

HADLEIGH UNITED REFORMED CHURCH

WITH MONKS ELEIGH AND WHATFIELD



ANNUAL REPORTS MARCH 2011

The vision of Hadleigh URC is
to challenge the community to respond to God's love
as shown and taught by Jesus Christ.

www.hadleighurc.org.uk

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Hadleigh

United Reformed Church

Annual Reports March 2011

Minister's Report

Each year we look back and give thanks for what God has enabled us to do – and, as always, there is much to thank him for. Each year we look forward and acknowledge the challenges that lie before us – and they are many. So we look to God for his wisdom and his encouragement.

Whatever we have been able to do, whatever we feel called to do the only reason we have for doing these things is our relationship with God. We believe in God's love for us. We believe that we are called to love God in response and our lives are to reflect our love for God.

So we give thanks for the worship, prayer, Bible study and fellowship of our church. We give thanks for new faces, young and old, coming to be part of the church. We give thanks for great improvements to our buildings, for those from our local community who make use of them and for the opportunity that provides to share God's love with them. We give thanks for the financial resources which we use for God's work of healing the sick and sharing the story of Jesus.

We look forward with joy and excitement to our continued discipleship in the year ahead, not knowing what God will call us to, but knowing that he will be alongside us always.

The Bible tells us that **"God is love."** (1 John 4.16) We don't know whether the year ahead will contain joys or sorrows, successes or failures, peace or worries. But we do know that God is love and he will continue to love us. The challenge to us is to continue to be God's love in the world no matter what the world throws at us. In that way, God's love will be seen and people will come to know him for themselves.

We cannot do that alone. We need God and we need one another. Only then can we demonstrate to the world that 'God is love.' I give thanks to God for each one of you and pray that together we will continue to love in God's name.

Yours in Christ, **Jim.**

Build Africa

The children in the Sunday Club continue to raise funds for the 'Skills for a living' scheme with the Build Africa charity.



The scheme helps to improve the lives of young children & people in Kenya & Uganda, helping them to have a brighter future. Providing access to an education including an understanding of AIDS & HIV, providing materials & resources to learn a living skill, so the youngsters can later make an income.

In Jan 2010 a cheque for £49 was sent to the headquarters in Kent. A total of £200 was raised at Harvest time, from the service offering & from crafts made & sold by the children. It is very encouraging to have our Sunday Club children actively involved in making a difference to children living in another part of God's world, those who live in very different situations to their own.

I receive a letter of grateful thanks from the charity each time I send a cheque & they ask me to pass on a BIG THANK YOU. Regular newsletters are sent & these are displayed on the charity board.

To find out more about Build Africa go to www.build-africa.org

As a church we have also helped a campaign within Build Africa, providing sanitary protection for girls. We very much take this for granted in our own country. £5 provides an African girl with a year's protection. 14 girls have been helped though peoples

generosity. Thus allowing the girls access to their school education whilst they have their periods. Thank you.

With Christian blessings, Hilary Crisp, January 2010



Ansell Community Centre

This year has seen the partnership with the Hadleigh United Reformed Church being put on a more firm footing, with the establishment of Ansell Centre Management Group [ACMG]. This is chaired by the minister [Jim

Dalgleish] and comprises 3 church elders and 3 ACC directors. This group has identified the responsibilities of the Church and ACC and has resulted in several joint initiatives e.g. clearing parts of the gardens, buying a new drum for the photocopier, preparing a risk assessment for the Cinema and Luncheon Clubs and the church funding essential repairs to the centre's roof, floor and windows. Plans are being drawn up for upgrading the kitchen which will be jointly funded.

The Luncheon Club celebrated its 5th birthday in June 2010 and continues to be very popular. Ansell Snacks has now become a second Luncheon Club. A set 2 course meal seemed to be more popular.

Hadleigh Inclusion Project continue to meet in the hall on a regular basis as do the Majorettes, dance classes, play groups and craft and lip reading classes. It is a popular venue for parties, discos and fund raising events.

