



Horfield Methodist Church

Bristol & South Gloucestershire Circuit

General Church Meeting Reports

April 2019

“What are you discussing together as you walk along?”

One part of the Easter story that speaks deeply to me is the conversation between two disciples as they walked from Jerusalem at the end of the first Easter day. As they walked together, trying to make sense of everything that had happened over the previous days, Jesus appeared by them and entered into their conversation. That encounter brought home the reality and joy of Jesus' resurrection – something which we continue to celebrate thanks to the faithful witness of those early disciples and generations of Christians since.

In common with them, we have countless conversations about our life together, seeking to discern Jesus' presence amongst us and seeking God's encouragement for our future witness together. That conversation continues in many ways throughout the year, but our Annual Church Meeting is a particular opportunity to bring those conversations together, and focus on some topics of particular importance.

‘We'll praise God for all that is past’

A year ago, I mentioned that a quick glance around our average congregation revealed a spread of ages and life experience, something which continues to be true. Let's offer thanks for those we have formally welcomed into the congregation over the year and also for those who have found a place to explore their own life's journey within our Christian community.

Together, we also offer thanks to those who hold positions of responsibility within the church, who ensure that all our activities take place, on whatever scale. We are all blessed by their contributions and leadership, some over long periods of time.

The reports which follow all tell their own story, but there are a few things I would like to highlight. In January, we celebrated 120 years of witness in our current location in Churchways Avenue, remembering that the first home for the Methodist community in this area was on Ashley Down, starting in the mid-1870s. January was also the 10th birthday of Messy Church here at Horfield: our monthly Messy congregation is now well established and with a character and witness of its own.

Part of our social outreach this year was to host the Bristol Churches Winter Night Shelter, working ecumenically with 14 other venues across the city. The inspiration for this project is quite simply the desire to share God's love with some of those who find themselves without a home. All those who were involved also found themselves receiving God's blessing, not just through the fellowship of working together, but through the friendship of the guests who became part of our church family for a few weeks over the winter.

‘And trust God for all that's to come’

During the past year, in common with churches across the circuit, we have continued to draw inspiration from the Holy Habits material, based on the example of Jesus' early disciples, including the series of services on prayer during morning worship in Lent. The Holy Habits programme will come to a conclusion very soon, but it is an on-going reminder to develop our own discipleship and witness, both individually and as a church. Four areas of this will be discussed when we meet on 5 May for our Church Meeting, during morning worship.

Our witness: The Leadership Team and Church Council are considering how we should use a significant legacy that we have received during the past year. One possibility is to

use this to improve the ambience of the Gloucester Road end of the church sanctuary, not least the accessibility to this part of the building. Your ideas about this would be welcomed, most importantly about how this would help our mission and witness.

Marriage and Relationships: The Methodist Church as a whole in the UK is undertaking a consultation about our understanding of marriage and relationships. This is an important topic because society continues to evolve its own understanding of these, but it is one where a number of views are held within faith communities, some with strong conviction. We are planning to facilitate our own local consultation about this, but would like to shape that but including the questions you would like to see raised – something we will be asking about at the church meeting. As background to this, you are encouraged to take a look at the following online material, if you are able to do so: www.methodist.org.uk/about-us/the-methodist-church/marriage-and-relationships-2018/

Supporting the activities of the church: I hope that you won't turn off now on the grounds that the minister always makes a plea for support and help. There are several roles which need to be filled – details will be available on the day of the Church Meeting, but can I ask you to consider whether you could support the church community by undertaking a position of responsibility?

Communication, communication, communication: The example of those two disciples is also a good reminder that talking to each other is an encouragement and witness not only to one another, but also to the world in which we serve God. What sort of communication would you like from the church, and how would you like to receive it?

On a personal note

I continue to be blessed by my ministry at Horfield and in the places that leads, not least in the generosity of friendship and practical support offered to me, Sandy and our wider family.

Like that first Easter day, our encounters bring Jesus alive for today, call us forward in worship, fellowship and in service. As we look ahead, let us all pray about our witness to the transforming power of Jesus' resurrection.

