

# **Annual Report**

## **2020**



***St John's Methodist Church***  
***Potters Bar***

[stjohnspb.org.uk](http://stjohnspb.org.uk)  
Registered Charity 1130633

St John's is part of the St Albans & Welwyn Circuit  
[midhertsmethodists.org.uk](http://midhertsmethodists.org.uk)

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## Introduction

Dear Members and Friends of St John's Methodist Church

Greetings to you all!

I think this will be the third consecutive Annual General Church Meeting that I will be chairing for you.

I want to thank you all for your support and kindness to me over a rather tough last 12 months. I also want to say that although I joke with you about being your "temp", in Methodism we are all Circuit Ministers and, as the Superintendent, it is my responsibility to make sure all churches in the Circuit receive adequate care. This has been very hard this past 12 months, harder than at the other times I have been looking after SJPB. Ali was on Sabbatical for March – May and then very sadly Ali has been off sick since 22nd June 2019, (and please continue to pray for Ali, Chris, Luke and Bethan) and the Reverend Bruce Anderson has been off since 24th July 2019. Bruce is now starting back with a phased return and he hopes to be full-time by Easter and I will be meeting with him regularly. Our wonderful Circuit Administrator Ann Huntingford died on 21<sup>st</sup> July 2019 and then at the end of the year our colleague at Panshanger (the Reverend Hayley Young) resigned to take up a new post in South Wales. And although I have not yet had a day off sick, my health could have been better (whooping cough last Spring, then acute viral laryngitis last summer) and now have broken a bone in the top of my arm! But somehow we have all kept going... And I want to thank the wonderful team of stewards at SJPB, especially our Senior Steward Chris Humphreys, Treasurer Rob Ward, Helen Barlow and all the Pastoral Visitors, and all others who hold positions of responsibility for all you have been doing. It has been a tough year for you all and also for our Circuit Leadership Team and they also need our prayers.

St Paul writes in his second letter to the Corinthians

2 Corinthians 4:8-12.

*We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be made visible in our bodies. For while we live, we are always being given up to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus may be made visible in our mortal flesh. So death is at work in us, but life in you.*

Our Annual General Church Meeting on March 8<sup>th</sup>, to which all are invited, takes place in the season of Lent. We journey with Jesus to the Cross and on Easter Day we celebrate the resurrection.

But that is our daily reality also... we do not wait for Easter to be reminded of the resurrection. Days might seem tough: bereavement, pain, loneliness, sadness, too much work, too little work, but, as Christians, can we see glimpses of the divine amidst the pain and difficulty?

The Gospel set for the first Sunday in Lent this year is Matthew 4 v 1- 11. Jesus is in the desert, alone with himself and his thoughts and his temptations, (think how hard that must be... most people find a Quiet Day hard!) But at the end we read that angels ministered unto him.

I am grateful to all the angels at SJPB who minister in so many ways. Can we all seek to find angels in the wilderness and thereby have a foretaste of the resurrection? The Connexion has sent us the Reverend Dr John Amankwatia until July to help us with pastoral visiting (I have asked him to visit people at Oxlease, MRMC and SJPB) and he is taking services on the Plan .... And I know those of you who have had visits from him have been blessed. Amidst all the difficulties, can we see those signs of the life of Jesus which St Paul talks about?

We come together on March 8th to reflect on the life of the Church over the last 12 months and to see where God might be leading us into the future.

Every Blessing

**Rosemary Fletcher**

## **Leadership Team**

While our minister Ali has been on extended sick leave, we have been grateful to have the support of our Circuit Superintendent, Rev Rosemary Fletcher, who has taken a keen interest in St John's. We were very sad that one of our team, Gill Hutley, understandably resigned due to her health situation and she will be sorely missed. Her enthusiasm, cheerfulness and insight were greatly valued.

### **Services**

We have managed to continue our normal array of services (including Parade, Creative Church, Praise & Play, Junior Johns and our informal evening Café Worship), despite not having our regular minister, with the exception of our monthly Tuesday Communion. Owing to the small number of attendees it was felt unfair to continue calling on our willing ministers from other local churches. We had our full range of Christmas services – some were our own local arrangement – and thanks must go to all those involved in the organisation and participation of these. At Easter 2020 we are again holding a Tenebrae service on Maundy Thursday (9<sup>th</sup> April), there is the CTPB Walk of Witness on Good Friday (10<sup>th</sup> April) and our now usual Easter Creative with Communion on Easter Day (12<sup>th</sup> April). As part of *Thy Kingdom Come* in May (21<sup>st</sup>-31<sup>st</sup>) we are proposing to hold a Praise & Prayer service on Friday evening 29<sup>th</sup> May involving contributions from as many of the local churches as we can muster.

