



The Blackley Centre FOR PEACE & RECONCILIATION

Offering the gift of peace through retreats, training,
interpersonal mediation and interfaith dialogue.

***Brochure & programme
September 2026 ~ July 2027***

About Us

The Blackley Centre is a Christian charity dedicated to building peace, transforming conflict, and strengthening relationships. We offer a welcoming, safe, and inspiring space where people can meet, learn, reflect, and work together.

We work alongside churches, faith communities, interfaith groups, charities, and community organisations—providing training, mediation, and dialogue to help build mutual understanding and lasting peace. Everyone is welcome, whatever your faith or beliefs.



The Centre hosts retreats, away days, meetings, conferences and training, both in person and online. Our facilities are also available to hire for groups of all sizes.

The Blackley Centre is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) with its own trustees and members, working in close partnership with 'Blackley Church: Gathering for Peace'. More details about Blackley Church can be found on their website: www.blackleychurch.co.uk

About Us



Revd Jo Williams – Director for Reconciliation

Jo has over 26 years' experience in devising and delivering bespoke training. An experienced mediator and restorative practitioner, she is a Training Partner for Bridge Builders Ministries and a member of the College of Mediators. Jo is also a Joint Minister of Blackley Baptist Church, alongside Andy.



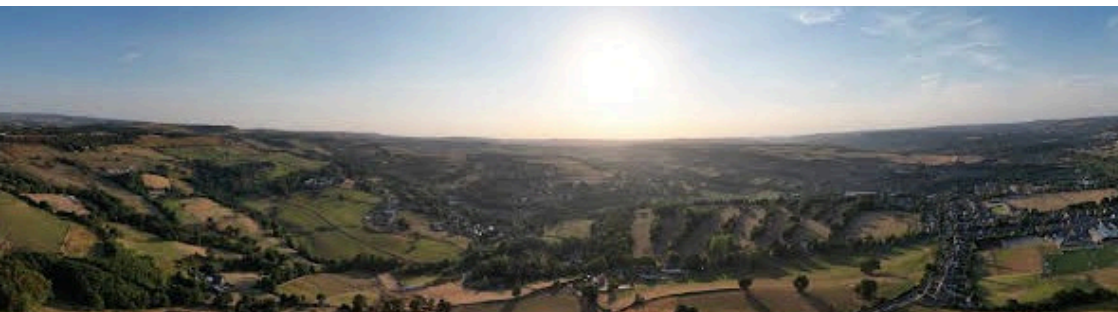
Revd Andy Williams – Director for Interfaith

Andy previously served as Chair of the Baptist Inter-faith Working Group and has experience in interfaith dialogue and supporting communities in developing understanding and peaceful relationships. He also serves alongside Jo as Joint Minister of Blackley Baptist Church.



Michyla Hickling – Head of Business Support

Michyla supports the administrative and operational aspects of the Centre. Prior to joining the Blackley Centre in January 2026, she lived and worked as part of the community at Scargill House and St Oswald's (Whitby).



Peace & Quiet Days

Our Peace & Quiet Days offer a wonderful opportunity to get away from it all and just 'be.'

Guests are welcome to use the spaces, resources, and beautiful grounds of The Blackley Centre and Chapel for quiet reflection, prayer, meditation, reading, and creative projects.

Art materials, craft supplies, books, and other helpful items are provided, though you are also welcome to bring anything that helps you find peace and rest.

The Bible is full of examples of people stepping away from daily life to draw closer to God. Our hope is that these days provide the space for you to create a personal retreat and find a deeper place of peace.

"Lovely food, bright spaces, open countryside"

"It's given me time and space for myself"

"Lovely peaceful place, beautiful scenery and a calm, welcoming atmosphere"



Peace & Quiet Days

Each Peace and Quiet Day begins with a short gathering reflection and ends with a closing reflection. As with everything, these reflections are optional. Resources are available for you to shape your own retreat.

