

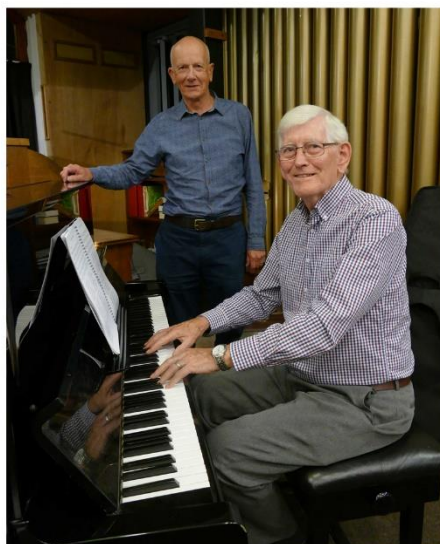
ANNUAL REPORT 2023



Gracious Street

Methodist Church

KNARESBOROUGH



With thanks to Brian Souter who produced the front cover



'Your church for your whole week'

**The Annual Report
of
Gracious Street Methodist Church (Knaresborough)
Published April 2023**

Registered name:	Gracious Street Methodist Church
Registered Charity Number:	1133967
Address:	Gracious Street, Knaresborough, HG5 8DS
Office Telephone:	01423 860166
Email address:	graciousstreetmc@gmail.com
Website:	https://graciousstreetmethodist.org.uk

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

Rev Gordon Hay

Tel: 01423 863298 / 07852 817475

Email: gordon.hay@methodist.org.uk

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	01423 863298
CONTACT STEWARD:	Deacon Rosemary Coggrave	01423 861607
CHURCH NOTICES:	Mrs Hilary Wilkinson	01423 865545
BOOKINGS:	Ms Wendy Holt	01423 860166
LEADERSHIP TEAM:	Mrs Libby Cook	01423 867077
	Mr Nick Garrett	07753 167190
	Mr Graham Taylor	01423 541870
	Mr David Rochester	01423 865816
	Mr Bill Rodham (Treasurer)	01423 865846
	Miss Sue Walkington	01423 547086

MINISTER'S REFLECTIONS

Dear Friends,

In this last year we continue to experience significant changes in our society. On 24th February 2022 Russia invaded Ukraine, escalating the war that started with the invasion of Crimea in 2014. The war has resulted in Europe's largest refugee crisis since the Second World War. We have also witnessed a cost of living crisis that affect us all and we continue to experience the impact of Covid-19. So as I read the report, I pause for a moment and consider the impact of these societal changes on our individual lives and the life of Gracious Street.

I am reminded of the servant King because in our weakness we can find solidarity in Jesus who suffered and strength in the risen Jesus who overcame the cross through the love of God. I am also reminded of Pentecost, where the Spirit of God revived the people and emboldened them to live faith as they adapted to changes in their world.

So as we stand in solidarity with the people of Gracious Street, Knaresborough and the world. We need to recognise the dignity and value of those who suffer and consider how our ministry strengthens one another. So as we read the report, celebrate the different ways we stand in solidarity but also consider how we need to adapt.

While we remember the servant King, we must also remember that Jesus came to share good news. In this past year there has been a growing desire to develop holy habits that will root us deeper in the love of God and help us to become more confident in sharing the story of Jesus. So as we read the report, celebrate the different habits that root ourselves in faith but also consider how we need to adapt.

When we consider the ministry of Gracious Street we give thanks for Juliana Caukwell who was our administrator and continue to pray for Juliana and her family.

At the same time we are delighted at the appointment of Wendy Holt as our new Centre Manager. In this appointment we have moved the focus from administration to the development of the Bridge Cafe and ministry of Gracious Street. So as we welcome Wendy into the family of Gracious Street, please hold her in prayer.

The Nidd Valley Circuit is also looking to appoint a Pioneer Pastor to help Gracious Street in developing faith in our wider community. So please pray for the appointment of the Pioneer Pastor.

The appointment of Wendy, and the potential appointment of a Pioneer Pastor, is good news. However, we must remember the ministry of Gracious Street is rooted in the amazing work of volunteers.

For many years we have been indebted to James Wright who has been our IT lead. James has felt it was time to step down from this role. We are extremely grateful for James' ministry and we will look to see how we can develop our IT ministry.

It is people who make Gracious Street and I give thanks for each one of you! You are truly inspirational and your ministries make a big difference. May the richness of God's grace bless you in your ministry.

Peace be with you
Rev Gordon Hay

WORSHIP

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

WORSHIP

There is great joy in the worship of Gracious Street as we celebrate the love of God. This is reflected in many of the other reports. There is much to celebrate about our morning and evening services, Messy Church and prayer. At the heart of Gracious Street is an openness to explore different ways of worshipping God.

So I would like to offer my thanks for the ministry of our Worship Leaders, Local Preachers, Worship and Welcome Stewards, Musicians and the Screen Operators. The team who operate the screen are developing their skills to live stream the services. They are doing an amazing job but there are a few tweaks that need to be resolved with the technology.

In addition to live streaming services, there are a number of different ways we can use technology to increase our access of worship and discipleship. It would be good to explore the potential of the technology further.

On the evening (7pm) of the first Sunday of each month we have the Feast. This is a service that is centred around food, discussion and prayer. I am very grateful for the support of Resurrected Bites who provide the delicious food. You would be most welcome to join the Feast.

At Harvest, Christmas and Easter we have a special service with the children, families and staff of Noah's Ark and Playbox. In addition to these wonderful services, we have welcomed Aspin Primary School for an Easter service. It was a great success and hopefully there will be more opportunities to welcome Aspin at Gracious Street.

Peace be with you
Rev Gordon Hay

WORSHIP IN CHURCH

We continue to appreciate the input of Malcolm, Brian and Mike as the main keyboard players for morning and evening services. We remember with gratitude Gordon Smith's sensitive contribution over a number of years. We have also benefitted from the keyboard skills of 'the next generation' – Sarah Darvill, Nick Garrett and Rachel Capstick. It is important that we plan for the future. These people are better known for their sax and trumpet skills and we are richly blessed to have such talented musicians in our midst. Rachel's sons Joseph and Nathan (trumpet and trombone) have also been involved, making up a Family Band usually (but not exclusively) on the first Sunday of the month. It has long been my wish to have guitar-led worship as a regular feature of our services and this has become a reality. Graham Taylor has taken this on with the help of his son Josh (drums) and a few willing singers. I would like to thank Graham, as it's not as easy to lead in this way and he is gaining confidence all the time. There are so many really good Bible-based contemporary songs which benefit from being guitar-led and I hope we will be able to gradually enlarge our repertoire over the coming months.

