



Aylesbury **Methodist** Church and Centre

# **ANNUAL REPORT**

## **2022-2023**



### **This Church is God's House**

God loves and welcomes you, whoever you are, whatever your age, gender, mental health, physical ability, race, sexuality or financial situation. Whatever your circumstances, however much or little you wish to engage or whatever you feel about faith, **you are welcome here.**

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## WELCOME



**From Rev. Richard Atkinson**  
 (Re-invited to be our  
 Superintendent Minister for  
 another five years to 2029)

I write this at the end one of those weeks when all has been hectic, and everything seems to have taken more time than it should. Frustration has abounded and the battle to find time has been waged as I sit here on Sunday afternoon composing these thoughts having led worship in the morning. I am glad that this is Sunday because if it had been during the week my frustrations might have made it on to paper rather than being in response to the highlight of the week, where we have gathered, both in person and on the stream, to share in worship.



Our coming together on a Sunday is for me the highlight of the church week, when our disparate community come together as one to offer of our hearts to our God. It is a reminder that all we do, all that is part of this report, is about the outworking of our faith. Everything, from the Monday night drop-in to Sunbeams, is part of the expression of our faith and the report, as always, offers insight into what is happening as part of response to the exceptional love of God seen in Jesus.

Our gratitude goes to Peter Green and others for pulling this together to allow us all to see something of love in action.

Blessings.

Richard

## **ORGANISATION**

### **Leadership - Jennie Torpey**

More new people are coming to church on Sundays and are encouraged to come round to the Hall for coffee and socialising after services. A successful afternoon Welcome Tea was held for newcomers. A Maundy Thursday evening service and meal were also very successful, with some new people attending; and a monthly Wednesday Lunch Club, open to all, is due to start on 4<sup>th</sup> October.

It now needs more of us to engage with our new congregation members, to ensure that they feel welcome and that they return to our church, and this is the responsibility of the whole congregation.

Leadership Team have discussed ways to share our Christian faith and our coming to faith, for example, by members of the congregation sharing their faith journey in services. An initial sharing by two members at Harvest Festival, was very well received. Recently, also, written accounts from members of other churches in our circuit have appeared in the weekly notice sheet.

Suggestions had been made of how to proclaim our faith throughout the church and community centre premises, and banners with a Christian message have been introduced by our Banner Group. However, it was felt that this needed to be extended, so a Statement of our Message has now been displayed in all areas of the building, including in the Welcome Space



and on the external notice board. Also, appropriate Bible verses with brief details of our services are now displayed throughout the building, being changed periodically.



Richard is planning to run a new course, 'Christianity Explained', developed by Rico Tice and Barry Cooper and based on Mark's Gospel. This will be suitable for new Christians and those wishing to learn more, as well as those who would like a refresher. It has already

been successfully introduced at Chinnor church.

After many years, Pauline Noble has resigned from responsibility for the overall 'In Touch/Pastoral' system, and Leadership Team have been asked to think about the future of the system: its aims; the changes needed because of the limited and reducing numbers of volunteers; and how the system might evolve.

Our Youth groups: Sunbeams Baby & Toddler Group, Boys' and Girls' Brigades, and Messy Church are all doing well. J Team (Junior church) numbers continue to have a small number of regulars, and other children attending occasionally.

The Coffee Bar in the Welcome Space is becoming more popular, and is now open on Monday, Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday mornings. The Welcome Space continues to host the AMC Foodbank, in association with the Trussell Trust, on Monday evenings, between 7.30 and 9.00pm, offering a listening ear, issuing food parcels, and serving hot drinks and left-over food donated by Wenzels and Greggs. A box for donations towards the foodbank is available in the Welcome Space during the week.

Safeguarding GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation) posters are now in all rooms in the building, along with notices describing where the Church Safeguarding Policies can be found. The need to invest in improved building security over the next few years is still being considered, possibly with CCTV.





# POLICIES



Church Policies were reviewed and updated in May 2023. It was agreed that in future they will all be reviewed annually in September/October, and any changes ratified at the October Church Council meeting. A folder of the Church Policies is available in the Church office and on the website.

The recruitment of additional Leadership Team members would be beneficial, to allow and encourage greater strategic thinking and planning. It was also suggested that Leadership Team and Church Stewards meet regularly to work together. The first meeting was in June.

Membership of the Leadership Team this year has been Rev Richard Atkinson, Kevin Hardern, Vivienne Kemp, Gill Marks, Margaret Miskin, Albert Odro, Tim Olofusoye and Jennie Torpey.

## **PROPERTY** – Kevin Hardern

Rainwater ingress has dominated the property team in the last 12 months. The leak in Room 4 continues to be an issue and the leak in the hall from the gutter has meant that we have not been able to redecorate that until it is fully dried out in the spring next year.

Having said that, we have now had clearance that we can incorporate the outstanding monies from the Welcome Space refurbishment into general funds, so are looking to hang some curtaining, in keeping with the new décor, which will hopefully stop any draughts.

The Property team continue to support Stoke Mandeville, which is taking more time as we are moving towards a refurbishment of the site. Circuit is aware of the issue – that we need to appoint a project manager before we can move forwards as we cannot cope with this as well as AMC.

Finally, some good news. We have received clearance from our insurers that our lightning conductor is in order. As usual, many thanks to the team for all their support, and a plea: we could do with more help, so if you are out there and willing, please get in touch.



## CHURCH STEWARDS — Gill Marks

At the moment the steward rota is working OK. Many thanks for help from members like former church stewards David Wilderspin, Sue Kirk, Steve Marks and Paula Gordon, all who have stood in to cover an odd shift. I wonder if the way forward is to have a list of members who are willing to stand in for the odd service, as opposed to committing themselves to a bigger stint.

