



# York Methodists

# Plan and Circuit News



Do you know where you're going?

**May to July 2019**

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Dear Friends,

Twelve months ago we were emerging from one of the wettest and coldest winters and springs for years. It was then that I embarked on my pilgrimage around the Circuit, visiting all the Churches, meeting many people and spending time in conversation and prayer. I learnt a lot, and have reflected long and hard on what I experienced.

Last autumn, the Circuit Synod suggested that we might build on this and ask each Church to engage with some questions about how they see their life now, and into the future, and then share those reflections with members of the Circuit leadership. The Circuit Council has agreed that we should try and carry this out during May, and although as I write this the details are not quite finalised, they are likely to look something like this.

During April, members of each Sunday's congregation will be asked to complete a short questionnaire which will offer descriptions of the church, impressions of its work and impact and people's feelings about the future. These will be collected and collated and, together with some property and financial information, will form the basis of a Pastoral Review Meeting between the Church Leadership and a Review Team made up of Circuit Stewards and Ministers. A summary of the discussions there will be fed back to the congregation and the Church Council in due course, as well as helping the Circuit Leadership Team and the Circuit Council in their deliberations.

Finding ways of describing the Church is always an interesting task. The Methodist Church is sometimes described as being "people poor and resource rich" – reflecting the fact that while nationally in the past 25 years our membership has halved, when the financial reserves of our churches are added together then the resources to fund and facilitate the work of God are there to be tapped and unlocked. And in the Easter season, as we travel from the empty tomb to Pentecost, let's not forget the untold riches which are ours through the gospel.

But that journey begins with one of the great paradoxical verses in the Bible – 'He is not here...' (Luke 24:5). And while everything we know and believe follows from the second half of that verse ('but has risen'), our calling has to include the initial realisation of God's movement and our need to respond to it. As Brian Wren's great Easter hymn puts it:

*Christ is alive! No longer bound to distant years in Palestine*

The change from familiarity is never easy – but read the Easter stories again –

for they are full of examples of people making that journey and discovering a new and enriched relationship with God as they let go. As we celebrate Easter and Pentecost once again, may we find the same transformative courage.

With every blessing,

Keith

### **Circuit Youth Worker: Introducing Amy Shephard**

Being born into a family that was a part of a large Methodist church, I guess there was never any doubt that I would still be part of that church 23 years on. I tried university and decided it wasn't for me, so I returned to York. I have been a home care assistant, a nursery practitioner, a steward and senior steward, and now I start a new chapter in my life, as a youth worker. I recently started studying at Cliff College, in the Peak District, in Mission and Ministry, following the youth pathway. The course and my new role in the circuit go hand in hand, practical work and a theology to base it all on.



I am excited to begin this new adventure, working with the young people in the circuit in which, up until recently, I was a young person myself. I am passionate about giving young people opportunities to grow as individuals in Christ.

### **Stop Press: Children & Families Workers**

We are pleased to let you know that Heather Lewis from Lidgett and Lorraine Jones from Haxby have been offered the role of Children & Families Workers in the Circuit. Heather and Lorraine will be working part time alongside Amy Shephard and Victoria Etherington. Please pray for them all and especially for Lorraine and Heather as they join our staff team.

### **Ordinations**

Congratulations to Judith Stoddart whom the district has recommended to be ordained as a deacon at conference this year. She will join Corinne Brown in being ordained at Shirley Methodist church on Sunday 30th June. Also being ordained at conference this year is Paul Parker, his ordination will be at Darlington St Methodist Church Wolverhampton. Please remember them and their families in your thoughts and prayers.

## Bible Month

In this year's Bible Month we will be looking at the book of Colossians. You can find out more and download the Bible Month magazine, or order printed copies, from [www.preachweb.org/biblemonth](http://www.preachweb.org/biblemonth)



We hope churches will get involved with services on the passages and themes from Colossians, and that small groups will run taking a deeper look at the passages and how they should influence our lives and faith during the week.

We are planning Bible Month to take place during June and July, starting after Pentecost on Sunday 16th June, and continuing on Sundays 23rd June, 30th June and 7th July. Then on 14th July we have our Circuit Celebration.

