



Annual Report 2019





'Your church for your whole week'

**The Annual Report
of
Gracious Street Methodist Church (Knaresborough)
Published March 2019**

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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
-

MINISTER:	Rev Gordon Hay	863298
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 David Rochester	865816
	Mr Bill Rodham (Treasurer)	865846
	Miss Sue Walkington	547086
	Mrs Sue Whalley	862252
	Mr James Wright	869588

MINISTER'S REFLECTIONS

Dear Friends,

I have been part of the community at Gracious Street for seven months. My overriding expression is of humbleness and gratitude. I give thanks for the ministry of Gail and David that has enriched the church. I am also thankful for each person who is part of Gracious Street. It is self-evident with all that happens at Gracious Street that many people have given up their time and money to ensure we are a flourishing Christian community. This is reflected in a statement that has emerged from the Leadership Team: "Your church for your whole week." We are a community that is open and vibrant each day of the week. Yet the word that is most significant to me is "your" because Gracious Street is not my church but our church; though theologically speaking Gracious Street is actually God's church.

Whilst we are a community that is connected to God and one another we are also connected with our past. John Wesley, founder of Methodism, wrote in a pamphlet: "A Methodist is one who has the love of God shed abroad in his heart.....and they accordingly love their neighbour as themselves: they love every person as their own soul. Their heart is full of love to all mankind." Whilst this is a Methodist character this is also the character of a Christian.

It was the pursuit of this characteristic that gathered people together in order to grow in love and then go back into the world. These early Methodists were an influence in prison reform, abolition of slavery and caring for the most vulnerable in society. In more recent years this activity of gathering and going has been phrased through the language of "A discipleship movement shaped for mission." We are not to be static but a movement, something fluid, that changes shape in order to help us grow in love and live love in the world.

Over the years Gracious Street has made significant changes that have enabled the community to flourish. One of these changes was the development of The Bridge. It opened ten years ago and has been a great success. While we need to celebrate a decade of success we also need to consider how The Bridge can continue to be successful in the years to come.

At the same time there are a number of people who have given of themselves but now wish to stand down from their current roles. So I am aware there are a number of roles that are or will become vacant within a short period of time.

For these and other reasons the church has invariably been in a time of reflection where we are considering the life of Gracious Street. In this reflection we need to remember the character of a

Christian to ensure we stay true to God's mission and consider how we live this character in a way that continues to be relevant for today. The outcome of this reflection will come from discerning the spirit of God within the church because we are in it together.

I would like to end on a personal note. My family and I love life in Knaresborough. We are also delighted to be part of Gracious Street and the wider Nidd Valley Circuit. We thank you for your welcome. It has been gratefully received.

Peace

Rev Gordon Hay

WORSHIP

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

STEWARDS TEAM

It has been an interesting and lively year for the stewards with some busy services, each with a full church. The team worked well together to ensure that Gail and David's leaving service, Gordon Hay's welcome service and the Christmas services all went smoothly and safely. Week by week the stewards ensure that the church is open and ready for preacher and congregation. Without their commitment and willingness to work together we would not have such a friendly and welcoming atmosphere.

During this last year we welcomed Anne Thickett and Aileen Jefferson to the team. We thank Christine Baker for all her hard work as she prepares to stand down as a Worship Steward. We must also thank Brenda Paul who creates the rota each quarter under increasingly difficult circumstances as there are fewer volunteers to be cashiers, welcome and worship stewards. The team is very good at covering for each other often at short notice. Our thanks also go to the dedicated team who operate the screen and sound desk. As with most tasks, more help is needed to spread the load. So, please consider whether you could offer help with one of these jobs and come and join our team.

Jeanette Mowat

CONSULTATION ON WORSHIP

Worship is essential. It creates space to experience God's love and respond to God. It can also motivate and inspire us to serve God in the world. It is equally self-evident that worship is significant at Gracious Street. Both the morning and evening services continue to be well-attended, including All Together Worship and Connect.

In recognition of the significance of worship I do apologise that I have not held a formal opportunity to consult on the worship of Gracious Street. May I reassure you that it is my intention to continue the practice of worship consultation. Nevertheless there have been conversations with musicians, worship leaders, local preachers and supernumeraries. What follows is a summary of these conversations.

We are committed to maintaining a blend of contemporary and traditional songs that creates a rich experience of worship. There is a recognition of the benefit of a group of singers leading the less familiar songs. Gracious Street is privileged with the depth of musicians and we have a desire to include people of varying ages and skills to be involved in the music. It has been expressed amongst the musicians that we need to consider succession planning.

We are equally blessed with those who have responded to the call to be worship leaders and Sue Whalley's journey to become a local preacher. Each one continues to enrich the life of the church. Those who are training to be worship leaders and local preachers have expressed some challenges with the new courses but these challenges are in the process of being resolved.

There has also been a recognition that those who operate the projector are equally involved in leading worship. This is a ministry in itself that enriches our worship.

If you have a desire to be involved in any way with our worship, please do speak to me or any of the worship stewards. Your willingness would be most welcome.

