



# Circuit Newsletter

## Winter 2024-25



*The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it. John 1 v5*

Please contact the Circuit Office if you would like to receive the weekly Circuit News email, or visit our website for information and other resources: [www.yorkmethodist.org.uk](http://www.yorkmethodist.org.uk) or follow our Facebook page for news and updates: [www.facebook.com/yorkmethodistcircuit/](https://www.facebook.com/yorkmethodistcircuit/)

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## Disturbing the Peace – A Traumatic Story

Dear Friends,

It will not be unusual if this Advent you receive Christmas cards proclaiming “Peace” in words and images which evoke tranquillity, harmony, creativity and stillness. Yet the way in which Matthew gives us the story of Jesus’ birth is shot through with trauma. Joseph struggles with the shame of his fiancée’s pregnancy and sees this only as the end of their relationship, not the beginning. Herod is perturbed by the threat of an alternative monarch and perceives that the only way to ensure peace and control is through violence. Numerous parents have their young children ripped from them because a tyrannical king’s intelligence techniques let him down. Those who manage to get away find themselves searching for asylum in frighteningly strange places. And all of this while travellers from some distance come and go, leaving their mark by unwittingly and unwisely alerting the current king to the birth of a possible rival, by offering extravagant and thought-provoking gifts, and then clearing off home safe and sound, untouched by the instability raging around Jerusalem and Bethlehem.

The first two chapters of Matthew’s Gospel are, of course, a prologue, and as such they encapsulate for us the significant themes of the whole book. Chief among these is the tussle between the values of God’s kingdom and the values of Herod’s and Caesar’s kingdom – the tussle between seeking peace and justice through non-violence and seeking peace through violent control and oppression. Violence and victims are not simply to be found in the story of the massacring of innocent young children, but occur on a number of other occasions too.

Perhaps the question that lies before us this Advent as we engage with Matthew’s story is whether we wish to sail through the narrative in the way that the wise men do, coming and then going, bringing their gifts and then returning to the relative safety of their homeland, or whether we are prepared to take seriously the depth of the text in all its trauma, recognising that it poses for us the choice between God’s values of trust, hope, vulnerability and community and Herod’s values of fear, control, power and isolation.

You might like to take time over the next few weeks to see the story from alternative perspectives, perhaps not only those of the main characters, but also those that remain unmentioned or unnamed: Mary’s parents, Joseph’s best friend, a soldier ordered to kill a baby, a mother hiding her infant....

And then ask yourself how this may have deepened your understanding of contexts such as Gaza, Israel and Lebanon.

Best wishes

David



### Circuit Diary Dates



- Wednesday 4th December 2024, 7 pm, Circuit Council at Haxby and Wigginton
- Wednesday 12th March 2025, 7 pm, Circuit Council at Haxby and Wigginton
- FLOURISH: Woven Threads, 13<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> February 2026, University of York, [www.yorkshiremethodist.org/flourish26](http://www.yorkshiremethodist.org/flourish26)



## Eco Task Force Newsletter Winter 2024

As at the time of writing, those who are concerned about the Climate Crisis hit a low. There are many concerns about the potential 'to do list' of the new Trump administration, but here I particularly draw attention to the Climate Policies, or lack thereof. The fact that stocks of oil companies rose on the day his victory was announced and those of renewables fell says it all.

The job of the climate movement just got a whole lot harder.

However, I feel cautiously optimistic. Don't get me wrong, I 'lamented' along with everyone else and felt anxiety grip me the morning of the announcement. Then an article I read reminded me that it was during the last Trump administration that several movements came to prominence: #Me too, Black Lives Matter and Climate Justice. Movements actually went relatively quiet during the Biden administration. Faced with such a challenge, protest groups galvanise into action. The challenge before us is huge, but giving up is not an option. We have hope in each other and hope in Jesus Christ:

"The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has never put it out." John ch 1 v5

The darker it gets, the brighter the light shines. In this newsletter, we will offer some bright lights to give you hope...

