

Broadstone URC AGM Reports for 2014/5

SECRETARIES' REPORT

During the past busy year we have shared together in our usual mix of events, celebrations and times of sadness. We have worshipped together, helping each other to grow in and share our faith, welcomed newcomers into the life of the church and have continued to encourage children and young people to feel they are part of our church family. Through prayer and practical action we have supported each other in our witness in the community, working in partnership with other denominations.

We have welcomed four new church members, celebrated three baptisms, two marriages, one marriage blessing, together with special birthdays and anniversaries, and the arrival of new grandchildren. We have mourned the deaths of several of our faithful church members and friends: Dennis and Joan Banfield, Earl and Margaret Roberts, Pam Toobe, Joan Snashall and Sylvia Carnhill. With our flower ministry and prayer support we continue to reach out to those who need help in times of sadness or joy.

The pattern of our Sunday morning services is now well established with Holy Communion being celebrated on the first Sunday of each month. The Family Worship Mix Service, every fourth Sunday, has begun to bring some new families into our congregation as we continue to worship with our friends from LMURC and the Beavers.

We have continued to hold a service of Holy Communion on the second Sunday evening in the month and on the fourth Sunday 'Worship and The Word' has welcomed a group of up to fourteen worshippers.

The installation of our new audio-visual equipment in the church has enabled us to explore different ways of presenting worship and has enhanced the range of hymns and songs we can now sing.

Our minister, Rev Caroline Vodden, has continued to lead worship at Lytchett Minster URC on second Sunday mornings and we have joined them for special services including Maundy Thursday Communion and their Carol Service. Christmas Eve and Christmas Day services are shared with Broadstone Methodist Church.

As members of Churches Together in Broadstone, we continue to share in all the events and services which are organised in the community. At Christmas inspired by the movement to make Broadstone more dementia-friendly, and in conjunction with the Broadstone Age Concern Day Centre, a Carol service was initiated for dementia sufferers and their carers. Similar services are being organised to celebrate Easter and Harvest.

Opportunities for outreach and mission centred on children and young families include our Toddler group, Pop-Ins and Pop-in Express and our contact with local schools and the Beavers. Once again a team joined other local churches to provide children's activities at the Broadstone Summer Jam.

We have also had the opportunity to extend our outreach by starting a Charity Knitting and Craft Group and by organising a Friday games evening. Both these are held fortnightly and are growing in number.

Caroline has continued her ministry as chaplain at The Junction Sports Centre and for the police force. She has continued to serve on the Wessex Synod Trust and Finance & Property Committee and visited local schools. Many in the community have appreciated her support for others in times of need.

In April, our link with our twinning church was strengthened by a group travelling to Frankenthal to renew old friendships and make new friends. We will be welcoming a group to Broadstone in September to continue our partnership.

As our Local Ministry and Mission Review, which was completed this year, shows this is only part of our work here at Broadstone URC. We are energized by our faith, and our desire to serve God and one another, to plan for the future. To do this several focus groups have been established to discern our priorities for the future.

The names of so many willing groups of members and friends appear on lists and rotas helping to maintain and continue the work of our church. There are too many to name and thank, but we must mention in this report Pat Johnson and Roy King-Underwood who are completing their time as elders. We thank them both for their years of loving service responding to the needs of our church family.

We have supported the wider church by attending Wessex Synod area gatherings and General Assembly, and by individual contributions at all levels of the URC from Wessex Synod Fury Camp to Mission Council. Elders training sessions and Safeguarding training have been undertaken this year. Two members are following the 'Growing Leaders' and TLS courses.

Our members and friends have continued to support the work of the church through their generous giving which has enabled us to maintain and improve our buildings, fund our outreach activities, give some support to LMURC and make gifts to many charities during the year.

We were sad to hear that Caroline has accepted a call to serve a group of churches in Essex. And so the next year will be a time of further change and challenge for us all. For Caroline and for us it may be a time of uncertainty, but let us all embrace the opportunities which will occur to re-think and re-shape our lives of discipleship and witness as we worship together and continue to serve the Lord.

Isobel Evans & Janet Meachin

CHILDREN'S AND YOUTH WORK REPORT

We have had another busy year of youth and children's work.

Toddlers The Toddler Group meets each Wednesday afternoon and, through recommendations on social media, has continued to grow. It is a busy, lively group of happy children, parents and grandparents. The car park is full and the hall is buzzing.

