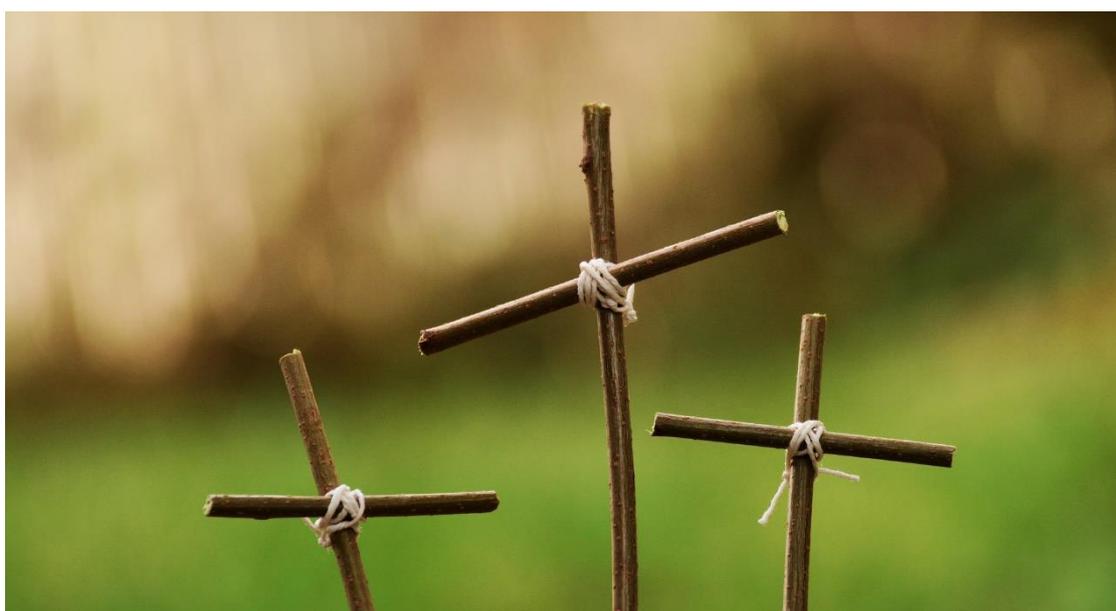


Circuit Newsletter

Spring 2023



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

Visit our website for information and other resources: www.yorkmethodist.org.uk or follow our Facebook page for news and updates: www.facebook.com/yorkmethodistcircuit/

York Methodist Circuit Hub

Melbourne Terrace Methodist Church, Cemetery Road, York, YO10 5AF
01904 499661 / 07984 019995 yorkcircuitoffice@gmail.com

Dear Friends,

As we move into the first few weeks of Lent, deeply aware of what has been happening recently to people in other parts of the world, deeply aware too of what is at the forefront of our own lives, you may find it helpful to reflect on the way fragments often lie at the heart of our experience.

With my best wishes to you all,

David

Fragments A Reflection for the Season of Lent

You may have been here before...

That interval between the end of one programme and the beginning of the next.
The trailer.
That minimal clip of comedy, drama, documentary, news.
Bringing to attention; awakening curiosity; sharpening anticipation
Towards that which is waiting in the wings.
The fragment that invites us to explore and engage.

You may have been here before...

Those thirty minutes marking the closing of life.
The funeral.
And it feels so brief – to say all we want to say and to hear all we want to hear
Of a life fully lived or prematurely interrupted.
Sometimes inadequate, but sometimes also just enough
To come face to face with truth, with meaning, with love.
The fragment of encounter.

You may have been here before...

That split-second of fearful shock as the crystal slips from your grasp.
The shattering.
And what is left but those scattered smithereens, the whole now unwhole.
And what is left but regret.
The fragments of loss.

You may have been here before...

Those images and voices from a world of news.
The journalist's report.
Here lies no attempt to over-dramatise, sensationalise or politicise.
Rather to angle shafts of light into the truth.
Into the realities of those who are anxious, scared, drained,

Of those who are determined, courageous, tenacious.
The fragment that puts us in touch.

And so we continue to pick up the pieces...