Some people have also articulated a desire for worship to focus on contemporary issues in order to help us think about our Christian journey in the world. At the same time the Imagine Project has been discussed as a means to help us think about our Christian journey in the world. This project originated from the London Institute of Contemporary Christianity and they have partnered with the Methodist Church.

Rev Gordon Hay

PRAYER AT GRACIOUS STREET

I recall hearing a few years ago at Methodist Conference that some people from Cuba prayed for revival of the church. Cuba is now one of the fastest growing Methodist churches around the world. Prayer should be the heartbeat of every church.

I am aware that many from our community take personal prayer seriously and people can testify to knowing that others have been praying for them.

Pause for Thought is an opportunity to gather at Gracious Street in order to pray for individual needs, church, society and the world. It offers a space that gives strength and encouragement to those who attend. Pause for Thought happens every Wednesday from 11.15 a.m.

We also have a Prayer Chain where prayers are circulated by telephone or email amongst those signed up to the Prayer Chain. If this is something in which you would like to participate or if you have a need for prayer, then please contact Alan Middleton or Joyce Hoare.

At the same time you will also 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 included into the prayers during our services. If you would rather not use the cards, requests may also be entered directly in the Prayer Book before worship on Sundays. Alternatively you may prefer someone to pray with you. There are a number of volunteers in The Bridge whom you can ask, or join in with Pause for Thought.

Rachel Watson has been working diligently in updating Gracious Street's Prayer Diary. This has been delayed due to requirements under the General Data Protection Register but will be available shortly. At the same time there is also the Methodist Prayer Handbook. This is a resource that offers prayers for the world and is a resource shared with people from all round the world.

Rev Gordon Hay

MUSIC IN WORSHIP

We continue to appreciate the input of Malcolm, Gordon, Brian and Mike as the main keyboard players for morning and evening services. Worship Group and Family Band have also enriched our worship especially for major celebrations and when a confident lead with new songs has been needed.

Worship Group meets weekly on Tuesdays at 8pm and includes an important element of prayer, Bible reading, song lyrics discussions etc rather than just learning new songs. The main focus of our ministry is to lead the church in sung worship when contemporary songs have been chosen. We have a particularly important role in Connect services (the last Sunday evening of each month.)

Family Band has focused mainly on playing at All Together Worship and special festivals; it is encouraging to hear how they have developed their skills over the year.

Looking forward:

We intend to continue using a variety of hymns/songs ranging from traditional to contemporary. We would like to introduce more recent contemporary songs (which tend to be sung in Connect services) to our morning congregation.

As far as instrumentalists are concerned, we are hoping to introduce the next generation of pianists to playing for part of the services – e.g. during the offertory, before or after a service. Also, over time, perhaps we can build up a large enough pool of instrumentalists to form a number of smaller bands so that the responsibility can be more widely spread.

We recognise the importance of getting more young instrumentalists involved in Family Band. Our youngest players are now at secondary school and progressing rapidly.

We could explore the possibility of having a core group of contemporary songs to draw on for a certain period e.g. two to three months. This would help the congregation to learn these songs more thoroughly and instrumentalists would only need to learn new songs at the beginning of the period.

Mike Hughes

LEARNING AND CARING

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

PASTORAL

No organisation, nor church, is more important than each individual. We are all equally important. In response Gracious Street aspires to be a community that welcomes and cares for all people.

While the minister will respond to pastoral needs, the church recognises it is the ministry of the whole people of God. For this reason pastoral care is also provided through a number of ways, such as pastoral visitors, home groups and the flower team. We also have a team supporting those who are housebound or in care homes. While they may be unable to attend services, they remain a vital part of our church. At the same time pastoral care is each person's responsibility. So we are to be a community that supports one another.

The pastoral committee meets with a specific focus of reviewing the pastoral needs of those in our community, appointing pastoral leaders and encouraging the practice of fellowship through home groups and other groups in our church.

Due to personal reasons Nita Ayrton has decided to step down from her role as pastoral secretary. We are grateful for all Nita has done on the committee. At the same time our prayers and support are with her. Currently the role of pastoral secretary is vacant.

The last time the committee met there was a fruitful discussion about the effectiveness of our pastoral care. One aspect the committee would like to develop is being a safe space where we can have confidence to be vulnerable with one another; to be honest about our struggles and doubts in regard to life and faith. The meeting also reinforced that we are a caring community but the size and structure of Gracious Street can create challenges. It was agreed that a small group will be formed to look at, explore and develop pastoral care. This is still on-going.

The church membership figures as of 31st October 2018 (the period in which Methodist church membership figures are collated) was 187 members and over (adults and children) on the community pastoral roll.

It is with great sadness I report that several people in our community have died this year. At the same time people within our community have suffered the loss of loved ones. Their death is a great loss to us all but we maintain our hope in Christ. Our prayers are with those in our community, as well as the friends and families of those who have lost loved ones.