With love in Christ

Rev Patrick

Stewards +

You will see from the heading that this is a group that came into being in April last year and comprises of church stewards; vestry/worship stewards and the communion stewards and meets 4 times a year. We look at the practicalities of worship such as the flow of communicants at communion or how we organise special services such as Christmas and Easter.

So, to this end:

- we have tightened our procedures for counting and recording the weekly offering;
- discussed how we prepare for worship;
- we have improved preparation for cafe church;
- confirmed dates for special events;
- planned the morning healing service.

We are working on:

- writing a schedule for the special times of the year, such as Advent and Christmas, so that we have a record of what preparations are needed, both personnel and items. In the future this will include Harvest, Remembrance service and more;
- where everything is kept and who is responsible for purchasing etc;
- making sure that we are an inclusive church.

All this is very practical, so if there is anything which you feel would improve your worship experience or help the church run more smoothly please do speak to one of us and we will put your request/concern on our agenda.

Leadership Team

The Leadership team came into being in September 2018 and consists of the church stewards and convenors of “Our calling groups” - Worship; Neighbourhood and Mission; Pastoral; Children and Young People; Finance and Property.

We use the discussions from the Annual Church meeting to guide our deliberations, to ensure the decisions taken then are acted upon and to involve the ‘calling group’ appropriate to the vision.

We meet quarterly and report to the Church Council.

We have covered a wide variety of themes such as: house groups; homelessness; Gift day; layout of the church; legacy; Holy Habits including prayer and development of the garden.

Our present project is “How can we make our frontage look more inviting?” To this end we are visiting churches where alterations have taken place to help our discussion.

What challenges will surface this year?

Treasurer's Report

Financial year (1.9.17 – 31.8.18)

Summary

Our main sources of income each year are invariably from the weekly offering (£33,009 in '17/'18) and lettings (£27,332) with the largest items of expenditure being the annual Circuit Assessment (£42,088), Repairs & Maintenance (£14,665, £3,888 of which was for required annual services of e.g boilers) and Utilities (£12,445 , including £3,830 for insurance).

If you want to see details of the accounts please ask the Treasurer.

Running at a loss

Over the last few years we have been running at a loss and gradually eating into our reserves. The loss hasn't always been immediately evident due to e.g. grants awarded being included in 'income', which are actually earmarked for a specific project, not for the day-to-day cost of the upkeep of the premises, worship resources and missional activities. This year the amount paid into the church's account from the playgroup's closing balance and earmarked for the courtyard redevelopment is an example of this. In future, income/expenditure in relation to grants will be recorded separately.

Courtyard Redevelopment Finances

The playgroup's closing balance of £12,267 was transferred to the church's bank account and – as agreed by the playgroup committee and Church Council - £1,200 has been donated to Action for Children and £1,200 to Eastville Park Methodist Church for outreach work. Of the remaining £9,867, £661 was paid for costs associated with the plans for the courtyard drawn up by a landscaper. This leaves £9,206 ringfenced for works to the courtyard. Further grants will be sought.

Charitable giving

Members of HMC continue to be generous in their charitable giving and over £3,000 was donated to charities

Current Financial Year

Change of Bank for HMC's Current Account

The new Lloyds Bank account (to replace our NatWest day-to-day current account) is now set up - having been delayed several times - and we are almost ready to start advising the relevant people/companies of our change of details (including those members of our congregation who give via bank standing order).

I would like to encourage everyone to consider giving through their bank by standing order as it helps you to ensure that your commitment is regular and helps with planning and budgeting purposes. Please speak to me to find out more.

Offering& Gift Day

I would like to thank everyone who has increased their weekly offering – compared with the same period last year (Sept – March) we are up by nearly £400. Much of this is as a

result of our request in January to consider an increase to help cover the church's increased annual costs.

Thank you also to all those who contributed to the amazing amount of £3,100 given on the Gift Day.

Legacy

An extremely generous legacy of £50,000 was very kindly left to the church by Edna Wicks in her will. It is important that this is used well and needs careful thought about how it is used.

Current Balance, as at 31.3.19

Nat West	£14,769
CFB	£35,122
Lloyds	£1,000
TMCP	£50,000
Total	£100,891

Messy Church

Messy Church continues to go well, we have a regular congregation of between 40 and 60.

