

# ANNUAL CHURCH MEETING REPORTS



10<sup>th</sup> May 2015

## Minister's Preface

Dear Friends,

Over time I have become convinced of a few things above all else. I am convinced that **the Bible works**. I appreciate the MPs who work hard on our behalf, but I was disappointed to hear that the book most of our MPs took on holiday a few years back was Richard Dawkins' *The God Delusion*. How much better equipped would they be if they had taken a Bible instead. I am convinced that **Jesus works**. The think tank 'Theos' points out that God has been mentioned in Parliamentary speeches more times over the past decade or so than at any time in our nation's history. But nobody mentions Jesus. You could say we '*do God*', we just don't '*do Jesus*'. How bizarre is that? When St Paul says he is 'not ashamed of the gospel of Christ' (Romans 1.16), he uses a figure of speech known as litotes. What he is saying in effect is, 'I glory in the gospel of Christ'. Why? Because he knew by experience Jesus saves and changes lives for the better. 200 years ago, our country was at a terribly low ebb. The inner cities were scary places – read Charles Dickens' account of Jacob's Island in London, for example (*Oliver Twist*, chapter 50). Britain was drunk on gin, the prisons were full. And guess what? Very few children and young people engaged with church – 3 to 4% in all. But then along came the likes of Wesley, Shaftesbury, Wilberforce, the Sunday School movement, etc, and more and more children started engaging with the Bible and church. The result? Crime went down, communities became safer. By the start of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, over 70% of children engaged with church. However, throughout the past 100 years or so that figure has drastically fallen. At the same time, crime, addiction, divorce, and mental illness have all gone up. 200 years on we may be better off in some ways, but in other respects we have gone backwards. I am convinced as goes the church, so goes the nation. 'Righteousness exalts a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people' (Proverbs 14.34). If we as the church believe that the Bible works, that Jesus works, then **let us go to work**. Let us do something new or support those who are doing something new for Jesus' sake, not forgetting, as Hudson Taylor of Barnsley once famously said, 'God's work done in God's way will never lack God's supply.'

Every blessing,  
John

## **Ecumenical Activities**

We have been actively engaging with many churches in the city centre which has led to various large gatherings in our church including various prayer and worship services one of which raised more than £1K for charity.

Several of our members formed a team to put on a very successful pageant float to mark the switching on of the Christmas lights along Union Street which led to much favourable comment from both the general community and across the churches.

John McNeill

### **O.A.K.**

The tradition of joining with St. Mark's congregation for a united morning service during the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity in January continued this year with the service at St. Mark's led by Rev. Dr. John McNeill and followed by a soup and sandwich lunch. On the second Sunday of every month friends from St. Mark's join us for evening worship. The service continues from Monday to Friday with the work of OAK Café. In 2014 £5,350, the profits from the café and Special Lunches, was donated to charities including £750 to our fund for education in Ghana, £700 to Action for Children, and £620 to the Cogwheel Trust to fund the education of Edward and Jennifer who live in an orphanage in Uganda.

Sincere thanks to everyone who patronises and helps at Oak Café, the regulars who turn up every week, those who respond to appeals for help to cover a staffing crisis and our new volunteers.

M.D.C

# Worship

## Worship Team

The Worship Group has continued its meetings on a six-monthly basis, where it has proved a valuable opportunity for preachers, worship leaders and representatives of the Singing Group to discuss the content and balance of our services together with the Church Stewards. We have specifically discussed communion services and the need to introduce material from Singing the Faith. The role and purpose of the Sunday Evening Service has also been a topic for discussion. It is, however, important to stress that while its deliberations have led to some practical developments the Worship Group has no executive authority, and the sanctioning of any changes in worship is a matter for the stewards and church council, not forgetting the responsibility of preachers for the conduct of services. You are also reminded that all members of the church have a right to attend meetings of the Worship Group. If you have any matters you wish discussed, whether or not you are able to attend in person, please raise them with me or the reverend minister in writing or email at any time. Michael Dyer ([michadyer@gmail.com](mailto:michadyer@gmail.com)).

