

Circuit Newsletter

Summer 2026



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York Methodist Circuit Hub

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Welcome

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Perhaps, like me, you have been engaging with Paul's letter to the Philippians as part of Bible Month in your church. It's a letter I am drawn back to often. Paul in prison, not knowing what his fate will be, still manages to find joy and contentment through his relationship with Christ and by extension with those with him and the church in Philippi. Uncertainty for Paul is dispelled by the certainty of those relationships. It is a letter from which I draw strength and often quote. Indeed, you might have noticed that I always begin my quarterly reflections quoting chapter 1 verse 2. In an increasingly complicated and difficult world it is good to read words of affirmation, that God's grace and peace remain whatever the circumstances.

Like Paul we are in a season of uncertainty with many things changing. A new mission area structure, a reduction in the number of ordained staff in the circuit, recruitment of additional lay staff all add to that uncertainty. In July we will say goodbye to Rev Rory Dalgliesh as he moves to Truro after 20 years in York. We have been richly blessed by Rory's ministry and we wish him and his family every blessing in their new home. Rev Elizabeth Cushion has felt called to enter stationing next year and will be leaving in the summer of 2027 after 15 years with us. We celebrate all she has brought to us and look forward to her last year. Circuit Council on 30 June will decide whether or not we enter stationing to fill her position.

In all this I draw confidence and inspiration from the words of Paul. Paraphrasing Paul (ch1 v6), I am confident that what God has started, God will finish. Individually and collectively, God is at work in all of us, inviting us to join in the work of building the kingdom in this place at this time. We have a chance to celebrate all that God is doing at our Circuit celebration on 12 July at Haxby and I hope to see you there for all or part of the day.

Not paraphrasing, but quoting Paul directly I offer you these words of encouragement:

Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen.

Rev John Hayward, Superintendent Minister

Circuit Celebration

Sunday 12th July 2026, from 10am- 3pm, Haxby & Wigginton Methodist Church.

Doors will open at 10am ahead of Morning Worship, which will start at 10.30am. This will include saying farewell to Revd Rory Dalgliesh as he and family leave the Circuit.

Following the service, we invite people to bring their lunch to eat together.

In the afternoon there will be a variety of activities available- you can choose between watching a musical performance, engaging in crafts, prayer activities or games, or a visit to the Community Garden for a taste of Forest Church (subject to the weather!).



- Tea and coffee will be available at lunchtime and throughout the afternoon.
- Please bring your own lunch.
- We are inviting people to bring cakes to share. Please don't feel you have to bring anything, but if you would like to that would be great. Ideally we would appreciate it if churches could consider how many people from their church are coming, and arrange to bring enough cake to share for that many people. **Please label all cakes to say whether they contain any nuts or other common allergens.**

The number 1 bus route stops directly outside **Haxby & Wigginton Methodist Church** (opposite Haxby Pond). You can find timetables at www.firstbus.co.uk/york The church (The Village, Haxby, YO32 2JJ) has a car park behind the building- note that access is one way (please follow the signs on site- enter the car park on the south side of the church and exit on the north). We would ask that if you can, we keep the car park at the church for those who have difficulty walking. For this event you can also park at Haxby Surgery, which is slightly further along The Village towards Wigginton, 3 or 4 minutes' walk from the church (postcode YO32 2LL)- look for the Whole Life Community Garden sign. There is also on-street parking available around Haxby, please show consideration for local residents by leaving access to drives and bus stops clear.

We look forward to seeing you on Sunday 12th July at Haxby & Wigginton Methodist Church from 10am!

Announcing our new District Chair

Revd Romeo Regardo Pedro will be taking up the role of District Chair from the 1st of September 2026 for a period of six years (subject to conference).

Romeo is currently serving as Superintendent of the Sheffield Circuit. He has served in a variety of ministerial contexts both in the UK, Namibia and Cape Town. Through the discernment process it became clear that Romeo had a clear call to this role, and will be able to help the District continue to grow from where we are now and respond to the leading of God's Spirit. We can't wait to see what God has in store!