Last July we had our new format Parade and Creative Fun Day at Morven and plans are underway to repeat that in July 2020.

### **Prayer**

Over the last year, we have announced 3 or 4 prayer topics each month. The topics are publicised via the screen notices, St Johns News and the website and we encourage you all to include these topics

in your prayers, whether in your meeting groups or personal praying. We also plan to construct a Prayer Tree in a prominent position, upon which anyone can hang a prayer.

### **Children and Families Work**

Last year we were hoping that we would be able to combine with King Charles the Martyr in appointing a part-time Children and Families Worker. Unfortunately, this has not proved viable but we are still hopeful that in due time we may be able to appoint our own worker. This would be to support and work alongside our Sunday groups, Junior Youth Club and Jumping Johns toddler group together with any new initiatives.

### **Events**

In July 2019, we held our *Parade and Creative Fun Day*. This was an evolution of our Family Fun Day and had a new format. The Scout groups camped over the previous night, which added to our numbers and we included a Creative type service on the Sunday morning followed by an excellent Barbecue courtesy of some Scouting volunteers. It is our plan to repeat this format in 2020.

Participation has been encouraged in Churches Together Potters Bar events with a number of us volunteering at the CTPB Holiday Club for primary school aged children which took place in August 2019. We also hosted the CTPB Discover Christmas Event again in December 2019 which involved crafts and the use of drama to tell the Christmas story.

### **Community**

We were pleased this year to be able to install a defibrillator outside the front door which is available to anyone on calling the emergency services. A number of our leaders have also undertaken First Aid at Work training with familiarisation of the defibrillator.

We would also like to thank everyone for the very generous support of the various charities throughout the year including All We Can, Christian Aid, Whitechapel Mission (Harvest), Tear Fund (The Big Quiz), Noah's Ark Hospice and Action for Children (Christmas) and several others.

Finally I would like to thank all of you for your support over the past year. There are so many who give their time and skills in so many ways that it is impossible to list them. It is what makes St John's the wonderful place it is and the outworking of the Body of Christ.

**Chris Humphreys**

### **Pastoral Report**

Thanks as always must go also to our fantastic team of 21 pastoral contacts who help in a variety of ways to care for our church family. At present we are fortunate to have 153 on our community roll at St. Johns of which 103 are members.

**Membership Changes since last year:** we welcomed Sheila Osborn who has been a part of our church for many years into full membership.

Sadly Glyn Evans, Marjorie Borrows, Pam Harrison and Barbara Attridge have this year passed away. Peter and Theresa Gaylor, David and Glynis Cracknell, Helen Johnston, Julia and Abigail Lim, Beth Burns and Glynne Parry have all moved away and are worshiping near their new homes.

Tom Ritson and Madeleine Lewis have both asked to be moved from full membership to the list of adherents. We were pleased when Sheila Alcock moved back to Potters Bar and Lee Khalid was baptised and became an adherent also.

On 23rd February we held our annual memorial service led by Rosemary which was well attended. Names of loved ones were read out and 57 candles lit in their memory.

We would like to express our gratitude and thanks to Rosemary Fletcher and John Amankwiatia for their love, care and help of all kinds over many weeks. They have invested so much of their time and energy into the pastoral work at St. John's. John is away in Ghana for the whole of March but is keen to restart his pastoral visits on his return.

**Helen Barlow**

## Property Report

Again we express our gratitude to the Monday Morning Fix-It group and to all who have worked at other times and contribute so much to the upkeep of our buildings and gardens. A special thanks to those volunteers who took part in the working party at the beginning of August and to those who provided such delicious cakes.

### Health and Safety

A Defibrillator has been installed, funded from donations, and its use has been covered in a series of first aid courses. Access can be given as part of dialling 999.

Fire alarm: Indicators are about to be installed below the false ceiling panels (where the detectors are above) as part of the half-yearly maintenance due around Easter, and we have agreed to follow advice to replace the smoke detectors a few at a time as they are now 15 years old.

A beacon indicator will be installed in the accessible toilet in line with regulations for the visually impaired.

Emergency Lighting: Several fittings are being replaced where batteries have life-expired, and additional lights added in the vestibule where the coverage was inadequate. All new lights are led and, where possible, more aesthetically pleasing ones are being installed.

### Building Report

There have been three main aspects to caring for our building this year.

