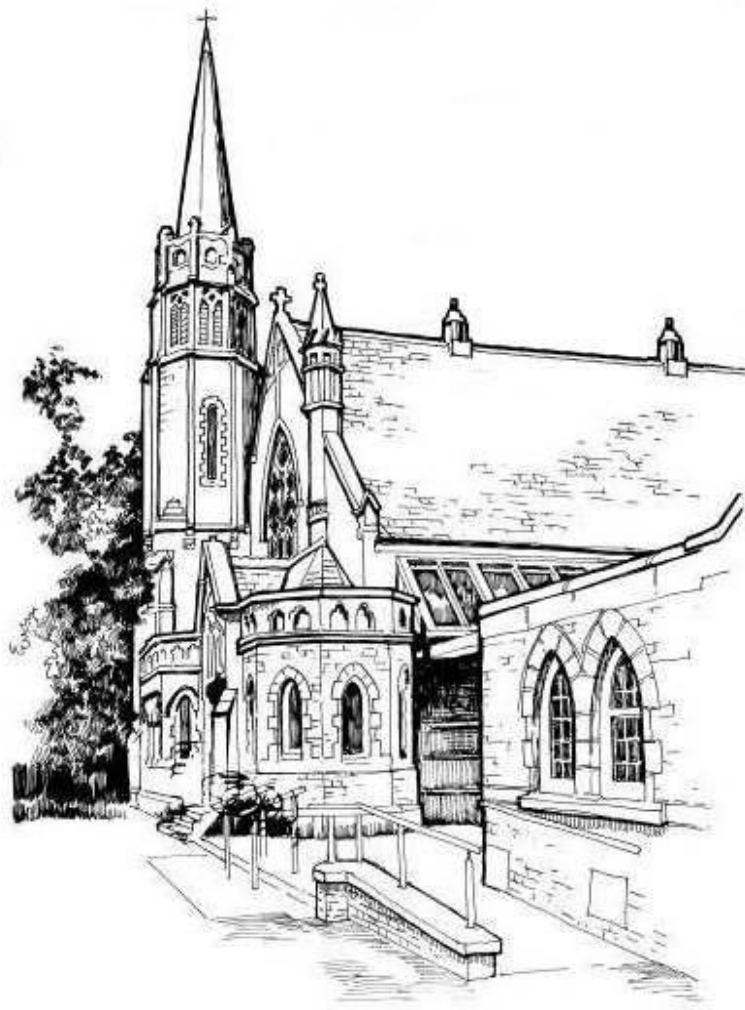


Fulwood Methodist Church

Registered Charity No. 1133929

Watling Street Road, Fulwood, Preston, PR2 8EA

www.fulwoodmethodist.org.uk



Annual Report 2016 – 2017

for the General Church Meeting -14th May 2017

Church Council Membership

Superintendent	Revd Mark Slaney
Ministers	Revd Malcolm Hickox
Church Stewards	Mrs Wendy Bennett Mrs Elizabeth Ellison Mr John Ferris Mr Joe Hamilton - until 30 th November 2016 Mrs Amanda Latham Mrs Libby Stone Mrs Anne Garsed Mrs Margaret Squire
Church Treasurer	Mr Ted Lowes
Secretary to Church Council	Mrs Linda Butterworth
Secretary to Pastoral Committee	Mrs Sue Penrith
15 Elected Reps from GCM	Mrs Hilary Banks Mr Allan Clarke until 25 th October 2016 Miss Ann Done Mrs Mary Jackson Mrs Pam Johnson Mr Colin Maudsley Mrs Gill McGill Mr Geoff Oldham Miss Charlotte Penrith Mrs Gemma Roberts Mrs Sue Salisbury Mrs Julia Scott Mrs Lindsay Walton Mrs Sue Whiteford Mrs Delma Whitman
Co-ordinators of Church Groups:	
Church Life	Mrs Janet Wales from 21 st February 2017
Church Outreach	Mrs Margaret Squire
Finance	Mrs Amanda Latham
Property	Mr Mike Ellis
Co-opted members:	Mrs Janet Wales (Sunday Club) Mrs Lesley Birkett (Safeguarding)
Circuit Steward	Mr John Spencer

Minister's Reflections

From Revd. Malcolm Hickox

Once again this annual report gives a 'snap shot' of the last twelve months at Fulwood Methodist Church and highlights the amazing quantity of activity which takes place each week on the Church premises or elsewhere in the name of the Church. It's a poignant report for me, not just because it will be the last I shall contribute to as Minister of the Church, but more particularly because it marks a significant transition in my life as I prepare to 'sit down' from full-time ministry. Sitting down is another of those uniquely Methodist expressions, chosen to emphasise that Methodist Ministers don't actually retire. We are still under the discipline of the Methodist Conference and are expected to continue to offer our time, skills and experience to the Church as 'unpaid' supernumerary ministers for as long as we are physically able. As such, I will have the opportunity to say 'yes' or 'no' to requests for assistance and perhaps even to develop areas of ministry that have not been possible in the past due to other pressures and demands. So, in many ways, I shall be much like any church member following their own journey of discipleship, which is a reminder that we are all called and challenged to offer our time, skills and experience as we seek to follow where Christ leads. It's also a reminder that we belong together as part of the Body of Christ, giving honour, recognition and respect to each other. As I reflect on the people who make up the Body of Christ here at Fulwood, I'm conscious of the debt we owe to so many who give unstintingly of their time and talents. We have a comparatively small leadership team, but it is the contribution of the many others which enables all the different activities and groups to function week by week, many of whom contribute behind the scenes, enabling our property, finance and administration to function efficiently. You can read about all they do in this report, but please pause as you do and offer thanks for their service. At the same time, can I challenge you to reflect on whether you might also be able to offer your service to undertake a particular task in the Church or work on a new venture.

Fulwood Methodist Church has always been known for its commitment to children and young people and it is good to report that all our youth and children's groups are thriving, in fact some of them are full to capacity. That frequently means that we are in need of additional helpers. With the departure of Yasha Mashoko in May 2016, I took on her responsibilities for overseeing the youth, children's and family activities in the Church. However, I am grateful that the Church Council agreed to continue to employ Stuart Johnson as a sessional youth worker for our Friday evening 'open' groups, Escape! and the Youth Club. Stuart has given stability to that important work and enabled our very committed team of volunteers to blossom and contribute their own skills. Recognising that Fulwood Methodist Church needs the services of two full-time ministers and reviewing the diaconal role that had been undertaken by Yasha, the Circuit decided not to seek a diaconal replacement, but to create a full-time lay Youth, Children's & Family Worker post. The initial hope and expectation was that someone would be in post by the end of 2016. The disappointment that this has not been possible has recently been compensated by the fact that we now believe that we have made an excellent appointment in offering the post to Darren Arnold. He will start on 1st August and will bring with him significant experience of undertaking similar work in two other appointments.

Last year we reported on the appointment of Sharon Beck as our part-time Church Administrator to undertake the administration of the Theatre Group and general administration for the Church. Sharon has proved to be a real asset to the Theatre Group as new booking and administrative procedures have been introduced during the year. She has also used her previous employment experience for the benefit of the Church in negotiating new contracts for the Church and saving us significant sums of money. This report gives me the opportunity to thank Sharon for all her hard work and commitment.

This report is clearly about the life and work of Fulwood Methodist Church, but it is important that we understand Christian discipleship not to be limited to the activities we undertake in our building or collectively as a Church. I am therefore encouraged by the fact that a good number of our members are involved in voluntary service in the local community. Several make a very significant contribution to the Churches Together help desk at the hospital, to local schools and to the work of Methodist Action North West, to name just three areas. I am delighted to be able to acknowledge their important service at the same time as thanking everyone who contributes in any way to the life and witness of our Church. I offer a special word of appreciation to our Church Stewards and Sue Penrith, our Pastoral Secretary, who form the Church Leadership Team with myself. Without their commitment and enthusiasm, we would not have been able to undertake so much of our Church's mission. On a personal note, I offer them my warm appreciation for their support and encouragement to me and frequent concern for my work load. The last five years have been challenging and rewarding for me in equal measure and I can honestly say that I am grateful that the Methodist Conference sent me here. From the outset, with the Church's Centenary Celebrations and the Preston Guild in my first month, the pace has not slackened and I have only been able to sustain the 'full-on' demands of this appointment with the support and encouragement of Christine. I thank her not only for the last five years, but for her partnership over the entire period of my ministry and look forward to all that we may be able to share together in pastures new.