Whilst I have decided not to restart Worship Group in the near future, we have been able to draw on a number of capable singers to help lead lesser known songs. I know that many in the congregation have found this to be a great help.

We have had a few workshops for singers and instrumentalists in order to learn new songs before they are introduced to the congregation and I expect this to be the way forward for the time being. Jenny Cook and Becky Hay have also been invaluable in their leading of Taize music. Of course we will continue to use traditional hymns as well. One of our strengths, which I hope we can build on, is the wide variety of hymns/songs we use.

I have been pleased to be able to hand over to Sarah Darvill the planning of the quarterly timetable of musicians. She is not only a talented musician but also a good organizer!

Mike Hughes

PRAYER AT GRACIOUS STREET

The Prayer Chain, Prayer Diary and Pause for Thought continue to be important ministries in the life of Gracious Street. Both the Prayer Chain and Prayer Diary are wonderful ways that we remain connected and prayer is a beautiful act of love as we bring people before God. So I would like to take this opportunity to thank Lynda Cooper who is now helping Joyce Hoare in coordinating the Prayer Chain. Please contact Rachel Watson for more information about the Prayer Diary.

Pause for Thought is a great opportunity to gather for a service of prayer and reflection. It is a midweek service, on a Wednesday between 11:15-11:45. The service is led by different people from Gracious Street and is an opportunity to pray and ponder the scriptures. For more information please contact Deacon Rosemary Coggrave.

While these are great ministries, there is a desire, perhaps a movement of the Spirit, for prayer to be embedded further into the life of Gracious Street. This is something that needs further prayer and thought. However, if you do sense this desire or movement of the Spirit, please do get in touch as I would be interested to hear your thoughts.

Peace be with you

Rev Gordon Hay

STEWARDS TEAM

As a Stewards Team we seek to oversee all the services which take place at Gracious Street ensuring all arrangements are made to enable the worship to proceed smoothly and that all who come to worship are warmly welcomed. It has been good to see new faces joining us and others returning after the pandemic.

The Welcome Stewards welcomed back Janet Smith during the year and Josh Taylor and Christine Baker have been helping in recent times. Our grateful thanks go to Bill Butler who stepped down from being a Welcome Steward. We are very pleased that Morag Ross has joined the Worship Stewards. Phil Mason is stepping down as a Worship Steward at the end of May and Rosemary Coggrave at the end of August. Alongside Phil's work as a Steward he has been doing sterling work on the administrative side in the absence of an administrator which has been hugely appreciated. Clearly we need to build up the Team as the worship life of the Church is so central.

Our grateful thanks go to all who do the rotas - Rod Moxley, Sarah Darvill and Jeanette Mowat from which currently Phil constructs a 'Combined Rota'. We are indebted to Sarah and Jeanette's dedicated teams – the musicians and those who operate the screen and sound desk.

There have been three Quarterly Newsletters to which we have contributed.
Rosemary Coggrave

LEARNING & 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 all, cares for all and encourages all in our faith.

To assist in this aspiration Gracious Street has a Pastoral Team that oversees the amazing work of our Pastoral Visitors, Home Group Leaders, Flowers Team, Ministry at Home, Welcome Team and Families. We are immensely thankful for

the welcome, care and encouragement of everyone involved in the learning and caring of Gracious Street.

It was a great pleasure earlier this year to have a service of commission for the ministry of learning and caring. I hope this will become an annual service as we celebrate and pray for our ministry.

In recent months there have been a number of changes to the Pastoral Team. Rachel Watson has stepped down as Pastoral Secretary, Rev Ron Hicks has stepped down from House Groups and Dot Rodham has stepped down from Ministry at Home. We are thankful for their ministry and we continue to hold them in prayer for the other ministries they continue to fulfil. I am delighted to write that Rod Moxley has agreed to become the new Pastoral Secretary but we still have vacancies for House Group and Welcome Team.

While there is much to celebrate about the learning and caring at Gracious Street we need to pursue our aspiration. A key aspect will be to grow our amazing team of Pastoral Visitors and House Group Leaders so that all are welcomed, all are cared for and all are encouraged in our faith because we are a large church.

During Lent, to help encourage us in our faith, we started to explore Holy Habits. This has led to a number of fruitful conversations where there is a holy yearning to deepen our fellowship where we can care, discover more of Jesus and pray together. There is a desire for different styles and sizes of groups that range from house groups, pop up groups, prayer groups and WhatsApp groups.

One recent example has been Luke through Lent which has been an encouraging and enriching experience of reading the Bible. This is reflected in the comments such as, "I feel like I am connecting emotionally with the story in the services much more as a result of doing Luke through Lent" and "I seem to be living and feeling the journey to the cross so much more this year by reading Luke and sharing all your comments. I'd love to continue this group." So at Pentecost we will continue the group as we read the sequel to Luke, the Acts of the Apostles.

Social events are also another important opportunity to welcome and care for one another. We have had some fabulous events that include a day out at the beach, a ceilidh and a concert. Please do look out for future events and feel free to organise any social events.

It is wonderful to welcome a number of new people into the Gracious Street family. At the same time it is with great sadness that a number of our brothers and sisters in Christ have died. So we pray for our community as we journey together in faith and uphold all who grieve and experience challenges in life. I would like to end this section of the report with a prayer.

Loving God,
may we discover within you
our refuge and our strength.
Grant us in all our duties your help,
in all our perplexities your guidance,
and in all our sorrows your peace,
through Jesus Christ. Amen.

Peace be with you
Rev Gordon Hay

FLOWER TEAM

The Flower Team of 13 continued with the flower ministry during 2022. The money for the flowers is donated and we are very grateful for all those people who give so generously. The flowers are bought and arranged in church on a Friday for the Sunday services and then distributed the following Monday.

During 2022 the Flower Team distributed 212 bunches. The church flowers go to people who are ill, bereaved, housebound, celebrating a special occasion. This is a lovely ministry sharing the love of Jesus and the love of the church family.