Optional extras:

- **The Blackley Pilgrimage** ~ A guided walk from The Blackley Centre through the valley with lovely views, pausing for reflections along the way. The Pilgrimage walk lasts about an hour.
- **1 hour Conflict Management Coaching Session**
Additional £35 (*see website for more details)*
- **1 hour Gilmore Fraleigh Individual Coaching Session**
Additional £50 (*see website for more details)*



Friday 25 September 2026

Friday 30 October 2026

Friday 27 November 2026

Friday 19 March 2027

Saturday 24 April 2027

Friday 28 May 2027

Friday 25 June 2027

Friday 30 July 2027

£30 (including lunch)

£20 concession

**10% discount for Blackley
Centre Members**

Themed Retreats, Workshops & Events



Songs of Peace and Protest (*Mike Leigh*)

Mike will lead us in a day of unaccompanied singing featuring songs from around the world that have been used to speak out for peace and justice. No previous singing experience is needed and everyone is welcome!

£25 (Concessions £20)

Two events: Sat 26th Sept 2026 & Sat 10th April 2027 (10am–3:30pm)



How Did We Get Here? (*Rob Halligan*)

In 2001, Rob Halligan lost his father in the 9/11 terror attacks. A week later, he found himself in New York City at the start of a journey to make sense of what had happened. From a dysfunctional childhood and life on the streets to becoming an ambassador for vulnerable children and an acclaimed songwriter, Rob's story breathes hope into a dark world and invites us to do the same. Through songs and stories, How Did We Get Here? takes us down a road underpinned by a simple faith and the belief that love is bigger.



Friday 6th November 2026 (7:30pm)

£10 – bookings via office or Eventbrite (QR code)



Bread for the Journey (*Jackie & Paul Reily*)

Join us for a retreat day with a difference. There will be short reflections, time to just 'be,' and the opportunity to make bread for those who would like to. We will then share freshly baked bread together in a closing communion.

Friday 26th February 2027 (10am–4pm) – £35 (Concessions £30)

Themed Retreats, Workshops & Events



Windows of Hope and Reconciliation – St Hilda of Whitby (*Sue Sherwin*)

This Quiet Day offers space to explore the ancient tradition of iconography through an icon of St Hilda of Whitby. Often described as windows to heaven, icons originated in the Eastern Orthodox Church, though interest in this sacred art is growing across many Christian traditions. The day will include time for reflection and prayer, as well as an opportunity for creative expression for those who wish.

Friday 5th March 2027 (10am–4pm) – £35 (Concessions £30)



Mindful Living in a Busy World (*Karen Openshaw and Bishop Chris Edmondson*)

Karen and Chris will introduce the concept of mindfulness and, drawing on their three books, explain how Christians can learn to live our lives being mindful of God's presence. Karen is a wellbeing consultant and qualified mindfulness teacher, while Chris is an Honorary Assistant Bishop in the Diocese of Leeds.

Saturday 15th May 2027 (10am–4pm) – £35 (Concessions £30)



Praying & Walking the Labyrinth (*Di Blakey Williams*)

Di has many years of experience creating labyrinths and helping others use them as tools for prayer and mindful journeying. This retreat will include led reflections, a facilitated labyrinth walk, and some short periods of silence.

Saturday 12th June 2027 (10am–4pm) – £35 (Concessions £30)

Paths of Peace: Handling Conflict Well

What can you do when relationships become strained?

Do you want to help, but feel concerned about how—and anxious not to make things worse?

Learn, develop, and enhance mediative peacemaking skills that can be used both formally and informally in conflict situations—whether between individuals, within a church, or across a wider community setting.

This innovative course draws on mediative and restorative processes to help participants transform broken and strained relationships in faith communities, families, and workplaces.

Central to this approach is careful, respectful listening that builds deep understanding, enabling those struggling with difference to find paths forward towards life and reconciliation.

If you want to be equipped to make a lasting difference using mediation skills and restorative practice, this is the course for you.

We aim to run this course twice a year. We are also open to running Paths to Peace in additional locations, so please get in touch if you would like to explore hosting a course.



Paths of Peace: Handling Conflict Well

Autumn 2026 – West Yorkshire (Blackley, Elland)

Friday 9th October (9am – 5pm) ~ The Blackley Centre
Friday 16th October May (9.30am–1pm) ~ Online zoom session
Friday 23rd October (9.30am–1pm) ~ Online zoom session
Friday 6th November (9.30am–1pm) ~ Online zoom session
Friday 13th November (9am – 5pm) ~ The Blackley Centre
Plus 3 x 1 hour webinars to watch in your own time.

