

BROADSTONE

UNITED REFORMED CHURCH



Reports of the church activities for 2015 – 2016

*Presented to the Annual General Meeting on
Sunday 20th March 2016*

INTRODUCTION

For the Annual General Meeting on 20th March 2016 the Elders have proposed a change to the way we report, specifically:

- That reports cover the areas shown below, with the intention of capturing better the wide scope of our church life. These are the areas that are shown in our ‘Organisational Structure’ used to capture that same ‘big picture’, and
- That with these reports provided in written form, our AGM presenters can speak about two or three main points from the report, rather than read it through. It is hoped that this will allow additional time to focus on the essential matters, and time for discussion and reflection.

CONTENTS

1. WORSHIP & SPIRITUAL LIFE.....	3
2. PASTORAL CARE & FELLOWSHIP.....	7
2.1 YARN WITH YARN – Charity Craft Group.....	8
3. CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE’S WORK.....	9
4. SECRETARIAL.....	12
5. FINANCE	12
6. PROPERTY MANAGEMENT & FACILITIES.....	13
7. ECUMENICAL & OUTREACH (incl. Mission & Communications).....	16

Acknowledgement to Jim Tudor for the front cover photograph

1. WORSHIP & SPIRITUAL LIFE

This congregation, and pastorate, has been greatly blessed by the presence and teaching of Revd Caroline Vodden, who led her last service here as our minister on 2nd August 2016. The quality of her leading of worship is something we recognise and have appreciated. In the activity of the vacancy now begun, we do well to reflect on the seven years of Caroline's time with us here and the benefit that we gained from her teaching and leading of this faith community at Broadstone URC.

Worship

Pulpit Supply

It is a responsibility of Elders "to see that public worship is regularly offered and the sacraments are duly administered" and no more so than in a vacancy. This has been achieved through the good offices of Chris Evans as Pulpit Supply Secretary, whom we thank for his diligent work. The quality of worship is very important to us as a fellowship and to our outreach to those who might choose to join us on any individual Sunday.

We thank the members who, occasionally before Caroline left, and so much more since have been leading our worship, including Revd Tim Meachin, Chris Evans & Ian McDonald, and all those taking part. We are blessed by the thought, wisdom and efforts of all those who lead our services.

Services

The monthly format of our Sunday services, in the revised plan from January 2016, is as follows:

- 1st Sunday morning – Worship with Holy Communion
- 2nd Sunday morning – Worship, led by a visiting preacher
- 2nd Sunday evening – our evening Holy Communion is not being held during the vacancy
- 3rd Sunday morning – Family Worship Mix service, to which we particularly encourage young families. The Beaver colony routinely attends this service.

- 4th Sunday morning – Sunday worship led by members of the congregation, an occasion when members of Lytchett Minster URC routinely worship with us
- 4th Sunday evening – ‘Worship and the Word’ Service, which includes Bible Study
- 5th Sunday morning – Sunday worship, led by a visiting preacher

Festival Services and Advent Service of Remembrance

We have celebrated the great festivals of the church with special services – Easter Sunday, Harvest, Christmas Festival and Christmas Carols by Candlelight. These have been largely co-ordinated through groups of willing members with Revd Caroline whilst she was here and in committee since. We are grateful to the very many members who participate in one way or another in these celebrations, not only in the services themselves but also in the preparation of the church on these special occasions.

Our Advent Service of Remembrance, introduced by Revd Caroline Vodden, continues to be a service of reflection that is valued by the local community. We have been pleased to welcome many visitors to this service and to the time of fellowship and support over a cup of tea afterwards. In 2015, this service was led by Revd Elizabeth Rundle, from Broadstone Methodist Church, who followed the style of service determined by Caroline.

Care Home services – Delph House, The Links, The Potteries

We have continued to lead services, taking turns with the other churches in Broadstone, in the care homes in our area, specifically Delph House, The Links and The Potteries. Our thanks go to Linda Smith, Pat Johnson, George and Eileen Goodbody, Ian McDonald and Saz Holland & Revd Charles Meachin for leading these services and providing this valuable act of caring for those in these homes.

Ecumenical and other joint services

Three festival services a year – at Easter, Harvest & Christmas – are held specifically centred on the needs of the Age Concern Day Centre members and members of the wider community with memory loss. Termed ‘Forget-me-not’ services, these are planned to provide an all-inclusive time of worship, to

resonate with the memories of those attending. The loving preparation of the church is, for these services in particular, an important part of the worship for the attendees.

