

**CHRIST CHURCH  
LONGRIDGE  
REPORTS  
FOR THE CHURCH  
AGM  
7<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2017**

## **Minister's Report**

I start this report with gratitude to God for his continued blessings upon our lives and ministry at Christ Church Longridge. I feel that I am still called to minister here and I continue to hold the view that our church compliments the offerings of our ecumenical brethren and provides an important element of diversity within the town.

As I look back I am excited by the things that we have done together as a church. The standard and quality of worship and preaching remains high with contributions from URC and Methodist Preachers and Worship Leaders. We have established an outreach service at Plessington Court on the 3rd Sunday of every month at 3 pm. This has consistently brought together 20-30 people, split approximately 50/50 between Christ Church members and Plessington Court residents to worship in a way that helps people hear the gospel in bite-sized chunks. Christ Church continues to be a meeting place for people of faith and no faith at Craft Club and Coffee Morning.

We have had our fair share of sadness and joy in the last few years with dearly loved brothers and sisters who have died and gone ahead of us to be in the Father's house. But thankfully, we have also receive more than we have lost into membership with others on the brink of becoming members of Christ Church. We thank God for those who have shared the journey with us and for those who choose to walk alongside us.

An annual church meeting report normally looks back at the year that has been. But this year I feel I must also direct our attention to the future. As many of you know, the Methodist District & Circuit and the URC NW Synod have been looking at how Ministers of Word and Sacrament can best be deployed in our current context. In 2018 the Circuit stands to lose 3 ministers and may only gain 1 or 2 replacements. The NW Synod still has upwards of 40 churches without a minister. Although our Senior Steward does a sterling job in pulpit supply and fills a balanced preaching plan for Christ Church, the Superintendent is still struggling to fill the Circuit preaching plan. All this is happening in a context in which numbers are getting smaller whilst people are getting older and presenting some challenging pastoral concerns.

But I am optimistic about the future. We potentially have two new preachers seeking a note to preach within the section. We have had an approach from Inglewhite Congregational Church about a joint discipleship project for young families in Longridge. We continue to provide vital aid through the Churches Together in Longridge & District food bank based at St Paul's. We continue to have close links with Clitheroe URC and Inglewhite Congregational Church.

All-in-all the future is as exciting as it is challenging. There is plenty to get stuck into. But we mustn't lose sight of the fact that we are called to make disciples of ourselves and those who want to come on a journey of faith with us in 2017-18. I pray that God will give us the wisdom and the energy to work in bringing in his kingdom in Longridge and district.

## **Pastoral Report**

There have been quite a number of changes in our membership this year. First we need to remember our sad losses. In August, we were shocked to learn of the sudden death of Audrey Barnes; in January Betty Warren lost her battle with a brain tumour and in these last few weeks, Norman Watson died after suffering a number of illnesses for a long time. Betty and Norman had

been life-long members of their respective denominations and members of our joint church from the very beginning. Our hearts go out to all their families and especially to Frank and Mel.

Several members have moved away in recent years. This year, Ann and Mick Hull and Esther Wolstenholme have all moved to be nearer family members and their absence from our regular worship is very noticeable. This would suggest that our church membership is declining but this is not the case. Two years ago our membership was 49 and now it is 51 --- not a big change but at least it is going in the right direction. Many of those who have become members in the last two years have settled in and are making a substantial contribution to the work of the church.

Once again, we have struggled to keep up with the high standards we had set for ourselves in terms of Pastoral Visiting. We have lost Betty from the visiting team and Audrey Barnes and Ann Hull from the support teams as well as a number of us having health or family issues which have made it hard to keep up with all we used to do. Some people who used to get visits are now having their magazine delivered by post. I feel we need a complete rethink and so every member should by now have received a letter inviting them to a meeting on June 21<sup>st</sup> to discuss the situation and see how we can move forward. Please contribute to the discussion either by attending or sending your ideas in advance if you can't be there. We currently have just five Pastoral Visitors. We are grateful to them and to all the other people who help by delivering magazines.

