

REPORTS

The reports are in five groups: teams, services, discipleship, other activities and charities. Thank you to everyone who has provided these reports; I hope no-one has been left out.

Chris Whitford (secretary)

TEAMS

EXECUTIVE TEAM

The Exec team, whose members are the managing trustees, mostly works behind the scenes to make sure things get done and the church meets its legal obligations. Although most decision making lies with the church meeting the Exec team tries to prepare the ground and offer guidance to the meeting. The team now meets 8 times a year. There are 7 elected trustees, which is one more than the minimum constitutional requirement, so the addition of one or two more would be desirable.

Lawrence Whittaker stepped down as treasurer on 31st August with Jenny Whillis taking over. On behalf of the whole church we would like to thank Lawrence for his very long service, and Jenny for stepping forward to fill this important position.

Chris Whitford

MISSION AND MINISTRY TEAM

The Mission and Ministry team has had a couple of changes during the year, with Helen Ashley standing down and Laura Johnson joining. The team is now Tom Ashley, Andrew Curry, Laura Johnson, David Maddock, Sue Sharman and Jenny Whillis, along with Kathryn Hamylton (as Pastoral Secretary), Kate Cook and John Rackley.

One discussion that took place in the autumn was about how the M&M team operates and how we ensure we're able to spend enough time on both mission and ministry. In our meetings we now have dedicated time for mission, ministry, and prayer. We also decided to appoint a convenor of the group. The convenor will change at the beginning of the year, acting as a contact point for other teams, ensuring attendance at Trustee meeting and making sure meetings are organised. Jenny Whillis has been convenor for 2023. We would welcome new members, so if you'd like to join the team please let us know.

As a team we have discussed and supported a number of ideas throughout the year. These include the monthly prayer breakfasts that have been taking place since December 2022 and which have been a valued addition to the prayer life of the church.

The Warm Space initiative was the focus of our mission and outreach discussions in the first half of the year, as we reviewed the weekly sessions and the need in the community. While uptake was low, it was appreciated by those who came regularly and brought other benefits in allowing the volunteers to spend time together. The team thank everyone who supported Warm Space in any way. David began conversations about hosting the Methodist Modern Art Collection at Christchurch, and we've considered both the practicalities of the project and the opportunities to engage with the community that it would bring. Opening Christchurch during the summer and Christmas Queens Road Fairs has been restarted.

In our Worship discussions, we have arranged two series of Sunday evening gatherings, one after Easter and one beginning in the autumn, as well as a Holy Week reflection series. Kate has begun a fortnightly mid-week service, and we have reviewed which Special Sundays will be marked throughout the year. We are looking throughout our meetings for opportunities to work ecumenically and with other faiths, and Kate has been in touch with the St Philips Centre to arrange a series exploring other faiths, starting in the autumn.

Jenny Willis

RESOURCES TEAM

The Team was seriously affected by the sudden death of Chris Booth who, over many years had made a significant contribution to the work of the Team using his knowledge of insurance and audio/visual Systems. It also had to face up to the impending retirement of Lawrence Whittaker as Church Treasurer. However he is remaining as part of the Team so his input on property matters will be retained. It is also good news that his replacement as treasurer, Jenny Willis will become part of the Resources Team.

Several problems have been resolved during the year as follows:

1. The Hot Water supply to the toilets has been restored and the aps have been replaced.
2. A faulty pump in the heating system has been replaced.
3. The plaster near the programmer in the Worship Centre has been repaired.
4. An upgrade of the Wi-fi throughout the building has been completed.
5. The pianos have all been tuned but unfortunately the one in the Keene Room has suffered damage which can only have been caused by vandalism. This resulted in three hammers being broken and having to be replaced.
6. It has been decided to pay for all of the radiator valves to be inspected and replaced where necessary. This work will be carried out in the autumn before the winter heating programme begins.

