



Horfield Methodist Church

Bristol & South Gloucestershire Circuit

General Church Meeting Reports

March 2020

Living in the moment

In the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 6. 25–34), Jesus challenged his followers to live each day fully and not be afraid, for none of us ever knows what the future holds. In light of the current outbreak of the COVID-19 virus, that's a particular challenge for us all, because in line with Government guidelines, the Methodist Church has suspended all acts of worship and other church-led groups until further notice.

This announcement was made with regret, but the wellbeing of all those involved in our church life the wider community in which we all live, must be our highest priority. The Annual Church Meeting will therefore be postponed, but this report is a good way to offer thanks for all that has taken place in God's name over the past year, inspired by the Holy Spirit as we strive to follow the example of Jesus' life.

What are your highlights?

There have been many personal highlights at Horfield during the year, and I hope that you will be prompted to think about what has stood out for you as you read and reflect on all the reports which follow.

In July we formally welcomed four new church members, all from 4:12, our young people's fellowship. The service itself was one of real blessing, highlighted when a visitor who was shadowing my work that week simply exclaimed 'Wow' as we walked into church at the start the service, as she looked around and took in the variety of ages, ethnicity and life experience expressed in our church.

Once again, I'd like to mention the way in which our social outreach as a host venue for the Bristol Churches Winter Night Shelter worked very smoothly. All in all, the operation across the city was supported by 16 venues, together expressing God's love with some of those who find themselves without a home. All those involved found themselves receiving God's blessing, not just through the fellowship of working together ecumenically, but through the deep friendship of the guests who quickly became part of our church family in January and February.

In common with churches across the circuit, and across the whole of the Methodist Church in Great Britain, we have been discussing our understanding of marriage and relationships during the year. I have been delighted by the way in which many church members have engaged with this important topic through our local discussions and those across the Circuit. Different views have been expressed and respected, which will be taken forward to the Circuit Meeting and the Bristol District Synod, before a discussion at this summer's conference. Whatever the outcome, I hope and pray that we will all honour and respect the outcome of this key consultation.

Looking ahead

Following discussion with the Leadership Team and others, there are three topics which we'd like to develop further.

firstly, to developing the conversation started at last year's meeting about the use of a significant legacy received in 2018. The intention is to improve the ambience of the Gloucester Road end of the church sanctuary, including a kitchenette, alongside some work in the courtyard between the sanctuary and the main hall. In particular, we need to

consider and capture how these proposed improvements would help our mission and ministry;

secondly, 3generate (the national conference of the Methodist Church for children and young people) has prepared a manifesto for the church as a whole. How can we respond to the challenges they have laid before us all?

thirdly, we were all delighted to see our four new church members on BBC TV in January, telling their story of Jesus' influence on their lives. Inspired by their example, and using this year's Methodist Conference theme of 'So what's the Story...?' we'd like to capture what will inspire and enable our future story here at Horfield and in our neighbourhood and beyond;

Something for you all to do

With this last point in mind, whilst we are in a different season of the church's life, can I ask you to think about our church community at Horfield and write down a handful of words which inspire you about it? For example, you might decide 'inclusive Godly community' represents our church.

Can you let Maureen Hyde know your ideas about this by 20 April via email (secretary@horfieldmethodist.org.uk) or by posting them c/o the church, following which they will be shared via the weekly news sheet, for further reflection.

An urgent need

Alongside offering thanks for each other, I'd like us all to offer a particular vote of thanks to all who hold positions of responsibility within the church, ensuring that all our activities take place on whatever scale. We are all blessed by their contributions and leadership, some over long periods of time.

Looking ahead, we urgently need to fill three Church Steward positions, without which the on-going work and witness of our church is at risk. I urge you to consider prayerfully whether you can take on one of these posts, which form a vital and shared part of the church's leadership – if you would like to know more about what this entails, please do get in contact with me.

