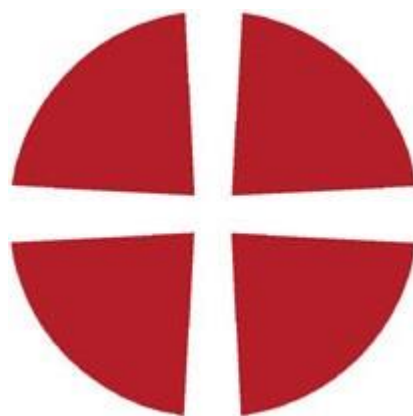


Stamford Methodist Church

www.stamfordmethodistchurch.org.uk
Facebook: Stamford Methodist Church



Annual Report 2018



Welcome to our Annual Report for 2017 - 2018

The reports contained within this booklet aim to tell the story of life at Stamford Methodist Church. Here you will find stories of groups and events inspired and prompted by God at work in our lives. From Bible study and worship to outreach and mission, the life and activity reflected here pays tribute to how people within our fellowship seek to be faithful to the God who calls us to make a difference.

Please take time to read and reflect and pray for all that goes on in our busy church. You may feel a sense of prompting to get involved in something new, or simply recognise with thanksgiving the energy and willingness which these reports highlight.

The Annual General Church Meeting will receive the reports formally on Sunday 6th May 2018 after morning worship. This is an open meeting and everyone is invited to share in it. There are important decisions to make too, including the election of our church stewards and leaders. Please make every effort to be there.

Once the meeting is over, these reports will become a prayer resource for you to use in the forthcoming year.

Thank you for taking time to read this booklet, and I pray that you will be inspired by what you find here.

With every blessing,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Andy Fyfe". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped 'A' and 'F'.

Minister

Stamford Methodist Church

Minister's Report to the Annual General Church Meeting 2018

Sunday 6th May 2018

Stamford Methodist Church continues to be a busy fellowship with an outward looking vision. The church not only provides a place of worship for all but also enables and encourages outreach and mission in a variety of ways.

Stamford Methodist Church provides regular acts of worship open to all. We seek to grow in Christian faith through worship, teaching and fellowship and care for all through our pastoral system. Our building is open to a wide range of groups and activities, meaning that the welcome of the church is felt far beyond our regular membership.

This short report, my ninth as minister, seeks to highlight the witness, mission and ministry we offer and to inspire us to growth in personal faith and as a church.

We have shared some interesting times of worship and outreach together since the last Annual General Church Meeting in 2017. This year I have chosen to use the Connexional aims, 'Our Calling', as a framework for my report.



Worship to increase an awareness of God's presence and to celebrate God's love.

- *Sunday worship*
- *Bible Study and Fellowship Groups*
- *School visits to the church*



Learning and caring to help people learn and grow as Christians, through mutual support and care.

- *Wednesday fellowship*

- GB/JCBs
- Church Stewards
- Pastoral Visiting team
- Rites of passage
- Junior Church
- Mission Projects Group
- Churches Together in Stamford
- Safeguarding



Service to be a good neighbour to people in need and to challenge injustice.

- Christian Aid Week
- Community groups using the premises
- Youth Outreach Work Project
- Second Helpings
- The Well



Evangelism to make more followers of Jesus Christ

- Churches Together events
- Concerts
- Encouraging faith sharing in deed and word

THE REPORT



Worship to increase an awareness of God's presence and to celebrate God's love.

Sunday worship

Our Sunday worship is rich and varied, resourced by our ministry team, Local Preachers and Worship Leaders. We seek to offer a variety of approaches ranging - preaching services, alternative worship, occasional all age worship, tea time church and quiet, reflective evening worship which often includes prayer for healing and wholeness.

We regularly have visitors among us who enrich our worship, as well as the general movement of people in and out of the church family from time to time.

We are grateful to everyone who makes our worship meaningful including the AV team, the worship group, our organists (and I am delighted to see David Husbands taking his place on the rota when he can), the stewards, readers, worship leaders and many others. Thank you.

Bible Study and Fellowship Groups

I am grateful to those who resource our study groups and lead them. Such groups give the opportunity for more interactive, conversational reflection on the Bible and faith in general.

During this Connexional year we have introduced a monthly Wednesday evening Bible Study Group, particularly aimed at those in employment. The group is in its formative stage, but I have been encouraged to meet with the group on a couple of occasions already.

School visits

We have had the opportunity to welcome groups from Malcolm Sargent School and Wilds Lodge School on more than one occasion during the year. This keeps our links with children open and feeds into the summer holiday club attendance.

We also participated in the Annual Churches Together 'Schools Festival' again in June 2017 and I am grateful to those who resourced it.



Learning and caring to help people learn and grow as Christians, through mutual support and care.

