

End of Year Reports 2008

MINISTER'S REPORT

There is always the danger that the year following a big anniversary can seem like a bit of an anticlimax. If that was ever a threat to 2008, after our 125th Anniversary celebrations in 2007, it has certainly not been the case. 2008 has been another full and active year, as we have sought to take forward the call that is upon us to love God and to serve and love our neighbours as ourselves. Of course, it has been a very different year to 2008. It has seen its own developments and has had its own emphases and flavours. One of these has been in the renewed relationship that has been evident among the churches of Crewe. This was most in evidence in January, when, as part of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity a Covenant was declared and signed, embracing twenty of the local churches, either committing themselves to full membership of the Covenant, or associating with it. Representatives from all the churches came together at the Oakley Centre, to mark in joyful worship our intention to do together all that we can. Statements of intention can be empty, but the churches also committed themselves to the Hope 08 national mission, and these two factors meant that the intentions were translated into actions. A New Year Fun Day, two days of Easter witness, a strengthened programme of united services and prayer times, involvement with the Town Carnival and a Service in the Park, hours of kindness, carol singing in Christ Church – all were aspects of shared witness and service that we hope to build on in the coming year. It has been a joy to work towards achieving Christ's prayer that his followers might be one, with Him and with each other. It is a continuing call for 2009.

Hope 08 was an exercise in reaching out, and Union Street Baptist Church has engaged in that both in company with the other churches, and also on our

own account. We have both maintained our relationships with the community in which we are situated, the community we believe we are called to serve, and built upon it. We have sustained our programme of Children's Clubs, and maintained our links with Edleston School. We are delighted that they have continued to come to us for their school services and productions, even though they have now moved to Gainsborough Road. We have seen new links and relationships develop: with the local council and the East Timorese population; in English classes for those more recently arrived in this country; with our neighbours in Lord Street, supporting their street party and hosting their carol service; with the local police. We look to build further on these relationships in the coming year and to add to them, possibly through stronger links with the MMU campus as we share with the other churches in the establishment of more formal chaplaincy to students and staff there.

The alterations we have made to the church last year have been much appreciated by the school for their productions, and in the concerts we have been able to host and plan. Crewe Male Voice Choir held their Annual Concert with us and we look forward to the visit of the Lions Youth Brass Band. We wish to do more, and it was undeniably a disappointment that our application for funding for the final part of our development plan was not successful. It was heartening that the subsequent Church Meeting was resolved in determination to pursue the plan, a further focus for 2009.

Any year has its sadnesses and in 2008 we marked the passing to greater glory of several members and friends of our fellowship: Nellie Smith, Chris Nicholls, Dorothea Kirby and Revd. Robin Davies. We have, however, been pleased to greet new friends who have joined us: Fabio Cura and Emily Smart, born in 2008, those who have joined us in

worship and David Barker whom we received into membership.

Such busyness gives some indication of the thanks and appreciation that should be expressed. I, personally, am grateful for all the wonderful and prayerful support that I have received during the year, not least from our hard-working diaconate, but I am also grateful for all the faithful and committed service that so many give to the life and ministry of Union Street Baptist Church. Some of that is reflected in the reports you are receiving here. So much more goes on unrecorded, and at times almost unnoticed. We are called to serve our Lord in small things as much as in great things. We may be confident that He notices and appreciates all that is done here in His name, and we seek to continue to serve Him in the coming year. We ask God for his blessing on all our endeavours in His name.

Andrew Taylor

PLAYAWAY

This year we have had contact with over 38 children with their Mums, Dads and Carers. The numbers have varied each week from 4 up to 16, with an average attendance of 9. Now free Nursery provision is available for three year olds, we have very few children over the age of three, so we have adjusted our toys and activities accordingly. During the summer break we were unable to arrange any additional activities for this group but hope to do so in 2009. Since June we have welcomed four new babies. In spite of a lot of sickness we had a good attendance at the Christmas party and all seemed to enjoy themselves.

We are very grateful to Doreen who comes along regularly to help and to Maxine who is able to help occasionally, and to Iris and Helen who have been able to take charge when we were away. A big 'Thank You' goes to all those who help on a Sunday to prepare the upstairs and downstairs rooms – it

saves so much time for us on a Monday morning. Also, thanks to the carers who put everything away, before we have our music session and 'quiet!' story time. Singing and playing musical instruments continues to be a very popular time at Playaway. Long may Playaway continue to flourish, providing support, fun and friendship for young children and their carers. If anyone could spare a couple on hours on a Monday morning to help it would be much appreciated.