Rev Romeo Pedro's welcome service will be on 28th August at 7pm, venue TBC and we have invited him to lead a Circuit Service on 22nd November.

Circuit stewards' report on 2025-26

The Circuit Stewards team this year are Sally Gall and Sue Gill, Janet Bowling, Ann Smallwood, Gail Lazenby and Nick Dawson (treasurer).

Our commitments have included serving on some Circuit Committees-Circuit Invitations Committee, Safeguarding and the Lay Employment Management Group in addition to being members of the Circuit Leadership Team and attending between us, church councils. This has helped us to be as informed as possible about what goes on in around the Circuit. Meeting lots of different people through these roles is very important and an enjoyable aspect of being a Circuit Steward. We have also been involved in a lot of decisions regarding property and finance. In particular in relation to both selling and renting out of premises.

We have been delighted to welcome Gail Lazenby to the team this year. We are very fortunate to have Angie Creswick and Lois Cross who manage most day-to-day aspects of property so well. As Circuit treasurer Nick Dawson oversees the finances and provides clear, informative reports to the team. We are thankful for his hard work and guidance. Nick has recently taken over the role of District Treasurer and wishes to step as soon as feasible. For the time being no one has stepped forward. The Circuit is currently advertising for a Finance officer to take over some of the tasks, but the need remains for a Circuit Treasurer.

Circuit Diary Dates

- Circuit Council and AGM, 30th June, Haxby & Wigginton, 7pm.
- Circuit Celebration 12th July, Haxby & Wigginton 10am-3pm.
- Start of Year Circuit Service 13th September, time & venue TBC.
- Circuit Service with new chair of District Rev Romeo Pedro 22nd November, TBC.
- Advent Holy Communion for supernumerary ministers with Rev Romeo Pedro, 24th November, time & venue TBC.

In September, we were pleased to welcome three new members of staff. Jill Pullan, presbyter with pastoral oversight of Acomb, Copmanthorpe, Bishopthorpe, Acaster Malbis and West Thorpe. Kate Paterson is a probationer Deacon working in the City Centre and with Southlands and Central. Alex Middleton-Laing, presbyter with pastoral oversight of Easingwold and Villages Together, also working alongside Rory at Haxby and Wigginton. We appreciate all that Jill, Kate and Alex offer to the circuit and our communities.

Rev John Hayward took over as Superintendent in September. We are pleased that John is now recovering from his recent heart attack and already busy in his new role. We value his expertise and leadership. We continue to offer our support and prayers.

This year we say farewell to Rev Rory Dalglish. Rory and his family are taking up a new appointment in Cornwall. Rory has played a big part in Circuit like for a number of years and his Ministry at Haxby and Wigginton will be greatly missed. We remember his regular Youtube recordings during the pandemic. His wisdom, encouragement and deep thinking has been greatly appreciated. We pray Rory and family will soon feel at home in Truro.

The Circuit Stewards have been busy implementing decisions resulting from the Circuit Consultation process, including future staffing structures. The CLT and Circuit council have been moving forward with a vision for the structure of the Circuit to build Christ's church in York. This requires a more collaborative way of working to pool resources, funds, people and buildings. This is an ongoing process, with proposals coming to the June Circuit Council.

The Circuit Stewards acknowledge the hard work and commitment of all the Circuit staff. The Circuit is blessed by the dedication and working together of everyone.

As ever, we thank you all for your support and prayers over the year and look forward to what the future brings.

Janet and Ann (on behalf of the Circuit Stewards).

Eco Task Force Newsletter

Sycamore 'helicopters'

As a child did you ever do that thing with sycamore seeds where you threw them up in the air and watch them spin around as they fall to the earth? I can definitely relate to one of those seeds right now...! My head is spinning and there is so much going on. It's all exciting but I am looking forward to a break where things 'settle' for a while, though I am not holding my



breath. As you will see from the pages below, there is an awful going on in the Eco/Forest Church world at the minute, both in the circuit and wider.

Every now and again I have to remind myself the Spirit will guide where those seeds fly and where they land and whether they take root. I just have to enjoy the ride.

