jenny Velez-Colby, Sue Whalley and Elizabeth Ali*

### SUNDAY CLUB

Sunday Club has continued throughout the past year with a dedicated team of leaders and helpers. The number of children continues to fluctuate from Sunday to Sunday but there is always a warm welcome for those who attend.

Liz Rochester is now the Sunday Club Co-ordinator as I have stepped down from the post. I would like to take this opportunity to say "thank you" to the Sunday Club team for their support during the past years and "thank you" to the Gracious Street fellowship for the card and picture.

*Rachel Watson ( Sunday Club Coordinator to January 2018)*

### MESSY CHURCH

Over the last couple of years we have made contact with and had the opportunity to build relationships with a large number of families through WLTD0, Family Film Nights and Thula Mama as well as the ongoing work of Playbox and Noah's Ark. Most of these families don't come to church on a Sunday but they feel comfortable and welcome here at Gracious Street, so it seemed like a fantastic opportunity to share God's love with them through starting Messy Church.

Messy Church is a way of being church for families based on creativity, hospitality and celebration – a time for all ages to have fun and learn together. A Messy Church session includes a creative time to explore the Biblical theme through making things and getting messy, a short celebration with story, prayer and songs and sharing a simple meal together.

**Its aim is to introduce Jesus, to give an opportunity to encounter Him and discover more about the Christian faith.**

So, after much planning, preparation and prayer the day of the first Messy Church at Gracious Street arrived on Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> January. We had a great team of leaders; the crafts were prepared and the pizzas ready to pop into the oven - but, how many people would come? We were amazed to welcome around 130 people and afterwards we were delighted to hear from so many families about how much

they had enjoyed the afternoon and were looking forward to the next Messy Church.

Messy Church takes place on the third Saturday of the month from 4.30pm to 6pm and we are now preparing for the third session and hoping to build on such an encouraging start. Many thanks to our brilliant Messy Church team.

*Libby Cook*

### **gsYOUth\* (Youth Fellowship)**

- gsYOUth\* is a well-established, Sunday evening 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. Beside this, they all have a chance to relax together, socialise with one another and just take time to themselves.
- In the last year we have focused on a lot of different topics. We have used films (Beauty & the Beast and Moana) and music (Stormzy & Ed Sheeran) to think about our faith in different ways. We have talked about relationships, money, mental health and other faiths. We have followed planned sessions for Christmas (Children's & Youthwork Magazine) and Lent (40 acts).
- We have also taken time to reflect on our world and the Methodist Church. For a few weeks we worked on going through the produced 3Generate Manifestos. This gave us a chance to talk about a variety of different topics including extremism and the refugee crisis, and how the Church, globally and locally, responds to it.
- In January we had our Circuit Youth Worship at Gracious Street. We had an amazing turnout (around eight people); we focused on the Covenant Prayer and what it means to live it out. It was brilliant to see gsYOUth\* and the congregation together. It was also brilliant to have the Gracious Street worship band with us, leading worship alongside Starbeck's worship band.
- Our young people have also had the opportunity to go to Contemporary Carols in Leeds and to see Rend Collective in Huddersfield.
- Since last year our volunteer bank has decreased again. We had two volunteers who consistently give their time and I am eternally grateful. However, having only a team of two, we did not have much wiggle room in terms of safeguarding.
- For a number of months now the young people attending gsYOUth\* have been getting less and less; however TOGS has sustained their numbers. Therefore, recognising our limited resources, we have decided to close the evening group with effect from Easter. In the coming months we will be exploring, with our morning group, the best way forward to develop our youth work in a new way.

*Poppy Winks*

## NOAH'S ARK PRE-SCHOOL

Noah's Ark, our pre-school, is an important part of our work and witness. Children were so special to Jesus. We cherish and encourage them and their families. We offer those vital early steps in education in a caring environment. We reach out to our families offering them the opportunity to "taste and see" the Christian story.

We have 36 children on the roll, ten of whom are with us for the full day. From September 2018 the fee for a session will be £5.20. This is an increase to meet rising costs. The fee level is to be reviewed each January for implementation in the September at the beginning of the new academic year. We have 27 children on the waiting list for 2018/19.

Parents and friends of Noah's Ark are very successful at raising funds for extra equipment to be used by the children. As they do this, they relax, build friendships and have fun together.

We are planning both Easter and Christmas worship for staff and children along with encouraging attendance at Messy Church. This enables our youngest children and their families to encounter the Christian faith on our premises.

The staff were included in the dedication service for those who work with children and young people last September and at their request that will continue.