Wednesday fellowship (weekly at 2pm in the hall)

Aimed at our 'more mature' members and friends, Wednesday Fellowship meets weekly and provides fellowship, learning, worship and care.

GB/JCBs (weekly on Tuesdays between 6pm and 7.15pm)

Reaching within and beyond the church family, GB/JCBs offers a lively programme of activity and Christian based learning for 5 to 18-year olds led by our dedicated team of voluntary leaders.

Church Stewards

The team of stewards provide not only practical support for worship and other services, but also share in the leadership of the church putting in place the decisions of the Church Council to further our mission and ministry. They are an invaluable support to me as minister and I am deeply grateful to them for their commitment and care.

Pastoral Visiting team

We have a good team of Pastoral Visitors (although there is always a need for more). Supporting me in the pastoral care of our members and friends, we meet twice per year to pray for everyone on our list together and ensure that proper care is maintained for all. The Pastoral Visitors deliver the monthly newsletter as a means of maintaining contact with those in their group.

Stamford Methodist Church has a membership of 222 people on our list as well as contact with well over 500 others through community outreach, the Well and lettings.

Rites of passage

Since our last AGM, I have been privileged to share in significant life moments with members, friends and folk in the community.

Rejoicing with those who rejoice, we have welcomed four children by baptism and I have prepared four couples for marriage and conducted their wedding services.

Weeping with those who weep, I have conducted 9 funeral services at or on behalf of the church and shared in many other pastoral situations.

Junior Church and crèche

We continue to provide a crèche each Sunday morning, Sunday Plus (for 5 to 11-year olds) and have the capacity for CK1 (Junior Church for 11 to 18-year olds).

It continues to be a cause for concern and prayer that we have very few children among us each week, although we do have the possibility of a reasonable group if they were all to come at the same time. The complexity of family life and other Sunday morning activities these days makes it difficult for all concerned, but we are committed to maintaining children and young people's work for those who come.

Mission Projects Group

Our Mission Projects Group continues to enable the church to reach out with loving, prayerful support beyond the walls of the church. Organising events and concerts to raise money for our chosen charities ('Mission Projects') we are able to support the needy and vulnerable in God's world.

The current charities are

- Dementia Care South Lincolnshire
- Nixon memorial Hospital, Sebgwema, Sierra Leone
- Stamford Methodist Youth Outreach Project

Churches Together in Stamford

Stamford Methodist Church is pleased to belong to CTiS, supporting the work of various outreach projects such as SHEP (Stamford

housing Essentials Project), Street Pastors (whom we host every Saturday night) and the Foodbank among others.

We encourage participation in the Churches Together Services and events, and take our turn in hosting them. Our representatives on CTiS are Clive Marshall, Jenny Whatley and Ian Husbands (who is also the treasurer).

Safeguarding

Along with the wider Methodist Church we are committed to making our place of worship a safer space for all who use it and our relationship with one another safe and caring in every way. Having been the Church Safeguarding Officer for 8 ½ years, I am delighted that we will elect Sian Chambers to this important role at our AGM.



Service to be a good neighbour to people in need and to challenge injustice.

Christian Aid Week

The Methodist Church is committed to challenging injustice and encouraging those in the wider community to help us do so. Christian Aid Week offers not only the opportunity to give, but also to educate people about our needy world and respond. The house to house collections are a great way to enable others to give and for us to show God's love in a practical way. Following Maurice Wade's retirement from the position of church co-ordinator after many years, we are delighted that Heather Ormston, Froo Coles and Jan Simmonds are taking up this role between them. Thank you to Maurice and thank you to Heather, Froo and Jan.

Community groups using the premises

We have numerous regular lettings, giving us the opportunity to befriend our neighbours and guests on our own premises. Ranging from choirs through to exercise groups to pantomime players, there is always something interesting going on!

Youth Outreach Work Project

Now in its 8th year with Luke Denley as Youth Outreach Worker, Stamford Methodist Church engages with young people in schools and the college through Luke's ministry.

We are thrilled to have acquired the lease for the Shack on the recreation ground, and will be opening the building as our youth outreach centre every Tuesday and Thursday between 3 and 6pm from 8th May.

With the help of the significant grant from the Methodist Connexion, we are able to furnish the Shack appropriately and we have employed Ruth Pryke as YOW assistant following shortlisting from four applicants and interviewing two.

The aim is to offer a space for young people to 'be' where we can befriend them and help them think about Christian faith in very low key, organised ways. We hope and pray that a new youth congregation might grow at the Shack through this ministry. We have also been accepted as a suitable project for a Connexionally funded 'Youth Work Apprentice' for one year to start in September 2018. The advert and job description for this role is now available and can be found on the Church, Circuit, District and Connexional websites. If you know a young person aged between 18 and 25 who might be interested in working with us for a year, please share the advert with them.

