

Circuit Newsletter

Spring 2024



Please contact the Circuit Office if you would like to receive the weekly Circuit News email.

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The First Step...

Dear Friends,

Words come more easily sometimes than others. There are those occasions when we seem to know exactly what to say or what we want to say, and we find ourselves able to articulate coherently and meaningfully. There are those other moments when we feel stuck, and we struggle to find any fluency or way forward. If this is true of our conversations, then perhaps you also experience something similar if and when you begin a crossword puzzle. There are times when I scan the clues and start saying to myself “I can’t do any of these.” Equally there are times when the first few solutions come so easily that my response is more along the lines of “Well, this isn’t going to take long.” The strange thing is that, when the first few answers come in no time, I often find myself getting stuck later – and really stuck - whereas, when I have more difficulty getting into the puzzle in the first place, I tend to get further and even sometimes finish without cheating. I do wonder whether this is a psychological trick I am playing on myself, or whether I am drawing an accurate conclusion here. It may not always be the case, but it certainly feels sometimes that the more challenging the first step feels, the more straightforward matters can become afterwards and the further the progress. We do talk about “breaking the back” of a task, after all.

Puzzles do not only come in the form of crosswords and sudokus, of course. Exam papers, application forms, questionnaires and other documents can often pose the same challenge. There are times when our minds go blank. There are times when the responses, the thoughts and the ideas flow. And then there are the issues we are confronting, the choices and decisions before us which may have significant consequences for us and for others around us. Sometimes we feel confident about the way forward, but sometimes we become overwhelmed by the questions asked of us, even to the point of inertia.

The season of Lent depicts for us a time when the disciples around Jesus *learned and discovered on the move*. In their travelling together to Jerusalem they find themselves puzzling their way through to new insights and deeper perceptions of what it means for them to be there amid all that seems clear and all that appears enigmatic. In all of this perhaps it is worth reminding ourselves of the wisdom of Rumi, the thirteenth century Persian poet:

“The path only appears with the first step.”

With my best wishes to you all,

David

Bible Month June 2024

This year's suggested book for Bible Month is Genesis. We will be encouraging churches and preachers to join in to looking at stories from the book of Genesis and what we can learn from them about God, the world and ourselves.

Look out for more news coming soon!

Circuit Diary Dates

Wednesday 6th March 7pm, Circuit Council, Huntington.

Tuesday 12th March 7pm, Safeguarding officers meeting, Copmanthorpe.


Wednesday 12th June 7pm, Circuit Council, Haxby & Wigginton.

Sunday 7th July Circuit Farewell Service, 10.30am, Acomb Methodist Church.

News from the Children, Youth & Families team

The importance of having a break

One member of our team took this rather too much to heart when she decided to fall over on the ice skating trip and break her elbow! Apart from the important lesson of making sure Lorraine stays away from the ice (!!)



it was also an important lesson in Grace. As a 'do-er', sometimes it's good to have a reminder that you also need to 'be' and let others show you care and love, rather than giving all the time. So many people were glad to help her in the days and weeks that followed and to keep an eye on her to make sure she wasn't doing too much. An added bonus was getting out of the Christmas Dinner washing up. Thankfully the elbow's well on the mend and she is grateful for all the help and care. Perhaps *you* might also learn that lesson and let people 'do' for you – though Lorraine does not recommend breaking your elbow as a way to do it.

Here's what the team have been up to over the last few months.

ONE X

The group have been continuing to look at different aspects of membership of the Methodist Church. The team were delighted to be represented at Acomb Methodist as two of our young people were received into membership. It was a special service. Our thanks to Louisa Taylor for continuing to be part of these sessions.



We also took some time to explore the digital world as a means for living our faith. It was fascinating to dig a little deeper to understand how our young people interact on-line. Yes, there is a lot of gaming, but it's much more about using skills, creativity, interacting with friends, strategy and learning. In our group social media was mentioned very little, though whatsapp was used to keep in touch with friends. We are going to continue to explore how we can engage with digital media to look at faith in creative ways. The team is definitely going to be on a learning curve!