All of the above leaves the following issues to be carried forward:

1. Car Park Barrier. A decision will be made after the next Church Meeting on whether or not to provide a replacement barrier.
2. The provision of a digital display screen in the foyer.
3. The repainting of the atrium ceiling.
4. Renovations in the Keene and Vaughan Powell Rooms.

If you add to this list the fact that the building will be having its Quinquennial Inspection which is bound to reveal several more things which need to be done there will be plenty to occupy the Resources Team in 2023/2024.

David Toseland

PASTORAL CARE

This continues to work well thanks to the hard work of the Minister and the Pastoral Links. We will be reviewing its remit later this year as following Covid it has extended way beyond its original scope. This year five of our members have moved in to residential care and we need to look at how we can best keep in touch with them as they remain members of our congregation.

Kathryn Hamylton

SAFEGUARDING

(not a team, but it belongs to this part of the report – ed.)

Safeguarding signposting information on the church website and church premises has been reviewed and renewed. It is now possible to access and download relevant sections of both the most current Methodist Policy and Procedures, including specimen forms, and our own Church Safeguarding Policy, from the Safeguarding section of the Christchurch website.

During the early summer all Circuit Churches were requested by the Methodist Church District to audit their level of compliance with the Methodist Church Safeguarding Procedures and to draw up an action plan to address areas of deficit. This is work in progress, particularly in respect of usage by external groups.

A circuit safeguarding foundation training course was run at Great Glen Methodist Church in October 2022. There have also been other neighbouring circuit foundation courses, both online and face to face, which have offered us places. There are a few people who are now waiting to attend foundation training, to update their previous learning.

WORSHIP

Worship is the bedrock of any faith community, and at Christchurch we have a regular and varied pattern of services, aiming to deepen and enrich the discipleship of our church family. We gather together to praise the One True God through our singing, our prayers, our reading of scripture, and our fellowship.

Christchurch has a settled pattern of Sunday morning services, alternating weekly between conventional worship in the Worship Centre and more relaxed, interactive ‘cafe-style’ worship in the Hall. The majority of the congregation come to both services. Both types of services are supported by our AV team, our musicians, our readers and worship leaders and we are very appreciative of the work that they do to enrich our services.

The majority of services each quarter are taken by Revd Kate Cook, our Methodist minister, or Revd John Rackley, our associate Baptist minister. Other services are taken by Methodist Local Preachers or our very able team of Worship Leaders.

A small but committed group gather for Worship on Wednesday, which meets fortnightly in the Keene Room at 11.30am before Luncheon Club. This act of worship lasts around 45 minutes and includes music, prayer, a reflection and discussion. All are welcome. **Revd Kate Cook**

COMMUNION STEWARDS

The communion stewards set the communion, provide assistance where required during the service and clear up afterwards. Our number is now down to two: Sue Eyre and myself and we would welcome more help. There was one Sunday this year when we were both away and Sue Sharman stepped in. This is a rewarding way of contributing to the services which doesn't involve standing up and speaking in front of the congregation. **Chris Whitford**

DATA PROJECTION TEAM

In the last year the projection team has provided projection services for one Sunday service a week, alternating between the hall and worship centre. All of the equipment used is working well and as expected, with the main glitches encountered recently being related to broadband reliability and cable reliability. The team now consists of 4 people, Russell Hobbs, Jenny Whillis, Mark Asher and myself (Thomas Ashley). We also provide ad hoc assistance to the sound team as required whilst they are short of recruits.

As a team, we have been saddened by the death of Chris Booth and have been trying to take up the roles that Chis did in projection. We thank Laura Johnson for her contribution, taking on the organisation of Copyright information.

I would also like to thank the whole projectionist team for their help over these last months being willing to help with the extra Sundays. If anyone is interested in joining our select team please get in touch with me.

Tom Ashley

FLOWERS

Another Church year has passed, and there is a selection of five artificial Flower Arrangements that I endeavour to interchange for the Services, held in the larger Worship Centre. Very occasionally, there are fresh Flower Arrangements, and as I have previously written if anyone would like to replace the artificial flowers with an arrangement of their own design, please just let me know. I can offer support and entry to the Church premises.

