

# Circuit Newsletter Summer 2024



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**York Methodist Circuit Hub**

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Dear Friends,

Welcome to the latest edition of the circuit newsletter. We are grateful to all those who have contributed to the following pages, providing us with news, thoughts and challenges from around the circuit. I am grateful too for this opportunity to draw your attention to two events in particular that are on the horizon.

On Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> July we will be sharing together in a special circuit service at Acomb to mark changes happening in the lives of three of our circuit staff team, as their time working in the York Circuit comes to an end. We are very grateful for the ways in which Heather Lewis, Louisa Taylor and Andy Lindley have made their own particular contributions to our life together, the impact they have made and the friendship and collegueship they have offered. The circuit service gives us the chance to express our gratitude to them and to wish them well for the next steps in front of them. The service will be at 10.30am on 7<sup>th</sup> July at Acomb and will also be livestreamed.

Before we get to July we are all being invited to get involved with Bible Month in June. This year we are taking time to look at Genesis. Since Genesis is quite lengthy, we have opted to focus on the first eleven chapters. These contain the fascinating stories of Eve and Adam, of Abel and Cain, of Noah and of the Tower of Babel. In their different ways they draw us into an exploration of how we as human beings relate to God, to one another and to the earth. They paint for us scenarios of **choice and consequence**. As we engage with all of the characters we will also be engaging with our own experience of what it means to live as human beings in a complex world of opportunities and dilemmas, of exclusion and violence, of creativity and destructiveness, of separateness and togetherness. Of course, these themes also take us way beyond our own personal experience, to the life of our world and its current tensions, conflicts and atrocities, as well as its signs of hope, justice and peace. There is material available for bible study as well as for those taking services in June. (*Resources for Bible Month are available from the Circuit [website](#)*).

So, enjoy reading this newsletter, enjoy participating in our circuit service and bible month events, enjoy making the most of opportunities that come your way or that you create for yourself over the summer months.

My best wishes to you all.

David

#### Circuit Diary Dates

**Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> June** 7pm, Circuit Council, Haxby & Wigginton.

**Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> July** Circuit Farewell Service, 10.30am, Acomb Methodist Church.

**Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> September** 7pm, Circuit Council, Haxby & Wigginton.

**Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> December** 7pm, Circuit Council, TBC.

## **Circuit Consultation – What’s happening?**

About a year ago the Circuit stewards, Nick Dawson, Janet Bowling, Vic Paylor, Ann Smallwood, and Ruth Morrison (before her move ) together with Steve Leah were tasked by Circuit council to carry out a Consultation across the circuit . We were very fortunate to be able to meet and work with Rev Graham Jones to help us in this task.

So a **reminder of our terms of reference:**

- To draw up realistic proposals for the way forward to address the current financial deficit.
- To propose a suitable staffing policy
- To work out which parts of circuit life are core to its budget.
- And to be able to explain how the proposals help the circuit fulfil its mission and objectives.

We started by compiling a simple questionnaire for individuals and churches to meet together and give us feedback on what they thought were the key issues. The group then went out in pairs to meet and discuss with various groups: lay staff, ordained staff, Carecent, Lois and Angie, Local Preachers and Worship Leaders, Children’s and Young People’s team.

**We listened, we discussed, we prayed and tried to distil what we’d heard** and come up with realistic and workable ideas. And tried to listen for what God is saying to us. Sometimes we were surprised, overwhelmed, and challenged by the suggestions and thoughts. We felt the weight of responsibility but were also encouraged by the willingness to accept change and the enthusiasm for different ways of doing things.

**We found that there was more to this than just addressing the financial deficit**, that congregations were struggling with the burden of buildings and governance and often wanted to have freedom to do ‘interesting things’ and mission. As we travelled, consulted, asked and enquired we found that many were also concerned with difficulties in recruiting to the offices of the church. We have a shortage of Church Stewards, Communion Stewards, secretaries, treasurers, caretakers and coffee makers – all difficult to find – all needed to keep the wheels of our “movement” turning.

The Circuit Council has now accepted our **set of proposals** and these will be taken forward to the Circuit Leadership team for action. The financial situation has improved since last year and there are changes in the budget forecast. We assume that these proposals will result in no overall change to the assessment. Time is pressing as we need to be ready for staff changes in September 2025.

**We don't want this to be seen as simply downsizing but an opportunity to be creative and brave. We acknowledge that there is some fantastic work happening in our circuit, in churches, by staff and with initiatives with other organisations, as well as "The Methodist Way of Life" This is a framework for a direction of travel. Love is at the core of what we do and we have hope rooted in Jesus.**

Over the next few months the Circuit Leadership team will start to propose specific plans. We hope that each church will engage with this process and focus on the issues already identified. It is important that we work together to find out where churches see themselves, both in relation to their immediate communities and to one another within the Circuit.