Second Helpings

Our church and community 'real junk food café' project which pops up in the church hall every Saturday from 12 – 2pm continues to provide nutritious, healthy meals for all on a pay as you feel basis.

The generosity of shops, farms and food providers is easily matched by the enthusiasm and commitment of our volunteers who make this project such a success.

We now open the cellar as a grocery (or 'Food Boutique') every Thursday and Friday between 12 and 2pm with the help of Paul, who oversees the distribution of fresh food to those who need it.

Second Helpings is seeking a Project manager who will oversee the admin and day to day running of the scheme which is now a significant task. An honorarium will be given to the successful applicant.

The Well

Our church coffee shop (Wed - Fri 10 am – 3pm) continues to provide a warm and friendly place to meet, greet and eat – outreach with good coffee and food without going anywhere! There is also the Fairtrade shop which sells beautiful items created by ethnic communities around the world, paying just wages to the makers – as well as fairly traded food and drinks. We are in the fortunate position of being able to give away all the funds we raise to our Mission Projects.

We also provide opportunities to students with specific needs from Stamford College to experience working in a café environment. Our wonderful team of dedicated staff, led by Jan Hetherington, are to be praised for their tireless dedication.



Evangelism to make more followers of Jesus Christ

Churches Together events

The Good Friday act of witness is the largest such gathering each year, attracting a large group from the various churches silently following the cross through the crowded town centre is quiet a witness.

Over the past two years, it has been my privilege to instigate and organise the Holocaust Memorial Commemoration in January along with a Town Councillor and a member of the Liberal Jewish Congregation (Peterborough). A very moving and evocative occasion, it has now been adopted as a Churches Together event.

Concerts

Our regular Mission projects concerts now only serve to raise money and awareness of need, but are also opportunities to gently remind visitors of who we are as church.

Encouraging faith sharing in deed and word

We all want to see the church grow! I am committed to growing God's church both in faith and number, and this a task we are called to do together.

I hope that my ministry is encouraging of faith, helps us all to think deeply about our beliefs and pray informedly.

As a result, my prayer is that we all take the opportunities that arise to share our faith in deed and word, encouraging others to taste and see that the Lord is good!

In order to further resource our faith sharing, there are lots of opportunities through the Circuit Study days and events to encourage us all, and we will be having a church mission in November led by Reverend Paul Wilson, a Methodist minister based in the North-West.

I am sure that there is much more to say but neither time nor space allows it. I am also certain that many of the items listed under the heading above could be mentioned under other headings too!

We rejoice at being part of the vibrant Stamford Circuit, and I encourage us all (as Superintendent Minister now!) to take every opportunity we can to partake in the life of the wider circuit and so encourage and support friends in other churches too.

Thank you to **everyone** who has contributed in any way, large or small, obvious or hidden, to the prayer life and mission and ministry of our church. We continue to look to God to guide us in all things as we seek to honour God and share the love of Christ among us and in our community.

Thank you for your commitment and the many ways in which you share in the life of Stamford Methodist Church. I remain privileged to serve as your minister.

Andy Fyall, 25th April 2018

Youth Outreach Report

As I begin to write this report I am amazed that I am in my 7th year here at Stamford Methodist Church. My work sees me working in the local schools and colleges, working with the young people from the church and also, as of the 8th May, working from the Shack, a youth drop in centre for the young people of Stamford.

My work sees me working in Casterton College Rutland. Here I am mentoring young people during the week. Many of the students are struggling with their own problems and having someone who will listen to them is vital to them and to the school.

At Casterton College Rutland I also run a lunchtime club twice a week and this engages students who may struggle during lunchtimes.

I continue to do a lunchtime club at Stamford Welland each week, again seeing students who struggle at lunchtimes, but by coming to a lunchtime club they are able to thrive.

I continue to work at New College Stamford as their College Chaplain. This is an interesting part of the work trying to engage with the students, listening to them where they are at and where possible talking of faith with them. I am taking food from Second Helpings and creating a food boutique at the college. This goes down very well especially with the staff.

I continue to work with the church's young people and it is a joy to work alongside the young people of the church. I have offered support to the current Methodist Youth President, Michael Pryke, this year as he seeks to perform his duties for The Methodist Church.

The work at The Shack has been a long time in the making, but we are now due to open on the 8th May. We have been held back a bit with the redevelopment that the Town Council

wanted to do, but this project is exciting and will aim to engage the young people of Stamford. This project will open on a Tuesday and a Thursday from 3pm until 6pm. We are providing a youth drop in centre and offering food provided from Second Helpings.

I am pleased to announce that we have appointed a Youth Work Assistant and I look forward to working with Ruth Pryke as she begins her work in this position.