Look out for more information and resources coming soon.

### **Circuit Celebration:** "Growing in the knowledge of God"

This year's Circuit Celebration will be on **Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> July at Acomb Methodist Church**. We will gather at **11am** for worship, reflection on the past year and the business of the AGM.

This will be followed by lunch (bring your sandwiches, we'll supply tea, coffee and cake) and a chance to chat and look at stalls and displays.

Then there will be an all-age Celebration at 1.30pm with the event concluding by 3pm, followed by refreshments.

Parking at Acomb Methodist will be reserved for those needing disabled and priority parking. There are other places to park around Acomb and buses stop nearby. But to help everyone get there we will be organising coaches— these will leave from:

- Easingwold
- Haxby & Wigginton
- Copmanthorpe
- Stamford Bridge and Dunnington

You will need to book a place on a coach and there will be a suggested donation to help cover costs.

We encourage everyone to book for the day- you can do this online via Eventbrite or if you're unable to book online please email or phone the circuit office. Please book and look out for further updates via the weekly Circuit news.

## Is your chapel *Open and Welcome*?

Do you know how many people walk, cycle or drive past your chapel each day? Spring and the promise of summer brings people outside, both locals and visitors. All of them are potential visitors to places of worship. The Open Welcome project helps you make the most of the opportunity to connect with people through having your chapel *open* and *welcoming* at certain times.

Open Welcome is much more than having your doors open and some notices to read. It gives people the confidence to come in and to feel that: 'We were expecting you. These are the ways we want you to feel welcome in our building. This is who we are and how you can meet us.'

Your chapel is a witness to the worshipping community, the body of Christ. It is a place of quiet and reflection and prayer, a sanctuary that some may be seeking. Some visitors may like its history and want to know the stories of the families who have worshipped there. Other folk may just be curious to know what is inside a chapel, what are things for and what happens there. Open Welcome is a chance to introduce yourselves and show a Christian welcome for everyone.

You can choose when to have your chapel available. It can be just a few hours on one or two days each week. It is whatever suits you.

As Open Welcome adviser this is what I can bring:

First of all someone to encourage you and to help you get going. Someone to answer your questions and address any worries you may have. I can then support you in considering missional aspects of Open Welcome and the possible new connections with people who visit the chapel.

We can look at these topics:

- First impressions – the journey into the building from outside
- What a Welcome Display could include
- Other literature and things to place in the chapel
- The practicalities of providing refreshments
- Connecting with local visitors
- Considering the needs of non-local visitors like walkers, cyclists and tourists
- Thinking how people might use the space in the chapel
- Expressing what makes your chapel special, including celebrating its history
- Creating a welcoming community in the congregation
- Considering why people may visit your chapel

- Being clear about what the results of Open Welcome might be
- Being aware of mission opportunities.
- Following up on visits
- Handling prayer requests
- Helping people in need
- Hospitality and availability
- Practical advice about security and insurance

Open Welcome presents a special opportunity to connect with people just by opening the building and taking some practical steps. It is also a great chance to share what God's love is like in the way that we do this and, if we are ready, to engage with our visitors and help them on their journey of faith. It is something in which the whole congregation can get involved. It could be a move into purposeful missional activity for your congregation. Whether you feel you are ready to try it or just want to talk about the idea I am really happy to help. Please get in touch so we look at working together.

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## **Parkrun**

*On Saturday 23rd March members at Haxby & Wigginton and other churches volunteered at the New Earswick Parkrun. This is what happened.*

**7.30am** My heart was slightly in my mouth as I opened the bedroom curtains because for the last two Saturdays it's been blowing a gale and pouring down with rain in York. I needn't have worried, it's dry and fairly still and my weather app tells me it's 7 degrees, so I move on to my next decision - just a short sleeved t-shirt or a long sleeved undershirt as well. I finally decide to be 'hard' and go for the short sleeves only, assuming I will warm up when I get running!

**8.00am** Have we got everything? Because Haxby and Wigginton Methodist church parkrunners are volunteering in lots of roles today we asked our church members if they'd like to contribute something small for all of the parkrunners and volunteers after the event, so we've got loads of chocolate eggs, hot cross buns and Fairtrade bananas (it's nearly Easter!) to remember as well.