Have a peaceful Christmas!

Lorraine Jones, Eco Task Force

### **A Sustainable Advent Guide**

The Children, Youth and Families Team and the Eco Group have put together a guide to having a Christmas that is kinder to people and planet. There are top tips and suggestions from Food to gifting and everything in between. The idea is that you can pick and choose a handful that will work for you and your family, rather than trying to do everything. Do pass it on to your communities too. Find it at [www.hwmc.org.uk/ecochurch](http://www.hwmc.org.uk/ecochurch)

### **Well Done Heworth!**

Huge congratulations to Heworth for reaching their bronze award! Well done to all of the team, Do you think your church could give Eco Church a try? Contact Lorraine - the Group is here to support you on your journey.

### **Meat free recommendation**

Not all meat substitutes are made equally and they are not for everyone, but I was really impressed with the Beyond Meat Burger. It's both vegan and gluten free and really delicious. I also recently tried Happie! plantbased breaded shrimpiee. I wasn't sure what to expect but myself and one of the other local pastors (who isn't a vegan) demolished them between us!

Lorraine

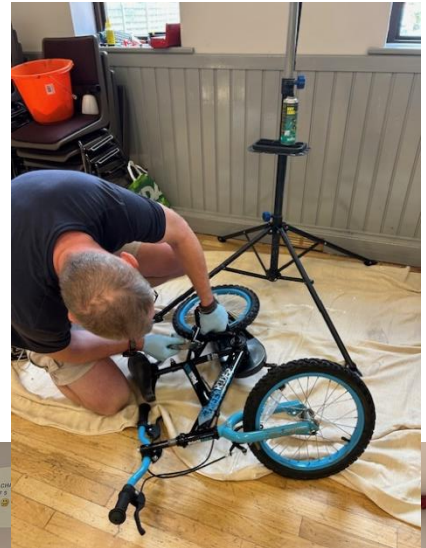
## Saving trees through World of Books

So far World of Books have saved 2 million trees through people buying preloved books. Not too shabby eh? Every day over 1.7k trees are saved and they donated nearly 300k books to charity. Over 28m books rehomed. It's the small acts, done faithfully day in day out that make a difference. [www.worldofbooks.com](http://www.worldofbooks.com)

Kay

## York Environment Weeks 2024

A lot of work went into putting on various events in September. There were events all over York. The Methodist Churches and Anglican friends were hosting repair cafes, craft stalls, talks, Eco Services, Lego Church, nature trails, eco fairs and the hub hosted a gathering for Eco Educators in schools. It was a lot of hard work but well attended and really worthwhile. Well done to everyone involved!



## Book Review

I love Sewing Bee, so when I knew that Patrick Grant, one of the judges, had written a book about buying less 'stuff' I had to give it a go. It's a bit of a history lesson - going through how we got to the position where clothing and other household items seem to be cheaper but incredibly poor quality. He's an engineer, so some of it got a bit technical for my simple brain, but it put a new perspective on why our systems seem so 'broken' now. It also offers hope for a way forward.

Lorraine

## Watch out for the 2025 Programme

In November we'll start to come up with a series of meet ups and activities for 2025. Do you have a subject you'd like to cover, or a site visit you'd love to have? Contact Lorraine to pass on your ideas.

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## News from the Children, Youth & Families team

### The importance of connection

It's always encouraging and refreshing to take time out of the day job and to step back, look up and breathe. The team were recently at the 'Joined up conference York' held at Haxby and Wigginton Methodist. It's a day of learning new things, worshipping with other like-minded people and reflecting on your ministry. It's a gathering for anyone who does ministry in schools, or with children, youth and families and is jointly organised by our own District (thank you Victoria!), the United Reformed Church and the York Diocese. It's always brilliant to come away with new ideas or words of encouragement, but one of the key benefits is the connection with others. I was there with my 'Open the Book' hat on and got to have many interesting conversations, including a lady from Hull who is setting up Open the Book for a school for children with additional needs. We have each other's numbers and I am sure we will learn a lot from adapting the way OTB is performed. I also had some lovely conversations with familiar faces and new faces and it is such an enriching experience. Everyone goes away feeling uplifted from the conversations. I am so appreciative of the provision of a 'gathering space' to enable those conversations.