There is an internship scheme within the Methodist Church called a One-Person Participant Scheme. Stamford Methodist Church has put in their application for this project and I am pleased to say that we were chosen to host a project. This project is run in conjunction with the local Methodist Church and would provide training for the young person run by the Methodist Church centrally.

I look forward to developing the Youth Outreach project and working with the Youth Outreach assistant and the OPP worker as we seek to share God's Love for the young people of Stamford.

Luke Denley

Youth Outreach Worker - Financial Report

On behalf of the YOW Management Committee it is great to be able to endorse Luke's report, especially concerning the long-awaited opening of The SHACK which is currently secure because of the dedicated Connexional grant. This has enabled us to part fund Luke's salary this year and employ Ruth Pryke as Assistant YOW as well as meet the legal and associated set-up costs and rent. Income for The SHACK has been supplemented by Second Helpings which has provided most of our catering equipment and a generous grant from Methodist Women in Britain for all the other equipment. This leaves us with our core salary costs. We are indebted to the Stamford Circuit and to Stamford Methodist Church for

their grant support and to the individual donors whose 'little and often' help makes such a difference. Despite our best efforts the application to the Aviva Community Fund did not reach the finals but they did give us £100 for trying! We are also grateful to the GB for a donation of £300. This still leaves an estimated shortfall of approximately £11,000, however, and we are exploring ways of boosting income including a grant application to the Henry Smith Charity as well as awaiting the outcome of an earlier appeal to the local ARK Trust.

Audrey Hensman

CHURCH TREASURER'S REPORT for the period ending 5th May 2018

- At this point, we are anticipating a year end deficit of £1,678. With a little less than 4 months of the financial year to go, this figure is more than likely to change.
- Collections to date for the current year are down on the figure at this point in 2017. There has been a gradual decline in giving since 2015
- Our assessment for the year 2018-2019 has been agreed with the Circuit at £55,383. This is an increase of £2,383 on this year's figure. We will probably need to appeal for more giving through collections to cover this additional sum.
- Gift Aid should amount to approximately £11,750 and should be received in August 2018.
- A Bequest has been received from the late Mary Coles of £500.
- It is not expected that we will be undertaking the repairs to the Halls windows in this financial year which was included in the budget. Our prediction for the Repairs and Maintenance expenditure has been adjusted accordingly.
- The media screens that have recently been installed in the rear corridor and The Well have been paid for out of the Eric Cook bequest.

- The Christmas Collections total amounted to £1,176 and this sum has been paid to our nominated charity, Action for Children.
- The Norwich and Peterborough Building Society account has now been closed and the 2 new accounts with Barclays and Lloyds are working well. The minor issues that arose at the beginning have been resolved.
- Applying for Charitable status for the Church is in its early stages, but the process is underway and more information on this will be given to all members of Church Council
- Our financial situation is constantly changing, but I will give an up to date summary at the Annual meeting, together with year-end predictions agreed at the recent Finance Committee.
- I should like to express my thanks to the collection counters who regularly attend to count and bank the collection monies each week and to Bill Newbery who constantly monitors our utilities usage.

*Eddie Adams
Church Treasurer
19 April 2018*

Second-helpings report

The project has grown at a rapid rate since we opened in October 2015. It has been a steep learning curve for all involved and no doubt mistakes have been made en route.

Most volunteers have been very loyal and new recruits by and large have not been too difficult to find. The growth of our food collections in particular is creating a need for more collectors. Cooks have come and gone but more volunteer cooks have been found so that they only need to do about one every 5 weeks. One cook travels from Wakefield when it is his turn, such is his enthusiasm for second-helpings. Sadly, in December one of our volunteers, Matt McCormack died after a very bad fall in Broad St and despite surgery in Addenbrookes Hospital he failed to recover.

Attendance for meals has gradually increased and we now serve regularly between 80 and 100 folks. As well as our regular meals we have provided meals for the Prison Fellowship, a Birthday party, and the Circuit Quiz. Christmas lunch again proved very successful with extra-large donations of food from some supermarkets and a kind donation of a turkey for the second year running by a local supporter. We have been requested to do a meal for a WI conference for over 100 people. On 5th May, Simon Spooner, who made it through to the last 9 of TV's MasterChef will be cooking for us. He is looking forward to the challenge of not knowing till the last minute what food is available and how many he will be cooking for.

The future holds the exciting prospect of expansion as we have offered to cater for the youth project in the Shack every Tuesday and Thursday. The Shack could provide us with an opportunity to expand to lunches during the week. Church Council has approved the idea of Sunday lunches after church, we just need to look at the practicalities and times. Church Council has approved in principle the installation of a Community Fridge in the Tunnel opposite the second-helpings food store. We are looking at recruiting a Project Co-ordinator as the person currently doing this work is getting rather old and tired.