Peace

Rev Gordon Hay

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 Methodist Church approved and updated the Safeguarding Policy in May 2018. Certain sections are subject to amendment in line with changes in law and in the Methodist Policy. The document will be 'updated' as and when such changes take place.

The Safeguarding Policy is a thorough and lengthy document bringing about some changes to safeguarding children and vulnerable adults within the Methodist Church. The Policy is available 'on-line' on the Methodist Church website. One paper copy of the policy will be kept in Gracious

Street Office for 'reference' only.

There will be further Foundation and Refresher Courses held during this year – dates to be arranged.

There is a NEW Advanced Safeguarding Course specially designed for all Local Preachers and Worship Leaders. The Advanced Module includes 'Essential Preparation' and a list of attendees has been drawn up and invites will be sent in due course. There will be a venue available locally due to the volume of people needing to attend in Harrogate.

We are looking to recruit Safeguarding Officers at Gracious Street. If you think you might like to join the team, then please get in touch with Rev Gordon Hay or Val Coapes for further details.

Please can you contact me 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 co-operation.

Val Coapes

Safeguarding Officer

COGS CREATIVE WRITERS

The Creative Writers continue to meet roughly bi-monthly to share, review and work on new projects, both personal and corporate.

There are so many styles involved: songwriting, muses, getting under the skin of Bible characters in monologue, haiku, humour and pathos, amongst others.

We enjoy writing for specific events or worship services too.

We are inspired by each other, our faith, our world – both nature, and aspects of current affairs; war and suffering, courage and determination, and the power of love and reconciliation.

After the success of the Advent book in 2017, last year we began compiling a Lent book, **CONSIDER JESUS**, which was released in February this year. The book follows events in the gospels and aspects of faith and life; it includes prayers and Bible references and Sunday reflections by various ministers, for which we are grateful. Material from the Lent book was also worked into two Connect services.

Some of us are studying Worship Leaders and Local Preachers courses and find scope and help here in our ability to write as an aid to worship. The writers also took part in the launch of Hilary's latest book, GASP, in January.

Writing can be good therapy, and 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.

We are always open to a challenge and are seldom short of ideas; time is important in all this, sometimes creative juices flow freely and easily, other times we yearn for the space to write; always we are thankful for the gift we have been given by God and continue to look for ways of serving Him and the world by what and how we write.

Gail and David were very encouraging in both using or quoting our work and commissioning new material. Gordon is also very aware of the creativity within the church and is eager to tap into it; we really appreciate this.

Encouragement is extremely important, so if you have enjoyed our work, or found a particular poem or prayer helpful, then please do let us know; thanks to all friends at Gracious St for the support you show. 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, indeed as we all are. And we seek to reflect that. We are ALL special to God.

Hilary, Jenny, Susan, Elizabeth and Susan

SUNDAY CLUB

Sunday Club (ages 3-10) and TOGS (ages 11+) meet during the Sunday morning service every week, apart from the second Sunday. Both groups are spaces where children can learn about God and develop their own faith in an age appropriate way. They are also an opportunity for adults to learn and be challenged by the children – young people tend to ask very honest questions!

Typically, the sessions begin with a time of welcome and sharing, then talking about/responding to a Bible story together. Activities include games, crafts, music, YouTube videos and role play – as well as times to be quiet (sometimes!). Just as adults have preferred styles of worship, so too do younger people; after a time of sharing ideas together, we try to provide a choice of things for the children to do. We display the art work and posters from our sessions on the Sunday Club notice board outside the Manor Room.

Recently it has been good to have input from Jaynie Kendall, our new children's development worker. With her help, our future plans include training for leaders, as we seek to stay relevant and fresh. We have been encouraged that the children feel comfortable bringing friends along to the sessions and we would like to develop our outreach through a Facebook page/special events.

The groups are run by a fantastic team of leaders and helpers; many thanks to them. More help is always welcome, so please get in touch if you would like to be involved.

Liz Rochester

MESSY CHURCH

In January we celebrated the first birthday of Messy Church. We took the theme of 'celebration' and looked at the story of the wedding in Cana so in the craft session we enjoyed making party clothes out of bin bags, party hats, bracelets to wear and we decorated wine glasses so that we could sample the water that turned into wine! As always we had a celebration in church with songs, the Bible story and a prayer before enjoying a party tea.

The first year of Messy Church has been very positive and enjoyable. We have a great team of twenty leaders and I would like to thank them all for everything they do. Our average attendance at Messy Church is sixty plus the leaders, so there are usually about seventy-five people in church on a Messy Church Saturday. There are about twenty families who come very regularly so there is a real sense of community building up and relationships being formed.

As we look to the future, we plan to start a Messy Church Facebook page to help build community and to aid communication including linking Messy Church in with things that are happening in the wider church. We are looking at ways in which we can help any adults at Messy Church to explore the Christian faith further. We are planning to have an Easter celebration on the Saturday before Easter Sunday. Messy Church families will be encouraged to invite friends to come along and we would also like to invite anyone from Gracious Street to join us.

We continue to build relationships and to make sure that Messy Church is truly for all ages so that we can share God's love with all who come. We are excited about where God is leading us and we would be very grateful for your continued prayer support.