Sue Rogerson Williams

MUSIC

Thank you to Janet Edwards and Roger Simons who have played the organ for most of our services in the Worship Centre this year. Thanks too to Anne de Graeve who has played occasionally.

For services in the hall we generally use YouTube. Sometimes a pianist will play for one of the hymns or songs. Thank you those who find suitable YouTube videos and those who have played the piano.

Andrew Curry

READERS AND PRAYER LEADERS

We currently have 11 lesson readers and 9 people who lead prayers. Many thanks to everyone who contributes to our worship each Sunday in this way. Di Lawrence has joined the readers recently. I would be delighted to welcome new readers and prayer leaders into the team. Please do have a word with me if you are interested in joining us. It works out at one or two duties each quarter.

Andrew Curry

REFRESHMENTS

The gathering before or after services is an important part of church life and the person serving refreshments plays a valuable part in making visitors feel welcome. There are now nine of us sharing this duty so the job comes round every 2 months. If you would like to join the team please speak to me. You can start as an assistant to learn the ropes!

Chris Whitford

SUNDAY SCHOOL

This year Sunday School has carried on meeting in the atrium. There are 4 regular children aged between 4 and 13, with myself leading the group and Thomas helping out and leading when I'm unable to attend. We have explored our faith and different parts of the bible in different ways such as painting, making, discussing, sharing food and baking. After we have spent some time learning we enjoy time in the hall, playing ball games and enjoying each other's company.

In addition to our 4 regular children we have had several visitors over the year who we have welcomed into the group for the short time they have been with us. If anyone has a passion for sharing their faith with our children and helping the children explore their faith please do ask about joining Tom and myself. You do need a DBS check but we are not an exclusive team and are happy to share this important role across more people.

Helen Ashley

SUNDAY STEWARDS

The group consists of Laura Johnson, Sue Sharman, Chris Whitford, and David Maddock. Laura continues to oversee initial contact with the minister conducting upcoming services. The role of the steward remains as before: liaison is established between the minister and contributors to the service. Then, in addition to introducing, if necessary, and welcoming the minister and all in attendance, the steward ensures that the Hall or Worship Centre is ready for the service to begin and, in the unlikely event of the alarm sounding, s/he will step in and direct the congregation out of the building. As before, the role is about the practicalities of hosting the service. We would welcome anyone who would like to join us and take on the role.

David Maddock

WELCOME TEAM

We continue to provide a welcoming presence to people in the porch each Sunday. Many thanks to Jenny for her time as a welcome steward, she has now come off the rota to focus on her role as treasurer. Over the summer we decided to combine the No 1 and No 2 duty, which means we only need one person each week on the rota. Many thanks to all the welcome stewards for their commitment throughout this year.

Kathryn Asher

DISCIPLESHIP

FELLOWSHIP GROUPS

A bible study group continues to meet on Thursday mornings in the Keene room from 10.30 to 12.00; the first half hour is coffee time and time for chat. During the year we have studied 'Women in the Bible', some of The Psalms, some of Paul's epistles and a bible overview entitled 'God's Big Picture'. During Advent and Lent we used studies prepared by Christian Charities working in the Middle East and helping persecuted Christians worldwide.

The Contemporary Theology Group has about 9 fairly regular members, meeting on the 2nd Thursday of the month on Zoom with discussions of talks on YouTube, usually found by Kath Parsons. Recent topics include "Is Britain still a Christian country" (Linda Woodhead), "The Atonement" (Richard Rohr) and "The Case for God" by Karen Armstrong.

From September we hope that a new fellowship group will be convened on a weekday evening for those at work.

On the 2nd and 4th Sunday evenings we offer a series of gatherings for refreshment and discussion. The first series was held after Easter and another session is planned for the autumn, using material produced by the Methodist Church called 'A Way of Life' and all are welcome to come along.

Further groups would be welcome and encouraged. John Wesley believed in the value of small fellowship groups to facilitate personal spiritual growth and maturity and as a model for making disciples.