Lorraine Jones, Eco Church and Forest Church Co-Ordinator

Sign up to the Forest/Eco Church Newsletter: lorraine.jones@methodistyouth.org.uk

Heat Pump workshop

Recently Angie, our Resources Manager, (with Lorraine's help) was able to showcase the new heat pump at the Hub at a community Heat Pump Café in partnership with York Community Energy <https://yorkcommunityenergy.org.uk/>. Angie talked about the way York Circuit churches have responded in practical ways to reduce their carbon footprint in their buildings with insulation, solar PV panels, batteries and heat pumps as well as her experience of getting a heat pump installed at home.



Other presenters included a Heat Geek heating contractor, a York engineer who is developing a heat pump optimisation app and a local resident who had a heat pump installed last year. The church was full, buzzing with conversation with people who wanted to learn and many attendees were interested to know more about why we as Methodist people care about climate justice.

National Emergency Briefing on the climate and nature crisis

Chris Packham and many other scientists have created a 50 minute film to present the latest evidence and to offer solutions. A few different people across the Circuit have seen this film now. I found it very helpful. Broken down into short and snappy sections such as 'food security' and 'climate change' and 'extreme weather', it was informative, helpful but hopeful too. I like to think I know a reasonable amount about this stuff, but I learnt a lot. Could your church show a film for the community? Maybe offer refreshments? Or you could join with others and go to a briefing elsewhere? Discussion guidance is provided. Contact Lorraine if you would like to host one and we can co-ordinate the dates for different churches. Find more information here: <https://www.nebriefing.org/the-film>

Acomb's Art and Community Festival 3rd-5th July 2026 – A return to nature.

Acomb Methodist Church are really excited to be involved with a brand new Art and Community festival AcombFest! This will be a celebration of community, creativity and local life across Acomb. A Return To Nature, promises a brilliant weekend full of activities, conversations, creativity and opportunities to reconnect with the natural world and one another. As part of the festival, AMC will be hosting a pop up cafe, community workshops, artists market, live music and a food court. There are also a range of eco-themed activities alongside sharing some of the ways we are growing community, care for creation and connection through projects around the church and community garden.

Two key events taking place at AMC are:

- **Forest Church Workshop Saturday 4th July at 12 noon**

A relaxed and reflective outdoor session exploring spirituality, creativity and nature together.

- **“Get to Grips with the Ecological Crisis – Biodiversity Collage” with Sophia**

An engaging and interactive workshop exploring biodiversity loss and the ecological crisis. Having experienced Sophia's brilliant Climate Fresk sessions before, we can highly recommend this style of workshop — thought-provoking, accessible and genuinely inspiring. Early sign-up is encouraged here:

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/acomb-fest-get-to-grips-with-the-ecological-crisis-biodiversity-collage-tickets-1986191635649>

More information about the full festival programme will be released soon via the AcombFest website <https://acombfest.co.uk/>

POSSIBLE FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES – ECO COMMUNITY