Funds have been donated by several WI clubs, the local Tennis Club and a musical event held at the King's head pub. Waitrose volunteered their green token box for a month and M & S selected us as their charity of the year providing money and labour for chosen tasks. At the time of writing this report, I have heard from M & S head office that the local branch wants to choose us again as their charity for the coming year.

Although numbers for Saturday meals have increased, the donations (for meals provided) have not risen significantly, indicating that we are reaching more guests who are in need.

I thank those church members who have eaten with us, and invite those who have not yet sampled our meals to give us a try. You are very welcome to come and join us. No need to book in advance!

We have a very mixed clientele, for example, a millionaire sitting and talking having a meal with a rough sleeper.

I nearly forgot, below are the latest second helpings statistics from October 2015 to end March 2018;

- Food intercepted = 29,246kg
- People fed = 9094 (includes from Food store)
- Servings = 14,709

“We’re feeding bellies not bins”

George Hetherington

The Well Report

The Well continues to be a place of welcome and care to all who come in as well as offering refreshments at reasonable prices. Unfortunately, we do not have as many customers as we used to although Wednesdays are busy with members of Twinkletots coming through after their session. Thursdays are very quiet, and even Fridays, with a few notable exceptions are no longer as busy as they were. Please do try to spread the word that The Well is a good place to meet and be refreshed!

Our volunteers are as important to us as ever. We have welcomed some new faces this year which has been invaluable. We also have a student from New College Lifeskills department on a work placement on Fridays.

Despite being less busy we have managed to donate £ 4,000 so far this year to Mission Projects as well as raising £112.60 for

Evergreen, £116.92 for Macmillan and £207.08 for the Traidcraft Big Brew Hidden Entrepreneur appeal. We have also supported the Karibuni Project in Kenya with sales of their stock.

Our stock includes Christian books and gifts for religious occasions such as Baptism, Confirmation, etc. These include olive wood items from Bethlehem, gift bibles and crosses of various kinds. We also continue to sell Christian books courtesy of Peterborough Christian Bookshop who let us have stock on sale or return. Please ask if there is a particular title you want and I can order it for you. Do come and look at our stock before you go to the High Street – you may find just what you are looking for. We have quite a range of cards for all occasions. Please consider just buying one item of your regular shopping, e.g. sugar, muesli, tea, sultanas and there are many more and you will be helping someone in the developing world to trade their way out of poverty!

Jan Hetherington

JMA (Junior Mission for All) 2018 Report

At the end of August 2017, the 3 young people, collecting JMA money each week, had raised the grand sum of £1,808.45, which included some donations. Congratulations to them all. They are doing an excellent job.

A very big 'thank you' to all who encourage them by donating regularly to Missions in this way.

If anyone wishes to donate in this way the collectors are Kyle Howitt, Stephen Husbands and Grace Wright.

New collectors would be very welcome.

Judith Wade

Twinkle Tots Report

The past year has been a difficult one for Twinkle Tots.

Firstly, our numbers dropped quite dramatically. We feel some of this is due to the fact that the Government now give Funding to 3-year olds to go to Nursery's etc.

Secondly staffing has been difficult due to health issues (only to be expected as those of us who provide this service are not in our prime).

As I write this report I am facing the very sad decision as to when we have to fix a finishing date.

Each year we have appealed for helpers. There was not a lot of response and sadly some who did volunteer now have health issues themselves.

If there is anyone out there who can come and rescue this very valuable service we will be pleased to meet you.

One suggestion I would like to make is that the Church Council at Barn Hill looks into the possibility of us having a Children's and Family Worker for our Church who could assist and encourage all aspects of work among children, young people and their families

Judith Wade

Christian Aid Report

After many years as the church's Christian Aid coordinator, Maurice Wade has decided to retire from the role. We are grateful to Maurice for his enthusiasm and encouragement to us all to raise much needed funds for this worthy charity serving some of the poorest people across the world and showing God's love in practice.

We are delighted that Heather Ormston, Froom Coles and Jan Simmonds have agreed to take up this role from 2018.

Sunday Plus Report

We continue to offer Sunday + for primary aged children every Sunday morning during worship. We have a small but dedicated team who work together to help the children think about Christian faith at their level and provide interesting and fun sessions.

We continue to share the concern about the numbers who attend week by week, and try to maintain contact with families as best we can. Over the last year we have held two bring and share lunches for church families after morning worship and we intend to continue doing so on an ad hoc basis.

If you feel that you would like to become involved with Sunday + as a leader or a helper, please speak to one of the team:

Helen Fyall, Katharine Gosling, Gareth Jones and Ruth Pryke

Thank you for your prayers and support for the work of Sunday Plus.