The work of the Safeguarding Secretary has been handed over to Jane Turner who has attended both the Circuit and District updating meetings. Most of our Pastoral Visitors and workers with young people have attended their safeguarding update session. Because of changes in the way records are kept, it is now essential that the church purchase a small safe or lockable metal cupboard for keeping confidential documents in the future.

Carol Spencer

## **Senior Steward Report**

### **Worship Responsibilities**

Grateful thanks are expressed to all council members take on the role of vestry steward for worship services. Thanks also to our welcome stewards and Sunday coffee teams who assist on the day. At present we have 9 vestry stewards, 9 welcome stewards and 3 others who help with refreshments.

The duties are regularly revised and updated and given out with the quarterly rotas.

Each quarter we need to appoint 26 vestry duties, 39 welcome duties and 13 coffee team duties.

As an LEP, all council members are Methodist stewards and also URC Elders and any new members appointed at the AGM are expected to assist with these responsibilities.

### **Worship Resources**

Singing the Faith hymnbooks are now in the chairs along with Complete Mission Praise 2. Hymns and Psalms will be given out when requested.

Also available are sets of Songs of Fellowship 1, Rejoice and Sing, Hymns and Songs and Methodist Hymns Old and New.

The Good News Bibles will shortly be replaced with New International Version.

We now only pay a PRS licence (around £35 per year) which is a big saving on CCLI copyright charges. PRS covers our live concerts and recorded music when church is open.

(Early contact with preachers is now even more important, as any non public domain material has to have permission sought for use and the music prepared. Public domain material can be copied without permission.)

## **Worship Involvement**

All members of the congregation are encouraged to take an active participation in worship. Readers' lists are revised regularly and preparation of prayers is welcomed and it is hoped during the year to develop more music and drama in worship

The new Worship Leading Course is now available in 4 units ( 8 units for Preachers in training) This course aims to cover all aspects of leading worship and any interested in exploring this avenue of service are welcome to take part for some, or all of the course as part of personal interest or development.

John and Jason were commissioned last October as worship leaders at Christ Church and such roles are reviewed every 3 years. Carol Spencer is a tutor and Henry and Carol Rose are mentors. Please have a word with them if you are interested in exploring this area of Church Life.

## **First Contact Responsibilities**

Most contact from Methodist District and Circuit is made by email.

Communications are handed out at Circuit meeting or sent to be printed and distributed.

Sometimes Circuit notices and messages are passed through both First Contact and Notices Secretary. The equivalent contact for the URC is mostly by post to our URC Secretary ( Mel).

## **Pulpit Supply Secretary**

As an LEP (Local Ecumenical Partnership), our preaching plan continues to offer a number of invitations to other preachers from the URC and other traditions. These are the appointments left to fill after the Minister's are placed. While under Methodist oversight, this amount varies up to 6 a quarter. These appointments are taken mostly by URC retired ministers or preachers. This can prove difficult as there are fewer preachers available or willing and able to travel across the URC Synod Area. Appointments taken by Methodist Preachers, Henry & Carol Rose and Carol Spencer, who in 2008 were ordained as Assembly Accredited Preachers, are sometimes included in the URC preachers' allocation of appointments.

Each 'visiting' preacher is offered £20 towards their expenses. (The URC now recommend a minimum fee of £30 plus expenses) Although not all preachers accept their expenses, it does have an implication of increased expense for the Church when in the future we revert to URC oversight and where possibly most services will include the need to offer expenses.

Grateful thanks, as always, are expressed to all our Christ Church preachers and also to Rev Elizabeth Hodgkiss for their help in taking appointments.

Carol Rose

## **Finance Report**

At the end of February 2017 the balances of our bank accounts was as follows:

Lloyds Bank (Current Account)	£11,323.86
Central Finance Board (Savings Account)	£68,786.42

This represents the half way point of the financial year. For comparison, the figures in August 2016 (the start of the financial year) were:

Lloyds Bank (Current Account)	£ 3,301.35
Central Finance Board (Savings Account)	£76,996.19

The balance in the Lloyds Bank current account is higher than we would normally keep in this type of account but is due to some large payments being made in the next month or so. This includes the insurance (typically £2500) and we also have ongoing building work to repair damp patches and other maintenance work planned.