The Readers' List is also working well; it saves a lot of phone calls trying to find someone.

So, overall all is good with stewards at the moment, although we would always welcome any new volunteers willing to boost our numbers.

## COMMUNICATIONS — Peter Green



Streaming of our Sunday services is also a way of sharing our faith beyond the walls of the church. In August 2023, we had to change streaming provider. Rewind to 2018. We were then invited by The Sunday Service, part



of the multi-BAFTA award-winning CTVC, to be one of eight churches nationally to be in a pilot scheme to stream services. It was funded by The Joseph Rank Trust who saw an ageing population with decreased mobility and increased difficulty in getting to services in person. They believed that reliable internet and streaming platforms could provide a solution. So, the equipment was installed in our church and after some teething problems, we have been able to share our worship on various devices such as tablets, laptops, phones, and smart televisions.

COVID alerted other churches of the need to stream their services. So many are now doing this that Rank feels the need has been proved and are no longer funding The Sunday Service. Our website providers, Then Media, are now hosting us. It is already an improvement in that we will now be able to stream any additional service at any time. It also opens the potential to upgrade our equipment and improve the viewing experience in the future. The one downside is that the service can no longer be seen on smart televisions. As before, services are easily accessed via the Streaming button at the top of each page and kept on the website for about six weeks.

We have expressed our thanks to The Sunday Service and Joseph Rank Trust. Our thanks also go to Then Media for helping us through this transition and to Steve Kemp for reconfiguring our equipment so that the streaming can happen. Steve will also be giving any additional training needed by our much-appreciated Stream Team of Harry Darku, Albert Odro, Solmon Awadzi, Tim Rolls and Steve himself.

Also much appreciated is Margaret Smith, who continues to keep our well used website Calendar section updated.

The Leadership Team Report has already mentioned the use of interchangeable posters being used in all the rooms of our church and centre, as well as the external notice board, to help proclaim our faith to all who come here or pass by. The main message is shown on the front cover of this report.

*"It now needs more of us to engage with our new congregation members, to ensure that they feel welcome and that they return to our church, and this is the responsibility of the whole congregation."*

*Leadership Team Report*



## GOVERNANCE — Peter Green

The Methodist Church was founded in 1784 by John Wesley. The issues he cared and wrote about then are the same issues that the Methodist Church cares about today.

These have been summarised as '**John Wesley's Manifesto**', which is:

1. Reduce the gap between rich people and poor people
2. Help everyone to have a job
3. Help the poorest, including introducing a living wage
4. Offer the best possible education
5. Help everyone to feel they can make a difference
6. Promote tolerance
7. Promote equal treatment for women
8. Create a society based on values and not on profits and consumerism
9. End all forms of slavery
10. Avoid getting into wars
11. Share the love of God with everyone
12. Care for the environment

For Wesley's actual words on these topics, see the Methodist Church website: [john-wesleys-manifesto-newdocx.pdf](http://john-wesleys-manifesto-newdocx.pdf) ([methodist.org.uk](http://methodist.org.uk))



The annual Methodist conference agrees policy that is set out in *The Constitutional Practice and Discipline of the Methodist Church (CPD)*, which can be downloaded from the Methodist Church website: [CPD](http://CPD.methodist.org.uk) ([methodist.org.uk](http://methodist.org.uk)).

This year's conference also appointed our District Chair, Revd. Helen Cameron, as President Designate for next year.





## Our President and Vice-President Designate for 2024/25



**Revd Helen D Cameron**  
President Designate



**Mrs Carolyn Godfrey**  
Vice-President Designate



The local decision-making body in each Methodist church is the Church Council. The members, who are also the church trustees, were this year: Rev. Richard Atkinson, Roger Kirk, Gill Marks, Gill Nord, Frances Aylen, Elaine Hope, Sue Adams, Keith Wallace, Peter Green, Vivienne Kemp, Margaret Miskin, Albert Odro, Jennie Torpey, Arthur Sara, Pauline Noble, David Neville, Kevin Hardern, Joy Murphy, Sandie Steeden, Paul Ingram, Lynn Bernstone, Nick Aylen and Tim Olufosoye.

Our church Leadership Team is appointed by and reports to the Church Council and acts as their executive arm. Chaired by the minister, it seeks to co-ordinate and guide the activities of the church and community centre.

Church Stewards, who are represented on the Leadership Team, are also appointed by the Church Council. Their prime responsibility is to ensure the smooth running of the Sunday services and of being a two-way communications link between the congregation and minister.



# YOUTH

## BOYS' BRIGADE — Steve Kemp

Boys' Brigade numbers are generally steady and are even growing slightly - a difficult thing when there are so many demands on boys' time throughout the week. New members are always welcome and stem from siblings, friends or school.

We once again shared a joint Awards/Promotion Evening with the Girls' Brigade which gave parents and carers the opportunity to celebrate the achievements of boys and girls in the Brigades.



*The BB's town centre litter pick*

We have been trying to do more things out in the community and amongst those activities we had a very successful litter pick in Aylesbury town centre with the older boys. They were shocked how much they collected in an hour or so, even when retrieving rubbish that was already in a bin was outlawed by the judges!

This year we have two parents who join us on a regular helpers' rota which has been a great benefit. We also enjoy great support from the church here. My special thanks go to Arthur Sara, our chaplain, who is with us most weeks. As always, I am very grateful to all the officers and helpers and the continued engagement from all



parents and carers which enables BB to run. I truly believe we make a difference to the boys' confidence, outlook, and sense of community.