## Singing Group

The singing group is going from strength to strength and we are really glad and grateful for the great opportunity to contribute positively to Sunday worship. We are delighted that the congregation enjoy listening to us and are blessed also through our singing. We hope to continue to improve and introduce diverse ways of worship so as to make the Sunday worship more exciting. We also would welcome and appreciate any suggestions from the church members on ideas they would like us to include.

Thank you and God bless.

Much love  
Treasure

# Evangelism

## Messy Church

Messy Church is (<http://www.messychurch.org.uk/>) is a worldwide movement with the values of being Christ-centred, for all ages, based on creativity, hospitality and celebration. We have held Messy Church events during the Craft Fair on the first Saturday in the months of June, October, November, December and April. To provide flexibility for families visiting the Craft Fair we allow them to drop in at any time between 11am and 1:30pm, whilst still retaining the three key elements of craft activities, sharing food together, and worship. Numbers attending have been fairly low, but it has provided an opportunity for outreach to those visiting the Craft Fair, and we would also very much welcome families who are already a part of our church.

Jackie

## School and University Chaplaincy

As Honorary Chaplain at both Universities I continue to provide moral and spiritual support to students. We were actively involved in the Freshers' Weeks at both Universities in the autumn which brought us into contact with a number of undergraduate and postgraduate students largely from African countries such as Ghana, Nigeria, and Cameroon but also from England. Through my chaplaincy work with the University of Aberdeen Chaplaincy I have also conducted various weddings, funerals and baptisms which have given us further links with others beside. I continue to support the work of Chaplaincy Teams at Ferryhill and Broomhill Primary Schools and also Harlaw Academy. The recent Easter assemblies at Harlaw Academy particularly went very well, using the Eclipse of the Sun as an analogy for the Easter story, with very good feedback.

John McNeill

# Social Responsibility

## Traidcraft

Why do we have Traidcraft stall in church?

Being a Fairtrade Church, one of 7,500 churches recognised by the Fairtrade Foundation, we are committed to using Fairtrade tea, coffee, sugar for all our catering, to include Fairtrade biscuits and other Fairtrade goods wherever possible, and to promote the sales of Traidcraft goods in particular, hence the Traidcraft stall.

The small discount we get is used to offset some of the cost of providing tea and coffee etc. in the church.

During the 8 months to March sales were disappointingly low. However, following the presentation in Church during Fairtrade Fortnight, 18 of the congregation returned cards pledging to buy at least one item a month. This has had a notable impact with increased sales in the last 2 months. Whilst this is very welcome it only represents at the most 6 of the 18 cards returned – I know time passes very quickly so this is a gentle reminder to the rest!

Traidcraft provides an outlet to small-scale producers of high quality goods who could not otherwise reach a global market, paying a fair price – a fair price that means adequate food for a family and an education for the children

As a charity it uses its profits to assist more small farmers and is able to maximise these by selling through stalls like ours in run by volunteers. Please support (continue to support) our stall, come and ask questions about Traidcraft and its products or give me any opinions you have about them.

Joan Ørskov

## **The Mary Slessor project**

This year marks the 100<sup>th</sup> year anniversary of Mary Slessor's death. Mary Slessor clearly lived according to God's requirements for his children which are; to show mercy, act justly and walk humbly with our God. Her understanding of God's requirements underpinned all that she did. She left the comfort of the known for the uncertainty of coastal communities of the south eastern part of Nigeria where she saved countless lives and worked to improve the lot of women.

CTM has decided to run a series of events to commemorate Mary Slessor's life which was lived sacrificially. The overarching theme of the series is 'Justice in the name of God' based on Micah 6:8. We hope that these activities will provide a small glimpse into Mary Slessor's life and inspire participants to step up and do more in the name of God.

