



**York
Methodists**

Plan and Circuit News



At the Welcome Service on 1st September– Revds Helen Freeston,
Steve Barlow, Leslie Newton, Keith Albans and Ruth Duck.

November 2019– January 2020

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Dear Friends,

Each Saturday morning many people from around the Circuit turn out to take part in a Park Run – a 5km run for everyone, irrespective of age and ability. It's been going for 15 years now, and it feels good to be part of a worldwide community which has grown from one person's desire to address their own issues around mental health. Earlier this year I heard the founder speak on the radio and was struck by what he said. He commented that he knew that Park Run is successful because the average time taken to complete the run has increased! I cannot think of many other human exploits where getting 'worse' is a sign of getting 'better'!

The past few weeks have seen many of us participating in Church Pastoral Reviews – part of a process aimed at exploring how we see ourselves within a church, how others see us and how we feel about the present and the future. The results of these reviews will help us better understand how and where our resources of people and ministry might best be focussed.

It is very easy to assume that we know what a 'successful' church looks like – indeed whenever you read the stationing profiles which are published each year it is quite clear what many define as success – lots of children and young families and lots of activities for everyone are usually writ large. But I wonder whether that is what Jesus is looking for? All too often we assume that when Jesus spoke about the kingdom of God in his parables of astonishing growth, that he had the as yet unfounded church in mind. No – I thank God that the kingdom is so much bigger than our notions of church, but am saddened to think that so much of our activity seems unrelated to the vision of the kingdom.

We are living in difficult times. Casting our minds back 30 years to 1989, life seemed very different and the opportunities almost endless. The Berlin Wall came down, the Soviet bloc was dismantled, and the end of Apartheid became possible with the release of Nelson Mandela. I heard recently that a former President of Conference was looking back to that time and saying, "how good a time that was – it felt like we were winning!" To which the former Archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams, who was in the gathering responded, "Whatever made you think it was about winning – it is about being faithful!"

In a few weeks' time we'll tell again the story of Jesus' birth. And when you strip away all the accretion of tradition, commercialisation and sentimentality, the heart of that story is of human faithfulness through dark and difficult

times, and of God's revelation in the form of a dependent, vulnerable child, born in dangerous circumstances. "Our God contracted to a span, incomprehensibly made man."

With every blessing,

Keith

Introducing Revd Ruth Duck

My early life was spent on a farm outside the village of North Duffield, near Selby. I grew up in a Christian family and attended the local Methodist chapel. Sunday School, Girl Crusaders, the Faith Mission and a youth fellowship all played their part in helping me to root and grow my faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Marriage to Geoff, and 3 children, jobs in banking, post office, school and GP Practice extended my experience of life.



As a teenager I trained as a local preacher, thus joining many other members of my family onto 'The Plan'. From 2000 I worked as a lay employee in Heworth for 3 years, and from 2001 in Strensall and Sheriff Hutton. These roles confirmed by sense of call into ordained ministry, and after training at the York St Johns Institute for Community Theology I was stationed to the Easingwold Section of the 'old' York North Circuit in 2005. In 2012 I moved to Pickering – part of the new Ryedale Circuit, and became officially Superintendent, after the death of a colleague, in January 2017.

Geoff and I are looking forward to returning to the York area, living and working amongst old friends and new. PS. I am not the hymn writer whose hymns appear in Singing the Faith!

God in Love Unites Us

We have a saying in our family for when it suddenly becomes obvious that someone is unaware of something it was assumed everyone knew – namely, "Queen Victoria's dead by the way!" I mention that because while, for many, the fact that the Church in general, and the Methodist Church in particular, has been discussing our understanding of marriage, relationships and human sexuality for many years, it will still be news to others. And the fact that the

2019 Conference has revisited the subject and made new decisions will come as news. So please, read on...

God in Love Unites Us is the report of the Marriage and Relationships Task Group which can be downloaded, along with other information, from the church website at <https://www.methodist.org.uk/about-us/the-methodist-church/marriage-and-relationships-2019/managing-group-conversations-around-marriage-and-relationships/> It was received by the Conference and 'commended for study and prayerful discussion' amongst the churches. Some of the proposals will require each District Synod to express their mind on what is being suggested and this will happen in April, with final decisions being made at Conference next July.

The District has agreed to hold four gatherings for conferring on the report in February/March 2020 which will be open to all and will be widely advertised. However, we are also encouraged as local churches and circuits to have local conversations and the staff are discussing how best to do this. Time will be set aside within the November Circuit Council to introduce the report and outline our plans for exploring its implications.

Summarising the report, the authors have identified three key themes which run throughout it and offer them as suggestions for continuing the conferring. So, they propose three aims:

- **Be open and positive about sexuality and relationships.** Speak openly, positively, and joyfully as well as wisely about relationships and sexuality as one aspect of God's gracious goodness and of who God has made us to be.
- **Value all relationships of grace.** That is all committed faithful loving relationships that bear the marks that we can see in the love of Jesus and are within the law of the land. We are encouraged actively to offer greater dignity, inclusion and restoration in the community of God's new creation to those who cohabit, are single, or are developing relationships, irrespective of sexuality and gender.
- **Widen and justify the understanding of marriage as being between two persons.** The report offers a theological reflection on marriage as a particular form of 'gospel' relationship between two persons and proposes that we take steps to enable same-sex couples to get married in the Methodist Church. It also recognises that not everyone will agree with this and asks that the Church seek to protect the differing convictions of those who do not agree.