## **GIRLS' BRIGADE** — Dawn Wright & Sarah Davidge



*Table talk at the GB's 50th anniversary.*

At Girls' Brigade we have had an exciting time over the last year. Back in October last year we celebrated the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of 1<sup>st</sup> Aylesbury Girls' Brigade. We were joined at AMC by around 100 guests from past and present at 1<sup>st</sup> Aylesbury. Captains and Officers from the past 50 years and people who had helped at GB or been

involved in various capacities. We had an afternoon tea in the hall where lots of stories were shared of Girls' Brigade over the years and then followed this with a service led by our Chaplain, Arthur Sara. We were very proud that all the girls from our present company took part in the service either by singing, acting, or reading prayers they had written. It was a truly joyous occasion involving fun, chatter, and fellowship.

We also sent handmade congratulations cards to the King and Queen on their coronation. We were very excited to receive both a letter and a card from Buckingham Palace thanking us for our cards. If you are in the hall at AMC, then please look on the Girls' Brigade board where we have displayed both the letter and card.

We continue to have about 20 girls of all ages on a Monday evening. We play games, make crafts, share bible stories, cook, and generally make lots of noise!

## **J TEAM** — Vivienne Kemp

We have recently seen an increase in children in our younger age group (4-10), with sometimes as many as 8 children. This group gets involved in craft activities, games and bible stories. Our older children (10-16+) take a more contemporary look at the Bible, discussing how it is still relevant today and looking at the challenges we currently face as Christians.



As the number of young people can fluctuate from week to week, I am very grateful for the support of the other J Team leaders who are getting used to adapting accordingly.

## **MESSY CHURCH** — Margaret Miskin



Messy Church re-started in September 2022 after a long absence, due to not having anyone to co-ordinate staffing and activities. We meet on the 1<sup>st</sup> Saturday of the month from 3:45pm – 6:00pm. There's always lots of crafts, cooking, games, air hockey & various board games. Around 5:00pm everyone goes into the church for a bible story that was

linked to that day's activities. Tea is served afterwards in the hall. Our numbers have been steady, ranging from 10 – 16 children per session plus their parents.

I have a fantastic band of helpers who come along to Messy Church, either by doing craft work or making the tea. Thank you one and all; Messy Church couldn't run if it wasn't for all your help & support.

## **SUNBEAMS** — Margaret Miskin

Our numbers continue to be steady with new people arriving and some leaving to go to school. We have managed to buy new toys, craft items and small gifts at Christmas. It's a truly wonderful group with lots of smiling faces and laughter. Everyone is welcome, so if you'd like to see us in action then please pop in on a Thursday morning and have a cuppa with us.

## **YOUTH EXCHANGE** — Vivienne Kemp

**60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebrations – 3<sup>rd</sup>- 6<sup>th</sup> August 2023**

Although we have not exchanged with our TuS Daun sports club partner in Germany since COVID, we were invited to Germany in early August to celebrate the Exchange. Who would have thought that our Exchange, started





in 1963 only 18 years after our two countries had been at war with one another, would still be going strong well into the following century!



*Celebrating the 60 years of our German youth exchange in the TuS 05 Daun clubhouse*





As there were only 15 of us going for 4 days (6 former leaders and 9 former participants) we opted to go by train. We set off early Thursday morning by Eurostar to Brussels and then continued by train to Cologne. This proved to be very smooth and problem-free (more about the journey home later!) and we were met at the station by Matthias Kröffges, son of our long-standing driver Richie. It was wonderful to arrive in Daun, which seemed relatively unchanged since our last visit in 2018 and meet up again with old friends. That evening gave us a chance to eat with host families and to catch up on our news.



*Former Exchange leaders and participants on the Moselle*

On the Friday we were taken to Cochem on the river Moselle where we explored and shopped. Then we took a trip down the Moselle Valley by boat to the beautiful historic village of Beilstein. The threatened rain never appeared, and we were able to enjoy the scenery and the prolific vineyards along the banks of the river. When we arrived in Beilstein, known as the Sleeping Beauty (Dornröschen) of the Moselle, some of our more adventurous members climbed up to the ruins of the Metternich castle. Others enjoyed a leisurely lunch in the restaurant next to the former Carmelite monastery.

That evening a reception was given by the TuS Daun trustees in our honour at the TuS clubhouse. We were very warmly welcomed, and Goddie Willems (leader in the 1990s) entertained us with anecdotes from former exchanges. We ate pizza and spent a delightful evening with former leaders, participants, and members of TuS Daun. They presented us with a booklet containing photos taken during the various exchanges. Some of these photos had been recently unearthed when Walter Haser (leader in the 1990s) had tidied out his attic. This booklet is currently being circulated, so please let me know if you'd like to see a copy.



## ACTIVITIES

### **BANNER GROUP** — Brenda Horne



Our latest banner, celebrating the music of the Church, is now up. It can be seen above the choir seats. Two more are nearing completion and two more are at the design stage.

We are now meeting more frequently again after lockdown. Sadly, one of our members is moving but a new member hopes to start in the New Year. Our meetings are held in Room 4 on the first and third Tuesdays from 2pm until 4pm.

### **BEDGROVE HOUSE GROUP** — Rosemarie Bucknell

The September weather was delightful as we began our year with a coffee morning in the garden of one of our members, plus cake and biscuits of course! Our number remains at fifteen. November saw us gathering for



our AGM where we expressed wishes and ideas and put a programme together for 2023.

We celebrated the New Year together in January with a lunch out at the Crows' Nest and in February we gathered together for a musical afternoon, organised by Derrick Matthews which was enjoyed by all. Arthur Sarah led our 'devotional' meeting one afternoon in March at a member's house followed by tea and biscuits.



*Milton's Cottage*

A coffee morning in April was followed by a trip out in May to Milton's Cottage in Chalfont St. Giles. The weather was good as was the cottage and gardens. We welcomed previous members who joined us for the outing.

