



Picture from Coronation Lunch at Wesley

Taken by Anna Wratishlaw

Annual Church Reports 2023

ACM MINISTER'S REPORT – WESLEY METHODIST 2023

This has been a very different year for me at Wesley and has probably felt different for you too. Over the years I have always strived to be a proactive pastoral visitor, but over this last year, due to the approximately 20 hours a week I have to commit to my presbyteral training, I have become a reactive pastoral visitor. This at times, has been a real struggle, trying to balancing church, student and home life. Shortly, I will be coming to the end of my 2nd year of training, and in September I will commence my 3rd and final year. I will then be a probationer for 2 years. I would like to take this opportunity to thank you all for your patience, understanding and support as I fulfil God's calling upon my life to become a presbyter in the Methodist church.

This has been a better year for Wesley as far as community groups and hirers are concerned, as most have returned to us after the Covid-19 pandemic.

Financially, we survived, and came through the other side, but it has been very tight. Many churches in Methodism have not been so fortunate, so we give praise and grateful thanks to God that we are still here.

Many of our activities have been very successful in the past year. Fusion Youth Club is regularly seeing over 100 children, Parent & Toddlers is thriving and Memory Worship, although slightly down in number since the pandemic, is doing excellent work in supporting those with, and without dementia.

The weekly lunches have also been successful, due to the commitment of volunteers, to whom we give grateful thanks.

Our café is doing well and is seeing new people coming every week, and the table top sales, which have coincided, as well as raising amazing amounts for charities, have also attracted new people to the church.

Throughout the colder months, Wesley opened a Warm Space, which prove to be a very beneficial outreach activity, and all those who helped are to be commended for their commitment and efforts.

Our Sunday congregation has also had a boost of new people who have been warmly received into the Wesley family, which has been great to see.

This just leaves me to say a huge thank you to all those who work to keep Wesley functioning and active within our community in whichever role you undertake. Without you, the church would not be here, or would not be undertaking the mission activities it engages in, shining God's love and light into our local community and beyond. Thank you.

I leave you with words of encouragement from the Apostle Paul: *'12 Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called when you made your*

good confession in the presence of many witnesses. ¹³ In the sight of God, who gives life to everything, and of Christ Jesus, who while testifying before Pontius Pilate made the good confession, I charge you ¹⁴ to keep this command without spot or blame until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, ¹⁵ which God will bring about in his own time – God, the blessed and only Ruler, the King of kings and Lord of lords, ¹⁶ who alone is immortal and who lives in unapproachable light, whom no one has seen or can see. To him be honour and might for ever. Amen. [1 Timothy 6:12-16 NIVUK]

May God richly bless you,

Pastor Steve Mayo

May 2023

Members and their Capacity of Wesley Methodist Church- Current
as of 24/1/23

<u>Name</u>	<u>Capacity</u>
Rev. Peter Moorhouse	Superintendent Minister
Pastor Steve Mayo	Minister (Chair of Council)
Judy Taylor	Church Secretary/ Safeguarding/Circuit Rep
Gabrielle Greenway	Co-ordinating Steward/Outreach /Circuit Rep
Ian Lowe	Serving, Inclusion and Justice in the Circuit Community/Circuit Steward
Anna Wratishlaw	Communication/Deputy Circuit Rep for GG
Eileen Simmons	Pastoral Co-ordinator
Emma Hearn	Youth
Sanya Strachan	Worship and Mission
Geoff Hawkins	Church Rep
Helen Boyd	Church Rep
June Childs	Church Rep
Alex Childs	Church Rep
Rupert Bertie	Church Rep
David Cox	Church Rep
Isobel Wratishlaw	Church Rep
Alan Severne	Property Co-Ordinator (Non -voting)
Tina Gowers	Treasurer (Non-Voting)



Communication report by Anna Wratishlaw

Communications within Wesley – in all the varying forms it takes - has been very busy over the past year, as most activities have now resumed and new events have taken place. Over Christmas, Wesley featured in a local paper with a piece on our Santa's Grotto event which raised funds for the Carli Lansley foundation. Thank you to Emma, John and all the team who worked so hard on the event, and to the charity for arranging the article. It was brilliant to get such good coverage, which goes a long way to promoting and demonstrating our community involvement.

Over the last year, we have continued to promote special services over Christmas, Easter and the Teddy Bears Picnic on Mothering Sunday. These usually include the production of a banner, website & social media artwork and posts, and linking in with local 'what's on' advertising across websites, newspapers and social media wherever possible. Over Christmas we also displayed material from the Methodist Church's 'There is Room' Christmas campaign throughout the building, to help promote this important message which is closely aligned with Wesley's inclusive values. Following a Worship Consultation meeting in September, leaflets have been produced with details of the monthly worship services held at Wesley, and the dates for the connexional year. These are available at the back of the church for anyone who may be interested in attending one of these services. As we now have a growing number of promotional leaflets and information, I have purchased leaflet display stands – primarily for promoting services and events taking place at Wesley - and I am looking at options for how we display local community events.