Digital Cinema remains very popular and successful with a large group of willing helpers. The film 'Rabbit Proof Fence' had two showings for the High School as part of their school curriculum. Two films were shown each winter month with all being well attended.

Nigel Crisp retired as a director in November 2009 so that he could devote more time to the urgent work on the church building, but continues to be a friend of ACC. Tom Tebbutt has taken over the website. Mary and Frank Cross have handed over the running of the Luncheon Club to a group of volunteers, but continue to keep an interest in it.

The past year should have seen a new chairman but unfortunately no director felt able to commit to the post at present. I have continued in post in the interim in the hopes that this will be resolved in the near future. Meetings have been reduced to quarterly, with extra meetings called if essential, and this has reduced the workload.

Eve McCoid

Pastoral Care

After many years of her hospitality, Phyllis Smith felt it was time for her to step down. Thank you Phyllis for your help over the years. We now meet at the home of Barbara Dixon. We have met together and discussed matters relating to Church membership. We have lost some friends over the year due to moving away from the area and also old friends have gone to be with the Lord. We have also had new members joining us.

This is a good opportunity to let you know who are the Pastoral Leaders:-Jean Cullen Clare Coster Elizabeth Meeks Barbara Dixon Phil Phillips Joyce Wells Pat Langley Milly Dagleish Sylvia Roberts and Kath Fullerton look after our friends in the villages.

Barbara Dixon



Scrabble Club

We meet each Saturday afternoon from 2pm to 4pm. Between 12 and 17 people meet. All people are made welcome and we do not confine ourselves just to Church members. We do make known to those players if we are holding special services and glad to say one or two have attended and joined in.

We shall continue to make this a fun afternoon and it gives us an opportunity to make people feel welcomed and valued. Thanks to all those of our members who have stepped in and kept things running when I have been unable to attend. It is much appreciated.

Barbara Dixon

Bible a Month

We are now a small group and I am delighted that although we have so few members giving monthly, we have received donations from friends. I am delighted to report that £168.00 was sent off to the Bible Society for 2010.



I shall continue collecting each month and it would be good if we could have more members willing to subscribe. I shall be happy to give more details about the work of the Bible Society and the different countries where the bible is making a difference.

Barbara Dixon

Web Site

This year's report.

I invite you to see by how much the promises of last year's report have been met.

Last year's report.

It is kept up to date, and in a way, describes to the wider world more of who we are and what we are about, than many people might do when walking past en route to the Ram.

You might ask, "what has been done for God by means of the Web Site in the past year"? and I would have to answer that I am not sure. But I do know and believe sincerely that it gives the impression of a bright, cheerful, concerned community of people, who can express their commitment to God in a modern fashion.

The current problems are that I am simply not receiving enough copy from the congregation, or much by way of interest. Do tell me what you have been doing, where you have been, what you are proposing, and I will publish your story on the Web Site. Perhaps someone might wish to give a testimony. Do please let me know. Do you have any interesting photographs of

congregational activity? Let me have them please. I will arrange to publish them, possibly with a story attached.

Our intention over the coming year is to encourage greater use of our Web Site, make it a living, lively forum and place that people turn to for information or help, both from within the congregation and without.

Ronnie

Sunday Club

We give thanks for times spent together in Sunday Club in the past year. It is good to have such a varied and interesting group of children, leaders and helpers, learning together about God's love for us, and our part in his world.

We use the Roots material, based on the same readings from the Lectionary which the adults use.. This provides food for thought through stories, prayer, music, crafts, discussion, games - and food!

4 of the older children in the club went to the CYM weekend at Sizewell and reported back with great enthusiasm. Ellen and Grace transferred to Explorers in September and although we miss them it is good to see them regularly in the older group.

We have around 10 families with whom we keep in contact through letters, invitations to events, phone calls and visits. For various reasons few make it to church every Sunday but we feel we have built a relationship with them. We had good feedback recently following the gift of a Christian Advent calendar to each family.