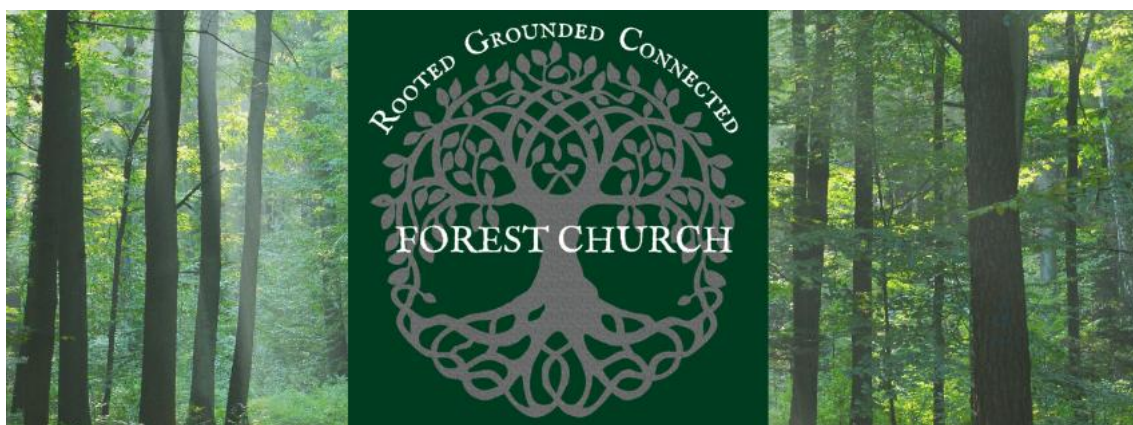
The Connexional Eco Community hosted a webinar which focused on funding opportunities. One of the interesting things I noted was that Going to Net Zero is now classed as a mission in and of itself, as opposed to mission being about outreach and community involvement etc (though obviously those are important!). The other thing I noted was that the funders very much welcome groups of churches working together. Is this a possibility for your new 'mission area'? The first lot of funding is specifically for Feasibility Studies, which is great for getting a full and up to date Energy Audit. The second claims back some of the money given to connexion on the sale of properties (going back up to 5 years) and is would help to fund the actions recommended on the Energy Audit.

- <https://www.methodist.org.uk/for-churches/property/property-in-mission/property-grants/feasibility-funding/>
- <https://www.methodist.org.uk/for-churches/property/property-in-mission/replacement-projects/>

These are two fundraising consultants. It was strongly recommended people made use of fundraising consultants, rather than trying to do it yourself. These are two consultants the presenter knew had been used by the Yorkshire North and East District. Please note these are offered as a starter for ten, they are not on an official Connexional approved list, you will engage with either of these at your own risk. But YNE was very happy with them and they were thoroughly vetted. [Chell Perkins](#) [Gilliland](#)

At the time of writing, Huntington will be having an energy audit on their property. We look forward to hearing how it went and what they learned.

The next Eco community covers Forest Church and Outdoor Worship! Sign up here: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/methodist-church-eco-community-network-tickets-1318852155299?aff=oddtcreator>



The very first Forest Church happened on Sunday 26th April at 4pm in the afternoon. We gathered over a cuppa and chatted before getting started. The Haxby & Wigginton team welcomed everyone in and explained what was going to happen. We introduced the theme, which was ‘finding the wow’, about awe and wonder. We had a breathing, or centring, exercise that felt really important in getting people ready to enter into the garden with a peaceful mindset. There were about 7 or 8 simple activities to do as people wanted to – or not - some just chose sit and enjoy the peace. There were 29 of us in total, including the leaders. It felt peaceful and people enjoyed the chance to be in the garden – we had to gently bring them back together and they could probably have spent a little longer, which is a good sign. At the sharing time, folk had obviously been reflecting or praying and talked about their thoughts and experiences.

Afterwards, the food went down a treat and Amy Shephard, who catered the event, now knows she needs to make more veggie chilli! We were pleased with the first session and have learnt a lot.

Amy has also been increasing our presence on social media and getting her head around the algorithms, which is no small feat, but we seem to be connecting with others far and wide. She is also working on our website: www.forestchurchyork.co.uk and will continue to do this until the end of August when the newly recruited Forest Church Support person is in place. Find Forest Church York on Facebook, Instagram and Tiktok.

Both Heworth and Acomb are firming up their plans to get their Forest Church up and running. They are promoting it at local events – Acombfest and the Heworth Scarecrow festival. Lorraine also had a good chat with many people at the Haxby & Wigginton Scarecrow festival to increase awareness.



Forest Forget-me-not

Liz, one of the attendees of the first Forest Church said: “Thank you for the first session of Forest Church. It was great, so relaxing and a lovely meal to end with. I spotted this when I got home. I have lots of forget-me-nots in the garden but I had never seen a white one before. It’s a wood forget-me-not. I think it should be renamed Forest.”

So glad that Liz went home and found more things to make her say ‘wow’, which was our hope for the very first Forest Church.