A project team has been set up and comprises the following individuals:

- Anuli Marshall
- Nana Aboagye
- Patrick Aboagye
- Uwem Okure

The team has reviewed a set of activities and have settled on the following with proposed dates:

- Project Kick off- 10<sup>th</sup> May 2015
- Visit to Dundee Museum to view Mary Slessor Collection – 30<sup>th</sup> May 2015
- Lecture by Andrew Walls – 27<sup>th</sup> June 2015
- Art Project (Hands and Feet) – Start 11<sup>th</sup> July 2015
- Seminar/workshop on child protection from sexual abuse – 19<sup>th</sup> Sept 2015
- Meal/project close - Typical meal from SE region of Nigeria where Mary Slessor worked – 17<sup>th</sup> October

Status

- Planning for the activities has begun.
- A proposed budget has also been sent to the minister.

# Learning and Caring

## Pastoral Committee

During the past year, we have been pleased to welcome four new members: Dawn Smith, Tomas Serafinavicius and Jurgita Mikeleviciute, and Ingrid Walls.

At present the membership number stands at 97, a small increase over the year.

Tomas and Jurgita will celebrate their marriage on Saturday May 16<sup>th</sup>.

Sadly Pat Poulson died on January 31<sup>st</sup> having spent several years in hospital and being unable to attend services. From her early childhood she had attended Crown Terrace and was a member for most of her life. In more recent years, Pat will be remembered by most people in the Church as a founding member of Mums and Toddlers.

John has conducted three baptisms and Paul one; we anticipate a fifth baptism on June 14.

During the year we have welcomed several new babies born to our congregation and John at present is running a Parenting Group. [This has also been set up as a Closed Group on Facebook so members can continue to converse between the sessions for mutual benefit.]

A new membership class will be starting in the near future; please contact John if you are interested.

Thank you to all the Pastoral Visitors and others who keep an eye on our flock. The pastoral care is an essential and continuing responsibility for all our members.

Anne Hubbuck, Secretary to the Pastoral Committee

## **Church Flowers**

Each week flowers are placed in the Church to the Glory of God and to aid our worship. The display in the porch is part of the warm, welcoming environment which we aim to offer to all who enter the building.

May Barbour, for many years, distributed the flowers during the week to members of the Church who were ill, housebound or otherwise in need. Unfortunately, May is no longer able to do this and there are weeks when the flowers remain in the Church.

If you know of someone in our congregation who would benefit from receiving flowers please speak to our Minister, John McNeill, Anne Hubbuck, or one of the stewards.

Thank you to all who have contributed in the past and to all who will contribute this year.

Carol Reeves

## **Sunday Morning Prayer/Bible Study Group**

We continue to meet on a Sunday morning at 10 am; now combining the Bible Study and Prayer time.

Our numbers have dropped this past year due to folk no longer able to attend due to health issues, moving away or other commitments. Sometimes there are just two or three of us but we still pray. We find this very valuable and a privilege to pray together.

We have discussed discontinuing but agree that we should not cease to meet. We never know when a visitor might want to join us or someone arriving early for a service can pass the time in our little fellowship group. (Both have been known to happen on several occasions).

God bless

Sarah

## **Creche and Sunday Club**

We have a wonderful group of babies and toddlers who meet during the Service in room 3 next to the kitchen in the care of a faithful group of mums and 'CTMC grannies'.

Our responsibility to the children and to our Safeguarding policy requires us to have two adults with the children at all times, and so, as we are unable to provide a teacher and helper at present, the Sunday Club meets with the creche. Beulah, Haili and Klaudia cope very well, but when we have a full complement with Miles and Malvin it is very cramped. In addition meeting round the table limits the activities that the children enjoy. Meeting separately and with much more space there would be an opportunity for games, action choruses, and drama which help to present the message of the Gospel in different or experiential ways.

It is time for me to step aside and I would love to see a new enthusiastic and prayerful team of teachers and helpers sharing the care and teaching of our young folk, who will develop the Sunday Club; and see that it is ready to receive our toddlers and babies as they grow up. Early thinking is that the team should have 5 or 6 members but this is a new venture and needs discussion.

Please pray for our young families and their children, and for those who care for them during the Services; and for 'new ways of doing Sunday Club', and its new team.

Anne Kelley

### **Midweek Prayer Meeting**

A midweek prayer meeting takes place approximately every other Wednesday at 7:30pm in Room 4. Please check the notice sheet for details. The exact format of the meetings varies, with different members of the group taking turns to lead, but usually involves a combination of open prayer for the needs of the world and of our congregation, and a time of more structured worship, which often includes some hymns or worship songs. We are a small group, and would very much welcome others coming along to join us, even if you are only able to attend occasionally.