Spring 2027 – Southern Counties (Thatcham, Berkshire)

Friday 16th April (9am – 5pm) ~ Thatcham Baptist Church (RG19 4YF)
Friday 23rd April (9.30am–1pm) ~ Online zoom session
Friday 30th April (9.30am–1pm) ~ Online zoom session
Friday 7th May (9.30am–1pm) ~ Online zoom session
Friday 14th May (9am – 5pm) ~ Thatcham Baptist Church
Plus 3 x 1 hour webinars to watch in your own time.

“Excellent content and engaging, gifted and experienced teacher”

“I would recommend it to anyone with leadership responsibilities”

“Wonderful expertise, clearly and openly communicated. A great atmosphere to learn”

“This was a real lightbulb moment for me”

£545 per person

**£495 for early
bird bookings
(by 11th Sept
2026 & 11th
March 2027
respectively)**



Peace by Piece: Online Training

Peace by Piece is a series of online gatherings exploring different aspects of peaceful living and restorative practice. Each standalone session runs from 9:00 to 10:30 am.

Cost: £30 per session

Booking: Contact our office to reserve your place.



1. Conflict Isn't the Enemy – 2nd October 2026

Why does conflict feel so threatening, especially in caring or faith-based communities? We will explore conflict as something to be understood rather than feared, and how avoidance often increases harm rather than preventing it.

- Common myths about “good” communities and conflict
- Why conflict feels scary (emotionally, culturally, and spiritually)
- A healthier, more hopeful view of disagreement

2. Small Cracks, Big Divides – 20th November 2026

A clear and compassionate look at conflict escalation, exploring how unaddressed everyday misunderstandings can harden into resentment and division—ultimately damaging relationships, mission, and ministry.

- The difference between healthy tension and harmful escalation
- Early warning signs of escalation, including the subtle impacts of silence, politeness, and spiritualisation
- When and where intervention is most effective

3. Listening When It's Hard – 22nd January 2027

Learn how to listen deeply, even when emotions rise or values clash, without giving up personal convictions or shutting down.

- Understand why disagreement feels threatening to our sense of safety
- Learn how to regulate yourself while listening
- How to speak truth with kindness while remaining connected

Peace by Piece: Online Training

4. From Trigger to Reaction – 19th February 2027

Understanding emotional responses in conflict. A compassionate exploration of how fear, anger, and past experiences shape our response to conflict.

- Why we react before we think, and how to recognise personal triggers
- Managing anger constructively without suppressing it
- Creating space between feeling an emotion and choosing a response

5. Talking Circles: Creating Space to Be Heard – 12th March 2027

An introduction to talking circles as a practice for shared listening, mutual respect, and collective wisdom.

- Principles of talking circles
- Creating safety and shared agreements
- When circles are helpful—and when they are not

6. When Harm Has Happened – 9th April 2027

Responding wisely and safely to serious conflict: a careful, grounded workshop for leaders and teams navigating situations where trust has been damaged.

- Naming harm without shaming
- Creating safe processes for repair while holding care for all involved
- Understanding limits and recognising when outside help is needed

7. Leading Through Tension – 21st May 2027

Supporting others through conflict without carrying it all. This session is designed for clergy, trustees, managers, and volunteer leaders.

- Staying regulated while others are distressed
- Avoiding triangulation and burnout
- Knowing when to step in and when to step back, modelling healthy conflict engagement

Bespoke Training & Away Days

Jo Williams has over 26 years' experience of devising and delivering high-quality training for churches, colleges, and other organisations. Most training offered through the Blackley Centre is bespoke, created to fit the specific needs and goals of each client. Topics cover a wide range of areas, with a central focus on peacebuilding, effective communication, managing conflict and anxiety constructively, and developing teams that work well together.