Stewards Report

The Stewards at Barn Hill have a good team spirit and during the year we recruited Charlotte Davis and John Cameron, who joined the team and fitted in very well, working alongside the 'old timers'.

We have 8 stewards at present Conan Lewis, Jenny Whatley, Ted Murray, Corinna Selby, Anne Wiltshire, Charlotte Davis, John Cameron and myself.

During the year Beth Hodgson and Maz Roberts have stood down, Beth to give more time to her new twin Grandsons, although she continues to work behind the scenes sending out letters to the preachers, an important part of our job and Maz so she can concentrate on her Local Preacher studies. We are grateful to them both for their work and support. Ted Murray

had a brief sabbatical after surgery and we were pleased when he felt well enough to resume.

Past stewards Pauline Jones and Jan Hetherington have helped on occasions when we've needed an extra pair of hands and I thank them for their offers.

As the Senior Steward for the past year I am very grateful to all the stewards for their willingness and enthusiasm in carrying out their duties and supporting each other and me. I am thankful that we work well together and wish my successor all the best in their new role, they have my blessing.

Finally, I wish to thank the congregation for their support of the team.

*Nina Rawlins
Senior Steward*

Open Door Report

Unfortunately, this group will be ceasing to operate for the foreseeable future.

Susan Sandall

Prayer Meetings Reports

Monday Meetings

Group meet at Mrs Sheila Wolfenden's home each Monday, bank holidays excepted.

We share together the needs of the Circuit churches, particular issues of concern and for Individuals who are ill, bereaved, those with special needs, people listed on the weekly prayer list.

All are welcome to join in this essential work of God.

Jenny Whatley

Tuesday Meetings

Tuesdays from 12 – 12.30pm is a time when we pause to pray for the renewal of God's church and revival of Christian faith, following the encouragement of the Methodist Conference 2017.

Whenever possible, I go to the Prayer Chapel for this time of prayer. However, being aware that not everyone is available for a meeting at that time, I continue to encourage everyone to pray for renewal and revival at noon on a Tuesday wherever you can for up to half an hour.

Andy Fyall

Tuesday Afternoon House-group Report

The Tuesday afternoon house-group meet every first and third Tuesday of the month in the Prayer Chapel. We have spent most of the past year studying "Acts" by Tom Wright and found it very challenging and enjoyable. We learned a lot from it and shared many personal experiences which came from it.

Throughout the year we have been collecting for "Dementia Support" and have collected over £100 so far. It was agreed by the group that we carry on collecting for this charity and hope to raise more money in the coming months.

In our last session before Christmas we had an Advent Reflection together and also shared a time of fellowship with mince pies which we all enjoyed.

We currently have thirteen members in the house-group and the numbers seem to be growing steadily, which is very encouraging. We are pleased that Bill Newbery and some members of his house-group are joining us after they had to disband and we welcome anyone who would like to come and be part of our happy, light-hearted group. Of course, we

do discuss serious issues too and enjoy the range of opinions and views which are always interesting.

In April we are starting a new 10 session Lifebuilder Bible study "Women of the New Testament" and I look forward to what it holds for us. Please feel free to join us any time for a "taster" session.

Beryl Teasdale

Empingham Mission Band

Another good year for the band with 20 engagements.

Our membership though is now 16 with 2 left, 1 retired and 1 died we do not seem to be able to find new members so if anyone would like to join us we would be very happy to welcome them.

Our engagements included Stamford free Church, Christchurch, and in our circuit Barnhill, Empingham, Thurlby and Ryhall

We also have been to Crowland and Elton in the Peterborough circuit

Keith Thrift

Barn Hill Prayer & News service

This is an e-mail based system, which sends out prayer requests and news about the church and its members to everyone who has registered to receive them.

Anyone with an e-mail address can ask to be included, and anyone can ask for information to be sent out. The system does not normally reveal your e-mail address to others. I try to keep messages brief and informative without going into too

much detail. There are probably two or three messages a week on average, but it does fluctuate. People like to know what is going on and to pray for others, or to be prayed for. There are currently 73 recipients.

For information contact Ian Husbands on 01780 753968 or IGHUSBANDS@GMAIL.COM

Ian Husbands

Churches Together in Stamford Report

Churches Together in Stamford is the collaborative organisation of Christian Churches and other Christian charitable organisations in the town.

We arrange a number of united events during the year, such as carol singing round the hospital, the procession of witness through the town centre and drama on Good Friday, the schools festival for primary school children in June, united services for One World Week and the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, the bread & cheese lunches during Lent, and co-ordinate the house to house collection for Christian Aid. We also organise a quarterly lunch for the church leaders, which facilitates good relations between them and mutual support. They all try to come! We have a homeless & hardship fund to help those in need.