That summary shows that the report is wider and deeper than a single issue of same sex marriage. It also offers the hope that while it deals with things which may divide us in the opinions we hold, nevertheless we can find ways of continuing to learn and walk together. The study guide includes the following prayer:

Merciful God, help us to speak in love what is in our minds, and to hear in love what is said by others; to feel in love what is in our hearts, and to sense in love what is in the hearts of others; to confer in love to discern your truth, and to be open in love to your guiding Spirit. Through our disagreements guide us; in our agreements direct us. Together may we share the mind of Christ, in whose name we pray. Amen.

Please hold one another in prayer as we consider this important and significant report within our circuit and throughout the Methodist Church.

Keith Albans

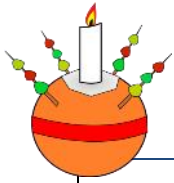
Circuit Celebration 2020– Save the Date!

The 2019 Celebration was held at Acomb Methodist Church on 14th July, and we've had some great feedback from people who enjoyed the day, which included worship with Acomb's wonderful music group, lovely cakes and snacks, guest preacher Revd Jonathan Dean, and all age worship and prayer activities.

Next year we're planning a fun day event, with worship, games and activities, stalls and food– hopefully a BBQ! We hope this will be held on either Sunday 5th or Sunday 12th July 2020, from late morning through the afternoon.

Join us then to worship and celebrate together!





Christmas services

Acaster Malbis	Christmas Day: @Bishophthorpe
Acomb	Christmas Day: 10.30am A Lindley
Alne	Christmas Day: 10.30am USA
Bishophthorpe	Christmas Day: 10.30am H Freeston
Brafferton Helperby	Christmas Day: 10.30am USA
Central	Christmas Day: 10.30am J Stoddart
Clifton	Christmas Day: 10.30am V Paylor
Clifton Moor	Christmas Day: 10.30am Anglican
Copmanthorpe	Christmas Day: 10.30am S Barlow AAW
Cornerstone	15th December: 3pm Service for former members of Melbourne Terrace and St George's
Dunnington	Christmas Day: No service
Easingwold	Christmas Day: 10.30am E Cushion
Haxby & Wigginton	Christmas Day: 9.30am R Dalglish
Heslington	Christmas Eve: 6pm Crib service J Schofield 11.15pm J Nobel HC Christmas Day: 10am J Schofield HC
Hessay	Christmas Day: No service
Heworth	Christmas Day: 10am R Muthoni
Holgate	Christmas Day: 10.30am LA AAW





Christmas services

Huby	Christmas Day: @Easingwold
Huntington	Christmas Eve: 3.30pm Christingle K Albans 11.15pm K Albans HC Christmas Day: 10.30am L Harrison
Lidgett	Christmas Day: 10am Own Arrangement
New Earswick	Christmas Day: No service
Poppleton	Christmas Day: 10am I Hill
Raskelf	Christmas Day: 10.30am USA
Rufforth	Christmas Day: No service
Sheriff Hutton	Christmas Day: 9.30am R Duck
Southlands	Christmas Day: 10.30am J Bailey AAW
Stamford Bridge	Christmas Day: No service
Stillingfleet	Christmas Day: No service
Stillington	Christmas Day: 9.30am E Cushion
Strensall	Christmas Day: 10.30am R Duck
Tholthorpe	Christmas Day: USA
Thornton-le-Clay	Christmas Day: No service
Trinity	Christmas Day: 10am K Albans/ S Redman
West Thorpe	Christmas Day: No service

Huntington 31st December 11.30pm
Watchnight service S Bunting



A day in the life of...the Circuit Support Manager

Over the next few months we'll be taking a closer look at a day in the life of some of the people in the Circuit. We start by looking at the day for our Support Manager, Lois Cross.

9.30am As I arrive at work the phone is ringing. I answer and take a booking for a Safeguarding training course. I log into the circuit office email account and set to work answering the emails that have arrived overnight. Many are requests for information or queries about the Plan, and I find the answers by referring to the Plan or Circuit Directory, Methodist website and occasionally Google! Others contain information that needs to be noted or filed, for example records of safeguarding procedures, changes to contact details or arrangements for circuit services.

By 10.30 a much needed cup of tea is made and I move on to whatever needs doing next. Today I spend an hour or so checking through invoices and expense claims. Several of our manses have been having maintenance work and the contractors' invoices come to me. I check with the manse steward or resident minister that the work has been completed before entering the invoice details on our payment system. Expenses for local preachers and staff members' travel are checked to make sure the sums add up before also being entered for payment by the Circuit Stewards. It requires a bit of concentration but fortunately the phone has been fairly quiet...so far!