Malcolm Hickox

General Overview from the Church Stewards

The Church Stewards continue to work hard to maintain the life of the church and support our minister in the ministry and mission within our community.

Since the General Church Meeting last year we have welcomed two new Church Stewards, Wendy Bennett and John Ferris to our team. Sadly, Joe Hamilton stood down in the autumn due to other personal commitments and we thank Joe for his hard work and support during his time with our team. Libby Stone has served as a Steward for several years now and feels it is time to step down. We thank Libby for her quiet but faithful support in all our work and responsibilities. We are fortunate to have a good team of Worship Stewards who help us each Sunday morning to set up for worship and we were joined in the summer by Mary Jackson and Pam Wright.

If you feel called to be either a Church Steward, or a Worship Steward, please have a conversation with Malcolm or any of the Stewards to see what the work entails and if you would be able to assist. The more people we have, the easier the load.

Last summer the team worked hard with the help of Ken Wales to produce our vision for the future and I hope that the whole church family felt able to contribute to the final document which we produced in the autumn. These goals will help us work together over the next year to enable our work to develop and focus whilst we have the change-over of our staff team.

Last year was a busy and difficult time as we realised that Yasha would be leaving us in the summer. Sadly, Yasha was unable to continue to Ordination and has left the Diaconal Order for the moment. She and the family still live in Preston and we continue to pray for them as they work together as a family to discern their future.

During the summer the stationing process began to find a new minister for our Circuit who will have responsibility for Fulwood. We were very pleased to welcome Jane Wild when she was invited to visit in November. I am very happy that, subject to confirmation by Conference, Jane, Stuart and their three daughters will move into the manse at Victoria Road in August. Jane's husband Stuart is also a Methodist minister and, again subject to

Conference, will take up an appointment in the Bolton and Rochdale District in September. We look forward to formally welcoming Jane and the family into the circuit at a special service at Fulwood on Friday 1st September at 7.30pm. We hope you will support this special service.

With the departure of Yasha the Church and Circuit entered discussions to decide the best way forward for work with our families and young people. It was decided that the Circuit would look to appoint a Youth, Children's and Family Worker for Fulwood. To that end the Circuit advertised just after Christmas and following interviews were pleased to appoint Darren Arnold who is currently working in Horsham, Sussex. Darren is an experienced Youth and Family Worker and will be joining the Circuit staff team on the 1st August. We will also give him a formal welcome at the service on the 1st September. Darren is married to Cheryl and they have two teenage sons, with an older daughter in Nottingham. Please help them to settle into their new life in the north and especially as part of the Fulwood Church Family!

Sadly, as you are all aware, this is Malcolm's final appointment as a minister before 'sitting down' as they say in Methodism. Malcolm and Christine will move to their new home and life in Seaton Sluice, Northumberland at the end of July. We thank both of them for all their work whilst at Fulwood. Malcolm has had to shoulder a heavy work load particularly whilst Yasha was on maternity leave and the problems which have ensued since. Particularly in this last year when he has had to work as the sole minister in our church and during this time he has continued to lead and guide us with great skill and sensitivity through difficult decision making. Christine has been a great support to Malcolm in all his work but also made a big contribution to the youth work in Sunday Club, OMG and Messy Church and also to many pastoral situations. We have been delighted with her leadership in teaching some of our members, young and old, to play the bells! Her contribution to the music and especially Taize services have been a delight. We will miss them both but wish them well in their journey into a new life of retirement. With the boys still living in Preston for the moment we may even have the opportunity to welcome them again from time to time as they visit family!

We will have an opportunity to say a formal farewell on Sunday 16th July when there will be a Circuit Farewell Service at Fulwood at 5.00 p.m., followed by tea and cakes.

On the morning of the 16th July Malcolm will take his last service and after that service we hope to have a Church Family Lunch to wish them well. Please put this date in your diary and join us on this special day.

Thank you to all the congregation who support us in our work and encourage us to carry on!!

Margaret Squire, Senior Church Steward

Church Life

Church Life Group

In the absence of a Church Life Co-ordinator at the start of the year, Janet Wales continued to act as the temporary chair for the meetings of the Church Life Group. However, at the February Church Council she agreed to be appointed as Church Life Co-ordinator and under her leadership in the coming months the group will be reviewing its terms of reference. After a significant period of service Ted Lowes stepped down as Minute Secretary. We thank him for his work and are delighted that Pauline Kirkham has agreed to take on the role.

Children & Young People

The Church Life Group continues to receive regular reports on the activities of the various youth and children's groups whose leaders meet together in the Youth Leaders Forum. As

will be seen from their individual reports below they all have very active programmes. Work on applying for the District 'Child Friendly Church Award' has slowed down with the departure of Yasha Mashoko last May, but we are looking forward to the arrival of Darren Arnold, the new Circuit Youth, Children's & Family Worker who has been appointed to work at Fulwood from 1st August. With his experience we are expecting to make some good progress on this work in the coming year, although we expect his insights might also challenge us to think in some new ways about the place of children and young people in the Church.

Fellowship Groups & Social Activities

It is good to report that our fellowship groups are all in a healthy state and the majority of them have folk attending who don't worship with us on a Sunday. The Church Life Group meetings enable us to provide support for their activities and to share common concerns. Details of their activities are included below. Over the year we reflected on the place of social activities within the life of the Church. It was suggested that during the years of fund raising for the development project a great variety of activities were held, which included mixed generations, the mixing of groups within church and a lot of outreach contacts too. It was recognised that one of the motivations for participation and bringing people together was the sense of working towards a common goal. However, since the target was reached fewer activities have been held and it has become much more difficult to gain support from members of the congregation. We recognised that society and family life are changing all the time in our '24/7 world' where the demands on many people have grown with more complex working patterns, care for aging relatives or grandchildren and families spread more widely in geographical terms. There are also many more opportunities for individuals and families to follow their diverse interests outside the church than there were a generation ago. Alongside this, church life has changed dramatically in the last twenty years, with a more diverse congregation from a wide variety of backgrounds. The changes in society and family life have also had a dramatic effect on when people attend, what they offer, what they seek to receive and their level of commitment. On the positive side, we realise that through most of the groups and other activities organised by the Church there were many opportunities for social interaction, which have provided friendship, a sense of belonging and opportunities to join in other aspects of church life. The outreach activities of Welcome Wednesday, Farmers Markets and Theatre Group in particular provide social opportunities, mixing significant numbers of folk from outside the church with members of our congregation. With this in mind, the Church Life Group recommended to the Church Council that in future we should only plan additional social events if it seems appropriate, such as an activity to tie in with a Harvest Festival, rather than planning an ongoing programme of events.

Festivals

The Christian Festivals continue to play a central role in the worship life of the Church and the Christmas services in particular draw in a large number of people from the edge of church life as well as from the local community. The Toy and Gift Service was once again very well supported, with gifts going to Surestart, the Women's Refuge and other local charities. The generosity of our congregation and the uniformed groups was remarkable, especially since the annual shoebox appeal was the previous month. Our thanks to everyone who gave so generously. A small group came together to plan the Advent and Lent liturgies that were used each week, with the emphasis on both seasons being times of preparation and discipleship for all ages. More fresh produce was displayed at the Harvest Festival last September, with it later being used in the catering at Welcome Wednesday. The gifts of tinned food and packets donated were gratefully received by Methodist Action for those in need and the financial gifts for All We Can – Methodist Relief and Development were equally appreciated.

Prayer Table

We are grateful to Margaret Holmes and Beryl Hoyle for taking on responsibility for the Prayer Table in the corner of the Church. The Prayer Book is taken into the Wednesday morning service of Holy Communion where it is used alongside the Methodist Prayer Handbook so that we pray for local concerns as well as those across the world. In addition, we have a Prayer Chain which Judith Harvey co-ordinates (details on the back of the notices).

