



WESLEY AND KING'S SOMBORNE METHODIST CHURCH

Annual Report 2023/24



FROM THE MINISTER



It's been quite a busy year for us this year. As planned, last September, we held our away day at Alresford Methodist Church. My thanks to all those who came along and contributed to our discussions and also to those from Alresford who made us very welcome. Lots of ideas came forward, some of which could be implemented quickly, others would need to become part of a longer term strategy and some are perhaps beyond our current resources but the Church Council have considered all of these carefully. One idea which has already borne fruit, was the community Advent event we held, which successfully engaged with members of the local community who had not previously had any involvement with our church. There were a lot of positive comments but some of the comments received do show that we still have a lot of work to do. Many people told us that they did not realise that our building is a church and others said that it is difficult to find the entrance. As a result of this, work is already underway to make us appear more visible and welcoming. It is already planned to hold another community Advent event this year which we hope and pray will attract even more local people to come and see who we are and what we do. My thanks go to all those who make such things possible; those who volunteer to run such events but also those volunteers behind the scenes, who help to maintain our church and its facilities so that such events are possible.

Revd Peter Rayson

WORSHIP

Our regular patterns of worship have continued over the past year and our congregation numbers have been maintained. A worship consultation meeting was held earlier this year and produced a detailed report to the Church Council. It was felt that our current pattern of worship suits our congregations although it was suggested that preachers should be encouraged to try different styles on occasion. Messy Church and Lego Church continue to be popular and it was agreed that streaming of Weeke's Sunday worship continues to serve a useful purpose and should be continued. A particular point of note was the success of a well-advertised "special" service which attracted significant numbers of our local community beyond our usual congregations in both Weeke and King's Somborne. It is hoped that we can continue to build on this, perhaps by introducing some additional special services throughout the year. King's Somborne continues to have an active plan of ecumenical worship, including Messy Church, and it is hoped that this can be developed further. In Weeke, it was felt that it might be more successful if ecumenical work could be more mission rather than worship focussed but this needs to be investigated further.

Revd Peter Rayson

SENIOR STEWARD'S REPORT

When I first walked up the path to Wesley Methodist Church, it was Fred standing prominently outside the door who first welcomed me. His presence gave me the reassurance that I was in the right place at the right time. That was the start of me finding my new Church family where I met the loveliest people in the world! Nick welcomed me and gave me all the info on the activities at Wesley. Libby invited me to the small groups work and when it was time for coffee, she even took me through to the hall to show me where everything was! I couldn't have felt more welcome! They, and many more, were amazing.

The wonderful welcome and friendly faces were, however, covered with face masks in accordance with Covid rules so I have to admit that remembering who was who was a little challenging.

Howard soon persuaded me to become a Steward and Julia very kindly took me under her wing and started to show me the ropes. I had thought that I would have 3 more years to get to grips with the way things are done at Wesley but due to the early resignation of Julia as Senior Steward and the fact that Clever, the next in line, has taken on the role of Treasurer, I have found myself doing the Senior Steward role so much sooner than expected! We thank Julia for her excellent commitment and hard work over her time as Senior Steward. She is sorely missed by the whole team. We look forward to her return soon. Paul Yarrien and Richard Rogers have joined the Leadership team, kindly offering their support in a mentoring role. As all the Stewards are fairly new to the role and juggling family life and full time jobs, we are very grateful for their help and guidance to keep us on the Methodist path. We are currently looking for more Stewards and would be grateful for any suggestions. The team has worked well over the year and we are very proud of the projects achieved by the entire Church family working together to support each other and carry out the vast array of tasks needed to keep Wesley running smoothly.

We are planning over 2024 to help with future projects, events, services, outreach and support for our Church community and the wider community. Suggestions and ideas are always welcome and we cannot thank enough, the tireless work provided by the army of volunteers who continue to do all the hard work – the coffees, the music, the media, the flowers, the gardens, the youth activities and more! Thank you.

Fiona Greaves

ECO CHURCH

As a Church concerned for the environmental future of this world, we continue to keep all aware of the issues and what we can do about them. Eco tips in our Link magazine are produced to remind us of even small actions which, added together, can begin to make a difference.

Acts of worship have, from time to time focussed on the relationship between the state of the world and our Christian beliefs. The Mission service back in October reminded us that although Rajasthan had a particularly beneficial monsoon last year, other parts of the world experienced fires, storms and floods, and placed people's lives at risk. Many experienced flooding in this country. The consequences of inaction are dire, but its important to keep God in the equation and to remember that 'with God's help we will'.