The beautiful weather in June saw a group of us who could ramble, explore College Lake near Marsworth, with all

members meeting afterwards for a pub lunch.

Our garden party in July was enjoyed by all although we were indoors because of inclement weather. We all accept that we are not as agile as we used to be but gathering together, even just for coffee as we did in August, is a good thing to do.

## **COMMUNITY CENTRE – Shirley Francis**

We are pleased to report that the Community Centre is thriving and has welcomed several new groups. The users are extremely happy with the facilities. Comments received are that the kitchen is well kitted out, the toilets are clean, and it's a welcoming place that offers privacy.

We have the following groups that use the Centre either daily, weekly, monthly, or at other frequencies. They are:

- Macular Society



- Deaf Coffee Morning Club
- Virtus Care (*was Sees the Day*)
- Casualties Union (*a charity that provides training for volunteers in rescue, first aid and medication techniques to enable them to deal with real life emergency situations*)
- Child Contact Centre
- Sun group (*a community support group run by Oxford NHS Trust*)
- Buckinghamshire Gardens Trust
- Indian Dance Class
- Yoga
- Choose2Lose (*a weight watching support group*)
- Diabetes Prevention (*run by the NHS*)
- Women's Institute
- Herts NHS Foundation Trust (*to help adults with varying physical disabilities find suitable employment*)
- U3A Local History Group
- Neil Douglas Estate Management
- Blood Unit (*NHS*)
- Fairhive Housing
- Buckinghamshire Council
- Private one-off hire for parties
- Independent church groups
- Musical performances (*Organ Concerts, Choral Society, Concert Band*)

The above users bring in a steady income that helps to support the activities of the Centre and pays for its upkeep (heating, lighting, wear and tear, etc). There has been a slight increase in income on a year-by-year basis since the downturn due to Covid.

Regular Church group users of the Community Centre are:

- Sunbeams Babies & Toddlers
- Girls' and Boys' Brigades
- Monthly Luncheon Club
- Tuesday Afternoon Fellowship meetings
- Tuesday Morning Prayer meetings
- Banner Group





- Messy Church
- Badminton Club

There are still slots available to let, so hopefully this upward trend will continue.

## **FOOD CAFÉ — Karen Crussell**

Our Food Cafe continues to thrive and become a happy place where, (they tell us), our guests like to be. We seek to create a welcome and accepting atmosphere in keeping with the name of our venue: the Welcome Space.



Attendance averages around 18-20 guests, (going up to 25 on one or two occasions). The "pull" is the free Wenzels and Greggs food that is shared amongst those present towards the end of the session. Our guests gather and chat as they share toast, pasties, or cakes from our donors. They can collect a food parcel if they are in food crisis. On average we give out four food parcels a week. We place a four-page information sheet on each table





containing information about where individuals can go to get support for a range of issues around housing, benefits and helping services in Aylesbury.

We have a few homeless guests. Most are vulnerably housed living in HMOs. HMOs are houses of multiple occupation where the individual 'rents' a room and shares a kitchen, bathroom and living space with others. They tend not to be nice places to live. Standards are low, occupancy insecure and the behaviour of other occupants can be unpleasant.

Most importantly of all on a Monday evening, we make time to chat with our guests, listen to their stories, occasionally giving pointers to where they can get help or a different perspective. Sometimes guests ask to go into the church to pray or light a candle or simply to speak privately with one of the team. Sometimes we react in a difficult situation contacting other agencies to help our guests.

We have learnt a lot as we have grown. We have now devised a written code of acceptable conduct which we enforce firmly in a kind and God-like way. Our guests respect and appreciate this as one or two troubled souls can make life difficult. We have changed our opening times to reflect the new closing hours of Greggs (we open from 6.30 to 8.00 pm.) We are deeply grateful for Greggs and Wenzels for giving us their unsold food, after store closure, as are our guests. Trussell Trust do a great job providing us with the means to give out food parcels.

We have six members of the church community who regularly help out and about ten from outside the church. You can help by your prayers, giving to the food bank donation station in the Welcome Space, and volunteering. The more people we have from church the more the project becomes our own - though, of course, we are extremely grateful for the valiant body of non-members who help out on a Monday.

## **FLOWER ARRANGERS — Melanie Dean**

Our team of Janice Matthews, Edith Awadzi, Ruby Darku, Sue Kirk and I continue to make floral arrangements for the Welcome Space and church each week. We are reducing our use of floral foam in the arrangements to 'do our bit' for the environment. One block is equivalent to 6 plastic bags!



## **FRIDAY FEATHERS BADMINTON CLUB — John Miskin**



To attract non-church members, we decided to change our name from AMC Social Badminton Club to Friday Feathers. Although we attracted 3 new players to start with, they only stayed a few weeks. We have a steady group of 8 players of varying standards, but I'm pleased to say that the beginners that started two years

ago have all improved their games.

We managed to raise £963, which is divided between 3 church groups, Boys' Brigade, Girls Brigade & Karibuni charity. We have also changed our times to 2:30pm – 4:30pm.

The cost remains the same at £4 per session. If you have never played badminton or only played it in the garden, you are more than welcome to come and join us. You even get a cup of tea/coffee and a biscuit.

## **Greeting Cards — Janice Matthews and Rosemarie Bucknell**



Attractive Hand Made Greetings Cards are available for purchase from the display stand in the Community Centre reception area. These are all at affordable prices, much lower than cards in local shops. In buying these, you not only receive good value, but you are also making a direct contribution to AMC funds.

Personalised cards can be made to order, please speak to one of us advising your requirements. You

will not be disappointed!