Jackie

### **Ghana Bible Study**

The Ghana Bible Study Group has continued to meet regularly over the past year, where it has provided an opportunity for open discussion from a wide variety of perspectives on the interpretation of biblical passages in the Old and New Testaments with notes prepared by the Methodist Church of Ghana, and in use at St Peter, Accra. Membership is open, and while most come on a weekly basis, occasional attendees are equally welcome. So, if you wish to come along and have not done so in the past you're welcome to bring along your bible and any bees in your bonnet!

Michael Dyer

## **Monday House Group**

The Monday House Group meets approximately twice a month in the evening to discuss a wide variety of material with an attendance of five or six people.

Does the Old Testament have anything to say to us today?

We used 'The Bible Jesus Read' by Philip Yancey as a focus for studying some of the Old Testament books.

We watched part of the DVD 'Fruitfulness on the Frontline' by Mark Greene

(Executive Director of the London Institute for Contemporary Christianity). The DVD shows how God can, and does, work in and through our daily lives.

Is God biased?

We used Desmond Tutu's book 'In God's Hands' as a discussion starter during, and after, Lent.

In May we are focussing on some of the Old Testament Prophets.

Whatever the subject the discussions are stimulating and thought provoking!

Carol Reeves

## **Women's Fellowship**

Women's Fellowship has continued to meet at the Church at 10.30am on the last Thursday of the month apart from July, August and December. Dr. Maureen Marshall opened the session for us by appropriately expanding on the "Four ALL's of Methodism". Inspired and assisted by Anne Hubbuck, we decorated a Christmon Tree which was displayed in the Church at Advent. We had 3 contributions from the Reeves family; a talk on the work of a National Trust ranger from Stephen, Stitching and Spring flowers and preparation of the service for Mothering Sunday from Carol. In January Rev. Dr. John McNeill shared a small part of his extensive archaeological knowledge and resources with us. Attendance at meetings has varied from 6 to 13 and new members will be very welcome at our next meeting on Thurs.28th May and our visit to Leith Hall on Thurs.25<sup>th</sup> June.

M.D.C.

## **Craft Group**

A few of us decided to start a craft group which would take place after Women's Fellowship on a Thursday afternoon to give ourselves the time to stitch. Stitching carried out at Women's Fellowship was enthusiastic but few have joined us in the afternoons. We are having a rethink to ascertain the way forward in the autumn.

## Table Tennis

In Division 2 CTM "A" have suffered only one defeat so far this season, to table toppers Westhill Aircon. The team look favourites for second place and promotion, pushed hard by University Eagles. In Division 3 the CTM "B" tyros battle to regain a mid-table position. Team absences have meant games in hand, so their current position does little justice to their abilities. In the cup games CTM "A" have reached the final of the League Handicap competition, where they meet Westhill Aircon in the final. The recent successful launching of Ladies Table Tennis at 7.15pm on Monday evenings already has three committed members with space for a few more! Normal practices continue on Fridays at 7.15pm, all welcome.

Nigel Herbert.

<https://www.tabletennis365.com/Aberdeen>

| Tables > Senior League 2014-15 > Division 2 |                   |    |    |   |    |     |     |            |
|---|-------------------|----|----|---|----|-----|-----|------------|
| #   | Team              | P  | W  | D | L  | SF  | SA  | Points     |
| 1   | Aircon Westhill   | 16 | 16 | 0 | 0  | 136 | 24  | <b>136</b> |
| 2   | Ctm A             | 18 | 17 | 0 | 1  | 135 | 45  | <b>135</b> |
| 3   | Abdn Univ Eagles  | 18 | 14 | 0 | 4  | 134 | 46  | <b>134</b> |
| 4   | Triangle Trio     | 18 | 12 | 1 | 5  | 120 | 60  | <b>120</b> |
| 5   | Nordan            | 20 | 11 | 1 | 8  | 106 | 94  | <b>106</b> |
| 6   | Triangle Tigers   | 16 | 6  | 1 | 9  | 75  | 85  | <b>75</b>  |
| 7   | Abdn Univ Falcons | 19 | 4  | 3 | 12 | 69  | 121 | <b>69</b>  |
| 8   | Shell Penguins    | 15 | 4  | 1 | 10 | 48  | 102 | <b>48</b>  |
| 9   | Westhill Bees     | 15 | 1  | 3 | 11 | 45  | 105 | <b>45</b>  |
| 10  | Triangle Eagles   | 17 | 1  | 3 | 13 | 39  | 131 | <b>39</b>  |
| 11  | Rgu TTC           | 14 | 0  | 1 | 13 | 23  | 117 | <b>23</b>  |