A recent new initiative is "Praying on the Streets" on Fridays in the town centre.

We have forum meetings quarterly at which matters of mutual interest are spoken about and plans made. A number of major initiatives in the town have first been floated at Churches Together forums. The forum comprises several people from each member church. There is space for more people from Barn Hill and new people would be welcome. Further information from Ian Husbands (01780 753968 or IGHusbands@gmail.com), who is a past chairman and is currently treasurer.

The member churches are: All Saint's C of E, Barn Hill Methodist, Christchurch C of E, Free Church Baptist, Great Casterton C of E, St Augustine's Roman Catholic, St George's C of E, St Martin's C of E, St Mary's C of E, United Reformed.

We have a good working relationship with the Churches Together. Some points raised at the most recent Forum Meeting are mentioned below:

Christian Aid

Arrangements have been made for the house-to-house collection next month under the co-ordinator Alison Warrick, All Saints Anglican Church. There will be a coffee morning to raise funds at St. Augustine's church hall, 09.00 – 12.00 on Friday, 18 May also at the URC church hall the previous Friday on the 11 May, all are welcome.

Lent Lunches

These had been very successful raising a sum of £752 for Christian Aid despite the difficult weather conditions, funds are up by 5% over last year amount.

Street Pastors

This service has been operating now for 7 years. Still a need for volunteers and other leadership roles. They are engaging in community outreach in an effort to raise their profile. It has been suggested that existing volunteers speak at different churches to encourage support.

Praying on the Streets of Stamford – POTSS

New venue is at St. Michael's churchyard a warmer and quieter location.

Evergreen Care Trust

Are engaged in a recruitment drive covering a wide range of workers. Prayers held at SHYP House

On Monday at 10.00-11.00 to pray for their work in helping those in need in the community.

Second Helpings Cafe

Are continuing to be busy helping to feed those in need. They may be expanding to offer another day .

Schools' Festival

Arrangements are in hand for this year.

Good Friday – Walk of Witness

Went extremely well. Someone to help with general organising the day was requested in order that The drama organiser is given more time to plan his programme.

Week of Prayer for Unity

Evening service 17.00 hrs at Christ Church or URC Church, to be confirmed later, date arranged for 20 January, 2019.

Renew Café

Speaker who had been involved in the opening of Renew Cafes, helping people with mental health issues liaising with churches in the Nottingham area, friendships share with health professional present to help, not proselytising just being available to listen and share situations.

Jenny Whatley & Ian Husbands

Stamford & Rutland Circuit Report

Barn Hill is the largest of the 10 churches in the Stamford Methodist Circuit. The Circuit provides mutual support and encouragement between the churches, which is particularly valued by the smaller village chapels. It provides various resources, fellowship, training, preachers and ministers. It handles the finance to pay for all this - about half Barn Hill's income (known as "The Assessment").

The circuit has two full time ministers – Rev Andy Fyall, who is the Circuit Superintendent and has pastoral charge of Barn Hill and the village chapels at Ketton & Ryhall. Rev Ruth Charlsworth has pastoral charge of the churches at Bourne, Thurlby & Deeping St James. Rev Leo Osborn works 3 weeks out of 4 to take care of Oakham, Uppingham, Empingham & Somerby. Philip Jones is employed part time as Rural Mission Enabler. The Circuit also employs Sarah Lamb as part time Children & Families Worker, and Rowan Scholtz as part time Circuit Administrator. All the other circuit officers are unpaid.

The next Circuit event is the popular “Barn Weekend” at Normanton Lodge Farm, with the barn dance (with food!) from 6.30pm on Saturday 12th May and service at 5.00pm on Sunday 13th May.

Ian Husbands

Music Group Report

We enjoy leading the more contemporary sung worship most Sunday mornings. We try to encourage young people to play in the group, learning what it is to participate in and to lead worship as part of a team, as well as developing their musical skills. We are always happy to have recommendations of good new songs so that we can learn them and introduce them into worship.

Julia Husbands

Wednesday Afternoon Fellowship

MEMBERSHIP

25 attends regularly to date, sadly during this year our member Loretta Ball passed away

COMMITTEE

Nina Rawlins (Treasurer) May Shellard (Birthday Sec.) Pat Fulcher, Maurice/Judith Wade.

GROUP ACTIVITIES

Devotion Service (first week of month) SPEAKERS - Laura Harden - Firefighters Charity, Gadfrey Jones - Tall Ships, Ron/Beryl Teasdale - Charles Dickens, Lizzie Cross - Olympic Games, Rev Ruth Charlesworth, Maz Roberts, David Bosworth, Kathy Hornig - Animal Welfare, Geoff/Elizabeth Heathcote, Phil Jones (Easter Service and Tea).