*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. We try to let parents know about other events in church as much as possible and families from Playbox have attended Film Nights, Messy Church, Noah's Ark, WLTD0 as well as services at special times and supporting coffee mornings and fundraisers. We have had several families going through difficult times this year and it has been lovely to be able to give flowers from the church and we thank the Flower Team for that. These times have also been a chance to talk about the power of prayers and parents have spoken about praying for each other.

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; menus are available during our session so that parents can order meals to be ready when Playbox finishes.

In the future we would, like last year, like to get more people to help make drinks at snack time and to encourage the parents and grandparents using Playbox to feel welcome and part of the church family. 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 theme park for the Rollercoaster Easter Club when we looked at the ups and downs of the life of Joseph. The aim was to introduce the children to a loving God who is always with us through the ups and downs of our own lives. As always 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.

At the time of writing, it is all about to happen again! This year's Easter club coincides with the Commonwealth Games and so the church will be transformed into a sports stadium for 'Get Set GO'. Our memory verse will be 'Let us run the race before us and never give up. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus' (Hebrews 12: 1-2) as we look at the life of Paul.

*Libby Cook*

### **CAMEO**

CAMEO (Come and Meet Each Other) is a fortnightly group on Mondays in the Manor Room at 7pm during our session from September until June. The meetings are open to anyone and if any one meeting appeals to you, then you will be made welcome.

The programme is very varied – music from Gordon, Malcolm with his friends Terry and Christine; travels in Sri Lanka, Falklands, Azores and Israel. We also have had a display of waistcoats and thimbles as well as talks about PAFRAS and a female vicar's experiences in the Middle East. Nearer home we have learned about the Aspin Pond and we look forward to talks on Fountains Abbey and Bebra Gardens as well as an update on our friend Lam. Alan will discuss his favourite hymns and Bible passages and Rev Gail will talk to us in the last month before she leaves and goes on her sabbatical.

Throughout the year we have also had several purely social events.

*Janet Smith*

### **MEN'S BREAKFAST**

Attendances at our meetings on the first Saturday of each month continued to stay high at an average of eighteen, including some new members. Sadly, with the death of Peter Raisbeck recently, we lost one of our founder members, who was also a regular speaker at our meetings.

A wide variety of interesting subjects was covered during the year and several new speakers were added to our list. Of course, the full English breakfast always got us off to an excellent start.

The popular biennial Women's Breakfast was held in October with Esther Swaffield, from the International Justice Mission UK, as an inspirational guest speaker. As usual this event was very well attended and a substantial contribution made to several charities as a result.

*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. Our group is now a little smaller, but we continue 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. We would welcome anyone new who would like to join us.

*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**

Alpha Plus meets each month on a Monday evening in different members' homes. There are eleven of us in the group and usually about 8-10 attend. We share in a variety of studies and support each other as much as we can.

In the autumn we studied James, the appointed book for Bible Month, and found the practical teaching on living the Christian life very helpful. We have enjoyed having speakers for some of our sessions this year rather than leading all our own studies. Peter Whittaker and Brian Hoare led sessions around the time of Pentecost and Brian also led an evening prior to the Covenant Service. In February Alan shared his favourite Bible verses with the group and in April Sharon will lead a session on 'Calling' as part of her Worship Leaders' Course. We will go as a group to the Monday Holy Week Service – meeting for hot cross buns afterwards! We enjoy occasional meals out and outings and have recently been to see one of our members, Tony Wade, perform in the Bishop Monkton pantomime 'Cinderella'. Some of us will join in an evening session at the first Spring Harvest to be held at the Convention Centre in Harrogate.

We plan to continue our studies and the social life of our group, encouraging each other to deepen our Christian faith.

*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. We enjoy a time of fellowship, study and prayer and also have regular social events including a lovely meal at The Dower House at the beginning of the year.

During the autumn we studied the Letter from James following on from the focus on James in church over the summer. During Lent we try and meet weekly and are studying a very interesting Lent Course based around the familiar hymn 'There is a green hill far away' by Cecil Frances Alexander.

*Libby Cook*

### **Learning Curve Home Group**

Nine of us have met monthly to complete the Bible Course seeing how the key events, books and characters all fit together. During the year we have enjoyed meeting socially on three very special occasions.

*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 supper social. 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](mailto:sue.whalley@gmail.com)*

### **Open Doors Home Group**

We were pleased to welcome Margaret Lancefield to our group in 2017. We continue to meet monthly with a regular attendance of 10-14, and a pastoral responsibility for a further three people.