Pamela and Andrew Taylor

RAINBOWS

It has been a very successful year for the Rainbows and Brownies.

The Rainbows had a busy year celebrating their 21st birthday. We joined together with other Rainbows in the County for an Alice in Wonderland Party where we did crafts and searched for the white rabbit.

The Rainbows in our Division had a special day out at Chester Zoo. Our Rainbows celebrated by achieving the Olivia's favourites badge making glittery jewellery, friend Rosettes, summer spirals and ending with a party evening.

We also planted sunflowers to give out to parents. We did activities on Look, Learn, Love and laugh for our Roundabout Rainbows Badge. Our numbers are up at present but some are due to go up to Brownies.

BROWNIES

Our Brownies began the year by going to the Regent Theatre in Hanley to the Pantomime Cinderella.

They have worked on various badges – number fun, designer and Brownie skills. They have all gained the right to be me badge where they discovered similarities and difference between themselves and other Brownies. They researched the meanings of their names. They got to know their own pebbles and make Promise necklaces.

We went to the Residential home in Manor Way to entertain the residents. They really appreciated it and have invited us back.

Brownie Revels was celebrated with a visit to the Black Country Museum where we stepped back in time and learnt about the past.

For our Brownie Holiday this year we went to Egerton Hall near Knutsford and had a week of medieval activities with a visit to Camelot, we held jousts and captured dragons and held a medieval Banquet.

We held our first ever sleepover at Union Street and believe it we actually got some sleep, as well as having fun.

Our Brownies and Rainbows got together for a great day out at Chester Zoo organised by Nicola.

Thinking Day was celebrated by all the girls in our district, getting together at the Alexandra Suite at Crewe Alex, for a circus themed day. The girls had their faces painted, made crafts, balloon animals and practised circus skills. All the Brownies gained their circus skills badge.

Yvonne Farmer (Brown Owl)

SECRETARY'S REPORT

2008 began with the Churches Together in Crewe Covenant Service at which 20 churches from Crewe signed a covenant to work together spreading the good news of our Lord Jesus Christ. This was a very moving and uplifting occasion and came about following a lot of hard work by some ministers and especially our own Andrew Taylor. The churches have worked through the year under the Hope'08 banner making contact with local people by holding events in our town square, a good presence at the Crewe Carnival both in the parade and at the park and finally by holding an open air carol service at Christ Church. We have also held several ecumenical services during the year and it is good to get to know our friends who are worshipping along side us.

We have held several concerts through 2008, Organ concerts, Crewe Male voice choir concert and the Kipling Singers have entertained us. We have visited Garden Parties, Barbeque Coffee Mornings, We have enjoyed hearing our augmented church choir singing to us and we have enjoyed the Christian Fellowship we share every week. We enjoyed our service held at Milldale the Scout Camping Site – we were blessed with a sunny day and we hope to repeat the event in 2009.

The church has been pleased to welcome the residents of Lord Street while they have met to get know each other and organize local events – the latest being the Christmas carol singing which finished in the church. We regularly welcome the Community Police Officers who call on Thursday mornings, and have hosted some meetings for the local council and used the premises as Polling Stations for two local elections. So we are able to use our buildings to reach out to the community and put ourselves on the map!

We were pleased to welcome David Barker into membership at Union Street but were sorry to report the death of three members, Nellie Smith, Dorothea Kirby and Chris Nichols. Our condolences go to the families of these friends.

I wish to extend a big 'thank you' to everyone who works to keep things going at Union Street Church. So many people are involved and every effort is very important to keep things running smoothly and to help in God's work here. The Lord needs you! A big 'Thank you' to our minister Andrew and his wife Pamela from us all for their efforts.

We look forward to another New Year and wonder what it will have in store for us. Probably still more hard work but may you all find plenty of happiness and companionship in the Lord's work!

Helen Birtles

PROPERTY

Another relatively poor summer has delayed some aspects of regular building maintenance, namely completion of repairs to the timber windows. Joinery repairs were carried out to some cills and frames, but the rubbing down and repainting had to wait for decent spells of dry weather which failed to appear before the painter's deadline for outside jobs arrived at the end of October. We are in his diary for Spring 2009, thankfully at the original estimate figure! Some short snatches of good weather however enabled the old timber entrance doors to be re-varnished.