In 2010 we have thought about others by craft making and cooking to sell and make money for our charity, Build Africa. We prepared the flowers which were given out on Mothering Sunday, and we created our own paper patchwork wallhanging, based on the Millennium patchwork made by the congregation 10 years previously. We brought

our teddies to church for the Pentecost celebration and helped lead the Nativity service with a re-telling of the story in our own words.

As we go through 2011, we give thanks for the children God has placed in our care and pray they will learn much of his love through Sunday Club.

The Sunday Club Leaders

Crèche and Cradle Roll

The last Baptism to record was Tom Gordon, in June 2010. At this time the Cradle role kept in church is full and research is being done to buy another one.

Those that are baptised as a baby are kept on the birthday list until their 3rd birthday, unless they are in Sunday club, in which case until they move up to Explorers.

Some families attend church less frequently, but we still send them cards as it is a positive way for them to know that they are still welcome. At the present time we have 21 children on the card list with baby Rosa being our latest addition.

Explorers group

With God as our guide and leader we continue to follow the Grid from Scripture Union. WE have about 10/15 young people coming along most weeks. Our focus is to teach the love of God through prayer, bible readings, craft and drama. We split into groups as the need arises.

St. Helens Church, London

We hired a mini bus. Despite Ronnie driving and Tom navigating we arrived at

St. Helens where we spent a most enjoyable time in worship fellowship followed by supper a



short distance from the church. It was a very inspiring time of worship and to see the church full mostly with young people was a wonderful experience for us all. Our young people spoke to so many different people and found out lots of information about when they would go off to University. A wonderful time spent in fellowship and love.



Tom and Lisa.



Becky W. and Becky I.



Katie, Hannah and Catriona.

Tom, Lisa and Jo's Baptism.

This was a wonderful time to share in this very special occasion with our young people. Tom, Lisa and Jo made this very special commitment to the Lord. How amazing is that !!! A lovely time of love and fellowship. It was good to see there many friends who came to support them. A wonderful commitment of faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.

Leading Worship @ Boxford and Hadleigh

We lead worship in the form of a family service. All activities were based around Jonah and the whale. Our young people lead worship with the children of Boxford joining in. All children when home with a goodie bag of with things to do and remind them of about the day they heard about the story of Jonah and the whale.

Hadleigh The Lepra Mission

The young people lead worship @ this service. This service was planned using the material from The Lepra Mission. The young people

lead this family worship. It was a time of fellowship shared with the congregation by the young people, With



Explorers carrying water round Hadleigh



At Clare after leading worship.



Fun in Clare Park.



Katherine, Becky, Katie and Lisa.



Juliet, Emma and Catriona.



Tom, Matthew and TJ.

DVD and supper evenings.

We have had a number of DVD evenings with supper through out the year. These prove to be a popular time of fellowship enjoyed by all who come.

The Irwin Family church event.

Peter, Karen and girls invited the church family to come and spend a afternoon and evening @ their house. It was a fun day and good to catch up with people and have a good old chin wag. It was good that so many came... would have been better if more could have managed. Those when went enjoy the time of fellowship shared with the church family. The Explorers stay over night and had a cooked breakfast in the morning. Our thanks go to Peter, Karen, Becky, Alison and Emma for a wonderful time spent with them in such beautiful grounds. A truly amazing experience spent in our Lords wonderful world.



Peter and Karen's House



Tom tucking into breakfast.



Flowers @ the Irwins.



In the Irwins' garden



Aldham church



Camping @ the Irwins.

Holiday Club.

Some of our young people helped at this valuable outreach in the community.

Charities

We continue to sponsor two children through Action Aid. We continue to support Build Africa with our weekly offerings. In 2010 we raised £ 231.00 for the Sense charity. This is a charity for deafblind people.... Children and adults.... Children often this way from birth. How can you cope with losing two of your major senses... how dreadful. We also raised around £120.00 for Leprosy Mission.