In relation to our plans at Wesley, its good to note that the Property Committee are considering the ways that we can make our premises more 'eco-friendly'. This involves looking at new ways of heating and saving heat and investigating our 'carbon footprint'. We look, in future, to have a building that is environmentally secure. We need to support them in their work.

Nick Langham

SMALL GROUPS

In early Autumn 2023 the small groups at Wesley embarked on the challenge of studying the Epistle to the Romans using a new Bible Society resource over ten studies with teaching videos, session notes, and exposition. The conduct of each study varied according to the set theme. The series was studied in two phases: five units up to Christmas and five from then till Easter. At the end of each phase a more informal time of sharing and hospitality was held. The groups contributed a commentary to WSLink on what they had found especially inspiring from the course.

Given the benefits experienced by both groups studying the same material, and following conversation within them, they have now started a new Bible study series on the theme "Names of God". A small group has met at King's Somborne and has included an ecumenical mix of attendees. Before Christmas the group focused on the prequel to the Nativity Story, exploring Mary's visit to Elizabeth, through Mary's Song and then looking at Joseph and his journey.

The groups continue to offer valued and vital places for prayer, reflection and fellowship. Thanks are due to all those who have contributed to sustaining and nurturing the life of these groups: in practical ways, in leading, and in being prepared to share together the quest for deeper understanding of faith and the realities of faith-in-action.

Brian Merriman (Small Groups Leader)

TOGETHER THURSDAY

Our gatherings every other Thursday continue to meet the needs of a small group of regular attenders. Besides games (eg Scrabble), jigsaw puzzles (no less than 1000 pieces) and colouring art, all designed to keep the brain exercised, there is always a lively discussion, often informed by past memories. Lessons on how to crochet have been supported by expert tips, and a new development is sharing 'wedding photos' ...such elegant fashion? A meeting point for friends. All welcome, of course.

Faith and Nick Langham

OUTREACH

We have continued to shape our outreach work by the outcomes and ideas from the Away Day. It was therefore wonderful to see all those taking part and involved with the Light of Christmas initiative on the 2nd December. Well done to all those involved, with particular thanks to Fiona and Kevin for them driving this idea forward and the provision of hot chocolate should perhaps be available on all church-led activities! We are pleased to see that a repeat of this Christmas outreach in 2024, is already being discussed.

Interaction with the wider community continued through the range of services during the Advent and Christmas period. The number of people from outside the Wesley and King's Somborne families worshipping during that period was considerable, with families of all ages attending each of the services. The engagement with these services must never be taken for granted, as it is often in the conversations in the margins where the Good News can be shared.

There are several activities which take place on a regular basis where these conversations happen, such as the Youth Activities, Café Wesley and in King's Somborne the Lunch Club and Women's Fellowship. At the time of writing this report, we are looking forward to the upcoming Wesley Plant Sale, where passers-by interact with members of the Church family.

We feel it is time now for a broadened group of people to enable the Outreach/Community activities to be the main focus for the churches' missional aspirations.

Brenda and Paul Yarrien.

MISSION GROUP

The small Group of people who comprise the Mission Group have followed the vision for the church:-

- raising awareness of the way we can serve a wider community here in the UK and the world,
- involving the whole church in a series of locally arranged morning services to join in worship with our main charities as a theme, raising money to support the three main charities: Water Harvest, Brickworks and Basics Bank,
- Supporting Café Wesley and the varied local charities it supports each month.

Thanks are expressed to all who support these initiatives.

Almost half of our church family share in the Methodist Prayer Handbook which gives us prayers for and from the church in the UK and around the world. This is published annually in September and is a hidden treasure of Methodism.

The Methodist Church also produces 'Connect', a quarterly free magazine, this is excellent with the information about what is happening with Mission in the UK Church.

Lynne Atkin, Janet Cunningham, Sue Lightfoot, Richard Rogers, Eileen Scoggins and Chris Travell

PROPERTY

Firstly, a thank you to all those involved in the church in caring for the fabric of the church. This includes housekeeping, gardening, posters, multimedia, flowers, the main property group (at both Wesley and King's Somborne) who deal with repairs and maintenance, renewals, insurance and annual checks.

The heating has been a main issue this year as we dealt with two aging boilers. Our Gas engineers 'Gair' were excellent in chasing the issues which we were faced with and it appears the heating is now better than it has been for some years.

What is a church for? Well, it really depends on your view but we believe it is for Worship to God and a place to 'serve our neighbours as ourselves'.