SOCIAL

Springtime Poetry (Members), Favourite Music (Members), Holiday Films - Pat, Yahtz (Members) Quiz with Nina, Humour Nina, Romance in the Air - Pat, March 2018 annual Lunch out at Bluebell , Belmistorpe.

VISITS

June 2017 Oakham Castle visit and talk followed by Afternoon tea at The Whipper Inn.

Pat Fulcher

Choir Report

Unfortunately, the decision was made to disband the choir for the time being.

GB/JCBs Report

We have had busy year, with lots of fun and enjoyment. We currently have fewer youngsters with us on a Tuesday than last year (about 20) but they are regular and include a few new ones gathered during the year. We have a happy group of 5 to 8-year olds and a lively group of 8-11s most of whom have no other church connection. The Brigaders (14-18s) are a great bunch who enjoy cooking (and devouring the results!), playing games and each other's company. Sadly, we have no Seniors (11-14) at the moment. GB/JCBs remains a valuable part of

our Church outreach and mission as we have contact with so many youngsters and their families.

The Brigaders took on the challenge of running a 'Pumpkin Party' as an alternative to Halloween. They did a good job; the evening was enjoyed by about 15 primary- aged children and resulted in some new members.

We have been in the habit of doing a panto every two years in aid of the Karibuni Trust but decided to try something a bit different this spring, presenting a musical about the story of Jonah. The youngsters threw themselves into learning lines and songs, and devising dances. They pulled it off very well, with the message of needing to share God's love with all coming through loud and clear.

We had another successful canvas camp last July in Norfolk. The weather was rather inclement at times (one highlight (??) being having a picnic in a multi-storey car park to keep dry) but we enjoyed lots of activities, food, games and good company. Ironically, the driest day was when we went paddle boarding and got deliberately wet! The folk at the local Methodist chapel were once again most welcoming, hosting us on a very wet afternoon and evening with handbells, games and a lovely cooked meal.

We have taken part in various District events including ice skating , and hosting the annual GB/BB parade. Locally, we once again joined the annual Remembrance Day parade in Broad Street.

We are very grateful to the dedicated team of leaders who work weekly with the youngsters in GB/JCBs, delivering a varied programme and sharing God's love. We are also grateful for the support and encouragement of the Church as we try to encourage more families to come to join us in worship.

Julia Husbands

Mission Projects Group Report

Since the last Annual Meeting the Mission Projects Group has been busy with many different fundraising activities in support of our chosen projects.

- John Archer – magician 17th June: £166
- Annual Dog Show and Family Fun Day 10th Sep: £2,443
- Paul Hale & Eleanor Turner – organ and harp recital 28th Oct: £388
- Craft and Chocolate Fair – 25th Nov: £440
- Stamford Brass Christmas concert 16th Dec: £509
- Carol Singing 23rd Dec: £363
- St Peters Singers – Passion Sunday offering shared: £118
- Kingfisher Chorale concert – 14th Apr: £191

In November we had our Mission Sunday with a stimulating address from Maurice Adams, the Director of 'All We Can' (MRDF) from the Methodist Church. We were also pleased that Dr Rob Burnie, chair of the Friends of Nixon Memorial Hospital, and his family were able to join us on that same occasion.

We continue to support the Nixon Memorial Hospital as our international project and have agreed to continue to support them on a long term basis which will be reviewed every three years. Since the last annual meeting we have donated £7,700 to the hospital.

The local project which we have been supporting since September 2017 is the Dementia Support South Lincs group which helps not only those suffering from dementia but also their friends and families who may need help. We have already donated £2,000 to the group since last September.

We continue to provide some help towards the youth outreach work done by Luke Denley and have so far this year donated £1,250.

We have also donated £500 towards the DEC appeal for work the displaced people fleeing from Rohingya.

Our grateful thanks to those church members who are unable to attend all the fundraising events but want to support our work and choose to donate on a regular basis to our funds. Their donations together with other one-off gifts have amounted to over £1,800 with further £175 from the donation box in the Well. The Well itself has made donations of £3,750 this year.

Anybody who would like to set up a bank mandate to make regular small donations can do so very easily. The MPG account is Cooperative Bank Acct nr 65386646 and sort code 08.92.99

There are many people who have helped in different ways for us reach these totals.

Thank you to all of you.

Roger Ing

Tuesday Evening House-group

As you may know, the Tuesday house-group was, for many years, led by Charlotte Pridmore at her and Graham's home in Ketton. It was a group that had welcomed and supported many folks over the years. When Charlotte became ill the group continued to meet, jointly led by various members, in Stamford. Since Christmas, however, and following Charlotte's death most of our number have been unwell at some point and it was decided, at least for the time being, to have a break before considering how/when/where the group might begin again or whether a new initiative might be more appropriate.

Audrey Hensman