Our Thanks

Our thanks go to everyone who has helped in any way to making Explorers work. Also and big thanks to Hilary and Tom for all that they do for Explorers. Of course Explorers wouldn't happen if the parents didn't encourage their young people to come along, thank you.

Ronnie and Ann Howson PPA

Elders

As Elders we have the responsibility for the day to day good running of the church our four aims are as follows :-

1. Worship, General Services and special services during the year.
2. Welcome and pastoral care of our Minister and his family as well as members of the congregation and visitors.
3. Word discipleship and leading by example
4. Witness and outreach in the town and surrounding villages

We hold quarterly meetings February, May and August and November when we discuss the above aims and also agree new members and baptisms.

During 2010 we welcomed 5 new members.

We hold Facilities meetings in January, April, July and October to discuss the upkeep of buildings and Finance.

The Annual Church meeting is held in March with Ordinary Church meetings in June, September and December.

Worship at Friars Hall and Angel Court.

Working on a rota with other churches we continue to lead quarterly Services at Friars Hall and Angel Court. The Service lasts about a half hour consists of prayer, readings and hymns either to listen to or to join in. It is remarkable how the older generation remember the words of hymns very often not needing a song sheet !

We have a selection of hymns on CDs but it would be good to have a pianist join us. We would welcome other members from church to help with the service.

Sylvia, Joyce Wells, Pay Langley and Barbara Dixon.

Thursday Group

The Thursday Group continues to meet monthly, and has invited many varied outside speakers of other faiths as well as calling on our own members i.e. Christian social workers, those on pilgrimages also some involved with mentally and physically handicapped children.

All our speakers were happy to share their experience of how God has led them as well as challenging our comfort zones!

In August we held our Songs of Praise Service many taking part - giving testimonies (sometimes in fear and trepidation) but glad to share their calling to the Lord in their daily lives.

We have also purchased a brick towards the building of the children's' hospice in Ipswich and also purchased a goat for the people of Burundi via Christian Aid.

Happy times of friendship and fellowship were had by all.

Thank you to all who took part at the meetings and continue to attend the group.

God Bless Phil.

Guild

The Guild has completed another year of fellowship together.

We enjoy meetings throughout the winter and monthly outings during the summer,

Each month we hold a devotional meeting and usually start all our meetings with a hymn and a prayer. We are grateful to Colin Wright, Philip Mann, Jill Taylor, Mary Boon, Jim Dalgleish and Greg Frost for leading this year and sharing their thoughts with us.

Our programme this year has ranged from musical and social evenings to work in a Moldovan Orphanage and a visit to Japan.

During the year we have raised funds with Bring and Buy auctions and an August coffee morning for the East Anglian Children's' Hospice and for church funds.

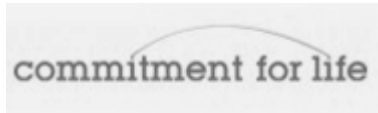
Our Summer outings were very enjoyable and as usual we visited Dunwich and Dunwich Heath in August, Supper at Felixtowe and walks by the riverside and at Hollowtrees Farm, Semer.

We look forward to another year of fellowship together and extend a warm welcome to any friends who would like to join us on Tuesday evenings

Elizabeth

Commitment for Life

C for L has continued to be one of the four charities supported on a regular basis by our church; envelopes for personal donations are on the table at the back of the church and when filled may be placed in the collection bag on Sunday. Commitment for Life endeavours to take seriously the command to love our neighbour as ourselves, and seeks to understand the roots of poverty and take action against injustice.



The money raised is divided by Christian Aid partners in Bangladesh, Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories (75%) the World Development Movement (10%) and for the Commitment for Life network (15%)

For many years C for L was supported by a thriving Christian Aid Group which has dwindled away, as a result our church enthusiasm for this cause has also dwindled, which is sad at a time when world poverty is increasing and justice in the world is still an important issue. Like the Christian Aid Group and church enthusiasm, I find myself also dwindling away!