We continue to integrate new ways of working and methods of communication brought in during the pandemic (email distributions for example), and thanks go to Judith Taylor for editing and printing the Clarion, and to Sue Hockett for updating and printing the weekly notice sheet – both are hugely important for promoting everything that goes on at Wesley.

Please continue to be mindful of GDPR regulations and our policies if you are ever in a position where you need to take, keep or use personal data of any kind, or share any photos or information in regards to our events. Over the last few months, Wesley's GDPR data consent forms have been sent out to all those we hold data for (this includes contact information). We are required by law to have obtained your consent in order to use and store this information. If you have not returned this form, the church will no longer be able to contact you or hold this information. We do have forms available should you require a copy, and we are more than happy to assist if you would like help with these - please speak to myself or Judith Taylor if you have any questions on GDPR or data protection within the church context. Thanks to all who help create, proofread and distribute our communications in all their forms.

Circuit Report by Ian Lowe – Leadership Team (Service)

Service – a place in the community, a place for justice



Circuit News

Circuit Mission Planning Day

As an advocate of local church, Rev. Pete is hugely proud that the Circuit has come out of the pandemic with the same amount of churches that it entered it with – sadly this is not the same for other Circuits. However, the Circuit is reaching a critical mass in some areas with not enough people to fulfil necessary jobs and it is estimated some churches will not stand a chance of surviving past the current generation.

A Circuit Mission Planning Day was held on 18th June at Belfairs and the aim of the day was to develop a plan for the way forward. The plan will be an ongoing exercise and input from all churches is encouraged. The day was lead by the District Discipleship Enabler (Angela Brydon) and we now have a number of proposals for where we would like the Circuit to be.

Out of the planning day was developed a Mission planning toolkit, which many churches completed to enable a Circuit Mission plan to be developed. Anne Bryant has produced a user-friendly version of the Discipleship Pathway document, which churches used to score themselves on each aspect - what areas churches can improve on and what are their strengths.

The Experience Project at Whittingham Avenue Mission Centre

Work continues as usual and thanks was given to Ocado for enabling the project to run a very extensive food bank. The project regularly receives more donations than they can handle. This surplus has meant 16 ecumenical partners across the local area are being supported with food that would otherwise have gone to landfill. The existing funding for the project is due to run out in 2023. Therefore, in order for this valuable work to continue Circuit Meeting approved a grant of £30k over 3 years. A District grant has been applied for on a match-funded basis. Rev. Peter Moorhouse advised that various external grants had also been applied for, such as The National Lottery.

Warm Spaces

The response to Warm Spaces has been mixed. Churches were not overwhelmed & people came for the company not necessarily warmth. For Hockley, it had been an unexpected opportunity for the congregation to come together in the spirit of co-operation. For many the crisis had been around food & not warmth. Rev. Pete Moorhouse thanked the churches for responding fast to an unexpected mission.

Ministerial Stationing 2023/24

The Circuit will welcome back Heather Simmons in the next Connexional year. Pastor Steve Mayo will also be back full time in 2024. Rev. Calvin Samuels is on sabbatical from 1st March through to May 2023. Rev. Pete is due a sabbatical in 2024.

Appointments

With the sad passing of Kathy Burrell, the many roles that she held within the churches, Circuit and across Connexion are being reviewed. There is no one person that has all the knowledge and experience of Kathy and can take on all that she did – she will be greatly missed.

Pamela and Patrick Smith have both resigned from their roles as Circuit Steward / Manses & Property Co-ordinator and Circuit Co-Treasurer respectively. The Superintendent has thanked them both for the work they have put in over the years in their various roles.

his has left the Circuit with some immediate gaps that need addressing. The Circuit needs to look for more volunteers to fill these roles.

Some roles are filled:

Ian Lowe is now the longest serving Circuit Steward, so becomes Senior Circuit Steward. Anne Bryant, and Mike Spauld continue as Circuit Stewards

Keith Norman is now Circuit Meeting Secretary

Rev. Zena Smith is now Synod Secretary

Adrian Nunn is now the sole Treasurer.

The Circuit Office staff will minute Circuit Meeting, Circuit Leadership Team meetings and other meetings in the Circuit. They will also co-ordinate Manse and Property matters.

Other roles, e.g. convening the Circuit Invitation Committee and Sabbatical Support group etc. are vacant and will need to be appointed, when necessary, by Circuit Meeting.

The Mission with Forum & Young Person' Rep roles remain vacant.

Cost of Living Crisis

The cost of living crisis is also influencing mission plans in ways we hadn't considered back in March 2022. Some churches have raised hire costs, while others have struggled to maintain the same level of lettings. Some churches are changing where they worship in order to heat less of their buildings, while others opened more in order to provide 'warm spaces' for the local community. Some churches are reviewing their contracts with energy suppliers & moving to fixed rates deals. Hockley organised all their church activities/meetings on the day of the 'warm space' in order to reduce their costs.