God of beginnings and endings,  
Take the past with its memories, take the present with its activities, take the future  
with its uncertainties, and make of all three one whole; that our lives may be in  
harmony, with your Spirit of peace.  
Amen

## **Circuit Consultation – Proposals**

### Governance Proposals:

1. The York Circuit Council encourages work to begin on merging Church Governing bodies within the Circuit.
2. The Circuit Council directs the Circuit Leadership Team to put together a framework as to how this might happen with the aim of making progress by September 2025.
3. The Circuit Council directs that planning for the resourcing of the Circuit from September 2025 should be on the basis of a reduced number of Church Governing bodies.

### Buildings Proposals:

As a guiding principle, the York Circuit Council agrees that there should be a reduction in the number of church buildings in the Circuit and agrees that they should either be affirmed in their current use or sold, or the possibilities of community use in partnership with others should be explored. The use of Circuit properties should also be considered; whether they are still required or should be sold, or put to creative missional use, e.g. housing refugees, housing a non-stipendiary or house for duty ordained minister, housing lay employees and others in a community house etc. To this aim:

1. The Circuit Council encourages an audit to be conducted on every church building in the Circuit.
2. The Circuit Council agrees that an audit should be conducted on all Circuit properties, these being the 10 manses, Aroma Café and flat, as well as the Melbourne Centre and Circuit Hub.
3. The Circuit Council agrees that the income and costs associated with the closed Churches (currently Trinity, Dunnington, New Earswick, Stillingfleet and Stamford Bridge) be ring-fenced from ongoing Circuit finances, and that any deficit from the management of these properties be funded from either the reserves received from these Churches or from the proceeds of a future sale.

#### People Proposals:

1. The York Circuit Council agrees that staffing (lay and ordained) should be organised in ways that encourages the development and use of specialist gifts and passions.
2. The Circuit Council agrees that, in collaboration with Carecent, a 'city centre chaplain' role should be developed, with funding both by Carecent and the sale of city centre properties. The post-holder's responsibilities would include seeking to address some of the causes of poverty and homelessness.
3. The Circuit Council agrees that opportunities should be explored for 'New Places for New People' seeking to attract connexional funds which are available, e.g. in new housing developments, marginalised communities, online and digital communities etc.
4. The Circuit Council agrees to encourage the development of partnerships with community organisations whose goals are consistent with those of the Methodist Church, including other denominations.

The proposals agreed by the York Circuit Council will be actioned under the direction of the Circuit Leadership Team: Janet Bowling, Nick Dawson, Vic Paylor, Ann Smallwood, David Bidnell, Elizabeth Cushion, Victoria Etherington, John Hayward, Louisa Taylor, Stephen Leah.

*We hope church members will pray for the Circuit Leadership Team as they lead us through implementing these proposals.*

## Flourish February 2026- Save the Date!



**Flourish is returning in 2026- and it's coming to York!**

The next District Flourish event will be **13th-15th February 2026** at the University of York, with a variety of speakers, worship, youth & children's work and workshops on a variety of topics around our theme of 'Woven Threads' - a phrase that recognises that we are individuals that feed into the body of the church, and that each thread has a

role in building the tapestry of the Methodist Church. Put the date in your diaries and keep your eyes open for more details over the next few months!

You can find more information as it is made available and sign up for the Flourish newsletter at <https://www.yorkshirenemethodist.org/flourish26/>

## Moving On

### Louisa Taylor

After three years in the York Circuit, I will be leaving you in the summer to start training for ordained ministry at the Queen's Foundation in Birmingham. I'm both excited and daunted by what lies ahead!

I arrived in York after 12 years abroad, with nothing but a suitcase, a strange European accent and a loving, supportive family to welcome me. I'll be leaving with a wealth of friends, experiences and encounters, and a new place to call "home". Those of you who have had to suffer stories of my 2022 Coast to Coast walk will

know that my favourite kind of home is one that moves with me, and I will certainly be carrying all of you in my heart and prayers on the next stage of my journey. So thank you and God bless!



*"Everybody Yurts": putting up the Hope & Anchor Yurt at Flourish 2023*

Louisa Taylor

### Heather Lewis

Sadly, Heather is leaving her role as Children's worker in the Circuit to return to teaching. She will be missed by the team as well as all the young people, children and families she has worked with over the last five years. Happily, she is not going far and will be remaining at Lidgett, so we will still be able to see her!

Heather says: after five happy years in my role as a part time Children and Families worker for the Circuit, I'll be moving on to take up a new challenge at the end of this month. I'll

become a class teacher in the school in which I already work part time as a teaching assistant, to cover for a teacher who is going on maternity leave. Now that my children are grown up and independent, I've decided to take up the opportunity of returning to teaching after a gap of nearly a decade!

I've really enjoyed my time working for the Circuit, alongside a wonderful team and it's been a privilege to work with such committed and talented volunteers in churches throughout the Circuit. I'll take with me fond memories of all the fun and joy of working with the children and young people in the various groups and activities I've been involved with. I'll still be involved in church life in York, so hope to continue to see you all at Circuit events and services in the future.