Libby Cook

YOUTH GROUP

We have just re-started our Youth Group at Gracious Street after a two or three year gap. This is such a vital part of our church jigsaw: a piece that has been missing recently and had made a real gap in our purpose.

Our first meeting was in late January. We are meeting on alternate Monday evenings in term time, upstairs at Gracious Street, which is such a fabulous space for young people to be. The sessions include computer games, table football, a group game, a tuck shop, craft activities and chat-time about a topical subject.

The group is open to all young people in school years 7 to 11 inclusive. We want to be as welcoming as possible and, whilst we will discuss topics with a faith perspective, we wish always to be somewhere that a young person with no church background could turn up at and feel that they belong.

It is early days as I write this: we have only met three times. We already have a core group of young people who seem to enjoy and value it already, which is great. Almost equally good news at this point is that we have assembled a great team of 7 leaders, which will enable us to run the group without the burden getting too heavy on any one person.

Please pray for this new venture as we set out on a new journey for our church.

David Rochester

NOAH'S ARK PRE-SCHOOL

From that most special moment, the time when Jesus placed a child in the centre of the disciple group, telling them to pay attention to the little ones, the church has had a special responsibility for the care and nurture of children. Sometimes, through the ages and even today, the universal church has failed in its duty. That makes it all the more important that Gracious Street supports, as part of its work, Noah's Ark, our pre-school.

We have thirty-nine children on the register now. Some twenty-two will leave us this July as their education continues elsewhere. We have thirty-three children already on our waiting list for the next academic year. From September 2019 fees will be £5.30 per session.

All our staff are being given the Methodist Advanced Safeguarding Training led by Laura Gallery the district Safeguarding Officer.

We continue to build links with all sections of our Church at Gracious Street and with the wider community. This is work we are to share. We are grateful for all those who work with us, in a variety of ways, to care and nurture the children among us.

Doreen Whittaker

PLAYBOX

Playbox Toddler Group continues to meet every Friday morning during term-time in the church hall. The aim of Playbox is to provide parents, carers and grandparents with a place to meet new people and have fun with the children, have a coffee, share problems and provide a Christian outreach into the community. We hold short child-centred services for Easter, Harvest, Christmas and the end of the summer term for our families and the children at Noah's Ark. We try to link activities to important dates and Christian festivals. We try to let parents know about other events in church as much as possible and support WLTD and Messy Church by sharing equipment that we have with them and we work with the Bridge, especially on Friday when we offer menus for families to order food during the morning ready for lunch. Families from Playbox have attended Film Nights, Messy Church, Noah's Ark, WLTD as well as services at special times and supporting coffee mornings and fundraisers.

We currently have just over thirty families involved in Playbox – we say 'families' as the child or children may attend with Mum, Dad, grandparent, childminder or a friend. About twenty families attend most weeks.

This year Playbox celebrates its 30th birthday; we will have our usual party on the nearest Friday morning in May and plan to hold a fundraising celebration with Noah's Ark one Saturday later in the year.

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 Easter coincided with the Commonwealth Games and so the church became a sports stadium! We had great fun at our very own Commonwealth Games complete with opening ceremony, flags and national anthems. Liz Rochester led a team of enthusiastic leaders from churches in Knaresborough as 84 children gathered for fun, friendship, games, crafts, singing, movie clips and stories about Paul and his amazing conversion on the road to Damascus. Our memory verse was 'Let us run the race before us and never give up. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus' - Hebrews 12: 1-2.

This year's Easter Club 'Imaginators' will be looking at the unexpected CHOSEN characters by God in the Bible and how God loves and knows each person in the world, all based around our Lego set. We are pleased to welcome back Hannah and Dave Ferguson together with Jaynie Kendall to lead the club this year.

Libby Cook

CAMEO

CAMEO meets every fortnight from September until June. At the end of the 2017-2018 session we were able to make donations to the church, Christians Against Poverty, All We Can, Lam, National Trust, Positive Action for Refugees and Asylum Seekers and Aspin Pond.

The group is strong on fellowship as well as gaining information on local and overseas charities. Anyone will be made most welcome to any meeting that particularly appeals to them. We have had an evening of making our own Christmas cards, learned about publishing a book on Winston Churchill, travelled to Nepal, Assisi, Australia and New Zealand. We also had some social events – beetle drive, Christmas party with food and carols and a Burns Night with poetry and song.

We are looking forward to a varied programme for the rest of the season.

Janet Smith

MEN'S BREAKFAST

We were very pleased to welcome two new members during the year – Peter and Brian. We were also delighted to welcome back Bill Butler after an absence due to work pressures followed by illness.

Attendance on the first Saturday of each month continued to be consistently in the region of fifteen to twenty, with another wide range of speakers (both existing and new) and an interesting variety of subjects throughout the year.

Donations totalling £600 were made during the year to the following worthy causes: Harrogate Homeless Project, Harrogate Food Bank, All We Can, 50/50 Toilet Appeal and, of course, Gracious Street.

