



September 2023 Edition

Gracie's Story...

Gracie and her family attend The United Church (Methodist/ URC) in Kirkheaton. Having just completed her GCSEs last year, Gracie was looking for some part time work while she studied at college for her A Levels and heard of the One Programme. She was encouraged to apply and wanted to offer something creative for our church children on Sunday mornings.

It was suggested that Lego Church might be a good way forward. Gracie has always related well to people of all ages, particularly children and is creative, so Lego Church seemed ideal.

Gracie was accepted onto the District One Programme and attended a District day. During the year she has been to 3 Generate and other residentials and made new friends. Throughout the programme Gracie has valued the support of many; at Church, Circuit and District level, and the encouragement she has received has enabled her to grow in confidence and in her Christian faith over the last year.

On Sunday mornings the children meet with members of the church family for worship, and then go on to enjoy Lego Church in the 'Lego Room' with Gracie. The Lego room was decorated by Gracie in bright exciting colours and on a Lego theme.

She reads a Bible story and then the little ones make a Lego model about it and sometimes do other crafts too. Later the group re-join the main service and share what they have learned with the church family and explain their models. Gracie heads up this feedback time and can now articulate well to a group. The little ones love Lego Church, finding it great fun!

As Gracie comes to the end of an exciting year, she is beginning to apply for university places. At her first interview she was asked about Lego Church and the One Programme and those interviewing were very interested in what she had been doing and were impressed by it. They encouraged her to include it on her CV.

Everyone involved in Gracie's story are proud of all she has achieved. The little ones, their parents and all at The United Church Kirkheaton have certainly benefitted, not just from her skills, but from the joy of being part of this stage of Gracie's faith journey.

Revd Sue Pegg



A few thoughts from Gracie...

Something that you particularly enjoyed?

I have particularly enjoyed being more involved in the church, and providing a Sunday School for the young children who attend church, to teach them the meaning of the Bible through stories, Lego and craft.

Something new you've learned?

During my time leading Lego church, I have developed my skills of communicating with younger children through the use of craft and Lego, inspired by the bible stories which are read. Lego church has also helped me boost my confidence by speaking publicly at the end of church.

Something you've discovered about the Bible and your Christian faith?

Something I have discovered about the Bible is that each story I have taught has a different meaning or message, such as teaching love, kindness, patience and how to treat others. An example of a recent bible story we have done in Lego church is The Good Samaritan. The Good Samaritan teaches us to always treat others with kindness and to love each other, no matter who they are.

Love Takes Time



I was given a book in my teenage years that was a series of graffiti walls. One that stood out for me was *One Hundred Thousand Lemmings Can't Be Wrong* ([Graffito](#), as given in *The Penguin Dictionary of Modern Quotations*, 2nd ed.).

In the last edition of *In Touch* (June 2023) I referred to “The Red Queen Effect” and how western culture continues to invite us to seek meaning, purpose, value and even hope in the things that we possess and consume. Faster, faster is the mantra and as a society we are running very hot.

John Swinton, a Scottish theologian, academic, and Presbyterian minister, writes in an article from the Church Times website, *‘In a culture that prioritises speed and productivity, we should remember that love takes time.’* John is the Chair in Divinity and Religious Studies at the School of Divinity, History, and Philosophy, University of Aberdeen. John is also founder of the university's Centre for Spirituality, Health and Disability and one of the sources we use in the Meaningful Ageing course. He is a very thoughtful writer and has reminded me of the need to be prophetic in a culture that demands instant everything. I hear Swinton inviting us to consider putting on a brake, and I wonder what we might be missing as we hurtle on.

Why are we afraid to slow down and take time? It seems that the teachings of the majority of faith traditions, and especially of Jesus, is to attend to the presence of God all around us.