We share with our local Christian brothers and sisters in many other ways including joint worship. Services at Lytchett minster URC for Maundy Thursday and Christingle last year; with Broadstone Methodist Church for Good Friday, Christmas Eve and Christmas Day, and with the other churches in Churches Together in Broadstone for Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, Women's World Day of Prayer and Bible Sunday services.

Music in worship

Music in worship is important and we are grateful to all our church musicians for their contribution. In the new pattern of services, the Music Group sings an anthem on the fourth Sunday of the month and will aim to introduce a new hymn also. This is in addition to the usual festival services, of which the Carols by Candlelight remains a significant focus of the Christmas music. We continue to explore how we can use our music to enhance our worship, for example on Advent Sunday the Music group sang whilst a video played that related to the text of the song. It is said that a characteristic of growing churches is that they use a variety of music accompaniment, and we aim to do this, using piano, band or orchestra as appropriate. In particular, our small band plays regularly for the gathering songs of our Family Worship Mix services.

Spiritual Life & Development

Prayer Groups

Our Friday morning Prayer Group has moved to meeting on Sunday morning before worship, at 9.45 a.m., and all members and adherents are invited and encouraged to join the group at that time, in the family corner.

Bible Study & House groups

Bible Study is provided as part of the 'Worship and the Word' services, which are held on the 4th Sunday evening of the month. There have been discussions on

when this might be repeated during the daytime. If there is interest in doing this, please let your Elder know.

Members of the church have joined in the CTiB Lent House Groups for many years; Revd Caroline Vodden lead a group in 2015, however in 2016 as there were already seven groups we did not lead or host one ourselves.

Nurture Groups and training

Before Revd Caroline Vodden left she invited and talked to a number of adherents on the topic of church membership. We are delighted that a number of our worship community have taken the step of coming into membership and are pleased to welcome them.

Growing in the faith is an important responsibility for all of us, by whatever means is appropriate to us individually. There have been, and are, training days arranged by Synod on range of topics, which may be helpful. Members who have availed themselves of these opportunities have found them very useful. Information generally appears on our church noticeboard in the hall, and members are encouraged to look regularly to see whether there are any day courses that they feel might be of benefit to them. The church has a training fund, if there are costs with which members would like help.

Weddings, baptisms and funerals

It is important to note and to make our wide community aware, that although we are in a vacancy, the church is still able to provide these services and support when it is required.

Worship and Spiritual Life Forum

The Worship and Spiritual Life Forum was established as a result of the LMMR discussion and has met once thus far, focussed on the provision of worship leaders during the vacancy. Its wider remit has yet to be explored, whilst concentrating on the needs of the church in the vacancy in the short-term.

Martin Casey

2. PASTORAL CARE & FELLOWSHIP

There are different ways pastoral care is provided at Broadstone URC. Informally members support each other, particularly at times of need and Elders share with the minister pastoral oversight, having groups of members and adherents entrusted to their pastoral care.

Up until her leaving, Caroline was involved in visiting members, making personal visits and telephone calls and also visiting those in the community who requested her support and prayer. She particularly visited families when they contacted her about a baptism, marriage or funerals.

The Elders continue to make personal contact with their members and adherents at worship or other events, visits are made at home, and news is shared by telephoning, through Pathway, email or Facebook. In this work, they are supported by members in the pastoral team who willingly give time to make contact when there is a need. For those members who are unable to get to church we try to let them know what is happening so that they continue to feel part of the church family.

In other ways too pastoral care has been provided. Newcomers are welcomed as they come into church by the sidepeople and welcomers who accompany them to coffee after the service. The provision and distribution of flowers each week and on special occasions organised by Margaret Tudor is always appreciated.

Each week transport is organised to church on Sunday by Joan Dyer and the recordings of our services are organised by David Holland and taken out to those who are housebound.

Once again, our annual service of remembrance was held at the beginning of Advent and Sheila McMahan updated the Book of Remembrance.

Specific events in the life of the church provide fellowship and friendship to all. We need to thank Janet Meachin for the many times throughout the year she has organised meals for us and also Val Rowberry for organising the team so that we can have coffee after morning worship.

The fundraising group have once again organised various events in the year and the Open House groups, Oasis, and the Curry Club all provide times when experiences and problems can be shared.