News from the Children, Youth & Families team

Summer 2026

For children, young people and families, summer can bring a very different rhythm of life from the rest of the year. School routines change, holidays begin, and, even though it’s raining cats and dogs as I write this, many of us spend more time outdoors in the sunshine. And then the end of the summer brings with it new starts for many.

New starts often come with worries and questions, will I be welcome and accepted, will I fit in, will I enjoy it? The message at the heart of the Gospel is that everyone has a place in God’s family. Throughout his ministry, Jesus made space for people who were often left out, on the edges of society. He welcomed children who others sent away, he spent time with people who others ignored, he listened to those who were rarely heard and showed compassion to the unloved. Again and again, Jesus demonstrated that God’s love is for everyone!

As a Circuit, we are blessed by the gifts, skills, questions, creativity, and energy that children and young people bring to our churches. They remind us to be curious, to see things from new perspectives, and to approach God with openness and trust. In the same way, parents, grandparents, carers, volunteers, and church members of every age contribute to the life of our churches and communities. Each person has something valuable to offer.

We've been looking at the passage from 1 Corinthians 12 as a Circuit over this past year, where the Apostle Paul describes the Church as one body made up of many parts. Every part is different, but every part is needed, and no part is more or less important than another. Some people lead worship, some organise events, some offer practical help, some pray quietly behind the scenes, some offer a smile and a warm welcome. Together, we reflect God's love in the world.

Creating a church where everyone has a place is about more than simply opening the doors. It means making sure people feel seen, heard, and included. It means listening to children and young people, welcoming new families, spending time with people who are lonely, supporting those who may feel isolated, and recognising that each person is made in the image of God.

Sometimes belonging begins with a simple conversation. A friendly greeting after worship. An invitation to join an activity. Taking the time to learn someone's name. Small acts of welcome can make a big difference.

As we look ahead to the summer months, there will be many opportunities to build connections across our churches and communities. Holiday clubs, family events, community gatherings, worship services, and everyday encounters all provide chances to show God's love in practical ways. Perhaps this season we can challenge ourselves to ask: Who might be feeling left out? Who is new to our community? Who could benefit from an invitation, a conversation, or a helping hand?

There is a place for each of us, and when we make room for others, we reflect the Good News of God's love and grace for all. May we continue to be a community where everyone can belong, where every voice matters, where every person can find their place in God's story, and where we celebrate the diversity of gifts, experiences, and stories that are found in our circuit!



Family Celebration at Easter

Our Family Celebration at Easter went well, this time at Haxby & Wigginton Methodist. It involved games like lob a chick (the little fluffy kind that go on Easter bonnets, just to reassure you!!) and a story egg hunt and craft activities. There were some local families gave us a try as well as some beautiful familiar faces from around the Circuit.

ONE X

We've been having great fun at ONE X, and also had 2 new young people who have settled in really well. One of the requests from our young people was having a film night, with a discussion session the week after. So we went for Star Wars: A New Hope (the original and the best in my humble opinion!). The following week we had some great discussions about life and faith that the film brought up. We've recently had a mid-exam-time stress relief by various exploding experiments which was very messy but went down a treat, and some more chilled out sessions including board games and crafts.



A big shout out to Sarah Wright, the Children and Youth Worker from Heworth, and Sarah Haslam and Alyson Christy, who have helped us out enormously over the past year and have also run a couple of sessions. It has been great to work with them. It's also been brilliant for the young people to get to know other people from across the Circuit.

Thornton le Clay school prayer stations

In February, Lorraine gave a hand to the team at Thornton le Clay who hosted a prayer station for their local school which is just down the road from them. Everyone had a great time and it was very much appreciated by the teachers and the young people. We got to have some great chats about the theme which was about love; love for the earth, love for each other, love for ourselves and the love of God...



Circuit Celebration 2026

Amy has been working with a team from across the Circuit to offer an intergenerational day of celebration for the Circuit in July. There will be something for everyone, worship, prayer, crafts, singing, games and more! Come along and join us as we think about the gifts we have to offer as a Circuit!