A meeting early in April with a representative from the grant funding organisation WREN presented an air of excitement in that it might be possible for the church to bid for a grant from the 2008 WRG Communities Challenge to fund the whole of the remaining Development Plan, amounting to £125,000. Much work went into preparing the application for submission by the end of May. Apparently, WREN received applications for grants totalling in excess of £25.6m, more than 12.5 times greater than the available prize fund maximum, and unfortunately our project was not selected to be taken through to the next examination stage. It may still be possible to apply for a grant through the Main Grant Programme but in 2008 that had a maximum grant figure of £50,000, and we would have to have funding available to match that.

Sadly, our old enemy dry rot visited again towards the end of 2008. I say 'visited again', but in fact the spores are always around, just waiting for the right conditions to germinate. This time the outbreak was behind the wall boarding and underfloor of the under-stairs cupboards. People were surprised it was in a 'new' part of the buildings i.e. under the new staircase, but of course the new staircase had been constructed

within an 'old' building. The timber specialists have again carried out very sympathetic repairs and we were soon 'up and running' again.

The remedial work to the Manse wall cracks is scheduled for January 2009. Some re-fixing of roof slates and ridge tiles has also been carried out.

Let us hope for a good measure of fine weather in 2009 to enable outstanding works to be completed by specialist contractors, and other more simple maintenance by volunteers – no hiding lights under bushels now!

Malcolm Riley

ORGAN CONCERTS

October 2008 marked the 37th concert in ten years of this series. We were also at the end of the 125th year in the life of USBC and it was good to have passed the £12,500 mark (£12,802) in money raised for the Buildings Development Fund.

The last four concerts I shall be arranging are booked for 2009, so if the church wish this aspect of fundraising to continue into 2010 and beyond, someone needs to step into my shoes, please, firstly because I'm ten years older than when the concerts started, and secondly the ever-present needs to monitor the church property simply cut down the hours available to me.

Although audiences have shrunk a little in the latter years, which seems to follow the national trend, the profit still averages £346 per concert and those folk that do come seem very happy when leaving with what they have seen and heard.

So thanks again to all helpers for your support. The 2009 bookings are Matthew Bason, Jean Martyn, Chris Powell and Tim Flint.

Malcolm Riley

AGE CONCERN T CLUB

2008 found T Club at USBC facing a rather big change as Fran – who had led the group from its formation, decided to retire. We were all very sad to see her go but realised that 'there is a time for everything' and Fran told us that March 2008 was a suitable retirement date. All helpers from the various T Clubs in the area were invited to a farewell celebration meal held at Danebank, which was very enjoyable.

Trish took over the reins, and we are all kept on our toes with various activities ranging from a quiz to a more leisurely afternoon tea at Stapeley Water Gardens. Our Christmas meal was again at the Nags Head, Haughton, being very carefully and competently driven there by Wyn in the Lady Cholmondley bus. Special thanks to Sheila for the lovely Santa sleighs she made for the occasion, and to all the cake-bakers and transport team for another year of help and support.

Sandra Riley

CHOIR

It has been another busy year for the choir. At the beginning of 2008, we were once again invited to sing at Minshull Vernon URC, where we presented Stargazers.

In June, we were thrilled to be asked to take part in the 200th birthday celebrations at Haslington URC, where we gave another performance of Roger Jones' *Greater Than Gold*. This was also repeated here at Union Street and later in the year, at Alsager URC.

The choir also took part in the combined Advent service, which took place here at Union Street at the beginning of December. We performed the opening number of *Rock*, Roger Jones' latest work, which is based on the story of Peter. At time of writing, we are looking

forward to presentations of the whole work here at USBC, as well as Minshull Vernon URC and The Dingle, Haslington. It is a great privilege to be one of the first choirs in the UK to perform Roger's latest work.

The choir continues to grow in numbers. We have been pleased to welcome several new members to the choir and are grateful to those who, although not singing with us, support us regularly when we go "on tour". Tuesday evening choir practice is good fun and our thanks go to David Greatbanks, for his expert tutelage and guidance, without whom, little of the above could have been achieved.

Annette Elliott

MUSIC GROUP

Once again, Music Group has played its part in worship at Union Street. We have been pleased to take part in regular morning worship, parade services and joint services. We also had the opportunity of two "firsts" this year – the outdoor service at the Scout Camp at Milldale in July and the service of witness in Queens Park during the Carnival weekend.