I have recently been connecting in other ways. This one allows me to wear both my 'Eco' hat and 'Children's work' hat. The York Climate Commission is a city wide partnership of many members aiming to work towards net zero in York by 2030. There are various sub groups and I am part of the York Educators group. This has allowed me to make many connections with schools and others and start building some great relationships and partner with others. Space seems to be the one thing community partners struggle with and the one thing we have in abundance! So we offered Melbourne Terrace one Saturday as part of York Environment weeks, to gather Sustainability Leads from York schools. It was such a lovely opportunity to host this and it was very much appreciated by those present. It was a common story – those who were flying the Eco flag as best they could often felt quite isolated in their schools so it was encouraging for them to get together with others, to share ideas and feel part of something bigger. The importance of connection to be able to flourish is clear. I made a contact in Poppleton Road school who was wondering about doing a uniform swap. I had mentioned the one in Haxby in our 'show and tell' time and she approached me for some top tips afterwards. As a result, I dropped off all of the coat hangers and hanging rails which made her life much easier. The lesson is there for us, too, that we don't have to do everything. Partnering WITH is just as enriching and means we don't burn out trying to do too many activities.

I wonder if you have recently had an enriching new connection?

I wonder what you learned from that connection.?

I wonder where you need to reach out to your community? Can you pray for a good connection?

Wishing you an Advent that is full of beautiful connections.

Lorraine Jones, Children and Families Worker

Here's what the team have been up to over the last few months.

## **ONE X**

So far this term we have been exploring the themes 'Peace and Working together' and 'how much is enough?'. This is most meaningfully explored by creating shaving foam pictures on the table, of course! They then had to try to get it all back into the can, demonstrating very nicely that sometimes you have to be careful what you say because harsh words cannot be taken back. We have made Christmas trees from pinecones and planted spring bulbs too. We understand that there may be some youth materials for 'Justice seeking church' so we may be guinea pigs for that in the new year. Watch this space.

## **ONE FAMILY**

We love looking at Bible stories in fun and creative ways so that all of our children, who are at a range of age and abilities, can take part. So far we have done a mini 'women in ministry' trail in the circuit hub and created marble runs with enormous cardboard tubes. For our Christmas session we have been given strict instructions from the children that we will make gingerbread reindeers with red smartie noses! No doubt we will be picking out a part of the nativity story to explore and playing 'I want a hippopotamus for Christmas'. With children, we never know quite what we will get of course....

## **FAMILY MATTERS**

Lorraine had a great meeting with two people from Family matters. We had a chat about how we can partner with each other across the circuit in order to strengthen family relationships and helping families to flourish.

## **COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE**

Twice a year, all of the lay workers in the District are encouraged to gather together in order to learn from each other and strengthen connections. They are valued as an essential time out from the day job. We have a time of input from others; so this time it was from Ali Campbell from Paraklesis, encouraging us to find our 'why'. He shared video that illustrated the point that 'why' we do what we do is essential in our ministry, not just the 'what' we do. You can check out this video here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1ytFB8TrkTo>



The time after lunch was dedicated to getting together with others with similar jobs to share top tips, ideas and highs and lows of our ministries. It's always very encouraging and reassuring when we have that 'imposter syndrome'! It is so good to have this amazing bunch of people to reach out too when you need to.