We have a strong community of people who use the building for their community. In particular, there is regular and heavy use by the Triangle Pre-school group and the Guiding movement.

Andrew Honess and Richard Rogers

WEBSITE

Wesley has maintained a presence on the Internet for many years and in the early days it was hosted by various generous local organisations. For the last decade it has been hosted by a very helpful company, Church Edit, which has recently introduced a new design process and also offers online training for designers. This enables churches to produce very pleasing modern websites and advice is always available. Fortunately, these desirable updates arrived at the same time as David Osgerby volunteered to take over responsibility for the website from Gordon Dixon. So, armed with new technology and a new Webmaster, we were able to produce a new website for Wesley which would also include King's Somborne material in the design from the start.

Planning began early in 2023 and the site was eventually launched in January 2024. Many people were involved in the process which led to the eventual structure and design of the site, so we owe many thanks to all those who contributed.

Since the launch we have managed to iron out a few outstanding issues which we were aware of and have continued to develop the site. We are now advertising upcoming events using a poster system, we have restructured how we update the calendar and have implemented electronic payments (for the church and the charities it supports) for the first time. Continuous development and improvement is essential, so we are always open to more suggestions!

Gordon Dixon and David Osgerby

YOUTH AT WESLEY - A year in the life

The 'Deconstructed Nativity' provided an intergenerational flavour to enable us to explore a traditional story from a modern perspective.



'Easter Is' during Holy Week gave children from three schools the opportunity to interact with characters from post-resurrection Jerusalem. It was for some children possibly their first encounter with the true meaning of Easter and for some it brought to life events that they had heard about over many years. For children and adults alike, there was food for thought and our gratitude goes to Sam for enabling this to take place. The assembled cast is below.



The pictures shown below were taken across the Easter period at Wesley, Friday Fun Club, King's Somborne Messy Church and outside Winchester Cathedral. The latter enabled engagement with the community, supporting the work of Churches Together in Winchester.



Holiday Club's 'To the Moon and Back' was enjoyed by adults and children alike and was supported well by members of Feel Good Friday. A visit to the Winchester Science Centre provided opportunities for learning through numerous hands-on experiences, talks and virtual displays. A great time was had by all and once again enabled meaningful conversations to take place between leaders, the young people and the wider community.



We have been thinking of the amazing creation that God has given to us. Both in Friday Fun Club and Lego Church, we have been giving praise of thanks for our beautiful world and exploring ways in which we can be good stewards, from being dedicated gardeners to being creative builders of bird boxes and bug hotels!

We continue to attend wider Circuit events such as this year's Light Party. We regularly attend the Youth Forum Zoom Meeting with other Youth Leaders to support and encourage each other.

Whilst numbers continue to fluctuate, we maintain a loyal and regular base of families who access and value Youth Activities at Wesley, including Mini-Marvels. We continue to re-imagine new ways of moving forward in bringing the gospel to the young people and their families. Your continued prayers and support are greatly appreciated as we engage in this vital outreach.

Eileen Scoggins and Brenda Yarren (Youth@Wesley Leaders) with Sam Barnes (Circuit Youth Worker)

DATA PROTECTION

This year the second iteration of the verification process has taken place. This time the opportunity was taken to also cross-check the information in the Wesley and King's Somborne database with other records held in various places in the Methodist Church.

Resolving some of the queries which deeper examination has exposed has unfortunately delayed our ability to produce a new addition of the Directory booklet which church members have been waiting for. However, we have successfully responded to the body responsible for examining our GDPR status and the last items before the publication of the new Directory are likely to be completed in time for the booklets to be available by the General Church Meeting in early June.

Gordon Dixon (Data Champion) and Sonia Craig (Administrator)

KING'S SOMBORNE CHAPEL

We have had another encouraging year here at King's Somborne. Although attendance to Sunday services is still down, numbers have increased in our outreach activities.

ATTENDANCE AT SUNDAY SERVICES

Numbers in the congregation can vary, anything from 2 to 10 people. Special occasions have been well attended such as the Advent Carol Service with a congregation of 36 and The World Day of Prayer which, this year was hosted by the Parish Church, and attended by 28 people. Our Good Friday service, followed by tea, had a congregation of 22. Once again, this was a very special time for us to gather together and remember Jesus' death on the cross.

DROP-IN COFFEE MORNINGS

These are becoming increasingly popular and have grown in attendance over the year. We can have any number up to 24. There's always lots of chat and people enjoy coming for the company and the happy atmosphere. It has been good to welcome people new to the village as well.