We have regular families attending most months and always new families coming to see what we get up to. In addition we regularly have members of the dance school dropping in between lessons. They really enjoy participating in the activities and hearing some of the stories we share.

We have continued to explore bible stories and think about how we can learn from the example Jesus shows us of the best way to live.

Messy communion was great, we crushed grapes and baked flat bread for use in the service and were able to use our communion chalice, plate and table cloth which we have made over the last few years.

In recent months we have had support from parents / grandparents to help run activities and with the clearing and cleaning at the end. This is really appreciated by the team.

We plan bi monthly generally following the Messy Church planning book, although we quite often modify things to fit with our congregation.

It is wonderful that so many people in church keep our Messy family in their prayers, please continue to do this and if anyone would like to join us on the second Saturday of the month, 11am to 1 pm you would be very welcome we can guarantee you will have fun, make things, worship God and then share fellowship and a yummy meal.

Pastoral Report

Membership to date is 99.

There have been a few changes in pastoral visitors due to 5 resignations towards the end of 2018 and they were thanked officially at the Covenant service in January.

Those who resigned are: Elaine Gibson, Lorraine Richardson, Jean White, Joan Lewis and Asmin Taylor. Also Pat Webb who sadly died September 2018.

We are pleased to welcome Hayley Grady, Colston Grady, George Otoo, David Bainbridge, Sandy Bowcock and Hazel Thorne as pastoral visitors. Linnette Nelson has kindly agreed to visit people at home if they are needing administration of extended communion. Any requests should be forwarded to Patrick.

It was decided that rather than call non-members adherents, a much friendlier term will now be used at HMC – friends.

We have celebrated baptisms and confirmations, 1 ceased to meet, 4 transfers in to HMC and Maddy Stonehewer transferred to Cardiff where she is studying at present.

Sadly 3 deaths, Celia Morrish June 2018, Pat Webb September 2018 and Grace Slade January 2019.

Nick Chivers requested that his name was moved from the members list to our friends list.

Some of the 4:12 group are likely to be confirmed this summer.

There have been recent training sessions for pastoral visitors and resource packs have been distributed to attendees. It was very positive to meet with other Circuit members. There will be more training available, but no dates have yet been confirmed.

It is our practice to pray for our whole church community, names are printed on the weekly notice sheet to enable us to do this.

Junior Church

When we look back over the last year there is so much to be thankful for.

We are very blessed to have a lively group of children and young people who confidently join in and ask questions both in Church and in Junior Church.

We are still keeping to our established routine of starting by singing and mentioning each child and adult by name, we then have a time of interactive prayer and then spend time looking at the story for that week. After the story we have a time in smaller groups completing age appropriate activities, which often involve discussion and craft. If there is time we end the session with more singing and the children love learning new action songs particularly lively Doug Horley action songs complete with sign language.

The children's corner in Church is still being used regularly by children attending our service - we think it is a wonderful addition to our worship space.

We are looking forward to our Junior Church Anniversary provisional date 23rd June 2019 and we are currently deciding how to celebrate this.

Whilst Hannah takes a step back from Junior Church for a short time a good routine continues with Helen and Shirin leading with Donna and Eurfron helping. The Junior Church Leaders would like to thank those who ran the Junior Church throughout the summer of 2018. We are very grateful and appreciative for all the work they have done. We also thank Libby for stepping in and leading a session early this year.

We would love to have some more helpers and leaders, so if you feel able to help with any age group please talk to one of the Junior Church leaders. Please feel free to come in and see what goes on in Junior Church.

4:12

You are young, but do not let anyone treat you as if you were not important. Be an example to show the believers how they should live. Show them with your words, with the way you live, with your love, with your faith, and with your pure life. 1 Timothy 4:12
(International Children's Version)

We are proud to say we are young, important to God, and can provide an example to everyone in how to follow a Christian life.

Over the last 12 months we have started to study the Youth Alpha course, with the help of Patrick. Youth Alpha helps to ask and answer a lot of the questions that there are about being a Christian. We have talked about Jesus, the Holy Spirit, and prayer, and hope that this will lead us forward on our Christian journey. In October, we had another sleepover where we watched the first Fantastic Beasts film, which was great fun! We're starting to explore more biblical games and getting used to discussing challenging questions. We will visit the New Room in April 2019 to learn about the Wesleys and the beginning of Methodism.