David Bidnell



FLOURISH: ROOTED IN LOVE

**FLOURISH-23 DISTRICT WEEKEND SCARBOROUGH
SPA 14th - 16th April 2023**



- be INSPIRED
- be CHALLENGED
- REFLECT and be RENEWED
- have FUN and LAUGHTER
- your HEART STRANGELY WARMED
- be EQUIPPED to FLOURISH

Speakers | Workshops | Worship | Children's & Youth Programme

John Bell, Paula Gooder, Rachel Gardner, Clive McKie, Paul Kerenza, Matt Beckingham, Graham Thompson & Anthony Boateng (President & Vice-President of the Methodist Conference), Leslie Newton (Chair of District), Tim Baker (All We Can), Arocha (EcoChurch) and many others.

Journey together with friends from across Yorkshire North and East Methodist District at an all-age weekend to discover how we can flourish in our faith, flourish as a church for the future, and in being flourishing missional communities. Join with over 1,000 Methodists at Scarborough Spa for our second "Flourish" gathering where we will be digging deeper into our theme of "ROOTED IN LOVE".

Discover booking info and more: www.yorkshirenemethodist.org/flourish23

For further resources and info, please contact John Middleton:
sheilajohn415@gmail.com

The circuit will contribute half the cost for young people joining the residential youth stream at Flourish. To access this parents or carers need to book the ticket and use the code YorkCircuit50 when they checkout. The code is case sensitive.

We'd love to hear about what's happening in your church- why not send us a short article on any projects or special events you have going on? Contact the Circuit office for the next deadline for the summer newsletter.

York Circuit Finances

The finances of the Circuit present a difficult and complex challenge as we move on from the pandemic. This is a situation that is by no means unique to our Circuit and is also reflected in many of our Churches. The Circuit is also aware that the financial position is very dependent on the generosity of the Churches who continue to contribute their assessment, often in the face of significant financial challenges of their own.

The financial situation of the Circuit is complex because of two important points:

- The Circuit has considerable reserves of nearly one million pounds, which have been boosted recently by the property sales of Hushwaite and Cornerstone Churches, and the sale of the manse at Headley Close.
- The Circuit is currently running a large deficit whereby our annual expenditure exceeds our annual income. This has been the situation for some years, but has increased during the pandemic, and a deficit of £175k is expected in the current Connexional year.

Whilst in the short term we can use our reserves to fund our annual deficit, this is clearly not a sustainable medium or long term situation. This has been discussed extensively at meetings of the Circuit Stewards, the Circuit Leadership Team and the Circuit Council over the last six months, and the following has been agreed:

- The Circuit will use our reserves to continue to fund our expected deficit over the next two Connexional years, up to the end of August 2025. This is expected to use around £200k of our reserves (between 20% and 25%) over the period 2023 to 2025.
- The Circuit Stewards, together with support from Graham Jones and Steve Leah, will work on a process of consultation towards a balanced core budget and an additional reserves budget from 1st September 2025. We hope that this consultation will be a creative exercise in which a range of voices and ideas will be heard. It will be particularly valuable to have wide participation in this and we look forward to the contributions.

Nick Dawson, Circuit Treasurer

Circuit Diary Dates

Circuit Council Tuesday 7th March 2023, 7pm Haxby and Wigginton Methodist Church

Meeting for church safeguarding representatives, Tues 16th May, 7pm, Strensall Methodist Church

Final Service at Stamford Bridge Sunday 14th May

200th Anniversary Service at Thornton-le-Clay Sunday 18th June

Circuit Service Sunday 9th July 2023

News from the Children, Youth & Families team

This term is a little calmer than the autumn one for the CYF team— although not much! We started with a bang, or rather a whimper as our first event was the Sleepout. We had high hopes that it would be a bit warmer this year, but no, once more the temperature dropped to -5 overnight. The event was well attended, given that it is really is not much fun! And we have raised over £4000, there are more details in the Sleepout article below.



New shoots of hope

Since the end of the pandemic, we have encountered widespread frustration and disillusionment over the declining numbers of families and lack of volunteers in many of our churches. However, recently we have seen new signs of hope and it has been very encouraging that some churches have started to move forwards and are looking afresh at new ways to engage children, young people and families in their local communities. We are delighted to say that several churches have approached the CYF team for support, to help them kick-start their new initiatives.

Clifton Methodist are keen to develop their provision for local families, by building on their already successful parent and toddler group, Pebbles. They are planning to start a faith-based group for families with young children. The CYF team will support them by providing advice, guidance and practical support, to help them develop these ideas further and to get a group up and running. So, we're excited to see how this develops.