At lunchtime the post arrives and there are several forms from local preachers letting us know when they are available to preach on the next Plan. The dates are entered on the software we use for making the plan, alongside ministers' information about what services churches would like. It can be a tricky job because every church has different requirements and with over thirty churches and around 50 active preachers that is a lot to remember and take into account when trying to arrange services.

After a quick lunch break, the chair of the manse committee drops in to find some information in one of the files, and to discuss some ongoing work. Keeping the Circuit's records -both paper files and electronic ones- in order so that information can be found easily when needed is another job to do.

At least once a week I meet with Revd Keith Albans to discuss what I can do to help him and the Circuit. This might mean scheduling meetings, typing, copying, creating orders of service, sending emails or arranging a get-together for supernumerary ministers. Not to mention the Plan and Newsletter...

Usually there will be at least one or two other meetings during the course of a week. Some, like the Manse Committee or Circuit Property Advisory Group, take place only a few times a year while others, like staff meetings, are more regular. Afterwards, there are minutes to write and distribute, and follow up actions to carry out. Many meetings are held at the Circuit Office, but others move around the Circuit. I will often set off with a car full of the Plan or other paperwork to distribute to those attending the meeting to take back to their churches. It's always helpful to be able to park close to the church as there can be a lot to carry.

Often attending meetings means working in the evening or weekends, and trying to take some time off later in the week, so my working hours can vary. Usually though, as it approaches 5pm I'll check to see if there is anything urgent to do before heading home. It's a varied job and you never quite know what you will be dealing with tomorrow!

Lois Cross

Circuit Council Report 17th September 2019

- The meeting heard that a final service had been held at Husthwaite chapel and it was agreed that the Circuit would take responsibility for the premises once the District Synod has approved the closure in October.
- The Circuit Celebration and AGM for 2020 is planned to be a fun day, including worship, food and activities, and will likely be Sunday 5th or 12th July. More details coming soon!
- It was noted that Methodist Conference this year voted in favour of allowing Methodist churches to register to conduct same-sex marriages. This will be discussed and voted on by Synods during 2019-20 before Conference makes a final decision in June/July 2020.
- Rev Andy Lindley spoke about his new role for the district in encouraging pioneering ministry and different forms of church to meet the needs of different people.
- Rob Cooper spoke about the work of Aroma café in Haxby, and their plans for future development.
- Revd Rory Dalglish spoke about discussions that are taking place between Central Methodist in York and Central Hall Westminster, with a view to CHW possibly taking on some of the building management for Central.

- A profile has been submitted to the Stationing process for a minister to replace Revd Rachel Muthoni from September 2020, and who it is hoped will take over the role of superintendent in 2021.
- Discussions of the Pastoral Reviews are ongoing and a working party has been formed to look at the information collected and make proposals, hopefully bringing a report to the November Circuit Council meeting.
- A refugee family has now moved into the former manse at Headley Close. This is in addition to the letting of the Ilton Garth manse to another family.
- A Circuit Coordination Team has been formed to help ensure that decisions made by the Circuit Council are followed through and to help communication between different groups within the Circuit.
- Approval was given for minor work to split a room into two offices at Central and to allow Poppleton to start work on their building scheme.
- Grants to Dunnington for audio visual facilities and to Huby towards their planned building scheme were approved.

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 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 Prayer Rota

Week beginning	Pray for a Church	Pray for our Circuit and beyond
3rd Nov	Stamford Bridge	Those who have lost loved ones this year
10th Nov	Stillingfleet	The armed forces and their families
17th Nov	Stillington	Those working to combat climate change
24th Nov	Strensall	Women against Violence
1st Dec	Tholthorpe	Those suffering long term, life changing illnesses
8th Dec	Thornton-le-Clay	Those called to be prophetic voices in church and society
15th Dec	Trinity	Those who are lonely
22nd Dec	West Thorpe	Parents and children
29th Dec	The year ahead	The future of our churches
5th Jan	Acaster Malbis	Our Church and the Methodist Connexion
12th Jan	Acomb	Our politicians and national leaders
19th Jan	Alne	Week of prayer for Christian Unity
26th Jan	Bishopthorpe	Those who are persecuted for their beliefs

Circuit Staff rest days

Keith Albans	Friday
Steve Barlow	Monday
Elizabeth Cushion	Friday
Ruth Duck	TBC
Ian Hill	Friday

Andy Lindley	Monday
Rachel Muthoni	Saturday
John Schofield	Friday
Judith Stoddart	Saturday



**York
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Circuit Service

Sunday 2nd February, 4pm

A Celebration of Preaching

With Revd Graham Jones

Venue TBC

Sunday 15th December, 3pm

December's quarterly Melbourne Terrace service will be held at Cornerstone (formerly St George's) Methodist Church on Millfield Lane, YO103AL.

All are welcome to join friends from around the Circuit.

Diary dates

2nd-3rd November	All We Can events
21st November	Circuit Council, 7.30pm, Huntington
2nd December	Leaders of Worship and Preachers' Meeting, Lidgett
2nd February	Circuit Service, venue TBC, 4pm.
11th February	Circuit Council, 7.30pm, Holgate
22nd April	Circuit Council, 7.30pm, Strensall