## **MUSIC DIRECTOR'S REPORT – Derrick Matthews**

Most Sunday mornings, the Church Choir continue to effectively lead the congregation in the singing of our hymns. Choir Members receive advance notice of the chosen hymns together with selected tunes to enable preparation. New Choir members are always welcome; if you feel that you can provide an effective contribution, please speak to me or to a member of the choir.

Organ Accompaniment together with supporting voluntaries is provided by myself or one of my able assistants, David Brooker and William Parker, for whose service I am most grateful.



*Professor Ian Tracey at the 2023 annual organ concert*

Following an enforced three-year absence due to the epidemic, the Annual Organ Concert resumed featuring the outstanding Concert Organist, Ian Tracey, Organist Titulaire of Liverpool Anglican Cathedral. Ian introduced and performed a pleasing programme planned to suit all tastes. The audience enjoyment was evident by the appreciable applause.



## **MUSIC GROUP — Nick Aylen**

Once a month, our morning service is accompanied by our Music Group. New musicians and singers of all ages are always welcome. Please contact Nick Aylen, Richard Atkinson , or a church steward if you are interested.

## **PRAYER GROUP — Ruby Darku**

This year our prayer group has received requests quite regularly from the congregation, also requests made through Rev. Atkinson. Our numbers have increased by two and we would also like to encourage others to join, even if only for a few sessions. We meet on alternate Tuesdays, 10.45am - 12noon.

## **SOS GROUP - Lynn Bernstone**



*Rev. Fred Ireland who started it all!*

This year was a special one for the SOS Group. We celebrated the thirtieth anniversary of our first meeting that was held at the manse on King Edward Avenue. Fred Ireland brought the idea with him from two previous circuits, so he knew it was a winner! The SOS initials translate to 'Sometimes On Sundays'. There were a number of people who had connections with the Church through their wives/husbands who for a variety of reasons did not or could not attend, and this was a way to reach out to them.

We have matured into a group of friends. We carry out fellowship through food with gatherings, roughly monthly, in one another's homes. The only constants are a faith supper, wide ranging conversations in groups or individually and laughter. Also, we are always thankful for a variety of fruits, and the spirit in which they are given!

So, the SOS group is alive and well. It has been, and always will be, open to all, so please joins us as we set off for the next thirty years.





## **TUESDAY AFTERNOON FELLOWSHIP – Coral Soulsby**

Although the Fellowship is down in numbers, our members are enjoying sharing the fellowship and friendship now on the first and third Tuesdays in the months.



*Derek Adams was one of our speakers.*

During the past year we have welcomed some very inspiring and interesting speakers, such as Derek Adams, who is fund raising by walking the coast of Britain, or three ladies from Age UK, who advised us on the help available in all areas of our age group.

Thank you for those volunteers who gave Rev Richard Atkinson their names to speak at future meetings. It is very supportive to us and encourages us to continue.

We are looking forward to next year to book fresh speakers, so please see if you can spare an hour or so to join us. You will find us a friendly group, open to the prompting of our Lord Jesus, to love one another as we love ourselves. God bless you all and please look out for the programme available in the Welcome Area.

## **WELCOME SPACE COFFEE BAR – Margaret Miskin**

We are now open four days a week: Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays, and Saturdays. Virtus Care group do alternate Mondays and every Friday and for that, I'm extremely grateful. Other days are covered by the wonderful ladies of our church and a couple of gentlemen. Our footfall has increased this year and it's wonderful to get to know other people while having a slice of amazing cake and a cup of tea.

Do come and join us whenever you're in town.





## CHARITIES

### ACTION FOR CHILDREN — Pauline Noble

Action for Children is the children's charity supported by the Methodist Church. Many of our members have a Home Collecting Box, and although small change in our purses is now less than it used to be, this year we have collected over £300, which is a superb amount. This is an excellent way of raising small amounts of money, and new collectors will always be welcome.

We have three special church collections over the year: two at Christmas and one on Action for Children Sunday. This year, the three collections amounted to over £700, some of which was Gift Aided which allows the charity to claim a further 25% back from the government.

Our small committee has also managed to arrange other fundraising events. We



*Afternoon tea fundraiser at the Hardens*

held a cake and plant stall after the service on Action for Children Sunday, raising a further £300, which included locally-produced jars of Wendover honey. Another event, enjoyed by many, was Afternoon Tea on a beautiful afternoon in August, held at the kind invitation of Elaine and Kevin Hardern. Besides the tea, we included a few games, and raised £316.64. Hopefully we will be able to arrange another in 2024.

We also hold our Toy and Gift Service at the beginning of December. There is no Action for Children facility suitable in Aylesbury, but instead we work with Della Holmes at Bucks Council. All the toys, and gift vouchers for teenagers, go to the Elmhurst Family Centre to be

distributed by the Family Workers to those children and teenagers in Aylesbury who otherwise would have very little to open on Christmas Morning.

Thank you to everyone who has supported us over the year.



## **CHRISTIAN AID** - Jennie Torpey and Maureen Tucker

**Christian Aid are a partnership of people, churches and local organisations committed to ending poverty worldwide.**

*“We have more than 70 years’ experience of working in partnership to support communities to thrive. We tackle the root causes of poverty so that women, men and children the world over are strengthened against future knocks. And if disasters happen, we get people the help they want straight away.”* Christian Aid website.

At Aylesbury Methodist Church, our collections for Christian Aid at the 2022 Carol Service and Midnight Communion totalled £363.17.

On Christian Aid Sunday, in May 2023, we watched a video - Esther’s Story.