Singing praise to God at the start of every meeting has continued with members now choosing some of their favourites. The cornerstone of our study in 2017 was the Book of Romans which challenged and inspired us for the vast majority of the year. One of our highlights was welcoming Colin Lake to lead us in our study of Chapter 5 of Romans in May. In July we enjoyed a meal out at The Ugly Duckling restaurant with sixteen people attending.

We had a brief break from Romans in August when we enjoyed discussing our favourite Bible verses and the most popular hymns/worship songs. We have recently started a new series on "Women in the Old Testament" and later we intend to explore the "Talking Jesus" resource.

*Alan Middleton*

### **Charlie's Angels Home Group**

Our home group comprises eleven members all of whom attend our monthly meetings as regularly as they are able. We meet by turn in 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 have an annual New Year meal together as well as an informal summer barbecue or other event. We greatly value the fellowship we share together.

We are currently studying a series entitled 'Transformed Living' based on the Epistle to the Ephesians which will take us through to the summer. The group also organised another film evening at church to mark the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Reformation, showing a DVD about Martin Luther, an event which was again well supported.

*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 place is full and joyfully noisy. Families relaxing together and busily engaged making things. This is Messy Church. A little girl is enjoying helping to make a fishing net. She wants to know why Jesus had fishermen who worked with him. "Was that the baby Jesus?" she asks. "Did he grow up?" We pass on the story. That's mission.

The high visibility jackets are removed as people gather in The Bridge around tables that have been pushed together. All must be included. "Staying Steady Strollers" walking for health have returned to The Bridge and now they chat, laugh, relax. We offer hospitality and encourage wellbeing. That's mission.

Just two examples of the regular work and witness of our Church. Two points of entry to this place of worship, where the story of Jesus is told. Where through our mission the love of God is offered.

Then we offer so many special events, with or without Radio York! Reaching out to all ages in our community. The God of Mission has a Church and we are one of its branches.

*Peter Whittaker*

### FAMILY EVENTS

#### Family Film Nights

Family film nights continue to be very popular with around 100 people attending each time. The aim is 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. This year we have watched 'The Jungle Book', 'The Boss Baby', 'Frozen', 'Sing' and 'Trolls'. 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 donation box which more than covers our costs.

*Libby Cook*

#### Who Let the Dads Out? (WLTD0)

WLTD0 at Gracious Street is now well into its second year with meetings on the second Saturday of each month from 10am to 11.30am for dads/grandads/male carers and their pre-school children. It 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. Refreshments are served including bacon butties which are much appreciated

by the dads! Meanwhile mums have an opportunity to relax or do the shopping in peace while the dads take over! There are usually about ten dads plus children at each session with more than that on the register.

There is a lively atmosphere and new friendships are being made. It is really encouraging to see several of the dads coming with their families to Messy Church.

*Libby Cook and Liz Rochester*

### **Thula Mama**

Thula Mama is a weekly informal singing group for mums and their babes-in-arms. It takes place in the Forest Room where everyone can feel comfortable and enjoy tea and homemade cakes and a chat before learning and singing beautiful songs and lullabies from around the world in a-cappella harmony. The group is now in its second year and continues to prove popular with ten to twelve mums and their babies attending each week. The group provides mutual support and many new friendships have begun. At Christmas the group enjoyed sharing their uplifting music by singing at the Christmas Tree Festival at St John's and also after the Noah's Ark Nativity play in church.

The 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](http://www.thulamama.co.uk) for more information.

*Jenny Cook*

### **ALL WE CAN**

During the past year we have continued to support the vital work of All We Can as a Partner Church. The focus for the Partner Church scheme has been a community in Zimbabwe, where All We Can has been helping to develop incomes for families who are struggling to access food, education and healthcare. Next year the focus will be on improving irrigation for rural farmers in Malawi by using solar energy to pump water – details to follow ....

In our Harvest service we used some of the All We Can resources and many in our congregation used their "Keep it simple" booklet as part of their own Lent devotions. At Christmas we were invited to buy "Extraordinary gifts", practical presents which help some of the world's poorest communities.

We were pleased to welcome Tim Baker, grandson of Christine and the All We Can Churches and Volunteer Officer, to lead our worship during Lent. It was helpful to be able to watch a video about the community in Zimbabwe supported under the Partner Church scheme, as we were able to see the difference this support makes.

I have continued in my role as a Volunteer Speaker for All We Can and have spoken at a Circuit Meeting, at Pannal Methodist Church's Mission Sunday and at Alwoodley Methodist Church's Harvest service.