Our thanks go to all those who work so hard to ensure that the life of our Church touches so many people's lives. Sue Penrith in her pastoral report thanks everyone who contributes to the pastoral care in the Church except herself, so we wish to place on record our gratitude for all the work she sensitively carries out on our behalf.

Janet Wales & Malcolm Hickox

Worship

The Worship Planning Group continues to meet quarterly. Convened by Lesley Birkett and chaired by Malcolm Hickox, it reviews the content and pattern of our worship and makes plans for the next quarter. It is an open meeting, but we particularly encourage those who are actively involved in our worship to attend: Church and Communion Stewards, Worship Leaders, Local Preachers, musicians and youth and children's workers. In that way we hope to have a variety of views represented from a congregation with differing tastes in music, worship styles, church backgrounds and ages.

During the year we have used different patterns and liturgies for the monthly celebration of Holy Communion in the Sunday morning services, sometimes coming forward to the rail to receive and sometimes receiving the elements in the pews. The monthly evening communion service has a much smaller congregation, which enables us to create a more intimate setting and use other liturgies – the variety has been appreciated. The size of the morning congregation and the layout of the worship area place certain restrictions on what can be undertaken during morning worship, but those leading the services have still been able to include some more creative elements of music, drama and occasional video clips. The installation of a new more powerful digital projector has helped greatly in this area. We have continued to be more flexible with our pattern of evening worship which has taken place at the URC on the second and fourth Sundays and in the Chancel or Willow Grove on the other Sundays. In response to positive comments, we continued with our monthly café style services, others using Taizé or Iona liturgies and Compline, as well as informal services, which have included a prayer walk around Highgate Woods and Summer Praise. The annual Service of Remembrance for those who have been bereaved continues to be much appreciated. In response to a challenge from the Circuit Strategy & Resources Group and reflecting on the number of people attending our evening services, the Church Council has agreed that from June this year we will no longer hold any evening services at the URC. Instead, we will follow a pattern of services in our own church of a café style service on the first Sunday of the month, Holy Communion on the second Sunday and an informal service (Iona, Taizé, Compline etc) on the third Sunday. We will then join with Ashton Methodist Church for their service on the fourth Sunday and where there is a fifth Sunday, it will usually be a Circuit Service of Healing and Wholeness. Our friends at the URC have been involved in the plans and are keen to continue to join us for the evening services, as are some others who regularly come from other churches in the area. We hope this will be seen as a positive move.

The Advent and Lent Liturgies were created to provide something for all ages to experience and reflect upon, with the idea of the children searching for items hidden in the church. They much appreciated their involvement as did some of our visiting preachers. The displays created in the front porch also provided a talking point during the week and the

Advent challenge to the congregation to take a photo with the theme of light received a very good response. These different dimensions gave a real sense of building up to and preparing for the great festivals of Christmas and Easter. All the Christmas services were well received with their mix of the traditional and the new and drew in a significant number of people from the local community. Following the success of the previous year's Messy Nativity Service we repeated the format and again attracted many more children and families than would have been the case with a more traditional approach and for the first time incorporated The Bethlehem Peace Light. By way of a change, we organised a Holy Week Labyrinth rather than the usual evening meditations. Whilst a limited number from our regular congregation took advantage of the Labyrinth, those who came found it to be very moving and a significant number of our visitors on Welcome Wednesday took the opportunity to participate. A number of comments received suggested that the Labyrinth provided a powerful lead into the Holy Week services of Maundy Thursday and Good Friday and reached a climax with our Easter Day celebrations. There was a strong link between all the different services, including the 'Messy Good Friday' session, which enabled all-ages to explore the significance of the Easter message for their lives. It was a particular joy to be able to include the baptism of a father and his young son on Easter Day. Their story provided a vivid illustration of the way faith can sustain and transform our lives.

We are grateful to Emma Byers and the small team who provide the Sunday morning crèche, but we could do with more volunteers to join the rota. It's an important part of our provision enabling young families to worship with us. Our thanks also go to the Sunday Club team who provide a table with suitable quiet activities for those under five during all-age worship. In the same way, we are grateful to Eric Waterhouse for co-ordinating the minibus which allows those who are more frail or need transport to attend the morning services. However, we have now reached a critical point with available drivers and without more volunteers to join the rota we will not be able to continue to offer the minibus every Sunday. Our thanks also go to the Worship Stewards, who support the Church Stewards in the smooth preparation for the services; the Communion Stewards; the musicians; the team of sound operators; all the people willing to read and participate in dramatic presentations; the welcomers on the door; the coffee servers (we again need more volunteers); the flower arrangers and not forgetting those who count the collection. They are all an integral and important part of our worship team. If anyone would be willing to join the team, please speak to one of the Church Stewards or if you have an idea for a different service or something to be included on a Sunday, please join us at one of the Worship Planning sessions.

Malcolm Hickox

Music

At a time when it is more and more difficult for many churches to find suitable musicians willing to play regularly at services, Fulwood is in the happy situation of having a number of people on the rota, providing a range of different styles of music. Thanks to Ian Williams, Tony Whitman, Stephen Anyon, Margery Pitcher, John Allcock, Stephen Grice, Mavis Fletcher, and the 316 Band for their various contributions to our Sunday morning and evening services. Other members also are prepared to play for the various weekday groups, and a special thanks must go to Sue Penrith, who is the reliable pianist for the Wednesday Communion services. The introduction of 'Singing the Faith' has been a good resource for some new hymns, and Malcolm has introduced us to many beautiful and meaningful words to well-known tunes. There is a small group of singers who meet every Sunday before Worship to practice the hymns. They would be very happy for anyone to join them – no audition necessary!

Stephen Grice

Sunday Club

Numbers of children attending Sunday Club continue to be stable with 47 names on the database. This does not include however the large number of children who come with

baptismal parties for just one Sunday and we are aware of the need to have systems in place to promote our work with these young people. Average attendance is considerably less than 47 with numbers varying from 22 to 5. This reflects the attendance pattern for the whole church but puts considerable pressure on leaders when planning material. Six leaders work with the children on a rota basis when possible but the demands of the work mean that adults may not get the opportunity to worship in church and deepen their own spiritual experiences and learning. All leaders have updated their safeguarding training and we work hard to ensure good practice in our provision.

This 'academic/church' year we have followed six themes. We began in September with 'God's world' which gave young people an opportunity to discuss different views on creation and evolution and consider how science and religion can complement each other. We then looked at some of the major Old Testament figures before our Advent and Christmas theme. In January we began a series of topics about the Bible – its format, development etc. our Lent and Easter theme looked at the Passover and Exodus and its links with the Last Supper and the Easter Story. Our final theme for this year will be looking at the growth of the Early Church and the work of Apostles such as Peter and Paul. Although we plan our work in themes in reality, we deliver a series of 'one offs' as it is unusual to have the same children there for two consecutive Sundays (see below *Goal 2*). All the themes link to our underpinning values and aims outlined at the end of this report.

Progress against 2016 goals and future action

Goal 1. *Prepare information about Sunday Club for the Church website.*

Basic information and a poster are now available and progress is being made with a more detailed leaflet. We also want to have cards available to give to visitors.

Action: complete leaflets and design cards to promote the work.

Goal 2: *continue to develop range of activities to meet needs of young people at different ages and stages of development.*

All sessions are prepared on a range of levels to meet the learning and social needs of the children and young people. Older children are encouraged to ask questions and think critically about the topics. A variety of activities allows children and young people to engage with the work in different ways. However infrequent attendance can mean that children miss the key aspects of a theme.

Action: continue to develop ways of working effectively with children and young people at different ages and ensure they engage with the basic messages of teaching in themes.

Goal 3: *Contribute to the church application for the Child Friendly Church award.*

Little formal development has been made as we await the appointment of a family and youth worker to take this forward. Sunday Cub staff continue to ensure that all sessions follow good practice policies.

Action – support application for award

Goal 4: *Work with parents to maximise learning and experiences.*

The development of the Facebook site has been a highly successful way of keeping in touch with families and helping them to know what we are doing. Most weeks a reminder about the theme is posted and then photos of activities after the session are published. Video clips used in the session are also included. Some families are starting to use Facebook as a way of communicating with us.