We would love to welcome new people to the team. (You don't have to be a flower arranger!) If you are interested please contact Rachel Watson (866323).

Thank you so very much to all people who have donated money.

Thank you to the people who have arranged flowers.

Thank you to the people who have distributed flowers.

Rachel Watson

SAFEGUARDING

The members of the Safeguarding team are: Revd Gordon Hay & Anne Thickett. Aim of the group is to promote a safe culture where all can meet for worship, work and social activities.

We follow the Policies and Guidelines of the Methodist Church.

We work with the Circuit safeguarding Officer Reverend Ron Hicks and recently appointed District Safeguarding Officer Jane Masterman.

There is ongoing work to ensure the database recording compliance with DBS checks and safeguarding training is accurate and up-to-date.

We aim to ensure DBS checks are carried out when necessary and inform individuals when safeguarding training is required and give information about local courses.

There has been one incident to report and for learning points to be identified and if appropriate notice board information to be altered.

Details of the incident given to me by GH:

Sunday morning before Church two teenagers outside the Church saying they had been out all night and couldn't contact home as their mobile phone was flat. Teenagers given support by Worship Steward on duty and mobile phone was charged. Teenagers then made a phone call and said they lived in Boroughbridge. Worship Steward then took them by car to Boroughbridge but on arrival there was no adult to meet them and the teenagers quickly disappeared. Gordon then discussed with Jane Masterman and her advice was that the Police should have been called.

For discussion: On the notice board there is the contact number for North Yorkshire County Council Social Services where there is a social worker on-call out of hours to discuss cases. Do we need to make an addition to the notice to say in emergencies call the Police?

I would like to thank Phil Mason for ensuring the information board is kept updated and Gordon for his support.

Anne Thickett

SUNDAY CLUB

Sunday Club has continued to meet every Sunday morning in the Castle Room for 4 – 11 year olds and enables families to come to church together. Everyone worships together for about the first 10 minutes before the children leave for their own group where they can learn and have fun in a way that's appropriate for them with a Bible story, prayer, crafts and games. At the moment we have a fairly regular group of about 10 children who have made good friends in the

group and feel part of the church family. Sunday Club really enjoyed being involved in the Christingle service in January. There continue to be challenges – the group is small; they don't all come every week and there's quite a wide age range. Our biggest challenge, however, is a shortage of helpers. We operate with only the bare minimum of leaders and helpers. In particular we need people who would be prepared to help occasionally – no preparation is needed – just come along and join in. However, despite the challenges, Sunday Club is going well and we hope to build on this so that the children can grow up learning about Jesus, developing their own faith and playing their part in the church community.

EASTER CLUB

In 2022 it was great to be able to do a 'live' Easter club once again. We had great fun being Easter Detectives and hunting for clues to help us discover more about the Easter story.

Easter Club is organised by Christians Together in Knaresborough and is for primary school aged children. As I write this report we are preparing for this year's club, 'Ocean Adventure' based on the story of Jonah. It will run for two mornings in Holy Week. It will be action-packed with 'dive in' sessions where we explore different parts of the story including being on the ship and in the whale! There will also be videos, songs, games, craft, quizzes, lots of fun and of course learning more about God's love and the adventure of following Jesus. Bookings are going well and we have a team of enthusiastic leaders from churches in Knaresborough so we can't wait to get started!

Libby Cook

MESSY CHURCH

Messy Church takes place on the third Saturday of every month (except August) at 4pm and is church on a Saturday where families can learn about the Christian faith in a very relaxed and fun way with crafts, games, stories and songs and sharing a meal together. Over the last year we have gradually returned to our pre-covid format with a craft session in the Castle Room before our celebration and teaching in church. In March we looked at the parable of the Prodigal Son with crafts linked to the story including making 'pig' biscuits which were very popular! Then into the church where we acted out the story and celebrated that we have a generous God who loves each one of us and is always ready to forgive and welcome us back. We then enjoyed pizza and ice lollies! We usually have

about 10 -12 families and a small, but dedicated team of helpers and we all enjoy spending that time together.

Libby Cook

NOAH'S ARK PRE-SCHOOL

Your pre-school is thirty years old! That's the wonderful news for the work that has nurtured generations of small children at the beginning of their educational journey. We are thankful for the work of our gifted staff and those who actively support the work week in week out – year in year out.

Our celebratory coffee morning brought together lots of former staff, parents and children. They chatted, laughed, shared memories and raised money for our outdoor sensory space. That's the new major addition to the Noah's Ark offer and the Rotary Club have given a grant of £3000 for this exciting venture. We are most grateful.

Here's a date for your diary – "Coffee and Chat" – Saturday June 24th from 10-00-12-00. All are welcome. Come and support your pre-school moving beyond its 30th year!

Doreen Whittaker

PLAYBOX

Playbox Toddler Group continues to meet every Friday morning during term-time in the church hall, run by Sheila Bradley-Smith, Helen Carass and Vicki Taylor.

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 at 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 WLTDO and Messy Church by sharing the equipment that we have with them. We work with Resurrected Bites in the Bridge, especially on Friday when they help us with hot drinks and washing up and we set tables up in the hall for our families and Thula Mama families to stay and eat. Gordon also leads small Bible studies after the meals some weeks. Families from Playbox have attended film nights, Messy Church, Noah's Ark,

Bible study groups, WLTDO as well as services at special times and supporting coffee mornings and fundraisers.

We currently have just over 30 families involved in Playbox - we say families as the child or children may attend with Mum, Dad, grandparent, childminder, or a friend. Over 20 families attend most weeks, and we try to support them as best we can in the sessions and through the WhatsApp group.

Our aim for the future is to keep doing what we are doing as the group is well attended and families attending enjoy it.

Vicki Taylor

GSYG

Gracious Street Youth group has continued to thrive. The group meets fortnightly on a Monday evening at Gracious Street. In this year the group has grown in size and there is a wonderful experience of belonging, acceptance and honesty.

On an evening we play some games, eat pizza and discuss topics such as, is there justice? Should British citizenship ever be revoked? the power of forgiveness and what is it like to be homeless? We often explore the voice of Christianity within topical issues. There is a shared experience between the young people and leaders of exploring the Christian faith.

