



Annual Report 2019

The Trustees present their Annual Report and financial statements for September 2018 -August 2019.

Main Events 2018-19

This has been the second year in the ministry of Revd Kevin Price and has been a time of continued consolidation with most of our Sunday worship led by Kevin or our own local worship leaders. We have remained integrated into the Methodist Circuit Plan with Kevin also leading worship elsewhere once a month. Whilst providing a solid base for weekly worship & preaching, new patterns are now firmly established with regular All Age services and a popular café style service on one Sunday afternoon each month, so an openness to diversity in worship has continued to be a hallmark of Wellspring. *Wellies*, the Sunday morning children's group, is well rooted with the few young people who attend confidently sharing what they have been doing and leading the congregation in prayer, and, to our delight, one coming forward for Believers' Baptism.

During the last year Wellspring has embraced the concept of *EcoChurch* through which our practice has been challenged in 5 key areas: Worship & Teaching; Buildings management; Land management; Community and global engagement; and Lifestyle. Good progress has been made and we have been grateful for the co-ordination of this project by one of our members. We now plan to use the annual '*Creation Season*' as a time to explore 'eco' themes from a Biblical perspective and in a variety of Sunday worship contexts.

Undoubtedly the highlight of the year was our *Commitment Service* in July at which an Act of Confirmation and an Act of Believers' Baptism by immersion were carried out, the first occasions of each since the church was established. It seemed to encapsulate the melding of two different Church traditions that has defined Wellspring since our formation. We were grateful to Chesterfield Church in the Peak who lent us a portable baptistery and to our Methodist Circuit Superintendent for guidance around Confirmation for our Baptist Minister who was officiating this rite for the first time. The fact that the candidates were Granddaughter and Grandfather made it all the more special. Both were then received into membership together with one other by transfer from a Baptist Church.

During this year opportunities for prayer and study together have continued. *Prayer Zone* meets weekly exploring various forms of prayer including a monthly 'prayer walk' around different parts of the town, which has proved enlightening. Seasonal times of reflection at Advent and Holy Week have taken place as important moments of reflection; and small *Home Groups* have met periodically. All have been well supported and beneficial to the spiritual well-being of the church. A new venture *Listening to God* has begun as an opportunity to review Sunday ministry and consider the question 'what might God be saying to us?' during an occasional and relatively unstructured evening service time; and we have continued to enjoy themed worship evenings engaging with *Taize* and *Iona* Traditions.

Midweek activities continue to grow in significance and numbers; *Coffee Stop* remains popular and has attracted some new regulars. *Memory Café*, which celebrated its fourth birthday in August, and *Easy Meals* are now well established as Wellspring community events.

Crossways drama and music group has rehearsed throughout the year and performed an original piece '*The Circus*' as well as carol singing at care homes, the library and *Intu* shopping centre, Derby. The group also led a reflective evening service before Christmas and worship at *Sudbury Prison*.

Successful social and outreach events have included a *Welsh Evening*, a *Circus Skills and Juggling Workshop* aimed at families and a *Light Party* in late October.

Our combined mid-week *Girls' Brigade/Boys' Brigade* has also enjoyed a good year attracting greater numbers of children and well supported by church members. *Brigades* are now regularly part of our All Age morning services and helped the church promote *Fairtrade Fortnight* by running a chocolate themed event one Saturday morning.

Jam Club, a one-day-a-week drop-in with drinks and snacks runs in school term time. Fortnightly *Guild* meetings attract a good following with a variety of speakers and activities.

Our church and minister are fully committed to *Churches Together in Wirksworth and District* taking an active part in seasonal and civic events. Through this we are represented in all of the local schools where Kevin leads regular assemblies. He together with some members contributed to a creative Lent series '*Journey to the Cross*' and the summer '*Wise Guys*' *Holiday Club*.

The church has continued to take a full and active part in the town's *Well Dressing, Carnival and Arts Festival*. This year our Well Dressing had an 'eco' theme and was much appreciated by visitors and local people. Once again the Brigades took part in the Carnival procession but this year as an eco-friendly 'walking float' with a circus theme, winning third prize. During the *Art and Architecture Trail* weekend, the church provided a venue for exhibitors as well as a much appreciated 'quiet space' also with an 'eco' themed '*Plastic Labyrinth*' made of discarded bottle tops.

An encouraging feature of the past year has been our increasing engagement with the community. We have held an *Indoor Christmas Market*; and taken a regular pitch at the weekly market as a book-stall; hosted part of the *Wirksworth Model Railway Exhibition*; and offered refreshments at the *Wizarding Weekend*. We welcomed a group of school children from Wirksworth Junior School studying the role and impact of local churches in our community. As of September the *Beanies* group for parents and toddlers is being integrated back into church life, now run by a group of Wellspring volunteers. The twice weekly *Charities Plant Stall* run by one of our members remains very popular in the community and therefore able to make significant donations to many local charitable causes including Wellspring.

Once again we were able to support the *Link to Hope* Christmas appeal with a good number of shoeboxes packed with gifts.

As some of our original Vision has been achieved in setting up the LEP and calling a minister, the Trustees produced a revised *Vision Statement and Strapline* which was adopted by the church at our last ACM and our logo now incorporates the phrase '*making God visible*'.

With regard to accessibility, a rota of private car drivers for Sunday morning together with the passenger lift on the premises continues to assist less active people to participate in morning worship.

All people working with children and vulnerable adults have received appropriate training, through the Methodist Safeguarding Scheme, with regard to the government's Disclosure and Barring Service. The church has read the Charity Commission guidance on public benefit, and is satisfied that the activities outlined above clearly demonstrate that the charity is providing a benefit to the public.