Action – explore further developments with social media with emphasis on keeping in touch with families.

In addition to these goals, we are eager to explore ways of further embedding Sunday Club in the life of the church. There have been useful links with Messy Church at Christmas and Easter and the Lenten liturgy provided a coherent approach to worship and learning.

Action: devise ways of involving more adults with Sunday Club. e.g. visiting the sessions

August and September will see many changes. We look forward to working with Darren Arnold, the new Youth, Children's & Family Worker and Jane Wild our new minister, but also want to thank Malcolm for his continuing support for our work and his help with ensuring that what we do is child friendly and also theologically sound. We shall miss him.

Every baptismal service the congregation is asked to make promises about maintaining the life and worship of the church and Sunday Club is one way in which this is put into practice. We need your support, prayers and care to continue our work.

Aims and Values

Sunday Club aims to help children and young people to discover:

1. *That they are special to God whose love is there for us.*
2. *The nature of the God we see revealed in the life of Jesus.*
3. *What it means to be a follower of Jesus*
4. *Who they are as creatures created by God, in God's image*
5. *That they belong to God's people – the Church*

Janet Wales

Pastoral Care

The last few weeks within our Church family and in the wider community there have been many occasions where our Pastoral Care has been much needed. The various needs of our church family and its wider community have been met in different ways, whether it be in hospital, in residential homes, the housebound or those within various groups. The visits, phone calls, flowers, cards, texts, emails, church magazines, prayers (through the prayer chain or prayer book) have been appreciated by the receivers. We can continue the Pastoral Care with the help of everyone, keeping us informed, so we can continue to strive to put the appropriate support in place. We continue to think of the family and friends, of those who have died recently, as they mourn their loved ones. We rejoice with the couples who have been married and with families who have had their children baptised. Thank you to all who support Revd Malcolm and Mrs Liz Ellison in the pastoral work of this church. As a Church family, we try to remember those in need both in this community and in other communities. Please help by keeping us up to date and giving ideas how we can improve and continue our pastoral work.

Sue Penrith

Church Membership Statistics

Each November a statistical return is completed for the Methodist Church, giving details of our Church membership and activities. Last year we recorded that in addition to 285 church members we were in contact regularly with over 1090 other people, of which over 435 were children and young people who attend our weekly activities. Our membership details were as follows for the year ending 31st October 2015:

Membership as at 1st November 2015 - 296

Deaths	7
Members Transferred Out	2

Ceased to be members	3
Transferred in	1
Net Losses	11

Membership as at 31st October 2016 - 285

Baptisms during year November 2015 - October 2016	7
Weddings	8
Funerals	21

Malcolm Hickox

Safeguarding

Since the last General Church Meeting, the refresher training in relation to 'Creating Safer Space' mentioned in my report last year, has been provided for the whole Circuit at several training sessions. Most of those from Fulwood who received their initial training five or more years ago have now attended, but there are still a few people to catch up with. Foundation Training continues to be provided for people who are new to working with our children, young people and vulnerable adults and further sessions of both levels of training will be provided in June. The annual review of the church Safeguarding Policy will also take place in June at the meeting of Church Council. Please contact me if you have questions or concerns in relation to safeguarding and I will do my best to be of help. But please remember that safeguarding is the responsibility of all of us.

Lesley Birkett, Church Safeguarding Co-ordinator

Women's Fellowship

Our average attendance has been 20 - 25 members at the weekly meetings. Once again, we have enjoyed a very varied programme from September 2016 - 2017. The talks have included a speaker from Lancashire Wild Life, Tales of a Brass Bands Man, Search Dogs and Blood Bikes, to name but a few, and also devotional afternoons with Revd Malcolm Hickox. We regret through bereavement we have lost one of our members, Christine Allsopp. During the summer we have four monthly outings planned, one of which will be a canal cruise which includes an afternoon tea.

Muriel Crossley & Mary Fox

Ladies After Eight

We still meet every alternate Thursday evenings at 8.01pm but our attendance numbers have fluctuated greatly recently, sometimes we can get over 20 and other times only 11! We have had a variety of speakers this year so far ranging from Preston Street Pastors, a very inspiring evening, to Lady Milena Grenfell-Baines, to which we invited friends etc and we had over 40 attending. Our own Ray Armstrong came along to talk about the work of Fox Street and we heard all about John Ferris' "Route 66" experience on 4th May. This is a very caring group of ladies and we would welcome any newcomers.

Sue Whiteford

WOW (Women on Wednesdays)

'WOW' continue to meet on a monthly basis (usually the 3rd Wednesday except in school holidays) to share a variety of activities. In September we had the idea of giving members responsibility for one meeting a year and allocated months to that effect. So far it has worked well, we now share the organisation of the group and it has led to a more diverse and varied programme this year. We now communicate largely through a Whats App group where you will find everything from reminders of meeting places, requests to collect plastic bottles for Youth Club to questions such as how long does a fruit crumble take to cook! Practical friendly support 24/7!! In November Mark Slaney came to talk to us about

his experiences in the refugee camps in France which was well attended and very thought provoking. December saw a very chilled session of Christmas tree decoration decoupage and Christmas refreshments at the Bennett house, this was followed by our "Christmas" meal in January at Houghton Manor. February saw a group of us taking a trip to The Harris Museum to watch "One Voice Community Choir" a Preston choir, which turned out to be a very uplifting experience. In March Sarah Hurst taught us how to make focaccia in the kitchen here at church which was a great learning experience and we all made some dough to take home and bake. I think we were all pleasantly surprised at how delicious it was! Other meetings have included being art thieves at the "Escape Rooms", (needless to say weren't good at this but a great team effort all the same!), some walks and lots of thought provoking discussions covering a variety of topics.

We still have some subs left in the church account from previous years so we haven't collected any this year. There are more than 20 members (including some who have been recently added) on the email list but we don't often have more than 8 core members at any one meeting. Many of the members have become good friends over the years and continue to support each other on a regular basis - the fellowship that has been forged via this group has created some strong bonds and many caring and reliable connections which are important to all of us. A recent development has been the teenage children getting to the age where they can babysit for some younger ones - a fabulous testament to the family connections we have built up.

Sadly, I will be leaving in July and handing over to Wendy Gaskell to help coordinate the group in the future. I will miss the friendship and support of the group and look forward to catching up with everyone and their families on my return visits. I trust and pray for the group and their ongoing support of each other and any new members in the years ahead. If you know of anyone who would like to join WOW please pass on their details to Wendy Gaskell tel. 07719 843543, wendy.gaskell@gconnect.com and they can be added to our What's App group to keep them informed as to what we are up to!

Sarah Farrell

AM Club

Our last meeting of the 2016/17 session has just taken place. The club has existed for 33 years, since Revd Ronald Jobling and John Hardman began it in 1984, and we have seen scores of men share with us and go to their final rest. The last of these was Charles Wisbey. Today our membership is 15 with most attending regularly, just one or two joining us less so. We no longer do outside visits but share a close friendship which is long standing and greatly valued at our fortnightly meetings. Out of the generosity of the coffee ladies we have a modest sum of cash in hand of £23.43 and sent £100 to the East Africa Famine Appeal via Christian Aid. Our programme is usually presentations by Circuit ministers, club members and some visitors and has been very much appreciated and enjoyed. I have been secretary for 30 years and happily retired at this year's AGM as we need to move on with new ideas. Generally speaking, the club is in good heart and much enjoyed.

Allan Clarke

Alphabites

Alphabites continues to meet on the first Tuesday of the month and has an average of 15-16 attending. The meeting starts with a two course meal which is enjoyed by everyone. This is followed by a time of praise and worship and Bible Study. Since September until January we continued to study St John's Gospel. Rather than following another Bible passage we decided to have a series of question and answer sessions and until now have looked at faith topics including prayer and forgiveness. We thank Malcolm for all the preparation enthusiasm and commitment and wish Christine and himself every happiness in their retirement.