We have been part of District events, such as a residential weekend, Sleep Out for Homelessness and Flourish. During the Easter holidays we also helped to lead at Easter Club. When it was extremely hot last summer we had great fun with a water fight, we have also had fun at Laser Quest and a scavenger hunt around Knaresborough.

We hope as we move forward to maintain the wonderful bond of the group, develop leadership with the young people and time for prayer.

Please contact me for more information about the GSYG

Peace be with you

Rev Gordon Hay

CAMEO

We have had a very interesting year, with new people coming to our meetings. So, our meetings have become larger (which is fantastic) and the whole atmosphere is buzzing.

From our “home” in the Bridge we have “walked” round Knaresborough looking at the Blue Plaques; been “guided” round Fountains Abbey; “flown” in a helicopter; “been” to the Falkland Islands. We have been told about flood defences and All Souls. We have enjoyed an evening sharing our favourite item or piece of music. And, of course, we’ve had food! Our Christmas Party and a Pancake Party.

Some of the meetings to look forward to include Knaresborough Castle and the Quaker Tapestry.

And to end the CAMEO programme in June - a Summer Party.

Do come and join us for a relaxed and interesting evening.

Our first meeting of the new session will be on Monday, 4th September, 2023 at 7p.m. in the Bridge.

Rachel Watson

COGS CREATIVE WRITERS

COGS CREATIVE WRITERS continue to meet in person, usually at Hilary Hughes’s. What do we do? We read, listen, write, reflect, drink coffee! And pray!

Themes 2022

March *‘God’s heart is for refugees’ ; Queen Elizabeth’s Platinum Jubilee* and Hilary’s project, *‘A Sense of Place’*;

May *‘Oppression’ ; Maya Angelou’s ‘And Still I rise’*;

July *‘Mountains and Molehills’* - conflict awareness, understanding and resolution in communities.

September *‘Speed Nature writing; Simon Armitage’s ‘A Floral Tribute’.*

November *‘Making a metaphor’, ‘Through the fly’s eye’, and ‘Expanding your image palette’*; weekly themes from *‘There is Room’* Advent and Christmas campaign. Results were on display in the Bridge.

Owing to Hilary's ill-health, we had not met until **March 2023**, when we celebrated our favourite poets, shared writing and discussed future collaboration.

We have endeavoured to include new members, supporting each other confidentially in prayer and encouraging each other.

Our creativity goes in waves but it doesn't matter, we write when we can. Two of our group regularly lead services and use their work in that. We welcome more opportunities to write for services etc and/or for our words to be *heard*, this makes poetry much more accessible.

Writing is such a privilege and a gift to be practised, honed and shared. I thank God for each writer and their unique style, talent and contribution to the group.

Hilary Hughes

MEN'S BREAKFAST

The Men's Breakfast meets in the Castle Room at Gracious Street Methodist Church on the first Saturday of each month (excepting June and December this year when we meet a week later) from 08.45- 10.00. Men of all ages and from any church or none are most welcome to join us for a cooked breakfast followed by a talk. After many years Alan Middleton has taken a step back from co-ordinating our activities and has been replaced by Peter Wilson. We continue to be ably supported this year by our Chef Robert Aspin in the kitchen and speaker finder Brian Hoare who has engaged a wide variety of speakers for the coming year. With around 20 attending each month the surplus from donations to the cost of breakfast allows us to make occasional donations to the Church and a variety of other charities.

For further information contact Peter Wilson (01423 862553) Email: pnw6@sky.com

Peter Wilson

MONTHLY BIBLE STUDY

I continue to lead a monthly Bible study, lecture style, on the third Thursday morning of the month at 10am in the Priory Room. We are studying the parts in Luke's gospel that are not in any of the other gospels. Members from Gracious Street are joined by an Anglican and Roman Catholic. All are welcome to come.

Colin Lake

HOME GROUPS

Alpha Plus

The Alpha Plus group meets monthly usually on Wednesdays but since the pandemic rather than meeting in homes we now use the Forest Room at Church which provides a very pleasant, comfortable space for our group. There are twelve of us in all although as Penny Talbot is now living near Thirsk she will only be joining us on the odd occasion.

We begin at 7.30 with a catch up chat over coffee and biscuits before moving into our time of sharing and discussion using a Christian Course or Study Book based on the Bible or Christian Topics. We end with prayers for the group and other concerns and are normally on our way home between 9.00 and 9.30.

In Spring 2022 we used the 'Surprised by Generosity Course' for a few meetings and then in July to end our summer session we enjoyed a social evening in the Forest Room with a bring and share supper.

From Autumn 2022 up to Easter 2023 we have used 'By The Way' Studies in Incidental Evangelism written by Brian Hoare - six different Gospel stories in which Jesus engages in conversation with people 'by the way' and challenges them to Christian discipleship. Together we've discovered important lessons about lifestyle evangelism and would be happy to lend the book to other groups.

So we continue to support each other and enjoy our ongoing fellowship and friendship.

Joyce Hoare and Alan Middleton

Baker's Dozen Home Group

Baker's Dozen House Group has continued to meet fortnightly for the past year and plans to continue. During Lent we meet weekly. We have a month's break in August.

We have in fact twelve members, so not quite a Bakers Dozen unfortunately. Some of our members are not physically able to join the meetings (which are held at the home of Christine Baker) but we are in touch regularly with them. Meetings vary usually between seven to ten in attendance.

We study Bible passages and are grateful for suggestions from other home

groups about successful themes. We are a friendly relaxed group who love to share together in fellowship and also to learn more about what the Bible has to tell us and challenge us.

Christine Baker

Charlie's Angels Home Group

'Charlie's Angels' is one of a number of house groups at Gracious Street which aim to provide informal fellowship, study and mutual support for their members. The group continued to meet on Zoom during Covid although not all members were able to participate in that way. Once we were able to meet physically again we have continued our monthly meetings and all thirteen members of the group attend as regularly as they can. Having welcomed several new members during the past year, the group is now too big to meet in members' homes so we have taken to meeting upstairs in the Forest Room at church which has proved a very comfortable venue.

Last Autumn we did a series of studies on the 2022 Bible Month book of Isaiah and so far this year we have been working through the various elements of 'A Methodist Way of Life' as listed on the annual church bookmark – a series which is proving to be very interesting and stimulating.

Our fellowship and study meetings are supplemented from time to time by occasional social events and at least one meal out together each year.