Later, in the same article, he continues:

*‘In the 1960s, a Japanese theologian, Kosuke Koyama, wrote a book, Three Mile an Hour God (SCM Press). He noticed that the average speed that human beings walk at is three miles per hour. Jesus, who is God, walked at three miles per hour. God, who is love, walks at three miles per hour. Love has a speed, Koyama says, and that speed is slow. That speed is gentle. That speed is tender.’**

* <https://www.churchtimes.co.uk/articles/2019/5-april/comment/opinion/god-walks-at-three-miles-an-hour>

I wonder where that lands for you? For us?

What I hear is an invitation to be countercultural and slow down so that we can practice love. Responding to this call to something other by going at the speed of love so that we can attend to ourselves, our neighbours, and the environment.

This takes change at many levels, and yet however frightened we all are by change, we are experts at it. Think how much you have changed over the last five years and notice how you have found a way to adapt. Change is part of life and cannot be ignored simply by going faster.

In the Circuit, we are continuing to adapt to many changes. We will have to do some more reflecting on how we are going to have to operate as Methodist Societies in the Huddersfield Circuit. When I arrived two years ago, we had the equivalent of 8 + presbyters and in two short years we are planning for the reality of 5 fulltime equivalent presbyters to work across the Circuit.

For, just as surely as we are moving from summer with its longer days to the ever-shortening autumn, we are changing season. Will we change with it, I wonder, or go on as if it is summer?

Is there any wisdom in the discovery of a group of anthropologists, who I heard talk about how Ice Age humans organised themselves? Some, mostly hunter gatherers, it has been discovered, used to gather in large groups in the shorter days of the year, sharing their resources whilst food was scarce. Once the longer days appeared they travelled in smaller units because they were better able to support themselves.

I wonder if that has something to teach us?

Rev'd Peter Catford

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)

What does the Lord require of you?

“To do justice, to love kindness and to walk humbly with your God.” (Micah 6:8)

Do you keep hearing the letters EDI mentioned around the Circuit? Perhaps you're wondering what they stand for or what they mean. The initials stand for 'Equality Diversity and Inclusion' and are part of a report 'Justice, Dignity and Solidarity' that was accepted by the Methodist Conference in 2021.

We often talk about our churches being welcoming and we sing the hymn from Singing the Faith 409 'Let us build a house' with the chorus 'All are welcome'. It is something we strive for and we want to make people from all backgrounds and ways of life feel as though they can belong in our church communities. We may have had situations when we have been somewhere and not been made to feel welcome and know how upsetting this can feel.

It is not always easy and sometimes we need to reflect on how we are doing. Following the Conference report, as a Circuit and at local church level, we are required to look at this in more detail. It is something we would hope to be working towards anyway, as we want people to come to our churches and feel welcome. More information can be found at <https://www.methodist.org.uk/about-us/the-methodist-church/the-inclusive-methodist-church/training-for-justice-dignity-and-solidarity/>

It is a requirement for all Ministers, Lay workers, Local Preachers, Circuit Safeguarding Officers, Circuit Stewards and Church Stewards to complete this training. There are two ways of accessing this training:

Online it can be accessed at <https://mcb.theologyx.com>.

Alternatively, the Circuit is offering some discussion sessions where you can meet with people from other churches.

It is a serious topic but we hope we will learn together by sharing stories and working together. Currently, we are running discussion sessions on two separate occasions in October, these are:

Saturday 7th October, 9.30am – 12 noon at Dalton St Pauls

Wednesday 17th October, 7pm – 9.30pm at Huddersfield Mission.

To book a place on one of the dates please contact Shirley Burton.

We look forward to these discussions with you.

Roz Page, Chris Mason, Suzanne Bridges, Sue Taylor, Andrew Marchington (Circuit EDI Group)

Market Place – Reuse, Recycle, Reconnect

The first Saturday of every month 10 -12 noon is Market Place at Lindley Methodist Church. It's a busy morning when the church is full and there is a really good atmosphere as people visit us from all over Kirklees. It is an opportunity for people to bring things to recycle that we are unable to recycle through Kirklees Waste Services. Each item brought for recycling has a given home. Things that can be recycled are:

Batteries which go to Sainsbury's

Ink cartridges and used stamps which are collected by Kirkwood Hospice

Blister tablet packets we used to collect for Superdrug who collect them for Marie Curie (This is on hold till we find another way of passing these on, though individuals can still take to Superdrug)

Spectacles that go to CART

Clean tin foil which is collected on behalf of Action for Children

Plastic milk bottle tops which we collect on behalf of a new charity.