This year we have seen a continuing growth in membership of the 'Yarn with Yarn' group, which started in 2014. Pat Johnson and Marion Pauley report that over 670 items have been knitted for charities as well as seven prayer shawls for members who have been unwell.

Throughout the year we share with each other times of celebration and times of sadness. We support each other with prayer and practical action and encourage each other in our daily witness. May this continue in the year ahead.

Isobel Evans

2.1 YARN WITH YARN – Charity Craft Group

Yarn with Yarn (although we did not call ourselves that at the time) started on 6th August 2014 with the intention of having a group in the church of people who were interested in doing something for charity using yarn in any way. At the moment everyone who comes knits.

Mainly we knit for PremiesUK with wool supplied by Leslie Shand Funeral Directors. A few items knitted in Premie size have also been given to King's College Hospital London via a granddaughter of one of our members. We have knitted Prayer Shawls and have passed seven of them to people who it was felt would enjoy a tangible reminder of the love of God and that of members of the church. We also support the Sailors' Society, for whom we knit hats and neck warmers and also Operation Christmas Child.

Small jumpers and hats have been made in quantity for African babies – also known as 'fish and chip' babies, because the families are so poor that the new-borns have to be sent home wrapped in newspaper. These have been given to Rivers of Living Water and Child of Hope when they have sent consignments out to Africa.

Our latest venture is Twiddlemitts or Twiddlemuffs. These are muffs with various items sewn onto them, e.g. large buttons, bows, bubble wrap anything with an interesting texture. These are given to people who have dementia as it gives them something to 'twiddle' with as very often their hands are in constant movement. We have a few small stuffed teddies, which will be sent shortly to Knit for Peace.

We charge 50p each meeting and this goes towards our coffee and biscuits as well as wool and other items such as ribbons. Our membership is mainly from the church, but we do have a couple of members who have come to us by word of mouth or internet.

A quick calculation showed that in the 18 months that we have been in existence we have sent about 670 items to charity.

Marion Pauley & Pat Johnson

3. CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S WORK

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

Toddlers

Parents, carers and grandparents are all made welcome on a Wednesday afternoon for a play session with their babies and toddlers. Friendships are made and renewed and it is a joy to see the children develop in so many ways in an atmosphere of fun and support. Further links have been made with some families who have also come along to our Pop-ins.

Once more this year the Toddler group has flourished through recommendations on social media and in local publications. Some families we see regularly and others just come along when they are able. Activities are organised each week and the children particularly enjoy playing outside. So that all can be included, we continue to charge 50p a session and we have been able to make donations to Home Start and to church funds.

Our team of helpers comprise of Joan Dyer, Pat Purser, Julia Gowen, Janet Meachin, Saz Holland and Isobel Evans. We thank them all for their continuing weekly outreach to families in the community.

Pop-Ins

We continue to provide quality, well-organise and well-run events which are happily enjoyed and much appreciated by all who attend, with some new faces every time. The children particularly enjoy collecting the pictures at each activity to build up a Bible story to take home and enjoy. With at least 20 children every time, and numbers on the increase again, the Pop-ins have a fabulous impact and we continue to have some extremely positive and encouraging conversations with the parents. We are constantly evaluating what we can do to improve and we introduced a short time of Christian celebration together at the end of the last Pop-in, which was extremely well received and appreciated by the parents.

Pop-In Express

In October 2015, we took the decision to stop running Pop-in Express for older children due to lack of numbers and we thank Siobhan Pauley, Shirley Pritchard and Jane Adcock for running these activity evenings over the last few years. Instead, they will be running activities for those aged from 8 to 88 during our regular pop-ins - do pay them a visit in the Acorn Room and have a go! We hope that this will encourage the older children to continue attending Pop-Ins.

Family Worship Mix

This has been running for two years now and in January we moved to the third Sunday morning of the month. Preparation continues to be a challenge for the team, especially those preparing the “hands-on” activities for all ages. It is encouraging that a couple of families have just started to come regularly to these services when the parents appreciate being able to access the Bible with their children in a relaxed and creative way. However, we have strived to ensure that we cater for everyone’s needs, whether young or old.

The orchestra continues to play once a month – if there is anyone out there itching to dust down that instrument in the loft, we'd love to welcome you to the fold. Each part is tailored to individual abilities – so don't be shy!