In this financial year we will pay a Circuit Assessment of £20,000 to Preston Ribble Circuit, of which 85% will be kept by the Circuit whilst the remaining 15% will be passed to the URC. This split is due to the Methodist Church providing pastoral oversight at the moment. We have received provisional notification for the assessment next year and this is likely to be in the region of £21,250. This does represent an increase on this year, but the Circuit policy is that the assessment should increase each year in order to avoid larger increases.

We received confirmation from Stewart McKinnell that the accounts for last year raised no cause for concern.

Finally, I can confirm that the accounts for this year do balance exactly.

Ian Lawson  
(On behalf of the Church Finance Group)

Grateful thanks are expressed to all members of the Christ Church Finance Group for all their hard work in undertaking their responsibilities.

In the light of the closure of all Longridge Bank Branches from September this year, urgent consideration must now be given to the way forward for our church bank account situation.

Henry Rose  
(Chair, Christ Church Finance Group)

## **Gift Aid Report**

As a registered body with HMRC we are able to reclaim money using the scheme for Gift Aid and Small Donations, known as GASDS. This means that we can claim 25p for every £1 donated to church through the Weekly Offerings (collection envelopes, cash collections and standing orders). The only condition is that the person donating the money must be a tax payer and must complete a Declaration Form.

To make this process easier to manage we submit claims to HMRC three times during the financial year as follows:

April - covering the period from 1 January to 5 April  
September - covering the period from 6 April to 31 August  
January - covering the period from 1 September to 31 December

During the Church Financial Year 2015 -2016 we received a total of £3885.78.

Sue Lawson  
(Gift Aid Secretary)

### **Property**

Over the last 12 months routine maintenance have been carried out order to keep our suite of premises in sound order. One major item has been the eradication of penetrating damp at the front right hand side of the worship area. You will see that it is not yet completed, but it is hoped to finalise this in the coming months. In addition to this there is also evidence of a similar problem in the balcony stair well, which will need to be tackled soon. These two pieces of work will cost in the region of £4,000. It is also evident that some of the double-glazed units in the porch are in need of replacement, as yet we have not obtained an estimate for this work.

When we look at the hall it is becoming evident that we shall have to spend money on repairing or replacing the 'skylights'. Along with outside painting of the windows and doors of the hall, this seems to us to be the priorities for the coming 12 months.

John Spencer (Chair, Property Committee)

### **Guild Report**

Christ Church Guild meets monthly between September and June. Meetings usually take place on the first Monday of each month and are open to all.

The first meeting in September took the form of a Coffee Evening with a Bring and Buy stall.

The meetings since then have been as follows:

October 2016	Sue Lawson speaking on her trip to Texas
November 2016	Margery Pitcher told us about her experiences as a Guide Leader
December 2016	Meal at The Corporate Arms
January 2017	No meeting takes place due to dark nights and possible wintry weather
February 2017	Judith Dixon told us about her lifelong interest in space travel and her visit to Kennedy Space Centre
March 2017	Howard Roscoe explained about his role as a Governor at Barnacre Road Primary School
April 2017	Henry Rose treated us to an evening of music with his guitars

May 2017

Ian Lawson will end the programme with a talk about his visits to the Czech Republic

The last event of the year is usually a walk along the canal concluding with a meal at Old Nell's.

At the last Church Council meeting Sue Lawson explained that she would be standing down as President/Secretary at the end of the 2016 – 2017 season due to childcare commitments.

## **Mission Report**

There are several ways in which Christ Church supports the Mission work of the Methodist Church and URC.