### **Andy Lindley**

I ought to be getting used to it by now, but a frustrating period of mental unease, restlessness, uncertainty and frankly inability to initiate new things in my ministry, coalesced in a conversation with the District Chair in January this year. The purpose of the conversation was to invite me to consider taking on the



superintendency of the Ryedale Circuit, which borders the north east of York Circuit, the North Yorkshire Coast Circuit to its east, and itself covers the southern part of the North Yorkshire Moors. It comprises 17 churches in small villages and market towns like Malton, Pickering and Helmsley.

The role will deviate fairly significantly from a normal superintendency, in that it will draw on a wider team to include practical assistance from the Bridge Circuit, which has a core team of people offering financial, safeguarding and administration oversight, but also with local lay pastoral and admin support. This will allow me to have direct pastoral charge of just three chapels, but also the hope, and for my mental health, I pray this is true, is that this will allow me to offer this ministry on a half-time basis. For the remainder of my time, I will continue to minister and offer leadership within the Kairos Movement, as well as my role as Assistant Chair of New Streams of church development. Anyone who works multiple roles knows they are rarely ever truly part-time, but in reality, they will, I believe have some significant overlap. I already had a sense that for Kairos to continue its growth, there was a need to spend time physically in other areas of the District, to encounter, identify and encourage those people who have a pioneering spark, or who struggle to fit into an inherited model of church. This role will offer that opportunity. There is also much to be excited about already taking place. The Wesley Centre in Malton, just off the marketplace, is £1m into a £3m refit, both restoring a heritage building, but also transforming it into a

concert venue, café and community centre. The money, I am informed, is identified and I'm trusting the build will be largely complete by the time I arrive, but of course, it will then need to deliver on its financial and missional aspirations. The two other churches in my care both seem to have a clear vision of their individual ministries and identities – which is helpful as they are only a few hundred yards apart!

I should add, that I have been extremely grateful to both the York and Ryedale circuits, for assistance with the logistical and pastoral challenge, for us as a family, of moving a year early and my son being midway through his A-levels at York College. To minimise disruption to his education, and indeed employment, both circuits have agreed, that we might retain use of the York manse until June '25, while having access to the Malton manse from September this year to offer me a sensible base for ministry there. I may regret that when two sets of utility bills arrive on the doorstep! While I am not leaving just yet, I'd like to take the opportunity to thank those of you, who I have had the privilege of serving and ministering alongside during my time in the circuit (12 years). I leave a different person, with a clearer sense of my vocation, faith that has been enriched and lots of wonderful memories. I'm grateful to remain in the district, in part because it is at the forefront of exploring God's emerging church connexionally, but also because I'll continue to be able to share in ministry with you, in different ways.

Rev Andy Lindley

### **Haxby & Wigginton Whole Life Community Garden**

See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it?  
I am making a way in the desert and streams in the wasteland.

Isaiah 43: 18-19



As part of the new Haxby and Wigginton Community Garden Team, it is incredibly exciting to be involved in this 'new thing'. After being so long in the planning stage it feels like we are very much coming out of the 'wilderness' as things start to take shape.

I would like to share with you a vision for the garden. I could waffle on about accessibility, mental health, biodiversity, connecting with nature and creating a space for community, but it doesn't always mean an awful lot and can be just buzz words. So I thought I would take you on an imaginary 'stroll' around the garden, as we envisage it in a few years' time.



So here we are at the entrance way - around the end of May 2030 – let me ‘show’ you around.



The first thing that hits you is the gentle scent of the roses which are just coming out. It is glorious. I can spot the ‘Flourish Rose’ that was planted in 2024 in all its splendour. Someone is just off to the left, their wheelchair tucked under the specially adapted raised bed, completely absorbed in planting out the green bean seedlings. We’ll look forward to harvesting those later in the summer and passing them on to some of our community partners. One of the children from the school group who are busy sowing some seeds and watering the tomato plants shouts a greeting to the lady who grins back at him. They are obviously old friends. A group of people

of all ages and backgrounds are putting the world to rights over a cuppa, before taking on the next round of weeding.

As we wander past the sea of wildflowers surrounding our little fruit growing area, which is still getting established, we hear the buzz of pollinators. Let’s go through the rose arches to the quieter area now - and we can hear the water of the solar fountain in the pond, gently bubbling away. Someone is sitting contentedly on a bench by the pond, watching the dragonflies dancing around. If we’re lucky we might see a frog. A little way off in the distance, a parent and their child are happily walking the labyrinth we mowed into the grass. I see them regularly; the child has autism and it really seems to calm them. A couple of people are chatting in the new garden room; I realise it’s the social prescriber from the GP surgery. So many of the people she has seen have joined us in the garden and it has helped our little community enormously.