The children thrive in an atmosphere of fun and support provided by the team which includes Joan Dyer, Pat Purser, Julia Gowen, Janet Meachin, Saz Holland and Isobel Evans.

Each week different activities are organised, special festivals are celebrated and once more Father George Christmas visited us. When the sun is shining the children play outside and in July enjoyed a Teddy Bear's picnic.

We continue to charge 50p per session in order that all families can be included. With our weekly contributions we have been able to make two donations to the charity 'Home Start' and also to church funds.

Once more we thank all who encourage us in this community outreach and especially to Caroline who visits us when she is able.

Pop-Ins continue to be successful. We continue to provide quality, well-organised and well-run events which are happily enjoyed and much appreciated by all who attend, with some new faces every time. Whilst a slight drop in numbers is disappointing, nevertheless, the children and parents who come have a fabulous time and we remain positive about the impact the pop-ins are having. Wouldn't we be delighted to see 20+ children on a Sunday morning?

Pop-In Express Siobhan, Jane and Shirley continue to run exciting and stimulating events on the second Saturday evening of the month for those aged 9 upwards. Whilst numbers are not high, they would prefer to have a regular additional member of the team before increasing the numbers any further. If you would be interested in joining the team, please let me know. There is very much a Christian emphasis to their themes and each month, they have a stimulating Biblical or Christian discussion whilst having tea. They enjoyed a bowling trip to Tower Park this month.

Family Worship Mix It was a year ago that we launched the Family Worship Mix services on the fourth Sunday morning of the month. These have been popular with the Beavers' families, both children and their parents, who appreciate being able to access the Bible with their children in a relaxed and creative way. It is also a pleasure to see the families on the periphery of the church at some of these services, as well as the occasional pop-in family. We have strived to ensure that we cater for everyone's needs at Family Worship Mix, whether young or old, and would welcome your feedback now that we have been running for a year.

The orchestra continues to play once a month at the Family Worship Mix service which is much appreciated.

Young People's Charity We raised £1,060 for the 2014 Young People's Charity, Children of Fiji – Solar Lamps, so thanks to all who contributed in any way. The 2015 Charity is for Beehives, and our annual musical ploughman's lunch will be on Sunday 26th April, so please put the date in your diaries – there are some interesting plans amongst our musicians, both young and not-so-young, over what they are going to play for us this year.

Sunday mornings Aside from the Family Worship Mix, there is always someone with material prepared every Sunday in case we have any children with us. However, most of our families come for Family Worship Mix and also for Orchestra practice if their children play an instrument. The Seekers have not been meeting regularly since September 2014 due to lack of young people. The only regular members are Paul, Emily and Saz who are now helping with the AV system. This does not however preclude meeting occasionally when others are back from university.

Outreach We continue to seek ways to reach out to those families on the periphery of the church, of which there are a number. In addition to invites to our family events and services, at Christmas we gave a Meaningful Advent Calendar to all those who came to the pop-in and to the children connected with the church. This was a very powerful means of outreach and was very much appreciated by

both the children and their parents, who were delighted that their children were accessing the Christmas story every day during the month of December as they opened the doors.

Looking to the future With the Family Worship Mix services now running smoothly, I believe that we should be looking to advertise this more widely in the community. You may have seen the colourful advert in the Broadstone Link advertising our March pop-in and this could be a useful way of advertising our Family Worship Mix. Another option to consider would be a banner on the hedge at the front of the church during the week preceding the Family Worship Mix services.

Several of our youth workers attended the synod safeguarding training last year and this has raised some important points for consideration, by the elders as well as the Forum, in our work with young people and also vulnerable adults.

Finally, my thanks go to the extremely hard-working and dedicated team who work so tirelessly in our provision to the very many children, young people and their families who pass through the church each year.

Gill McDonald

MISSION COMMITTEE REPORT

The Mission committee continues to meet twice a year to plan Mission Suppers, organise the Minute for Mission slots and discuss issues raised by information received from URC Headquarters and other organisations such as Christian Aid.