Several members of the congregation have mission boxes for the Methodist Church World Mission or URC Commitment for Life. During the last 12 months the following donations have been made from these boxes:

Methodist World Mission £336.63

URC Commitment for Life £6.00

We also support the Methodist World Mission Fund through the Easter Envelopes Collection. This is co-ordinated at a Circuit level by Ann Done and we donated £117 towards this at Easter 2016.

If any members of the congregation would like to have a mission box to collect for either of these mission funds, please see Sue Lawson.

## **URC Synod Report**

There was a meeting of The North Western Synod of the URC on 25 March 2017 at Bamford Chapel URC. The main items on the agenda were:-

1. Consideration of the booklet 'Missional Discipleship: what is it?' for use in our churches, and three policy papers contained in the booklet 'Missional Discipleship – a Synod Strategy'. Our adoption of these papers will enable us to introduce Missional Discipleship as a new framework for our being and doing as local churches, including how Ministers work with us.  
The booklet 'Missional Discipleship: what is it?' has been written by Laurence Moore and is commended to local churches for discussion and feedback. It comes after research has shown that society in general has overwhelmingly positive attitudes to Jesus but overwhelmingly negative attitudes to the Church which bears His name. As a result we need to grow Jesus – shape churches to make the same sort of differences to the lives of people and communities as he did.

The booklet 'Missional Discipleship: a Synod strategy' reveals how Missional Discipleship can be put into practice including how every local church in the Synod will belong to one Missional Partnership and these Missional Partnerships will promote and support local ecumenical working. The booklet also addresses the deployment of Stipendiary Ministers.  
A copy of the booklet will be made available to every elder in the Synod.

2. The extension to the terms of service of John Piper as Synod Treasurer. John wishes to step down as Treasurer after holding the office for 6 years, but as it has not yet been possible to begin a recruitment process for a new Treasurer he has agreed to serve for a further one year term, concluding at the end of the Synod meeting in March 2018.

3. The future of the Windermere Centre. This is still under consideration

In addition to the other usual business for consideration at Synod there was a film and celebration of the centenary of the ordination of Constance Coltman (the first female minister). This was led by Revd Dr Kirsty Thorpe.

The next meeting of the North Western Synod will be on Saturday 14 October 2017 at Carver Church, Windermere.

Anyone requiring further information regarding this report, please see Sue Lawson.

### **Circuit Strategy & Resources Group**

The Circuit Strategy & Resources Group have set up a second consultation evening to look at a range of ways the circuit and churches may operate in the future in response to the response to the issues we face. The meeting is scheduled for Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2017 at 7.30 pm. The venue will be confirmed after the Easter holidays. Suggested Christ Church reps for this meeting are those who have attended the first consultation in January. H & C Rose, J & C Spencer, Jason, Claire, Howard (numbers suggested: 'about 5 per church')

### **Lettings Update.**

I am pleased to report that since Christmas although we have 'lost' Choir 1 albeit temporary, the hall has seen a modest increase in hall use.

ATC have been using the hall on Tuesdays, and Thursdays, for some time now, and they have also hired the hall on a Sunday afternoon. This proved for them to be successful, and they have requested if they can hire the hall occasionally on a Sunday in the future. Funding for this is met from their own income, and not from District HQ.

Hayley has settled in nicely, and she is now going to increase hiring the hall to a Monday evening, which fills the Choir 1 slot. Should David Kennedy wish to return with Choir 1 and re-hire the hall, I am sure we can accommodate him on another night. Hayley is not in a position to pay for the hire of the hall by BACS, at this present time; however, we now have a system in place where she is paying by cheque.

We also have the Painting class waiting for a free Saturday (Hayley is in the hall then), however Hayley is going to notify us when she has some free Saturdays.

We have also had a number of enquiries, from outside organisations, who are interested in hiring the hall.

We are acquiring a good name for hall hire, and I hope that in the future hall use continues to increase. We are also going to restart our Hall Users group, in the very near future; this has been proven very useful in the past.

Judith Dixon

### **Notices Etc.**

#### **Notices**

With help from Howard Roscoe & Carol Rose we manage to produce the notices each week with occasional mistakes!