Young People's Charity

We raised £1,125 for the 2015 Young People's Charity for beehives, so thanks to all who contributed in any way. The 2016 Charity is for Shelter Boxes, and our annual musical ploughman's lunch will be on Sunday 17th April 2016, so please put the date in your diaries.

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, families usually come for Family Worship Mix.

Outreach

We continue to seek ways to reach out to those families that we have contact with, through Toddlers and Pop-in, with invitations to our family events and services. We are currently looking at building stronger links with the Kindergarten and seeking a closer working relationship with the church.

We have continued the link that Caroline built up with Springdale First School with visits to school assemblies, using the Open the Book material from the Bible Society. Our first visit at the end of January was very well received by the children and we hope to visit once a term. In addition, we once again hosted their Year 4 Christmas Carol Service.

Looking to the future

With the Family Worship Mix services now running smoothly, I believe that we should be seeking to advertise this more widely in the community and you will see a regular advert appearing in the Broadstone Link Magazine each month. We will continue to seek ways to build links with the community and starting this morning, we will be considering the Child Friendly Church Award, what this means and how it can be achieved.

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

4. SECRETARIAL

After reading through last year's secretaries' report, I realised what a busy year 2014 -2015 had been in the life of Broadstone URC.

It has been the same once again and 2015 -2016 has also been a year of changes for us all as we continue to serve God and one another and plan for the future. On behalf of the Elders, I would like to thank all who serve in so many ways to continue the work here and in the community in Broadstone.

Instead of a long secretaries' report, today we are going to hear about the work of the church in reports written by elders and members who have oversight of different areas. As each report is quite detailed, the elders have decided to give you a shorter account and you will receive a booklet made of the full reports. We hope that by the end of the meeting you will have received a picture of the work, which continues, month by month as we move forward together re-thinking and reshaping our lives of discipleship and witness. May we be open to God's guidance in our discussions, our deliberations and in our decisions. May we sense His voice and presence in all we do.

Isobel Evans

5. FINANCE

Our external auditors have examined the church accounts for 2015 and found them to be an accurate representation of the financial activity of the year. A copy of these accounts is available separately. The Elders have approved the accounts, in effect to say that they correctly reflect their intentions (as trustees) and the church meeting needs likewise to approve the accounts before they can be signed off.

The church is very grateful to Martin Sales as our Treasurer for his hard work, and to the fundraising group who have contributed to the financial success, and also the social life of the church through their activities.

For the record, the Finance committee meets annually in November to discuss the budget for the coming year, including the recommendations of the elders and other groups with regard to expenditure. The Finance committee members also support the Treasurer as required during the year.

Martin Casey

6. PROPERTY MANAGEMENT & FACILITIES

The Property Management & Facilities part of the church oversees seven areas of work:

Cleaning

Ted Lee continues to clean the Church and hall (including kitchen and toilets) on a Thursday afternoon while AMS Cleaning cleans just the hall (including kitchen and toilets) on a Tuesday morning at about 6.30am before the Day Centre uses our premises.

Housekeeping

Sheila McMahon as Housekeeper, with support from others continues to do an excellent job ensuring all is neat and tidy and in particular ensuring that all of the expendables are kept stocked up. That is typical of one of the jobs which nobody notices happening because it's done so efficiently but that you'd soon notice if it wasn't.

Property Maintenance

We are indebted to a number of POG members who have been involved in property maintenance during the year. I hesitate to name names as there are a lot who get involved however I must particularly thank Val and Mick Rowberry, Martin Casey and Tim Meachin. The most recent work organised by Mick and Val has been the updates to the fencing and gates either side of the church hall which has made a huge improvement both aesthetically and from a safety point of view. Mick has also been painting in the hall and is organising the improvement to the flower preparation area. Val and Mick also organised the ramp for the church entrance which has made access for the less mobile much easier.

Grounds

For the earlier part Chris and Isobel looked after the grounds with Paul Vodden cutting the grass. When Caroline and Paul left, this work was passed to Luke Bradford. Luke, as well as cutting the grass, has an ongoing programme of general improvements. Current work includes growing a screen of shrubs to hide the compost heap.

Safety and Fire checks

The fire equipment has continued to be serviced annually. At the recent checks of the extinguishers, etc. it was pointed out that our fire alarm system had not been serviced for a number of years. We are currently investigating how we can get this done and what our obligations are in terms of regular testing of the equipment.