### **3GENERATE**

This year the team went down to the NEC to take part in the Annual Methodist Youth Event. It's certainly come a long way since the old MAYC weekends! There were tech hubs and VR headsets, plus drama, dance, games, an inflatable chapel, a dome, a brass band, arts and craft, opportunities to explore many aspects of



faith and a chance to worship too. All of this could be found on your app that you downloaded! The young people seemed to have a blast. The team were to be found in 'The Well' which was a space for leaders to chill and replenish their coffee and their energy! There were also some talks on various subjects such as LGBTQIA+, Justice seeking church and vocation in children and youth ministry. We were mostly serving tea, coffee and snacks to everyone and chatting to everyone. We were on our feet constantly and got very little



sleep. It took a couple of days to recover but well worth it – the leaders were so appreciative of the space.

### **SUSTAINABLE ADVENT GUIDE FOR BUSY FAMILIES**

For Christmas 2020, the team produced a sustainable advent guide. This has been given a new lease of life, updated and put under the

umbrella of the Eco Task Force. Full of top tips and ideas to have a Christmas that is a bit kinder to people, planet (and ourselves!). Feel free to do one thing or do them all, make it work for you. It can be found at:

<https://www.yorkmethodist.org.uk/about-us/eco-church-and-circuit.html>

### **SUMMERBRIDGE VISIT**

We had a lovely visit to Summerbridge Methodist Church at the end of August. It was a joint event with the Eco Group and was therefore an intergenerational group. We were warmly welcomed and shown around by Rose Gosling who is a Gold Assessor for Eco Church. It was great to see the many recycling boxes, food sharing opportunities and hear about all of the other things they are doing for Eco Church. We had some lovely vegan cakes to try too, so were thoroughly spoiled. We then went across to the Anglican church and talked about their Eco journey. After this we went off to Pateley Bridge Park for a run around and an Eco quiz. The weather was kind too and we all had a great time. See the attached photo, taken by Monty from Acomb.



## CYF team Dates for your diary

### Ice skating

14<sup>th</sup> December – details to be confirmed nearer the time. This is open to any of the young people, but we ask that under 10's are accompanied on the ice by a parent or carer. It is not too early to book! Contact Victoria at [victoria@methodistyouth.org.uk](mailto:victoria@methodistyouth.org.uk)

### Sleepout 18<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> January

Lidgett Methodist Church

Come along and sleep out in the cold (does not really sell this does it?!) )

This event raises money and awareness for all those who are homeless or forced to sleep rough, so despite being challenging and somewhat unpleasant it is an important feature on our annual calendar...honestly!

### Emmaus Weekend 7<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup> February 2025

Encouraging and equipping young people to find their voice. For young people aged 14+ who are ready to go a little deeper, to explore their faith and ask where or to what God might be calling them. This weekend is offered free to young people, but they must be supported by their church. Contact Victoria if you know of a young person who might be interested [victoria@methodistyouth.org.uk](mailto:victoria@methodistyouth.org.uk)

### Venture 2025 11<sup>th</sup> – 13<sup>th</sup> July 2025

More information to follow

### The team

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## Circuit Council Report September 2024

- The meeting began by sharing in an act of rededication and Holy Communion with our local preachers.
- David Bidnell reported that the Circuit Invitation Committee had recommended to Circuit Council members that Revd John Hayward be appointed as Superintendent from September 2025. His appointment would have been due to end in 2026 but it was also recommended that his appointment be extended until 2030. No objections had been raised and this was thus accepted. John will continue to be in pastoral charge of Huntington, Sheriff Hutton and Strensall.



