

LORTON STREET METHODIST CHURCH

Annual report. May 19th 2010

This last year has been a traumatic year in Cockermouth, the November floods brought devastation to many people including some members of our own congregation and that of the other churches in the town; and as a result for the last 6 months we have been joined for worship by the congregation of the United Reformed Church. It has been good to have them as part of our fellowship and it has been a real blessing to have them among us and to be a united worshipping community. I hope they have felt and will continue to feel at home with us.

We have lost some dear friends these past twelve months, Tom Hestletine, Essie Cameron, Mick Lewis, Harry Facer, Betty Latcham, John Bassett, Heather Craig, Ruth Thompson, Jessie Whitelaw-Bell and Doreen Clarke. We thank God for them and remember them all with fond memories and love. But amidst our sorrow we praise God for signs of new life and we have welcomed Hannah and Paul (Ted) amongst us and the recent and safe arrival of a baby son to Elaine and Philip and brother for Emily. Our current membership at Lorton Street is 133 but there are some people who will be brought into membership later in the year.

Since our stewardship campaign and our recent thinking about our aims and objectives for mission we are seeing some new and encouraging signs within our church. We now have the fully operational kitchen area in the porch which is a great asset for our outreach into the community and I thank Heather and all the other volunteers for their service in this area, but we always need more help and if you can spare just an hour or two a week please speak to Heather. We now have a prayer corner at the back of the church and hope to develop this even further over the next few months with the availability of prayer literature and a new banner to go on the wall. Our Church is now open every day for people to come and just sit in the quiet of the sanctuary for prayer and there is also the opportunity for prayer before worship every Sunday in the Garden Room. Prayer is very important for discovering the vision for our ministry here in Lorton Street and so I encourage you all to avail yourselves of the opportunities for prayer which are now available to you and which I hope to develop further in the coming months.

I am now well into my second year among you and would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your continuing encouragement and support and I feel it a privilege to be your minister. I truly believe that God is at work in Lorton Street let us all be open to the movement of his Spirit and work together for the growth of his kingdom among us.

May God richly bless you.

Sue Edwards

PROPERTY REPORT .

Since the last General Church Meeting, the following work has been carried out:

July ; various electrical works including new tubes and cleaning diffusers in Blindcrake room.

August ; external painting of church front and Abbeyfield side, re-decoration of Pardshaw Room and re-sealing floor in Blindcrake Room. A wash basin was provided for the Blindcrake Room.

Peter Sealby and Jim Martin constructed new shelving in the main store.

October; windows along the south western side of the hall were replaced along with other joinery repairs.

January; three new under sink water heaters were installed.

February; blinds were provided for the new windows in the hall.

April; a new mini kitchen was installed in the church foyer.

We are very grateful to the Joseph Rank Trust for a generous grant which has covered the cost of the mini kitchen and other post-flood expenses. This summer we hope to complete the window replacement programme for the main hall, do some damp plaster and flashing repairs and carry out some more external painting.

We have had issues with inconsiderate and damaging actions by some of our users and some people who use our car park. These matters have been addressed by circular letters. The building has of course been extra busy since the flood. In particular, we are home to the Hospice at Home drop in centre, the Credit Union and the Food Bank.

Keith Rushton

TODDLERS

The Toddlers meet in the Hall each Thursday morning. We would very much appreciate more help to provide

refreshments for this group. It is really good to see all the young children playing in our hall.

Heather Rushton

SUNDAY COFFEE

Sunday Morning coffee seems to run smoothly - thanks to all who help, especially to those not on the rota but who put out and put away tables and chairs. That help is much appreciated. Extra people to join the rota are always welcome.

Linda Jenkins

COMMUNION STEWARDS

We have four regular stewards:- Ivy Duddle, Jean Robinson, Katherine Sealby and Barbara Butterfield.

There are two reserves:- Bill Stephens and Anna Verghese.

This seems to work quite well and all are happy to continue with these duties.

Ivy Duddle

SOUP AND SANDWICHES

The following charities have been supported-

Mayfield School	£303.02
Red Cross	334.15
Rising Sun	334.33
Fairfield Ward	310.20
Action for Children	337.96
Total	£1619.66

We lost one event due to the floods, but on that day we raised £271.25 for the Flood Fund managed by the Church. We will miss Wendy Rust very much as she has been a loyal, hardworking member of the group for many years. We have some new helpers though, with David Herbert, Jethro Bampton, Barbara Hoban, Connor McKay and Tony Naylor having joined us during the year.