We don't currently have anyone looking after health and safety.

Photocopier

We continue to be grateful to Peter Carter who kindly provides us with a photocopier as well as keeping this maintained and filled with toner. During the year, he replaced the copier we had been using with a more modern machine.

PA, Projection and Recording Equipment

The PA, Projection and Recording Equipment system has served us well during the year. The only changes to the system in the last year were the installation of a fourth screen for use by the service leader(s) and the replacement of the handheld microphone, which had become unreliable, with a much-improved one.

So finally a big "thank you" to all who continue to ensure that our church buildings are a clean, pleasant and safe place to be in.

LMMR Building Focus Group

Although this strictly speaking didn't come under the Property Management work, there was an initiative in 2015 under the LMMR Building Focus group to look at possible improvements to our church buildings. The key objectives were

- ease of access to church,
- easy access from church to disabled toilet with baby-change facilities,

- a more impressive appearance from the road,
- a lobby/entrance area with views into the sanctuary,
- a more modern meeting place with easy access to the toilets - possibly coffee shop style
- a small meeting/quiet room,
- improved access from church to rear of church
- a small office,
- improved storage,
- a flower preparation area

There were additional objectives of:

- a refreshed and extended Waterman Lounge
- a multi-purpose church lobby/gathering place where meetings could be held
- a small meeting room/vestry, entered via a new entrance, accessible in a disability friendly way and including access to toilets/baby-changing (even when the Hall is hosting Kindergarten/Toddlers).
- better location for crèche,
- connection to hall,
- other hall changes including a sliding partition between the hall and the Acorn Room

An architect produced two possible outline designs with an estimated cost of £600K to £700K. Work on taking this all or part of these proposals forward is currently on hold. There are concerns about taking on such a large project however, it has been recognised that there are a few “quick wins” which can be pursued in the short term.

David Holland

7. ECUMENICAL & OUTREACH (incl. Mission & Communications)

The Ecumenical and Outreach report encompasses the following three areas:

1. Communications
2. Ecumenical and Outreach
3. Mission and Charities

Communications

Pathway

Pathway continues to be the focal point of news and photos of church life at BURC. As always, feedback and/or items for publication will be gratefully received by the Editor, Jim Tudor. There is also an online version accessible via the church website and you can ask for a copy to be emailed to you, as and when each issue is published, if that is preferable to having a paper copy.

Website and Press Releases

Development of the website is currently under review, so watch this space! Both the website and the press releases about what we're doing, that we send to the local press, are vital communication channels to the local and wider community.

Noticeboards

Ian and Gill McDonald continue to keep the noticeboards in the church hall up-to-date with items displayed under the headings Our Church, Our Community and Our World. There has also been some discussion in the Elders' meeting about using the noticeboard opposite the side entrance to the hall to display information on church activities.

Weekly notices

Janet Holland continues to produce the weekly notice sheets, which provide members with a valuable reminder of church event in the coming week and advance notice of events in the coming weeks.

Ecumenical and Outreach

Age Concern Day Centre

This has been a year of change for the URC team cooking at the Day Centre every five weeks. We said a huge thank you to Sandra Byrne as she retired from leading our team and also Ann Longley and Jean Girling have finished after many years. We thank them all for the contribution they have made. Over the last year a new team has emerged including Pat Johnson, Sheila McMahon, Chris Blendell, Janet Meachin, Dilys Lawrence and Isobel Evans. June Lawrence continues to work in the Age Concern shop in Broadstone and Pat and Isobel represent the church on the committee.

While Caroline was with us the Forget - me - not services for the Day Centre and others in Broadstone suffering from dementia were begun in our church at Christmas, Easter and Harvest. We thank Martin Casey for continuing to be our representative in the planning of these services.

Women's World Day of Prayer

This is held on the first Friday of March and, although in the UK we have Women's World Day of Prayer, the rest of the world just has a World Day of Prayer. Each year the service is written by the women of a different country. This year it had been arranged by the women of Cuba. In Broadstone, the service is held under the auspices of Churches Together in Broadstone in a different church each year. A committee of representatives from each of the churches decides how the service should be organised. Our representative is Eileen Thurston, with Pat Johnson as her deputy.

Synod

The Wessex Synod meets twice a year at which Chris Evans has been our representative. Of the many topics discussed at Synod, two issues of particular relevance to BURC were the request for a voluntary additional contribution to M&M of 1%, and the publication of the new safeguarding guidance.