Alan Stead

PRAYER MEETINGS

Prayer breakfasts

The mission and ministry team continue to think about ways in which we can enrich our prayer life at church and from these discussions the Prayer Breakfast was born.

Since December 2022 we have held a monthly Prayer Breakfast usually on the last Saturday of the month. These have been well supported with an average of 10 - 12 folk meeting for a variety of breakfast fayre from porridge and pancakes to bacon and bananas! A time of prayer then follows. Prayers have been led on a variety of themes including Christian Aid, Action for Children and quiet contemplation. This time of fellowship has provided the opportunity to pray together and makes a valuable contribution to the prayer life of the church. Thanks go to all those who have led, cooked and attended.

Please can you consider offering to pray or arrange breakfast - hot or cold as we believe that a variety of styles and ideas will benefit us all.

Sue Sharman

Thursday Prayers

A small group meets on Thursday mornings at 9.45 in the Keene room for about 40 minutes. The Methodist Prayer Handbook's (Hidden Treasures) daily devotions provides a structure for our meeting, leaving time also for personal prayers and times of silence.

Alan Stead

ACTIVITIES

BANNER GROUP

The extensive collection of banners on two expanding racks was fitted with protective covers last year and the lockable cupboard in the back corridor houses all the banners made for the special times of celebration throughout the Church Year, which have been repaired as necessary over the last 12 months. Over the summer ALL the banners were taken out and hung in the Worship Centre and visitors were invited to view the handiwork of the Christchurch Banner Group over the last four decades as part of a fund raising event for the Trussel Trust and Action for Children. For the past twelve months the Eco Team have been awaiting a pair of banners featuring Creation Care and Christian responsibility towards our planet. A start has been made on these, and contributions of further designs on this topic are very welcome. As yet there has not been an opportunity to complete the banners. The Fair Trade banner in the atrium is being updated with the new logo and current amount that has been raised through sales to members.

The original group members have retired and no longer meet to craft new banners. Our diverse collection is much appreciated by church members and the founders of 'Banner Group' hope a new set of enthusiasts will develop to continue the inspirational hand worked Messages of Faith to which the Christchurch collection bears testimony.. Any church members interested in helping to complete the 'creation care' banners, or contribute to banner making, please contact me.

Sue Eyre

BOOK CLUB

Read and Relax Book Group was established in September 2022 and we meet on the first Sunday of each month at 2.00pm at Christchurch. Members include Laura Johnson, Aaron Parker, Jenny Whillis, Sue Eyre and Kath Parsons.

The group currently has 7 to 8 members, including non-church members, who enjoy meeting every month to discuss a book over tea/coffee and often cake! It is a small, friendly and relaxed group who enjoy reading a wide range of fiction that they otherwise would not have considered. Group members are encouraged to contribute and have selected authors/books that they have previously enjoyed reading, so it's very much a collaborative group. We have read and enjoyed books from Richard Osman, King, Gail Honeyman, Paula Hawkins, Matt Haig, Tracy Chevalier and even Stephen King!

The group has a WhatsApp group and a Facebook page and has been advertised locally in the community to encourage non-church members to attend. Although many struggle to make the meetings in person, this is designed to be flexible and many enjoy simply engaging on social media and reading along with the books monthly. There has been a great amount of enthusiasm in the group and some good friendships have also been made through the group as well as sharing an enjoyment of books and authors.

Laura Johnson

ECO CHURCH

We began September 2022 with a service led by Mark Asher, using Christian Aid material on Talking Climate Justice.

While we haven't met frequently throughout the year, there have been a few ongoing actions. We met with the Resources team to discuss the possibility of a building survey that could identify energy saving possibilities and will be arranging this soon. We offered to lead Climate Care and Harvest services in September 2023, with organising these being the focus for John Rackley, Mark Asher and Jenny Whillis during the summer.