**8.15am** We're all ready and head down to New Earswick sports field. Several members from church arrive to set up tables laden with goodies for after the event - now if that isn't an incentive to run 5k.

**8.55am** Lots of people are now gathered to hear the race briefing. There are several people (at least 7) doing their first ever parkrun, as well as tourists from Leeds and London.

**9.00am** And we are off. The conditions are much better than the last few weeks, with only a little bit of mud in places, and not too warm or too windy either. This means 17 people got new PBs [Personal Bests], including the first and second finishers (sadly I didn't get a PB, but I still enjoyed the run!!)

And then, thanks to the church members, post run goodies galore - crème eggs, bananas and hot cross buns have never tasted so good, probably because we felt we had achieved something and therefore in some way had earned them.

Thanks to all of the volunteers who made the parkrun happen, and all those who volunteer week in week out to ensure parkrun takes place every week. We really do appreciate it.

Around 30 people from Haxby and Wigginton Methodist church can be found running at a variety of parkruns each Saturday morning. A few people have been parkrunning for a number of years, others have joined in more recently, and some were doing their first parkrun today. But wherever we are (in other parts of the UK or overseas) we go along to get our parkrun 'fix' and be welcomed by members of this wonderful community. As a church that's what we also try to do, and so we were really pleased to have the opportunity to all volunteer at New Earswick parkrun today and hope in doing so we might also have just recruited some more parkrunners who will have seen the wonderful parkrun community in action for the first time and the health and social benefits it can provide.

Steph Cooper



## Circuit Council Report 13th February

- The meeting was updated on the resources available for Christian Aid week and on changes in staff at Aroma, and approved a new Circuit Representative to the Aroma board.
- Amy Shephard introduced herself to the meeting as Circuit Youth Worker and spoke about the One X and One Programme and the 3Generate manifesto.
- Circuit Council agreed to the sale of the site of the former Shipton Methodist Church. Work was also agreed to make improvements to the manses at Vanbrugh Drive (where Revd John Schofield will be moving) and Trentholme Drive. It was agreed to rent out the Chestnut Avenue manse.
- Revd Steve Barlow has been matched with our circuit to work in the churches where Revd Julia Skitt currently is from September 2019. He will be offering the circuit 30% time alongside a District role. The Circuit Welcome Service for Steve and for Revd Ruth Duck will be on Sunday 1st September at 6.30pm, venue TBC.
- We were reminded about the District Gathering 'Flourish' 18th-20th October. People are encouraged to watch a video about the event (<https://vimeo.com/316850337>) and to book via Eventbrite. The circuit is hoping to arranging coach travel for Saturday and Sunday nearer the time.
- The meeting gave permission for window repairs at Acomb, portico and wall repairs at Central and window replacement at Stillingfleet.
- Ian Hill requested the meeting to encourage respect for those working or volunteering in our churches, particularly when it comes to Safeguarding as there have been instances of disrespect from people 'fed up' with procedures. Treating each other with respect is at the core of safeguarding and of our churches.
- We are expecting Deacon Judith Stoddart to be ordained on Sunday 30th June. Deacon Corinne Brown and Revd Paul Parker who were sent out from our circuit should also be ordained that day.

The meeting received a report on steps towards implementing the discussions from the Circuit Synod:

- For the last two Plans each church has had one Own Arrangement (or joint service or similar) service each month. It is still a struggle to fill the Plan and there will likely be further difficulties due to illness and fewer ministers. Churches were encouraged to consider ways to help relieve this, e.g. by

staggering service times with nearby churches to allow preachers to take two services in a morning, worshipping with ecumenical partners, or looking at experimenting with ideas such as streaming services from another church.

- During May each church will be visited by representatives of the circuit leadership to talk about how each church sees their future and how the circuit can help.
- It was agreed that the money from the sale of Shipton would be used as a Mission Opportunity Fund to support change— e.g resources and equipment for new projects or staff to work with churches for a defined time.
- It was agreed to convert the former chapel at Melbourne Terrace into a Circuit Hub to house the Circuit Office (which has outgrown its current site at Strensall) and spaces that could be used for meetings, training and also be let out to help cover costs. We will not be selling the site at present due to the lease on the Melbourne Centre, so this is a good use of the premises.