This charity deserves lively and enthusiastic support which I find I am no longer supplying. I would like someone to take over the role of Commitment for life Representative or better still for a group to be formed whose combined thoughts and interests would better support the Christian work of caring for the World's needy people

Joyce

Property and Management Committee

Again during the past year the above committee have met quarterly rather than alternative months to fall in line with other Elder and Church meetings and their main aim has been to keep the Church properties in the best possible order. The Committee is made up of the following members: - Graham Rolfe (Minute Secretary), David Grutchfield, David Coster, Sarah Parkinson, John Rose and Lester Bennett.

No large projects were undertaken but having received quotes for a stair lift back in 2007 it was finally decided to go ahead with having one installed on the stairs at the rear of the Church.

The School Halls' future is still being determined by a separate group but the ACC together with the Church have maintained the building. It is encouraging to see good use being made of the School Hall and Community Room by Church Groups and other organisations in the Town.

The Monkey Puzzle tree in the front garden still gave us concern with branches regularly falling to the ground and Babergh District Council finally gave their permission for it to be felled. Throughout the year especially spring, summer and autumn, members and other willing helpers from the congregation met to tidy the church garden, borders and hedges. Special thanks go to Dr. Irwin for providing membrane, bark and lavender plants for one of the front borders and hopefully the remaining border will be planted this year with lavender plants raised by members of the congregation. John Cunningham kindly removed ivy from the wall between the Church and Victoria House and repaired any damage to the wall.

The Elders have accepted a quote from Phil Taylor to maintain the area beyond the leylandii trees and the shrubs at the Manse garden.

The Committee would like to thank anyone who helped during the year and their work was much appreciated.

Graham

Film Discussion Group

This group continues to meet on the first Wednesday of the month in order to discuss films which members have previously watched on DVD at home. A different person leads the discussion on each occasion using notes provided by the Bible Society and entitled “Reel Issues”.



During the past year we have watched a very wide variety of films which have led to equally wide ranging topics for discussion. For example, films have included “The Hurt Locker”, “Pretty Woman”, “Invictus”, “The Bucket Job” and “Capitalism, a Love Story” and themes have ranged from forgiveness and redemption to whether capitalism is compatible with Christianity.

It is good to share our thoughts and consider what the Christian response to a wide variety of issues should be. Our discussions are always frank and open, and we feel able to express our opinions in an atmosphere of mutual respect.

Unfortunately our group has slightly diminished in size this year so we would be particularly pleased to welcome new members.

Jan

Churches Together in Hadleigh

One of the great joys of being a Christian is meeting with Christians from any country and any denomination and finding that we are bound together by God’s love in Jesus. Yes, we have to acknowledge the differences and sometimes even the falling out, but our love for Jesus binds us into one Church, the Body of Christ.

During the last year, here in Hadleigh, we have experienced that in many ways and have much to thank God for.

The new Encounter Working Group has brought fresh ideas about silence, retreats and meditative prayer. Through the series of events that they have organised many have drawn closer to God. In the

busyness of our culture we need more space. I am pleased to say that they are planning some more of these reflective opportunities.

The Worship Working Group has again planned several joint services at which we have been truly blessed. In addition they have organised a Lent Study series and the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity events, which seemed especially enriching this year.

Hadleigh Youth Ministries have found it a challenging and puzzling year. We give thanks for all that is happening through the Porch Project at St Mary's, but are still seeking to discern the way forward for Churches Together in youth work.

The Forum is our quarterly business meeting, designed to draw these different threads of work together. It is a sign of a real intent for churches in Hadleigh and the surrounding villages to work together for God's glory. Thank you for all your support. Please continue to pray that our unity may be a sign of God's love for his people.

Jim.