Margaret Holmes & Beryl Hoyle

Book Club

The Book Club continues to hold regular meetings usually on a Tuesday evening - 5 or 6 sessions each year. Attendance is usually around 10 people but the Group is always ready to welcome new members, new ideas and new suggestions for books to read and discuss. The members decide for themselves what they are to read - often relatively new and interesting recent novels, but sometimes biography or non-fiction. Our opinions usually differ but our discussions are always friendly. We often find ourselves asking where is God to be found in the stories we are reading - and sometimes we have answers! There are occasions when members bring along a poem or a passage which has caught their interest often in fitting with the season. New members are always welcome especially if they bring along some biscuits. Dates and details are in the notices and on the website.

Ken Wales

Theatre Visits Group

The regular programme of theatre visits open to the church and the wider community continues to thrive. Sharon Beck, the Church Administrator, now has a key role in the administration of the group and as a result many of the systems have been revised. A major policy document was widely discussed and presented to the Church Council early in 2017 and sets out clearly why the Church is providing this service to the community, how its interests will be protected and some possible new directions. In addition to the usual theatre visits, we are looking to expand the programme with some day trips to places of interest and in May 2017 a three night residential break in North Wales. Ideas for enabling especially older members of the community (and sometimes younger ones too!) to get out and about will always be carefully considered and any offers to help lead the excursions will be very welcome.

Ken Wales

Knitting Group

We have had a successful year and are flourishing. We have 19 members, mostly from outside of church, who attend very regularly to enjoy knitting and crocheting advice and help and to enjoy a cuppa and chat. It could be described as knitting and natter but the ladies do air their problems, thoughts etc and value the replies they receive. Subs are £2.00 per week and this year we have given money to general church funds, paid for music for Christmas, donated £250 to the Rosemere Cancer Foundation's Twenty Years Anniversary Appeal and provided the new toaster in the kitchen. Poppies were crocheted for Remembrance Day and we raised over £200 from our knitted chicken and rabbit chocolate egg holders at Easter. Currently we have a range of baby knitwear on sale and we have been known to take on commissions. We now meet in the Copper Beech having outgrown the Sycamore Room. We do feel that our members are part of our church and we ask for them to be included in the flower distribution if required. They really appreciate this gesture.

Jan Astley & Barbara Hothersall

The Handbell Ringers

The 'senior' bell group met for fun and enjoyment on a Tuesday morning until Christine was working. We have been unable to find another time so at the moment the group is on a pause. The 'younger' bell ringers continue to be enthusiastic and want to ring when possible. We rang bells, as we have been doing, at the Christingle service with a few new youngsters joining in. There has been interest from one or two more who have already said they want to join in next Christmas! Charlotte Harrison and Christine also played for a couple of carols at the Carol service. Christine has prepared music to be used when she leaves in the summer. Olivia Bennett and Emma Hurst are working on playing 'Carol of the Bells' already. A couple of parents have said they would oversee the playing in the future and there might be options to use the bells either for fun or during worship.

Christine Hickox

Community Choir

We have now been up and running for 18 months and have about 20 members with an average turnout of 15 any week. It is good to see that we have attracted about 50% of our regulars from outside of the church family but disappointing with the lack of support from within. The choice of songs is left to those attending with popular songs and songs from the shows and we always welcome new suggestions for our repertoire. The only criteria for joining us is that you enjoy company and can laugh with the rest of us. We change our days of meeting to accommodate everyone's availability and it does not matter if you can only come occasionally you will be made to feel welcome. A former PNE manager coined the acronym 'AIMITA' - attitude is more important than ability and that is certainly true with our Choir.

David Topping

Publicity Group

During the year, Joe Hamilton stood down as our Publicity Co-ordinator and we thank him for the work he undertook. In the absence of a successor or a Publicity/Press Officer the Publicity Group has not met. However, a great deal of work has been carried out by the small team who undertake a variety of tasks. We thank Margaret Holmes and Beryl Hoyle for ensuring that the 'Wayside Pulpit' continues to be updated on a regular basis, sharing a Christian message with those who pass the Church. Additional notice boards have been installed around the Church, both for posters/Church information and for the use of groups using the premises. We are indebted to Sue Whiteford and Beryl Hoyle who edit the Church Notices each week and to the Friday volunteers who print them. John Butterworth maintains the Church Website and we are grateful for his willingness to update it even when holidaying overseas! The quarterly Church Magazine is greatly appreciated by those who read it, especially our housebound members and also those from other churches. We offer our thanks to the small editorial groups, to John Butterworth who designs and sets it and to all who contribute articles. Should anyone be moved to offer their services as the Publicity Co-ordinator or Publicity/Press Officer they would be warmly welcomed! Just speak to a Church Steward if you are interested.

Malcolm Hickox

Other Groups

Over the last year, the weekly Zumba dance session has taken a break, but the Church table tennis team has continued to play regular matches. The contribution of Richard Holyfield is missed from that area and we wish him and Katrina well in their new home in Wales. Several other local community groups from AA to children's dance and drama classes, and the Alzheimer's Society have also met regularly at the church for their activities.

Activities for Families, Children & Young People

Toddlers' Club

We currently have 123 children on the register with an average of 35 attending each week. There is clear evidence that our membership will continue to increase, we are convinced that some Mums have more babies so that can keep coming on a Friday morning! Through Toddlers' Club 98 families have some contact with the Church. We have a good supply of toys and regularly buy new ones and replace those which have been damaged. Most weeks the children also have supervised play in which they use playdough or do some other craft. Each of our sessions ends with a sing-a-long which is led by some of our mothers. We do a roaring trade in toast and teacakes and are known by some as the Teacake Toddlers. We currently have six regular helpers but are always grateful for more help.

Janet Porter

OMG (Our Methodist Group)

The group currently has 11 youngsters on the register and this year we have welcomed two new members from Ashton Methodist Church. They are a lively group who enjoy a variety of activities on a Sunday afternoon which have included a Birthday Biscuit Bake Off, craft activities and, of course, lots of games. We try to vary the programme by having activities off the church premises and on Remembrance Sunday we had a visit, with Joan Hardman, to the War Memorial at Lostock Hall which was followed by a question and answer session and refreshments back at Church where Joan shared her wartime memories. As usual we will conclude this year's programme in July with a barbeque and games.

John & Gillian Ferris, Wendy & Andrew Bennett, Jez Harrison

The Big Group

The Big Group (TBG) have met a couple of times over the year. We had a major group session in June where with OMG we had a Tea Party to celebrate the Queen's 90th birthday and raise money for Ronald McDonald House. We tried to arrange a walk/get together during holidays but there is always pressure with working and study. We asked if they would like to fold the group but it was decided they would like to keep the Facebook Chat going to support each other and meet when possible. We felt we just had to keep assessing the situation with everyone. Christine will be leaving at the end of July, Charlotte is prepared to keep going and perhaps see if the new Youth, Children's & Family Worker might have some ideas.

Christine Hickox & Charlotte Penrith

Escape and Youth Club

Escape! (for youngsters at Junior School) is an active group of up to 55 children at any one session. There are a range of activities including football, dodge ball, table games, pool, X box games, table tennis and a table for creative activities. The creative activities have proved to be very popular and a lot of planning and organisation has been put in by a group of the leaders. Escape! is a group for fun and friendship. This group has the benefit of two Scouts who are working towards their Gold Award by helping at Escape!

Youth Club (High School age group) is an active group which varies in numbers from a few up to 20. They favour activities such as football, dodge ball, pool, table tennis and time to 'chill out' with their friends. Time to chill out is very important to this age group.

Each group has the opportunity to have drinks and food. Food for Escape! includes chicken dippers, hash browns, curly fries, bacon, sausage, potato waffles, whereas the Youth Club youngsters' choice is pizza. They also have the opportunity to buy drinks and sweets throughout the evening. This year we have gained some new helpers but we are always looking for more help.

The Escape! & Youth Club Team

4th Fulwood (Methodist) Scout Group

This has been a good year for the group as a whole. Membership of young people is up on last year. It has been a transitional year leader wise, with me taking over as Group Scout Leader, Chris Thomas taking over as Scout Leader and Lindsie Wallace as Chair of the exec. Steve Williams and Lesley have both taken District roles but have continued to support the group and helped out a lot. We have the family camp this July which is a great opportunity for building relations with parents and hopefully get some of them involved. Church parades are not very well attended, the young people have so many activities as do the parents that we struggle to get them to attend. I would like to reduce the number of parades with the hope of getting much better attendance if there were less parades perhaps? We are grateful for the continued support of the Church and will try to not cause too much trouble in the next year.