Brian Hoare

King James Class Meeting

Composed of members from four churches, twelve of us meet in the Priory room, because of space, about every three weeks. We are still looking at all those verses of scripture which we shared daily during lockdown. Everyone shares freely and prayer for each other is important to us. We are amazed at the rich variety of what God speaks to us. We still have plenty of material ahead of us.

Colin Lake

Learning Curve Home Group

This year the Group has been pleased to welcome Rod Moxley, Josie Burdon and Rachel Watson and Max and Sandra Brougham join us regularly too. This makes

us a group of twelve when everyone is free to be there which is more often than not. We would struggle to welcome more as everyone wants to meet in a home.

We completed the 'I am' Life Builder studies which we would recommend. Then Josie led us to share our favourite hymn, Bible passage and Bible verse and what it meant to us. During Lent we had two meetings when we studied 'Holy Habits' choosing to look at worship and prayer.

During the year we went to the Kestrel for a meal which suited us all well. Early 2023, somehow or other, Alan and Margaret managed to fit us all round their table for a scrumptious buffet meal!

Rosemary Coggrave

New Shoots Home Group

New Shoots is a home group and we meet every month in various homes for fellowship, encouragement and study and twice a year have a social get together, sharing food and fun.

We have sadly lost some of our members this year for differing reasons and they are sadly missed, but we have gained new members and welcome back former members to join us once more!

We have been looking at the DVD Jesus the Game Changer season 2 'To the ends of the earth' which follows the movement of Christianity around the world, telling some of the great stories of vision, faith and sacrifice.

During Lent we have managed two sessions of the Holy Habits Lent course.

We hope to continue our friendship and fellowship and be open to new ways of supporting each other as we deepen our Christian faith.

Sue Whalley

Open Doors Home Group

Last year we completed Brian Hoare's "By the Way" study guide followed by a number of discussions on big questions of our faith 'Why does God allow suffering' and 'How can we understand the Holy Trinity'. We concluded the year with a session considering the re-registration of Gracious Street to allow same sex marriages.

Our regular numbers have decreased by 3 as a result of Walter Bland and Frank Daniel going into full time care and Margaret James no longer able to attend our meetings. We have 8 full time members and now 7 pastoral care members.

We continue to be encouraging and supportive of each other as we seek to deepen our faith.

Alan Middleton

Stepping Stones Home Group

Stepping Stones home group continues to share fellowship together through Bible study, discussion and prayer. Last spring we completed “The Well-being Journey” on line via Zoom. Whilst the course was aimed at a slightly younger demographic than our group we found some useful insights on how different facets of life all impact on our Christian journey. In the autumn we began meeting face to face in each other’s homes once again which has been great. We have used some of Ruth Parry’s “Thought for the Week” as a basis of discussion and more recently have started on Brian Hoare’s study in incidental evangelism “By the Way”. The group is a great source of encouragement and support and I would like to thank all the members of the group for the support they give to me personally.

Bill Rodham

3 Dogs and the Pilgrims house group

We continue to meet on a Monday evening. Our numbers have increased to 10 although most weeks we struggle with numbers due to childcare and family or work commitments. So for Lent we have been meeting online to see if this is easier for people. We are following the Holy Habits booklets and meeting for an hour once a week which is going well. We have 5 or 6 people joining each week and we are relearning how to use Zoom. We are missing the personal interaction and hope to organise a social event in the next few weeks.

Quite a few of our members are new to church or have never been in house groups before, so it is lovely to be able to support and encourage each other in this way. We are all under 60 and often struggle to get to church services due to other commitments, so it is really important that we have the opportunity to make time for God together.

We will continue to meet after Easter although in what form we are not sure yet, perhaps a mix of online and in person to allow more people to be part of it.

Vicki Taylor

SERVICE & EVANGELISM

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

ALL WE CAN

Gracious Street is a partner church of “All we Can” the Methodist relief and development charity.

Despite the cost of living crisis and a European war contributing to problems within our nation, we must never forget the needs of countries and communities in other parts of our global village. Climate issues, development challenges, wars and exploitation stalk much of our world. “All We Can” works with local partners to offer help and support into some of these difficult situations.

Thank you for the prayer support and the financial support you offer.

Please note the following dates:

- June 4th – Sunday – Tim Baker from All We Can has been invited to share some news of the work. He will lead our morning worship at 10-00.
- July 22nd – Saturday – The coffee morning from 10-00 to 12-00 will raise money and awareness of the work. Please support the work and have fellowship with members and friends of our church.

We are grateful to those within the fellowship who at Christmas time don't send cards to others at Gracious Street but rather give money to “All We Can” and then the names of those who have contributed are listed in Christmas greetings circulated as a thank you for your support.

All money raised goes to support the work with partners around the globe who work to bring hope, through practical projects requested by the people.

May God bless and encourage this work as we partner with “All We Can.”

Doreen Whittaker

FAMILY EVENTS

Family Film Nights

Family Film Nights are held on Saturdays at 5pm from autumn through to spring and we have had five film nights this season. They are always very popular with about 70 – 80 people attending. Everyone enjoys hot dogs, drinks and popcorn before the film which is shown in the church. It is also shown in the Bridge where we have a few toys and this is really appreciated by families with young children

who can opt in and out. Film nights are free but we have a donations box which more than covers our costs.

Libby Cook

Thula Mama

Thula Mama is a weekly informal singing group for mums and their babes in arms. It takes place every Friday morning in the Dales Room. This year, in response to the cost of living crisis, we have been able to obtain funding from Rotary to cover the cost of the room which has enabled us to offer the group on a pay what you can afford basis so that those who are struggling financially are able to attend for free. The mums have an opportunity to chat over cake and hot drinks before learning and singing beautiful songs and lullabies from around the world in a-capella harmony. The aim is to nurture and empower mums, find new ways to bond with and soothe their babies and celebrate motherhood together. The group also provides mutual support and many new friendships have been made with some of the mums staying for lunch in The Bridge and also joining in a parents' group to explore faith, which Gordon runs after lunch.

Jenny Cook

Who Let the Dads Out (WLTD0)

WLTD0 is a stay-and-play session for dads/grandads/male carers and their children. It generally takes place on the second Saturday of each month from 10am-11:30pm in the Castle room. We have toys, crafts and refreshments, finishing with a story-time. The aim of the group is to reach out to dads, particularly those with no other church contact, and to help them have fun with their children, to provide a support network and to introduce them to other aspects of the GS community, such as Messy Church.