Esther and others in her community in Malawi, working with Christian Aid, are growing pigeon peas (more suited to the climate than other crops) and using them to bake bread to sell. For Esther and her community, pigeon peas are like *“the tiny mustard seed, growing the hopes and dreams of their children and grandchildren:*

- *to go to school*
- *to start their own businesses*
- *to help their friends and their neighbours.”*

The retiring collection after the service amounted to £474.05 (with Gift Aid - £560.80). We were also given £200 for Christian Aid from donations for tea and coffee after Sunday services.

## **KARIBUNI CHILDREN** — Joy Murphy

Kenya had a new President, William Ruto, in September 2022. Like all candidates he came in with huge promises to stop the rampant corruption, high prices, inequality, and so on. As elsewhere, those experiencing these things, the poorest, are still waiting – and many are even worse off!

**Children at Tusaidie Watoto (Let us help the children), Kibra, Nairobi.**

Sugar, maize flour, beans, cooking oil and margarine, all basic ingredients of the Kenyan diet, have all doubled in price, and are beyond the means of



the families Karibuni is involved with. This is having a serious knock-on effect on Karibuni's budget, as all the projects we are working with request extra funding to continue providing the children with nutritious food. The last thing we want to do is reduce the nutritional value to these children, who get little or no food at home. Despite the challenges the social workers and other staff continue to explore ways of raising funds in their own areas.



*Some of the children at Njoro*

**At Njoro**, the project continues to sell the clean fresh water from the borehole for use in the project and are supplying fresh water to the nearby primary and secondary schools and some businesses, providing a regular income. They are exploring the feasibility of installing solar power – sun is never in short supply. The trustees are looking for external funds for this purpose. James, the caretaker, grew vegetables and fruit for the project, and has created tyre planters for this purpose. This enables vertical gardening when tyres are piled on each other, making watering, and weeding much easier.





*Fruitful times at Tharaka*

**At Tharaka**, they continue to plant and provide fruit trees that were granted to the project by another organisation. The workshops built around the edges of the project are all rented out to local artisans and some of the project's own young people who have qualified as dress-makers, beauticians, or carpenters. This brings income and independ-

ence to their families.

**At Meru**, among other initiatives, they have started a school uniform factory and in addition to their own young people being employed, local women are being trained. Mercy, the social worker is also employing several young people when they are on holiday from their studies, giving them work and business experience.

**In the UK**, Karibuni is struggling to raise the necessary funds needed. Churches, like AMC, are finding it hard to raise the funds necessary for their own costs, so fewer are inviting us to speak and raise money for the charity. We are having to reduce our support gradually each year, causing problems for the projects. We are continuing to support those children we have started with until they finish their education but taking fewer (or no) children into the pre-school. This is heart-breaking for the trustees, especially those who have been working with Karibuni since it started in 1995.

We do now have two Kenyan trustees with their deep personal knowledge of Kenya and the lives of many people there. Their insight and contributions are invaluable. It was Helen who suggested vertical tyre gardening to James at Njoro and Steve who is running in the London 10K with other Kenyans for Karibuni.

Earlier in November 10 of us from the charity were invited to the celebration of Kenya's 60th Anniversary of Independence at Buckingham Palace. Wow! What an exciting day that was. All of us met the King or the Queen.



And even this committed anti-monarchist had a great time – and behaved well! The canapes were delicious too.

Thank you again for your faithfulness and love for the children in Kenya that we are empowering in our partnership. Please pray for Karibuni and its future and all those affected by cutbacks.

## Link to Hope – Margaret Miskin

After 2021 being a bit of a disappointment for the number of shoe boxes coming in, I am pleased to say that in 2022 we amassed a fantastic total of 143 boxes, 57 from our church.



*Shoebbox smiles!*

As usual the many boxes were distributed in Romania, Bulgaria & Moldova, they even managed to get some into Ukraine to help the displaced families there. It's a joy to see happy, smiley faces when they receive a shoebox. If you haven't filled a box before, then perhaps you would like to give it a go next year. Thanks to all those who continue to support Link to Hope.

## MHA – Jennie Torpey



*"As the UK's leading charity care provider dedicated to enriching the lives of older people, we are committed to delivering exceptional care, accommodation, and support services across Britain, ensuring the highest quality of life at every stage of later life."*

*Our story began in 1943 when compassionate members of the Methodist Church came together to establish our mission.*

*Today, we proudly serve and support:*

- **3,896** older people living in our care homes, where we offer specialised dementia or nursing care to ensure their wellbeing





- **2,763** older people living independently in retirement living communities, enjoying access to various social and leisure facilities, with the added comfort of flexible care when needed
- **11,400** older people living independently in their own homes, empowered by our community services, that span across Britain.

*We are driven by the desire to inspire the best care and promote wellbeing for every individual as they journey through later life. “*



*Hillside Care Home, Aylesbury*

Aylesbury Methodist Church has strong ties, traditionally, with the MHA Hillside Care Home, partly because of our close proximity, since AMC is more accessible for residents to attend our Sunday services, if they are able. Our Minister and others regularly hold a short communion service for the residents at the home.

The theme for MHA Sunday, on 11<sup>th</sup> June 2023, followed 1 Corinthians 12:12-27: ‘There is one body, but it has many parts. But all its many parts make up one body’. This explores how we need one another for our happiness, highlighting the importance of community and inclusion in making us stronger. A retiring collection at our MHA service this year raised £192.20.

## **WHITECHAPEL MISSION** — Ruth Watkins

Tony Miller MBE, Director at Whitechapel, reports that need increases as more and more folk are hit by financial crisis. So, I am pleased to report that we have managed to keep up our support despite the price increases we all face.

The Easter Breakfast raised even more money this year - the wonderful amount of £482. My thanks for all who were involved in this event. Harvest giving was again very generous, an abundance of food and generous



amounts of new and used clothing. There was also an extra collection in memory of Peter.