ONE FAMILY

We love looking at Bible stories in fun and creative ways so that all of our children, who are at a range of age and abilities, can take part. We have baked, done dress up, made dive bombing birds, sang, ate, chatted, asked questions and laughed our way through sessions.

ICE SKATING



The young people enjoyed our annual Christmas get together at the Designer outlet. Lots of fun and soggy clothing and cold fingers to be had. Lesson learned from the team: don't let Lorraine anywhere near the ice again.



SLEEPOUT FOR HOMELESSNESS

The wind was a challenge this year as the young people gathered for the sleepout event at Lidgett Methodist. The wind wasn't as bad as the next day, but still enough that the events shelter had to be hastily taken down before Amy was taken off like Mary Poppins. Although there wasn't much sleep happening, everyone still managed to raise nearly £3000. Well done to all involved. See Victoria's article for more details.

FAMILY MATTERS

Heather is working alongside Family Matters to offer a short course to help parents support their children's emotional and mental wellbeing. The course will give parents an opportunity to discuss issues affecting their children's wellbeing and offer a range of strategies to help support them. It will be held on a Tuesday evening at Acomb Methodist church in April and May. More details to follow nearer the time.

CHURCH UPDATES

The team at Poppleton are continuing to build on the relationships they have developed with groups using their premises. Visits to the under 5s playgroup, the childminders after school group and the community youth group have been arranged, to run activities and to get to know the leaders and those attending the groups. They are also looking to encourage parents and childminders with young children to come along to their Tuesday morning session of their café, Coffee on the Green. A supervised area with toys and craft activities will be provided, so parents can relax and enjoy a coffee and chat, whilst the children are occupied. Ecumenical partnerships are also developing nicely. The recently established Messy Church, held at the Anglican church, is being supported by volunteers from the Methodist church. Strensall Methodist are busy getting ready for their February 'Treasure Builders' Holiday Club. Lorraine is looking forward to being there and has helped out by creating a mini 'escape room', preparing a treasure hunt and getting some games ready to help the children engage with the theme. Check in next time to find out how it went.

LEGO CHURCH

There are now two churches in the Circuit that offer a monthly Lego Church, where there is the opportunity for people of all generations to come together to explore a bible story through being creative with Lego. Lidgett's Lego church is usually on the third Tuesday of the month from 4 – 5:15pm. Huntington Methodist have theirs on the fourth Saturday of the month from 2-3:30pm. The first one of these went extremely well and everyone who attended thoroughly enjoyed it.

PAEDIATRIC FIRST AID

Lorraine and some others in the circuit undertook their Paediatric first aid training. Important lessons learned but plenty of fun and cake along the way.

HEIRS OF HILDA

This year the Minster is hosting this event, which ties in to International Women's day. It's about encouraging young women in ministry and leadership. It's a family day and will involve a trail around York or around the Minster, an activity bag, worship and a chance to chat to inspirational women about their work and who inspired them. It's on Saturday 9th March and you can find out more on the separate flyer. This is the link:

<https://tickets.yorkminster.org/webstore/shop/viewItems.aspx?CG=ympfh&C=hilda>

OASIS REFLECTION SPACE

Amy and Lorraine, with ecumenical friends, have been trialling a quiet space in Wigginton School for children's mental health week. We took over one of the playground sheds and made it into a welcoming space where children took some quiet time out in the midst of a busy playground. There are 5 simple 'stations' with reflective activities that they can engage with. We look forward to hearing how the children



use the space. The aim is for this to be a simple 'drop in', where a team take the bunting, lighting and activities and set up the space for a school, or a care home or any other setting, leave it there for a few days and collect it up a few days later. We would like to build up a resource 'library' of reflection stations/prayer spaces as we go along. If you might be



interested in using something like this in your own context, please contact Lorraine.



If you would like any further information or to chat with the team, please get in touch:

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Sleepout for homelessness

Each year as I write this post sleepout article, I start by saying how much I dislike camping. This year was our fifth sleepout, and my dislike of camping remains as strong as ever. Although perhaps, as one of the young people pointed out, if I wanted to enjoy camping, I would not do it in January!