On a personal note

I am blessed by the extension of my appointment in the Circuit until 2023, which reflects a continuing call to serve God in this part of the city. I am particularly grateful at Horfield for the continuing generosity of friendship and practical support offered to me, Sandy and our wider family in many ways by many of you.

I pray that same generosity of the Holy Spirit alongside our pragmatic approach will continue to be evident in the current unsettling period, but continue to underpin our mission and ministry in the year ahead and beyond, safe in God's hands.

With love in Christ

Rev Patrick Stonehewer

Stewards +

We continue to look at the day-to-day events within the church, such as

- drawing up the details in the job descriptions and passing them to the Leadership team for finalising;
- continuing to prepare the fire evacuation procedures in consultation with the Property Committee;
- confirming the dates of special events, such as Gift Day, Fairs etc;

We are very grateful to Elaine Gibson who is managing the calendar of tasks.

If you have concerns or ideas please do talk to one of us and we will look into it.

Many thanks to all stewards of whatever persuasion for your dedication and concern for the life of Horfield Methodist Church.

Leadership Team

During the past year we have dealt with the following:

- The weekly notices have been changed and we hope you like the new format.
- The library has been moved to a spot outside the kitchen which is more accessible for people. We hope you will make use of the books there. Please add and subtract as you see fit.
- We have drawn up a job description for stewards, both church and vestry. If you feel you are called to join either team please ask for a copy.

Changing our image is an on-going process and will be taken further after more discussion at this year's AGM, so come with your ideas.

Treasurer's Report

Last Financial Year (1.9.18 – 31.8.19)

Summary

- For the financial year 2018 – 2019 we almost broke even with just a small deficit of £167.23.
- We received a legacy from Rev Edna Wicks of £50,000. The use of this has been, and continues to be, discussed.

Charitable giving

Members of HMC continue to be generous in their charitable giving and over £3,600 was donated to charities during the '18 – '19 financial year

Current Financial Year (1.9.19 – 31.8.20)

Summary

Figures for the financial year to date (approximately halfway through the year) are looking encouraging and it is hopeful that we will not finish with a deficit, as for last year. We do, however, need to continue to be careful with our spending.

Current Balance, as at 14.3.20

Of which:

Nat West	£801.47	Major Projects Fund	£15474.77
CFB	£20,158.23	Boiler Fund	£2000.00
Lloyds	£32,347.44	TMCP (legacy)	£50,352.21
<u>TMCP</u>	<u>£50,352.21</u>	Messy Church	£524.08
Total	£103,659.35	Special Collections	£815.46
		Earmarked/allocated	£69,166.52
		In the General Fund	£34,492.83

Portable Payment Device

Research continues into the feasibility of having a portable payment device (contactless payments) for accepting donations and payments to HMC. Howard Wilson has been looking at different devices and systems used by one or two of the churches he has worked with and will be presenting some alternatives and costings to the next Property & Finance meeting.

Fundraising Group

We are grateful for the work of the fundraising group to help increase funds through a variety of events. Our largest fundraisers (more than £3000 between them) are the two fayres and ask for your continued support in these and all other events. Thank you.

Regular Giving

Many thanks to everyone for your ongoing financial support.

If you feel you are able to increase your giving - either by way of a more regular commitment through the weekly envelope scheme (speak to David Bainbridge) or setting up a bank standing order, it would be very much appreciated and would go some way towards helping to meet the increased day-to-day running costs as well as the increase in Benevolence-giving and Missional activities.

If you have online banking, setting up a regular bank Standing Order can be done online. Alternatively, you can go into your own bank and ask to set it up. For both ways you will need the church's bank details which are as follows:

Bank: Lloyds

Name of account: Horfield Methodist Church

Sort code: 30-91-91

Account no: 36329860

Pastoral Report

Total membership to date is 104.

Sadly, one of our long-standing congregation, Valerie Chivers, died on Saturday 1st February 2020 following an extended period of ill health. She maintained close links with the church through regular pastoral visits. A celebration of her life took place at Canford Crematorium on Wednesday 26th February. Sincere condolences have been sent to her family.