If you're at secondary school or 6th form college (11 – 18) and would like to join us, we meet twice a month, on the 2nd and 3rd Sunday evenings at 7.00 – 8.30 pm at Church, with games, biscuits and some study time. Please speak to Hannah or Sam, or email them on samandhannahwilliamson@gmail.com if you would like any more information.

Property

Roles of responsibility

We are still looking for a Chairperson/Convener/Secretary for the Property and Finance Committee (the exact nature of the role could be slightly tailored to fit what the person is happy to offer).

Having split the areas of responsibility between the Property Stewards, the vacant role now largely consists of chairing the meetings (with each member reporting back on any issues to do with their area of responsibility) and checking that the meeting follows up on items raised in the Quinquennial Report. It would also be useful if that person could maintain the spreadsheets which keep a record of work carried out (such as the servicing of boilers/fire extinguishers etc), however this is not a necessity.

We have been asking for well over a year now for someone to step into this role and are in desperate need of someone to do so. Please do prayerfully consider whether you could offer to take this on – or at least to find out more.

As previously mentioned, the areas of responsibility have now been shared between the committee members, so if there are any issues or concerns with the premises please report them to the relevant person:

- External areas – Chris Sither & Chin Tan
- Internal areas – Cherry Arnal
- Various (mainly electrically-based) systems – Howard Wilson
- Heating and plumbing systems, floorings, lightbulbs – Keith Cornell
- Portable Appliance Testing, storage, cleanliness of building – Lorraine Richardson
- Musical instruments/equipment – Howard Wilson
- Bookings and diary – Janet Browning (until the end of April 2019)

Coping stones to north porch

It has been quite a quiet year for the Property Committee with the largest project being the replacement of coping stones - as well as other waterproofing remedial works - to the roof above the north porch of the church.

Work to be considered

The Quinquennial Report last August highlighted many things in need of attention – only to be expected with a building of this age – and the committee addresses these items in order of deemed urgency.

If money were no object we could be addressing recommendations made in previous Quinquennial reports such as works to the boundary wall at the back of church and the retaining wall on the corner of Gloucester Road/Churchways Avenue.

Other work advised includes: the repointing of many areas of the exterior stone walls; the insulation of the loft space above the office; the fitting of fire doors to the upstairs kitchenette and to the corridor there; the creation of a fire escape at the end of the downstairs corridor.

Although not mentioned in the Quinquennial Report, in recent months it has become obvious that the floor of the main hall is becoming an increasing safety hazard with large

splinters/slivers of wood breaking off the wooden flooring. The curtains on the stage could also do with being replaced but the use of the stage itself might determine what the curtains could be replaced by – the future of the stage usage is a discussion to be had at some point!

Use of donations from playgroup and legacy

Having been in discussions with a landscaper and obtained plans and a quote to develop the courtyard, this project has been put on hold whilst the church considers how the legacy from Edna Wicks might be used.

Big Spring Clean

The recent request for help with the church 'Big Spring Clean' had a very disappointing response with only 9 people volunteering (many thanks to those who came on the Friday, Saturday or Monday). The 'captive audience' on Sunday after the morning service proved the proverb, 'many hands make light work' - and most of the chairs in the church and hall received a wipe over or polish. If we had had plenty of help on the other days so much more could have been achieved.

Cleaner

We would like to welcome our new cleaner, Parveen. It is unlikely that any of you will meet her as she is mostly working 5.30am – 7.30am! She has done a good job so far and is getting to know the cleaning-needs of the premises but if you have any comments (concerns - or particularly praise!) please speak to Elaine Gibson.

Pam Williams' House Group

Members of our house group continue to meet monthly at each other's homes for fellowship, discussion, bible study and practical activities. Some of our discussions are quite formal, whereas others just 'happen' whether we're walking or having meals or doing something practical.

We started the year in June, making use of the lovely summer evenings, with a pleasant walk around the village of Almondsbury. It was then a while before we met again in September for a social gathering and meal at the newly refurbished Beehive.