Our thanks as always go to Andrew, for introducing us to lots of new music and for being prepared to join in with us, especially when we have been few in number.

There has always been a strong musical tradition at Union Street and in its small way, Music Group is seeking to continue it. However, our main objective is to serve our Lord in music, to assist others in their worship and to praise His name.

Annette Elliott

J CLUB

Our regular members continue to maintain a steady attendance each Sunday and we give thanks as a church family when this is acknowledged as they receive their awards for 50 attendances. It is a joy to see them grow and progress in commitment to church life – our young people are keen get involved and we must ensure that we encourage them in their willingness to help.

We welcome Connor, Hollie & Tia to J Club this year and delight in their enthusiasm to learn about the Bible stories, as they get to know Jesus as their best friend. Scripture Union resources continue to be the basis of our teaching each week, although staff try to be imaginative in their teaching methods to ensure that both children, young people and indeed leaders enjoy and learn more each week.

We give thanks for the continued willingness of J Club leaders and offer a warm welcome to anyone who feels that they would like to share in the leadership role. Please speak to me or any J Club staff if you would like to join any of the classes to see what goes on. We also thank Andrew for his support and for his children's addresses which always provide a good basis for further discussion when the children leave for J Club.

Our series of Holiday Clubs throughout the year have been generally well attended with averages of over 20 children. As we continue to plan a new series of clubs during 2009, we pray for God's continued guidance as we think wider than our own church family and utilise the resources of our ecumenical family in the local community. I end 2008's J Club report with a reminder of how we should all help our children to "learn what they live".

If a child lives with criticism, he learns to condemn.

If a child lives with hostility, he learns to fight.

If a child lives with ridicule, he learns to be shy.

If a child lives with shame, he learns to feel guilty.

If a child lives with tolerance, he learns to be patient.

If a child lives with encouragement, he learns confidence.

If a child lives with praise, he learns to appreciate.

If a child lives with fairness, he learns justice.

If a child lives with security, he learns to have faith.

If a child lives with approval, he learns to like himself.

If a child lives with acceptance & friendship, he learns to find love in the world

Gill Lindop

CONTACT CLUB

During 2008 we had good attendances at most of our meetings, and we were pleased to welcome some new members. We have had some interesting talks – by a lady who had taken part in a sponsored cycle ride in India, which was very entertaining, 'Experiences as a Prison Chaplain', Origins and meanings of our surnames, and Doris' holiday in Norway, to name a few.

In the summer, Sue and Mark Thompson invited us to visit their garden. For once the weather was kind to us and we were able to sit outside admiring the garden and indulging in tea, coffee and strawberry and cream scones!

Many thanks to our officers and Tea convenors for helping to make our evenings enjoyable each month.

Hazel Dodd

15th SWC SCOUT GROUP

It has been another busy year for the group with an average of 68 young people and children regularly attending with the support of the Leadership Team.

The memory of Yvonne Chetwood lives on in the group in our hearts and now also in a memorial special award that was launched at the 2008 AGM. Each year, The Yvonne Chetwood Award will be presented to a Beaver, Cub and Scout who has made a difference to others or has shown particular determination to overcome adversity.

We have welcomed Joyce Redfearn (nee Seal), to the Beaver Leader Team, and are delighted that yet another of our former members has returned to the group as a warranted leader.

After many years in the group, as a cub, a scout, a venture scout, a young leader and then a fully warranted leader, Hinton Chetwood decided to step down from his current leadership role in the Scout section in December. Hinton remains a nationally recognised warranted adult leader and is increasing involved in West Lancashire as part of the 2nd Ashton Scout Group. On behalf of the group, I wish Hinton and his partner Fiona, every good wish for the future in their new life in Preston.

We would like to thank all at Union Street for your continued support of Scouting in this place, and look forward to 2009. The highlight of the summer was the open air parade service at Milldale Campsite, which was attended by almost 100 people! We are delighted that this will now be an annual event which helps link the church membership to the scout group membership.

May we also take this opportunity of inviting everyone from Union Street to our Group AGM on Friday 27th March 2009, starting at 7.15pm. Feel free to come along that night and hear about what happens in the group at all levels.

Wish best wishes from us all in the 15th.

Paul Boskett - Group Scout Leader