We very rarely use all the 40 notices I produce.



### **Friday Coffee Rota**

Unfortunately we are down to 6 people. If anyone cannot do it we may have to rely on the Friday regulars to do it occasionally.

### **Prayer from the Congregation**

This works well in conjunction with special liturgies during Advent & Lent.

Margery Cook

### **Flower Coordinator's Report**

I have been approached to take over the role of coordinating the flowers in church and am very glad to assist with this.

Firstly I would like to thank Pam and Mandie who were in charge of organising flowers for many years. As a transition period this year, Carol Rose has very kindly been coordinating the flower rota, including updating the list of contributors and dates. This revised list has now been in operation for a few months and a copy of the current list is on display in the foyer. Some people have specific dates on which they wish to donate flowers, whilst others indicate a wish to donate flowers or money towards flowers on non-specific dates. We are grateful for both. In addition there is a collection tin in the foyer (appropriately decorated with flowers) in which anyone is welcome to make donations towards the weeks when we have 'Church flowers'. Thank you to all who kindly provide and distribute flowers.

It is good to share the flowers with members of our church community, and I am looking to further develop the way we operate this. Traditionally flowers have been distributed to people within the church community, and although this has happened a little less recently, we are now endeavouring to reinstate this more consistently as a way of sharing God's love and our thoughts and prayers with those in need. I would be grateful if people would let me know if there is someone they feel would benefit from a gift of flowers on behalf of the church.

If you would like to assist with this ministry, whether providing, arranging or distributing flowers, please speak to me or fill in one of the flyers available in the foyer.

Thank you

Claire Tuffin

### **Links with Barnacre Road School**

We maintain a formal link with Barnacre Road School through our two members of the governing body, Jane Turner and Howard Roscoe. We meet regularly with the other governors to deal with budget and staffing matters and to set school policy. Some of the issues that the school faces were aired at the Christ Church Guild meeting in March. These include:

- Child protection (including E-safety),
- Attendance (Government policy is to fine the parents of children who are not in regular attendance)
- Standard Attainment Tests (SATS) and their detrimental effect on school morale
- The pastoral and social needs burden that falls on the school because Social Services are critically under funded.

Despite these and other pressures the school continues to provide the children of Longridge with a rich and varied school experience and a wide range of learning opportunities and we continue to support them as we are able.

Our team of garden volunteers provide the children with an enjoyable and informative programme of 'hands on' gardening activities. We very much enjoyed a visit from a team of young gardeners last winter who planted 500 crocus bulbs for us in the garden in front of church. Other successes have been the provision of fruit and vegetables for school dinners and the winning of two prizes in the 'open' classes at Longridge Show.

Howard Roscoe

### **Connexion Zone**

As part of our link with Barnacre Road School we continue to run 'Connexion Zone' with the Nursery and Reception classes, with Year 5 acting as 'buddies'. Once every half-term we have a morning of bible stories, songs, craft, prayer and refreshments with up to 90 children plus helpers from school and church. This takes place either in school or in church depending on the time of year. We have also been in school to take assemblies relating to Harvest and Sierra Leone.

In a time when we see little evidence of children and young people in our Sunday morning worship it is encouraging to know that the Gospel is still being spread in other ways.

John Spencer

## Forthcoming Dates

### CHRISTIAN AID WEEK

SUN MAY 14:	10.45am 2. 15pm	Christian Aid Service led by Henry Rose and Jason McMahon Music in the Afternoon – Preston Flute Group
THU MAY 18:		Longridge Market Day
FRI MAY 19:	10 -12	Christ Church Coffee Morning
FRI MAY 19:	7.30pm	Christ Church Quiz

JUNE: Bible Reading Month with a focus on the Letter of James.

JUNE 11:	10.45am	Christ Church 28 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary Guest Preacher Rev Peter Clark Cafe style worship followed by Church Lunch with closing devotions
SEP 10:	10.45am	Guild Service
SEP 17:	10.45am	Harvest Thanksgiving

**For your meeting notes**