Through our Communion Offering we continue the pattern from previous years, supporting a smaller number of charities over a longer period of time. The Minute for Mission each month is used to provide information and updates on the charity that we support in the Communion Offering. This arrangement has continued over the last twelve months and appears to be working well. In 2014 we supported the Retired Ministers' Housing Fund, the Junior Church Charity, Forest Holme, Broadstone Age Concern, Christian Aid, the MARS Trust, Tools for Self Reliance, Alpha India, Rivers of Living Water,

Poole Volunteer Chaplains, Routes to Roots and the Bible Society.

The Mission Suppers are always happy occasions, providing members with an opportunity to have fellowship together as we share a meal and learn about work done to help those less fortunate than ourselves. As in previous years we have organised two events since the last AGM, one in the autumn and one in the spring. At our harvest supper last September the Rev. Mark Warner came to talk about the work of the Sailors' Society. Mark gave a very thoughtful presentation enabling us all to understand just how much we owe to the merchant seamen who play such a vital role in transporting goods around the world and in particular to our shores. At the end of the evening Mark was presented with knitted hats and neck warmers made by members of our Craft Group. From the Harvest Supper and the Harvest Thanksgiving offering a donation of £420 was made to the work of the Sailors' Society. Food brought to our Harvest Festival service was again given to the Poole Food Bank, who was very pleased to receive non-perishable food from our Harvest Festival service and also fresh food from our window displays. At our spring event this year, held on Saturday 21st March we had two presentations from members and friends who had recently visited Zambia. Alice Vodden spoken about her voluntary work under the auspices of the International Citizen Scheme and Janet Meachin talked about her visit with our synod moderator to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the United Church of Zambia. Donations at the end of the evening to Golden Opportunity Links for Development, a charity set up by Michael and Prudence Mwanza to alleviate extreme poverty in Zambia amounted to £303.38. This event was well supported; 52 in all including several visitors and some members from our Lytchett Minster church.

The United Reformed Church's Commitment for Life programmes continues to be supported by about 30 members. We have continued to support their work in Zimbabwe and last year members contributed £2323. Over the last 15 years members of this church have contributed almost £30,000 to Commitment for Life. Thank

you to all who have supported, and continue to support Commitment for Life.

We continue to run the Traidcraft stall on the second and fourth Sundays each month. Two highlights are probably worth mentioning. Firstly, this year we have sold nearly 110 Real Easter Eggs, 75 of these were bought by St. John's Church for distribution at their Messy Church and the Breakfast Church service. Secondly, over the last three years we have made a surplus on our sales which now enables us to make a donation of £200 towards the Traidcraft's Fair Necessities Campaign.

Finally, my thanks to fellow members of the Mission Committee; our minister Caroline, Pat Johnson, David and Saz Holland, Janet Meachin and Eileen Thurston, for their work and support throughout the year.

Ian McDonald

MUSIC REPORT

We have widened the scope of the report this year to cover more of the music in worship – including and saying a few words about the band. (The orchestra has already been covered under the Children & Youth Work Report.)

The objective of the Music Group is to provide music to add to our services of worship, because we believe that music is an inclusive way to express our faith and a means of highlighting elements of the service.

We have sung our way through the church's year, singing on 15 occasions (too much or too little?) with our usual range of music suited to the group and the season. This has included arrangements of worship songs and anthems – mostly contemporary from our 'flexible' anthems book and a few well known older ones. Whilst music by John Rutter did still feature ('Love came down at Christmas' at the candlelight service), music by Alan Bullard has been more prominent this year. We sang Alan Bullard's Christmas anthem "His praises we'll sing" in the Carol Service and we have sung a number of his arrangements of other songs from our Oxford Book of Flexible Anthems.

So a little about Alan Bullard, he was born in 1947, is one the UK's highly regarded

contemporary composers. He was tutored by Herbert Howells and Antony Hopkins at the Royal College of Music before going into teaching – he was head of composition at Colchester Institute until 2005, which he left to become a full-time composer. Initially his music caught the attention of the local Colchester Choral Society who commissioned works from him, and in due course Oxford University Press which now publishes a wide variety of Alan Bullard's anthems and carols for different choral groupings and situations, which has made them readily available world-wide. Alan and his wife Jan (a piano teacher and singer) both sing in the choir of Lion Walk URC, Colchester, and occasionally perform in their lunchtime concerts.