Tuesday Pause for Prayer

This brief quarter of an hour on a Tuesday morning from 10.15am continues to be part of the prayer life of about 15 to 20 people, although not all are present every week. It is ably led by several different people in a variety of helpful styles. It is now regularly ecumenical, as we are joined by a few people from other churches.

After the time of prayer together, there is always opportunity for anyone who feels the need of prayer for themselves or anyone they know to remain behind and receive prayer. This is not restricted to a Tuesday morning. Anyone in need of prayer should not hesitate to get in touch and I will be happy to arrange to pray with them.

It is very good to be able to draw aside for this short time, listen to God with the help of others and then to share in coffee and conversation in the Community Room

Jim.

What do you think over a Drink?

This men's group has continued to meet monthly in the George to discuss important topics of interest and over the course of the year several new faces have come to join in.

Topics considered in the last year included the Legacy we leave our children, Marriage, TV & Internet, History, Waste, Sport your Final Month and Hallowe'en. There was also a lot of informal conversation over many other topics.



There are usually about a dozen men on any given evening and about 18 in total who regularly come along. It is a very informal group. On arrival we get a drink and then settle in for about an hour's discussion on the chosen subject. After that we may break into small groups and talk about any subject that men like to talk about. It is often then that there are many good conversations about things that matter.

This is a group of men some of whom attend church, but many of whom do not. It is a good opportunity to get to know those outside the church and relate to them on subjects that are important. There is rarely an evening when God is not mentioned.

Jim.

Christianity Explored

This is an excellent short course for anyone who is new to the Christian faith or anyone who simply wants to be refreshed in the basics of what we believe.

Over the last year I ran an all men's group and this was very enjoyable and also very helpful to me and to those involved. Some of the men want to continue meeting to explore further issues around our faith.

The new youth group, Eternal are planning to use the Youth version of Christianity Explored and will be starting soon.

In the past Milly has run mixed groups, for men and women and those at different stages in their Christian journey. If you feel that this is something that you might find useful, then please do ask Milly or me.

Jim

Planning Committee

In the previous Annual Report the Planning Committee noted that they had been successful in attracting grant aid from a wide range of sources in order to meet the refurbishment of the Ansell Centre. The committee are once again pleased to report that a total of £79,500 has been received in grant aid towards these refurbishment costs. In addition a further £5,500 was given to the church to enable a stair lift to be installed off the Community Room. This gave a total of £85,000 received by the church in grant aid. Church members will recall that the Synod directed the Elders to ensure that the Ansell Centre was in a sound condition as a prerequisite to embarking on the remodelling of the church worship area. All sponsors have been thanked for their generous contribution and praised by Jan Dicks in recent inclusions in the Hadleigh Community News. Ring fenced church resources provided an additional £25,000 to support both the refurbishment and cash flow during times of need. A repaid grant of £10,000 from the Synod further supported the cash flow during the refurbishment project.

The Planning Committee have maintained formal agendas and minutes at each of their four meetings. Close liaison has been maintained with the officers of the Ansell Centre and the URC Eastern Synod. Once again this has been a strong team effort and has drawn upon the skills and experience of the Planning Committee members.

This time last year, your Planning Committee were awaiting the outcome of an extensive bid to Biffaward/Entrust for £27,000. This bid was successful and is included in the cumulative amount listed above.

Ronnie Howson and Nigel Crisp have managed tenders for work to the pathway between the Church and the Ansell Centre; the Ansell Centre Roof; the stabilisation of the Minister's toilet block; the Ansell Centre windows and the Ansell Centre hall floor. All of this work has now been completed and the grant has been claimed for each of these initiatives.

The committee are now engaged in programming further improvements to the Ansell Centre. These suggestions will be brought forward to the Great Church Meeting in March. The Planning Committee are mindful that Public Notices were posted in the press and on the Church Notice Board to activate the plans agreed at the church meeting in June 2007 for the remodelling of the worship area. This time last year the Planning Committee received a long awaited visit from the Synod Ecclesiastical Exemption Committee (LBAC) who examined the plans for this work. The Synod subsequently gave their approval to these plans. The future programming of the work is again subject to agreement by the Great Church Meeting and finance being made available.