Poppleton Methodist is hoping to re-engage with families in their community but recognise that they have a limited supply of volunteers to safely run a group or activity on their own. However, they do have many children coming into their building throughout the week for groups that are run by external providers, such as the pre-school, the after-school club and the youth club. So, they are working to build good relationships with these groups and are aiming to visit them to offer pastoral support, or potentially provide faith-based sessions for the groups. They are also engaging in discussion with their Anglican friends to explore some form of ecumenical provision. It is still early days and how this will develop is still

unclear, but thinking creatively and working alongside others, can enable engagement with families and young people that otherwise would not happen.

Save the date CYF events!

11th March Celebration of Women in Ministry event in Hull, link to register <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/525415009437> this is free for York Circuit families, use the code YNEMethodist at the check-out.

14th - 16th April Flourish District Weekend in Scarborough. The team are once more running the youth stream and this time will also be offering activities and events for young families and parents. Bookings are now open <https://www.yorkshirenemethodist.org/flourish23/> the circuit are funding half the cost for young people on the residential stream use YorkCircuit50 (case sensitive) at the checkout.

18th May 7.30-9pm on zoom. Parents' Guide to the Internet with Karl Hopwood – contact. Victoria to book.

20th May Youth Synod at Manor School.

6th - 8th October 2023 3Generate.

At Strensall an ecumenical team ran an 'Eco' holiday club. Called 'New leaf' it's all about encouraging children in caring for God's creation. We are hoping that this can be the start of a concept that can be taken to any church. We will gather all the resources together; with ready-made session plans, registration letters, risk assessments, templates, social media posts and posters etc. The Open the Book Team from Strensall were also pleased to be invited back to the school to share the Easter Story. We are building on that and perhaps very soon we will be a regular fixture! One of the teachers from another school asked if the team went to Robert Wilkinson school. When we confirmed that we did she said that she had overheard her two boys "playing" Open the Book. It's one of the beautiful things about being storytellers; you just never know where God's story is going and how it has been heard.

At Easingwold, they are planning an Easter workshop for primary age children.

Haxby and Wigginton will soon be starting to think about their 3rd uniform bank event that will be in July. This has been a fantastic opportunity to create links with schools, community

groups and partners across the city. We have a ready-made format and resources that have been tried and tested and are easy to run.

Meanwhile the team are continuing to develop the intergenerational worship resources; working intensively alongside Acomb, Haxby and Heworth to develop their intergenerational church offerings.

We would love to hear from you if you have an idea you want to explore further or need any support to get a group or activity up and running. Please get in touch with the team and we will do our best to help. Lorraine is the person to contact for Open the Book, the Eco holiday club resources, or the uniform bank, whilst Amy is the best contact for intergenerational church support.

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

Amy amy.shephard@methodistyouth.org.uk 07708 559419

Heather heather.lewis@methodistyouth.org.uk 07923 527555

Lorraine lorraine.jones@methodistyouth.org.uk 07850 631168

Victoria victoria@methodistyouth.org.uk 07473 065856

Sleepout for homelessness January 2023

I think I have said this before, maybe once or even twice - I really hate camping! I am really not the hardy outdoor type, and so the sleepout looms large in my mind once we get past Christmas. It feels like such a huge thing for me to sleepout for just the one night, and I need a lot of stuff to do it! Yet, there are those who do this night after night, and who don't have the amount of stuff that I think I need for just the one night.

More than that, people who are homeless do not have access to the sort of facilities that we had at Lidgett church.

Thanks to the generosity of the church, we have access to a warm space if we find it gets too much overnight. We can also get hot drinks whenever we want and fill that vital (for me anyway!) hot water bottle. At risk of being vulgar, we also have access to clean, warm, and safe toilets during the night. This is not the case for many people who are homeless, at



best, they will face unhygienic toilets, and risk encountering drug dealing, prostitution or worse. It is such a simple thing, that we take for granted when we wake in the night, but the reality is, it is one of many overlooked blessings in my life.

There were around 25 brave souls sleeping out at Lidgett, with four more boycotting their beds or sleeping in their back gardens, with most of us choosing to sleep in tents. This may sound like cheating however, many homeless people now have pop up tents which offer a small amount of protection from the elements. This protection is minimal in the sort of temperatures we experienced, by the early hours my sleeping bag and blankets were cold and damp on the outside, making it difficult to get warm and do any sleeping. The cold also meant the condensation from our breath froze on the inside of our tents as well as the outside! It was so cold that by the time I got home there was still ice in my tent!