There will be a special service on Sunday 5th April to welcome three more people into Church membership.

There is still a need for further pastoral visitors to support our Church community. Please chat with Patrick or Pam, who would welcome volunteers for this very rewarding role.

An important part of our Church discipleship is to pray for our community and each other on a weekly basis.

Please continue to inform Patrick if anybody requires extended communion.

Messy Church

Happy to say we have had another fruitful year with our Messy Congregation.

We continue to welcome between 30 and 50 members of the congregation each month. We have a core group of regular attendees and are pleased to welcome new families each month and help them explore the love of Jesus.

We have looked at a wide variety of bible stories, exploring their meaning using all manner of craft activities, trails and experiments. Could you lead someone through an assault course when they are wearing a blindfold!? Would you be able to protect an egg so that it survived a drop from a great height? How good is your eyesight, good enough to read the small print using a pair of binoculars, across the hall? There is always a buzz of excitement in the hall as families explore the activities together.

Our act of worship, celebration time, is always lively, sharing our activities and linking them to the theme of the day. Telling the story, singing and praying. We have just shared our Messy Communion with all the congregation sharing our communion meal.

Messy Church always finishes with a delicious meal and a time to chat to the families as we eat together.

We are fortunate to have an amazing team of helpers who work alongside the core team to guide our wonderful families through some great activities and to help them understand the links to the bible stories.

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.

This year we completed Youth Alpha, with four members being confirmed in July 2019. We were invited by Songs of Praise to talk about our Christian journey and testimony. We have started back using again Harry Potter, helping us to relate to stories and ideas from the Bible in today's world. We're looking forward to organising some social events over the next year, with some film nights and visits out and about.

If you're at Secondary School or 6th form college (11 – 18) and would like to join us, we meet once a month, on the 2nd Sunday evening 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.

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 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.

During January 2020 the young people decorated the Junior Church room with hand-made flower bunting to welcome the guests from St Mungos who were sheltering at our church for 6 weekends covering January / February 2020.

The young people will be making bookmarks to be handed out to the congregation on Mothering Sunday, 22nd March 2020.

We are looking forward to our Junior Church Anniversary provisional date 14th June 2020 and we are currently deciding how to celebrate this.

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 2019. We are very grateful and appreciative for all the work they have done.

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.

Housegroup (Janet)

We continue to meet every 4 – 6 weeks and have looked at a variety of topics such as

- Marriage & relationships
- Looking at the lives of significant people in the Bible
- Holy Habits.

We continue to grow, welcoming new people which is a joy but our venue cannot expand so we may need to start another group.

If you are interested in meeting to explore your faith, the Bible or what it means to follow Christ please have a word with Janet Browning or David Bainbridge.

House Group (Pam)

As a group we continue to meet monthly in each other's homes for continued fellowship, discussion, Bible studies and practical activities.

We have studied the Holy Habits, Biblical Teaching and we focused on creativity using the Lindisfarne Scriptorium and had a very pleasant evening choosing Bible verses to add to our butterflies that we coloured and had laminated as a keepsake. We followed this the next month with a discussion as directed by the Holy habits programme.

Members of the group, once again took part in the Women's World Day of Prayer service. This was entitled "Come everything is ready." The service was written by the Christian women of Slovakia. The service was a joint service at Horfield Parish Church and later members of the house group assisted in repeating and leading this service during Sunday worship at HMC. Members of the group have just participated in the service for 2020, now named "World Day of Prayer", but still written by Christian women and this time from the women of Zimbabwe. The service was held at URC Muller Rd. As a group, we are busy preparing to recreate this service for a forthcoming Sunday service at HMC.

The group has again aided Margaret Postlethwaite with the potting up of plants for the May Fayre, and then helping to serve at the fayre. We thank Margaret for her amazing efforts and her amazingly green fingers!

