

Marlborough Churches Together



Annual Report 2017



Chair's report

The life of the Church in Marlborough continues to thrive as the churches enjoy a good working relationship.

We have, once again, shared some key moments together over the year including a very successful open meeting last year which included food and some very positive sharing about the work that is done in the name of the church.

The reports tell us about much of this and it is good when we can see just how much work in so many ways we do together when all the reports are gathered together.

We studied together in small Lent Groups last year, a change from the weekly talks of the previous year.

As usual we gathered for the silent Walk of Witness and worship on Good Friday.

The All Souls service was well attended and moving as always as was the United Service for Advent Sunday.

We are saddened to lose Rev Miri Keen but pray God's blessing on her new appointment.

The clergy continue to meet most months to pray together and plan together.

In everything we do we seek to work together to honour God and build his Kingdom in this place, and so we look forward to the year that lies ahead of us.

Heather Cooper

Treasurer's report

MARLBOROUGH CHURCHES TOGETHER

INCOME & EXPENDITURE: CALENDAR YEAR 2017

TO 02 OCTOBER 2017

INCOME

			NOTE
ST GEORGE'S	24/03/2017	£500.00	PASSION PLAY
	21/04/2017	£100.00	SOURCE NOT KNOWN

TOTAL = £600.00

EXPENDITURE

PASSION PLAY	13/02/2017	£1,000.00	PASSION PLAY DONATION
ST MARY'S PCC	25/07/2017	£250.00	HOLIDAY CLUB DONATION

TOTAL = £1,250.00

OPERATING SURPLUS/DEFICIT = -£650.00
FOR THE YEAR

OPENING CASH AS AT 01/01/2017 = £3,414.97

CLOSING CASH AS AT 02/10/2017 = £2,764.97

CLOSING CASH AS AT 31/12/2017 = £2,764.97

Mustard Seed

Mustard Seed is now in its 28th year and is still continuing its mission as a Christian bookshop and coffee shop reaching out into the community and into the different churches by

- The warmth of welcome from the staff
- Building relationships with our customers
- Offering moments of 'peace' in our riverside location
- Stocking a wide variety of Christian books
- Providing cards and gifts for special religious occasions
- Helping customers' book awareness with reviews of books on the tables and in individual books
- Resourcing churches with e.g. lectionaries, candles, wafers
- Supplying Home Group courses
- Having an area for groups to meet – e.g. Spanish Conversation, an after Yoga coffee group, church meetings/social over coffee or lunch
- Author Events and a regular Book Group

Every customer whether local or passing through is of importance and valuable particularly in the current uncertain trading conditions. We are grateful for all those who pray for the work of Mustard Seed

Rachel Maurice and Deborah Reynolds



Marlborough Area Poverty Action Group

MAPAG continues to monitor and make efforts to relieve poverty in the Marlborough area.

We meet monthly to share information on projects serving our community. Amongst the speakers in the last year were a previously homeless person who spoke of his journey into homelessness and out again and Sarah Johnson, the Outreach Assertiveness Officer for Wiltshire talked about her work with homeless people acting as a support and spokesperson. This service is slowly decreasing the numbers of homeless on our streets. In November Lorna Wilcox, energy advisor for Warm and Safe Wiltshire gave us an overview of her work and explained how the organisation helps people in fuel poverty and with problems heating their homes.

We monitored the progress of the plans for the redevelopment of the Clarke and Rodway site and the efforts of the Town Council to object to the way Macarthy and Stone were able to wriggle out of the commitment to pay £330,000 for affordable housing. We have to look at the reasons why and hope that efforts to create a Neighbourhood Plan that reflects the wishes of Marlborough citizens can be used to defend future development plans and ensure they include affordable housing.

In January we gave a presentation of MAPAG to the Area Board and fed into the consultation on the Joint Strategic Assessment process and in November attended the Area Board Meeting on "Rough sleeping and homelessness".

We had been keeping an eye on the state of the Youth Centre and were delighted to attend its reopening in December.

The summer was busy thanks to grants from Tower and Town, St. Mary's Garden Trust and the Area Board. In July, we organised a coach trip to Bournemouth for families who might not otherwise be able to experience such an outing. We enabled children from less well-off families to participate in Camp Activate sessions at the Leisure Centre and piloted a project to enable teenagers to participate in sports activities run by Innov8 Sportz CIC. Activate Sessions were continued in October half term.

Since the AGM in August there has been a lot of Foodbank Activity, as can be seen from the report by Ann Yates following this report.

Juliette Plank ran a course on money management and budgeting under the auspices of Christians Against Poverty and plans to run more in 2018.