As we wander back someone waves us over; it’s a local gardener who has been growing some more seedlings for us. She hands them over and mentions that one of her neighbours has offered to make a new potting bench out of some spare bits of wood he has lying around. I tell her to give him my number, with thanks. Before leaving we sit down on a couple of chairs in the patio area.

One of the volunteers asks us if we want our usual brews. I grin and nod and sit back in the chair and sigh as a wave of contentedness washes over me, as it so often does being here. After talking over our planting plans for the next few weeks over a cuppa, you and I say our goodbyes and agree to meet next week for a spot of weeding.

I hope that gives you a flavour of what the garden might be like in a few years' time. I often wonder where the journey will take us but we hope our community will go with us in our little adventure, whether it's with their time and skills, a seedling or two, or with encouragement. Above all, we want people to come and enjoy it and be part of it. After all, it's for all of us.

Lorraine Jones, Trustee, Whole Life Community Garden.

Find us Facebook, Instagram and our website [www.wholelifecommunitygarden.org](http://www.wholelifecommunitygarden.org)

## News from the Children, Youth & Families team

The spring term has been yet another busy one for the CY&F team!

**One X dates: 17<sup>th</sup> May, 7<sup>th</sup> June, 21<sup>st</sup> June and 19<sup>th</sup> July  
5-7pm**

**One Family: 14<sup>th</sup> June and  
12<sup>th</sup> July 4.30-6pm**

### One X and One Family

Both these groups continue to meet regularly at the hub on Friday evenings, where we enjoy fellowship, faith and food together.

Katie Wrenn – one of the

members of One X was recently recognised for the work she does around climate justice and at St Nicks environment centre, with the Yorkshire and Humber Youth Climate Champion award in the category of Youth Voice and Social Action.



### Hilda's Heirs



In March we were at the Minster running Hilda's Heirs. This is a one-day event that celebrates the role of women in the church, both in the past and today, through craft, discussion, and worship activities. We were joined by inspirational women from around the circuit as well as the Youth



President Thomas Hart. Those taking part included; Fran Taylor, Steph Cooper from RAY, Kiera Snaith and Angie Creswick for

Carecent, Rachael Maskell Labour MP, Penny Stables Green councillor. Although it was very chilly, there were some fascinating conversations!

### **Strensall Holiday Club**

There was a full house both days of the Strensall half term holiday club in February. With a theme of 'Treasure Hunters' the young people had a ball, with obstacle courses, treasure hunts, escape room, treasure chest crafts and outdoor activities. Not to mention building a giant castle!

As well as helping them plan and prepare for the February holiday club, Lorraine will work alongside the Strensall Team who are about to start planning the next which will take place in the first week of the holidays.

### **Open the Book**

The Bible Society have released new resources, including new stories which the teams are getting their head around. While there are many upsides to them - introducing more sign language to the stories for example, planning them is taking some thinking about. Lorraine has visited the Stillington team to share a few insights and pass on some top tips for the new resources. If any other team is looking at starting the new resources, give Lorraine a shout. Having worked with them for nearly a year now, there are plenty of learnings to share.

### **Family Matters**

Heather has just finished facilitating a successful new course with Family Matters at Acomb Methodist church, giving parents advice and practical strategies to help them support their children's emotional wellbeing. Family Matters is a small York based charity, who offer a range of courses to help develop positive family relationships. They are looking for venues to host their courses, so please do get in touch if you are able to support them.

### **Role descriptions**

One of the things that came out of the Safeguarding officers meeting in March, was the need for example role descriptions. John Hayward and Victoria are working on these, which we hope to have available by the summer. If you have any requests, please let us know.

### **York Youth Partnership**

York city council are re-establishing the youth partnership, a network of providers offering services to families and young people across the city. This initiative is faith friendly, and the team are actively supporting and developing this project.

## Staff meeting 7<sup>th</sup> May

The CYF team led devotions at staff meeting on Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> May. We spent most of our time in a discussion about what the circuit could look like in the next 10 years, but we started our time together with a little challenge...

The staff had to wind their way through the maze whilst overcoming different obstacles that they came across. Someone had to be blindfolded and guided around the maze, everyone had to duck under woggles, some people had to balance frisbees on their heads, Lorraine was having lots of fun throwing 'snowballs' at them, one person even had to do a section of the maze on a pogo stick!



We talk a lot about what issues we see, what problems need to be solved, but the real problem is that we don't do much more than talk about them. What if we started coming up with ways to move beyond solving the problems, and started looking at these problems as opportunities to engage with the wider community? What if we no longer use the language of scarcity and absence, but of sufficiency

and abundance. What if we no longer make plans that are set in stone, but we adapt and flex with the ever-changing culture and society that surrounds us. What if we no longer focus on where we are struggling, and instead celebrate what we do well and encourage one another.

What if we no longer think about my church and your church, and instead think about the joined-up community of the Circuit, in which we are all a part of. What if we stop trying to do everything by ourselves, and instead ask how others can help us, and how we can help others. There's an African proverb that I love – 'If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together.' We can make great change in the church, if we just do it together.