In November we now have a tradition of a pleasant evening sorting and wrapping items for the Lucky Dip stall that we facilitate at the Christmas Fayre. This stall continues to be very popular along with the cakes that we sell.

We also have another pleasant tradition of meeting for a Christmas meal, which is another of the Holy Habits - Breaking Bread Together.

Members of our group assisted with the very successful Night Shelter. They were either engaged in cooking or serving a meal, setting out the beds or simply engaging with the guests. It was a very humbling experience.

In June we had a very lovely walk organised by Margaret. We started at Oldbury on Severn and visited St. Arilda's Church and were able to learn something of her and her demise. We then continued to do a circular walk to the Severn and back.

We look forward to another year of continued fellowship, contributing to charities and taking part in many varied themes and activities.

Leprosy Mission

Once again thank you to the faithful supporters of the Leprosy Mission. It is much appreciated.

This year we sent £230, which is great and there is still a little in the "kitty" to be sent later on. Postage stamps in aid of the Leprosy Mission can be left in the box at the back of the church.

Wednesday Morning Group (WMG)

Would you like to join us for coffee and a natter?

We meet on the 1st and 3rd (and occasionally the 4th) Wednesday of each month during school term time, 10am -11.30am in the 4:12 room at church. We see it as a little oasis of 'me' time when work, household tasks and other 'dutiful' things are put to one side for 90 minutes and the time is completely ours to do with as we choose!

Occasionally we will spend some time cleaning the room (it is the only room used for meetings etc on the premises which does not have someone to clean it) or sorting through the children's toy bags used in church. Once or twice a term, we also like to go on our particular version of a field-trip – supporting a local church or charity-run coffee shop!

Worship Consultation

Group members: Janet Browning, Jenny Cornell, Rev Patrick Stonehewer, Helen Wallbridge, John Hopper, Howard Wilson, Joan Davis, Stephen Holliday, David Bainbridge.

The above is not a closed group and other members of the congregation are welcome.

The worship Consultation group has continued to meet quarterly prior to the making of the Circuit preaching plan, this enables our own in Church plans for Sunday worship to be forwarded to the Circuit plan makers. These include special services marking the Christian calendar, local arrangements and themed services. During this past year the latter has included a focus on the Methodist Church Compass material in evening worship, looking at the basics of discipleship. We also held two evening services which included discussion on the Methodist Church's report on "Marriage and Relationships". Currently, the theme for morning worship, running for twelve weeks, is "So What's the Story", based on the book of that name co-authored by the current President and Vice President of the Methodist Conference. In July we will be looking at the book of Ruth in morning worship, this year's theme for Bible Month.

At each meeting some thought is given to recent services to consider what worked and what didn't work so well and issues which relate to our worship are also discussed. Feedback from the congregation is always welcome, both negative and positive, just let one of the group members listed above have your comments.

Feed back is also received from Messy Church and Churches Together.

Fundraising Group

The newly created Fundraising Group has enjoyed producing a programme of interesting and varied events for the year. We have been very pleased with the support we have received from people volunteering to make cakes or to help run an event, as well as from those attending or e.g. buying quiz sheets.

The quiz sheets have proved popular (around £150 raised between the Autumn and Christmas quiz sheets) so we will continue to produce one every few months for the foreseeable future.

Our first major fundraiser (not including the Christmas church fayre) was in December when the City of Bristol Brass Band came and performed a very well-received selection of Christmas carols and songs. If you weren't able to be there, you missed a real treat. One member of the audience was even invited to conduct the band for one of the items! It is hoped that the CoBBB will be able to return to entertain us again next Christmas. The church benefitted by more than £220 from the proceeds of this concert.