We've had some discussions and shared ideas with our lettings secretary Jean Baxter, and a poster detailing what can be recycled was designed by Rohita to make this easier for all building users. We have also added items to the Newsletter, which is something we hope to do more frequently.

Jenny Whillis

FAIR AND ETHICAL TRADE STALL

Traidcraft ceased to trade and went into administration in January 2023 so we wondered whether our stall could continue. Fortunately Traidcraft kindly sent us a list of alternative suppliers so we

have been able to keep going. Prices have risen, like the retail trade, so sales have slowed and some stock reaches its BB date still on our shelves.

Eventually a small number of the original Traidcraft team restarted trading as 'We are Fair Trade' and are slowly building up the range of products available. Orders are placed with them and with 'Ethical Superstore'.

Sales in 2022 achieved a total of £8320 — £5612 through the Christchurch community; £2222 through WQE College and £586 through Stonegate Baptists.

We are pleased to report that total sales since we started in 1992 have reached £1/4 million.

Sales on Sunday morning depend on those attending worship and numbers have yet to recover to pre-pandemic levels so we may well see a decline in our income. However we shall continue to use whatever profit we make to support Baptist and Methodist World Missions, Transform Trade (the charity arm of Traidcraft) and make a donation to Christchurch.

Many thanks to our great team of volunteers – Christine & Roger, Kathryn & Mark, Alison & Cathy.

Alan Stead

KNIT AND STITCH

The group has been running for over 18 months now and there is an average attendance of around 8, although some afternoons over 12 members will drop in. Everyone is encouraged to bring 'just one item' for the food bank and contributes towards tea and cake which usually results in a donation of around £40 each month to charities the group opts to support, such as the food bank, Shelter, AFC, Spurgeons, DEC Appeals. Most members are working on personal projects such as quilting, family knitting, crochet, hand sewing, repairs and remaking. We aim to extend the group to include other crafts such as card making and calligraphy, felting and rug making. We are even hoping to recruit some gentlemen into the group to try their hand at repairing fabric items. Members share their specialist skills, as needed, by novices trying a new craft in a convivial, warm and friendly session from 4.30 to 7 p.m. on a Tuesday and everyone is welcome to drop in for as long as they wish.

Sue Eyre

LUNCHEON CLUB FOR OLDER PERSONS

Following the vision of our Christchurch prayer encouraging us to reach our community, we displayed several posters in venues around Clarendon Park inviting people to join our group. We were pleased to welcome 10 new members - Derek, Barbara, Jeanette, Terry, David, Diane, Pat, Paul, John, and Elsa, meaning our club is at full capacity. Sadly, we remember former members, Beryl, Shirley, and Joan who died this year, Mary and Trevor moved into residential care homes plus Angela, Ken, and Philip who no longer attend.

Operating fortnightly seems to be working well with gratitude to Chris and Sue in sharing the cook's responsibilities. We were pleased that Janet and Rachel returned to our team of helpers but sorry to lose Amanda. Margaret, Jean, Kathryn, and Janet have often provided a dessert, which is much appreciated. Chris and Rohita have recently completed the 'Level 2 Food Hygiene and Safety for Catering' course but there are still a few to update this training, which needs refreshing every 3 years.

In August our premises were inspected by an officer from Leicester City Council Food Standards Agency Team. We were awarded another Food Hygiene Rating of 5 but with one or two improvements needed to the fabric of the kitchen. On inspection Luncheon Club are held responsible, but as we only use the facilities twice a month, it seems a bit unfair, as many other groups now use the equipment in the kitchen and can cook and serve food, as well as ourselves! Twice now we've been unable to use one of the ovens until Chris managed to unblock the gas lighters at the back! We were also recommended by the inspector to use the 'Safer Food Better Business for Caterers' pack with updated procedures, which we have now purchased.

