

## END OF YEAR REPORTS 2009

### MINISTER'S REPORT

“God is working his purpose out,  
as year succeeds to year.”

So went the first two lines of one of the hymns we sang in our opening worship of 2010, and one of the challenges of looking back and reporting on a year just ended is to recognize the ways in which God's purpose has indeed been worked out in the life, activities and service of this church. Sometimes we hope it can be discerned in the coming to fruition of what we have planned. At other times things can take a quite different turn, which we accept and follow because we have believed we have been guided by the Spirit to that course. I am not sure which of those categories my ordination in May might have fallen into, but I am sure of God's hand being in that process. The reports which are here collated will also, I suspect, give evidence of both these things having happened, and in either case we give thanks to God for his continued blessings, for his love and inspiration. We seek, as ever, to be the servants and witnesses, the missionary disciples, he calls us to be.

“From utmost east to utmost west  
wherever man has trod.”

Missionary disciples, the definition of ourselves that is now promoted by the Baptist Union, know no limits to their missionary endeavours. I hope we have demonstrated that in our support of the work of BMS World Mission, the Leprosy Mission, Tear Fund, of persecuted churches, Christian Aid and Operation Agri, whose collective efforts spread around the world, but it is probably inevitable and appropriate that our work is more locally focused, in some measure in the support we give to local charitable and voluntary activity, but more in our witness and outreach. This has been increasingly been an area of collaboration with the other covenanted churches of the town, with whom we meet, not only in the established series of united services, but in other opportunities. These have included: work with young people in schools, ensuring there is church

contact with all the schools in the town, providing booklets to Year 6 children as they move on to

secondary education, and the first attempt at a Primary Carols event for primary schools; work with the student population at MMU, where we have now formal chaplaincy arrangements; card distribution at Christmas and Easter; and more widely both the town centre Easter Witness on Good Friday and Christmas witness, attempted for the first time in 2009, and a presence at the Town Carnival.

Many of our efforts and activities as a fellowship here at Union Street also provide or support our missionary call. You will see this in the following reports. The children's Holiday Clubs, however, have been attracting diminishing numbers, although we see new faces each time we run, but it may be appropriate to review what we are doing. We have maintained our close relationship with Edleston School. Social and fund-raising activities are also times when we can bring in new faces, though we are not alone in struggling to convert midweek and casual attendances into worshipping presence. Bible study and Lent Groups give opportunity to deepen and strengthen our understanding of our faith, and to arm us for our tasks.

“We shall march in the strength of God,  
with the banner of Christ unfurled.”

As we march forward, we have to mark the passing of those whose time on that journey has come to its close. During 2009 we have said our farewell to Pat Ollier, to Edith Galliard, to Tony Nicholl and to Irene Hitchen. We continue to thank God for their contributions, and to uphold the families who mourn their loss.

We have been pleased to welcome at various services of dedication through the year Emily Smart, Grace Haigh, Precious Boady, Scarlett Broad, and Susan and Troy Mosely.

We have also been pleased to receive Barbara Davies into membership by transfer from Market Street, and to welcome a number of new families as regular worshippers. We are grateful for the way in which God's hand has been on all of them.

“All we can do is nothing worth  
unless God blesses the deed.”

We therefore seek God’s blessing on all we hope and plan for the coming year. I hope that we might be able to run a second Lent Course at a time convenient for those for whom a midday/ afternoon meeting is not possible. That might even develop further into another time for people to study, share and grow together in their faith. We also seek God’s blessing on us as we take forward our ideas to fulfill the Building Development Plan in ways that stress our twin heritages: that of the community and town God has called us to serve, and that of the faith we have to profess. Our covenanted recommitment with the other churches, all of whom are now in full association with Churches Together, will be a platform for further work across the town.

I continue to be grateful for all the wonderful and prayerful support that I have received during the year, not least from our hard-working diaconate, and also for all the faithful and committed service that so many give to the life and ministry of Union Street Baptist Church. 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.