The cost of living crisis is also affecting the Circuit finances. Owing to inflation, increases in stipends/wages and on-costs, as well as other rising prices (e.g. energy, maintenance etc.) in the Circuit and across the Connexion, a shortfall is expected in the Circuit budget by the end of the year. Looking ahead to next year churches' assessments would have needed to be raised substantially, which is unfeasible. A budget committee was formed to look at the forecast and see if there were any areas of movement – this committee consisted of Adrian Nunn, Rev. Pete Moorhouse and Ian Lowe. The Circuit Meeting accepted the proposals from the committee and the Circuit budget for the next Methodist year will be the same as this year. This is very good news given inflation is over 10%. However, some churches are struggling to pay their assessments. The Circuit Treasurer will meet with the Church Treasurers on May 4th 2023 to determine the formula for how the budget is divided up. If some of the struggling churches pay less, it will inevitably mean those churches who are in a better position will need to pay more.

Grants

Circuit Meeting has reminded churches that grants are intended to kick-start Mission projects that churches wouldn't have otherwise considered. Grants are an incentive which serve as a reminder that we are a Circuit and not isolated churches. A number of churches have received grants. There is still money left in the Elm Road fund and future applications for grants for Mission are still encouraged.

Bible Month

Will be in July this year on the Book of Revelation. For the next plan churches and local preachers will be contacted to see if they want to participate that month; it is understood some churches can't participate due to united services and other prior arrangements. Generally only half the churches in the Circuit participate each year, but the Circuit Leadership Team wishes to keep Bible Month up as it offers Scriptural lessons to the wider membership.

Matters Referred by Conference or District

Rev Calvin was congratulated on his appointment as Deputy Chair of Missions Committee.

Sabbaticals are beneficial for all concerned and allow Ministers to recharge and refresh. Circuit Meeting approved a proposal to pay Supernumeraries to cover Sabbaticals. The pay would be approx. one 1/3 of a stipend.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Training

Conference has passed down the requirements for EDI training that will affect ministers, employees, circuit reps, local preachers, church stewards and many others across Circuit and church life. This involves unconscious bias training, an EDI online course and a personal development project. This is going to be a huge amount of work

for the Circuit Office to co-ordinate, and the Superintendent still needs to get to grips with the requirements.

The Circuit has agreed that EDI is an important issue that we need to work on, but did note that it was going to be a vast task and would be difficult to get many church members who are already under a lot of pressure to complete more work. It has been suggested that we should approach it positively as an addition to safeguarding, and that if churches offered a day course for the whole congregation to work through it together this would be the best approach.

The Superintendent and the Circuit Office are to meet in the near future to put a plan together so we can show the District we will complete the training in a realistic time.



Finance Report by Tina Gowers

Negative Points

I'd like to point out the huge difference in our Circuit Assessment figure and the total income from direct giving and weekly offerings. £5,000 has already been transferred from the General account and the only reason I've not yet transferred more from the CFB account is because the Internal Organisations balance is offsetting the Circuit balance. This doesn't mean I'm using the Organisations money, it just means that there's enough in our Current account to cover this deficit. And, whilst money can stay in the CFB account, it's earning interest.

There is also a deficit between income from lettings and property related expenditure. However, as we enter the Summer months, we won't be spending so much on the utility bills.

The predicted end of year deficit is over £12,000 but is offset slightly, by the internal organisations, who also make donations to the church general fund periodically.

Positive Points

I'm about to claim our Gift Aid back which should be around £6,300 of which, about £4,800 will go into the Circuit account.

The Sanctuary Café income has exceeded the predicted budget figure and is proving a very worthwhile Community Outreach facility. At the end of the year, profits go into the church General fund which, as you can see, has helped to pay the assessment this year.

Both Fusion and Parent & Toddler are flourishing and there have been no issues with the money coming through the Church accounts.

Our Electricity prices are fixed until November 2025 and our Gas prices are fixed until November 2024. Contracts are negotiated 11 months before the end date, so I'll be looking at new Gas prices in December 2023. However, this will depend on the price we're offered as it may be worth our while to hold off on a new contract until later in the year, to see if prices fall.

FUSION Youth & Kids

Report by *Emma Hearn Fusion Youth Leader*

Fusion Youth & Kids meets once a month on a Thursday night at 6pm and has up to 100 children attend of primary school age. The children enter through the church and then go through to the back where there are a number of different activities set up – board games, sports, xbox, karaoke, hairdressing, lego, dressing up and lots more! The last half an hour we come into the Church space for our 'worship' where we sing songs, have a 10/15minute talk lead by me and then some group games and prayers from our prayer board to round the evening off.

Since stepping down from running the Club on a weekly basis, Judy Taylor has taken over the running particularly the administration side, organising the craft and games whilst I continue to do the talk and lead the singing and prayers. We have found that monthly meetings are still popular so we will continue until September when Judy and I will meet again to discuss the future of Fusion.