As my tent was purchased about 20 years ago for my children to camp in the garden, and the forecast said it was going to rain, I decided that a new tent was a wise investment this year. Less wisely, I left the purchase late and did not have time to practise putting the tent



up. With the predictable result, that I ended up trying to put it up in the dark and cold. Needless to say, it was only due to the efforts of others (thanks Mark and Angie), that I had a tent to sleep in at all! This reinforces another often overlooked blessing in my life, being part of a supportive community. When we sleepout we are part of a small community supported by a wider community, who act as cheerleaders, encouraging us on when we find it challenging. If we find it hard, with all the additional benefits we have and knowing we can return to our warm comfy beds the following night, just how soul destroying must it be to know this is your life, night after night after night?

This year we once more supported Inspire North as well as SASH and Carecent, and at the time of writing we have raised over £4000, which we are really grateful for, people have been so generous despite the cost-of-living crisis. These are vital funds for organisations that support homeless people and work towards eradicating the causes of homelessness. Yet, events such as this are about more than that. It is an unpleasant experience which challenges most of us to step out of our comfort zone, this creates a bond between those

who have slept out, building community. The wider church community engage through donating to our JustGiving page and sending messages of support and encouragement, cheering us on. We basked in the approval and admiration of those who had not felt able to brave the cold, but who applauded those of us who had. Although this leaves me feeling a bit of a fraud, after all I haven't done much, to spend one night in rather uncomfortable circumstances is not that hard.

If you would like to support the event, please go to our JustGiving page <https://bit.ly/3GUAXdp> Alternatively, you could join us and sleepout on 20th January 2024. "I have noticed that every time I have do something bit mad, you are involved" (Bill Topping to me on the night of the sleepout). It may not be the most sensible thing to do, but it is for a good cause and I guarantee that you will appreciate your bed so much more as a result!

Victoria Etherington

Eco Task Force Update

Welcome to the Eco Task Force update for Spring 2023. The group continues to share ideas and inspire each other. There's lots going on, both in local areas, citywide and nationally. If you are up to anything 'green' or have some great top tips, please do share it with us! Or if you want to be on our mailing list, get in touch. Contact Lorraine Jones: Email: Lorraine.jones@methodistyouth.org.uk or tel: 07850 631168

Act Now! For a Greener Future: Saturday 13th May

A date for your diaries: Acomb Churches Together are organising a day to learn, discuss and pray about the environment and care for creation. The day will run from 9:30 to 2:00pm and will feature a keynote talk from A Rocha and workshops (more details and a link to register will follow). The day is open to all.

This event is organised by the Acomb Churches Together Eco Group - a very informal bunch of lovely green minded people. We are very welcoming of those from further afield. If anyone is interested in helping with planning of this day and other Acomb based Eco initiatives, they should email fran.g.taylor@gmail.com

Joint Public Issues Team (JPIT) – Net zero in my neighbourhood scheme

JPIT is a partnership between the Baptist Union of Great Britain, the Methodist Church and the United Reformed Church. It's purpose is to help Churches work together for peace and justice through listening, learning, praying, speaking and acting on public policy issues. They have introduced a 'Net Zero in my neighbourhood' scheme which is designed to help

communities engage with their local Councils to make sure they are acting on environmental concerns. See here for a look at the scheme and a link to more resources.

<https://jpit.uk/net-zero-in-my-neighbourhood>

JPIT do 10 minute podcasts on various issues; one of the most recent is Councils and climate Justice. <https://jpit.uk/podcast>

York City Council Climate Strategy

City of York Council has approved the York Climate Change Strategy at the Executive Meeting that took place on Thursday 15 December.

The strategy sets out York's vision to be net zero and provides a framework to both reduce carbon and be more climate resilient by 2030. It provides guidance for the council's actions and decisions over the decade ahead.

Read the Climate Change Strategy at <https://www.york.gov.uk/big-conversation-2/10YearStrategies/2> and find the details of the Executive Meeting online at <https://democracy.york.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=733&MIId=13293>.

Resources

From what is to what if, unleashing the power of imagination to create the future we want.

Rob Hopkins.