Jan Dicks is currently in the process of preparing a questionnaire to all users of the Ansell Centre to determine levels of usage. This data will be analysed and reported to our grant providers as part of our outcome criteria. It is now time to give thanks to God for this work. Jim, the Elders and the Planning Committee are forward planning a time for thanksgiving and celebration for the work which has been achieved during the year. Invitations will be sent to a representative from each of the user groups, grant providers and the skilled workforce who have carried out the refurbishment.

Chair of the Planning Committee. Sylvia Jarvis

Members: Jim Dalglish; Ronnie Howson; Nigel Crisp; Eve McCoid; Jan Dicks; Mervyn Cort.

Inspired

If I were to try and write a mission statement for Inspired it would be something along the lines of responding to the needs of a changing world through a modern style of worship. This can be a challenge in a church such as ours where we try to balance the traditional with the modern to cater for all tastes. However, if we stand still with the music we offer are we meeting the needs of people currently outside the church whose musical experience is likely to be influenced by the modern music scene which pervades television, radio and the internet? Whilst Inspired are not about to try and emulate the styles of Tinie Tempah or Britney Spears we feel there is room for truly contemporary Christian music (i.e. not 1970's!). Our aim is to encourage both existing churchgoers and anyone who walks into our church for the first time to relate to God through the music.



We are now including a time of worship before our evening practices for us to stop and reflect on any themes we feel are important to us both as a group and as individuals in a real and relevant way, and to seek God's guidance in taking us forward. Lisa and Tom have also recently started holding evening services with a modern feel. Inspired is pleased to be part of this and we pray that this will be a way of reaching out to more people.

Sarah Parkinson

Treasurer

The work of the treasurer is to ensure bills are paid, investments recorded, receipts accepted and the balance of our funds monitored.



This results in a set of accounts that are maintained month by month, are audited by an independent auditor and presented to the congregation for approval.

The monthly accounts will be placed on the church Web Site from the 1st of March onwards.

RTH

Tuesday Lunch Study Group

On the last Tuesday of every month The Lunch Study Group meets at 2 Queens Row, Magdalen Road at 12.00pm. We take a packed lunch with us, with which we start the session. This we follow with a study of all or part of a book from the Bible, supported by other relevant literature. Due to various circumstances, we have had a short break in our meetings, but have just resumed our studies with Matthews Gospel. The last book we studied was James. The meetings last between 1 ½ - 2 hours. - do join us if you are interested.

Joyce and Barbara (Dixon)

Vision4life

We are now in the third year of the URC Vision4Life programme. A year spent looking afresh at the bible was followed by last year reflecting on prayer. For those of us who thought we knew what prayer was all about, it was a year of revelation as we explored new ways of being open to God.



We've reflected on pictures, handled a variety of objects, listened to music and much more. Those present at the December Church Meeting may remember experiencing prayer using the 5 senses. Surprisingly to some maybe, we've regarded the year of prayer as being a high point.

The ecumenical Encounter prayer sessions have partly come out of the Year of Prayer and these will continue, the next one being on 14 April (morning, repeated in the evening) as an opportunity to prepare for Holy Week and Easter. (More details in newsletter.)

We have now moved into the Year of Evangelism, looking at how we share our faith. However we are very much aware that the bible and prayer are still so important in preparing us to do this.

Each monthly session (mostly 2nd Wednesday evening) stands in its own right, new members are always welcome and transport is available.

Milly Dalglish

The A-Z Group

In a sense this group no longer exists. The year started with us continuing to look at Old Testament characters - those people whose names we know vaguely, but not much beyond that. It has been fascinating to study the stories behind the names, and we've been surprised how many of them are relevant to life today.