Amy Shephard



## **CYF team Save the dates!**

### **York Pride - 1<sup>st</sup> June**

This year we are doing Pride a little differently! Usually we head to the festival at the Knavesmire, sometimes after joining the parade too, however we know this can be quite overwhelming for some of our children and young people, so this year we will be making it a little quieter, and meeting at Southlands Methodist Church!

Join us from 10am for activities, we will be waving the parade past the church at roughly 11:45am (this is likely to change depending on when they set off from the Minster) and handing out rainbows, followed by some lunch at about 12:30pm, finishing by about 1:30pm. We will provide some food for a picnic, but please feel free to bring something to share (although if you could avoid nuts, that would be great)!

Families and young people are welcome to join us for some or all of the morning, and, of course, can make their way to the festival afterwards if they want to.

### **Venture Weekend 5<sup>th</sup> - 7<sup>th</sup> July**

We are returning to Carlton Lodge outdoor centre for a weekend of activities and faith workshops. There will be indoor as well as outdoor games and chances to engage with craft, discussion and worship over the weekend. The cost of this weekend is £150, but the district and circuit will both pay £50 per young person, so the cost for families is £50.

Contact Richard Ellarby for more information [richard.ellarby@methodistyouth.org.uk](mailto:richard.ellarby@methodistyouth.org.uk) or <https://forms.gle/KHKyyAXF46kKNCFn9> to book direct.

### **Family Eco Day - Saturday 31st August 2024 11-4 at Summerbridge Methodist Church**

Everyone is invited to have a look around Summerbridge Methodist Church to find out how they got to Gold Eco Church.. Then it's time for a picnic, activities and games or a chill out with a cuppa to appreciate God's Creation from your picnic blanket! Children to be accompanied by an adult. Contact Lorraine Jones to book on, so we know how many to expect. [lorraine.jones@methodistyouth.org.uk](mailto:lorraine.jones@methodistyouth.org.uk) 07850 631168

### **3 Generate 4<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> October at the NEC Birmingham**

This is the national children's and youth assembly. It aims to equip children and young people to become participants in advocacy, change and growth and have an impact in their local Methodist communities. Last year there were over a thousand children and young people present – it is great opportunity for young people to be with their peers. The cost of this weekend is £120, the circuit and district will both contribute £40, so the cost per young person is £40. The team are hoping to take a group, but if we are going to arrange transport we need to know by the end of June who wants tickets. Contact Victoria if you would like to go.

## Joined Up 19<sup>th</sup> October at Haxby and Wigginton Methodist church

This is one for the adults! A day for equipping and empowering anyone who works with children, families or young people. There are some great speakers, Matt Woodcock is keynoting. Cost £15 including lunch.

*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, Eco resources, or the uniform bank, whilst Amy is the best contact for intergenerational church support.*

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

- Amy: amy.shephard@methodistyouth.org.uk 07708 559419
- Lorraine: lorraine.jones@methodistyouth.org.uk 07850 631168
- Victoria: victoria@methodistyouth.org.uk 07473 065856

## News from the Circuit Eco Task Force

### Where can hope be found in the climate crisis?

By Katie Wrenn, Acomb

A lot of people ask this question, I know that. And a lot of people believe they have found the answer. Except each and every answer is different. My answer? Hope can be found in the people.

Recently, I attended the Act Now eco conference at Acomb Methodist Church which consisted of a number of workshops and talks. In true Methodist fashion, I'll explain the three things from that day that helped answer the question: where can hope be found in the present climate crisis?



The first one of these things was the Coat of Hopes. This was a project set up in August of 2021 in response to COP26 (the annual meeting of world leaders in 2021 about trying to solve the climate crisis). In short, it is a coat that has been on pilgrimage from the south coast up to Glasgow and has been worn by people walking ever since. It has been made with patches made from embroidered fabrics, sewn by people or communities to share their hopes of the place they live in and love in the face of climate and ecological breakdown. The coat has been worn by thousands, made by hundreds and all at the conference were incredibly lucky to be able

to wear the coat and see it further on its journey. Barbara, who was the current coat guardian, sang the song of the coat

‘In truth my destination is each person that I meet  
The turning of our future is on all our backs and feet’

while walking down the centre of the church and I'm sure the haunting melody will stay with all of us for many years to come. For me, the coat symbolises the sheer amount of people who have placed their hopes in COP26. Although COP26 wasn't as impactful as it needed to be, the coat is still walking and will keep walking until the climate crisis is solved, which shows that the hopes of the people are still alive and hope still lies in the people.

The second thing which helped me answer the question was the talk by keynote speaker, Colin Beale, University of York. Last year, he spoke of how hope can be found in Christ. This year, it was how this hope can be put into action. What Colin spoke about was incredibly important but not often heard. It was the fact that, although small changes to our lifestyle, like using public transport are important, and every little change matters, if everyone in the UK did this, it would still not make a significant impact to our carbon emission. In fact, we need to drive systemic change, for example the economy, to help combat the effects of climate change.