February saw our 'Flippin' Fantastic Pancakes-a-Plenty' event! Thanks go to Pam Williams' housegroup who served up delicious pancakes and toppings to the art group, Brownies, a few of the dancers, members of the church plus other friends and families. Another well-supported event which raised £130+

In March we were serenaded by some extremely talented young musicians who played in the Musical Medley concert arranged by Faith and Maddy Stonehewer. One comment overheard during the interval: "It's as high a standard as the concert I went to at St George's [concert venue] last week – and they were professionals!" Many thanks to those eight performers who helped us raise an incredible £360!

Our next major event planned is a VE Day Anniversary Celebration on Friday 8th May. Once again music will be featured as one of our members, Andy Stevenson, will be entertaining us with a group of his friends who dance to Swing and Jazz music, using music from the Big Band era (Glen Miller etc). Mary Lane, who attends the art group, will then lead a community singalong with songs such as the 'White Cliffs of Dover' and 'Pack up Your Troubles'! A tea of sandwiches and cakes is also included in the cost of the ticket (all tickets must be bought in advance).

Rules and entry forms for the photographic competition, 'Images of Horfield and Beyond' are now available so why not take the opportunity to snap some of those beautiful daffodils or other spring flowers which are gracing our gardens and Horfield Common at the moment. The closing date isn't until early September so you have plenty of time to capture that one spectacular photo!

Several further events are planned so please do support them - we hope that we have managed to devise a programme that has 'something for everyone.'

Lunch Club

An average of about 25 people meets on the second Tuesday of the month for lunch. There is a three course meal followed by coffee or tea for £ 4.00. We are indebted to the following for cooking , preparing the meals and washing up during the year- Audrey Bainbridge, Margaret Postlethwaite, Linnette Nelson, Joan Lewis, Heather Wilcox, Thiene Liang, Marilyn Tighe and Pam Gannon. The profits we make are used to buy kitchen equipment and products in addition to contributing to the church funds.

Neighbourhood and Mission

A number of the group have been involved in the Night Shelter, which was held in our church at the beginning of the year. Thank you to all the people who contributed in any way – those who donated money and items of food and clothes, those who attended the night shelter to host or cook or stay overnight, those who made up the mattresses and toiletries, those who collected in the mattresses and bedding. Those who opened up the church for deliveries and those who took the washing home and returned them every week. Most of the congregation have been involved in some way and we thank you all.

Our charitable giving has been for the Night Shelter, The Food Bank, The Methodist Centre and contributions to Parkway's Christmas gifts collection for Social Services. If you know of a charity which you can suggest we help, please let us know

Art Club

We continue to meet on Friday afternoons from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. We average about 16 people each week and we use different kinds of art materials- pencils, pastels, oil and paint. It is a very friendly, supportive group which is happy to welcome anyone who wishes to join us. We hope to hold a small exhibition of our work at the gift/ Lent Lunch Day on 4th April, 2020.

Craft Group

We are a small group. We meet on the 2nd, Thursday of the month. We make items that can be sold at the Church Fairs and events. We have learnt craft skills as we have progressed. Hayley has given us a lot of material, passed on from a friend, and Joan and Hazel have been busy making tablecloths, shopping bags, cushions and aprons (which we will use for the VE Day Celebrations.)

Scrabble

A core group of 6 still meet on alternate Tuesday afternoons to stimulate the "old grey matter". We have welcomed Lauren, Jade's friend, on a couple of occasions. If you would like to join us please have a word with John Hopper or Janet Browning as we will need to check we have another game available.

Little Fishes Toddler Group

Friday mornings, 10am – 11.30am during school term time.

Little Fishes continues to thrive with an average of 18 – 22 toddlers attending each session.

A typical session: As the children arrive, they choose a bowl and help themselves to a selection of cut-up pieces of fruit – this could be satsumas, apple, banana, pineapple, cucumber, raisins or maybe some cheese or breadsticks. Each week the selection is varied so the children have a chance to try different foods. The mums, dads, grandparents and other carers sign their name and indicate which hot drink they would like. The volunteers in the kitchen meanwhile have been busy sterilising the children's beakers and cutting up fruit, they then work through the list of drinks. And then comes the job of taking the ordered drinks to the very grateful parents who welcome the chance to sit down and watch their children play with the toys or they maybe go to the craft table together. Over the past few weeks, craft activities have included playdoh, printing, cutting and sticking, threading and colour-in nursery-rhyme hats.