After a two year Covid break, we re-started in March 2022. Since then we have had about 30 families joining us at the sessions. Although initially for pre-school children, we are finding that older children still also like to come, so are adapting the toys and activities accordingly. An exciting new venture has been our outdoor sessions: one at the Community Festival and one at Conyngham Hall Games Kiosk. These were well attended and a great opportunity to develop and build relationships. I have also been developing the story time; initially picture books but now always an interactive Bible story, with 'I wonder' questions – for dads as well as children. I'm very grateful to the small but dedicated team - Ed

and Eliza Walton and Gordon Hay. Our next session will be at Meadowside School on the 22nd April at the Community festival. We also plan to return to the Games Kiosk in the summer.

Liz Rochester

FUN AND GAMES FOR SENIORS

This group has evolved from what used to be called 'Silver Bowlers' and continues to meet every Monday morning with coffee in The Bridge from 10.30am and games upstairs in the Dales Room for an hour from 11.00am to 12 noon. These include several sitting down table games such as dominoes, bagatelle, skittles and shove ha'penny (equipment for the latter two kindly donated by a former pub owner who heard about our group's activities) and a couple of more active games, indoor rubber bowls and bean bags thrown into a target.

Attendance varies according to members' commitments and health (an older group such as this inevitably have hospital or doctor's visits from time to time) but we have a list of twenty names who enjoy attending whenever they can. There is always a good deal of laughter and some valued friendships have been formed in the group which was formed as a piece of social outreach and comprises both church members and others from the wider community. New members would always be most welcome.

Brian & Joyce Hoare

GRACIOUS STREET BOOK CLUB

The Thursday Book Club meets in The Bridge at 10.30 on the fourth Thursday each month during term time. There are 20 members on our list although sadly several can't come along at present. Usually about 10-12 attend although once we had 14 - including visitors!

Over coffee we each tell the others very briefly about a book or maybe two books we've read recently but if we haven't done any reading at all we come along anyway and just listen. We jot the titles and authors down and then circulate a list giving between 10 to 20 different books. This means we can try books we like the sound of because they've been recommended but which we might not normally choose. We either borrow books from the library (printed or digital), buy them on Kindle or, when members bring them for the church bookstall, we make a small donation to the Ukraine Appeal.

Our meetings are very friendly, chatty and informal and we're more than happy to welcome visitors or new members so if you're interested please either contact me or just come along.

Joyce Hoare – 01423 860750

LUNCH LINK

Lunch Link has been going for over 30 years for single folk living in Knaresborough over the age of 60. Our average age now is over 80 with new members joining the many familiar faces. It is an opportunity to enjoy a cooked two course meal in the company of others. We run with five Teams doing five very different meals from sausages, chicken meal, pork casserole, shepherd's pie and steak pie and the puddings vary from home baked lemon sponge some weeks to cheesecake and lemon meringue pie, all with either cream or custard. All very much appreciated.

Our five Teams have about five volunteers each and recently we have welcomed Helen Carass and Viv Ainsley to our Teams with Jeanette Mowat kindly taking over the leadership of one of the Teams from Chris Keene who unfortunately is not well at present. We thank Chris for all she has done for Lunch Link over the years and wish her well.

We have about 30 regular customers with a few more on the books. At present we do not have a waiting list so if you know anyone who would like to join us (charge is £5) or if you would like to find out more or join one of our Teams, please contact Eleanor Borkett 01423862345.

Eleanor Borkett

MEMORY LANE CAFÉ, KNARESBOROUGH

The Memory Lane Café have rebranded themselves as The Memory Lane Café, Knaresborough on Facebook, if you would like to follow us. The café is now run by Dot Rodham and Chrissy Richardson along with volunteers Ann Emms, Anne Dobbie and Laura Dudley. We now meet every second and fourth Tuesday of the month, not only for folk with early onset Dementia but for anyone who would like a warm place to come for entertainment and cake and a cuppa.

This last year we have had visits from Exotic Pets, Painting Pots, Air Ambulance, and various speakers.

We have created and planted the memory garden along with a wind sculpture and memory plaques which were unveiled by the Deputy Mayor Cllr Flood and dedicated by Rev Gordon Hay in September.

We had two fund raising events, a coffee morning and a pantomime "Annie", both of which were well supported.

This year we are having a coffee morning on 27th May and hoping to have a trip to Saltburn in the summer this will be our first summer outing since before Covid.

Dot Rodham

PROJECT BOB

Project Bob is a mental health group that meets weekly at Gracious Street. The purpose of the group is to discover empowerment through listening to one another's stories. The people who attend are living with a wide range of mental health issues. We have witnessed the act of sharing one another's stories has had a positive impact.

Project Bob is currently a small group, with limited number of leaders. It is our intention to develop the team, so that we can advertise and grow the group. We are also looking to see if we can develop our Methodist links with other mental health groups.

Please contact me for more information about the Project Bob

Peace be with you

Rev Gordon Hay

SPEAK UP!

Commencement January 2023

The Vision

A safe place for local refugee ladies to get together, have fun and become more confident about understanding, using and speaking English. Many feel isolated for various reasons. We want to deliver quality support within our community.

The Venue

The Forest room at GS church is ideal, as it's informal. We are indebted to the church for the free use of this space.

The Objective

Focus on repetition of essential vocabulary based around topics. Learning through fun, games and music is a powerful and successful medium.

The Activities

Songs, raps, role plays, simple conversation models, art, crafts and planting ... 'take home' items: – calendars, mindfulness pictures, bulbs in pots, giant faces; lavender bags; make-up brushes; Mother's Day cards.

Themes

Introductions; Physical health/mental health; Make-up; Colours and clothes; Time and Calendars and About Town.

Demographic & Attendance

Ladies are from Iraq, Syria, Afghanistan and more recently, Ukraine. A good core of 6-10.

Assistance

I am indebted to a rota of loyal helpers including Sue L, Dot, Diane M, Anne T and Morag. The more helpers, the more we can get alongside the ladies, helping them to 'Speak Up!'