We would like to extend Activate places into the wider community area and would welcome more Trustees to enable this.

Rachel Rosedale

Marlborough Foodbank distribution centre

After discussion between MAPAG and Liz Starling, the Project Manager of Devizes Foodbank, we re-opened on November 17th, 10am -12md, 2017.

There was an excellent response to requests for volunteers both to attend the Friday morning sessions and for volunteer drivers to collect Food boxes from Devizes or to deliver to clients if needed. The volunteers were made up of representatives from all the churches and people from the wider community.

I would like to express special thanks to Heather Cooper, Andrew Trowbridge and Maurice Smith who have been so helpful in re- setting up at Christchurch. We have been able to store a total of 9 boxes in the stair well and the "coffee bar" is a relaxed venue for clients.

Since we opened the following have attended Christchurch on a Friday.

A couple x1, a single person x2, a Parent Support Adviser from Pewsey collecting for a family and Lisa Farrell for a person in need.

Other boxes have been delivered in response to requests from professionals, 4 in total.

Obviously this has been a disappointing uptake so far. There will be more discussions with Liz Starling to see how awareness of the re- opening of the Christchurch Foodbank sessions can be increased. In the meantime thank you to all those volunteers who are giving of their time even though there has been a disappointing start.

Ann Yates

Devotion

Devotion's work has continued throughout most of 2017 in the form of the weekly 'Hangout' sessions at the Wesley Hall on Thursday evenings. Between twenty and thirty young people, aged from 11-18, attend each week for the hour and a half sessions which remain largely unstructured and are valued as such.

Blayze White, the Youth and Children's Worker from St Mary's, was responsible for overseeing the rota, being the contact point and being there in person for the first six months of the year. Thereafter Michael Eaton stepped in to help on a part-time basis during the autumn.

It is necessary to have three volunteers at each of the sessions. Recruiting such help has been challenging and we have been very dependent upon the willingness and availability of Susie Price and Janneke Blokland together with Keith Fryer to ensure that sessions can go ahead. Caroline Philps, Rupert Travis and Andrew Studdert-Kennedy have also helped out.

The Devotion Management Group consists of Heather Cooper, Susie Price, Keith Fryer, Janneke Blokland and Andrew Studdert-Kennedy.

Andrew Studdert-Kennedy

Marlborough Community Passion Play

Marlborough Community Passion Play (MCCP) had at its heart the desire to celebrate and affirm the good news of the risen Christ in an accessible and thought-provoking presentation in the context of celebrating and uniting our own local community in as many ways as possible. The starting point was always one of inclusion along with meticulous consideration of Health and Safety issues.

We are indebted to an enormous number of individuals who freely gave their time and expertise to make this project such a significant success. We are equally grateful to the bodies that supported MCPP financially and especially to Christchurch Marlborough for acting as our sponsoring agent. All costs were met and donations were made as below.

More than 170 individuals were involved in some capacity ranging in age from 7- 90 years.

Estimates suggest that more than 1000 spectators watched the play with a great many of those joining in the High Street procession that officially began proceedings. Coverage in the local press was extensive and unceasingly positive. Individual feedback was heartfelt and deeply moving.

More than 60 actors took to the stage including the manager of a local shop; a Marlborough College Housemaster; members of the Roman British Re-enactment Society; a local headmaster; pre-school teachers; members of the clergy; retired folk; school children.... A professional actor played the part of Jesus and was remunerated through a private donation.

As the project drew to a close, it was heralded 'a monumental success.' We give God the glory.

Helen Stokes

Donors:

Marlborough Churches Together - £1000

Passion Trust - £4000

St Mary's PCC - £2500

Wilts Churches Together - £1000

St Aldhelm's Trust - £4000

St Thomas More - £300

Donations to:

Wilts Air Ambulance Airbase Appeal - £662.18

Kennet Community Transport - £50

Kennet Valley Driving Group - £100

The Filling Station Marlborough

Marlborough Filling Station is part of the national and international work of The Filling Station which has close to 100 monthly meetings. Using mid-week evening 'celebration' gatherings held in non-church venues, the Filling Station offers high quality speakers and teachers, contemporary sung worship and powerful, accessible prayer ministry.

Our meetings are designed to be overtly spiritual but presented in a manner that those outside the church would also feel comfortable. Meetings are held monthly and aim to build up the lives of the individual and the Christian community as a whole. We celebrate the work and gifts of the Spirit

During the last twelve months our speakers have included church leaders past and present from our own locality and beyond. We have celebrated the story of God at work in our lives over and over again. Participants come from Marlborough and the surrounding area; most are in the 40+ age bracket. Numbers range between 25 and 45.