Open the Book Work

Many OTB teams give out 'It's your Move' booklets to the year 6 students in their primary schools. Created by Scripture Union, it's a gift from the teams to the children to help them with the transition to High School. Often YoYo team also go into the schools to give a 'It's your move' assembly so these compliment these perfectly. Donations to pay for them come from the Churches, individual congregation members and, in Haxby, from the Aroma Café Community fund. Lorraine co-ordinating the ordering of these to ensure we could make the most of the bulk ordering discount!

Core Training and Holiday Club work

As part of their ongoing training, storytellers have to complete 'core skills' training with Open the book. Many of our teams are due for refresher training so Lorraine has got a date in the diary for teams across the Circuit to come together for that at Huby Methodist in October. We are also using the opportunity of us being together to talk about the potential for working together more closely. Many groups are considering holiday clubs to build relationships with the young people the tell Bible Stories to. Open the Book have recently created holiday club resources which allows the teams to explore the stories in more detail, through a range of games, craft and other activities. As teams of storytellers across York and surrounding area, we'll have chance to think about how we can work together on this, to share ideas and resources. Watch this space!

Pride 2026

This year, the team were at Southlands again for Pride! We set up some rainbow-themed crafts and a simple prayer station in the morning, and then headed outside to hand out stickers to those in



the parade. Together, we reckon we handed out around 4000 stickers, plus some crocheted rainbows, sharing God's love with everyone!



3Gen at the NEC 2026

The team are getting plans together to take a group of young people to the NEC this year. Straight after school on Friday 2nd October, we'll be taking a minibus down to Birmingham for a weekend of shenanigans! The so much to do for the young people, whatever their interests. Running through it all is the chance to explore and deepen their faith with others of a similar age. We'll arrive back at Sunday tea time, no doubt with a bunch of tired-but-

happy young people! Do you know any young people you think might be up for it? Here's the video from last year for them to check out:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O8_THIF3Hbs

The Circuit and the District are paying a third of the ticket price each so it is heavily discounted. Contact any of the CYF team for more details or to book you place on the minibus!

Forest Church Launches!

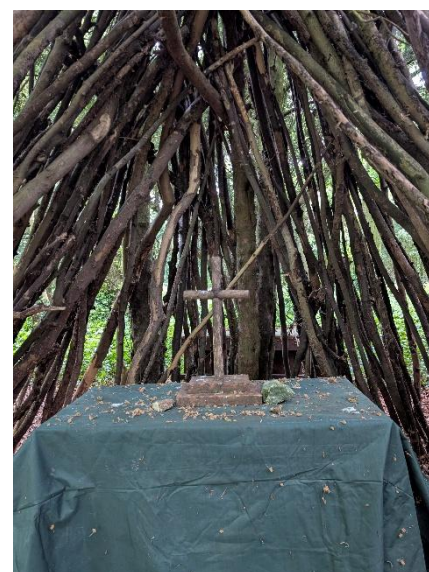
Given that it's right at the beginning of the New Places for New People Project, Lorraine has been full on with getting 'all the ducks in a row' to get it launched. Promoting, risk assessments, recruitment, planning. We've held a couple sessions in Haxby at the community garden and they've been very well received! The Forest Church team is in the middle of planning the next one



there. Heworth and Acomb also have plans in place to get started there too! Lorraine is very relieved that the project allowed us to fund Amy for a day or so a week to get the website up to date and build our presence on social media.

We offered a forest church session to the staff team as our devotions at the beginning of staff meeting in April as well. They really enjoyed the chance to step away from the building and think differently about things.

We also had the chance to share the story of Forest Church York with colleagues from across the North, at the recent Lay Workers Retreat. The beautiful setting of Wydale Hall was perfect for this, and we even got to run a session in their beautiful woodland chapel!



Contact the team

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Re:New Prayer Event and Circuit Re-imagining

The team have been closely involved in the work the Circuit Leadership Team have been doing to help re-imagining how the Circuit might work; adding their insight from a Children, Youth and Families point of view. We also put together the Circuit Prayer event in March.