It now being sixteen months since our last Women's Breakfast, planning will soon be starting for the latest version of this ever popular event to be held in the autumn.

Alan Middleton and Geoff Rogers

METHODIST WOMEN IN BRITAIN (MWiB) / TUESDAY FELLOWSHIP

Tuesday Fellowship is a fairly small group of fairly elderly ladies who are nonetheless young and forward looking in outlook. We are a friendly gathering of Christians who welcome excellent speakers week by week sourced by our leader, Josie Burdon. Topics are varied and can be challenging or light-hearted and cover many subjects visual and aural. We are grateful to many from our own congregation, the Circuit and other organisations.

Our aim is to deepen our Christian faith and offer all who come friendship and support practically and spiritually. Alongside this we support the work of our Church using a weekly collection and we save small change to send to Methodist Women in Britain, under whose wider umbrella in Methodism we are included. Any surplus at year end is donated to charitable organisations chosen by our members at the AGM.

The meeting has members not just from Gracious Street but from other Circuit churches and we would gladly welcome others to join us. If you are free on a Tuesday afternoon at 2pm, feel free to give us a try; do not be put off if you are not able to commit to weekly attendance. So come along for fellowship and a cup of tea to complete the proceedings.

Joan Greig

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 Rev Gordon Hay..

Alpha Plus Group

Alpha Plus meets monthly on Monday evenings in different homes. There are eleven of us altogether with about eight to ten coming each month. We enjoy sharing together and supporting each other in whatever ways we can.

In April 2018 we joined in an evening session at the first Spring Harvest to be held at the Convention Centre in Harrogate. In May we joined CAMEO to hear Mike and Hilary Hughes talk about 'Our Friend Lam' and their visits to Thailand. We invited Helen Lunn to our June meeting and found her story interesting and encouraging – it also helped us to appreciate the role of Deacons more fully. July saw us at 'Two Brothers' for our summer social evening.

Since September we have thoroughly enjoyed 'Jesus the Game Changer' DVDs when host Karl Faase travels to the UK, USA, India, Singapore and Australia interviewing over thirty authors, academics and modern-day game changers about how the life and teaching of Jesus changed the world and why it matters. So far our topics have been: Jesus, Equality, Forgiveness, Women & Children and Democracy and we are looking forward to Care, Education & Health, Wealth and Reason & Science. We can't recommend this series too highly and would be happy to lend it to

other groups.

We trust that as we share together in our studies, our fellowship and the social life of our group, our Christian faith will be deepened.

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. We especially appreciated Diane and Ron's hospitality at Christmas when they cooked a delicious three course Christmas dinner for us all.

Recently we have been looking at the Parables of Jesus and several members of the group take a turn in leading the session. During Lent we try and meet weekly and this year we are using the Bible Society Lent Course which guides us through six sayings of Jesus on the cross.

Libby Cook

Learning Curve Home Group

The Learning Curve Home Group meets monthly on Wednesday in members' homes to share fellowship and friendship. There are nine in the group, all of whom attend regularly.

During the early part of the year we completed the 'Bible Course' which gave us a most interesting overview of the Bible. The York Course 'Faith in the fire' which followed encouraged more participation and sharing of testimonies.

As well as meeting to study and pray we have met for social occasions. During summer we revisited Ripon Spa Hotel for a Sunday dinner – a step back in time to gracious living! Our Christmas celebration at the home of Alan and Margaret Shankster is not to be missed!

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

Open Doors Home Group

Open Doors has a membership of sixteen, of whom four are non-attendees for a variety of reasons. The remaining twelve attend regularly – meeting once a month on Monday afternoons at the home of Shirley Shepherd. All non-attendees are visited regularly by a number of different people.

During the early part of the year we followed a Scripture Union course on "Women of the Old Testament", studying Esther, Ruth and Naomi which we found to be particularly interesting. During the early summer we held our usual meal out together, at The Ugly Duckling, attended by almost all our members/spouses. During the rest of the year we studied a Spring Harvest course "The Spirit filled life" which has been challenging, but also affirming, and was completed in January this year. We intend to resume our study of "Women of the Old Testament" again from March.

Although an elderly group, there is considerable support for each other both physically and spiritually, as we seek to grow in faith together.

Alan Middleton

King James Class Meeting

The King James Class Meeting is a home group meeting for fellowship about every three weeks. Up to ten of us share in singing, Bible study, testimony, prayer and refreshments. We encourage, strengthen and support one another. We have missed attending the monthly 'Connect' service preceded by a meal at Wetherspoons; but we enjoyed a meal at Drakes followed by a Christmas party.

Colin Lake

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 for meals together or other activities.

Our studies over the past year have included a series on Paul's Letter to the Ephesians using the study book and videos entitled 'Transformed Living' and we are currently in the middle of seven studies using the CWR Cover to Cover study booklet on Revelation 4-22 which is taking us into some less familiar biblical territory.