We have just had our Easter Special with 115 children attend. Lots of fun throughout the 2 hour special with an important element of sharing the Easter Story with the children.

We always have a theme to our regular evenings and an important part is to share our love of Jesus with the children through stories, videos, singing, short plays etc. It really is a joy to see the children learn about Jesus and hopefully, whether it be now or in the future, come to want to know more.

Our Team

We are truly blessed to have our righthand ladies - Sam and Clare who work tirelessly for Fusion and have continued to stay on with Fusion once a month. Also recently joining the team regularly we have Sammy and Trudi along with her daughter Hope.

Rose a mum of children who have attend the clubs also attends with a watchful eye, beautiful singing voice and generally wonderful person to have around.

From our Church family we have the wonderful Gaye, Jane, Isobel, Anna, Alex and June who regularly help out. We were blessed to have the fabulous Joss with us on many occasions along with her brother Benedict. It goes without saying Joss is a sad loss to us all at Fusion and we miss her sweet soul around the place.

Alan clears all the chairs for us every month and my brother Matthew comes monthly to help out with whatever needs doing and the lovely Angie and my sister in law Sue who come along to help with Special events.

Our very own Steve Mayo who may not be able to attend regularly due to his many other commitments, has and continues to be, a massive support to the youth of our church and community.



GDPR Report by Judy Taylor

In line with the circuit requirements Wesley has recently undertaken a Data Protection Audit which included the completing of Data Consent Forms.

The audit is in line with requirements for the Circuit Office and has to be completed by 31st May 2023.

Those people who declined to complete a Data Consent form for Wesley have now been removed from the Church list of people to contact. This decision was made at the Church Council on Wednesday 26th April 2023. All completed forms are kept in a locked filing cabinet in the office in line with GDPR guidance.



Pastoral Report by Eileen Simmons

Last August Pastor Steve took a baptism within our morning worship and a couple not known to me were sitting immediately behind the baptismal contingent. I approached them after the service and welcomed them and asked if they were part of the baptismal group. I was told no, but of course I continued to chat as they had coffee with me. As they were leaving I said it would be lovely if they chose to join us on another Sunday. As they left, Steve was at the door and he asked me if I knew she was the new circuit minister, Rev. Agnes Sam. As I did not I rushed to the car park and told them they would always be welcome, but doubly so, as she was joining the circuit. Since then she and I have a great relationship and she reminds me every now and then how brilliant Wesley is at welcoming newcomers.

I think this example shows just how welcoming we are and what fantastic teamwork we have; from Linda Lister's volunteers who welcome all at the door, to the unofficial spotters inside who note anyone new, gives one of us the nod and they join them to chat. There are too many of us to mention names, but recently we have added three sets to our Community Roll helped by the warmth of our welcome and follow up.

Dara Jones and Jay, Jeannie Brooke and Ursula Warwick. Dara and Jay are in the Metropolitan police and Dara tells me she is on duty near Buckingham Palace on Coronation day. I shall look very carefully for her on TV !

At this point I need to pay tribute to the hard working team of Pastoral Visitors, who work so cooperatively together with me. We each have our own group, but happily phone each other with news of each other's individuals in such a supportive way.

Wesley has so many lovely traditions including one of giving plants after Easter Sunday service, which are so much welcomed by the recipients. Here I need to thank Annette Charnock, who does such lovely creative work in making up these floral gifts.

Every member of Wesley has a Pastoral Visitor, but not all on the Community Roll. Anyone who worships with us is invited to talk to me about supporting our Pastoral work, whether a member or on the Community Roll. This already happens, but we can never have too many of us willing to meet, chat or phone each other in a supportive way.

I used to have my own designed Welcome Form for those starting to worship with us, but since GDPR I have changed, and now use that form, plus a form welcoming just giving my own contact details and those of Pastor Steve.

All newcomers come into my own Pastoral group to start with, but then one of the other visitors may take over certain individuals if they have a connection.

I welcome all information and with the individual's permission include their details of illness or other news for my monthly Clarion Pastoral News.

I love my role as Wesley's Pastoral Coordinator and regard it as a real privilege to be so.
Eileen Simmons

Tel : 472521 email: eileen.kester.simmons@gmail.com

Property Report by Alan Severne



Quinquennial Inspection

Since the last CC meeting we have had a Quinquennial inspection. In general this is much in line with what we expected. I am pleased to report that the surveyor does not consider any of the cracks to be significant structurally.

The surveyor has indicated that in the current climate it is more difficult for him to produce accurate long-term estimates and in conversation said recent experience reflects the difficulties in obtaining estimates in general making it unlikely that three quotes will be found for a project.

The report provides estimates under the section “Works of Repair”. For convenience I have inserted the items and estimates below.