Rachel Watson has kindly been donating proceeds from the sale of her handmade cards to All We Can. Since 1<sup>st</sup> September 2017 we have given £2,603 to All We Can, made up of collections and a church donation.

*Sharon Wright*

### **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 3 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. There has been no formal follow-on this year as our numbers were small but we continue to support each other in fellowship on Sundays and at other times and it is hoped that some guests will be able to continue in fellowship within various different home groups and continue to meet regularly.

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

*Sue Whalley, Alan Middleton, Sue Lightfoot*

### **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. A new group is our 'Silver Bowlers' – an indoor bowls group which takes place on Mondays 11-12.

Our aim is to build more links into the community, explore more faith sharing ideas and build on what we have. A recent visit by Radio York with their 'Cake and Cuppa' feature put us well and truly on the map with over 300 visitors on the day! 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 – STAYING STEADY STROLLERS**

The Thursday walking group 'Staying Steady Strollers' is now run with support from 'Walking for Health' rather than AgeUK but continues to provide a valuable weekly leisure activity for seniors. The walks take place each Thursday at 10.30am starting and finishing at The Bridge. This is a very friendly and sociable group of about 15-20 older people. The walks are 30-40 minutes on the flat around the Castle Top, swimming pool, Crag Lane etc. The walks are free and are designed to help folk stay or become more mobile and to provide company and social contact. They are a valuable link between the church and the community. New walkers and helpers are always welcome. Full details for both groups from Brian and Joyce Hoare (860750).

*Joyce Hoare*

### **SILVER BOWLERS**

The Silver Bowlers group has now been running for well over a year, having been started as a partnership between our church and AgeUK to provide another leisure activity for senior citizens. Recently, however, AgeUK have had to draw back from their involvement and it is now run by the church as part of our community outreach attracting both church and non-church participants. The group meets every Monday morning from 11am to 12noon and usually comprises between eight and twelve people, both men and women – though there would be about twenty of us if everyone came at the same time.

We play both carpet bowls and 'street bowls' – shaped like traditional bowls, but much lighter and made from a rubber compound so that they can be played on any surface. There is always lots of hilarity as the inbuilt bias in these bowls is complemented by the rather uneven surface of the Castle Hall's floor! Real friendships have been forged and often members of the group stay on to enjoy lunch in The Bridge after the session. Silver Bowlers is open to anyone (in the 'silver' age group!) and we would encourage you to come and give it a try on any Monday morning.

*Brian and Joyce Hoare*

## **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!

I am taking a sabbatical from the organisation of the walks but it is hoped that it will continue in some way with others getting involved to share the planning – so watch this space! I am happy to continue as a contact and put folk in touch with the appropriate people.

Our aim is to continue the walks in whatever way we are able.

*More information from Sue Whalley 862252 or [sue.whalley@gmail.com](mailto:sue.whalley@gmail.com).*

## **LEADERSHIP, PROPERTY & FINANCE**

### **MANAGEMENT TEAM**

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.

We are grateful to David Simpson, who joined the team this year, for the work he has done to bring our risk assessments up-to-date. David has also done this for Kearby & Kirk Hammerton. The next step is to do activity risk assessments for each of our groups. David will be contacting group leaders in the coming weeks to run through this for our various groups.

Key activities completed this year were an annual "deep" clean during the summer, including some redecoration, as well as general repairs. 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 (do not assume someone else will do it!) 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.

We would also be pleased to welcome one or two more people on to 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**

The challenging message from the Methodist Conference in June 2017, that the Methodist Church is facing a decline in numbers, has shaped much of the thinking of the Leadership Team this year, along with the Communications Strategy adopted by the Church Council. This evolving strategy is directly informed by our mission, which is to create opportunities to bring people into a relationship with Christ and to develop discipleship.

In June we launched our new website, <https://graciousstreetmethodist.org.uk> which better reflects our church life and will be used as one of our tools for mission. It was so encouraging to hear that someone from Radio York, who was organising the recent cake and cuppa event, said 'When I looked at your website I knew it was the right kind of place.'

As we prepared for the launch of Messy Church, a video produced to promote it was viewed over 1,000 times on Facebook! This highlights the importance of communicating with our local community in relevant and sometimes new ways. We are going to be developing new ways of communicating – including more videos and social media – not instead of, but alongside traditional media - to support our mission in the community.