We have been hugely grateful to St Peter's School for allowing us to use their premises at no cost for the last eight years, since we began. Between September and December we were delighted to hire The Wesley Hall Marlborough. From January we have been meeting in the newly refurbished Marlborough Community and Youth Centre, St Margaret's Mead. We are enormously excited at the chance to be celebrating the Kingdom of God in the heart of the residential community and we look forward to growing the vision in this location, as an expression of the church in Marlborough loving the world. A generous donor has come forward to finance hire costs.

Our ongoing aim is to listen and respond to the leadership of the Holy Spirit

Vincent and Helen Stokes

Lent Groups 2017

During this Lent it was decided to have ecumenical groups rather than visiting speakers. Eight groups met – six were new groups and 2 were existing home groups open to new members – with about 70 people taking part. They met weekly for 5 sessions and used the York Course material on 'Receiving Christ'. The material helped us to reflect on the different ways that we can receive Christ into our lives. The themes of the different weeks were:

Receiving Christ...

1. As children of God
2. In the stranger and needy
3. In Holy Communion
4. Through prayer and fellowship
5. Christ in you the hope of glory.

There was input on a CD from Bishop Nick Baines, Margaret Sentamu, Revd Dr Ken Howcroft (former President of the Methodist Conference), and a nun Theodora Hawksley. Feedback was a bit mixed with some sessions being found to be better than others. There was more material in each session than could be used so those leading needed to be selective.

David Maurice

Communications Group (Comms)

This group with a representative from the Anglicans, Methodists and Quakers has continued to meet every month to put together '**News from the Churches**' for each edition of 'Tower and Town'. This aims to report the church-related activities for the coming month and to keep people aware of what other faith groups are up to. We would welcome a representative from the Catholic church.

Barney Rosedale

St Non's Retreat

A very successful retreat in September 2017, our 17th on this rugged and beautiful Pembrokeshire coast, was led by Anglican Licensed Lay Minister Sarah Musgrave. It is a small retreat as the Retreat Centre has 11 rooms, but we were fully booked with folk representing a wide range of experience and views who enjoyed the chance for peace and reflection, the walks in a wildly lovely environment, sung Evensong in St David's Cathedral, the well led discussions and a sense of sharing.

Our 18th retreat will be September 11th to 14th led by Edwina Fogg with thoughts about St Hildegard of Bingen, mystic and musician, polymath and philosopher, who died in 1179.

Barney Rosedale

Tower and Town

Circulation

Circulation is holding steady at around 645 copies per month.

Publication

The printed edition remains valued both for the quality of its printing and because people enjoy having a physical object in their hand. We changed printers a year ago and now use Origin Zone, in Swindon, with whom we are very pleased. They have enabled us to go to full colour for all the paid advertising pages, as well as giving us the flexibility to vary the number of extra pages, including extra colour pages, from month to month. Their turnaround time is also faster than the previous contractor's, giving us more elbow room for our preparation. Alongside the printed edition, the online edition receives a slowly-growing amount of attention. This has brought to us a number of first-rate memoirs from people who have moved away from Marlborough but remember it with fondness, and whose reading of the online magazine has inspired them to write for us. The online edition is also giving us a steadily accumulating searchable archive of articles that will, over time, offer a readily accessible mine of information for curious researchers.

Finances

Peter Astle, the Treasurer, reports that finances are in a healthy state, with more than a year's costs as a buffer. Andrew Unwin has worked hard and successfully to keep current advertisers on board and to recruit new blood.

Staff

Staffing has remained stable since the last report, bar the retirement of Norma Dobie whose cheerful and generous contribution over decades has been a mainstay of the magazine's administration for which we are enormously grateful

The St Peters coffee morning in the first quarter of the year, organised by Sue Tulloh, has proved very popular with our large band of distributors as they register the subscriptions they so faithfully collect.

Gabriella Venus most generously contributes her skills with a monthly Arts Review, drawing attention particularly to the exhibitions now regularly mounted by The White Horse Bookshop, as well as to the annual Marlborough LitFest.

We owe a considerable debt to Ann Owen who now makes up the monthly bundles for delivery on her own since Linda Wells was so sadly confined to hospital.

General

As always, we continuously review content and presentation with a view to making the magazine as attractive as possible. Regular columns for Arts Reviews and Book Reviews are an example of recently adopted policy. Editions masterminded by the various schools in our community widen the pool of interest and offer to our youngsters the opportunity of becoming published authors. The team of well over 60 people, including distributors, bundlers, editors and compilers, constitutes a significant example of community involvement and commitment, deserving great praise for their faithfulness and enthusiasm.

Hugh de Saram