Although a lot of that systemic change relies on politicians, it is up to us, the people, to help drive the change. One example of this, if you are considering getting a heat pump, is instead of spending so much money on a single one for your home, is to instead spread the cost by joining up with other people and buy a community heat pump which will serve three or four homes. The thought of actions like this did help to give me the answer to the question that hope lies in the people. This is because, as well as actually changing our lifestyle, we *can* drive systemic change by talking about the climate crisis and spreading awareness of it. Surely if it is in our power to do so, it must be our responsibility to do so.

The final thing that showed me that hope was in the people was a workshop I attended by St Nicks. St Nicks is a nature conservation charity based in York, and among their activities, they conduct practical habitat management such as scything or coppicing. The workshop was led by Beki, a conservation officer, and we discussed ‘Urban Corridors’, where plants, gardens, verges and hedgerows link up green spaces for wildlife to use to go between them. And how they could be implemented in Acomb to help join its many green spaces. It was extremely interesting to see the work that was already going on in Acomb, and around York, to connect green spaces and everyone had lots of ideas of how to improve this process. Overall, it showed me that local people and communities can work together to help protect nature, increase biodiversity and it is down to the people.

Hope lies in the people.

## Bible Month – Genesis

Look out for the Bible Month resources this which are available on the Circuit [website](https://www.yorkmethodist.org.uk/about-us/news/bible-month-genesis-resources.html) (https://www.yorkmethodist.org.uk/about-us/news/bible-month-genesis-resources.html)

There is a ready to go café style service, designed to encourage people to discuss and think about our relationship with nature. But there are additional recommendations or suggestions for your to tweak the service to suit your own setting. If you don't have time to use it now, perhaps your church could hold a Climate Sunday Service some time?



**SAVE THE DATE: Saturday 31<sup>st</sup> August Family Day at Summerbridge Methodist Gold Eco Church, followed by picnic and games.**



### Yorkshire North and East District Net Zero Board

Our District is committed to becoming a Net Zero Carbon District by 2040. To help them achieve this, the District obtained funding to employ a Net Zero Officer – Tim O'Brien – and have also established a Net Zero Board to monitor the progress on the journey to Net Zero. There are people on the board with various specialist skills and knowledge, the grant funding officer and also a local church representative. I have joined them as a Circuits representative, on behalf of the Eco Task Force. I am looking forward to working with them to offer insights that I see from circuit level and local eco

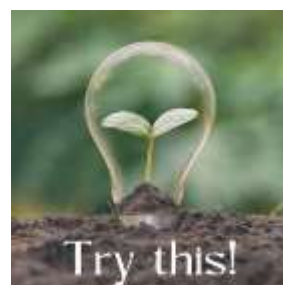
churches, and also to gain wisdom and information from elsewhere in the District and Connexion to share with you.

Lorraine Jones

### Apps to help save the planet.

Thanks to Colin in Haxby for this recommendation.

1. Ecosia – a search engine that plants trees with its ad revenue.
2. Joulebug – An eco-friendly app that encourages sustainable habits through challenges and rewards.
3. My Little Plastic footprint – offers tips to help you reduce your plastic consumption.
4. Zero Waste App – Connects users to local zero waste stores, farmers markets and recycling facilities.
5. Happy Cow – a vegetarian and vegan restaurant finder





6. Good on you – an ethical fashion app that rates brands based on their environmental, labour, and animal welfare practices.
7. Olio – A food sharing app that connects neighbours to share surplus food, reducing food waste and promoting community-building.
8. WattTime – An energy tracking app that helps users make smarter energy choices.
9. Too Good to Go – an app that connects users with local businesses offering surplus food at discounted prices, helping to combat food waste.
10. WWF My Footprint – A carbon calculator which then offers you options to help reduce your footprint.

### **Shrinking your Digital Footprint**

Something that is a growing problem, but one we don't really think about, is the carbon footprint associated with our digital world. While it has offered many carbon savings, such as reducing the number of face to face meetings and commuting, there is an expanding need for datacentres which need cooling. They are mostly cooled by fossil fuels. Here's a couple of tips to shrink your digital footprint (and as a bonus, it's very therapeutic to ditch what you no longer use!):

1. Close your old accounts – whether email or platforms you no longer use.
2. Check out your junk! What random newsletters have you signed up for that are no longer relevant to you? Are you still getting emails from insurance companies you are no longer with or shops you no longer go to?
3. Apps – every shop you go into you are encouraged to 'download the app' and it's easy for your phone to get cluttered. Ditch the ones you really don't use.