Nick Penrith, Group Scout Leader

Beaver Section

Beaver Scouting is all about giving boys and girls opportunities to have fun, face challenges and enjoy, especially with it being the 30th anniversary of the official recognition of Beaver Scouting as part of the UK Scout Association! Monday nights have seen us enjoying a wide variety of activities from creative crafts to learning about endangered species, undertaking some problem solving and team-working challenges, visit from the RNLI, how to stay safe and deal with emergency situations.

We do like to be out and about as much as we possibly can so, we have spent time learning about tracking and navigation, exploring the natural world around us, having a positive impact on our community working with Friends of Highgate Woods and Friends of Conway Drive, learning how best to make a photograph, not just take a photograph; we have been hiking, climbing, swimming as well as having a try at canoeing and sailing. Our tastebuds have also been treated with trying foods from around the UK and the wider world along with some old favourites – toasted marshmallows, always a favourite on sleepovers and camps!

There is no doubt we are not only active as a Colony but also participate in the District and County events, all of which provide a variety of activities that will appeal to all our members. To that end our Beaver Scouts complete lots of badges that all contribute to them gaining the top award within the Beaver Scout section, the Chief Scout Bronze Award. Not all Beaver Scouts achieve the award, it must be earned through personal achievement, so I am really pleased that the majority of our Beaver Scouts do achieve it, even those who are not with us for the full two years and put additional effort in during their own time. Very well done to them all, it's well deserved for all the hard work they put in.

Lots of our explorations and activities just would not happen without the fabulous support we have from the parents of our young people. It is appropriate to thank each and every one for their contribution, large or small, from simply bringing Beaver Scouts to activities, sharing their own interests, skills and hobbies, to sparing time to accompany us on our various adventures. If anyone else is interested in helping out, (be it once in a while, once a month or every week) with our fabulous young people, please do just let me know, any offer of help is always welcome!

Clearly, the fantastic programme of activities we undertake is not just down to me, there is a wonderful team of people working hard with me to provide the best possible initial Scouting experience to the youngest members of our movement. Without the combination of all our different skills, interests, abilities and enthusiasm we would not be able to provide the breadth of programme activities for the Beaver Scouts to enjoy. We thoroughly enjoy watching the development of the Beaver Scouts during their time with us and seeing their own amazement as they make new discoveries about themselves and the world around them. I hope you have enjoyed this brief insight into our Colony antics – you'll be very welcome to come and try it for yourself!

Fiona Jackson (aka Badger), Beaver Scout Leader

Cubs Section

We currently have 26 Cubs, 3 moved to Scouts at Easter. The Cubs have recently completed Stage 2 First Aid badges. Blackpool Astronomy Club came in to help with a talk/slideshow for our Astronomy Activities Badge. We did a Walk/Hike in the Longsands area, a great night over styles, through fields and brambles. The Children learnt to play chess, developing strategies in readiness for the District Chess competition. For the Home Help badge, they undertook sewing, cleaning windows, ironing, making a simple one course meal and laying the table. Ten cubs and two leaders attended the Cubs Day of Adventure at Blackpool Sports Centre, with high/low ropes, crate stacking, gladiator challenge and orienteering - a fantastic day and some conquered their fear of heights (me)

as I had to go up and gently persuade the younger cubs that it was okay and nothing to worry about! Five Silver awards are due to be awarded before the end of May - the highest award a Cub can achieve. Lots of exciting activities and camps are coming up over the next couple of months – rock 'n river, family camp, clip 'n climb, and the District Pack of the Year Competition and Sports day.

Karen Smalley

Scout Section

Scouts have had a busy year and were up to 34 Young people, recently we have had three new cubs up. We are sorry to say we have also had to say goodbye to seven young people, who have now moved on to explorers and left 4th Fulwood.

Weekly, we have had a busy programme getting out as much as possible. Including night hikes, wide games and fire lighting. Then while in the church nights we have had Easter egg hunts, talks on important topics such as drugs and alcohol, and discussions about social media in the world today.

We have had many camps including our yearly in door camp to Yealand Conyers, and survival camp, then have many camps coming up as the weather get better. Country rally next week, then District Camp in June. Some of the Scouts are also going away this summer to the Isle of Wight while others are off to Denmark, even over summer the Scouting adventure continues.

Chris Thomas (CJ), Scout Leader

Rainbows

Some people may have noticed an item in the church notices at the beginning of the year promoting Rainbows as a number of girls left us at the end of 2016 either to move up to Brownies or pursue other activities. However, I am delighted to report that after a “Bring a Friend” evening two girls decided to join the unit and since then we have a number of enquiries for places which means that we are likely to have 18 girls again by the end of the summer term. We have been very pleased to welcome my co-leader back after a short break and her daughter, who is also a guide, is helping on a regular basis. This means that we have two ‘warranted’ leaders, a leader in training and a young leader. We are also constantly grateful for the help and support we receive from the Brownie leaders. We aim to offer a varied programme of activities which reflect the interests of our girls whilst promoting the aims of GirlGuiding UK. Last term, amongst other things, we celebrated World Book Day by dressing up, had a Teddy Bear’s Picnic and made a flower arrangement in a teacup as a Mother’s Day gift. This year we are looking forward to celebrating 25 years of Rainbows at this church with a special parade service along with Brownies.

Jayne Myatt

Brownies

39th Preston (Fulwood Methodist) Brownies continue to thrive, with 28 Brownies on the roll at the moment and others due to come up from Rainbows soon. Madeline Bennett has recently completed her Leadership Qualification and Olivia O’Brien is working towards it so we have 5 qualified leaders, two Unit Helpers and one Young Leader. As we are all volunteers and other commitments sometimes mean that leaders cannot attend all meetings we also have a number of parents who are willing to help us from time to time. We have been busy this year with a variety of activities. The girls completed their First Aid badge last summer with some also completing the advanced badge. We are grateful for the support of a qualified first aider from the Guiding circuit. We took 12 girls on a Brownie holiday to Guy’s Farm in July 2016 and Claire Bird and Madeline Bennett had their first taste of catering for a large number of people (16 in all – only 4 leaders were able to attend, which is why we could only take 12 girls), with archery, climbing and bouldering being favourite activities. We have had outside experts in, to do crafts with the girls, a ‘Party in the Park’, a Spanish Night led by one of our parents, a Folk Dancing night led by Roy

Smith, a visit to the pantomime with Rainbows and Guides, a 'Disco' sleepover at church and we have just returned from a Brownie Holiday at Bibby's Farm where we completed a badge to celebrate Roald Dahl's centenary (thanks to the church members who donated books for this event).

Diane Bird

39th Preston Guides

We have had a year of changes at Guides with new leaders. Ellie and Lorna are our Warranted Leaders and we also have our three Unit Helpers currently completing the leadership qualification. We are always eager to welcome more help and support to help keep the unit running smoothly. We continue to have a steady supply of Brownies fly up to Guides which is great to see the girls continue to enjoy their Girl Guiding experience. Eight of our BP'S have worked hard and completed the Baden Powell award and moved on to pastures new. The Autumn and Winter term was full of cooking, games, pottery painting and more recently we had a trip to FIRED 4 U in Walton le Dale and had a wonderful evening designing and making enamel jewellery. We have completed our Chocolate badge & Cultural badge and working towards our Guiding traditions badge and Agility badge over the summer term. The girls are excited to be attending Guystonbury again the year, promising to be bigger and even better. All of the Guides continue to work together to plan fun-filled evenings of adventure.