Old greeting cards that the Welcome Centre recycle and sell as new cards.

There are also different ethical and charity stalls to buy things from each month, knit and natter group, a prayer table and, of course, coffee.

Please feel free to bring your recycling or join us for coffee and a chat.

Revd Sue Taylor



What's in a Name?

When we closed the doors for the last time at Parkwood, there was so much we seemed to have lost that we couldn't quite put our finger on. It wasn't only the nostalgia of the 'Good Old days' – the *Messiahs* and concerts - the Youth Club with a waiting list - all the uniformed organisations and the friendships.

The building seemed to represent so much more. It had given us a confidence and hope because it had always been there for us. It gave us comfort to step inside and feel the warmth of being part of something worth being worth part of. The building gave us a certainty - we knew who we were and what we stood for without having to think about it, so we took it for granted.

After preaching for over fifty years that the church wasn't a building, rather it was the community of people – it made me wonder if there wasn't something else about our church building.

This story started on a Zoom call with a grant fund organiser. They liked our ideas with our partners, Primetime, for a Children's Club – Youth Drop By – Street work and Community Breakfasts. BUT...how can you call yourself 'Parkwood Methodist Church' when you haven't a church? And why are you having to worship in a rented room from another church and your community work is taking place half a mile away? You're in a very busy and competitive market place now for funding. You can't sell cracked plates – but you have to be noticed and stand out from the crowd.'

Maybe this was our moment of identity crisis. Who were we? How could we describe ourselves? What was our vision if we had one?

It turned out our grant funder was a PR consultant to charities or other organisations. After sending a map and explaining our background to them it was one of those freak moments you just can't explain when they said: 'I like Parkwood as a name. If you're going to have to operate from different locations why not try something like...'Parkwood@ St Mark's or 'Parkwood @ The Drop By Centre' and maybe in the future 'Parkwood @ The Surestart Centre'?

So, it all dropped into place! We had our new identity – who we were.

The other tricky bit was to work out what our vision was. We had played around with numerous suggestions we were there to combat loneliness...or food poverty...or support children and young adults.

It was another contact, who was a marketing consultant, who came to our help. 'You're much more than all these, you CARE!'

It's a bit hard to explain, and I know it sounds daft, but it took us about three months to work through all this. Our advice had been free so far, so we paid a graphic designer to bring our new identity and vision finally to life – and this is the result:

PARKWOOD
@ The Drop By Centre

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PRIMETIME



FREE CHILDREN'S CLUB

Hi Kids. Come along for some FUN!



- SAFE PLACE for ages 5-11 with experienced staff to support and help you.
- 'COOK & EAT' – learn to cook from Yorkshire Puddings to Butterfly Cupcakes.
- CRAFTS: Make your own crafts from a Sun Catcher to a Lion Face.
- ACTIVITIES & GAMES

Thursdays Term-time. 4.00 – 5.00 pm.
Drop By Centre. Sycamore Avenue

FREE YOUTH DROP IN

Looking for a safe place to go after school?

- SAFE & WELCOMING for Ages 11-18
- GAMES & ACTIVITIES
- ARTS & CRAFTS
- SAFE PLACE with experienced staff to support and help you.



Thursdays Term-time. 6.00 – 7.00 pm.
Drop By Centre. Sycamore Avenue

PARKWOOD
@ The Drop By Centre

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PRIMETIME



FREE YOUNG LEADERS NETWORK COURSE

Hi young people, invest in a New Future with our free Youth Leaders Course.

- Learn New Skills
- Connect & Share
- Nationally accredited course.