Pam Mellor has kindly replaced Linda Jackson on the raffle rota.

Margaret Howarth

WOMEN FELLOWSHIP

Our Ladies Sunday was excellent and enjoyed by all. Twelve to fourteen Ladies attended our meeting each week. If any ladies would like to join us you will be very welcome.

Speakers. If anyone would like to come and speak or share a hobby we would be grateful as we like to have a varied programme- please ring Ann Roberts 85333.

We could still do with help for playing piano on occasions. Our meetings continue to the end of June and will recommence in September 8th 2.00p.m. in the Garden room - always with a cup of tea and biscuits.

From our collection we gave money to the Church, Mountain rescue and RNLI.

Ann Roberts. President

PORCH ROTA

The weekly 'meet and greet' rota continues to be an essential contribution prior to Sunday Worship.

Offers of help from those interested in playing a part in this are always welcome.

FELLOWSHIP AT 54

Unfortunately this house group is presently suspended because of the lack of support.

Hopefully, it will restart again in the future.

Barbara Butterfield

ANNUAL FINANCE

The church needs income to:

- A) Pay the ministers and maintain their houses, pay for the training of new ministers and pay for the District (Cumbria) and national (Connexional) Methodist organisations. This is called the circuit share.
- B) Heating, Lighting and maintenance of the church buildings.

- C) Administration costs such as printing and postage, organ tuning and Junior Church resources.
- D) Make donations to various Christian charities.

Last year i.e. up to 31 August 2009, these costs were:

A) Circuit share	£41000
B) Heating, Lighting, Premises	£24287
C) Administration etc	£ 2101
D) Donations	£ 5295
TOTAL COSTS	£72683

The income to meet these costs came from:

a) Weekly Collections and Gift Aid refund	£40696
b) Lettings of Church Rooms	£23387
c) Weddings, Funerals Fees etc	£ 2872
d) Circuit Advance	£ 8000
d) Bank Interest	£ 1022
TOTAL INCOME	£75977

On paper there was surplus of Income over expenditure of £3294. In real terms this is disguised by the Circuit Advance which was received before the year end and spent later. The actual position was a shortfall of £4706. We had free reserves of £34392, which is slightly below Central policy of aiming to have 50% of the annual expenditure in reserve. A declining trend is evident

The Future

We continue to face challenges financially. The Stewardship Campaign brought about an increase in Giving sufficient to meet the increase in current Circuit share. We have incurred expenditure on the Hall windows - £6796 and the flood related activities have been both necessary and expensive. Much of these are however covered by a grant from the Rank Foundation. Whilst our Reserves look healthy, they will be eroded over the next few years if income does not increase.

Donations.

The following Donations were made from Church Funds during the year up to 31 August 2009

Fund for World Mission	£1900
Home Missions	£ 340
Property Division	£ 390
Auxiliary Fund	£ 340
LWPT	£ 95
Relief & Development Fund	£ 865
MHA	£ 205
The Reef	£ 330
Bible Society	£ 135
Leprosy Mission	£ 135
NISCU	£ 560
Total Donations	£5295

These amounts are from Church Funds and therefore separate from other amounts raised by Church Members for other causes throughout the year.

David Collins Church Treasurer

FOCC

Friends of Chernobyl's Children hosted 12 children from Belarus for 4 weeks and had a varied programme. We thank the Church for making room for these children. We would be glad to have more Church people to help – on the committee, and during the visits, to host children or to help on a daily basis.

Heather Rushton

KENYAN CONNECTION

The monthly stall supplying many goodies in the way of cakes and preserves, as well as crafts, has continued to flourish. The monies raised have supported The Karibuni Trust and Maua Methodist Hospital in Kenya. This year will see our 3rd birthday in June

Janice Westley

CHURCH FAMILY ALBUM

We have several photo albums in the Foyer. Some of the Church family, some of people who have moved away, some of those who have passed into glory and some general photos of church family events. I have been looking after this for the last 5 years and we thank Audrey Albon for taking over.