Churches Together in Broadstone

Churches Together in Broadstone continues to meet at St. Anthony's three times a year in October January and May with the May meeting including the AGM.

CTiB involves St. John's, The Methodist Church, St. Anthony's and Broadstone URC and is normally well represented by each Church.

During the past year there have been changes at each church; Revd. Linda Carter joined St. John's as curate and has since been Priested, The Methodist Church had a change of minister and organization, Father Keith at St. Antony's became ill and our minister Caroline moved to a new pastorate.

Events, which have taken place successfully, include the usual Good Friday Walk followed by a service at The Methodist Church, Bible Sunday Service on 11th October 2015, the distribution of Christmas Cards, Christmas Tea and Carols at The Methodist Church, Carols on The Broadway and Lent Groups and Lunches planned by the Revd Linda Carter.

Women's Network

Women's Network continues to meet weekly at the Methodist Church on a Thursday at 2.30.p.m. and there is normally a guest speaker plus tea and biscuits. The interesting speakers make this a worthwhile event for anyone able to attend.

Frankenthal Twinning

Our long-standing Frankenthal Twinning link was strengthened last year with the successful visit to us by 12 members of Zwölf-Apostel-Kirche in September. A varied programme of visits and events included a coach outing to Wilton House and village, a skittles evening, a retreat (led by Revd Mary Thomas), meals and Sunday services. Providing activities that could involve as many people as possible was our objective, to enable enjoyable times of fellowship with these members of our extended church community. Janet Shortland and Martin Casey, as organisers, would like to thank all those who helped arrange this visit and all those who took part in any way. We have continued to share with ZAK since their visit by providing material to each other for specific services. We have been invited back to Frankenthal in 2016 and dates are under discussion. If you think you might like to be involved in this please let Janet or Martin know and they will happily involve you in the discussions.

Lytchett Minster URC

We have continued to enjoy a close relationship with our partner in the pastorate, Lytchett Minster URC. Members of LMURC join us for worship on the 4th Sunday each month and we have joined them for a service on Maundy Thursday and their carol service. Elders from the two churches have also shared together in an Elders' Training morning at LMURC. Members for LMURC joined us for our New Year party in January.

In December it was with sadness that we learnt that the members at LMURC had decided to close the church after much prayer and careful consideration of this matter. Their final service will be on Sunday 26th June 2016.

Mission and Charities

Mission Committee

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 2015, we supported the Retired Ministers' Housing Fund, the Youth Charity (beehives), Traidcraft Exchange, Alpha India, Christian Aid, Child of Hope, Home Start, Broadstone Age Concern, Rivers of Living Water, Children of Fiji, 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. We have organised one event since the last AGM, our harvest supper last September. (This year our spring event falls after the AGM on the 9th April.) At the harvest supper, Kay Gairdner and Annie Strang from the Farming Community Network gave a very

good presentation on the work they do to support farmers who are facing difficult situations. From the Harvest Supper and the Harvest Thanksgiving offering a donation of £267.10 was made to the work of the Farming Community Network. 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.

The United Reformed Churches' Commitment for Life programme continues to be supported by about 30 members. We have continued to support their work in Zimbabwe Thank you to all who have supported, and continue to support Commitment for Life.

Broadstone URC members raised £2125 in the house-to-house collections during Christian Aid week. Collections were made in 14 roads. As we are unable to collect in all the roads allocated to us, we could consider advising members which roads to collect in, to avoid roads where the amount raised in the past is low. It may also be possible to pair up Oasis ladies who are willing to deliver envelopes with other members who would be willing to collect.

We continue to run the Traidcraft stall on the second and fourth Sundays each month, and have missed Paul's help since last October when he went off to Surrey University.

Caring for creation

The fifth mark of mission is "To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation, and sustain and renew the life of the earth". Climate change and its effects have become mainstream news in many ways, good and bad, during the last year. In our services, and especially at Harvest, we remember the wonders of God's creation and are reminded of our responsibilities for it. However apart from these valuable reminders, and despite its importance, it has not been an area that has seen significant activity during the year.

Interfaith Dorset Education and Action (IDEA), an organisation that we have supported and hoped would provide an impetus held only one meeting last year, which we attended. If any member of the congregation would like to be more actively involved in this area of mission, please would they speak to Martin or Cecilia Casey?

Ian McDonald