



Annual Report 2024

The Trustees present their Annual Report and financial statements for September 2023 - August 2024.

Main Events 2023-24

It is noted that this is the tenth year of Wellspring and the seventh of our minister Revd Kevin Price. In many ways it feels as though the identity and experience of our church has been reshaped following the opening of our extended and refurbished building in 2022, with much growth in church life and community engagement in evidence.

Sunday morning worship continues to be well attended and resourced, with several new people becoming regular in worship. Our team of welcomers and coffee makers help to create a relaxed and welcoming environment. We are also grateful for those who use their musical gifts in worship whenever possible.

Our flexible spaces allow a range of worship service styles to be held in different rooms. Evening Communion services have tended to be held monthly in the main worship space as we now have a regular community booking in our meeting room; whilst our monthly All Age Café worship has become established in our usual Sunday morning space. Though having taken a break from afternoon Café services, it was pleasing to hold a 'one-off' in our Café during August.

Prayer Zone has continued online and incorporates a *Prayer Walk* once a month, taking a different route around the town; also a pattern of sharing in Communion as *Churches Together* each month has continued whereby different worship environments and liturgies are experienced.

In October we began our third year of holding Sunday afternoon services at *Waltham House* each month and these have gained in popularity, with some joining who might not be able to attend other places of worship in the town. Several residents have become regulars at Wellspring on Sunday mornings.

Wellspring has continued to embrace the concept of *EcoChurch* and environmental issues regularly feature in our worship and prayer, and especially in September when *Creation Season* is marked. It is our desire that ecological priorities are applied to all aspects of church life.

We maintain our *Fairtrade Church* status, partly by ensuring that all refreshments offered by the church are *Fairtrade* wherever possible. As Fairtrade Fortnight has now moved to September, we look forward to engaging with this later in the year.

Over the last year the cemetery has been well maintained by Paul Briggs, with an occasional church working party helping out.

Our contact and work with children and families has developed. Our combined *Girls' Brigade / Boys' Brigade* has continued to meet, attracting some new children. The weekly Tuesday evening sessions are well supported by a committed team of Brigade leaders and the faithful support of several families who now consider us to be *their* church. It has been a joy to see some join us for our monthly All Age Café worship and occasional Brigade services. It was decided to hold a *Holiday Club* at the end of school summer holidays in early September, alongside a *Family Fun Day* which was held in mid-August, and was very successful.

In April we were delighted to see our dormant Parent and Toddler Group re-born as *Little Springs*, now meeting on Tuesday mornings in our worship space. Setting up involves a fair bit of furniture and equipment moving, but this has been worthwhile to create a relaxing child-friendly space, into which parents/carers come. It has become quickly established and it is good to see so many young families coming through our doors. Thanks to the *Little Springs* group for the initiative and staffing each week.

When designing and building the Annexe our aim was to create a community building in which worship and prayer happen, so letting *all* our new spaces to the local community is central to this. It seems that our second upstairs room has grown in popularity and become the 'meeting room of choice' in Wirksworth. The list of community groups and public bodies using our premises is continually growing, many performing a vital outreach role to our community that we cannot do alone. In this way our building is doing some of our outreach for us! We just need to manage the comings and goings - so we are grateful to our Bookings Secretary for co-ordinating this, and also to our 'gleam team' who keep the building clean and tidy. Towards the end of this year, we engaged the services of a local cleaning company who assist with cleaning hard floors and our toilets for a minimum of 3 hours per week.

Our welcoming café space has become an established meeting place for *Coffee Stop* on Tuesday mornings and with a committed group of volunteers we are able to offer refreshment for town-wide events such as *Well-dressing*, *The Book Festival* and *Arts Festival*. We have continued to partner with *Grassroots Wirksworth* to run a *Repair Café*, offering basic repairs to household items which might otherwise be thrown away.

The kitchen has been well used by our *Brigades* and *Memory Café*; and has become central to the work *Young Futures* - a local group working alongside students of Anthony Gell School encouraging mental wellbeing. Our community hall is very well used and has hosted children's games; funeral refreshments; *Well-dressing*; festival artists; and a repair shop.