Roofs: The perennial issue of roof coverings has continued with work recommended in our Quinquennial Inspection as well as several other issues where moisture leaked through with a total of £7,000 spent in the past year. The issue was exacerbated by heavy rain during the inspection which showed up a number of potential problems for the near future which have now been remedied. The Property Stewards are aware that the flat roofs continue to be patched, and these areas are holding firm so there is not yet a need to consider full replacement of the asphalt. Other weaknesses have been in the flashings, and with two exceptions each new leak is in an area which has not been touched for several years.

Quinquennial Inspection: This took place in June on a very wet day, and showed the building to be in very good condition part of which is now 77 years old!

Other than work to roofs, the majority of the advice concerned longer term issues which are beginning to show. The issues of note are:

- The Car Park surface is again starting to break up and more extensive repairs are needed. We are currently costing the breaking out of the bad areas with full repair (as opposed to patching) against a full resurface, with a view to work taking place in the summer. There have been two specific complaints so far and an insurance claim was made by a user a few years ago who had tripped and been taken to hospital so this is clearly a Health & Safety issue. The full resurfacing would cost in the region of £9,000 if this were pursued.
- The metal Critall windows in the Worship Area are nearing the end of their life with some areas rusting, and other windows with damage to the leaded lights and broken panes. Particularly bad are the lower windows on the Approach Road side, although all the lower windows are in a poorer condition than those above. Separate quotes are being sought for lower and upper

windows with a clear priority for the lower windows to be replaced within the current 5 year period. This may entail a specific fund-raising effort. The lower windows could cost close to £10,000.

- At the time of the Clifton Room extension, we had the surface of a number of bricks re-faced due to erosion. There is now a number of other bricks in similar condition and this will be looked at during the summer. There are also some areas of pointing that need to be replaced. Total cost may be in the region of £5,000 to £8,000.

#### Other works

Work of a more minor nature continues on a weekly or monthly basis. We are very fortunate that our team of members who meet on Mondays are able to do much of the work which keeps contractors to a minimum. A working party was again held last summer who carried out redecoration of the church Vestibule, the side aisles and all woodwork in the church. Rear gents' toilet, the fire lobby between the Minister's Vestry and the church were painted, as was part of the Garden Room and window sills in the Clifton Room.

The Scouts had the covering on the Scout Hut roof replaced at the end of the summer and are now to look at the concrete panels forming the walls.

#### **Contents and Technology**

A shredder has been purchased for use by the Church and Nursery Playgroup given the new data and safeguarding regulations. Fix-It are now processing old accounting papers.

A new contract has been agreed with TalkTalk for our Internet service – used by both the Church and Playgroup, and the old payphone has been removed as use was very, very slight.

#### **Environmental Issues**

Energy performance – average fuel consumption over the winter months has been lower than last year, although the savings following previous insulation works have not been as great as hoped, possibly due to the fact that the Rainbow Room is now as warm as it needs to be! Work undertaken in the summer of 2018 appears to have been effective.

The overall Environmental Statement is now under review and a new policy will be produced during the coming year which will include specific actions and will lead to an Environmental Action Plan. We are looking at the Eco-award scheme and whether it may be possible for St John's to receive a Bronze Award.

#### **Oakmere Nursery Playgroup - lease**

Hertfordshire County Council have recommenced their efforts to put a proper lease in place for the Oakmere Nursery. The Church welcomes the additional security that a lease would give the Playgroup and this has been approved by Church Council and the District. Terms have been agreed and surveyors and solicitors are appointed. Legal documents are currently being progressed.

#### **Peter Barlow and Rosemary Bootle**

### **Treasurer's Report for the year to 31<sup>st</sup> August 2019**

The Church has two main funds, the General Church Fund and the Nursery Playgroup Fund.

#### **1. General Church Fund**

This fund is responsible for the costs of ministry and the maintenance and repair of the Church buildings.

The main source of income is regular giving from the members and friends and the related Gift Aid reclaimed from HMRC; this totalled £83,000. The other two significant sources of income are lettings income from third parties of £18,000 and the annual contribution for rent and service charges from the Playgroup setting held on the Church premises totalling £14,000. The total income of approximately £123,000 is slightly lower than in the previous year after allowance has been made for one off donations relating to the cost of the defibrillator. Regular giving and related Gift Aid showed a small year on year reduction, partly as a result of members leaving to relocate to other parts of the country.

The main expense is our share of the Circuit Assessment; this is the cost of supporting the Circuit ministers, their manses and the funds which the Circuit must pay to support Methodism at District and National levels. This cost increased by just over 2% to £65,400 for the year. Other costs also showed small increases over the previous year.