This was the subject of our last Eco Group meeting. Sometimes we cannot imagine what a post-carbon world might even look like. If we can just create that picture, maybe we can long for it and become determined to bring it into being. The book looks at reasons why we struggle to do this and offers some ways to free up space to let our imaginations do the work. This doesn't just apply to sustainability issues – it works for anything in our lives, from our churches to work places and homes. If you want a quick fix, here's a TED talk:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bg715sgTuhQ>

Hot mess. Matthew Winning

A comedian and environmental economist, Matt Winning manages to take a serious subject and have you chuckling away. His comparisons in describing climate issues are spot on and help you to understand immediately. It's a bit swearsy though – don't say I didn't warn you!

Lent resources:

<https://www.eden.co.uk/christian-books/easter-and-lent-books/families/wild-lent/>

<https://arocha.org.uk/go-green-for-lent/>

Take action: Greenpeace wall of change
Share a message to inspire, empower and call for action <https://www.greenpeace.org.uk/wall/>



Circuit Council December 2022

- Ann Smallwood was appointed as a Circuit steward, in addition to the existing stewards.
- A Circuit Leadership team was appointed: David Bidnell, Elizabeth Cushion, Janet Bowling, John Hayward, Louisa Taylor, Nick Dawson, Ruth Morrison, Vic Paylor, Victoria Etherington, Stephen Leah. The meeting heard that the structure of the Circuit Leadership Team was designed to be 5 members from the staff and 5 non-staff appointments.
- Revd David Bidnell, Deacon Judith Stoddart and Richard Burnett were appointed to the Executive committee of Carecent. The committee is looking carefully at the work of Carecent including the liability and responsibilities between the Executive Committee and the Circuit Council.
- Circuit Council gave permission for the sale of Trinity Methodist Church and for replacement windows at Easingwold. Signatories were appointed to sign legal documents on behalf of the Circuit.
- There was a broad discussion of finance issues and the process the Circuit should take to manage the existing budget deficit and future budgeting. For further details see the article earlier in this newsletter.

Circuit prayer rota

5th March	Villages Together	The church on the Circuit prayer rota for this Sunday is Villages Together . Give thanks and pray for the work of God in Alne, Huby, Stillington, Tholthorpe and the other villages in this area. “My help comes from the Lord, the Maker of heaven and earth.” Is there something you need to ask God for help with, for yourself or others? Psalm 121 reminds us that God loves and cares for us, even if life isn't always easy.
12th March	West Thorpe	The church on the Circuit prayer rota for this Sunday is West Thorpe . Give thanks and pray for the work of God in that place. “Come, let us sing for joy to the Lord; let us shout aloud to the Rock of our salvation.” Psalm 95 reminds us that part of our role on earth is to worship God. We often do this through song- why not sing or read your favourite worship song or psalm?
19th March	Acaster Malbis	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. This Sunday is Mothering Sunday. Give thanks for those who have cared for you and helped you in your life. Is there anyone you could be a parent to in their faith journey?
26th March	Acomb	The church on the Circuit prayer rota for this Sunday is Acomb . Give thanks and pray for the work of God in that place. “I wait for the Lord, my whole being waits, and in his word I put my hope.”

		Sometimes it feels like we've made a mess of our lives. Reflect on Psalm 130, which reminds us that God forgives, and encourages us to wait and look in hope for signs of God at work.
2nd April	Bishopthorpe	The church on the Circuit prayer rota for this Sunday is Bishopthorpe . Give thanks and pray for the work of God in that place. "Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his love endures forever." (Psalm 118) What are you thankful for at the moment? It could be a sunny day, a chat with a friend, or something much bigger. Whatever it is, give thanks to God for it.
9th April	Easter Sunday	He is not here; he has risen, just as he said. (Matthew 28 verse 6). Today is Easter Sunday. Give thanks that Jesus was raised from death and praise him for redeeming us by his death and resurrection.
16th April	Central	The church on the Circuit prayer rota for this Sunday is Central . Give thanks and pray for the work of God in that place. God calls us all to different kinds of service, both in the church and in the wider world. Where do you currently serve others? It might be by doing something, or listening, or praying.
23rd April	Clifton	The church on the Circuit prayer rota for this Sunday is Clifton . Give thanks and pray for the work of God in that place. Give thanks to those who serve the church by working with children, young people and families. Why not ask anyone you know who does this if there is something in particular you could pray for?
30th April	Clifton Moor	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. Give thanks for those who provide healthcare, as doctors, nurses, carers and many other roles, including those who are family or unpaid carers. If you know someone in one of these roles, why not ask if there is something in particular you can pray for?
7th May	Copmanthorpe	The church on the Circuit prayer rota for this Sunday is Copmanthorpe . Give thanks and pray for the work of God in that place. Today is Vocations Sunday, when we remember that we are all called (vocation means calling) to some form of service. Is God calling you to a particular role?
14th May	Easingwold	The church on the Circuit prayer rota for this Sunday is Easingwold . Give thanks and pray for the work of God in that place. This is Christian Aid week. Pray for their work- you can find out more at https://www.christianaid.org.uk/
21st May	Haxby & Wigginton	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. 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.
28th May	Heslington	The church on the Circuit prayer rota for this Sunday is Heslington . Give thanks and pray for the work of God in that place. This Sunday is Pentecost, when we remember God's gift of the Holy Spirit to the church. Where would you like to see the Holy Spirit at work? Pray for that now.