This year our singing as a church has been accompanied regularly, in addition to the piano and organ, by our Band, on Family Worship Mix Sundays. This has provided an up-beat start to the service and introduced us to a number of contemporary hymns & songs, which we may sing again now we are aware of them. The freshness of music is often matched by the freshness of lyrics which provides a stimulus to our thinking. The Band has been playing occasionally for many years now and the FWM services have provided the impetus and opportunity to play more regularly. We have learned new songs, sometimes with the help of YouTube, in order to provide this music for worship.

I am grateful to the members of the Music Group for their faithful support during the year, and their fun and encouragement. It is not all hard work and if anyone would like to try us out we would be delighted to welcome you to our meetings. If you are interested, please talk to me or any member of the group. We meet on Thursdays, 8 p.m. to 9.30 p.m. in the Waterman Lounge. Equally, if you would like to play or sing in the band, please make yourself known – we will be pleased to welcome you.

Also, if you have any suggestions of music you would like to hear, hear more of, etc. please let me know.

Martin Casey

COMMUNICATIONS REPORT

This report focuses on the various ways in which BURC communicates with both its worshippers and the wider community through Pathway, the church website, and news sent for publication in the local press. First of all, though, may I thank Roy King-Underwood, our fellow - and now-retiring - Elder, who has spent a lot of time, energy, and strong coffees over the last 5 years or so both building the church website from scratch and then helping me to keep it up-to-date, eg uploading the weekly newssheet and monthly services information. Although he's now stood down from the Eldership, Roy has kindly agreed to continue to help with 'webmastering' and wider Communications issues. I must also thank Peter Carter for his continuing support in kind for the church via the regular printing of our newssheet and Pathway magazine.

As for the church website itself, apart from the ongoing improvements, the major issue in 2014 was that, in November, our then hosting service told us that they were no longer going to support the computer program that we have been using to put the website together. Fortunately, after some anguished emails from us, we had our account transferred to a sister company – which was continuing to offer the same program – and all our files and email accounts were subsequently transferred across.

Unfortunately, because of that change, I have no usage data prior to 2014. However, in 2014, the website had between 354 and 821 visits each month. While about half of these were from services such as Google looking to 'index' our site, there was - and is - still lot of 'human' interest in what we have to say. Certainly the 'Contact Us' page on the website generates numerous enquiries, especially since we added (this year) a dedicated email address for Hall Booking enquiries.

The other major communication development to report is that, along with our existing Facebook site managed by David Holland, we have recently set up a Twitter account and have even 'tweeted' a few brief reminders about BURC's events and activities. So if you want to get your grandchildren, nieces, nephews, etc interested in Broadstone URC, please refer

them to the Twitter link on the home page of the church website!

Jim Tudor

PROPERTY OVERSIGHT GROUP REPORT

The Property Oversight Group has continued to manage the church maintenance and upkeep. This has involved the usual mix of yearly checks, regular work, general repairs as well as some improvements to the overall infrastructure.

We have had the usual gutter cleaning, boiler and gas heater servicing etc that comes around every year. Then there was the gardening required to keep the grounds looking nice and repairs to things that have broken or need replacing like bulbs that have gone out, doors that are sticking, railings and white lines that needed repainting.

Perhaps of more interest have been a number of updates, the main one being the installation of the Audio Visual System which was used for the first time last July. Once over the teething problems and with some robust processes in place it has performed well. The final stage of the AV system will be completed on Friday (27-Mar) with the installation of a 4th screen next to the Frankenthal wall hanging, to enable the service leader, musicians and communion servers to have visibility of the what is being projected. The hand-held radio mike is also being replaced with one which should provide better performance.

Other updates have included powering the cross and star on the front of the church via a daylight sensor, a new Passive Infrared Sensor on side of the hall so that the light comes on when you start to walk down the side of the hall and also the Daylight Sensor controlling the church perimeter lighting has been replaced.

We have identified a number of areas which may need to be addressed over the next few years. This includes decoration of the church and other rooms including the Acorn room as well as some updates being considered by the LMMR Buildings Group including disabled access and improvements to the dais to aid access.

Finally can I thank the members of the POG - Martin Casey, George Goodbody, Mick and Val Rowberry and John Evans and I should include Tim Meachin as an unofficial member who has done a number of jobs around the church during the year. Thanks also go to Chris and Isobel Evans who have done an excellent job looking after the grounds. And finally thanks for the housekeeping work go to Sheila McMahon supported by Sandra Taylor and Janet Meachin.

David Holland