Tony was very pleased to see all the goods waiting for him in the entrance on the Monday morning after our Harvest, and not a little surprised!



*Part of the Harvest giving for Whitechapel*

### **Some of John Wesley's words of yesterday with a resonance today...**

1. Be ye ready to distribute to everyone, according to their necessity.
2. Wickedly, devilishly false is that common objection, 'They are poor only because they are idle.... Find them work.... They will then earn and eat their own bread.'
3. How many are there in this Christian country that toil, and labor, and sweat... but struggle with weariness and hunger together? Is it not worse for one, after a hard days labour, to come back to a poor, cold, dirty, uncomfortable lodging, and to find there not even the food which is needful to repair his wasted strength?

See [john-wesleys-manifesto-newdocx.pdf](#) ([methodist.org.uk](http://methodist.org.uk)) for more.



# FINANCE

## NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS - Roger Kirk



*Church Treasurer  
Roger Kirk*

Our accounts will be submitted, through the formal Methodist Channels, on the Accruals basis. This allocates income and expenditure to the year to which they relate rather than in which they were received or paid, thus providing a more meaningful picture of the accounts.

### **The year 2022/23 – General Fund**

Our finances are being affected by the recent high rates of inflation resulting mainly from the war in the Ukraine. The full effect of these will occur in 2024/25 when there will be a large increase in the Circuit assessment and our current three-year fuel contracts expire.

Income from members has remained fairly constant in recent years and an appeal is being made to encourage members to increase their contributions to match our rising costs now and in future years. Income from lettings has increased by £12,000 to £41,000 compared to the previous year.

The **General Fund** made a net surplus of £2,346, increasing our fund balance to £44,536 which is in line with our reserves policy of 33% of expenditure. **The Benevolent Fund** increased its balance by £284 to £717 during the year. **The Welcome Area project fund** had a balance of £3,393 at 31<sup>st</sup> August 2023 and as it is unlikely that any further payments will be necessary that sum will be transferred to the General fund during 2023/24.



# AYLESBURY METHODIST CHURCH

## **Informal STATEMENT OF ASSETS AND LIABILITIES** on an accruals basis as at 31st August 2023

***Note: The full accounts submitted to the Vale of Aylesbury Circuit will be found in an appendix to the Trustees Report.***

Actual 2021/22	Funds balances at 31st August 2023	General fund	Restricted funds			Church orgs.	Total 2022/23
			Welcome area	Benevol- ent	Endow- ments		
£		£	£	£		£	£
60,174	Liquid Funds per Income & Expend. accounts	44,536	3,393	717	3,434	11,196	63,276
1,015,720	Capitalised expenditure	1,015,720					1,015,720
1,075,894	<b>Total funds</b>	<b>1,060,256</b>	<b>3,393</b>	<b>717</b>	<b>3,434</b>	<b>11,196</b>	<b>1,078,996</b>
	<b>Represented by:</b>						
	<b>Assets:</b>						
	<b>Capitalised expenditure on fixed tangible assets:</b>						
1,015,720	Community centre improvements at cost b/f	1,015,720					1,015,720
-	Welcome area improvements at cost this year	-					-
1,015,720		1,015,720					1,015,720
	<b>Current assets</b>						
	Bank balances						
10,834	HSBC current	5,132					5,132
8,896	HSBC deposit	6,945					6,945
2,599	Metro current	2,636					2,636
8,643	Central Finance Board	7,004	3,393	717		148	11,262
100	Imprest account	100					100
10,484	Held by church organisations					11,048	11,048
	Endowment funds accounts*						
3,314	Stranks & Staley's bequests				3,224		3,224
210	Mead bequest (J Team and choir)				210		210
16,192	Debtors and prepayments	24,494				-	24,494
61,272	<b>Total current assets</b>	<b>46,312</b>	<b>3,393</b>	<b>717</b>	<b>3,434</b>	<b>11,196</b>	<b>65,051</b>
	<b>Current liabilities</b>						
600	Lettings deposits	100					100
498	Creditors and amounts received in advance	1,675					1,675
1,098	<b>Total liabilities</b>	<b>1,775</b>					<b>1,775</b>
60,174	<b>Net current assets (current assets less liabilities)</b>	<b>44,536</b>	<b>3,393</b>	<b>717</b>	<b>3,434</b>	<b>11,196</b>	<b>63,276</b>
1,075,894	<b>Net assets (all assets less liabilities)</b>	<b>1,060,256</b>	<b>3,393</b>	<b>717</b>	<b>3,434</b>	<b>11,196</b>	<b>1,078,996</b>

\*Held by Trustees for Methodist Church Purposes

**There are differences of up to £1, which are due to rounding up to the nearest £1**

These informal accounts show the position as at 31st August 2023 before any charge for depreciation of fixed assets. The formal accounts will include provision for depreciation, yet to be approved.