### **Zero Hour Climate and Nature Bill**

Zero Hour have done this great video based on Monty Python's 'Romans' sketch called 'Toadwatch: What has nature ever done for us?' to promote their Climate and Nature Bill.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PhIMWK7GysA>



The climate and nature bill is supported across political parties by many MPs. Zero hour is the organisation that has pulled it together and wants to get it through parliament. A few weeks ago I was at a launch of their new call to action. 2024 is a critical year since it is a general election year and who is voted in will be critical to the planet and all our futures.

Go to the link <https://action.zerohour.uk/> to put in your postcode to get your constituency. The website will tell you who your candidates are and whether the candidates are already supporting the Bill. When you add your name to an open letter it will be added to other

signatures. When they get to a critical number, zero hour contacts the candidates and explains that the bill has the support of their constituents and asks them to support it. Once they have confirmed their support they get a green tick above their name, so people can go into the voting booth knowing which of the candidates will vote for the bill should they get into power.

The launch was supported by Deborah Meaden from Dragons Den and Chris Packham. What we need is cross party and wide ranging support for the Bill which gives us a framework to tackle the climate and nature crisis but also does so in a way that ensures a fair and just transition, so those who can least afford to take action (and usual have done the least to cause the problem) don't bear the brunt.

You can support as an individual or as an organisation - is this something you could offer as a Church?

**Next Eco Task Force Meeting: Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> May, 7pm at Strensall Methodist.**

**Sharing the learnings from the Carbon Literacy Training. Implications for Communicating to our Communities, Lorraine Jones. Also, at 8pm joining the webinar Eco Church: The baby steps to Bronze.**

*Thank you for beautiful nature photos from Helen in Strensall – her husband Ken is a dab hand with a camera.*

## **Circuit Council Report March 2024**

- Circuit Council received the report of the Circuit Leadership Team on the work of the Review Task Group. Circuit Council affirmed the work that has been done and agreed to proposals on Governance, Buildings and People. See separate article above for details of what was agreed.
- Lorraine Jones gave an update on our progress towards Eco Circuit status, including that 12 Churches have now registered for Eco Church and 7 have achieved Bronze. Several churches are also looking at projects to move them closer to Net Zero and to reduce energy usage.
- Nick Dawson gave a finance report, highlighting some changes in accounting practice that have altered the way our property valuations are taken into account as part of the accounts. The Circuit Council then approved the Accounts for 2022-23, and agreed the Assessment and Budget for 2024-25.

- Approval was given for a grant and a loan from Circuit MTM funds to contribute towards replacing the roof and other work towards Net Zero at Acomb. The church are also expecting to get grant funding.
- It was noted that the former Methodist Church at Stillingfleet has now been sold. Other sales are ongoing.
- It was noted that the current Secretary of the Carecent Executive has completed their term. Carecent therefore requires a new Secretary. The meetings are 4 times a year. Please speak to David Bidnell or Judith Stoddart if you are interested or know some who may be able to fulfil this role.
- David reported that Andy Lindley has been asked to move to the Ryedale Circuit in order to become their Superintendent this September 2024. We are delighted for Louisa Taylor that she has been accepted to go to Queens to train as a Presbyter. We will have a Circuit Farewell Service for both Andy and Louisa on Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> July, 10.30 am at Acomb. This will be live streamed.

### Circuit prayer rota

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|-----------|--|
| 2nd June  | The church on the Circuit prayer rota for this Sunday is Holgate. Give thanks and pray for the work of God in that place.<br>June is Bible Month, and this year we're looking at Genesis. We're starting with the story of Eve and Adan in Genesis chapter 3. God is shown as coming to talk to Eve and Adam. What would you like to talk to God about?                            |
| 9th June  | The church on the Circuit prayer rota for this Sunday is Huntington. Give thanks and pray for the work of God in that place.<br>We're continuing our look at Genesis for Bible Month with the story of Abel and Cain (chapter 4). Have there been times when you have felt isolated and cut off from God, as Cain describes? Talk to God about how that felt, and what you learnt. |
| 16th June | The church on the Circuit prayer rota for this Sunday is Lidgett. Give thanks and pray for the work of God in that place.<br>This week's Bible Month: Genesis story is about Noah. After the flood God makes a covenant- a promise- with Noah and his family, with the rainbow as a reminder of God's love. How do you remind yourself of God's love for you?                      |
| 23rd June | The church on the Circuit prayer rota for this Sunday is Poppleton. Give thanks and pray for the work of God in that place.<br>Our final story from Genesis is from chapter 11, when people come together to build a tower to 'make a name for themselves.' When have we put our own desires over the good of others and our planet? What can we do about it?                      |
| 30th June | The church on the Circuit prayer rota for this Sunday is Rufforth. Give thanks and pray for the work of God in that place.<br>As we come to the end of Bible Month: Genesis, think about what you've learned and what you want to remember for the future.   |