Ellie Sedgwick, Guide Leader

Messy Church

In September Messy Church will begin its seventh year! I am not sure that when we started we envisaged how popular and creative Messy Church would be. God obviously had plans! We regularly get 60 plus sitting down to eat together at tea-time, ranging from the under ones to the over 80's! We all share together to learn from each other and enjoy the fellowship. We have more than 60 names on our register but not everyone is able to come each time. This year our theme has been 'Let's Celebrate' - Harvest, Advent, Epiphany and Lent so far. Our next Messy Church in May will pick up on the Christian Aid theme of Refugees. We repeated our Messy Nativity, using the theme of Light and following a similar pattern to last year with something for all the family. An early start on Good Friday heralded our Messy Church session. Holding the Service of Meditation slightly later gave a less rushed programme and also enabled us to have more time for fellowship afterwards over our coffee and hot cross buns. Messy Church works on so many levels, providing an outlet for the many talents that God has given us, not just to make things but to share so many different things both physical and spiritual. I am very grateful to all those who share in the planning and organisation for their enthusiasm and support. A particular thank you this year to Malcolm and Christine, as they leave us, it has been great to have you working alongside us on the team. Please remember us in your prayers that we may continue to grow and develop to meet the needs of those who join our fellowship.

Delma Whitman

ACTS

Yet again this year we have not had a production. We did put out some feelers for one in February but many people had other commitments so we couldn't muster a cast. However, Malcolm has continued to use drama in Worship and many people who have been associated with ACTS take part. We have to thank Eva for sorting our costumes and props so that when they are needed to enhance short dramas in Church, or clothe the drama put together for Messy Nativity, they are to hand.

Delma Whitman

Church Outreach

The Outreach Group continues to work hard to make connections with our local community and work to support Christian outreach nationally and across the globe. Here is a short resume of our activities throughout the past year.

World Church

We still need to find a volunteer to be our World Church Co-ordinator. The main thrust of the work is to encourage and enable our congregation to be aware of the wider church across the world – to be an ambassador for the work of the Methodist Church throughout the world, and identifying places where we can learn more about our brothers and sisters in Christ. If you feel able to take on this important role in the church please speak to me or Malcolm for further details.

Church Project

For many years the church has supported fundraising for charities locally, nationally and internationally. As well as raising money we have always tried to provide information about each charity. Our current policy is to donate 10% of the money raised through the Church's 'outreach events', namely: Welcome Wednesdays, Farmers Markets, Table Top & Plant Sales, Craft Fair and Craft & Book Stalls, and the catering associated with these events. The aim is to raise £1000 for a specific project, with additional funding raising events being organised, should the target not be reached within a year from the 10% levy. Such has been the level of activity that we have not needed additional funding raising events to reach the target and we have actually raised enough from the levy to support more than two projects in the same year. We recently completed donations to the Ronald McDonald House Charity and Preston Panthers. Our current charity is the Erayim Charity Aid Trust (Kyrgyzstan).

Eco Church

Due to other commitments Ali Birkett has relinquished her work as our Eco-Church Champion. She wrote an article for the Christmas magazine outlining the work she had been doing and asking for someone to take up the role. I am still waiting to hear from any willing volunteer(s)!!

Methodist Communications

Lesley Birkett continues to send out all the information on events which take place, locally, within the Lancashire District and further afield. She does this by email so if you do not receive her regular notes then please contact her to be added to her address list, lesley.birkett@yahoo.co.uk.

Local Community

Libby Stone co-ordinates our local community events. Tuesday morning coffee and Welcome Wednesday are both key to our local outreach. Each day fills a different need with Tuesday being a quieter day it suits some of our more vulnerable adults who find the busyness of Wednesday too much. Welcome Wednesday embraces a wide range of needs including the informal service of prayers and communion, the friendship over coffee and food which are all greatly appreciated. Numbers staying for lunch have grown and we now regularly provide over 50 lunches. This is not done without a lot of effort and dedication from a small group of people, particularly the kitchen staff. If you know of anyone who would be willing to join the team on a rota basis please ask them to contact me for further info. All offers gratefully received! We try to provide these facilities throughout the holiday periods and also offer coffee on Friday mornings during the school holidays to support those parents who would normally attend the Toddler Club in school time.

Christian Aid

Three families have taken up the challenge to 'Live on a £1 per day' for a five days during Christian Aid Week. Please support them in their endeavours and donate to Christian Aid to support its work with the least able people and communities across the world. We are hosting a Christian Aid Lunch followed by a presentation on Monday 15th May. We also recently sent a letter to our local MP following the Government's response to the agenda for Climate Change.

Fairtrade

The planned Fairtrade Breakfast in Lent did not take place due to lack of support, but the Fairtrade stall continues to be well supported on the second Sunday morning of each month. The Farmers' Markets have continued regularly and for the rest of this year will be on 27th May, 22nd July, 23rd September and 25th November from 9.30 a.m. until 1.00 p.m. Do remember to support these events as we continue to encourage everyone to think of where our produce and foodstuffs are sourced. We thank Anne Garsed for all her hard work promoting the work of both Christian Aid and Fairtrade throughout our church and community.

Theatre Group

As will be seen from their report, the Theatre Group continues to thrive with visits made to many exciting productions across the north of England as well as an overnight stay in Stratford on Avon. The Outreach Group and Church Council see this activity as an important part of our Church outreach. An open meeting was held in the New Year to discuss a more transparent way of booking, charging and administering the ever popular visits. The meeting was attended by around 30 people and a reference group has been set up to support Ken and Sharon in their work.

Christmas and other Activities

We again had a good response to our appeal for singers to join us singing carols around the residential homes on two evenings. Our visits are always well received and it was much easier with many more voices to swell the throng. We are looking for someone to liaise with the homes before our visits this year. Sue Penrith has done this for many years and we thank her for all her hard work. This is not an onerous task and only requires the use of a telephone to arrange the visits once a year. If you think you could take this on please contact Sue or myself.

The Festive Lunch was again a great success. We provided a hot lunch with all the trimmings for over 80 people from our Church and community. We were pleased to welcome our Community Choir who entertained us both before and after the meal with a variety of songs and carols. This is an opportunity for anyone who finds themselves alone over the Christmas period to share a meal and entertainment with others from both inside and outside the church. Thank you to all the helpers who gave up their time during the Christmas holiday. As New Year's Day was on a Sunday this year we decided to change to the time of worship to 12.00 noon and combine it with the opportunity to share lunch and family worship together. Around 50/60 people enjoyed the informal fellowship and worship.

Churches Together in Fulwood and Broughton (CTFB)

CTFB continues to provide volunteers to staff the help desk at the Royal Preston Hospital, although additional volunteers are now urgently needed. A programme of ecumenical meetings was arranged for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity in January which focused on the 'Five Marks of Mission'. We were pleased to organise the last well-supported meeting on the environment, which took the form of a café service in the Willow Grove. Adverts were taken out in the Fulwood Focus magazine to publicise the local

churches' Christmas and Easter Service. A pilgrimage was again held in the autumn, on this occasion to Cartmel in Cumbria.

We are a very active church at Fulwood, trying to connect particularly with our local community. Thank you to all our committed volunteers for all our outreach events. However, none of the events above would happen without a lot of dedication from a small number of people. If you think you could offer to help out serving coffee or chatting with people even once in a while please speak to Libby or myself and we will make sure you are added to the rotas. Likewise, if you have any new ideas of ways we can reach out to our local community please let us know.

Margaret Squire, Outreach Group Co-ordinator

Action for Children (AFC)

It has been a good year for AFC. We sent a cheque for £405.50 in July which covered the collection on Action for Children Sunday and a donation from the Church. Previously at Christmas, we had sent £650 from our Christmas services collections. The League of Light lantern boxes which are emptied in March and April raised the very acceptable sum of £1228.64. This was comprised of the boxes from the former Deepdale folk, looked after by Margaret Holmes, which amounted to £436.79, and the remainder emptied by Pauline Kirkham, which amounted to £791.85. If anyone would like to have a lantern box, please contact Pauline who will be happy to supply one. We no longer hold a House to House collection or a store collection.