E.1 Of utmost urgency

1. Complete proposed damp proofing works to entrance lobby. S
2. Remove sections of old cast iron rainwater goods from flat roof areas. I
3. Secure frame to fire escape door in nursery. C
4. Provide ventilation to nursery office. U
5. Relevel manhole covers in concourse floor. I
6. Remove lift oil from intake cupboard. C

Estimated Costs £2,000 C=complete, I=incomplete, S=scheduled, U=unstarted

E.2 Essential within the next twelve months

1. Undertake continuing repair and clearance of rainwater goods.
2. Undertake external redecoration work and joinery repairs.
3. Undertake repairs to all defective stone/concrete sills.
4. Continue with maintenance and repairs to flat roof areas and remove moss and other debris.
5. Remove items wedged between nursery wall and back boundary.
6. Investigate areas of damp to first floor level and check corresponding roofs and mend accordingly.
7. Cut back Ivy to rear of building.
8. Repair all defective render and seal concrete frame to Wesley Hall stairwell.
9. Label and manage all asbestos as detailed.
10. Repair soil vent pipe.

Estimated Costs £10,000

E.3 Essential within the next five years

1. Undertake on-going pointing and repair to brickwork and stonework.
2. Continue maintenance and repairs to church roof slopes and all flat roofs.

3. Continue on-going repairs to church windows and older remaining hall windows.
4. Undertake ceiling repairs and general plasterwork repairs prior to redecoration.
5. Continue programme of internal redecoration work.
6. Continue replacement of defective cast iron gutters and downpipes and replacement of asbestos rainwater goods.
7. Refinish older wooden floors.
8. Continue with maintenance of boundary treatments and surfaced areas.
9. Regularly review energy efficiency.

Estimated Costs £40,000-£50,000

E.4 Advisable

1. Repaint white edging to steps.
2. Provide hot water to first floor basins.
3. Cap and vent chimney.
4. Cost out fitting snow guards to church roof slopes.
5. Insulate roofs.
6. Resolve organ air pressure issue.
7. Reinstate wall and ceiling vents to sanctuary space

No estimate made.

As well as its coverage of the building condition the full report includes recommendations on obtaining specialist advice on addressing areas of damp plasterwork, obtaining a professional fire risk assessment and reviewing PAT testing – HSE have issued new guidance on this.

Sanctuary

Internally the Sanctuary is generally still in good order, with minor issues only.

Externally some of the pointing should be replaced soon, and there are a small number of broken segments within the stained glass windows. I am trying to obtain a cost for the window repairs, not so much for functional reasons but because broken windows can attract further unwanted attention.

Organ

The organ is currently (9th April) playable following some adjustments by our normal tuner. The new combined Finance & Property group are taking some exploratory steps to see if there are viable options for a more extensive overhaul.

Manse Garden

The Quinquennial Surveyor has expressed concern about the practicalities of incorporating this into the vehicle-accessible areas. See report from the combined finance/property group.

Lighting and Electrical

Church main lighting is still presenting some issues. The problem is caused by faulty controllers which are expensive to replace. By implementing a second layer of switching which will take the major load away from the controllers it is intended that a more robust system will be created. This will be installed shortly.

The outside bollard lights around the church will be addressed once the damp works are complete.

Some of the oldest internal lights in other parts of the building are obsolete and will need to be replaced in the not too distant future. Following the success of the emergency LED units in the Youth Hall and the Concourse it seems prudent to consider where similar units might also be used instead of fluorescent devices.

Sanctuary Porch Damp

Paul Wolton, Contracts Manager for the firm that carried out the original refurbishment came down to see us and provided some insight into the detail works and how they might have led to the damp. He recommended a damp treatment company (Maljon) who will shortly begin remedial works.

Halls

David Cox's daughter Louise has been kind enough to arrange a volunteer who has begun plaster repairs.

Boilers

Both the main boilers and the new water heater are working well. Controls still have room for improvement but are adequate.

Safeguarding Report by Judy Taylor



Safeguarding Training has been on going and Wesley has received a session for those who could attend. Another training session is being planned for after a church service at Wesley to enable more people to attend.

There is also a Circuit Safeguarding Audit being completed at present and Wesley is at present fully compliant.

It has been announced at Circuit Meetings that Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Training is now being included in the mandatory training, which could in the future be added to the Safeguarding training. We will be kept abreast of any changes by Rob Gray the Circuit Safeguarding Officer.

Reports from other Church Groups:

ADVISORY GROUP ON FINANCE (formerly the Finance Advisory group) By Geoff Nash

Meeting in advance of Church Council, to whom we report, the group has met three times.. The group is made up of Pastor Steve (Chair), Tina Gowers John Hearn, Alan Severne, Ian Lowe, Rupert Bertie and Geoff Nash.

With mutual agreement it seemed appropriate to combine the Property and Finance Groups, so Judy Taylor, June Childs and Alex Childs have joined those above, as members of the **FINANCE & PROPERTY GROUP (FPG)** .