# **AYLESBURY METHODIST CHURCH**

Informal income and expenditure account  
for the year ended 31st August 2023

## **GENERAL (UNRESTRICTED) FUNDS on accruals basis**

***Note:** The full accounts submitted to the Vale of Aylesbury Circuit will be found in an appendix to the Trustees Report.*

2021/22 £	GENERAL FUND	2022/23 £
	<b>INCOME</b>	
83,428	Offerings & tax recovered:	82,671
68,040	Collection (services, standing orders and annual)	67,399
15,388	Income Tax refund	15,272
34	Bank & CFB interest and investment income	385
38,108	Lettings	40,996
8,806	Other income, detail in shaded area below:	10,563
3,064	Fund raising	3,391
2,745	Donations and legacies	3,986
253	Government Job Protection Scheme re Covid 19	-
1,406	Weddings and funerals	1,675
1,338	Coffee Bar profits	1,512
-	Miscellaneous	-
130,376	<b>Income Grand Total</b>	134,615
	<b>EXPENDITURE</b>	
86,724	Circuit contribution	84,372
520	Donations and subscriptions	2,003
22,165	Repairs & maintenance, detail in shaded area below:	19,007
3,816	Building maintenance	3,856
9,250	Cleaner's wages and supplies	9,976
9,099	Equipment maintenance (incl.organ & piano)	5,175
13,653	Utilities & insurance, detail in shaded area below:	15,369
9,881	Heat, light, water and refuse	11,135
3,772	Insurance	4,232
9,769	Other expenditure, detail in shaded area below:	10,602
2,766	Administration	3,257
5,258	Administrators - wages, less Circuit share	4,878
121	Layworker (last year only) and Young Leaders Scheme	-
4	Telephones	289
962	Church Activities	1,159
658	Publicity & miscellaneous expenses	1,020
132,831	<b>Total Expenditure, excl. Welcome Area Improvements</b>	131,353
( 2,455)	<b>NET INCOME/(EXPENDITURE) FOR THE YEAR accruals basis</b>	3,262
44,214	Balance brought forward 1/9/2022	42,191
41,759	Subtotal	45,453
433	Net transfers between funds, excl. Welcome Area Fund	( 916)
42,192	Subtotal	44,536
	<b>Welcome Area Improvements:</b>	
-	Funds transferred from the Welcome Area Fund	-
-	Above funds then expended on the Welcome Area and capitalised	-
42,192	<b>GENERAL LIQUID FUNDS AT 31/8/23 C/ FWD.</b>	44,536



## AYLESBURY METHODIST CHURCH

### Informal Summary of Income and expenditure accounts for the year ended 31st August 2023 (on Accruals Basis)

#### ALL FUNDS

*Note: The full accounts submitted to the Vale of Aylesbury Circuit will be found in an appendix to the Trustees Report.*

Actual 2021/ 22 accruals basis £		General Fund £	Re- strict- ed Funds £	En- dow- ment Fund s	Chur ch Or- gan- isa- tions £	Totals 1922/23 £
135,030	Income	134,615	334	88	9,437	144,473
136,874	Expenditure, excl. Welcome Area improvements	131,353	50		9,882	141,285
( 1,844)	Net income/(Expenditure)	3,262	284	88	( 445)	3,189
	Welcome Area improvements:					
-	Earlier years' expenditure capitalised	-	-			-
-	Expenditure capitalised this year	-	-			-
( 209)	Change in value of investments			( 86)		( 86)
( 2,053)	Subtotal	3,262	284	2	( 445)	3,102
	Net transfers between funds:					
	Welcome Area Fund	-	-			-
	Other funds	( 916)	-	( 92)	1,008	
( 2,053)	Subtotal	2,346	284	( 90)	563	3,102
62,229	Liquid Funds Balances b/fwd 1/9/2022	42,191	3,826	3,524	10,633	60,174
60,176	Liquid Funds Balances c/fwd 31/8/23	44,536	4,110	3,434	11,196	63,276



## AYLESBURY METHODIST CHURCH

Informal income and expenditure accounts for the year ended 31 August 2023

### RESTRICTED FUNDS, ENDOWMENTS AND CHURCH ORGANISATIONS

***Note: The full accounts submitted to the Vale of Aylesbury Circuit will be found in an appendix to the Trustees Report.***

#### RESTRICTED FUNDS

2021/22		Welcome Area Fund	Benevolent Fund		Total 2022/23
£		£	£		£
	<b>Income</b>				
38	Offerings		334		334
-	Grants, donations, etc & tax recovered	-			-
38	<b>Total income</b>	-	334		334
	<b>Payments</b>				
-	Other expenses	-	50		50
-	<b>Total expenditure</b>	-	50		50
38	<b>Net income / (expenditure)</b>		284		284
-	Earlier years' expenditure capitalised	-			-
-	Transfers between funds	-			-
38	<b>Net income / (expend.) after transfers</b>	-	284		284
3,788	Balances brought forward 1/9/2022	3,393	433		3,826
38	<b>Net income / (expenditure)</b>	-	284		284
3,826	<b>Balances carried forward 31/8/2023</b>	3,393	717		4,110

#### ENDOWMENT FUNDS HELD BY THE TRUSTEES FOR METHODIST CHURCH PURPOSES

Totals 2021/22		Mead Bequest	Stranks & Staley's Bequests	Totals 2022/23
£		£	£	£
		Restricted	Unrestricted	
3,731	Balances brought forward 1/9/2022	210	3,314	3,524
13	Income	7	81	88
( 11)	Paid to General Fund	( 7)	( 85)	( 92)
-	Paid to J Team and Choir	-	-	-
( 209)	Change in Value of investments	-	( 86)	( 86)
3,524	<b>Balances carried forward 31/8/2023</b>	210	3,224	3,434

#### CHURCH ORGANISATIONS

£	Income		£
	Offerings & tax recovered		
	Investment income, etc		
4,603	Other income		9,437
4,603	<b>Total income</b>		9,437
	<b>Payments</b>		
4,043	Other expenses (incl. external donations £300)		9,882
4,043	<b>Total expenditure</b>		9,882
560	<b>Net income / (expenditure)</b>		( 446)
( 422)	Transfers between funds		1,008
138	<b>Net income / (expend.) after transfers</b>		562
10,495	Balances brought forward 1/9/2022		10,633
138	<b>Net income / (expenditure)</b>		562
10,633	<b>Balances carried forward 31/8/2023 *</b>		11,195

\* Excludes Endowment Mead Bequest Fund, which is shown above.



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