Olwen Simons

MODERN ART EXHIBITION

Plans for this event have been taking shape during the year. While we await confirmation from the Methodist Church, the idea is that it will also entail a programme of music, talks, educational visits, and practical workshops during the four-week period between Monday 23 September and Saturday 19 October 2024. Pictures will be displayed on panels positioned in the side aisles and transepts of the Worship Centre so that services and other activities can continue in the main body of the church. The title, *Through a Glass, Darkly*, is taken from the King James version of the bible in which the apostle Paul speaks of our imperfect understanding of God's love. Because of the variety of events, there will be scope for different kinds and levels of involvement, and it is hoped that not only Christchurch folk will opt in but also people from the wider Clarendon Park neighbourhood.

David Maddock

NOTICES AND MONTHLY NEWS

Between them the Weekly Notices and the Monthly Christchurch NEWS attempt to help to keep the members of Christchurch and visitors in touch with the activities that are taking place in the church and around the circuit and occasionally further afield.

Rev. John Rackley and Rev Kate have alternately written a reflection to be included in the Christchurch NEWS. Tom Ashley has continued to provide a section of activities based on the Sunday School teachings for the month which have been welcomed by the young at heart. Di and Tony Lawrance have continued their sterling service in proofreading to reduce the number of factual and typing errors that occur when I collate the information. Chris Whitford prints the hard copies along with sending in contributions to keep information up-to-date.

The Christchurch NEWS is always livelier when there are additional contributions from its readers. Please feel free to send suggested contributions throughout the month (you do not need to wait until the deadline – any emails I receive early get filed in a labelled folder and cause me no inconvenience.

Both publications continue to be a real team effort, and my thanks go to all who make the weekly notices and Christchurch NEWS possible.

Susan Bindley

PRAYER SHAWL MINISTRY

Firstly, thanks once again to the remaining 'needle women' who have contributed this past year in providing gifts to Christchurch members experiencing changes in their lives. These have provided

encouragement and support in testing times AND on special occasions. However few, we continue in love creating gifts on behalf of the membership, and I am grateful that we still have two 'out workers' to rely on, as we welcome new additions to the church family, celebrate achievements, encourage recovery and express the empathy of the body of Christchurch with the challenges individual members are facing. We have had current and appropriate news of Christchurch friends from the 'KEEP IN TOUCH' initiative which has helped us all to better serve all our members in Christchurch. Since the resumption of services, and the return of more groups, it has been good to meet up again, . Over the past twelve months we have sent four gifts on behalf of the membership of Christchurch. Please contact Sue Eyre, if you wish us to support another member, community friend, or relative with this ministry of prayerful giving. If you feel able to offer to make prayer gifts your input will be very welcome.

Sue Eyre

PUBLICITY

Chris Whitford continues to publicise Christchurch activities and events on the website while Jenny Whillis oversees Instagram and Facebook. Toyin Arogundade looks after the church noticeboards, and David Maddock does the exterior church noticeboard. It is hoped that a recent audit of Christchurch groups and their activities may yield a fuller picture of all that goes on as part of the church's life and that this information might be publicised appropriately. Publicity remains a work in progress. Fresh ideas are always welcome as is the contribution of anyone who would like to join us!

David Maddock

SOCIAL MEDIA AND WEBSITE

Christchurch has had a presence on social media for a number of years, through which we are able to connect with members, groups we are linked to and the wider community. Through social media we're able to tell people what we're doing, but also give anyone who searches for us or stumbles across us an idea of who we are.

Our Facebook 'like' page is currently followed by 204 people (including current and former church members/attendees but others as well) and continues to be our most active social media site, but we're on Instagram and Twitter as well. On our sites we've been able to share news of services (both information before and pictures afterwards), events being held at the church such as Warm Space, carol singing on Queens Road and pictures of the church at Christmas and Easter. We've also shared messages and prayers from the groups we are linked to, including Christian Aid.

The church WhatsApp group is for current and former church members to instantly communicate with each other, and now has 33 of us the group. As it's a phone app, WhatsApp is a fast way to share news, photos, petitions, requests for help and much more. We also have separate groups, including 'All things green' for discussing environmental issues and sharing tips.