Outcomes

Is their spoken English improving? Yes! They have certainly retained a lot of the target vocabulary and the raps and songs. A lot of laughter, engagement, fun and genuine gratitude. We share information/recordings on a group WhatsApp.

What next?

Lots of everyday topics to be explored, tasks and short outings; sessions with visiting craftspeople, creative spoken word etc. I'm applying for a Marsh Award which, if successful, will help resource and improve the Project. The emphasis will always be on ladies using their English, however little.

I thank God for the vision, support and success of this group; for each lady who comes; for the helpers and for the support of the church.

Hilary Hughes

LEADERSHIP, PROPERTY & FINANCE

LEADERSHIP TEAM

The Leadership Team has met roughly every 6-8 weeks over the past year.

Leadership consists of Reverend Gordon Hay, Libby Cook, Sue Walkington, Bill Rodham, Graham Taylor, Nick Garrett and David Rochester. James Wright has also been on Leadership for the past year and has recently stepped down. I wish to thank James very much for all his hard work, and in particular his great advice to us on IT matters.

The past year has been a challenging yet exciting one. One year ago we were still very much emerging from the shadow of Covid. Although we were doing physical services, they were by necessity still somewhat formal. A year on, we have really recovered our joy at Gracious Street and it has been fantastic to see. We have also developed our evening services back to them happening most Sunday evenings. We continue to explore a variety of forms of worship, including Feast and Taize.

We have also had our challenges regarding The Bridge. As a Leadership Team, we felt that we needed a Centre Manager, who could look after our administrative needs as well as developing our service there. It's been a long haul to think through the financials, agree the job description, advertise and recruit. Now we have Wendy about to join us within days as I write this. It's a super-exciting new chapter.

The needs of those in our town around us grow ever greater. We also continue to welcome refugees. Over the past year, of course, that has now included people from Ukraine, who have become part of us. The stories of people coming here may be desperately sad, but our role is to continue to say "All are welcome here", and to make that a reality. Our community store and Resurrected Bites continue to be a vital lifeline to so many in need.

Over the next year, we also hope to recruit a Pioneer Pastor, with a focus on outreach to our local community. This is another new and exciting challenge. We have followed Methodist Church initiatives such as "There Is Room" and "Holy Habits", as we seek to deepen our faith. The most recent initiative, Luke through Lent, has been a wonderful shared experience in exploring the Bible.

Please feel free to speak to any member of the Leadership Team if there's anything you think we should be discussing.

David Rochester

MANAGEMENT TEAM

The Management Team of Eleanor Borkett, Jeanette Mowat, Gordon Hay and Dot & Bill Rodham have worked extremely hard over the last year to ensure the building remains safe and welcoming for all our users. We are grateful that Dot Rodham returned to Management Team on a temporary basis following Juliana's move to a new job, to pick up the bookings secretary role and has done a great job. We are also extremely grateful to Phil Mason who has done an excellent job holding the fort on much of the admin work left by Juliana's move. We were of course very sad to lose one of our longest serving members of management team, Pauline Murray. Whilst in recent times Pauline was less able to do things physically, her wisdom and experience were greatly valued and are missed. One of the last things Pauline did just a few weeks before she died was to arrange for Harrogate Male Voice choir to do a concert on 30th September. I do hope many people will support this event as a tribute to Pauline and Harry for all they have done in the life of Gracious Street.

Our standard meeting agenda covers bookings, the Bridge, property, items raised by the worship stewards, items raised by leadership team, finance, and planning for future events. So always plenty to discuss and resolve.

Over the year we have re-arranged the Minister's office to create a warm, quiet space for people to drop in; we have continued to work alongside Resurrected Bites to enable the Café and the Community Store to develop and we continue to support Harrogate College and Henshaw's on a Tuesday and Wednesday respectively to open the Bridge. Jeanette has been instrumental in this work and has also opened up to serve coffee on a Monday to the groups who use the building on a Monday morning.

In recent weeks alongside leadership team we have developed the job description and person specification for the Centre Manager and we are looking forward to welcoming Wendy Holt and working with her to further develop the Bridge and other initiatives to reach out to the community.

Having lost the experience of Dot and Pauline we are keen to strengthen the Management team to increase its scope and resilience, so if you are interested

in ensuring we maintain and develop the mission of the Church through the use of our premises please have a word with me about how you could be involved.

The management team work extremely hard behind the scenes to keep our premises in good order and to ensure the smooth running of the building and I am grateful to them all for the great work they do.

Bill Rodham

Chair of Management Team

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

I took over as 'office boy' in late July 2022. Since then I have put in 331 hours in the 35 weeks so, assuming two weeks off, that pans out nicely at 10 hours per week. The job has included being receptionist and has helped provide valuable continuity as well as being general 'problem solver.'

I have tidied up the office and the computer files in that time and so hope to give the new Centre Manager a clean start at the beginning of April and a tidy work space. To that end I have also completed a set of admin instructions, building on the notes that Juliana left. I have worked closely with Eleanor (regarding the fabric of the building), Dorothy (room bookings) and Bill (settling invoices). My thanks go to those people and also to James for providing vital IT support. Mention must also go to Jeanette who has helped me in a thousand and one ways, as well as Rosemary, Hilary and Gordon. It has been a pleasure to be of some assistance to those people and all the others who do valuable work in the church but are too numerous to mention.

Phil Mason

TASK FORCE

Members: Phil Mason, Hugh Mowat, Alan Shankster.

The group has not met as often as they might due to holidays etc, but Phil (often with help from friend, Ian Willis) has attempted to keep on top of things. 47 items have been actioned and there are five things outstanding:

Priory door closure

Sanitiser machine outside toilets in Bridge

Forest room door handle

Hole in wall outside Castle room toilets

The old 'scissors mop' needs attention (though a new one has been purchased)

The group is always looking out for additional helpers, in particular Phil wishes to stand down and would like to hand over to a new team leader. It's possible for the group to change format or meeting times to suit personnel. It could be evenings or weekends, for example. The group does make a valuable contribution towards the upkeep of the buildings; if all those jobs had resulted in 'call outs' of professionals at (say) £50 a time that would equate to £2350 over the year.

Lastly a reminder to all users of the buildings, please do make a note in the book of any faults that you come across. That way things won't be forgotten and are likely to be actioned more quickly. The book is an A4 'spotty' thing and lives in the bookcase outside the church office.