Barbara Hothersall

Property Group

The Property Group has met four times during the past year. Recent work by the Group and its members include:

Building

- **Contract:** The contract for the supply of GAS is currently being negotiated by Sharon. It is likely to lead to significant financial savings.
- **BT:** The BT contract has now been re-negotiated, removing several services that were never or no longer required.
- **Projector:** A new higher resolution projector has been installed in the Church.
- **Audio/Visual:** A new DVD player has been purchased and connected to the stand-mounted television in the Copper Beech Room. Small flat-screen televisions have been placed on the west side of the pulpit and in front of the electronic piano in church to display the same information as screened by the projector during church services.
- **Quinquennial inspection:** The quinquennial (building) inspection was carried out in December 2016. The report was received in March which listed a number of minor items which may need attention over the next 5 years. The Property Group reviewed this list at their May meeting.
- The **Electrical System Quinquennial inspection** was conducted in the summer and defects rectified. We await the final report.
- **Lightning protection:** The lightning conductor was visually inspected by ourselves and then tested in October by an approved contractor (as required by Methodist Insurance). The test result was not satisfactory so an additional earth mat was installed. This improved the result but not sufficiently to meet the standard. A third mat was installed in April – we await the test result.

- **Outside repointing:** The pointing around various windows has been repaired to make weatherproof.
- **Wall damage:** The low wall outside the Copper Beach Room, which was demolished by a vehicle, has been repaired.
- **Floors:** The Oak Hall and Willow Grove floors have been given their annual re-sealing.
- **Kitchen:** Splashback tiling has been installed behind the sink and other working areas.
- **Insurance:** The excess on the insurance has been increased from £50 to £500 resulting in a reduction of the annual premium of nearly £850.

Health, Safety and Security

- **Portable (Electrical) Appliance Testing (PAT):** All portable electrical equipment was tested in October 2016 by the in-house team.
- **The Fire Alarm and Emergency Lighting systems have been tested.**

Ongoing and near-future work

- **West Chancel Window wall:** The wall now needs redecoration.
- **Oak Hall window:** The wall (around the door to the Copper Beech room) needs redecoration
- **Car Parks:** The front and rear car parks will be resurfaced over the summer.
- **Cedar Room Projector:** A computer projector will be purchased and mounted to the ceiling of the Cedar Room projecting onto the screen in front of the cupboards. Controls will be wired back to the electronics in the left hand cupboard.
- **High off-ground property inspections:** Following his very conscientious work in undertaking repairs and maintenance in several high-level locations, it is intended to ask Mark Dawson to conduct a high off-ground inspection of the whole premises on a five-year basis.

The Property Group wish to again put on record our grateful thanks to all volunteers for their splendid work during the year in maintaining and cleaning our premises and looking after our garden.

Mike Ellis

Finance Group

Finance Report for year ended 31st August 2016

Total Balances

Our church funds and the movements since last year are summarised below:

	General Funds	Internal Funds	Totals 2015/16	Totals 2014/15
Funds brought forward at 1/9/2015	84,209	24,760	108,970	83,218
Net receipts	9,339	604	9,914	25,751
Transfers and adjustments	(6,623)	6,623	0	0
Funds carried forward at 31/8/2016	86,925	31,988	118,884	108,970

Our funds are invested as follows:

	2015/16	2014/15
Cash in hand	21	540
Royal Bank of Scotland	38,573	68,203
Central Finance Board	80,014	39,951
Trustees for Methodist Church Purposes	276	276
Total cash held at year end	118,884	108,970

We have transferred funds from RBS to the CFB to take advantage of the better interest rates available.

General Funds

We ended the financial year to 31st August 2016 with general funds in the bank totalling £86,925. This is an increase in funds of £2,716 since 31st August 2015. The movements are set out below:

	2015/16	2014/15
General funds brought forward	84,209	69,146
Receipts		
Offerings and Tax recovered	100,027	108,020
Bank and CFB interest and Investment income	330	288
Lettings	10,410	10,993
Other receipts	43,085	31,795
Sub-total	153,851	151,096
Payments		
Circuit Assessment or Share	(81,996)	(80,170)
Donations	(6,070)	(6,481)
Repairs and Maintenance	(4,380)	(6,504)
Utilities (Insurances, water charges, heating & lighting)	(17,541)	(18,854)
Staff costs (cleaning, admin and youth work)	(12,883)	(6,411)
Resources for Worship	(3,527)	(5,048)
Sunday Club	(499)	(569)
Catering and Outreach	(7,203)	(6,505)
Minibus	(2,026)	(1,274)
Hygiene and vermin services	(2,088)	(2,812)
Administration costs	(3,920)	(2,360)
Miscellaneous	(2,380)	(717)
Sub-total	144,512	(137,703)
Transfers and adjustments	(6,623)	1,670
Total funds at end of year	86,925	84,209

Key messages on the General Fund position:

- Income from offerings continues to fall. We need to encourage church members to review the level of offering they are able to make on a regular basis.
- The financial contribution from outreach activities continues strong. The net contribution in the year to 31st August 2016 after expenses was £20,115 (2015: £21,279). As agreed by the Church Council, we have transferred 10% of this balance to the church projects fund.
- Other receipts include a donation of £10,000 in the year. This has been transferred to a new Special Projects Fund. The Church Council will decide how this fund is used.

- The increase in staff costs is due to the employment of a new Church Administrator and a new sessional Youth Worker. Transfers of funds have been made by the Theatre Group to offset the majority of the Administrator's salary costs.
- The significant increase in miscellaneous payments is due to one-off Land Registry fees.

Internal Funds

	Balance b/fwd	Income	Donations	Other Payments	Transfers between General Fund	Transfers between Internal Funds	Balance c/fwd
Benevolence Fund	1,041	1,718	-3,015	0	0	1,000	744
Theatre Group	7,393	30,894	0	-33,298	-3,258	0	1,731
Kitchen Fund	0	137	0	0	0	0	137
OMG	-361	100	0	-57	350	0	32
Ladies after 8	48	950	-250	-350	-300	0	99
WOW	122	0	0	-51	0	0	71
Women's Fellowship	60	655	0	-385	-200	0	130
Escape & Youth Club	1,423	1,700	0	0	0	0	3,123
Flower Fund	-11	150	0	-172	11	-50	-72
Toddler Club	1,124	1,602	0	0	0	50	2,776
AM Club	50	150	0	0	0	0	200
Alphabites	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Messy Church	161	37	0	0	0	0	198
Knitting Club	0	943	0	-1	0	0	942
Building Improvement	8,099	320	0	-213	0	0	8,207
Church Projects	2,115	40	-1,000	0	1,020	0	2,174
District Funds	3,496	0	0	0	-1000	-2,496	0
Minibus Fund	0	0	0	0	0	1,496	1,496
Special Projects	0	0	0	0	10,000	0	10,000
Total	24,760	39,396	-4,265	-34,526	6623	0	31,988

Key messages:

- In reviewing the balance on the Theatre Group, please note that this includes expenditure on tickets which have not yet been sold.
- The transfer from the Theatre Group to the General fund covers 75% of the cost of employing the new Church Administrator.
- Balances on the Escape/Youth Club and Toddler Club funds have risen significantly. We encourage these groups to consider how to spend these funds as these activities are not intended for building reserves.
- The increase in the Church Projects fund includes the 10% outreach levy of £2,020. A donation of £1000 has been made from the fund to the Circuit in respect of Sierra Leone. A transfer was also made to General Fund of £1000 in respect of a donation to McMillan in 2014/15 which was paid from General Funds in error. At year end we were in a position to make donations to two further projects agreed by the Outreach Group.

- We have had confirmation from the District that the District Fund per Chris Penrith's records is not owed to them. We have therefore released this fund – with the Finance Group recommending to the Church Council that we transfer this fund as follows: £1000 to the Benevolence Fund, £1000 to the General Fund and the balance of £1,496 to a new Minibus Fund.
- As approved by church council, the £10,000 donation received in April has been transferred to a Special Projects fund. The Church Council will be responsible for approving the expenditure of this fund.

External Funds

Funds held for external organisations	At 31/08/2016	At 31/08/2015
Balance b/fwd	2,423	8,975
Monies received for external organisations	4,734	6,738
Monies passed to external organisations	6,877	13,290
Balances still to be paid	280	2,423

We have been reducing this balance year on year. We have now cleared all of the old balances, and transfer new monies swiftly. The only balance at 31st August 2016 relates to funds raised for Ronald McDonald over the summer. This amount has been paid in the current financial year.

**Amanda Latham
Chair, Finance Group**