Together with other churches and community spaces in the town we were able to participate in the *Warmer Wirksworth* initiative offering a co-ordinated programme of warm spaces through the winter months. Our mid-week *Lazy Lunch* was continued, this year using our worship space as the rest of the building was in use. Kevin remains part of the steering group for *Warmer Wirksworth* who anticipate a similar programme of free venues and low-cost refreshments in the coming winter.

Crossways singing and drama group continues to meet informally, and to rehearse occasionally for local singing events.

Once again during May we welcomed well-dressers old and new to work on a reduced size design to be placed in our front yard as part of the annual '*Blessing of the Wells*'. This year it featured the *Tree of Life*.

One of our *Life Groups* has continued to meet regularly as a place to share in Bible Study, prayer and encouragement, and during Lent we were able to offer two venues for small group engagement with a course entitled '*The Mystery of Everything*' based on the film about the life of Stephen Hawking – one meeting in our worship space and the other with our Life Group hosts. This year's Methodist Bible Month material focussing on the book of Genesis has also been followed in both a small group and Sunday morning setting.

We regularly support charities such as *Action for Children*, *Amnesty International* and the *Christian Aid* group in Wirksworth. There has always been a representative on the *Christian Aid* committee from the original Baptist/Methodist churches and currently Wellspring, working alongside the other churches. This year the 50th anniversary of the local group was celebrated in style, noting the phenomenal amount of fund raising over this time.

Once again we were able to support a Christmas appeal with matchboxes containing banknotes - money which was directed towards the partnership work of Christian Aid in Ukraine.

Our church and minister are fully committed to *Churches Together in Wirksworth and District* taking an active part in seasonal and civic events. School assemblies led by local clergy have continued with Kevin regularly visiting Wirksworth Junior School and Middleton Primary School. He has continued as Chair of *Churches Together*, and amongst other things, co-ordinated a very successful *Easter Egg Hunt* at St Mary's churchyard which again involved over 100 knitted chicks made by residents of Waltham House and other keen knitters around the town - all very well received by local families.

With regard to accessibility, lifts to Sunday morning worship can be arranged for those who need transport and our building is served by a platform lift providing access to all meeting spaces.

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.

Recognising the increasing importance of digital communication our Wellspring Facebook page and website have been a source of information and inspiration through the year. Further information 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. 2023-24 has been a positive year in terms of growing relationships, commitment and caring for members and others in the community. We are conscious that both existing programmes and new initiatives have had an impact and Wellspring is clearly known and accepted in the town.

At our *Re-Vision Day* in February we were joined by Revd Graham Dunn, a Baptist Minister and friend of Kevin's who has a ministry of encouraging church growth and development. It was a very uplifting day in which our many strengths were celebrated, and challenges for the future embraced, including becoming more intentionally missional, and beginning to think around the future shape of ministry at Wellspring.

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.

Our new premises have already made a significant impact upon our mission and offer so much potential for future growth. We have welcomed a group meeting of *Alcoholics Anonymous* each Sunday evening from last September; the *Wirksworth Christmas Lunch* was held at Wellspring offering a full dinner and entertainment for those unable to cook for themselves and/or without company on Christmas Day; *Young Futures* increased the scope of their work with teenagers with the Head Teacher of Anthony Gell School full of praise for Wellspring making our space available for this worthwhile work.

During the last year congregational numbers have increased and it has been a delight to see many new attenders making Wellspring their home. Four people were welcomed into membership, and sadly two members have died therefore at 31 August 2024, the membership stood at 50.

As this year ends, it is noted with sadness that the members of Cromford Methodist Church have taken a decision to cease worship. Having shared worship with them whilst our building work was undertaken, several have been worshipping at Wellspring in recent months when no services were held at Cromford. We stand by to welcome those who wish to join us.

Notwithstanding these changes in membership, Trustees believe that outreach should be a primary focus of our ministry in the coming years.

Financial Review

The last twelve months have brought some clarity to the uncertain financial situation we found ourselves in at the end of the annexe project. And it is encouraging!

The last of the builder's bills was settled in October 2023 and £6,000 of members' loans have since been repaid. As a result, the Annexe Fund is now effectively emptied, leaving the rest of the loans to be covered eventually from our General Account. However, two members have generously converted their loans into gifts, so that only £30,000 of loans are now outstanding.

Further donations and two bequests have been received over the year: a total of almost £19,000. This was over and above our month-by-month regular giving, which has maintained last year's level.