This year saw the warmest temperatures we have had for the event. That said the weather the week before included snow and ice, and the forecast was for storm Isha to come in on Sunday! The night was very windy, I was anxious my tent would not survive, and at about 1am the campsite shelter threatened to take off and had to be taken down. Despite that, we were lucky and avoided the worst of the weather.

There were a few negative comments on social media about our decision to go ahead. We are incredibly lucky that we can choose which night we sleep out, and if the conditions are too extreme, we can cancel the event. Or, had my tent been damaged in the wind I could go inside the church to seek shelter. Not only that, although it was a wet and windy night, conditions were far, far worse on Sunday. Someone who is homeless has no choice but to sleep out, they cannot look at the weather and decide that tonight is not a good night because the weather is too extreme. The dangers of sleeping out as a fund-raising event are not to be taken lightly, it is not an activity that is advisable for everyone. However, it is important to recognise the privilege inherent in having the option to weigh the risk and decide whether to go ahead.



Our activities this year included a role play 'game' in which participants worked in teams acting as housing services trying to place a variety of characters into hostels for the night. This is something that Kiera Snaith, Carecent project manager, and I have been working on over the year, with the aim of demonstrating the practical challenges involved when trying to offer accommodation. Although this resource is still a work in progress it stimulated significant discussion amongst the groups, and all the copies have gone on to be used in churches and groups across the district. We are now working on version 2.0 and hope to be able to offer this to more organisations via the Carecent website.

We were also joined by Sinéad Creagan from Inspire North (charity number 1180693) who spent time talking to the group and answering questions about their work. Inspire North is the parent organisation of two other charities; Community Links, which offers wide ranging mental health and well-being services; and Foundation an organisation that provides services for people who are at risk, aiming to prevent homelessness before individuals end up sleeping rough.



Using broad brush strokes, these organisations tackle homelessness from both ends. With Inspire North working to prevent it and Carecent serving those who have been failed by the system and ended up sleeping rough as a consequence. The reality is, of course, more nuanced, but this perspective, along with activities such as the role play activity help us to see the complex needs that exist within our society.

If you feel inspired to join us we will be sleeping out again on 18th January 2025 and if you are able to donate and support Inspire North and Carecent the link is <https://bit.ly/3S0wkEf>

Drop in help sessions

Need some help with governance issues for your church?

Safeguarding, Risk Assessments, Data Protection, Property Queries, Annual Returns, etc...

**17th April 9.30am-11.30am at
Huntington Methodist Church**

**15th May 9.30am-11.30am at
Lidgett Methodist Church**

Drop in to talk to Lois (Support Manager) & Angie (Resources Manager) and others and get help with running your church.

From help completing governance returns to advice on tricky issues, our aim is to provide a one-stop-shop to help your church flourish.

Both sessions are running alongside church cafes, so come, get a coffee, get some help and have a chat!

News from the Circuit Eco Task Force

Good advice from toilet rolls

It's not every day you find sound advice from a toilet roll manufacturer, but hey, I will take my inspiration where I can. It actually summarised the points of a book I had just been reading. Headlines are getting increasingly worrying and research from 2023 shows that 80% of people have at least some concern about climate change. So, a certain brand of recycled toilet rolls recently sent an email entitled '7 things to remember when the climate crisis is stressing you out'.



1. What you're experiencing is Eco-Anxiety and it might show up as irritability, stress, grief, feeling helpless, guilt, or a whole host of other things.
2. Your anxiety is a very rational response to a genuine climate emergency. Instead of trying to push the feelings away, sit with them a little. They show you care and that is pretty great.
3. Your anxiety can help you figure out what matters to you most. The climate crisis is huge and we can't care equally about every part, so let your feelings guide you towards the issues you're most passionate about (or as we might think about it: being called to action).
4. Keeping hard emotions to yourself is really tiring. We're literally all in this together, so connect with people and talk it out. You'll feel less isolated and less overwhelmed, promise! Evidence shows that those 80% of people hardly ever talk about how they feel. Fear of being thought 'too depressing' or 'going on about it too much' hold us back. We will actually find that most folk are worried about it, at least a little. Part of the beauty of local Eco Church groups or the Eco Task Force is the solidarity and encouragement you find with others who care as much as you do.
5. Connect with creation helps to remind us how amazing God's world is and how connected we are in the web of life. It's so powerfully good for our physical and mental wellbeing, as well as firing us up to protect it.
6. It's not all doom and gloom – there's good news out there too! I refer you back to previous newsletters in looking out for the positive news. It is definitely there. Just for starters, there is every chance we could reach peak fossil fuels this year. Last year the investment in renewables outstripped the investment in fossil fuels for the first time.
7. We need eco-anxiety – without it there would be no action. Let your feeling energise you to take back some control by voting, protesting, talking to others and remembering that change can happen:



“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.”

Anthropologist Margaret Mead

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Bible Month – Genesis

Given that Bible Month in June is focusing on Genesis this year, it could be a great opportunity for Eco Churches to hold a Climate or Creation Service. If you want to get some ideas for a service, or have some to share, contact Lorraine Jones. To give you one idea, Holly Adams from the Evangelism and Growth team gave an excellent presentation on creation care and evangelism. I'd not really considered it before, but committing to a sustainable, just and climate friendly lifestyle is evangelism. It is kingdom building. Do check it out. <https://www.sdmc.org.uk/ministries-across-the-district/eco-church-1/integrating-creation-care-evangelism/>

January Meet Up – Hope and Healing in a Time of Climate Crisis.

The group received a warm welcome from St Bedes and the Director, Paul Golightly, led us in our opening prayers. Lorraine Jones then took us through a summary of an encouraging and inspiring book called 'Active Hope' (see the book recommendations below). The book helps us think about the difference between optimism, which can be quite passive, and active hope. You don't actually need to feel hopeful to have active hope; you focus your intention on what positive outcome you want to happen and act on that. The book looks at different important aspects of Active Hope; Gratitude, honouring your feelings, seeing with new eyes (realising how interconnected we are with others and with nature) and going forth. For me, it was rather releasing to realise that no one person has to have all of the answers and do everything; we each need to do our own work, based on the gifts and context we live in.

Keith Seddon led us in a Take Time Meditation, with a focus on acknowledging how we feel through the following Bible Verse:

“Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life?” Matthew 6:26-27

Eco Fairs to watch out for!

Look out for flyers for the ACT now! Conference held at Acomb Methodist on Saturday April 27th. Last year's was a great success so I am looking forward to another round of interesting and encouraging workshops. In September as part of York Environment Festival, you will be spoilt to be able to go to not one, but two Eco Fairs! Acomb will hold another one and a few churches on the other side of York will hold another. Both will offer new ideas and tips on taking steps to live a fairer and more sustainable lifestyle. If you want to get involved in either of these, contact Lorraine Jones.

Recommendations from the Group

See this repairable electric toothbrush: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y143irxnV2A>

A big way to reduce your impact is looking at where your savings are held. This website can help you understand your money's carbon footprint. <https://www.mymothertree.com/>

Active Hope: How to face the mess we're in without going crazy. Joanna Macy and Chris Johnstone.

Thursday 11 April, 6pm Green Screen continues at City Screen

[Six Inches of Soil](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OaJl0yQ7ufQ) (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OaJl0yQ7ufQ>) is the inspiring story of young British farmers standing up against the industrial food system, transforming the way they produce food – to heal the soil, improve our health, and provide for local communities. As with all Green Screens the film is followed by a live panel discussion with local experts including either the director or producer. If you would like to be part of the panel please get in touch with Cath at City Screen and also contact her if you'd like to take a group to the screening.

Watch out for a whole range of events and meetings coming up throughout the year with the Eco Task Force.



What are we missing?

Is there something going on in your church that you think the Circuit should know about? Why not write a few paragraphs or take some photos and send them to us for inclusion in the next newsletter?

Please send stories and photos for the Spring newsletter to the Circuit Office by early May.