Everything that comes from us needs to reinforce our message and mission. In terms of traditional media, we are working on the creation of templates for posters and printed communication so that the visual identity of Gracious Street Methodist Church is consistent.

Whilst the appointment of our minister from September 2018, Rev Gordon Hay, is a circuit appointment, the Leadership Team has had an input into this important process. As Gail and David prepare to start their Sabbatical at the end of April, before taking up their new appointments in September, we have been working closely with them to ensure a smooth transition.

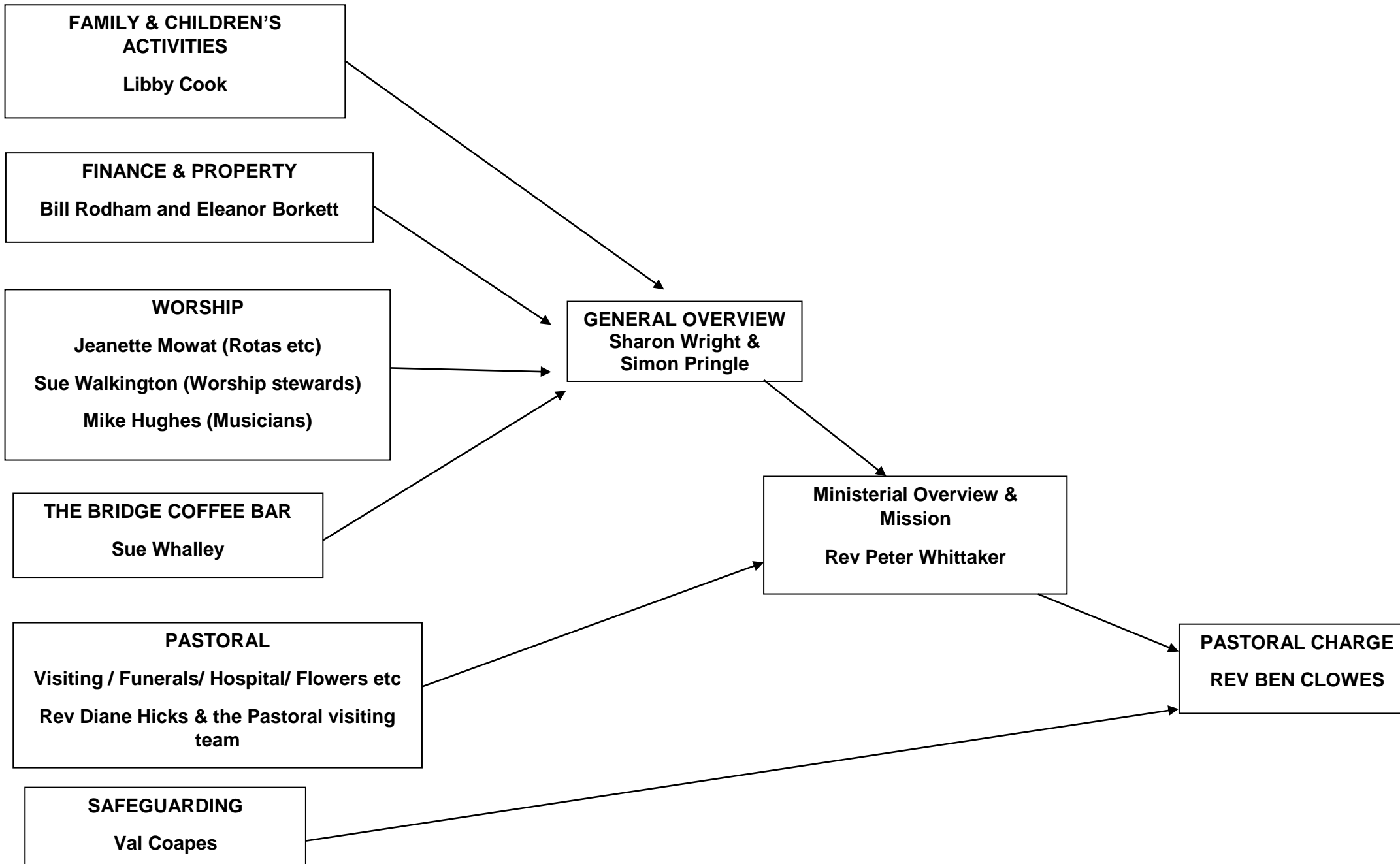
*Sharon Wright*

*On behalf of the Leadership Team*



Please see the separate PDF attachment for pages 23 and 24 – 2020Plus Circuit Report, which will be discussed at the Annual Meeting.