Chaplaincy report from Victoria Etherington

This week marks the end of the academic year for the undergraduates, and as I sit in Derwent college coffee shop writing this, I am watching students as they move out of their accommodation. Although postgraduate students remain in session over the summer, most students in the chaplaincy are undergraduates, so regular events have now paused.

As the Diocese of York have made the decision not to recruit for a new chaplain, this pause offers some valuable breathing space as we consider the future shape of the chaplaincy.

This year has been a steep learning curve; I have had the sensation of lurching from one week to the next!! Despite this the role remains fulfilling and the year has been joyful in so many ways. I feel so blessed when a student tells me how much they look forward to meeting, or that the chaplaincy has made a positive impact on their first year at university.

On Ascension Day we had glorious weather and 76 turned up for the 7am service. Although this meant I had to climb the 275 steps to the top of the tower! This week we have had funding awarded for a young adult missional placement; from 1st September Morgan will be working alongside the children's youth and family team as well as assisting in the

chaplaincy. And I am working alongside students interested in developing a 'student' chaplain role, offering chaplaincy for students by students.

As I enter the calmer months of the summer, and plan for the next academic year there is much to be grateful for as well as much to look forward to.



Circuit Council Report March 2026

- Circuit Council received a report from the CLT on the vision for the future of the Circuit. This included the proposed distribution of ministers between churches and the creation of 'Mission Areas' to encourage working together. This was discussed and recommended to churches for consultation.
- As part of the above report, it was agreed to appoint a Circuit Finance Manager to assist both the Circuit and churches with day-to-day management of finances. This will also free up the Circuit Support Manager to give more support to churches.
- Circuit Council approved the Finance Report and accounts for 2024/25; and approved the assessment and budget for 2026/27.
- It was agreed that we would start the process of selling Clifton Methodist Church.
- It was noted that since Victoria Etherington started as Methodist Chaplain to the University of York in September 2026, the Anglican Chaplain had left and was not likely to be replaced, meaning Victoria's role is even more important than before.
- Permission was given to Carecent to create a counselling room and to appoint a paid Volunteer Co-ordinator.
- Permission was also given for a Forest Church Project Support position to be created, funded through grant funding given to this 'New Place for New People.'

Property update

- The former chapel at Stillington has now been sold.
- The sale of the former manse at Vanbrugh Drive is expected to complete in late June.
- The former chapel at Stamford Bridge is back on the market after a potential purchaser withdrew. We have had some interest but no further offers.
- The former chapel at Dunnington is now on the market.
- We have begun the process to sell the former chapel at Rufforth.
- The former Clifton chapel is now the responsibility of the Circuit and the process of getting reports to make decisions about a sale has begun.

Circuit prayer rota

7th June	Our prayers in June draw on the Bible month material on Philippians. In chapter 1 Paul talks about being joyful, even though he's in prison, because he trusts God and knows that he is serving God's purpose. How might we cultivate contentment and trust, even when circumstances are beyond our control?
14th June	Our prayers in June draw on the Bible month material on Philippians. In chapter 2 Paul calls on the church to follow Jesus' example and be humble, so that we may be able to live together in love without egos getting in the way. Where might God be calling you to live our Christlike love in your community this week?
21st June	Our prayers in June draw on the Bible month material on Philippians. In chapter 3 Paul encourages the church to 'press on' and keep striving to walk God's way. How can understanding faith as a journey help you be patient with yourself and others?
28th June	Our prayers in June draw on the Bible month material on Philippians. In chapter 4 Paul talks about how he has been encouraged and supported by the church. How have the people and communities you've journeyed with brought joy to your life?
5th July	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. Next Sunday is Action for Children Sunday. Pray for all those working to help children and young people who need support. You can find out more about their work at www.actionforchildren.org.uk
12th July	This Sunday is our Circuit Celebration! Pray for everyone who is part of our Circuit, as we look both back at where we've come from and ahead to where we hope to go.
19th July	The church on the Circuit prayer rota for this Sunday is Villages Together. Give thanks and pray for the work of God in that place. Today is marked as rural mission Sunday. Pray for all churches and members who serve rural communities where people may face struggles to access services, poor transport links and isolation.
26th July	Over the summer our prayers will focus on our Circuit's Vision statement. This Sunday we're thinking about Witnessing in the World . How can we deepen our local engagement? How can we meaningfully engage in national and world concerns? Ask God to speak to you about how you and your church can be witnesses for the good news.
2nd Aug	Over the summer our prayers will focus on our Circuit's Vision statement. This Sunday we're thinking about Inspiring Ministry . Where might there be exciting new opportunities? Where do we need to increase support and care for people in our churches and communities? Ask God to speak to you about how you and your church can minister to the needs of those around you.
9th Aug	Over the summer our prayers will focus on our Circuit's Vision statement. This Sunday we're thinking about Nurturing Relationships . What is important to us that is distinctively Methodist? Who can we work with to multiply our impact? Ask God to speak to you about how you and your church can nurture better relationships in your community.
16th Aug	Over the summer our prayers will focus on our Circuit's Vision statement. This Sunday we're thinking about Developing our Gifts . How do we support and encourage both our lay leaders and our ministerial staff? Ask God to speak to you about how you and your church can support volunteers and circuit staff.
23rd Aug	Over the summer our prayers will focus on our Circuit's Vision statement. This Sunday we're thinking about Offering Hospitality .