Thursdays Term-time.
5.00 – 6.00 pm.
Drop By Centre.
Sycamore Avenue

PARKWOOD Give yourself a treat!



COMMUNITY Breakfast

First Saturday in the Month. 9.30am – Last orders 11.30 am.
Drop By Centre. Sycamore Avenue



- Let's cook a Full English Breakfast for you at our Community Breakfast.
- It's Free! (Donations welcome)
- Families Welcome

If you have any queries email us on:
parkwoodcommunity6@gmail.com

PARKWOOD
@ The Drop By Centre



PARKWOOD
@ St. Mark's Centre



It's been so strange to look back and see how our name and vision has been shifting and changing over the past few years. It will be interesting to see how it shifts and changes in the future.

John Oldham, Parkwood

Daily Hymn and Prayer - St. Paul's Dalton

During the Covid pandemic, a daily hymn was posted on the church WhatsApp group to keep people connected when we were unable to meet together. This was well received and people who listened every morning said how much they appreciated it, singing along at home. In some cases, it was a lifeline.

On our journey, we have celebrated well known and loved hymns, and have discovered lots of new ones. There are so many in *Singing the Faith* that we just never, ever sing. Occasionally we will have requests from listeners, sometimes birthday requests too. We have even taken our hymns on the road, calling it outside broadcasting - well if the BBC can do it! - posting from Scarborough, Redcar and Cromer, and later in October from Llandudno. Our daily hymn never takes a holiday, even though those that post might do.

Our hymn book has inspired me more than I thought it could, I love researching the hymns and their writers. Over the last 12 months or so, a daily prayer has been added and I know people use the hymn and prayer as part of their daily devotions. Three plus years on, we are still going strong, I will not be allowed to stop!

St. Paul's is a great fellowship to belong to, pop along sometime and find out.

Audrey Kershaw, St. Paul's Dalton

Happy Second Anniversary to Wednesday Welcome!

It's hard to believe *Wednesday Welcome* at St. Paul's Dalton is fast approaching its second anniversary. What a journey 'Reaching out to the Community' is proving to be for us all!

Early days of waiting and watching the car park for visitors to come along seem far in the distance; equally, panicking and wondering if the church hall really can hold any more people is all taken in our stride these days! Like any journey, not only has it been a time of change for us, it's continuing to be a time of positive change for many who walk through our door each Wednesday.

Every aspect of the day, from putting up tables, to catering, activities, providing chat and company, and ensuring the building is safe and secure at the end of the day has to be covered by those who volunteer their time. Your continued energy and dedication has not gone unnoticed, we gratefully thank you. Thanks also go to Sharon and Sam for your continued support of the very popular exercise group.

As our journey continues, we have noticed the many special and unique gifts of our church family.

You may wish to listen or chat, and provide company for those who attend. If you are interested to find out more about *Wednesday Welcome* why not pop along and join in!

Happy second anniversary, Wednesday Welcome!

WW team, Dalton



What have we been up to?

June - Step Out Walk

The beginning of June saw a group of 35 walkers from various churches around the Circuit take part in the annual 'Step Out Walk'. We enjoyed sunshine and beautiful scenery as we ambled along the canal between Slaithwaite and Marsden. No water-proofs needed that day!

Thanks to all who took part and supported in any way!

Together we raised a grand total of £2,509.60 - our best ever total yet for this event!

June/July - The Very Hungry Caterpillar Growing Challenge

Do you remember growing cress seeds as a child?

Well, this was one of the challenges given to the Circuit toddler groups. The only difference being the need to create an eggbox 'Hungry Caterpillar' to grow them in first! Remember to water, keep in a bit of sunlight and you can't go wrong with cress! I wonder how many family salads and sandwiches included home-grown cress over the summer? Along with eggbox caterpillars, butterfly face masks and 'The Very Hungry Caterpillar' story, lots of cake was enjoyed too!

Thanks to all the toddler groups who took part, raising a fantastic total of £362.28!