The current accounts are presented at each meeting, noted and the need for any action discussed. To retain our hirers, we have not raised our charges to them during this Methodist Year, but they have been given notice that we will be reviewing them in September. New utility contracts have to be negotiated in the not too distant future and these are likely to be much higher than we currently pay.

A number of projects are under consideration. The organ has been serviced and further work is under consideration, work is due to start in mid-April in the porch. A new proposal is to be considered for the area behind the old manse

Wesley always has pressing financial needs, so the group wishes to support any fund raising. We encourage people to contribute on Gift Day and to consider leaving the church a legacy in their wills.



Afternoon Tea Report By Janet Whiddett

It was good to welcome everyone back for Afternoon Tea and Cakes last year. We all seemed more confident being out and about and meeting together in the one room. We thank all who made or contributed cakes and biscuits for us to share. For Pam and Linda who continue to serve our refreshments and clear up afterwards-great teamwork.

My thanks to Maureen Chambers who has kindly offered to be a Listening Ear during these afternoons. Anna has designed some pocket sized leaflets with all the dates throughout the year, which is very helpful. We start again at the end of April and look forward to seeing old friends and making new ones. All ages most welcome.

Cameo House Group Report By Jane Fulford

This house group is a mixed group of members from Wesley and Rochford. We usually meet once a month on a Wednesday in the afternoon. There is no set agenda for the year we decide each meeting the time before – so a mix of topics can be reviewed varying from Scripture to current local and national concerns. This year we have been looking at the Lord's Prayer. We number about 8 and any newcomers are very welcome.

The discussion is always thoughtful and deepens one's faith.

Thank you to those who have attended.



Clarion by Judy Taylor

Thank you to all those who are part of the process of preparing the Clarion for print, Terry Harper is invaluable as proof reader. Thank you to all those who write items and articles each month and share the events happening with in our church.

Creative Worship Report by Jane Fulford

This more usually a more meditative and creative service on the fourth Tuesday of the month at 8pm. It is always different, and I thank Sue Hockett and Isobel Wratishlaw for their wonderful contributions.

The numbers are small but those who come appreciate what is offered. On a couple of occasions, we have had new people join us.

Perhaps with renewed advertisement we may gain more support.

All are welcome

Inspire Report by Judy Taylor

This service is alternative to a worship service on a Sunday morning and is attended by a small but faithful group of people. The once a month services are led by Pastor Steve Mayo, Sanya Strachan and Judy Taylor. Each session has a different style and content which makes them all unique and hopeful there will be something for all.

Services start at 5:30 with coffee and cake and in a relaxed atmosphere the service continues for about an hour in length. Why don't you come along and join us to experience new ways of worship.



Memory Worship Report by Julie Peek

Why Memory Worship?

How can we sing the Lord's song in a strange land? (Psalm 137:4)

After attending a Methodist study day in June 2016, entitled 'The spiritual needs of older people and those living with dementia', I was drawn to the difficulties for people living with dementia in expressing and connecting with their own spirituality. I came away with the conviction that, as churches, we should be doing more. Worship is an important channel for recalling the past and we all have a continuing need to worship and experience a loving encounter with God, but for people living with dementia it can become increasingly difficult to make these connections.

Music

Music is a powerful trigger for memory recall and can take people back to a time when they felt safe and held by God. So, stimulus can be introduced in the form of music,

Bible stories, the Lord's Prayer, and other familiar liturgy. Many times, during Memory Worship I have seen examples of the power of music creating a sense of spiritual fulfilment. A familiar hymn has the ability to awaken feelings of wellbeing and memory for words without the need for a hymn sheet. Our opening song, chosen by our team is an uplifting song that raises our spirits: 'Bring Me Sunshine', famously sung by Morecombe and Wise.

Memory Box

Repetition is key in Memory Worship and nowhere is this more evident in the liturgy opening the Memory Box. We unpack it in the same way each service and it contains a red cloth, a cross, a little prayer bear, a candle and a Bible. Firstly, we take out the red cloth with the words: "We shake out the red material, red for love, remembering that God loves us." This cloth then dresses the table. We take out the cross and give it to a member of the congregation addressing them by their Christian name saying: "We remember that Jesus died on the cross and we remember that it is a sign of forgiveness." We take out the prayer bear and hand it to another person saying "This little prayer bear reminds me that I can take all my worries and all my fears to the Lord in prayer" We take out the candle and give it to another person saying: "We remember that Jesus came as the light of the world." Then we take the Bible and give it to another person saying: "We remember that the Bible is the word of God, and we remember that through the Bible, God speaks to us."



Lighting The Flame

The person leading the service slowly returns to each person to retrieve each of the items and places them one by one on the table. "We remember that the cross is a symbol of hope and we remember that Jesus is alive and with us today." Then we return the candle, saying: "We remember that we all have dark times, but nothing can

extinguish Gods light" This is where we come to what I find to be the most profound part of the service; lighting the Memory Worship candle. The person leading the service addresses the congregation: "And God said: 'Let there be ...'" No matter how badly we struggle with memory, everyone remembers God said: "Let there be Light," Lastly, the Bible is returned, and we then consider: "What are we reading from scripture today?"