“May the earth be filled with the glory of God  
as the waters cover the sea.”

**Andrew Taylor**

### **SECRETARY’S REPORT**

Another year has quickly passed by – they say we are getting old when time flies! No comment! We have been busy at Union Street Church all year. Our different organizations have kept up their good work throughout the weeks and we have had some great services and fellowship led by our minister Rev. Andrew Taylor and visiting speakers. We were thrilled to witness the ordination of Andrew by Rev. Andrew Funnell of the North Western Baptist Association. Andrew Taylor deserves this acknowledgement of his work over recent years. Thank you to him and Pamela for all their work and effort they both put into our church life here. Andrew is also busy doing God’s work for Churches Together in Crewe – even if it means wearing a Gorilla costume!

We have held some memorable social events during the year at the church (concerts by organists, Kipling Singers, Fiona Simpson and The Lions Youth Brass, Ceilidh with the Nantwich Scottish Dancers) and joined with local churches on other occasions (Quiz, Art & Craft events, Garden Party). Our premises are being used during the week by different local organizations and on alternate Sunday afternoons by the Zimbabwean United Methodist Church for their services. It is good to have the building in use as much as possible and we are always ready to consider future requests.

We were sorry to lose some friends during the year – Edith Galliard who was our oldest member at 96 years, Freda Slaymaker who lived in Leominster more recently, Pat Ollier, Tony Nicholl and Irene Hitchen. May they rest in peace with their Lord and Saviour.

Finally I wish to say a big ‘Thank You’ to all who work throughout the year to keep the building safe, warm and clean and also seek to do Gods work at church and in the surrounding community. I am always glad of willing volunteers to help with the cleaning and serving coffee on Sundays and Thursday mornings. Please see me if you can help!

May God bless you all,

**Helen Birtles**

### **PROPERTY**

At the beginning of the year plastering and decorating was carried out at the manse to complete the remedial works following the leaking sewer repair. All work was carried out under buildings insurance cover.

The painting of exterior woodwork at the church premises had been delayed from 2008 due to poor weather, but was completed in Spring 2009. Some minor but high level repairs have been necessary to air bricks/window sill, and gutters and downspouts have been checked and cleaned.

The paving to the fire escape ramp had settled, causing rainwater to drain towards the building rather than away from it, and has been re-laid. The 'courtyard' paving outside the corridor door regularly becomes uneven and advice was sought from our building surveyor who designed the scheme, as several attempts to relay had been unsuccessful. He advised that the paving was only intended to be a temporary measure until the suspended deck under it became the floor of the proposed new vestibule. The problem is that the sand bedding for the paving slabs is very shallow, gets wet, and gets dispersed allowing the slabs to rock. If it is re-laid, the problem is likely to recur. In an attempt to avoid this continuing expense and maintain reasonably comfortable access some heavy rubber mats have been laid which seem to have eased the problem. It goes without saying that the problem will be completely removed when we can complete the development plans!

The quinquennial survey of church and manse premises has been carried out towards the end of the year, and the surveyor's report is awaited. Recent advice to all Baptist Union churches – particularly listed buildings - stresses the importance of regular maintenance in avoiding large scale repairs, and whilst the maintenance itself can be costly, its omission constitutes poor stewardship and can result in financially crippling repair bills.

Whilst the manse continues to be currently surplus to ministerial housing needs, it would be unwise to leave it vacant when the present tenancy ceases, as a vacant building soon deteriorates. Baptist Union advise that sale of the manse "...is an important decision as the lack of a manse can often make it more difficult to find a suitable minister. Once the property is sold and the money spent, it can be very hard to raise enough money again to buy a house." Whilst the manse is a relatively large four-bedroom house, it has a small garden and no off-street parking – factors which could influence its suitability for a future minister with family. We are advised that under the terms of the Baptist Trusts "...it is possible to sell the property and use any funds for the purchase of another manse, or if that is not needed, to invest the money and draw the income. There is also scope for the use of the sale proceeds for projects linked to the general purposes of the church, and in particular to use funds towards refurbishment and improvements."