However we felt that after a year in the Old Testament we needed a break and turned to the New Testament, looking firstly at what James has to teach us about Christian life. We are now looking at Revelation - not as dull and impenetrable as one might first imagine, but filled with hope for those who look to a future with Jesus.

The group meets monthly on a Monday evening and new members are always welcome.

Milly Dalglish

Prayer Partners

It is good to have current prayer concerns printed on the pew sheet and in the newsletter, so that we can support one another in joyful and difficult times through individual prayers.

A group of us also uses these prayer points as we meet as Prayer Partners, at a time convenient to both during the month. The following month the Partners are changed. This provides the opportunity to get to know different people within the church family, (often over coffee), and to pray for particular family concerns, (which are of course kept confidential.)

It is always good to have new people becoming partners so do contact me if you would like to join.

Milly Dalglish

Holiday Club 2010

We went on an Xpedition in more than one sense for the Holiday Club in 2010.

Our first Xpedition was to set up Holiday Club in the church, as the hall was having the floor re-laid. This however worked well with four camps being set up in the church itself and the two up stairs rooms, we even managed a mountain!!



Our main Xpedition, however, was going on a journey to discover what happened during Jesus' last week, whilst using all our senses. As we climbed higher up the mountain the journey got more difficult

We thought about how the people must have felt on Palm Sunday, and why the woman poured the perfume on Jesus' feet. We also thought about what Jesus' friends must have felt during the Last Supper, in the garden and at the tomb

Although the main focus was all working together as a team to climb the mountain the children also had time for songs, puzzles, crafts, cooking and discussion groups.

The club ran for two days, with the parents arrive back on the third day to share a picnic. Also running on the third morning was a group for the younger children and parents in the community room. During lunch times the children had the chance to socialise or, the more energetic children could join in games in the garden.

Discussions are underway for a way to take this outreach forward for 2011; so do talk to us if you might be interested in getting involved. It's great fun and a wonderful way to take the message of Jesus to many children who have no church connection.

Milly, Michelle, Karen, Claire and team.

Worship – Stirred with Awe?

(Thoughts from the Worship Team convenor)

Awe! We are told that of the early believers “everyone was filled with awe” (Acts 2:43). This was after Pentecost and after the coming of the Holy Spirit and presumably this awe-filling was closely associated with worship.

And of course we sing together, “when I in awesome wonder consider all the works they hand hath made”.

So should our worship be a time when we are stirred with awe? And maybe the awe, the wonder and the fear of God, or the relationship with him, should be central to an intensity in worship. The point where God speaks and is heard? Therefore perhaps the objective of the worship team is to ensure we have an environment where God can work and we can respond.

The reality of the worship team is a bit more mundane! We meet four times a year. This year we have followed a check-list that covered the key elements of worship and we talk through the issues and try to arrive at a balance of our traditional (with a small ‘t’) combining new ideas and trying new things. And pray that we can fully support and actively help Jim in his ministry amongst us.

Most of what has progressed this year has been adjustments to the norm, but interestingly and pleasingly the January evening service was initiated, led and prepared entirely by our future generation. Which I felt, was an inspiring time.

As to how effective the worship team has been, is perhaps more for you to tell us? What is of interest for us is to know the good things you have discovered in worship particularly when that worship has been in a church somewhere else. So let us, via me, know what you think.

And maybe at our meetings next year we will follow a check list for being in awe of the Lord!

Nigel

Eternal

Back in the summer Lisa Guest, Jim and I met to discuss Lisa's plans to start a Youth Study group. From September we have met on Wednesdays at 6pm in the minister's vestry to discuss issues raised from the bible or brought to us by the children, to pray and sing together and share fellowship. We have four committed members and would welcome other young people interested in having the opportunity to learn more of Christ's love for us.

Just before Christmas we had great fun going bowling together and we have discovered how poor I am at it!

We are about to start a six week Christian Youth course for our students based on 'Christianity Explored' and in the summer some of the students will be attending Soul Survivor with Lisa and Tom. We ask for your prayers for us all.

Karen Harman

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