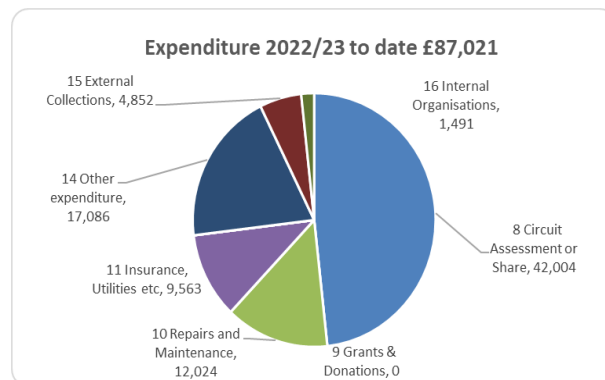
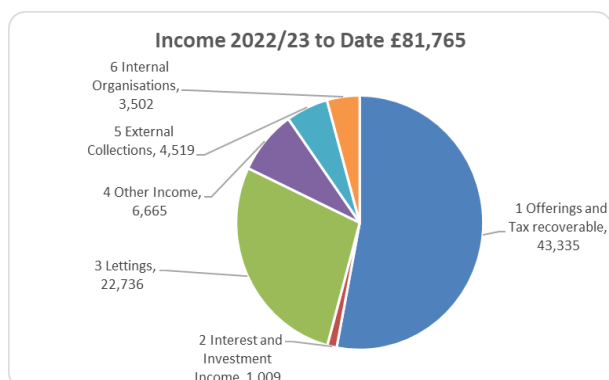
Phil Mason

TREASURER'S REPORT

The accounts for 2021/22 were signed off by the independent examiner in January and were agreed by Church Council at the March 23 meeting. Having invested in three key areas, Community Store, live streaming and the connexional pension fund we made a deficit of just under £30,000 for the year 2021/22. Our opening position is set out in table 1. Our current position as at 29th March, is set out in table 2 and shows that to date we have a deficit around £5,000. The breakdown of our spend to date is given in the pie charts below.

Table 1: Opening Position	01-Sep-22	Table 2: Current Position	29-Mar-23
Virgin Money	£17,751	Virgin Money	£11,062
Trustees for Methodist Purposes	£886	Trustees for Methodist Purposes	£886
Central Finance Board	£63,135	Central Finance Board	£64,569
Schofield Foundation	£6,400	Schofield Foundation	£6,400
Cash	£354	Cash	£354
Total in General Fund	£88,526	Total in General Fund	£83,271

Summary of Income & Expenditure to date



In the second half of the financial year we are going to see increasing costs due to utility bills, insurance and the cost of employing a centre manager. We have to date avoided the worst of the energy price rises and our gas is on a fixed price contract until 2027. Our new electricity contract will commence in July and the price will rise from around £600/month to £1,400 per month, an increase of £800/month. The appointment of the Centre Manager is an exciting opportunity which will support the development of the Bridge Café and mission of Gracious Street. This will however increase our costs in the short term. I am therefore forecasting that we will make a deficit of around £30,000. This will further deplete our reserves to around £50,000.

There are many great things that are being done in the Church which are having a very real and positive impact on people's lives. It is important that we build our finances to continue this great work. Whilst recognising the impact of the cost of living on many families I would urge members to review their giving if you are able, particularly if it is a while since you did this. For example, if 100 people were to increase their giving by £10 per month, the equivalent of say a weekly cup of coffee in a coffee shop, then this would go a long way to covering the additional cost of the centre manager. I am of course extremely grateful for all the financial support we currently receive.

I would encourage all who contribute regularly to church funds to consider paying by standing order which brings more certainty to our financial planning. I would further ask all who are eligible, to gift aid their donations, which brings in additional income totalling around £17,000 per year. I am indebted to Ed Walton who has been our gift aid secretary for the last few years but is stepping down after this year. A huge thanks to Ed for all he does within the Church and of course in his role as Circuit Treasurer. If anyone is interested in taking on the role of Gift Aid secretary in future, please do have a word with either myself or Ed.

I would once again like to take this opportunity to thank all those involved in looking after the Church finances Ed and Eliza Walton, Jeanette Mowat, Alan Middleton and Dot Rodham who bank the money week by week. Ed and Eliza will be stepping down from the banking rota from April, to focus on their other work in the Circuit and for Eliza as treasurer of Noah's Ark so a huge thank you to Eliza for her help with the banking over the years.

This of course means that there are opportunities for others to serve in this way. There are further opportunities to serve by supporting the stewards by counting the collection on a Sunday morning. This enables the stewards to focus on the general wellbeing of the congregation and preacher after the service.

Bill Rodham
Church Treasurer
31st March 2023

Church Council Membership & Managing Trustees at April 2023

Office holders

The Superintendent	Reverend Ben Clowes
The Minister	Reverend Gordon Hay
Circuit Representative	Mr Tony Pearson
Church Council Secretary	Mrs Hilary Wilkinson
Church Finance Officer	Mr Bill Rodham
Pastoral Secretary	Mr Rod Moxley
Safeguarding Officer	Dr Anne Thickett
Data Protection	Ms Kellie Read
<u>Management Team</u>	Mrs Eleanor Borkett (Property Secretary)

Leadership Team

Mr Bill Rodham
Mrs Jeanette Mowat
Mrs Libby Cook
Mr Nick Garrett
Mr David Rochester
Mr Bill Rodham
Mr Graham Taylor
Miss Sue Walkington

Church Meeting Elected Representatives

Mr Michael Borkett	Mr Philip Mason
Deacon Rosemary Coggrave	Mr Simon Pringle
Mr John Cook	Mrs Morag Ross
Ms Anna Cooley	Mr Alan Shankster
Mr Mike Hughes	Mrs Sue Whalley
Mr Iain King	Mr Tim Webster

Church Council Appointed

CAMEO	Mrs Rachel Watson
Home Groups	tba
Lunch Link	tba
Men's Breakfast	Mr Alan Middleton
Mission Team	Reverend Peter Whitaker
Noah's Ark	Mrs Doreen Whittaker
	Mrs Vickie Wrigglesworth
Playbox	Mrs Vicki Taylor
Task Force	Mr Philip Mason
Who Let the Dads Out	Mrs Liz Rochester