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

FAMILY EVENTS

Family Film Nights

Family film nights continue to be very popular and we aim to hold five each year from autumn through to spring. They are held on Saturdays (usually the first Saturday in the month) at 5pm starting with everyone enjoying hot dogs, drinks and popcorn. So far this year we have watched 'Peter Rabbit', 'The Star', 'Aladdin' and 'The Good Dinosaur.' 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 takes place on the second Saturday of each month from 10am to 11.30am for dads/granddads/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 for the children to play with as well as a craft corner and a Bible story. Refreshments are served including bacon butties which are much appreciated by the dads! There are usually about ten dads plus children at each session with more than that on the register.

There is a lovely atmosphere and it is encouraging to see some of the dads and their families coming 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 seems to be getting even more popular with over fifteen mums and their babies attending each week. The group provides mutual support and many new friendships have begun. Some of the mums stay for lunch in The Bridge afterwards. At Christmas the group once again enjoyed singing at the Christmas Tree Festival at St John's and also after the Noah's Ark Nativity 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 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 communities in Malawi, where All We Can has been helping to tackle the problem of poor harvests through the use of solar power.

All We Can produces some excellent resources and we used some of them in our Harvest service. More recently some of our congregation followed their "Travel Lightly" booklet as part of their own Lent devotions.

In October we held a Gift Day with 50% of donations going towards the refurbishment of the toilets next to the Castle Room and the other 50% going to All We Can in support of their "Build a Bog" projects in Zimbabwe. We also supported All We Can in its humanitarian relief work by raising money for their Indonesia Tsunami appeal. At Christmas we were invited to buy "Extraordinary Gifts" and we raised over £500 by making donations to All We Can instead of giving cards to friends we regularly see at church. Rachel Watson has kindly continued to donate proceeds from the sale of her handmade cards to All We Can.

In June I attended an informative and helpful training session organised by Tim Baker and have continued in my role as a Volunteer Speaker for All We Can, speaking at Netherton Methodist Church's Harvest service.

Since 1st September 2018 we have given £2,579.60 to All We Can and recently received a letter from their Chief Executive thanking Gracious Street Methodist Church for our support.

Sharon Wright

ALPHA

The Alpha Team took a decision not to run a course in 2018 but instead have been looking for other courses which contain pre-Alpha material and do not presume as much knowledge about Christian basic beliefs. We hope that we have now identified an appropriate course and are now looking at how and when is the best time to deliver it.

The focus of such a course would be communicating Christian beliefs in a relaxed and non-threatening way to whoever wishes to take part. The aim is to get the course up and running at the most appropriate time and place to encourage as many people to come and ask their questions.

Sue Whalley 862252 sue.whalley@gmail.com Alan Middleton 863780

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 Fridays from 10-2 p.m. A new development since September 2018 has been students from Henshaws running the café on Mondays serving soup and jacket potatoes until 1.30 p.m. .On Tuesdays and Wednesdays 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. The monthly Drop-in by the Safer Neighbourhood Police Team also continues whenever possible. 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 'Walking for Health' walking group on Thursdays – short easy strolls on the level. The 'Silver Bowlers' – an indoor bowls group which takes place on Mondays 11-12 – has grown in numbers.

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. I intend to stand down in August and would welcome conversations with

anyone who has a passion to see the Bridge fulfil its mission potential while continuing the day-to-day contact with all our customers.

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

MEMORY LANE CAFÉ

The Memory Lane Café moved over from Alzheimer's Society on 1st July 2018 to Gracious Street Church. We have 24 members on the books and we meet twice a month on a Tuesday afternoon. Our first big event was a boat trip to Skipton in July for which we received a donation of £300. We have received a few small donations in the last six months and this has helped us build up a small amount of money in the bank.

The Christmas Carol Service and Café Party in the Castle Room were a great success and we made £53.20 with a raffle. Thanks to everyone who joined us from the church. Now that the Café is with Gracious Street we have a lot more scope to move the Café forward; we have made quite a few contacts and received offers of help from people.

There will be a third trip to Skipton this year and, if things progress, this will be opened up to include members from the church – something not possible under Alzheimer's.

A volunteers' meeting took place at the beginning of January working on plans for the year.

Steady progress is being made with funds and we look forward to this year.

Dorothy Rodham and Norman (Memory Café)

LUNCH LINK

I would like to start this report by saying a huge 'Thank you' to Pauline Murray who for many years has headed up one of the Lunch Link teams and kept an eye on the rest, and managed the kitchen and all that has gone on in there. Pauline continues to be involved in sending out birthday and Christmas cards to all our customers – thank you to Nita Ayrton who has done this job for a number of years.

Diane Hicks has agreed to take over the pastoral side of Lunch Link keeping a watchful eye over our number of customers (about 40) and accepting new customers when space allows. I will keep an eye on the kitchen generally and oversee the general running of this very worthwhile and appreciated service to the older community. We are very grateful to the leaders and members of all the teams for their loyal and continued support over the year, especially for our Christmas Lunch with all the trimmings which is enjoyed not only by our customers but by extra guests as well.