October was spent discussing the Women's World Day of prayer which several of the group are involved in organising whilst November saw us in our usual activity of wrapping presents for the Lucky Dip stall for the Autumn fayre, and at the same time enjoying each other's company.

Yet another meal in December, when we had a very pleasant evening at the White Lion in Westbury for our Christmas meal.

With the start of the New Year Jane shared her photos and experiences of her very interesting trip to Rwanda. More details of this visit are in the April Link magazine.

During February and March we explored the Holy Habits material on Biblical teaching. In one of these sessions, the group focused on the aspect of creativity in bible teaching and exploring the bible in imaginative ways. We all have different ways of learning, either with visual prompts or through the use of our other senses which allow us to connect with biblical texts in diverse ways. Following a discussion of different forms of preaching and bible study, we thought about our own learning preferences. We then used a template of a butterfly, in the style of the Lindisfarne Scriptorium artist Mary Fleeson. Members of the group chose a special bible verse which was important to them and everyone produced a colourfully illustrated version to represent this which we then laminated and displayed. Hopefully we can use these in our daily lives as a source of comfort and strength.

During April, we were blessed with a fine evening in the garden to enjoy potting on about 200 plants ready for the Spring Fayre.

During the past year, as a group we have once again tried to support the church in a variety of ways. At the two church fairs, we ran the cake and gifts stall and volunteer our help where needed during other events. We spend an evening wrapping gifts and have been pleased to see this stall become a real feature of the Christmas Bazaar. Many of the group have also taken on roles as pastoral visitors, helping at Messy Church and the monthly Church lunches among other things.

Wednesday Morning Group (WMG)

We often refer to this as our midweek oasis of 'me' time! We are busy people who appreciate the time to have a chance to sit and have a natter over a cuppa – usually in the 4:12 room at church but also on 'field trips' to local coffee shops or further afield. On these outings we try to support coffee shops run by churches or charities and this year destinations have included a church in Chippenham, the Nonesuch Coffee Shop (St. Peter's Hospice, Gloucester Rd) and the coffee shop at St Michael's, Stoke Gifford.

As there are only a few of us and rarely have others drop in to the group we occasionally decide to go out on the spur of the moment but generally we stick to the following routine:

1st and 3rd Wednesdays of the month – at church in the 4:12room, 10 am – 11.30 am

2nd Wednesday of the month – no meeting

4th and 5th Wednesdays – either at church, a local coffee venue or occasional longer 'day' outings.

We'd love others to join us so if you find yourself free on a Wednesday morning please do come along. If you'd like to confirm where we'll be meeting that day, please do ring me on 07767 481445 (Helen W).

Wessex Avenue House Group

Unfortunately over the last six months this house group has fallen apart. Of course, we have been fortunate to have been able to function for as long as we have. Age was always going to be our problem! Over half the house group are now unable to attend. Thanks go to Eurfron and Cherry for their support and for ensuring that members could attend.

It is good to know that one or two other groups have been formed. Being able to follow 'Holy Habits' will have been valuable to these.

Leprosy Mission

We continue to support the Leprosy Mission. If you would like to know more about this, then please ask Sheila Lomas. Perhaps the simplest way you can help is by donating used postage stamps and postcards which can be sent off. There is a box at the back of the church for such donations.

Any cash donations may be handed to the stewards for keeping in the safe if Sheila is not at church.

Thank you to all who support.

Worship Consultation

Recent services and future planning

Following a request at the last AGM for more help with prayer this formed the theme for our worship during Lent. We will also be adopting a themed approach during Bible Month in June. This year we will be focusing on Paul's letter to the Church at Colossae.

Two local arrangements are planned for the 5th May 6pm and 26th May 10am. The latter will be All Age Worship and Café Worship.

This year's Holy Week services have been mainly shared with other churches in our Churches Together group.

Junior Church Anniversary will be All Age Worship and Parade service to be held on 23rd June.

Churches Together

It has been proposed that we should seek to do more things together as a local church group in the form of social action. We already support food banks and have provided night shelter.

Holy Habits

It is felt that we hadn't engaged in this course as fully as hoped for. Apart from introductory worship for each theme it was mainly the house groups which engaged in further study. It does seem that it hasn't rooted so well in larger churches.