- Church, charity, and workplace team days (at the Blackley Centre or in your location)
- One-to-one coaching—in person or online
- Gilmore Fraleigh profiling to help teams understand their responses in calm and storm situations
- Continuing Ministerial Development (CMD) tailored as required
- Bespoke courses designed to suit your specific situation

"We found the Gilmore Fraleigh profiles so revealing and helpful, as some rebuild from past hurts and as we form a new dynamic with new team members. They commented on how sensitively the training was done and I was grateful that my hopes for the day were more than realised"

Mediation

The Blackley Centre offers **Interpersonal Mediation** and **Church Facilitation**.

There are occasions when relationships get strained and conflict escalates despite everyone's best intentions. Communication becomes tense, leading to misunderstandings and misinterpretations. As hurts multiply, work, daily life, ministry, and mission all suffer.

Interpersonal Mediation

Jo leads a team of trained, accredited mediators who facilitate structured and safe conversations between two parties to find positive ways forward. Because every conflict is unique, the mediation process is tailored to your specific situation. Typically, this involves meeting separately with each party before bringing them together.

Church Facilitation

Our experienced mediators come alongside churches to facilitate healthy communication and help them to resolve tensions within a congregation or leadership team. All our facilitators are professionally trained with a proven track record in transformative mediation.

Please contact the office if you would like to arrange an initial consultation to explore the possibility of an interpersonal mediation or church/team facilitation.



"You both led us very skillfully to a good resolution, and your grace was much appreciated. It is a testament to your professionalism and your talents that this deep wound in our church has now begun to heal"

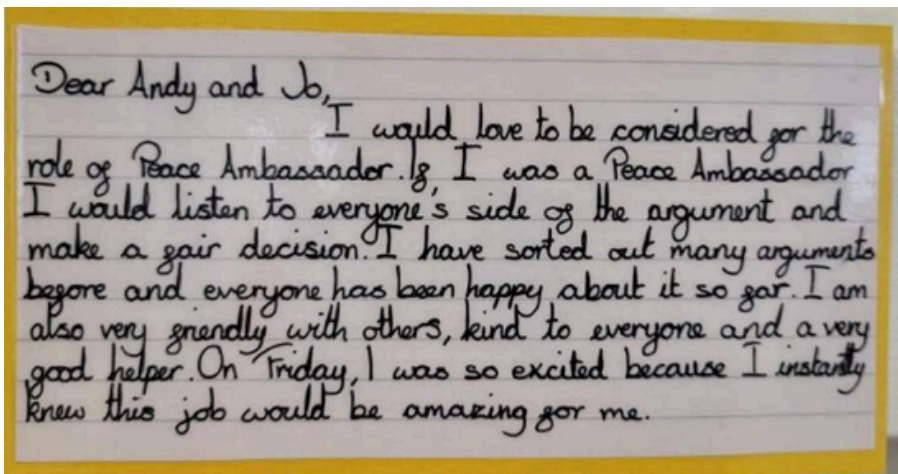
Young Peace Ambassadors

Young Peace Ambassadors was established in memory of Lord David Shutt, one of the founding trustees of The Blackley Centre. David had a deep heart for young people and for peace, and so this initiative stands as a living memorial to a man whose life embodied the very principles of peace and reconciliation we share with children today.

The Young Peace Ambassador programme aims to help children:

- Form more peaceful relationships
- Develop practical skills to navigate difference and conflict
- Act as advocates for peace and collaborative working
- Foster a culture of peace across their school and wider community

Our aim is to equip children to take these principles back into school and become advocates for peace. Our Young Peace Ambassadors work within their schools, supporting children when they are in conflict, often being the first point of contact in the playground.



Young Peace Ambassadors



"I loved it so much it was the best"

We currently work with five local primary schools, training pupils in Years 4 and 5. Children spend two full days at The Blackley Centre in the Summer term, followed by a refresher day in the Autumn term.

School staff accompany the children and participate fully in the training. Participating schools report significant benefits from the initiative—impact statements from Headteachers can be viewed on our website.

We are also currently expanding the Young Peace Ambassadors programme for secondary schools and sixth form colleges.