For the present, enquiries are being made of other churches as to whether a member needs rented

accommodation, before the manse is offered for rent, via an agent, on the open market.

## **Malcolm Riley**

### **AGE CONCERN T CLUB**

We have had another interesting year with new faces appearing both with clients and drivers. Various activities have been enjoyed – all with afternoon 'T' of course, and the usual excellent range of cakes from our loyal team of bakers.

We visited Minshull Nursery, recently extended to provide greater browsing areas through large stocks of plants, flowers and fancy goods. Other meetings have included a visit from a 'famous clothing store' supplier, where, before cakes were eaten we tried on various garments! Our Age Concern organiser, Trish, compiles interesting quizzes to keep the grey matter in tune and the laughter flowing. In October – at short notice, Malcolm showed us a filmed record of his 1934 Riley car restoration, which jogged a few memories around the room of such cars being everyday transport.

Nearing Christmas, our November meeting was led by Sheila showing us how to make 3-D festive cards, which was a huge success and hopefully can be repeated at other seasons of the year. Our Carol Service was led by Andrew, with musical accompaniment from our church member Barbara whose choice of carols and encouragement to sing pleased everyone. Despite difficult but seasonal weather, we enjoyed the annual Christmas meal at Hunter's Lodge, so our thanks to Trish for organising the occasion.

Being a member of the church support team for alternate meetings only, I have mentioned only a number of the T Club activities, but on behalf of everyone I would like to thank two people who support every meeting – our minister Andrew and his wife Pamela – who, after leading a morning's Playaway session, take only a brief lunch break before joining the afternoon's T Club team.

## **Sandra Riley**

## **CHOIR REPORT**

The choir has continued to thrive during the last twelve months, under the guidance of our director David Greatbanks.

The early part of the year was dedicated to presentations of *Rock*. As well as our "premiere" performance here at Union Street, we were pleased to be able to present the work at Minshull the Dingle in Haslington, and the URC churches in Alsager and Audlem. We believe that Roger Jones' powerful work was well received and enjoyed by all who came to listen.

After a break in the summer, the choir has been busy working on *Sing Good News*. Originally produced in conjunction with the first publication of the Good News Bible, the work includes music by many different composers and highlights the way in which God speaks to us through creation, the prophets and most of all, through Jesus. *Sing Good News* has already been presented here at Union Street. We were also pleased to be able to take part in the Churches Together in Crewe Advent service at Stephen's Methodist later the same day. Sadly, a second presentation, which was scheduled for mid January at Minshull URC fell foul of the weather. It is hoped that this can now take place at the end of February 2010.

Choir practice is good fun and we all look forward to our Tuesday nights. We are also looking forward to the year ahead, to new musical challenges, but most of all, continuing to serve our Lord through music.

**Annette Elliott**

## **MUSIC GROUP REPORT**

Once again, Music Group has played its part in worship at Union Street. We have been pleased to take part in regular morning worship, harvest, and parade services here at USBC, as well as the time of worship at Milldale scout camp in July.

Always happy to welcome "guest" artistes, it has been great to welcome some new faces to the ranks. Our thanks as always go to Andrew, for introducing us to lots of new music, thus increasing our repertoire.

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

**Annette Elliott**

## **ORGAN CONCERTS**

We held four concerts during 2009 – Matthew Bason, Jean Martyn, Chris Powell and Tim Flint. All were enjoyable evenings again, according to comments from people on leaving. Tim's concert marked the end of my role as organiser of the organ concert series which began with John Mann in October 1998 as a means of raising funds towards the Buildings Development Plan which was agreed by the Church in that year.

