



Circuit Newsletter Easter 2025

News from the Circuit Leadership Team:

Dear friends,

Our latest Circuit meeting has just taken place, where we have reviewed the previous year and are now looking forward to the year ahead. Whilst we encourage everyone to take a look at the minutes of the meeting to see the details of where we are currently, we would also like to send a personal message to all our members and friends.

As Easter approaches, we find ourselves in a season of conversations where, at both church and circuit level, we are looking at our Mission and Vision for the future. May sees the start of the stationing process for our ministerial team and this will also involve consultation and discussion, so we are hoping that all this engagement and activity will encourage everyone involved in the life of the church to play a part in looking forwards and responding to the call of God at both a personal level as well as in the life of the wider church and circuit.

We are encouraged by several things which have blossomed during 2024 and will hopefully continue to flourish. These include the jollity and fun of the toddler group at Stokesley, where numbers have grown, and friendships thrived. As a result, a bouncy castle church is being pioneered to bring new families in on a Sunday morning, where all come together for the end of the service and to share refreshments. As the Chapel Community Hub in Hutton Rudby continues to welcome many guests into its café, the story time for children has proven so popular that it too has spread its wings in the form of a new children's service on a Sunday morning, currently running around every six weeks or so. How lovely to see such growth!

The new Community Hub at Great Ayton brings together several community organisations on Saturday morning for coffee and discussion once a month. People are invited in to meet the local police and other community groups, and to feel a warm welcome into their local church.

Isn't it great to see our churches trying new things? Although not every venture attempted is a runaway success from the start, God is clearly calling people in all sorts of places to reach out and develop different expressions of their personal ministry. We hope to encourage more of this in 2025 and to provide resources, prayer and companionship to support new ventures.

We also aim to congratulate all those who are willing to step out in faith, whether each venture succeeds or not. Our aim is to be a “church that likes to say YES” and continue to give things a try.

Several of our long-standing outreaches continue to thrive and provide fellowship. Easby Guild continues to be well supported, the Tuesday lunches at Carlton keep the soup chefs busy and the Stokesley coffee morning has hosted Christmas stalls in December, raising funds for church and charity. The carols rang out once again at Seamer and we hope that all churches will continue to actively encourage their local communities to see that God is at work in our area, and they can feel welcome to join in.

Our financial picture is mapped out in detail in the report from our Treasurer, who tells us that our resources remain under pressure after the extensive refurbishment of Chapel House in Carlton, which is rented out to tenants.

Although we have sufficient funds to finance our short-term plans, the underlying trend does give cause for concern, as our income has been reducing for several years in a row and costs are growing faster than ever. Going forwards, we are concentrating our efforts on securing grant funding from sources in the wider community, from funds which exist to promote initiatives such as environmental improvements reducing our carbon footprint.

This reduces the pressure on our financial reserves for the time being, although we may still face difficult decisions ahead. We prayerfully hope that we can improve this situation through our plans for mission and vision, which aim to widen our appeal to members, friends and also to the general public.



One of our greatest opportunities to make a positive contribution to the wider community is through embracing the Eco Church initiative and demonstrating good stewardship of our God given resources.

As we learn more and make changes, not only will our churches become more sustainable, but we can also take this learning into our homes and workplaces. A team-based approach is already starting to show results, and our Property Steward is at the forefront of these improvements. If this speaks to your personal ministry, then don't hesitate to come forward and help us all in this important area of work.

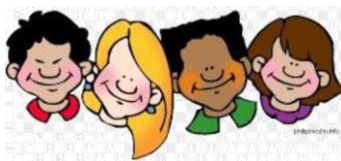
Much of our most fruitful ministry comes from teams, however small, working together to build the life of the church and spread the gospel in a way which is personal and approachable, and we hope that 2025 will see more of this. In the same way as our local preachers have someone alongside them as they do their training, an opportunity to have a buddy or two can transform a personal dream into a personal ministry which can benefit others.

Please don't feel that you have to find somebody likeminded just within your own church – there are plenty of good hearts across the circuit and by simple conversations and sharing we may discover new ideas and outreach opportunities. An ideal opportunity is to visit a different church on a Sunday morning and say hello. **So, let's talk!**

We can have confidence in planning ahead with the assurance that good safeguarding practice underpins everything we do. Our Compliance and Safeguarding Manager has now been with us for more than a year and her positive impact has been felt across the circuit, supporting individual churches as well as the circuit itself. The recent circuit meeting has agreed an expansion in this role which will ensure we can proceed on a firm footing, especially in churches which have found it difficult to find volunteers to take on this responsibility.

Across the wider Methodist movement there are several developments which indicate the ways that the church as a whole is seeking a way ahead.

'A Methodist Way of Life' maps out how our patterns of faith can affect and support our everyday life for the better, and 'New Places For New People' is a creative way of reimagining how we might offer the message of Jesus in less conventional places where people feel comfortable in exploring faith and are encouraged to pursue the journey as followers of Christ. There have never been so many resources to support the work of the church in its many and varied forms and we can do more to take advantage of the support which is on offer as we move ahead.



As we wish you all a happy and blessed Easter, let us reflect on the words of St Paul to the Corinthians, "Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labour in the Lord is not in vain".



Holy Week 2025

What's going on around the circuit

Holy Week reflections: 7 pm on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday at Stokesley

Led by members of the congregation, a chance for some time out and reflection on Jesus' journey to the cross.

Tuesday: 2.30 pm, Network/MWiB Easter Service including Holy Communion

Led by Rev Rob Weir at Stokesley

Wednesday: 10 am – 12 noon, Easter Messy Church at Stokesley



Easter fun for all ages, with Hot Cross Buns included! Crafts and music, worship and celebration. For children up to age 11, children under 5 must be accompanied. Everyone welcome! Please ring 07837178938 to book a place, there is a suggested Donation of £5 to cover costs.

Maundy Thursday:

4 pm Easby Guild Maundy Thursday Service

7 pm Communion Service at Stokesley, led by Rev Trevor Haigh

7.30 pm Communion Service at Great Ayton, led by Rev Rob Weir



Good Friday:

10 am Good Friday Service at Stokesley, followed at **11 am** by the Churches Together Walk of Witness, and an invitation to hot cross buns at the Parish Church.

10.30 am Good Friday Service at Great Ayton, followed at **11.45 am** by an Ecumenical Walk of Witness from Christ Church car park.

11 am Good Friday Walk of Witness around the village center, Hutton Rudby, followed by refreshments and hot cross buns in The Chapel Community Hub.

Easter Sunday Celebration Services: Including Holy Communion

6.30 am Sunrise Service at Captain Cooks Monument (meeting at Gribdale Gate)

8 am at Great Ayton led by Rev Rob Weir

9 am at Seamer led by Rev Rob Weir

10 am at Hutton Rudby led by Rev Graham Peacock

10 am at Stokesley led by Rev Andrew Robinson

10.30 am at Great Ayton led by Ron Kirk

11.30 am at Carlton led by Christine Campy



This year's Easter Offering Service will be on 11th May, 10.30 am at Stokesley

The focus this year is on every person's right to education. All the money raised through the Easter Offering goes to the World Mission Fund of the Methodist Church in Great Britain for works in our partner churches around the world.