"I feel more able to help people because I've practised and learnt techniques"



You are welcome to join us as we celebrate and commission this year's Young Peace Ambassadors at Blackley Baptist Church on Saturday 10th October (4pm)

Playing with Peace & Interfaith Relationships

Playing with Peace

At The Blackley Centre, we believe in introducing concepts of peace at the very earliest opportunity. Playing with Peace is a baby and toddler group providing a safe, welcoming space for parents and children to



explore themes of peace through play. Run in partnership with Blackley Baptist Church, the group meets every Wednesday during term time from 9:30 am to 11:00 am. If you are local and would like to join us, please get in touch!

Interfaith Relationships

Interfaith relationships and dialogue have always been central to the vision of The Blackley Centre. This work grew out of Andy and Jo's experience of living in Burnley during the 2001 riots—a catalyst for Andy to help build positive connections between different faith communities to increase understanding, break down barriers, and forge genuine relationships. Andy has hosted a wide range of interfaith events at The



Blackley Centre and sits on the Steering Group of Calderdale Interfaith. We would welcome conversations about bespoke projects and how this vital area of ministry can be developed and funded.

Partnering With Us

Joining our mailing list

Scan the QR code to join to our mailing list. We promise we won't bombard you with emails, but we'd love the opportunity to send you newsletters and updates about our events.



Joining our movement for peace

You can support our work by becoming a member of The Blackley Centre, either as an individual or as an association or organisation. Individuals can become a Blackley Centre member for as little as £2.50 per month. Our members are integral to our organisation and receive a 10% discount on all training and retreats. The QR code will take you directly to our website where you'll find a membership form. We would love you to join us on this journey!



Supporting us with a one off donation

We are working hard to become fully self-supporting through earned service income. However, by offering services at points of need, we remain reliant on grant funding and donations. If you are able to make a one-off donation to support our work, scanning the QR code will take you to our JustGiving page. Every gift, no matter the size, is very much appreciated. Thank you.



Diary of Events

SEPTEMBER 2026

- Friday 25th • Peace & Quiet Day (10am-4pm)
- Saturday 26th • Songs of Peace and Protest (10am-3.30pm)

OCTOBER 2026

- Friday 2nd • Peace by Piece 1: Conflict Isn't the Enemy - online (9-10:30am)
- Friday 9th • Start of Paths of Peace Course (Blackley)
- Saturday 10th • Young Peace Ambassador's Celebration & Commissioning (4pm)
- Friday 30th • Peace & Quiet Day (10am-4pm)

NOVEMBER 2026

- Friday 6th • Rob Halligan: How Did We Get Here? (7.30pm)
- Friday 20th • Peace by Piece 2: Small Cracks, Big Divides - online (9-10:30am)
- Friday 27th • Peace & Quiet Day (10am-4pm)

JANUARY 2027

- Friday 22nd • Peace by Piece 3: Listening When It's Hard - online (9-10:30am)

FEBRUARY 2027

- Friday 19th • Peace by Piece 4: From Trigger to Reaction - online (9-10:30am)
- Friday 26th • Bread for the Journey Retreat Day (10am-4pm)

Diary of Events

MARCH 2027

Friday 5th

- Windows of Hope and Reconciliation – St Hilda of Whitby (10am-4pm)

Friday 12th

- Peace by Piece 5: Talking Circles: Creating Space to Be Heard – online (9-10:30am)

Saturday 13th

- Blackley Centre AGM – time tbc (morning)

Friday 19th

- Peace & Quiet Day (10am-4pm)

APRIL 2027

Friday 9th

- Peace by Piece 6: When Harm Has Happened – online (9-10:30am)

Saturday 10th

- Songs of Peace and Protest (10am-3.30pm)

Friday 16th

- Start of Paths of Peace Course (Thatcham)

Saturday 24th

- Peace & Quiet Day (10am-4pm)

MAY 2027

Saturday 15th

- Mindful Living in a Busy World (10am-4pm)

Friday 21st

- Peace by Piece 7: Leading Through Tension – online (9-10:30am)

Friday 28th

- Peace & Quiet Day (10am-4pm)

JUNE 2027

Saturday 12th

- Praying & Walking the Labyrinth (10am-4pm)

Friday 25th

- Peace & Quiet Day (10am-4pm)

JULY 2027

Friday 30th

- Peace & Quiet Day (10am-4pm)



@blackleycentre



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