We now need to review which habits we have embraced / not embraced and how do we move forward?

Prayer Fellowship

The Prayer Ministry of the church is very strong. It consists of:

- The prayer corner where prayers are available to support anyone who may wish this;
- The prayer chain (which still exists although not often used). This enables people to request prayers over the phone outside of church. There are twelve people on the chain .At present the coordinator is Linnette Nelson (tel 0117 9514919)
- Prayer breakfast which meets on the second Sunday of each month. Our prayers are offered for people and situations in our country and world wide. The Methodist Prayer Handbook is an useful tool for this. We would like more people to join us for this, also to come on the rota for the prayer corner.

During Lent the theme for worship is "Exploring Prayer" and we are being encouraged to write a prayer to put on the board in the prayer corner.

Neighbourhood and Mission

Most of our efforts for the latter part of 2018 and the beginning of 2019 have been in helping to organise the Night Shelter. An amazing amount of good-will and support has shown from our church worshippers and from members from other churches. Everything went very smoothly and most of the volunteers would like to repeat the experience next year. The guests were very gracious and showed their appreciation of our efforts when the Shelter came to an end.

Our Christian Giving this year has been directed at, “ Twinning Toilets”, Supporting Parkway Church, in their annual gift distribution to the disadvantaged at Christmas, and a collection towards funding the Night Shelter. We have also collected for Shelter Box which supports people in countries undergoing crisis. The annual Christian Aid Lunch took place in Lent and the Lunch Club donated the proceeds for last lunch towards this cause. The congregation has been very generous in their giving.

We would welcome any suggestions on charities and organisations which could be the focus of our giving in the year- 2019/ 20

Lunch Club

We meet on the second Tuesday of every month. The numbers are constant between 25 and 30. The Lunch is open to anyone. Our team is composed of Audrey, Margaret P, Linnette, Heather, Joan L, Marilyn, Thiene, Pam G, Eurfron and John. We have a three-course meal followed by tea or coffee. Thiene always makes interesting serviette shapes which enhance the tables. We are very grateful for their help.

Art Club

We have an eclectic group with people of all ages meeting on a Friday afternoon from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. A number of people enjoy the company over a cup of tea/ coffee and cake or biscuit. We have had a few new members joining recently. People use the media with which they feel most comfortable- water colour, oils, pastels, pencils etc. We are pleased to see Roger, Graham and Betty back with us again. We welcome anyone who wants to come -it does not matter what ability you have, we can help you.

Craft Group

We meet on the 2nd Thursday of the month. We are very low on numbers so have not always been able to meet. Our aims are to make items for the church sales and learn new skills ourselves.

Novel Group

I think all members of the Group would agree that we really value getting to read books we might well not have chosen for ourselves.

We've followed authors as various as: Robert Harris: Pompeii, Conclave, Munich; Khaled Hosseini: The Kite Runner; and, nearer home, novels by an English politician, Alan Johnson.

Everything we read feeds into our (attempts at) understanding current affairs, both national and global, and we are, at the same time, stimulated and entertained.

We've also been happily absorbed by three thoughtful, but lighter hearted, novels by Rachel Joyce, whose collection of short stories, "A Snow Garden", is our choice for next month. It was good fun hearing her work quoted in a sermon!

If anyone feels their might like to join us please don't hesitate. You'd be very welcome.

Little Fishes Toddler Group

Fridays during term-time, 10am – 11.30am

Little Fishes Toddler Group would not be able to serve the community as well as it does without the dedicated support of so many volunteers. We pride ourselves on being able to spend time to talk to the mums/ dads/ grandparents/ carers and their toddlers to ensure that everyone is made to feel welcome and valued, as well as providing a caring and listening ear to those who need it. Unfortunately in recent months, some of our volunteers have had to give up being on the rota so we haven't always had enough people to fill the basic roles resulting in the pastoral side taking a back seat. Having said that, even something as simple as being brought a hot drink by one of the volunteers with a smile and a few friendly words has been highlighted by parents as being one of the reasons they love coming to Little Fishes.