Reflections

Psalm 121

“My help comes from the Lord, the Maker of heaven and earth.”

Psalm 121 reminds us that God loves and cares for us, even if life isn't easy. Sometimes it's hard to see what God is doing, especially when we're finding life difficult. This psalm reminds us that God is always there and always knows what we're going through. Maybe there's also a hint that 'looking up' and focusing on God rather than on the difficulties of the path in front of us can help us get our priorities straight.



The psalm ends with a blessing:

“The LORD will keep you from all harm— he will watch over your life;
the LORD will watch over your coming and going both now and forevermore.”

Is there something you need to ask God for help with, for yourself or others?

Psalm 95

“Come, let us sing for joy to the Lord; let us shout aloud to the Rock of our salvation.”

Psalm 95 reminds us that part of our role on earth is to worship God:

“for he is our God and we are the people of his pasture, the flock under his care.”



In the past the Israelites failed to trust God and hardened their hearts, not acknowledging God's love for them. Because of this they had to wander in the wilderness for forty years until a new generation was more willing to follow God. The psalm encourages us not to be like them but to praise and worship God who cares about everything- from the heights and depths of creation to the wellbeing of the 'flock under his care'.

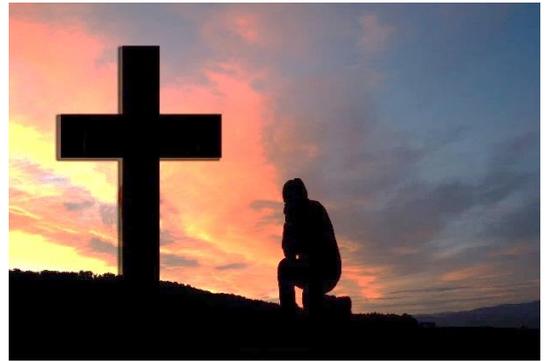
We often worship through song- why not sing or read your favourite hymn, worship song or psalm?

Psalm 130

“I wait for the Lord, my whole being waits, and in God’s word I put my hope.”

Sometimes it feels like we’ve made a mess of our lives. Psalm 130 acknowledges this:

“If you, LORD, kept a record of sins, Lord, who could stand? But with you there is forgiveness, so that we can, with reverence, serve you.”



Sometimes, it can feel like God is taking a long time to respond to our cries for help. Sometimes it feels like God isn’t there at all. All we can do is wait, and hope, trusting in God’s word and past actions to give us strength to hold on. The psalmist encourages God’s people to put their hope in God’s unfailing love and promises of redemption.

Can you think of any particular bible passages, hymns or past experiences that encourage you to wait in hope? Thank God for them and ask for patience to keep waiting hopefully.

Psalm 118

“Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his love endures forever.” (Psalm 118)

Psalm 118 acknowledges the reality of the difficult times in our lives. The psalmist talks about having enemies swarming around him, of being surrounded.

We can often feel surrounded and hemmed in by our troubles, unable to see a way through. The psalmist’s response is to cry out to God for help.



“When hard pressed, I cried to the LORD; he brought me into a spacious place. The LORD is with me; I will not be afraid. What can mere mortals do to me?”

The psalmist gives thanks that God hears and responds. Do we remember to give thanks when God answers prayers, and difficult situations are resolved? As well as acknowledging what we owe God, it helps remind us that God is trustworthy and will respond to our needs. “I will give you thanks, for you answered me; you have become my salvation.”

What are you thankful for at the moment? ? It could be a sunny day, a chat with a friend, or something much bigger. Whatever it is, give thanks to God for it and maybe make a note somewhere to remind you in future.