# LINES OF RESPONSIBILITY FOR MAY, JUNE, JULY & AUGUST 2018



## TASK FORCE

Our eleventh year of existence presented a similar picture to the previous ten. Whilst the majority of the building is in good shape, maintenance work is still required to prevent deterioration and preserve its character. Examples of upkeep are:- replacement of light bulbs and starters, looking after clocks, fixing loose skirtings and carpets, provision of coat hooks, stripping and painting a donated bench, mending the 'OPEN' sign, mending broken chairs, refixing acoustic tiles, repair of Noah's Ark gate and rainwater pipes, repairing and oiling door locks and stops, descaling coffee machines, replacement of soap dispensers, adjusting kitchen cupboard doors, refitting of staircase nosings and installation of a notice board.

There are frequently some items needing attention but the team do need to be made aware of any defects. Please continue to use the register in the Church porch to record these faults.

*Alan Shankster*

## FINANCE 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 30<sup>th</sup> March 2018 are as follows:

Yorkshire Bank	£6,913
Yorkshire Bank (COGS Account)	£501
Trustees for Methodist Purposes	£868
Central Finance Board	£61,287
<b>Total Funds</b>	<b>£69,569</b>

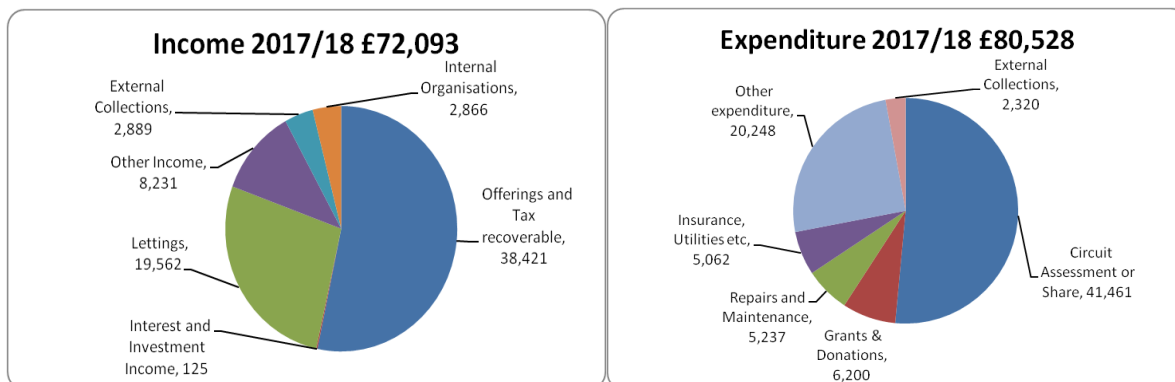
Generally our income and expenditure remain in step, but the recent payment of our quarterly assessment to the circuit means that expenditure to date is slightly ahead of the income, as can be seen from the charts below. I anticipate income and expenditure to come back into balance by the end of the 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 £8,500.

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, as well as paying for the services provided by the District. We have been fortunate as a circuit to be successful through the stationing process in replacing Gail, and, as we say farewell to Gail and David, we look forward to welcoming Gordon Hay and his family in September. It is therefore vital that we are able to pay our assessment in order to receive the benefits

of a minister and other circuit and district services. Alongside our assessment we also need to fund our mission in the community and continue to provide opportunities to bring people to Christ. In January the Church Council unanimously agreed our communications strategy and to focus on the twin themes of "First Contact" and "Faith in Action" . We will need to ensure that the financial resources are in place to support the strategy. 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 – I would remind people that if you are a UK tax payer the Church can reclaim the tax on your offerings; John Cook who has this year taken over from Michael Borkett as treasurer of Noah' s Ark – thanks to Michael for many years of service in this capacity; 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.

**Summary of Income & Expenditure to date**



**Bill Rodham**  
**Treasurer**  
**30th March 2018**

## **Church Council Membership & Managing Trustees at March 2018**

### **Office Holders**

The Superintendent	Rev Ben Clowes
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 Nita Ayrton
Safeguarding Adviser	Mrs Val Coapes
Property Secretary	Mrs Eleanor Borkett
Health & Safety Officer	Mr David Simpson

### **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)*

Mrs Christine Baker (Worship Steward 2017)  
Mr Michael Borkett (2015)  
Mrs Celia Booth (Worship Steward, 2016)  
Mr John Cook (2017)  
Ms Anna Cooley (Worship Steward 2017)  
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)  
Mr James Wright (2017)

### **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	Ms Poppy Winks

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