There have been 41 concerts in the series, raising £13,490 for the Development Fund and I thank everyone for their efforts in achieving this sizeable chunk of fundraising. Many of the celebrity organists want to come back to Union Street as they enjoy the warm reception from the audience, and the acoustics and general setting of the building's interior. I have already passed a number of emails from organists on to my 'successors' as concert organisers – David Elliott and Paul Boskett – so I hope we will see some artistes on return visits in the future.

This final report presents another opportunity for me to say thank you for your support during the concert series, and for the 'retirement' gifts presented to Sandra and I at the close of Tim Flint's concert in October.

**Malcolm Riley**

## **CONTACT CLUB REPORT**

We have had good attendances at most of our meetings where we have had a variety of very interesting speakers. Thanks to Helen for organizing our programme.

We did not have many friends at our Coffee Evening in June, but those who went to Helen and Bill's enjoyed the coffee and chat with a selection of goods and cakes for sale. For our outing in the summer we went to the Wedgwood Museum and Visitors Centre at Barlastan, where there were many interesting things to see and do. Following the museum visit and lunch we were able to see potters at work and look around working displays and the gift shop before returning home.

We hope that in 2010 all our friends will support our meetings and encourage others to join us on the last Wednesday in the month. Our next meeting for 2010 will be on 24 February at 7-30p.m. when Mrs Barbara Davies will address the meeting,

**Hazel Dodd.**

## **PLAYAWAY REPORT**

This has been a very special year for Playaway. We celebrated our 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary on November 1<sup>st</sup> with a party. We tried to contact all those with whom we had had contact with over the last 10 years (in excess of 150 children). We had a good response initially but on the actual day due to illness and forgetfulness numbers were less than hoped for. Nevertheless those who were there had a good time – special thanks to Paul, Gill, Helen and Iris who helped with the party. Here are just a couple of messages we received : “I remember when I first came to the playgroup (I didn't know anybody because I had moved from Halifax). I was made very welcome by Yvonne, Clare and Teresa. Not forgetting all the tea ladies behind the counter!!! Ah bless them all.” “Thanks for being here for 10 years and helping so many children through their early years. We look forward to your 18<sup>th</sup>! Enjoy your celebrations.”

The numbers coming each week has ranged from 8 to 27, averaging out at 13, ending the year with a very successful Christmas Party for 17 (only one regular unable to come).

We are very grateful to David Elliott who steps in when we are away and to Doreen, Maxine, Iris and Helen who are able to help occasionally.

Once more 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. Long may Playaway continue to flourish, providing support, fun and friendship for young children and their carers. If anyone could spare a couple of hours on a Monday morning to help it would be much appreciated.

**Pamela and Andrew Taylor**

## **7<sup>th</sup> CREWE BROWNIES & RAINBOWS.**

As usual it has been a busy year.

We began by taking part in changing the world, the Rainbows doing a project against bullying which culminated in a party where we all pledged not to be bullies.

The Brownies project was to learn more about asthma. We were amazed at how many celebrates have asthma. The project ended with us holding a mock swimming gala, where the girls put on swimming costumes and swam lengths of the hall, ending the evening with hot chocolate and wafer biscuits. They were challenged to raise money by being sponsored for the number of lengths each girl pledged to raise at least £2.

Both units worked hard to gain their Time Travel Challenge badges. Rainbows took part in activities to gain their bunny bobs which came in seven colours with an activity for each colour. The Brownies were challenged to take part in activities undertaken by past Brownies to become first and second-class Brownies – this included remembering messages and semaphore.

This year the Rainbows went global by doing the Rainbow Global Roundabout. They each made a passport and filled it in as they did various activities from around the globe.

The Brownies were challenged to do street dancing when we had a visit from Debbie Brandon who kept them on their toes. A very energetic evening, which they wish to be repeated. Some of the girls joined with other Brownies in our district for a day at Milldale doing various activities to gain their campfire challenge badge.