July - Circuit Coffee Morning at Gledholt

It was good to be able to have Emily Beahan, Action for Children Regional Fundraising Manager for Yorkshire, present at the first of our Action for Children Circuit Coffee mornings. Emily was able to share her knowledge and experience of Action for Children with those present.

The coffee morning also marked the start of collecting items for the Bradford Baby Steps project. Thanks to Almondbury Craft and Chat for bringing along some beautifully knitted baby blankets! Good conversation, coffee/tea and cake seemed to be the order of the morning!

Thanks to Gledholt for hosting and all those who supported this event, yielding a total of £227.75 in donations.

Action for Children Sunday Services - Growing and Flourishing Together

It was good to be able to attend one of the Action for Children services held around the Circuit. The chosen theme, 'Growing and Flourishing Together' is a reminder of the transformative difference that a nurturing, supportive and loving environment makes to the lives of children, young people and their families.

If you attended one of these, you may have watched the short video featuring Terri, a mum who benefitted from parenting classes and support through the Bradford Baby Steps project. For me, this brings into focus why we're supporting this project through the practical actions we're taking – knitting and collecting items for labour bags.

Bradford Baby Steps Project

With collections of items in progress, and a hive of activity amongst Knit and Natter groups, we can't wait to see how much we'll have gathered together!

There will be a drop off point for Baby Steps items at the upcoming Action for Children Circuit Coffee Morning at Dalton, Sat 23rd Sept, 10am-12noon.

Note - Baby Steps collection ends 30th September

Suzanne Bridges, on behalf of the Circuit Social Justice group



• **Sat 23rd Sept, 10am – 12noon**
Action for Children Circuit Coffee morning @ Dalton
Displays, activities, drop-off point for labour bag items and refreshments.

• **Sat 30th Sept, 6-8pm**
Circuit Charity Quiz and Games Night @ The DRAM Centre, Dalton
Quizzes, games, raffle, bingo, snacks...

• Take a breather

• **Secret Santa Launch**
Invitation to donate a gift through the AfC website, more information to come.

• **Secret Santa**
Encourage Christmas gift donations through the AfC website

September

October

November

December

'I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.' (John 10:10)

Life in a Barbie Land

The world of the imagination can be a transformative place. Whole worlds are created, destroyed and remade. We get to know fictional characters like they are real people, and travel with them on their adventures. What happens, though, when the real world and the world of the imagination collide? What kind of reaction would this cause? Could it be a nuclear reaction? This summer found me heading off to watch what has become the biggest grossing movie of the year. Not *Oppenheimer*, but- *Barbie*!

I only had one Barbie growing up, and dolls weren't really my thing, but I was struck, when I watched the trailer, by a question *Barbie* asks midway through a disco number- do you ever think of dying? It's probably one of the biggest questions anyone can ask.

I wonder if the question she asks is as much about living as dying. What does it mean for Barbie, who lives in Barbieland, where every day is the same, to really have life? This is the journey that Barbie takes, with the unexpected companionship of Ken.

Ken isn't asking the same question, he is content with his job, but feels that his life would be complete by being 'Ken and Barbie', though Barbie doesn't think of him in that way. His journey becomes about how Ken thinks of himself- is his life fulfilled only through a relationship with Barbie or is there more to Ken?

They travel together from Barbieland to the Real World through an amazing combination of transport methods that I'm sure I remember seeing in the Argos catalogue as a child. The contrast between our worlds are immediate and the questions it raises are difficult. It's striking that it's only when she reaches our world that Barbie experiences sexist language, cat calling and misogyny, but she also experiences deep connections with others that change her life in a way that Barbieland couldn't.

On the surface, *Barbie* looks like an effervescent, pink, glittery film that is for children. It is and it isn't. Yes, it is pink and glittery. It is also full of deep, probing philosophical and ethical questions about life that had me scrambling for some of the reading I did at college. What does it mean to be a person? What does it mean to have life and a fulfilled life? What does it mean to be me?