- David Bidnell also informed the meeting that he was seeking to curtail his appointment so that it would end in August 2025, for family reasons. The CIC and Circuit Council supported David and Fiona in this.
- As a result of the above decisions, it was agreed that the Circuit would enter stationing for a Presbyterian to live in Easingwold with responsibility for Easingwold, Villages Together and sharing in work at Haxby; as well as the previously agreed presbyter for the Acomb, Bishopthorpe and Copmanthorpe (which will now be extended to include Acaster Malbis and West Thorpe) and deacon to replace Deacon Judith in the city centre. Further discussion needs to take place around responsibility for Heslington, University chaplaincy, and a few other 'loose ends'.
- Churches should be taking part in review conversations to establish their own priorities and hopes for the future, as well as which other churches or groups they might work with in future.
- Heworth Methodist Church are planning to appoint an administrator and a Children & Young People's Worker. Carecent will be appointing a second project worker.
- New guidance is available for those involved in Pastoral Care which can be found at <https://www.methodist.org.uk/safeguarding/policies-procedure-and-information/policies-and-guidance/>
- Judith Stoddart spoke about her Sabbatical and in particular her pilgrimage on the "Via di Francesco", or "St Francis' Way" in the mountains of Italy. She spoke about how close she feels to God amidst the mountains, as well as all that she learnt about herself, her faith in God and more.

### **Property update**

- The sale of the former New Earswick church building completed on 7th October 2024. Joseph Rowntree Housing Trust are hoping to use the site for housing.
- It is hoped to complete the sale of the former Trinity Methodist church to another local church in the next few weeks.
- The former Stamford Bridge Methodist Church building is now on the market. Preliminary work is taking place to enable the former Dunnington and Stillington church buildings to go on the market.
- Two manses are rented out through City of York Council to refugee families.
- In view of stationing plans (see above), the decision was taken not to let out the manse in Easingwold at the present time.

## Circuit prayer rota

1st Dec	Throughout Advent and Christmas 2024 the Methodist Church is calling us all to 'Hush the Noise' and listen for God in the business of preparing for Christmas. Rather than being overwhelmed by the anxieties and chaos of the world around us, like a wave crashing over us, how can we find opportunities to connect to God despite our fears and distractions? What helps you quiet your mind?
8th Dec	Throughout Advent and Christmas 2024 the Methodist Church is calling us all to 'Hush the Noise.' This week we're thinking about those who show the way to God, like the prophets of the Old Testament, who often spent time in the wilderness connecting with God away from the busyness of the world. Like a light making it easier to see in the darkness, how can we make it easier for people to see and connect with God?
15th Dec	Throughout Advent and Christmas 2024 the Methodist Church is calling us all to 'Hush the Noise.' Our noisy world is filled with people talking, but few people who really listen. How can we seek to mend broken situations, broken trust, broken people? How can we seek for a better world that is more in tune with God ?
22nd Dec	Throughout Advent and Christmas 2024 the Methodist Church is calling us all to 'Hush the Noise.' It's all too evident that our world is unequal, that the voices of some are dominant and others never heard. How can we challenge this injustice, and make space for those who are often ignored or outcast to be heard?
25th Dec	Throughout Advent and Christmas 2024 the Methodist Church is calling us all to 'Hush the Noise.' Today, Christmas Day, are you making space to listen to the good news brought by the angels? "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace"
29th Dec	Throughout Advent and Christmas 2024 the Methodist Church is calling us all to 'Hush the Noise.' Today we're asked to think about who we might be 'hushing' when instead we should be encouraging them to speak and be a full part of our churches- whether that's children, young people, or people who are different from 'us' for some reason. How can you encourage others to make their voice heard?
5th Jan	Throughout Advent and Christmas 2024 the Methodist Church has been calling us all to 'Hush the Noise.' But today we're thinking about how to use music and noise to help us understand and worship God. What music, secular or church, do you find helpful in understanding or praising God?
12th Jan	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. At the start of the year many churches hold a Covenant service, where people are invited to recommit themselves to God. Is this something you'd like to do? Check out the Covenant prayer at <a href="https://www.methodist.org.uk/about/what-is-distinctive-about-methodism/a-covenant-with-god/">https://www.methodist.org.uk/about/what-is-distinctive-about-methodism/a-covenant-with-god/</a>
19th Jan	The church on the Circuit prayer rota for this Sunday is Heslington, a Local Ecumenical Partnership between the Methodists and the Church of England. Give thanks and pray for the work of God in that place. The week of prayer for Christian Unity runs from 18th to 25th January. Do you know people who are part of different types of church? Pray for them and for other churches in your area.
26th Jan	The church on the Circuit prayer rota for this Sunday is Hessay. Give thanks and pray for the work of God in that place. Methodists and Anglicans work closely together in Hessay, and the Methodist building is