	How do we make sure our properties are welcoming? How do we extend hospitality to everyone in our communities? Ask God to speak to you about how you and your church can offer a hospitable welcome to your community.
30th Aug	Over the summer our prayers will focus on our Circuit's Vision statement. This Sunday we're thinking about Welcoming Diversity . What different ways of being church might we want to explore? How can we make sure everyone feels welcome in our churches? Ask God to speak to you about how you and your church can celebrate the diversity of God's people.

Reflections

Our reflections are based on the resources for Bible month: Philippians.

A harvest of joy

"I thank my God every time I remember you, constantly praying with joy in every one of my prayers for all of you, because of your sharing in the gospel from the first day until now." Philippians 1 v3-5.



Paul starts by saying how thankful he is for the Philippian church, because of their faithfulness and support. Who are you thankful for- maybe someone who has encouraged you in your faith?

He goes on to describe the Philippians as producing a "harvest of righteousness" (verse 11) because of their love for Christ. Love and joy are key parts of Paul's message- not what we might expect when you consider that he was in prison while writing this letter! How might we keep focused on our love for God when our lives are tough?



Shine humbly

"Do all things without murmuring and arguing, so that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, in which you shine like stars in the world." Philippians 2, v14-16

Paul calls on the Philippians to copy Christ's- and his own- humility and servant-heartedness. Rather than seeking status, he calls for them to be obedient to God, even when it is uncomfortable.

Through this self-giving love, he says they 'shine like stars' amid the selfishness of the world. Paul uses Timothy and Epaphroditus as examples of other people who have given up a lot to faithfully follow Christ.

What might it look like for you and your church to 'shine like stars' in the world?

Press on

“Forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on towards the goal for the prize of the heavenly call of God in Christ Jesus.” Philippians 3, v13-14.

Like Paul, we are on a journey. Even if we have followed Jesus all our lives, we know that we still aren't perfect. Our righteousness doesn't come from our own actions, but from acknowledging Jesus and following him- even when this makes our lives tough. Paul calls us to keep going, to follow Jesus' example and try to be more like him. Not because we can 'earn' salvation, but because making the effort will change us to be more like Jesus.

How might you or your church keep moving forward on your journey with Jesus? Are you ever tempted to sit back rather than pressing onward?



Grace be with you

“I can do all things through him who strengthens me.” Philippians 4 v13

Paul emphasises that he relies on God, not his own strength, to carry him through what must have been a challenging time- in prison for his beliefs. While at times it's appropriate to grieve, to be angry, to feel lonely or disappointed, God is still with us, even if we don't feel like it. While we shouldn't deny these feelings, remembering who God is and the things God has done can help us trust that we are not alone. Because of God we can be strengthened to face the challenges the world throws at us.

How do you react when you face challenges? Can you encourage yourself or others by remembering or sharing God's faithfulness?