I have yet to see *Oppenheimer*, but it is on my to do list, but *Barbie* is going to stay with me for a while. To ignore *Barbie* or to brush this film off as sparkly emptiness is a mistake, in my opinion, because of the questions it asks. What it means to be human and what it means to be human in community are big issues for us today, as much as what the impact and legacy of the Manhattan Project was in the 1940s. The ethics of, and proliferation of, nuclear weapons continue to raise their head in the current war between Russia and Ukraine.

I'm grateful for the Barbenheimer phenomenon- both films were released at the same time and the contrasts between the pink, glittery Barbie and the sombre *Oppenheimer* were all over social media, but I suspect that they have more in common than appears on the surface.

Roz Page



Oppenheimer - choices and responsibility

I wonder whether you've been to the cinema recently to see Christopher Nolan's 'Oppenheimer'? Well, this summer saw me going not once, but twice! On my first

viewing, whilst enjoying the film, I was somewhat over-awed by the quantum physics, not to mention all the politics. However, for me, going a second time helped to provide greater clarity.

The film is a biopic documenting the life of J. R. Oppenheimer, an American theoretical physicist, and a key figure on the top-secret Manhattan Project (1942-45), responsible for leading the scientific research and development of the atomic bomb. It follows his 'roller-coaster' journey as eminent physicist, his struggles with personal relationships and moral conscience and his 'brushes' with US Government politics.

Throughout the film there's a resounding theme of choices and responsibility. Oppenheimer has to make choices, not least his involvement in the Manhattan Project. I wonder whether he could have predicted that his work on nuclear weapons, whilst ending the second world war, would ultimately change the course of the world forever? The very existence of nuclear weapons still dominates our geopolitics today.

As the film unfolds, choices become more complicated, often dictated by external events, and there's a move towards collective responsibility - lots of tensions ensue. In later years Oppenheimer, perhaps naively, tries to exert his sense of responsibility by lobbying for international control of nuclear power to avert nuclear proliferation. Frowned upon by the US Government, his ideas led to his security clearance being revoked, and we find ourselves following his security hearing - the consequences.

We face choices in our lives all the time, some simpler than others. Life is complex and relationships are complicated. The impact of our choices may not be as great as Oppenheimer's nuclear discovery, but we can choose to make a positive difference. How can we do our bit to combat climate change?

How can we stand up for social justice and make our voices count? We too, have a shared responsibility for the world in which we live.

Ultimately, what sort of a world do we want to be part of and what legacy do we want to leave behind?
Suzanne Bridges

Lepton Lunch Club Volunteers' Celebration

A few weeks ago, Kirklees held a 'Thank you to community volunteers' week and asked places around Huddersfield to write in and tell them about ongoing projects.

Lepton Methodist Church Lunch Club for the elderly and vulnerable has been running for some 25 years. Volunteers provide a two-course lunch every couple of weeks and also offer lifts in their cars to those unable to travel to the group unaided. Everyone offers their services free of charge. Two of our volunteers have been cooking meals for the full 25 years! Here's a photo of the volunteers about to enjoy an afternoon tea made possible by a grant.

Revd Sue Pegg



Yorkshire Day Celebration at Lepton

Following a special joint Yorkshire Day celebration service led by Revd. Sue Pegg for Lepton and Kirkheaton churches, a Yorkshire lunch was served. We enjoyed Yorkshire pudding, sausage, mash, and peas followed by apple crumble and custard. The lunch was a time of excellent fellowship and enjoyed by all who attended. A big thank you to all who donated, helping us to raise £85 for *Action for Children*.



Anne Murray, Lepton

In Touch is edited by Suzanne Bridges and Rev Roz Page, and produced by Chris Mason. Please send all contributions for the next edition of In Touch (Dec 23 - Feb 24) by Fri 3rd Nov to suzhmc@gmail.com

In Touch



Family Ethics, Family Values

Telephone: 01484 656156 (24hrs)

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SATURDAY 30TH SEPTEMBER 6-8PM

Bookings Available Here:

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THEME: FAVOURITE KIDS TV PROGRAMME

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