Toys in the pink room are generally rotated on a 3 or 4 week basis so there is always something different on offer from the week before. The green room is where toys which require more space are put out - toys to develop their gross motor skills: ride-on toys; slide; small football net and balls; a balance 'path'.

At 11.10am everyone joins in when 'Tidy-up Time' is called, to pack away all the dolls, trains, jigsaw puzzles, building bricks etc before we have the story and singing. Favourite songs include 'Sleeping Bunnies' and 'Bouncing Along on the Big Red Tractor' along with old favourites such as 'Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star'.

Once a month our theme for the story and songs is based on a Bible story - a recent one being the Lost Sheep which saw lots of the children (acting) climbing over rocks, looking behind bushes and wading across a stream to try and find that elusive little sheep which was eventually found, much to the excitement of one and all!

We really are very low on volunteers at the moment and would ask that you consider prayerfully whether you could add your name to the rota to come and help out once a month (or more!).

There are different roles: helping in the kitchen to make the snacks and drinks; opening the door to let people in and making them feel welcome; sitting at the craft table to oversee the craft activity (which has already been prepared, and which the carer actually does with the child); helping with the tidying up at the end of the session. We also need someone to take the subs occasionally when Janet isn't able to be there.

The carers and children really appreciate what Little Fishes has to offer and often say it's the best and friendliest group they go to, but much of this is down to the number of volunteers we like to have on duty, enabling those volunteers to have the time to chat and get to know everyone.

Please let Eurfron or Helen know if you can be a part of our wonderful team.

62nd Bristol (Horfield Methodist) Scout Group

At the latest census the 62nd Bristol Scout Group were the second largest in the District (recently eclipsed by another Group moving into the District!) Numbers were slightly down on last year but this is in a large part deliberate, and we currently have on our books:

- 26 Beavers (aged 6 to 8)
- 57 Cubs (aged 8 to 10½) split between two packs, and
- 79 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 42 scouts struggle to operate in our current headquarters.

We have had another incredibly busy year with another Group Family Camp, following last year's success, at the River Dart Country Park, very successful Christmas Tree sales (and we take cards now!), a Group BBQ, and our own St George's Day celebration overlooking the suspension bridge. Several of our leaders took part in the Macmillan Mighty Hike along the River Wye – a cause very close to our hearts at the moment. And we recently built some brand-new storage in the front hall of the hut – much in need as we push forward with a programme of improvements.

Cubs and Scouts attended the County Youth Forum, helping to support the wider Youth Shaped programme and we had a great turnout at our Carol Service which was also great fun for all involved.

Beavers went to the national fun days at Woodhouse Park, joined the rest of the District Beavers on a trip to the Aquarium, and held a sleepover at the church for St David's Day, with hugely appreciated support from Patrick.

The cubs also attended the fun days, tried sailing in the harbour, and took part in the District swimming gala – coming in an amazing third place this year! They tried kick boxing – thanks for the use of the church for some more space for that, toured the local Window Wanderland display, and had a successful and sunny Spring Camp near Bath. They also attended the District Cub Camp which was the biggest ever.

The scouts went on Expeditions to help earn their challenge badges, put in a great performance at the Kohoutek team challenge event at Woodhouse Park, and volunteered at the North Bristol Food Bank. They also went on an incredible variety and number of camps, including a camera camp with a dark room, an adventure in London, a trip to the Isle of Wight, winter camp in the Forest of Dean 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. The hard work of several of our leaders was also rewarded with a number of awards and successful completion of training.

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, as our Group Scout Leader (a role we've been missing for a while, helping to glue everyone together!), helping in a section or in any other way, please do let us know. We'd be very pleased to hear from you.