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| 7th July    | This Sunday we are gathering as a Circuit to thank and say goodbye to staff who are moving on this summer. Pray for Andy and Louisa and those around them as they prepare for their new roles.  |
| 14th July   | The church on the Circuit prayer rota for this Sunday is Sheriff Hutton. Give thanks and pray for the work of God in that place.<br>Like many churches, Sheriff Hutton holds a regular coffee morning. It's an opportunity for the church and wider community to keep in touch. Pray for strong links and friendships within our churches and communities.      |
| 21st July   | The church on the Circuit prayer rota for this Sunday is Southlands. Give thanks and pray for the work of God in that place.<br>Southlands is home to the Planet Food cafe, using food that would otherwise have been thrown out to serve good meals to the local community. Pray for those involved in the project and those who attend.                       |
| 28th July   | The church on the Circuit prayer rota for this Sunday is Strensall. Give thanks and pray for the work of God in that place.<br>Strensall are holding a children's holiday club at the beginning of the school holidays. Please pray for all those who are/ were involved that they have had/ will have a good time and find out more about God's love for them. |
| 4th August  | 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.<br>Pray for the members of Villages Together Methodist Church as they seek to find ways to work together to share God's love with the people in Huby, Stillington, Alne, Tholthorpe and other villages.                     |
| 11th August | The church on the Circuit prayer rota for this Sunday is Thornton. Give thanks and pray for the work of God in that place.<br>Thornton enjoy a good relationship with their local school. Pray for all those moving school or leaving education this summer, and for those who teach.   |
| 18th August | 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.<br>Like many churches, West Thorpe's premises are used by a group working with pre-school children. Pray for all those working in early years care and education as we head towards the start of the school year.                 |
| 25th August | This Sunday we pray for our District, Yorkshire North and East. Pray for Chair of District Leslie Newton and other staff as they support churches and ministers across East and North Yorkshire throughout the year.  |

## Reflections- Genesis

Our reflections follow the Bible Month 2024 book of Genesis. In particular we're going to look at some of the places the stories take place and what we might learn from these.

### The Garden



“They heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden at the time of the evening breeze.”

Genesis 3 v8

I love the idea of God coming to the garden in the evening to meet with Adam and Eve. It's a picture of intimacy between human and divine that might seem hard to imagine.

The Garden of Eden represents that place where God was close to humanity, before our going our own way came between us and God. Our mistakes and selfishness have damaged our relationship not just with God but with all of creation. God's presence doesn't feel so close. And yet- God hasn't given up on us. Maybe, sometimes, in gardens or churches, streets or hillsides, we can sense God walking with us. What would you like to say if you were walking with God in the cool of the evening?

### The Soil

“Today you have driven me away from the soil, and I shall be hidden from your face; I shall be a fugitive and a wanderer on the earth.”

Genesis 4 v14

Cain's murder of his brother shows the growing distance between humanity and God, and Cain echoes the punishment given to his parents, describing it as being driven 'from the soil.' Verse 16 tells us he 'went away from the presence of the Lord.'



But despite the warning about 'restless wandering' (as the NIV calls it), a few verses later Cain is building a city. So what's going on?

For Cain, home was where God was. As a result of his murder he was 'hidden' from God's face. Our actions have consequences, including on the natural world. In our own time we see this with the effect of over-consumption on our planet's ecosystem. It's a reminder that we need to take care of our earthly home. And to remember that, however wonderful our current home is, our true home is in the presence of the Lord.

## The Water

“I have set my bow in the clouds, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth. When I bring clouds over the earth and the bow is seen in the clouds, I will remember my covenant that is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh; and the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh.”

Genesis 9 v13-15



We often see water used in the bible as a metaphor for cleaning and new starts- from the ceremonial washing of the Old Testament rituals through to the baptism of Jesus's early followers in Acts and beyond. Here, we see floods being seen as a cleansing force to 'reset' Earth. The devastation is easy to imagine when we think of the damage done by floods around the world- even in York- in the past few years.

It's also a new start. God makes a covenant- a promise- with Noah and his family, a covenant that looks back to Eve and Adam and yet also forward to Abraham, Moses, and beyond to the 'new covenant' Jesus talks about at the Last Supper. The covenant isn't just with Noah, it encompasses 'every living creature' (v10). Next time you see a rainbow, remember the new start God offers us.

## The Tower



“Then they said, ‘Come, let us build ourselves a city, and a tower with its top in the heavens, and let us make a name for ourselves; otherwise we shall be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth.’”

Genesis 11 v4

We've already seen that our choices and actions affect the natural world. We try to impose ourselves on it, say that our desires are more important than the considerations of other beings, and bend it to our will.

Here we see what happens when people coming together because they want to 'make a name for ourselves,' to declare their own importance rather than acknowledge God. The tower may also have been a way to escape a future flood- despite God's promise that this wouldn't happen again- or to try to predict the future using astrology. They were choosing not to rely on God's provision but to try to control the world and put themselves in charge.

Rather than coming together they found themselves spreading out across the world, perhaps learning that it's better to rely on God than on themselves. It's a lesson we all have to be reminded of sometimes!