A programme of monthly services was devised with a regular pattern of welcome, well-known hymns, familiar scripture and saying the Lord's Prayer together. After worship, carers can talk with Memory field professionals and meet with others in the same situation. We plan sensory stimulating games and crafts around the theme of the service that are fun and simple in form.



Covid

For people living with dementia the Covid pandemic was devastating. The personal stories of folks that used to come to Memory Worship, not being able to access shopping deliveries, no respite for carers and the terror of a loved one admitted to hospital unable to accompany them felt unbearable. That's really why I started Memory Worship "at home" to reassure that God is with us where ever we are; whether we feel worthy or not. Thank goodness the need for YouTube services came to an end. As much as it was helpful it didn't reduce feelings of loneliness and isolation. Two years on and Memory Worship "at home" has been watched at home and in care homes over 3,000 times.

Very sadly I lost my Dad in May 2022; he was always my greatest advocate and in June Rev Julia Monaghan also passed away. I decided in August to step away from employment with the Methodist Church with the intention of volunteering instead. In this way I continue to support the initiatives I remain called to.

It is lovely to see that churches continue to set up Memory Worship services. It is my hope in the future to set up a charity that supports a website offering all the tools a church or care home needs to set up a Memory Worship service.

Memory Worship 2pm-4pm on the 3rd Monday of the month at **Wesley Methodist Church**

Memory Worship 2pm-4pm on the 1st Monday of the month at **Thorpe Bay Methodist Church.**

Memory Worship 2pm-4pm on the 1st Tuesday of the month at **Rayleigh Methodist Church**



Parent and Toddlers Report by Georgina Paveling

The group continues to be busy every week and we see many new faces coming through our doors. The word has spread of the cakes Becca bakes fresh every week and a good coffee. Plus the effort we put in with our seasonal activities.

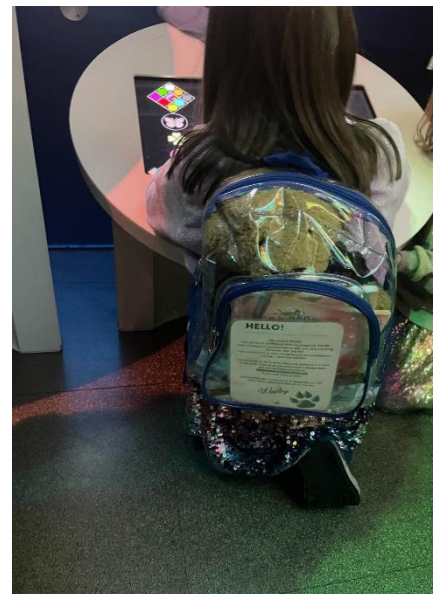


We have seen a change to our team of volunteers from March this year. Sadly Charlotte who volunteered has returned to work full time and isn't able to commit to Wednesdays. So I'd like to thank her on behalf of Wesley for all the work and time she gave us over the past year. This means we are in need of volunteers who can take on an active physical role within the group. We did advertise through our own social media but sadly no one has come forward as yet. But Becca, myself, June, Gaye make it work between us.



We have kept the same structure of the playgroup the same as last year, free play, tidy time, story time and ending with singing, parachute and bubbles.

Wesley our mascot continues to go home each week to share adventures with our children who attend. We now are on our 2nd book of pictures & stories of those adventures which we share each week with the group. He's a well-loved lion with a big heart.



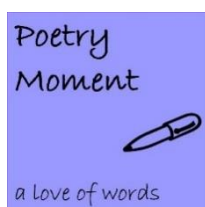


We have also added a new initiative called 'Wesley's little swap shop'. We have a box which we invite our members to bring along any children's clothes and shoes that are in good condition that their own children have grown out of to put in the box. We then invite them to take anything out they would like. We came up with the idea because we know how fast children grow out of things and it is also a way of helping families save money in these expensive times. It's also great for the environment!



The group has become such a positive welcoming, supportive space for all to enjoy. Something I'm very proud to of taken on and continue the hard work of Majorie and her team.

All that's left to say is a big thank you to Becca, June, Gaye for all their hard work and continued support in making the group the success it is.



Poetry Report by Joan Hawkins.

Talking Poetry meets on the second and fourth Wednesdays from 2.30 to 4 pm and we currently have 11 members with an average attendance of 7 .

We have a programme of poets or subjects and we each read our chosen poem followed by shared discussion and often a few laughs as some poets are easier to understand than others. Our session ends with friendly chat over tea/coffee and biscuits . If you are interested please contact Joan by email joanh838@icloud.com or on 07871 180 644

Sanctuary Café Report by Emma Hearn

The Sanctuary Café continues to be very popular and busy run on a Friday and Saturday morning. The Cafe welcomes a wide range of people not only from our church family but from the wider community. Many are now regular visitors with whom we have got to know and whom have become part of our wider church family.