	valued as a multi-use space. Pray for small congregations and the communities they serve.
2nd Feb	The church on the Circuit prayer rota for this Sunday is Heworth. Give thanks and pray for the work of God in that place. Give thanks for all those who work with children, young people and families through churches. How might you show that you appreciate the work they do?
9th Feb	The church on the Circuit prayer rota for this Sunday is Holgate. Give thanks and pray for the work of God in that place. Give thanks for all those who serve our churches through looking after finances. When did you last review your giving to the work of the church?
16th Feb	The church on the Circuit prayer rota for this Sunday is Huntington. Give thanks and pray for the work of God in that place. Give thanks for all those who help look after our church buildings and property. If you appreciate having a warm, dry place to worship, why not say thank you to those who make it happen?
23rd Feb	The church on the Circuit prayer rota for this Sunday is Lidgett. Give thanks and pray for the work of God in that place. Give thanks for church safeguarding officers and those who help ensure that our churches are safe and welcoming places. How might you help make our churches places where a wide variety of people can feel at home?

## Reflections

The Methodist church's 'Hush the noise' resource for Advent and Christmas (<https://www.methodist.org.uk/for-churches/christmasresources/>) encourages us to look beyond the distractions to find God, using words from the carol 'It came upon the midnight clear.' Our reflections pick up on some of the themes from the carol.

### That glorious song of old

The carol 'It came upon the midnight clear' focuses on the song of the angels and their message to the world- the message that God loves the world and all the people in it, so much so that Jesus came to earth as a baby to be with us. We sometimes talk about this as the 'gospel', meaning 'good news.' But do we sometimes make it sound not so much like good news as bad news, as obligations rather than freedom, fear rather than love, discordant noise rather than a song of joy? How can we make sure our Christmas story this year really does reflect the angels' song of good news, because Jesus is with us?





### **Peace on the earth**

'It came upon the midnight clear' is a carol which recognises that our world has problems. Whether war and political strife or just the weariness of daily existence, this is a carol for those who struggle and strive. It can be hard to see hope for many of the situations we see around us in the world- poverty,

injustice, conflict- but the carol reminds us that there is still hope- because the song of the angels is still going on. How can we remember to look to God's presence for hope in the hard times and seemingly unsolvable situations? How can we show that hope to others, while acknowledging the pain?

### **O hush the noise**

How do we make space for God once Christmas is over? When the festivities are packed away and we return to the reality of normal life, it might feel like God is further away, less 'real' to our everyday lives. How do we keep listening for the song of the angels- how do we keep reminding ourselves of God's presence in our world? The Methodist Covenant is a prayer of dedication, of choosing to commit ourselves to seeking God in our everyday lives. Do you find it helpful in reminding you to take time to listen for God amidst the noise of everyday life?



### **All the world repeat the song**

'It came upon the midnight clear' uses the angels' song as a way of reminding us of God's continuing message of 'good news' to all the world. We repeat the song and reflect it back to God and to others when we worship God, not just through hymns and sung worship, but through using our time, our gifts and skills to the glory of God. That might include serving others, campaigning for peace and justice, donating to a foodbank, or helping at a project working with those who are homeless or

refugees. It might mean finding ways to protect the world God has placed us in. How do you worship God in your daily life? Would other people recognise that what you are doing is part of your faith?



The Methodist Church

New venue: **UNIVERSITY OF YORK**

# Flourish

**13/02/26 – 15/02/26**

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