If you want adding to the Christchurch WhatsApp group, let Mark Asher, Alison Charlesworth or me (admins) know.

Jenny Whillis

The website continues to get about 9 – 10 visits per day (up slightly on a year ago) and the contact form is often the 'way in' for people wishing to contact the church. New pages have been added for safeguarding and to advertise the availability of rooms for hire (with some excellent photos taken by taken by Chris Apperley Bennett).

There's been a steady trickle of articles for the blog, mainly from our ministers, with an occasional article copied from the monthly news. This isn't limited to ministers – anyone who feels inspired to write a reflection is welcome to contribute.

Chris Whitford

If you haven't done so already, you can find us via the links below.

Website: www.christchurchcp.org.uk

Facebook: www.facebook.com/christchurchcp

Twitter: www.twitter.com/christchurch_cp

Instagram: www.instagram.com/christchurch_cp

TREE PLANTING

Sadly this has now come to an end. We are grateful to the many members of the congregation who planted seeds or saplings or helped out on planting days often in bad weather! This initiative was started by Brian and Ann Mason, and we are pleased to have been able to carry on the good work over many years.

If you would like to continue to support the National Forest please visit their web site and consider their "Dedicate a Tree" initiative – this makes a good present for birthdays, anniversaries and giving our grandchildren a stake in the countryside!

Kathryn Hamylton

TUESDAY TODDLERS

We continue each Tuesday during school term time with a growing group of (mainly) happy, noisy babies, toddlers, parents and carers.

There are 8 of us involved, some of whom arrive at 8am to set out the toys and equipment, and others who have to deliver older children to school before coming to help. We serve teas, coffees, juices and biscuits until 10.40am, when we gather round our (super new) mat and sing action songs whilst some of the helpers put everything away in cupboards and clear up the kitchen. The singing is a very popular activity and there are a couple of families who arrive just in time to join in.

I have to let you know that the only person representing Christchurch is me (Christine Sharp); the rest of the 'crew' are volunteers from my family and two mums whose children are now at 'big school'. Whilst I am really grateful that these people are willing to help, if I become unable to do the tasks required, I do wonder whether the group would be able to continue and if it did, whether anyone from Christchurch would step in. If anyone from church would like to come along and see what we do they would be very welcome. I make sure the people who come know that it is a church sponsored activity.

I personally would be sorry if the group didn't go on into the future as I know how much such groups kept me sane as a young(ish) mum and the parents now tell me how glad they are to be able to bring their children along to play with others and for them to have some 'adult' conversations with other parents. It's a real mutual support group as well as being really good fun.

Also, we are a really multi-cultural group, which I hope shows people we really mean it when we say we welcome people from all parts of society.

Last of all, my very grateful thanks to Rachel, Coreen, Steven, Ewen, Ella, Roger and Helen (when she's not at University) for being so willing and helpful. I couldn't do it without you.

Christine Sharp

CHARITIES

CHILDREN'S CHARITIES

The traditional carol singing parties on Queens Road before Christmas resumed in 2021 and continued this year. Our planned sing out of the good news of Christmas was again a happy success and appreciated by local shoppers. This year cake sales for Spurgeons and AFC have again not been possible on the usual scale. Cake sales income had been supporting Spurgeons funds as well as Action For Children in equal measure. However, refreshments provided for the Knit and Stitch meetings every week have raised donations for Spurgeons on three occasions this past year. In June the group agreed to donate equally to the Trussell Trust and Action for Children £200 each, following a Cream Tea Saturday drop in whilst the worship centre was open for visitors to view the display of Banners. AFC Sunday in early July raised another £242 from Christchurch members making their annual gifts, Cake was involved on both these occasions. Christchurch has made a stewardship donation of £60 to both AFC and Spurgeon's whose Christmas appeal was focussed on providing opportunities for underprivileged children to develop their natural talents and focussed on children 'trapped' during lock down suffering mental health consequences. Thank you for your continuing generous support of children's charities at Christchurch; £116.90 from the Christmas Day collection was sent to both AFC and Spurgeons. I continue to represent Christchurch at the South Leicester circuit AFC support group, led by Eileen & Peter Molesdale from Anstey. We have, unfortunately been unable to meet lately, but on the first Saturday in October Anstey Methodist Church had a 'sing-along' with The Little Big Band evening for Action for Children which raised over £300 and before Christmas a similar event at Great Glen.