Circuit prayer rota

3rd March	<p>The church on the Circuit prayer rota for this Sunday is Acaster Malbis. Give thanks and pray for the work of God in that place.</p> <p>We're about halfway through Lent now. Is there anything you need to talk to God about, as you prepare for Easter?</p>
10th March	<p>The church on the Circuit prayer rota for this Sunday is Acomb. Give thanks and pray for the work of God in that place.</p> <p>Acomb is home to the Tea To Go Project, providing take-away meals to those in need. Give thanks for those who help the project, and pray for everyone involved.</p>
17th March	<p>The church on the Circuit prayer rota for this Sunday is Bishopthorpe. Give thanks and pray for the work of God in that place.</p> <p>As we move towards Easter, pray that you will be aware of God's presence with you and that you will hear what God wants you to learn.</p>
24th March	<p>The church on the Circuit prayer rota for this Sunday is Central. Give thanks and pray for the work of God in that place.</p> <p>Central is home to Carecent, the breakfast and help center for people who are homeless or in need. Pray for those who use Carecent, those who work and volunteer at Carecent, and for those who work and volunteer there.</p>
31st March	<p>Today is Easter Sunday. Give thanks that thanks to Jesus' death and resurrection we can know God's love and new life.</p>
7th April	<p>The church on the Circuit prayer rota for this Sunday is Clifton. Give thanks and pray for the work of God in that place.</p> <p>Clifton is home to the Pebbles group for pre-school children and their carers. Pray for all who work with this age group in our churches to be encouraged and to be able to share God's love.</p>
14th April	<p>The church on the Circuit prayer rota for this Sunday is Clifton Moor. Give thanks and pray for the work of God in that place.</p> <p>Clifton Moor is run in partnership with the Church of England. Pray for relationships between our two denominations, and partnerships with other churches.</p>
21st April	<p>The church on the Circuit prayer rota for this Sunday is Copmanthorpe. Give thanks and pray for the work of God in that place.</p> <p>Give thanks and pray for those who seek to reach out to our communities. What activities take place in your church? Pray about how you could make a difference to the area where you live.</p>
28th April	<p>The church on the Circuit prayer rota for this Sunday is Easingwold. Give thanks and pray for the work of God in that place.</p> <p>Give thanks and pray for those in our churches who work with older people, providing friendship and practical support through activities such as lunch clubs, fellowship gatherings and home visiting.</p>
5th May	<p>The church on the Circuit prayer rota for this Sunday is Haxby & Wigginton. Give thanks and pray for the work of God in that place.</p> <p>Give thanks for those who take on a leadership role in the churches in our circuit- maybe that's by leading worship, managing finance, property or safeguarding, or leading youth work or other activities. Is there any role you feel you might be being called to?</p>
12th May	<p>The church on the Circuit prayer rota for this Sunday is Heslington. Give thanks and pray for the work of God in that place.</p>

	This is the beginning of Christian Aid week. Look at their website https://www.christianaid.org.uk/ to see where they are currently working and pray for what they do.
19th May	The church on the Circuit prayer rota for this Sunday is Hessay. Give thanks and pray for the work of God in that place. Today is Pentecost, when we celebrate the coming of the Holy Spirit. How does the presence of the Holy Spirit affect your life?
26th May	The church on the Circuit prayer rota for this Sunday is Heworth. Give thanks and pray for the work of God in that place. Aldersgate Sunday is when we remember how John Wesley felt his heart 'strangely warmed' as he experienced the love of God. Pray that you and the church may also experience God's love and know it is real.