As well as our wonderful volunteers, we would also like to thank Patrick for coming along to Little Fishes most weeks spending time getting to know the toddlers and their carers, but also for helping to pack away the toys and equipment after the sessions when he is able. Packing away generally takes 3 of us 30 – 45 minutes, but getting the two rooms ready on Thursday evenings takes even longer (an hour) and I am very grateful that we have two reliable 'workers' who come and help me – 'Thank you', Danikka and Jehlani. Thanks are also due to Donna (their kind mum!) who invariably steps in if one of them can't make it for some reason.

Last summer saw the biggest reduction of numbers in one go since we started (2010) with around a third of our toddlers moving onto nursery in the September. During the last 6 months, however, we have gradually returned to full capacity (42 toddlers) with an average attendance of 24. By the time younger siblings (we have 10 babies under 1 year) are included and also their accompanying adults, it's not unusual to have around 60 people in the room at the end of the session for story and singing time!

This past year has seen the introduction of one fundraising coffee morning every few months. The parents are very supportive and bring along delicious cakes to sell (and money to buy!) in aid of different charities. Since September we have had 2 coffee mornings – in November we raised £70 for Action for Children, and in February we raised the same amount for Comic Relief. As well as this we are able to give a donation from our funds to the church each term.

Every week there is a different craft activity and these help to develop a variety of skills including cutting, sticking, painting, printing and threading. Our most recent craft activity was to decorate a llama for the Calmer Llama Trail which is taking place around Broadmead this Easter. The increase of subs from September up to £2 has enabled us to provide a greater range of craft activities for the children as well as updating some of the older, worn toys together with the addition to our dressing-up clothes of two lovely outfits based on book characters – the Hungry Caterpillar and Elmer the Elephant.

If you appreciate how worthwhile Little Fishes is and are able to give up one Friday morning a month to support this outreach work, please speak to Eurfron or myself. There are a range of roles which need covering each session such as making refreshments . . . delivering the drinks to the adults . . . at the door welcoming . . . talking to the adults/playing with the children . . . overseeing the craft table . . . clearing away. We really could do with your help!

62nd Bristol (Horfield Methodist) Scout Group

At the latest census the 62nd Bristol Scout Group were the largest in the District – we currently have on our books:

- 27 Beavers (aged 6 to 8)
- 59 Cubs (aged 8 to 10½) split between two packs
- 85 Scouts (aged 10½ to 14) split between two troops.

We also have a District Explorer Scout Unit meeting at our headquarters on a Tuesday as well. We are very grateful to the church for their support, including providing a venue for sleepovers and also regularly for our Friday Scout troop who with 50 scouts struggle to operate in our current headquarters.

Ours and the District's gratitude to Patrick in particular was reflected in him being awarded a Commissioner's Commendation, presented by Chris Gavriel, our District Commissioner on 31st March at the church.

We have had a packed calendar this year with a Group Family Camp – our most successful yet - at the River Dart Country Park, a trip to Longleat with the District for St George's Day (our patron saint), attending the Westbury-on-Trym Remembrance parade en masse, and successful Christmas tree sales. We hope the church enjoyed their tree!

Beavers went to the national fun days at Woodhouse Park, joined the rest of the District Beavers at badge day earning three each, attended the popular District campfire and recently help a sleepover at our scout hut including an exciting trip to Aerospace Bristol.

The cubs also attended the fun days, tried sailing in the harbour, and took part in the District swimming gala. They also held a successful joint campfire with many parents and siblings joining in. Monday cubs had a sleepover at the church with a trip into the city for a walk and exploration around the harbourside, and both packs attended one of the largest District Cub Camps yet at Woodhouse Park Activity Centre in September with the cubs getting plenty of opportunities to try new activities.

The scouts went on Expeditions to help earn their challenge badges, took a carnival float to Pewsey Carnival, and went on a trip to the Fairford Air Tattoo. They went on several camps including a narrow boating camp, a memorable summer camp in Cornwall, a winter camp in a castle at St Briavels and their annual surf camp.

These are the big highlights but the section leaders consistently deliver a high quality and balanced programme on weekday evenings evidenced both by the number of young people drawn to our group and the large number of top awards gained by those Young People.

We are always in need of more help and support though, and if you feel you could offer some of your time either in our executive committee, helping in a section or in any other way, please do let us know. We'd be very pleased to hear from you.