Our Brownie holiday this year was spent at the Kilgrimol Centre Lytham St Anne's. The girls had fun exploring the High School Musical theme. They spent time doing crafts, playing on the beach and in the grounds. We visited Blackpool Tower where we marvelled at the wonderful circus. It was great when Andrew and Pamela came to visit and took part in a very energetic game of rounders.

In September our Rainbows and Brownies joined with the rest of Cheshire Border for an afternoon of fun at Congleton Park as we celebrated Starburst the start of our celebration of 100 years of Guiding. There was so much to look at, crafts, face painting, steel bands, heritage exhibitions and many giant helter-skelter and other blow ups to climb on.

As we got together for the finale of the day unfortunately the heavens opened and soaked everyone it was such a great shame.

I personally must thank Nicola for all she did during the second half of the year when I was in hospital and when I returned home still unable to do very much. Without her all these activities certainly would not have been possible.

This year we look forward to activities to celebrate out 100 years culminating in renewing our Promises at Macclesfield Football Ground on 20 October 2010.

**Yvonne Farmer**

## **SCOUT TROUP REPORT**

It has been another busy year for the group with an average of 66 young people and children regularly attending with the support of the Leadership Team.

2009 saw the 21<sup>st</sup> anniversary since the start of our Beaver Colony at Union Street, and a number of special events were held to celebrate this, including a party, of course. The banner still remains in situ as a reminder for now of 21 years of 'Fun and Friends'. Doesn't time fly? We still have contact with

some who were in the original Beaver Colony, and one has even returned as a Leader (Kevin Lawton).

The Group continues to attract 'old' members who have decided to return as helpers and possible future Leaders. This is really encouraging to those of us on the leadership team that have been delivering scouting at Union Street for many years, and I pay tribute to all the Leadership Team for their commitment and dedication week after week.

We are proud that children of all abilities and backgrounds are able to come and take part in scouting activities here. We have at least three children with special needs, but they are integrated and take a full part in all that goes on as we focus on the person and not the disability. We welcomed a family from Bangladesh to the group and we now have a young man who has been brought up in the Hindu tradition, who has attended at least two of our parade services so far, and enjoyed the experience, and loves attending every Friday night.

We would like to thank all at Union Street for your continued support of Scouting in this place, and look forward to 2010. The highlight of the summer was the open air parade service at Milldale Campsite, which was attended by over 100 people! Even though we had to use the building due to the weather, we are delighted that this is now 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 19<sup>th</sup> March 2010, starting at 7.00pm? Please feel free to come along that night and hear about the activities of the group in all the sections.

Wish best wishes from us all in the 15<sup>th</sup>.

**Paul Boskett** - Group Scout Leader

## **J CLUB**

Attendance at J Club has again been steady throughout 2009 and attendance awards have been welcomed and acknowledged during our Sunday Morning services. We welcome Cameron, Ayo, Tyrese & Lara who have already been eager to contribute their enthusiasm to both J Club and Sunday services. I never cease to be amazed at the children's creativity, imagination and willingness to take part in J Club sessions – they are always very keen to display their work to the rest of the church fellowship. Please take every opportunity during coffee to talk to the children about what they have been doing and show interest if you notice anything new on display.

Dena and I feel blessed (and sometimes challenged) by the role which God has guided us to within the church, but we would really welcome any offers of help from anyone who feels that they would like to share the J Club leadership role. Please ask Dena or myself if you are interested. We give thanks for the lives of the children and young people within our care, for Andrew's continued support throughout the year and for his amusing and inclusive children's addresses which often generate further discussions in J Club.

Attendance at our Holiday Clubs this year has been disappointing, but for those children who have been present, there has been a wide variety of activities to keep them amused and to help them to learn more about God's love for his people. We are currently reviewing our clubs for 2010 but are committed to their continuation as part of church life in this community. May I offer my thanks to everyone who has helped in any way throughout the year – for your commitment, enthusiasm and creative ideas. We ask for God's guidance in showing us the way forward in this exciting venture to enable children and young people to come to know Jesus and open their hearts to his eternal love.

**Gill Lindop**