Heather Rushton

MARY PLATT METHODIST PRE SCHOOL Registered Charity No; 1101234

We have continued to adapt the Early Years Foundation Stage model to our setting. A lot of our staff time has been devoted to this. We are grateful for all the extra work put in by our staff on an unpaid basis. Our registration is for 23 children at any one time and we are open for up to seven half day sessions per week. We are also offering lunchtime care. Our registers are almost full with 41 children for the different sessions each week. We had a satisfactory Ofsted inspection on 8 October. We have five permanent staff members.

We have continued to spend on good quality materials and equipment. A wash hand basin has been provided in the class room and a covered play pavilion has been provided in the garden. Sue Edwards hosted a Christmas event in Church and this was much appreciated by parents.

All members of staff have appropriate qualifications. We have a happy team who work well together to serve our children well.

Keith Rushton Chairman

MOOR HOUSEGROUP:-

The Moor Housegroup meets on alternate Thursday afternoons at The Coach House, Vicarage Lane from September until June. We have 10 members who attend as often as they are able. This year we have studied the book of Ruth and during Lent followed the York course When I Survey ...Christ's cross and ours. At the moment we are following another York course - New World, Old Faith. In mid January we had a belated Christmas Lunch which was enjoyed by all. Sadly we lost Jessie one of our founder members recently and will miss her very much. New members are always welcome.

Jean Robinson

JUNIOR CHURCH

We operate two Groups – one for Junior Church and one for Young People.

Junior Church members who are at secondary school meet upstairs in the Pardshaw room. This group has been led by Stephen & Fiona and for most of the year has met weekly. Attendance has fallen to two regulars. As Fiona is leaving us the group will switch to meeting twice a month with sessions led by Stephen.

Children of primary school age and younger meet in the Blindcrake room. We have reduced the number of staff to two which generally works well. We continue to use the Salt material from Scripture Union. Attendance can range from nil to perhaps six or seven depending on who is visiting. This does make planning activities difficult - but the children seem to enjoy it (most of the time at least!).

Variable numbers have meant that a traditional nativity service is no longer viable although we have been pleased at the growth of Family services. It is rumoured that Stephen is working on a cunning plan for the Christmas 2010 service.

Bob Crozier

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All these are recorded and given to me by August 1st each year so that I can send the information to the copyright body.

Heather Rushton



TRAIDCRAFT STALL

The Traidcraft stall is available after the service on the third Sunday of the month at present. It was decided to continue the Traidcraft Stall due to a shop which used to sell Fairtrade and Oxfam who stopped selling Fairtrade goods. The stall buys its goods from Traidcraft and they sell Fairtrade goods which the Co-op and Sainsbury's do not sell. It is also good to support a charity which offers so much extra support to the producers and who pioneered Fairtrade originally. However, it is difficult to know what people want to buy and as many goods have a short shelf life, some products go out of date before they are sold, and this is a little problem. The money from the stall goes through the main church account. Thank you.

Anne Crozier

RESOURCES

In the Foyer is a host of books to borrow and lots of leaflets and prayer manuals on the information table. Also available by ordering are the following Bible study booklets:-

'Light for our Path' which is published each January,

'New Day Light' and 'The Upper Room' are published January, May and September,

Each September we have available the Methodist prayer Handbook.

Heather Rushton

CHRISTIAN AID

At time of writing, Christian Aid Week 2010 is just over a week away. Last year 38 Lorton Street collectors brought in £1,844.35 directly. When Gift Aid commitments are added, the grand total rose to £2,067.38, over £2,000 for the first time. I am not expecting to exceed this total in 2010 because a number of properties on our patch, notably Derwentside and Derwentside Gardens, were flooded last November. Even if some flood survivors have returned I don't think it is right to ask them for a donation in the current circumstances.

The Street and Sainsbury's collection last September, in which Lorton Street participated, raised just short of £700. The Lent Lunches 2010 held in Christ Church rooms and supported by all the churches provided around £900.

Lorton Street folk remain committed year in year out and contribute approximately 20% of the money sent by the local area, covered by postcode CA13, to Christian Aid HQ. To maintain this position we need new people to replace those retiring as active supporters and collectors. Talking of retirement, I have been the Local Organiser for CA13 for the last 6 years and the Church Representative for the last 27! I would welcome someone to shadow me for 2011 with a view to taking over the Church Representative role from 2012 for rather less time; 6 years seems more reasonable than 27. Time flies when you are having fun. A volunteer please. If you are interested but not sure, I can explain what is involved.