During this last year our Wellspring Facebook page has successfully re-launched and our website redesigned. More information on the life and history of the church is available here: www.wellspringchurchwirksworth.co.uk.

Looking to the Future - Achievements and Performance

The Church does not measure success only in numbers, in terms of people or finance, but also in less tangible areas like fellowship and encouragement. 2018-19 has been a positive year in terms of growing relationships, commitment and caring, for members and others in the community with our minister integral to this. Wellspring is clearly known and accepted in the town.

The Trustees are grateful for the trust and support offered by the congregation and continue to work hard to encourage the church in seeking to fulfil our focus of ministry in terms of Worship, Pastoral Care, Reaching Out and Property.

As our church activities thrive and there is an increasing need for community space within the town, we are very pleased that during this year significant progress has been made towards achieving our vision to enhance our premises with a new annexe. Since Planning Permission was granted last year we have been delighted with the level of commitment and support shown through personal donations large and small; grants from several charitable bodies; and particularly the support of the Methodist Circuit, District and Connexion together with the East Midlands Baptist Association in making substantial grants and releasing funds for this project. We are especially grateful to the fundraising team who have worked extremely hard to secure this funding. Meetings with our architects are currently being held to fine tune the design and finish of the building with construction start now anticipated in September 2020.

Congregational numbers have remained stable with a few new attenders. Three new members have been welcomed (one by transfer) and one has transferred away. At 31 August 2019, the membership stood at 55. Trustees believe that outreach should be a primary focus of our ministry in the coming years.

Financial Review

We have been operating financially as Wellspring for five years now and supporting a full-time minister, Kevin, for just over two years.

We have already received over £50,000 in personal donations to the Annexe Fund. Thanks to the twice-weekly efforts of Peter, assisted by Bill and more recently Tracey, the latest Charity Plant Stalls contribution to this is £2,192.

All this sacrificial giving has, been a persuasive factor in securing grants worth nearly £345,000 so far from outside bodies. This means we have reached almost £600,000 in overall donations, grants and firm promises. However, it may have had a negative effect on our general finances.

Whilst our General Fund expenditure has reduced in the year ending 31/08/2019, our income has unfortunately also gone down -- and to a greater extent:

- Offertory giving has fallen by around £2,000 (6.6%) with a corresponding drop in Gift Aid.
- Income from rents, which was around £10,000 three years ago, has fallen to zero with the Nether Gardens property now being used as a manse and the Bonsall cottage having been sold. The approx. £1,200 interest we receive by investing the proceeds of sale of the cottage is a fraction of the £4,400 p.a. we used to get when we had a tenant.
- Income from social events and donations has fallen, probably because money is being given to the Annexe Fund instead.
- Lettings income is up by 42%, thanks to Lesley's encouragement of U3A groups.

In terms of expenditure, there has been a small overall rise due to inflation. But otherwise:

- Chapel utilities bills have decreased (though repair costs are higher due to replacing the water heater);
- We seem to have reached the end of the big bills for improving the manse.

- There are no more solicitor's bills (except those charged to the annexe account).
- We are making savings by no longer using the minibus.
- What a shame that it cost us £880 to cut down four trees in the cemetery.

So, the year just ended has seen a shortfall of almost £7,000 on our General Account, resulting in a balance of just under £7,663 when we had intended to keep our reserve around £15,000.

Our grateful thanks are due to Rob in his role as Treasurer; Barbara for counting the money every week; to Geoffrey Batstone (who has now moved away) for managing the Gift Aid scheme; and to Mike Sharpe for examining the accounts.

Status

The Charity is a Methodist/Baptist Local Ecumenical Partnership, governed by a Constitution approved by Churches Together for Derbyshire, as Sponsoring Body, and by the Baptist Union of Great Britain and the Methodist Church of Great Britain. It is exempted from registration under Section 30 (2) (b) of the Charities Act 2011.

The church has read the Charity Commission guidance on public benefit, and is satisfied that the activities outlined above clearly demonstrate that the charity is providing a benefit to the public.

Charitable Object

The principal purpose of the charity is the advancement of the Christian faith, including the advancement of education, community service and such other general charitable purposes in such parts of the United Kingdom and the world as the Church shall determine.

The Church occupies premises at 49 St John Street, Wirksworth, which are held by the Trustees for Methodist Church Purposes, on Trusts which are entirely compatible with the above object.

Organisational Structure and Decision-making processes

Members of the Church are accepted in accordance with the Constitution which requires them to be or to have been publicly baptised as believers or confirmed as believers, professing their faith in Jesus Christ.

In accordance with the Constitution, the members appoint six of their number as Trustees, who together with the Minister and up to four co-opted Trustees are responsible for the day to day running of the church's work and witness, and the financial and legal aspects of the charity. The Chair, Secretary and Treasurer are appointed by the Trustees.

Members Meetings take place four times per year to review the life and witness of the church; consider topics relevant to its witness; receive reports covering all aspects of its life; consider matters brought to the meetings by the Trustees; and generally help the church's life, work and vision.

The Trustees have made an assessment of the major risks facing the church, and are satisfied that there are policies in place to minimise these risks.

All people working with children and vulnerable adults have received appropriate training, through the Methodist Safeguarding Scheme, with regard to the government's Disclosure and Barring Service.

Leadership

Minister: Revd Kevin Price

Trustees: Jenny Few, David Hughes, John Proctor, Peter Slack, Sue Watts, Barbara Wilson.

Secretary: Barbara Wilson

Treasurer: Rob Few