Eleanor Borkett (862345)

SILVER BOWLERS

The Silver Bowlers meet in the Castle Hall each Monday morning from 11am to 12noon and we make a small donation to pay for the room. We are a friendly group and have recently been pleased to welcome some new friends from The Manor House residential home. As numbers have increased we now have three games going at the same time – carpet bowls, 'street bowls' (shaped like traditional bowls but much lighter and made from a rubber compound) and throwing beanbags (trying to score on numbered targets). It's all very hilarious as the bowls seem to have a life of their own and we all say the hour sets us up for the rest of the week. Often members of the group stay on to enjoy coffee or lunch in The Bridge after the session giving chance to chat and make new friends. Silver Bowlers is open to men and women (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

At the start of 2018 Sue Whalley, after many years organising the walking group, handed over the reins to me and Alan Middleton. The focus of our group remains the same: to enjoy walking in the beautiful countryside and socialise with like-minded people along the way. 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!

We have explored many lovely footpaths and found some lesser known surprises around our beautiful area. These have included walks in Upper Nidderdale, around the Swinsty and Fewston reservoirs, along the Ripon canal and beyond, Addingham to Ilkley circular.

We also have a reciprocal arrangement with Bilton Methodist Amblers where both groups are welcome on each other's walks. 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.

More information from Alan Harby or Alan Middleton

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.

In the year since the last AGM we have had to deal with a major refurbishment of the heating system, including re-configuring the boilers; we have also done a major refurbishment of the toilets off the Castle Room. Major work was completed in 4 Chapel Street to rectify damp issues and make good the decoration in readiness for new tenants. Eleanor Borkett does a brilliant job organising tradesmen and contractors to carry out these repairs.

Other main activities completed this year were an annual “deep” clean during the summer, including some redecoration, as well as general repairs, including the roof. We administer annual maintenance contracts for the heating, the lift, fire alarm and extinguishers and the burglar alarm. The problems with the heating system serve as a reminder that our “new” building is approaching ten years old and we can expect increasing issues as various items of equipment wear out and require replacement.

We have completed risk assessments for all our internal groups – many thanks to David Simpson for leading on this activity. We have reviewed our evacuation procedure and will be training office holders in the procedure in the coming weeks.

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 (don't assume someone else will do it!) so that they can be dealt with promptly and by working together to maintain the building to a high standard.

As well as our regular users we have a steady stream of enquiries from a variety of bodies including hosting course for Tees, Esk & Wear Valley NHS Trust, North Yorkshire CC, Age UK, UBU and in particular this year we have hosted Harrogate Adult Education classes. We also have a steady stream of children's parties.

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.

The work of the Management Team is often only noticed when something goes wrong; this belies the huge amount of work that goes on behind the scenes. I would like to record my thanks to the Management Team for all their hard work once again this year.

Bill Rodham, Chair of the Management Team

Management Team: Rev Gordon Hay, Eleanor Borkett, Pauline Murray, Dot Rodham, Jeanette Mowat, Sue Whalley, David Simpson, Bill Rodham.

LEADERSHIP TEAM

The Leadership Team meets every two months to discuss and think about the work, vision and mission of the church.

In September we were pleased to welcome Rev Gordon Hay to the church and to the team; also joining us were James Wright and David Rochester; Sharon Wright has stepped down to take up circuit responsibilities and we thank her for all her hard work whilst on the team.

- We worked on an 'identity statement' for our church which can be put on posters, leaflets etc. We agreed on 'Your Church for Your Whole Week' – to make clear to everyone that the church belongs to them.
- Templates have now been produced for posters and printed communications to ensure that our visual identity is consistent.
- A new video has been created and is now on the website.
- The Gracious Street Youth Group has now re-started. Our young people and the need for them to have their own group was an area of concern and the subject of much discussion.

We held discussions with Chris Rawson about a social justice project he is setting up around mental health.

There are challenges with resources and filling rotas and we continue to explore this issue.

As a church we must take our responsibility to care for God's creation seriously, so it was decided to fill in the Eco Church questionnaire and to see where we come out and what more we might need to do.

Sue Walkington

On behalf of the Leadership Team

TASK FORCE

Members of Task Force, as the name implies, look after the fabric of the building and are normally the first resource to be called on should any occurrences arise which do not require the attention of qualified personnel, as notified in the Record book kept on the table in the church porch.

In the last year we have:

repaired door furniture, soap, toilet paper & hand towel dispensers, Bridge 'A' board, Forest Room coffee table, pan handles and dishwasher; cured leaking rainwater pipes; fixed linoleum, plinths, stair nosings, carpets and drawers; replaced dud light bulbs and batteries; descaled coffee machines; oiled door and window hinges; cleaned out gutters and removed weeds.

The service is only as good as its informants, so, if you want to continue being proud of the church buildings, if you come across any defects, please report them in the Record Book on the table in the front entrance.

Alan Shankster

FINANCE REPORT

Our finances have reduced substantially since the last AGM due to major refurbishment & repairs to the heating system over the Summer and Autumn (£9,500) and refurbishment of the Castle Room toilets (£3,500). We have also seen significant increases in our circuit assessment in recent years, with 2018/19 increased by almost £8,000.