Martyn Evans

LEPROSY MISSION

Although during the year we have lost several generous collectors, we still have 62 faithful loyal supporters who between them raised £1300 in 2009. which has all been used to advance the work of the Leprosy Mission worldwide. We have had two visits from Mr. John Roughley who spoke to the Ladies Fellowship in March and gave us a very interesting evening of vegetarian cooking in October. The latter was poorly attended so it was suggested that John would preach on the Sunday of his Autumn visit in October instead of holding an evening meeting. In this way more people would hear the message of the work done by TLM.

Thank you to all our loyal supporters.

Mary Stocks

THE WALKING GROUP

This has been meeting every second Sunday in the month since 1988 and everyone is welcome to join us. We can tailor the walks to suit wheelchair, pushchairs and dogs if needed. We usually have a turnout of 6 – 8 people but would like to see more out with us.

Most walks are about 2 hours long and about 4 to 5 miles in distance- not too strenuous but always interesting and enjoyable, especially the 'fellowship of the tea shop' at the end.

Mary Stocks.

MMETHODIST HOMES FOR THE AGED. (M.H.A.)

MHA opened a new extension to their Penrith Home, Woodlands, in July 2009 which is a new concept in elderly accommodation. Residents are able to buy, part own or rent their apartment, together with bringing in meals or services from the establishment. This is proving popular and all apartments are taken.

In the circuit we have contributed £671 in 2009 which consists of church donations and collections on MHA Sunday.

MHA Sunday this year falls on June 13th. Please support as generously as you can.

Mary Stocks.

WORSHIP GROUP.

The Worship group continues to enjoy fellowship, song and contributing to worship when called upon to do so. We in Music Group are greatly indebted to Marion who meets every challenge we put to her with great skill, patience and indulgence. We'd be lost without her. We are also grateful, as ever, to Janice for her hospitality as we meet in her home once per month. .

You will be aware that we are small in number so we are always delighted to welcome new members. Please feel free to join us if you feel so led. Though we have fun, we take our role seriously and have worked for many years now to develop our repertoire and make a meaningful contribution to the services here. We are grateful for the support we have had and value your prayers as we seek the Lord's guidance for us all.

Audrey Albon,

FLOWER MINISTRY.

The 'Flower Ladies' have worked hard as a team this past year making sure the church has been kept florally decorated each Sunday, and arranging extra displays and decorations in the way of baskets of blooms for the elderly, sick, and housebound at special festivals such as Easter, Christmas and Harvest.

Wendy Rust, who tirelessly and quietly organised so much of this ministry for several years, relocated to Wales in April 2010 and is very much missed by us all.

Janice Westley

PASTORAL MATTERS.

We continue to meet about every 6 weeks or to discuss events and concerns . The group this year consists of Hazel Tomlinson, Mary Stocks, Janice Westley, Sylvia Noble, Margaret Howarth and up until the November floods, Pam Mellor.

Sue organised a Pastoral Visitors Training Day last June where " Guidelines for Good Practice and Confidentiality in Pastoral Care" was discussed. We held the sessions twice in order to enable all Pastoral Visitors to attend.

Margaret Howarth



AND FINALLY.....

Over the last 6 months Lorton Street has been the distribution centre for the North Lakes Food Bank.

COCKERMOUTH POST is now delivered to Church each month at the same time as the rest of Lorton Street and you will see that we have a few lines about our Church in each copy.

Some of the HIGHLIGHTS of the year have been the Harvest concert, the Christmas services, Simeon Wood Concert and the Easter weekend (Maundy Thursday quiet communion, Good Friday meditation, Walk of witness through town, Resurrection sunrise service and finally Easter Sunday worship when we were moved with the beauty of flowers on the cross).

Our weekly Notice sheet, Recordings of Sunday Worship and the Annual report are all to be found on the METHODIST WEBSITE

Andrea Lucas is our new church rep for ACTION FOR CHILDREN.

The recent passing of two extremely talented, dependable, long-serving organists has left us bereft as a church family. Harry Facer and Jessie Whitelaw-Bell were generous in their time and devotion to worship here. We miss them.

Thanks to Wendy and Geoff Rust for all the work they have done at Lorton Street over the years.

Thanks to the Church stewards (Pauline Headford, Heather Rushton, Pam Mellor, Paul Allen , Sylvia Noble, Peter Sealby and Jethro Bampton) for their leadership over the last year.

Thank you to everyone.