**Statistics for Mission– did you know?**

- On average over 1000 people of all ages attend worship in a church in the circuit each week.
- There are nearly 1,300 Methodist members of churches in our circuit. If you include Anglican members of single-congregation LEP’s, it’s over 1,400.
- Around half of our churches have a website where you can find out more about who they are and what they do. Is this something your church could think about?

**Circuit Staff rest days**

Keith Albans	Friday
Elizabeth Cushion	Friday
Rory Dalgliesh	Thursday
Ian Hill	Friday
Andy Lindley	Monday

Rachel Muthoni	Saturday
John Schofield	Friday
Julia Skitt	Monday
Judith Stoddart	Saturday

## Diary dates

30th April	Circuit Council, 7.30pm, Copmanthorpe
5th May	Circuit Service & tea, Stillingfleet, 3pm-6pm
12th May	Christian Aid service, Southlands, 6.30pm
26th May	Easter Offering Service, Huntington, 4pm,
13th June	Leaders of Worship & Preachers Meeting, Holgate, 7.00 for 7.30 p.m.
16th June– 14th July	Bible Month: Colossians
14th July	Circuit Celebration, 11am-3.30pm, Acomb Methodist
28th July	Julia Skitt's leaving service, Copmanthorpe 6.30pm
1st September	Circuit Welcome Service for Revds Steve Barlow and Ruth Duck, 6.30pm, Clifton.

## Regular prayer meetings

Easingwold	Prayer meeting every Friday 8.30am.
Haxby	Ecumenical prayer 9am every Wednesday, venues vary.
Heslington	Christian Meditation Group, Fridays 10.30am & second Sundays 7pm. Prayer Group, Tuesdays 10am.
Heworth	Prayers, Tuesday 12.30pm-1pm
Holgate	Prayer and Care, Thursdays 10am.
Huby	Prayer meeting, Thursdays 8am.
Husthwaite	Prayer meeting, 1st Wednesday of the month 9am.
Poppleton	Prayerful Reflection, Tuesdays 10am-10.30.
Southlands	Concern: a meeting for prayer, Wednesdays 2.30pm.
Tholthorpe	Prayer meeting, Thursdays 8.45am.

## Circuit Services

**5th May** Stillingfleet Bicentenary service  
3pm at St Helen's (Stillingfleet Parish Church).

**26th May** Easter offering service 4pm, Huntington

**1st September** Welcome Service 6.30pm, Clifton

## Circuit Prayer Rota

Week beginning	Church	Praying for our Circuit
5th May	Acaster Malbis	Those working in the emergency services
12th May	Acomb	Christian Aid
19th May	Alne	Those with caring responsibilities
26th May	Bishopthorpe	Relationships with other churches
2nd June	Central	Those who care for our buildings
9th June	Clifton	Methodist Homes
16th June	Clifton Moor	Those engaged in pioneering work– to take the church to those outside
23rd June	Copmanthorpe	Refugees and migrants
30th June	Cornerstone	Those being ordained at Methodist Conference
7th July	Dunnington	Action for Children
14th July	Circuit Celebration	
21st June	Easingwold	Rural Mission
28th July	Haxby & Wigginton	Families and relationships

# Circuit Celebration

**“Growing in the knowledge of God”**

**Sunday 14th July, 11am-3.30pm**

**Acomb Methodist Church** Front St, York, YO24 3BX

Join others from around the Circuit to worship together and celebrate the life of our Circuit.

Including the Circuit Annual General Meeting.

With guest speaker Revd. Dr. Jonathan Dean

All ages welcome! (children– please bring an adult).

There will be activities for children during part of the day as well as all age worship in the afternoon.



Please bring your own lunch and a mug-  
drinks and snacks will be provided.



Coaches are being arranged from several locations.

Please book a place for each person when you book for the day.

You can book online via Eventbrite (<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/york-circuit-celebration-and-agm-2019-tickets-56329666549>)

or by contacting the Circuit Office on  
**admin@yorkmethodist.org.uk** or **01904 499661**.