We are all aware of how much use is being made of our new facilities by the wider community. This has resulted in well over three times as much income from lettings and from catering as pre-pandemic. Heartfelt thanks are due to our Bookings Secretary and Catering Convener.

Inflation was particularly high nationally in 2023-24, resulting in significantly higher ministerial costs and premises running expenses. Despite this, we were able to afford some improvements to the chapel, notably the lighting on the old staircase and blinds in the worship area. More recently, we have engaged a professional cleaner for three regular early-morning visits a week to supplement the work of the Thursday afternoon volunteers.

All in all, we achieved a small surplus of £1,471 over the course of our tenth year, ending it with £61,471 in the bank. In addition to all our regular expenses, this sum should cover the current improvement programme for the manse and allow further loan repayments.

Account summary

<u>Receipts</u>	£	Notes	Last year
Offertory	37,409	loose cash + envelopes + payments via bank	37,529
Tax recovered	11,521	Gift Aid + GASDS	8,106
Interest	1,847	from CFB investment account, this year	22,439
Regular activities	4,543	coffee, Mem Café, Easy Meals, Lazy Lunch, Li'l Springs	4,382
Other social events	1,772	Welldressing & festival catering, etc	1,394
Undertaker	825	net income from funerals was £675	2,700
Lettings	7,216	Thanks to Lesley's hard work	3,804
Donations	18,734	'in memory of' + personal	2,101
Annexe Fund donations	0	excludes £10,000 loans converted to annexe donations	29,342
Sundry receipts	65	Support from Circuit for <i>Warm Spaces</i>	251
Total income £	83,931		112,049

<u>Payments</u>	£	Notes	Last year
Ministerial	27,448	stipend, PAYE, NICs, pension, expenses	25,270
Manse running costs	3,223	Council Tax, water, broadband, 25% of gas & electricity	2,366
Circuit assessment	4,153	Mid-Derbyshire Methodist Circuit	5,002
Baptist affiliations	2,547	BMS, HMF, BUGB subs.	1,950
Officiating at funerals	150	Minister, organist, stewards	1,270
Donations from funds	550	CTW&D subs, Easter Offering, MHA, 12 charities	629
Chapel repairs & maintenance	4,376	incl. lighting on old stairs, blinds, new heating controller	6,230
Manse repairs & maintenance	198	electrical + DIY paint, tiles	1,038
Cemetery maintenance	1,689	incl. removal of fallen tree	1,241
Chapel running costs	5,676	gas, electricity, water, broadband	6,963
Insurances	2,047	chapel + manse	2,018
Admin & Worship	1,391	inc. printing, payroll accountant, speaker fees, CCLI	2,989
Catering & cleaning	2,614	provisions for meals, professional cleaner (w.e.f. June)	1,173
Annexe: final bills	24,900	final builder's bill, solicitor, some loan repayments	8,543
Sundry payments	1,496	Christmas tree, well-dressing materials, mediation	90
Total expenditure £	82,460		66,772

£1,471 *surplus this year, despite paying final annexe bill*

31/08/2024 balance £61,471

Remember, there are £30,000 of members' loans still to be repaid
and around £18,000 of work on the manse to be paid for

Personal monies passed on to external organisations

The amounts below are *extra* to the figures above.

	£ Received	£ Paid out	Notes
Red Cross Morocco 'Quake	109	109	
BMS Harvest Appeal	306	306	
Christian Aid Ukraine Appeal	591	591	
Salvation Army Winter Appeal	126	126	plus late £2 paid directly into SA collecting tin
Methodist Easter Offering	72	72	plus £55 from church funds
Total received	1,204	1,204	Total paid out

Status

The Charity is a Methodist/Baptist Local Ecumenical Partnership, governed by a Constitution approved by Churches Together for Derbyshire, as our original 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. During this last year a Minutes & Administration Secretary was co-opted in a non-Trustee role.

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.

Leadership

Minister: Revd Kevin Price

Trustees: Ingrid Keith (until November 2023), Alison Proctor, Sue Watts (until November 2023), John Proctor (from November 2023), Marion Tucker (from November 2023), David Butlin (from May 2024), Lesley Price (from May 2024)

Secretary: Alison Proctor

Treasurer: Rob Few

Minutes & Administration Secretary: Hilary Adams