Carol singing in Queens Road before Christmas last year raised £110 for both AFC and Spurgeons and £60 was sent to Embrace. Please join us in the carolling party this year on 16th and 23rd December. We meet at church from 9.45 to start singing at 10 on Queens Road and sing for about an hour. Everyone is welcome and we return to Christchurch for hot drinks and mince pies.

Sue Eyre

CHRISTIAN AID

We raised £607 at Christchurch in Christian Aid Week, £412 from a house-to-house drop off envelope collection and £195 from donations made at church.

The SLCP Christian Aid Week service was held at Christchurch this year. The speaker was Martin Gage who gave a powerful and passionate address. The collection at the service raised £180.42.

We also held a retiring collection for the Turkey and Syria Earthquake emergency appeal in February. This raised £420.

Thank you to everyone who has supported Christian Aid by giving, acting or praying this year.

Andrew Curry

FOOD BANK

Members of the congregation have continued to donate monthly to the South Leicester Salvation Army Food bank. In addition, we have received cash donations from the stitching group and one very generous donation of food from a hirer of the hall. These last two have been organised by Jean Baxter our lettings officer and we are grateful to her for these initiatives.

The volunteers at the Food Bank are always grateful for our contributions particularly as the need for help is always on the increase.

Kathryn Hamylton

MISSIONS – HOME AND WORLD

Thank you to all who continue to support Home and World Missions and also for the many people who pray for mission work as part of their daily devotions. Thanks too to Alan Stead who obtains the Prayer Manuals each year, providing a structure for daily prayers for churches in the UK and around the world.

After the disruptions from Covid the previous pattern of fundraising is only slowly being re-established. Now that the Birthday Scheme is no longer running all the Mission funds are now collected/recorded by me, but it would be nice to have someone take on the publicity, to promote the mission activities of the wider church within Christchurch.

Chris Whitford

Birthday Scheme

		2022-23	2021-22
From birthday gifts	247.00		
Donation from Traidcraft	150.00		
Sent to BMS World Missions		197.00	709.50
Sent to Methodist Fund for World Mission		50.00	87.50

This report only pertains to the period up to December 2022 as during that month I informed the members through the monthly newsletter that I would no longer be running this scheme and no-one else volunteered to take it on.

I have enjoyed the happy contact I have had over the years when I have given them some lovely bright cards and they have passed over to me their envelopes containing money which I sent on to BMS World Mission (Baptist Missionary Society) for use in their medical mission work. I thank you all for your generosity – some of which was shared with the Methodist equivalent society.

Christine Sharp

BMS World Mission

	2022-23	2021-22
Birthday Scheme donations	197.00	609.50
Donation from Traidcraft	150.00	100.00
Christmas Post donations	80.00	74.00
Harvest envelopes*		
Stewardship contribution	625.00	625.00
Totals	£1,052.00	£1408.50

* includes tax which can be recovered under Gift Aid.

Methodist Fund for World Mission

	2022-23	2021-22
Stewardship contribution	440.00	440.00
Donation from Traidcraft	150.00	100.00
Easter offering*	54.00	175.00
Christmas post box	80.00	74.00
Birthday scheme donations	50.00	87.50
	£774.00	£876.50

* includes tax which can be recovered under Gift Aid

Baptist Home Mission

	2022-23	2021-22
Stewardship Contribution	1,500.00	1,200.00
Retiring collections		
Totals	£1,500.00	£1,200.00

Methodist Mission in Britain Fund (Home Mission)

	2022-23	2021-22
Stewardship contribution	140.00	140.00
Retiring collections		
Totals	£140.00	£140.00