Our current funds as at 27th February 2019 are as follows:

Account	27-Feb-19
Yorkshire Bank	£6,613
Trustees for Methodist Purposes	£871
Central Finance Board	£46,803
Cash	£214
Total in General Fund	£54,501

I am delighted to say that during the year we have received a grant from the Schofield Foundation of £10,000, to be held as a restricted fund, for the education of Johnny Huy (Lam's son in Vietnam). This is included in the above summary, therefore our net available funds are £44,501.

Based on our finances so far this year, ignoring the items of extraordinary income or expenditure and taking into account our anticipated gift aid income, our expenditure exceeds our income by

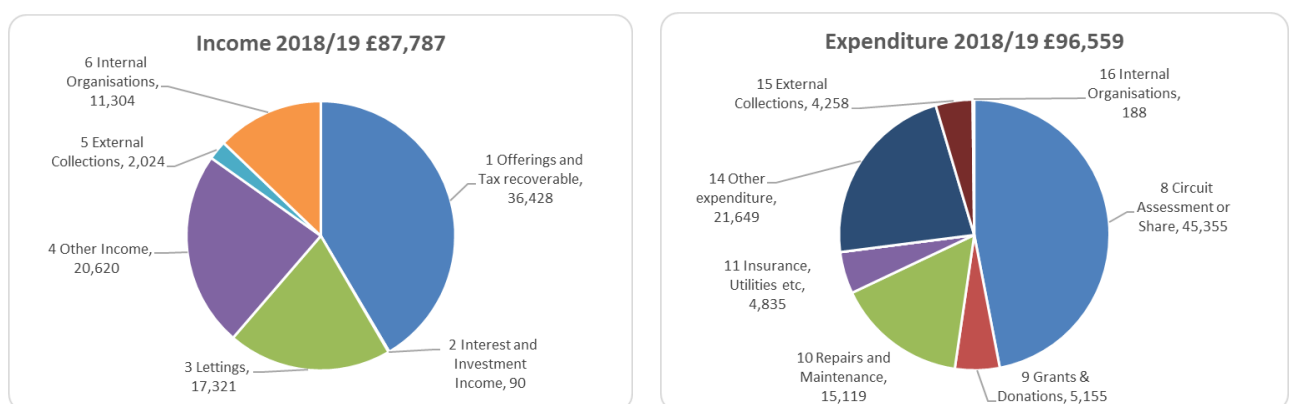
approximately £350 per month. The charts below give a summary of income and expenditure. We hold in tension the needs of our internal running costs against the need to be outward looking. This year to date we have made donations and collections totalling just over £9,400.

We will continue to face the challenge of an increasing circuit assessment as we will probably 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. 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 new people to Christ. We therefore need to remain diligent in our giving and fundraising activities.

Many of our Church community give generously not only financially, but also of their time and talents to support a range of fundraising and missional activities. We do however need to engage the whole Church community in our mission and its financing. I feel that we need to have a concerted effort to increase our income over the coming months whilst bearing down on our expenditure. One of the ways that we can do this is to ensure that if you are a UK tax payer, you gift aid any donation you make to the Church. Ed Walton our Gift Aid secretary or myself would be pleased to advise you in this regard. The leadership team & I would like the Church community to come forward with fundraising ideas that could help to boost our income. Any ideas can be explored - any idea is better than none at all.

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; Ed Walton has now replaced Paul Blanch as gift aid secretary; Alan Middleton who looks after the Bridge takings and all those who count and bank the money week by week.

Summary of Income & Expenditure to date



Bill Rodham - Treasurer

3rd March 2019

Church Council Membership & Managing Trustees at March 2019

Office Holders

The Superintendent	Rev Ben Clowes
The Minister	Rev Gordon Hay
Circuit Rep	tba
Church Council Secretary	Mrs Hilary Wilkinson
Church Finance	Mr Bill Rodham
Pastoral Secretary	tba
Safeguarding Adviser	Mrs Val Coapes
Property Secretary	Mrs Eleanor Borkett
Health & Safety Officer	Mr David Simpson

Leadership Team

Mrs Libby Cook
Mr Mike Hughes
Mr David Rochester
Mr Bill Rodham
Miss Sue Walkington
Mrs Sue Whalley
Mrs James Wright

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)
Mrs Joan Greig (2014)
Mrs Dorothy Rodham (2016)
Mr Paul Skeels (2014)
Dr Anne Thickett (Worship Steward 2018)
Mr Tim Webster (2014)
Mrs Sharon Wright (2017)

Church Council Appointed *(max 15)*

Alpha	TBA
Contact Steward	Mrs Jeanette Mowat
CAMEO	Mrs Janet Smith
The Bridge	Mrs Lynne Bullock
Flower Ministry	Mrs Rachel Watson
Grapevine	Mrs Hilary Hughes
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 Liz Rochester
Task Force	Mr Alan Shankster
Tuesday Fellowship	Mrs Vonni Wilkins

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