There was an overall surplus for the year of £5,900, which is lower than the previous year's surplus of £12,300 as a result of slightly lower income and higher costs. This surplus has been added to our reserves which now total approximately £114,000. The major renewal which it is hoped will be carried out soon is the replacement of some of the windows in the Church. It is likely that the anticipated cost of this major project will use up all the additional reserves held above the recommended acceptable level.

## **2. Nursery Playgroup Fund**

The Playgroup operates from two settings, one at Oakmere School and the other on the Church premises. It had a satisfactory year financially and achieved a small operating surplus of about £4,000, a slightly better outcome than the previous year, but it operates on very tight financial margins and tries hard to ensure that over each financial year it covers all its costs.

Total Playgroup income from the two settings was £263,000; 86% of this income came from Hertfordshire County Council ('HCC') for children's sessions which they funded, the balance being paid by parents. The Playgroup employs 26 staff; its main expense is staff salaries, which together with related pension costs and training charges totalled £235,000. It faces the challenge of covering increasing costs each year while its main source of funds, income from HCC, expressed as the hourly rate which they pay for children's sessions covered by them, has only increased by about 1% over the past three years. The Playgroup holds reserves of £114,000 to cover for the sudden loss of revenue and to provide for other contingencies including those relating to the employment of staff.

## **Conclusion**

The Church's finances remain in a satisfactory condition and it is indeed fortunate that members and friends continue to donate generously to enable all the work of the Church to continue and for its buildings to be maintained to a good standard.

Members and friends have also donated generously to various charities over the year including £2,422 to Keech Hospice, the Christmas 2018 appeal, £1,582 for the Malawi cyclone appeal, £1,033 for famine relief in Yemen and over £500 to the Whitechapel Mission in addition to considerable quantities of food and clothing. £668 was sent to four local charities from the net donations to our coffee fund.

The church's accounts have been scrutinised by the Property and Finance Committee and will be presented to the Church Council, as Managing Trustees, for their consideration and approval. The accounts will also be subject to an independent examination by a firm of Chartered Accountants.

The finalised accounts and the trustees' annual report are filed with the Charity Commission and are available for inspection on line by the general public.

### **Robert Ward**

## **Committee Members**

Here is a list of those who currently serve on our committees.

### **Church Council**

Rev Ali Facey	Minister
Kathryn Krause	Secretary
Chris Humphreys	Snr Steward
Robin Burns	Steward
Myra Sloper	Steward
Dave Best	Steward
Rob Ward	Treasurer
Peter Barlow	Property
Helen Barlow	Pastoral Secretary
John Sloper	Playgroup Board Chr
Dawn Fenner	Playgroup Board Rep
Celia Mills	Playgroup co-opted
Steve Matthews	Safeguarding
Jo Hutton	Women's Guild
Rev Rosemary Fletcher	Circuit Supt
Rev Andrew Prout	Circuit Minister
Valerie Vessey	Elected 2013
Stephen Krause	Elected 2013
David Bowler	Elected 2016
Roger Croughton	Elected 2017
David Carter	Elected 2019
Helen Jeckells	Elected 2019
Pat Griffith	Elected 2019

### **Leadership Team**

Rev Ali Facey	Minister
Chris Humphreys	Snr Steward
Myra Sloper	Steward
Robin Burns	Steward
Dave Best	Steward
Rob Ward	Treasurer

### **Pastoral Committee**

Rev Ali Facey	Minister
Helen Barlow	Secretary
All Stewards	
All Pastoral Contacts	

### **Property & Finance (Resources) Committee**

Rev Ali Facey	Minister
Peter Barlow	Lay Chair/Prop Stwd
Rob Ward	Treasurer
Chris Humphreys	Prop Stwd/Lettings
Roger Croughton	Property Steward
Rosemary Bootle	Secretary
Angela Paren	
David Bowler	Cleaning
Stephen Krause	Health & Safety
David Carter	Environment
	Employment
	GDPR

### **Nursery Playgroup Board**

Rev Ali Facey	Minister
John Sloper	Lay Chair
Celia Mills	Manager
Alyson Gnesson	Oakmere Leader
Rob Ward	Treasurer
Guy Fenner	Asst Treasurer
Dawn Fenner	
Steve Matthews	
Petra Necasova	

### **Communications Committee**

Chris Esdaile	Lay Chair
Chris Humphreys	
Margaret Rhodes	

### **Outreach & Evangelism Committee**

New committee to be formed