Circuit Council Report December 2023

- The meeting heard a report from the Circuit Consultation group and discussed this in groups, focusing on Buildings, Governance and People. There will be further discussion with the Consultation task group and then the Circuit Leadership Team before proposals are brought to the March Circuit Council.
- Membership of the Carecent Executive was approved, with Judith Stoddart and Sue Gill (as well as David Bidnell) being nominated by the Circuit Council to the Executive. Angie Creswick and John Hayward will also be assisting with resourcing support and safeguarding.
- Sally Gall and Sue Gill were appointed as Circuit Stewards, specialising in lay employment and Carecent respectively. Nick Dawson, Janet Bowling, Vic Paylor and Ann Smallwood were appointed as signatories for legal documents on behalf of the Circuit.
- It was noted that there is a new Chaplain at Forest of Galtres School- Frances Simon.
- The meeting approved the development of the assessment calculations, and budget, for 2024/25 based on an increase in the overall assessment take of 4.7%. There will be consultation with church treasurers before this is brought to Circuit Council in March to be finally approved.
- It was recognised that the role of Circuit Treasurer is a big one, and the meeting approved in principle spreading the workload over a small group. This will be developed further by the Circuit Leadership Team.
- There was a discussion about ringfencing the proceeds of sale of Stillington Methodist Church to be used for work in the villages. The discussion will be continued by the Circuit Leadership Team and discussed by Circuit Council again at a later date.
- The meeting agreed the sale of New Earswick Methodist Church to the Joseph Rowntree housing trust and delegated the management of the sale of Stillingfleet to the Circuit Stewards. The replacement of windows and re-roofing sections of the building at Easingwold was approved.

Reflections

How do you use your skills and talents in worship and service to God and others?

Preaching and teaching

“Let no one despise your youth, but set the believers an example in speech and conduct, in love, in faith, in purity. Until I arrive, give attention to the public reading of scripture, to exhorting, to teaching.”

1 Timothy 4, v12-13



We tend to think of teaching in the church as just what happens in the pulpit, but here Paul reminds Timothy that it goes beyond words. People will look at our actions and the example we set, especially those who stand up at the front and take on leadership roles. This is especially true for preachers, who help people understand God’s word and what it means for them. Teaching can also happen in children and youth work, in small groups, and many other settings.

Do you see yourself as a teacher? Do you enjoy helping others understand and explore faith? Even if you’ve never considered preaching, think about whether you could be being called to help others learn more about God.

Give thanks for those who serve God through preaching and teaching.



Pastoral care

“The LORD is my shepherd, I lack nothing. He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, he refreshes my soul.”

Psalm 23 vs 1-3

The word ‘pastor’ comes from the Latin for shepherd, someone who cares for and leads the flock to pasture. In the modern church it tends to be used for those who care for the sick, lonely or those in need; those who have the wellbeing of people in mind. Being a caring community is an important part of being church, as is making sure that the support we offer is appropriate and has the best interests of those being cared for at heart. Praying for people is also important.

We can all pray and look out for those around us who need a bit of extra help- but might you be called to a deeper involvement in caring for others?

Give thanks for those who serve God through caring for others.

Administration and organisation

“Joseph’s master saw that the LORD was with him, and that the LORD caused all that he did to prosper in his hands. So Joseph found favour in his sight and attended him; he made him overseer of his house and put him in charge of all that he had. From the time that he made him overseer in his house and over all that he had, the LORD blessed the Egyptian’s house for Joseph’s sake; the blessing of the LORD was on all that he had, in house and field.” Genesis 39 v3-5



Throughout the Old Testament we find figures like Joseph, Moses and Nehemiah who were called to deal with the organisational side of life. In the New Testament, Paul spent a lot of time collecting money and setting criteria for leaders who would make sure the churches ran smoothly.

There are lots of jobs that happen behind the scenes in the church- keeping the accounts, managing property repairs, dealing with groups that use our space, or organising the rotas that help our events run smoothly. Do we think of these as gifts? Do we consider them as part of our worship?

Give thanks for those who serve God through organisational gifts.



Creativity

“See, the LORD has called by name Bezalel... he has filled him with divine spirit, with skill, intelligence, and knowledge in every kind of craft, to devise artistic designs, to work in gold, silver, and bronze, in cutting stones for setting, and in carving wood, in every kind of craft.”

Exodus 35 vs 30-34

We might think this is just an obscure passage about the construction of the tabernacle, but it demonstrates that all kinds of skills and crafts can be used to God’s glory. Bezalel and his colleagues were called to use their God-given skills to create art and objects that would help remind people of who God was. Through their creations people would be pointed to God, and symbolic objects would remind them of what he had done for them.

Where is there space for creativity in your church? Are there opportunities for people to worship through art, music, dance? Perhaps people could share creative writing, or photographs that they feel help them explore their faith. How might you be creative in worship and service?

Give thanks for those who serve God through their creativity.