Tables > Senior League 2014-15 > Division 3

| #  | Team                | P  | W  | D | L  | SF  | SA  | Points     |
|----|---------------------|----|----|---|----|-----|-----|------------|
| 1  | Triangle Blades     | 20 | 12 | 2 | 6  | 116 | 84  | <b>116</b> |
| 2  | Hazlehead Hawks     | 17 | 14 | 3 | 0  | 115 | 55  | <b>115</b> |
| 3  | Westhill Foxes      | 19 | 9  | 6 | 4  | 104 | 85  | <b>104</b> |
| 4  | Triangle Quattro    | 18 | 9  | 2 | 7  | 95  | 84  | <b>95</b>  |
| 5  | Westhill Caesars    | 17 | 10 | 3 | 4  | 92  | 78  | <b>92</b>  |
| 6  | Westhill Demons     | 20 | 6  | 3 | 11 | 91  | 109 | <b>91</b>  |
| 7  | Shell Petrels       | 19 | 5  | 6 | 8  | 85  | 105 | <b>85</b>  |
| 8  | Triangle Raptors    | 19 | 2  | 4 | 13 | 72  | 118 | <b>72</b>  |
| 9  | Csi Aberdeen        | 18 | 3  | 3 | 12 | 70  | 110 | <b>70</b>  |
| 10 | Abdn Grammar School | 13 | 6  | 1 | 6  | 67  | 63  | <b>67</b>  |
| 11 | Ctm B               | 12 | 2  | 3 | 7  | 52  | 68  | <b>52</b>  |

## Finance

The latest estimates for the end of year position in August on income and expenditure, suggest that we will not be far from breaking even in unrestricted funds, that is, in the main Church account. A small surplus seems more likely than a deficit, but the position is fragile and a predicted surplus could easily turn into a deficit. There was a small surplus in August 2014.

**It would greatly assist the planning and control of money in the Church if those with bank accounts would move from the weekly envelopes to standing orders. This leaves what people donate to the Church unaffected and also leaves arrangements for “gift aid” unaffected. Updated forms will soon be pinned to the board in the vestibule.**

The Church financial reserves are about £11,000 below the recommended figure in Methodist Church papers. Unfortunately we would have to increase income by about £30,000 to remove this deficit in the curious Circuit financial system and that is beyond our means. It is however very unfair on the Churches on the Moray coast at present not to try and do something as they have to pay increased sums to the Circuit as a consequence.

The renewal to the Church roof is still in the planning stage and moving much more slowly than hoped. There must now be a doubt that it will be completed this summer. The best estimate we have is that we hold enough money in a separate account to cover the cost, together with an adequate promised contingency reserve. However there is a consequence of the delay. Temporary repairs were made to the roof over the kitchen and the Finance and Property Committee recommends that we now need to commission more permanent repairs and not wait until the main roof is fixed. A particular problem is that the electrical wiring of the Church has been affected. We hope that the cost will not be more than a couple of thousand pounds. There is also some concern with the Church heating system which is old and we trust that it will limp on. Such matters could easily make the estimates of the first paragraph inaccurate.

My period as Church Treasurer ends in August 2015 under the Constitution of the Methodist Church in Britain. I have indicated that I am happy to continue as Acting Treasurer until a replacement is found and to help a new treasurer as requested. I thank the congregation for their support over my period as Treasurer.

Jack Hubbuck