It really has been wonderful meeting and getting to know new people in our community. Jane is often on hand should someone want to spend time with her in private prayer, Gaye too always with a kind listening ear to anyone wanting that solace. We have a fabulous volunteer team of tea and coffee servers, and it has been great to welcome new people (not previously connected with the Church) that help on a Friday and Saturday mornings.

Thank you to our wonderful cake makers who keep the customers coming back! We still need more volunteers to make cakes and help to serve so please come and have a chat with me if you think this is something you could help with.

Throughout the year we have run several charity coffee mornings – Containers of Hope and MacMillan. Hugely successful not only financially for the charities but brilliant at bringing the community together.

The café financially is holding its own and supporting the teas and coffees after Church services. We are still hoping to improve our serving station and coffee machines soon and have been grateful to the Coop with extra funds to help with this.

Thank you to all that support the Sanctuary Café.



Southend Foodbank Report by Anna Wratislaw

Wesley continues to collect donations for Southend Foodbank and deliver these to the warehouse. A collection bin is available at the back of the church sanctuary, and all donations are very gratefully received. At the time of writing, the foodbank is giving out around 3 and a half tonnes of food a week, and the amount of people needing food parcels has risen around 80% from March 2022 to March 2023. Whilst donations have not dipped, the Foodbank is having to buy food every week to keep up with this need, and have spent £30,000 this year so far in order to keep the food parcels going out of the door. They have less than a week's stock on their shelves for most of the food they pack into three-day parcels.

We are endeavouring to include an updated list of most needed items in the weekly notice sheet; for those with smartphones, the *Bank the Food* app can keep you updated with this list and will ping your phone when you enter a supermarket that has a foodbank donation point. The app is completely free and was developed in Southend with a local charity supporting Southend Foodbank. More information on how to donate

food, drop-off points, financial donations and other ways to donate are available on the Southend Foodbank website, or please speak to Anna Wratishlaw. Thank you for all you are able to give.

Thursday Call House Group Report by Isobel Wratishlaw

Thursday Call continues to meet on the third Thursday of the month, and over the past year has moved back to meeting in the homes of members (we can always facilitate joining by zoom for those not able to attend in person). Each session is led by a different member, alternating the style and theme, with recent meetings looking at passages from the book of Proverbs and a discussion on prayer. We would always welcome anyone who feels this might be something they'd like to join. Please see Isobel Wratishlaw for details.



Thursday Lunches Report by Jane Fulford

The Thursday Lunches started in Dec 2021. They have raised just over £1000 so far for church funds.

Thank you for Miriam and Kate who prepare and serve the food for their time and thoughtfulness. You prebook as this keeps costs down and prevents wastage of food

It is a very friendly group, and all are welcome.

Thank you



Time for Prayer Report by Jane Fulford

The opening of the Sanctuary Café on Saturdays and the resulting change in the ambience of the church during the time of the café's operation prompted a rethink of the nature and purpose of the Time for Prayer for 2022. The group is intended to provide a quiet space of both communal and private prayer with a focus on general, healing, and personal matters. To avoid the inevitable busyness of the Sanctuary on Saturdays, weekday meetings were trialled in April and May 2022, but this proved inconvenient for a number of the regular attendees. It was therefore decided to revert to a Saturday date from June 2022, but with an earlier start time of 9.30am, in order to allow for a period of quiet contemplation prior to the opening of the Café. However this proved inconvenient for some people and numbers regularly attending have fallen. Ideas on how to maintain the purpose and accessibility of this group would be welcomed. Please contact Jane Fulford. (Email: fulford.family@btinternet.com)

Warm Hub Report by Geoff Fulford

Due to the increase in energy costs, it was decided to start a Warm Space at Wesley for the benefit of the community. This started in November 2022 and ran until the end of March. The Warm Space was open from 10.00 am to 4.00 p.m. on Tuesdays and Thursdays. We provided newspapers and free tea and coffee.

We were very fortunate to receive a grant of £1,000 from the BEH District. Because there are considerable books and games resources at Wesley, we have spent only £222 of this grant.

Over the 5 months we had 124 visitors. This may not seem a lot but to those who came, it was a very valuable service. The Concourse also served as a Community Hub, where people dropped in for a chat and a tea or coffee.

We had a number of helpers and I would like to thank: Dave Cox, Gaye Greenway, Peter Lister, Geoff Nash, Jan Pope (Belfairs) and Janet Whiddett for their important contribution of time and conversation with our visitors.

Whether this is continued next winter, I leave to the Church Council to decide.



WTG Report by Judy Taylor

The Group has had another successful year and look forward to another year of treading the boards and entertaining audiences. We are always on the lookout for new members, both those who would like to work behind as well as on the stage, all would be welcome. We rehearse on a Monday evening from 8pm in Wesley Hall.