EPWORTH LUNCHEAS

These continue to be popular. We cater for 24 diners and have an excellent team of helpers who enable the occasion to run smoothly. We continue to be very grateful to a team of very good cooks who kindly take turns to provide the meals. The quizzes at the end of the meal are enjoyed and can be quite competitive! The charities we have supported over the year have been Andover Young Carers, Jane Scarth, Butterflies Bereavement, Romsey Food Bank and Naomi House, raising a total of £535 for them from our charity tin. All these charities are local to us. Once again, for our annual inspection, we received a 5 star award for hygiene.

WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP

We have a possible 16 ladies attend our Women's Fellowship, depending on their availability and the subject matter! Once again we have had a varied programme and have had some open meetings where we invited anyone to join us. One such meeting was a talk given by a representative from Andover Young Carers. This proved to be a very interesting and moving talk and it was quite humbling to learn how young carers were involved in helping an ill parent at home, with the support of the charity. The charity also offers the young carers time out in after school clubs or a holiday to give them a break. The talk was followed by a coffee morning/sale a few weeks later, to raise money for the charity. We raised £540 which was an excellent amount.

MESSY CHURCH

Messy Church began by being small in numbers but this has altered during the year as new families have joined. We cater for approximately 30 people, including adults and children. The leaders of the activities consist of Anglicans and Methodists and two young people who were members of Messy Church and have now become Junior Leaders. The activities are well prepared and organised and a write up about the afternoon appears in our village Gauntlet magazine.

Marilyn Bolton and Marion Downing

MULTIMEDIA

There has been little change or renewal of equipment or practices for at least the last twelve years, except for replacing the multimedia computer and adding a 'streaming box' to enable services to be available online. As equipment ages, people aspire to do new things and now a regular online community is accessing our services. We need to replace things which are no longer functioning satisfactorily, take advantage of the latest technology and ease the ever more complex task of the operators. The Multimedia Operator's screen is unreliable and also a different shape is needed when working with more complex services. The Live-stream Operator's computer (used

for both connection to YouTube and control of the PTZ camera) is 15 years old and unreliable. This old laptop computer is best replaced by a modern mini-computer and small screen, both mounted on the back of the desk.

The continuity of the programme transmitted to YouTube needs to be improved by adding a second, much less expensive, camera to work in conjunction with the PTZ one.

Problems have always arisen from the fact that the walls of the Sanctuary are made of hard concrete blocks, which reflect rather than absorb sound, and the octagonal shape of the building only makes the problem worse. The present analogue audio mixer does not provide adequate tools to resolve these problems and modern digital solutions have become available which could offer a significant improvement in sound quality throughout the Sanctuary. Such equipment is being investigated.

The present seating arrangements for operators are inadequate in terms of visibility and communication (with each other and with musicians, as well as always having a clear view of what is happening at the pulpit area).

A new, larger desk is required and it will also provide more capacity for internal equipment and wiring.

There are other improvements under consideration. The Multimedia and Property teams are now considering the detail.

Gordon Dixon (Multimedia Team Leader)

FINANCE FOR YEAR ENDING 31ST AUGUST 2023

The report covers the period from 1 September 2022 to 31 August 2023. Figures in this report are from the annual accounts that have been examined by the Independent Examiner, Kimball Smith Limited.

The figures are from the Standard Form of Accounts submitted to the Circuit.

RECEIPTS

	£
Offerings and Tax recovered	52 835
CFB interest & investment income	4 237
Lettings (Use of buildings)	18 204
Other receipts	12 732
TOTAL RECEIPTS	88 008

PAYMENTS

	£
Circuit Assessment	37 240
Donations	1 000
Repairs and Maintenance	19 151
Utilities (insurance, water, gas, electricity)	13 611
Other payments	13 753
TOTAL PAYMENTS	84 755

NET RECEIPTS - PAYMENTS OVER THE YEAR 3 253

NB A copy of the fully audited accounts is available at request.

The Circuit Assessment increased from £37 240 to £39 109 for the year 2023/24. The Circuit has proposed to hold the assessments as they are for the year 2024/25. It may be a relief but the projections of expenditure at the two sites are a concern. 2023/24 has encountered extensive financial expenditure in buildings maintenance and is likely to present at different outlook of accounts by the end of the year. The generous giving that has kept the church afloat is appreciated and a little flexibility will be more appreciated and most welcome.

Clever Safurawu (Church Treasurer)

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