



Dawn Service at the seaside



Good Friday Walk of Witness



THE STRAND CHURCH, DAWLISH (United Reformed)

ANNUAL REPORTS 2012



Christmas Day lunch for those on their own



Toddlers at Coffee and Kids



Lunch Club

MINISTER'S REPORT

In many ways for both the Strand Church and the Strand Centre 2012 was a year of preparation. For the centre it was preparing for the building work in the foyer; and for the church it was preparing to take advantages of the opportunities which the growth of the centre has provided.

It is encouraging that during the year we established a **Prayer Meeting** on Friday mornings so that the continuing work is undergirded by regular corporate prayer as well as the prayers of individuals. This has made the elders even more anxious to establish the Strand Chapel in the west vestibule. We believe it will be well used.

The **Bible Study Group** has also become established. It has looked at most of the smaller epistles as well as the history of the Maccabaeus and general topics.

The church has continued to play its part in **Churches Together in Dawlish & District**. This include a **united morning service in St Gregory's** June to mark the Queen's Diamond Jubilee and taking responsibility for the Christian Aid Week service and the **Christmas Nativity Play** on The Lawn. We also seek to work closely with the Methodist Church when we can. We have also supported and enjoyed **the social events** and **quizzes** arranged by the Torbay URC Churches.

At the end of the year Rychard Winslade handed over the job of **Church Treasurer** to Geoff Willis. We are very grateful to Rychard who has looked after our finances in years of considerable income and also much expenditure.

Attendance at services has dropped slightly over the year. Though not welcomed by everyone, the **Café Worship** has been appreciated by many and has given the opportunity for conversation at a deep personal level which does not seem to take place in any other context. We are fortunate to have a **Worship Group** which leads worship two or three times a year and we hope it will take on more of the leadership of worship as it gets more difficult to find lay preachers in our area.

In 2014 we shall be celebrating the **200th anniversary** of the signing of a Covenant to form the Congregational Church in Dawlish. The elders are reflecting on what might be the theme of the anniversary. As we enter a New Year it is clear that the challenges which lie ahead are going to be as demanding as those in recent years, and the commitment to God and to one another which was the basis of the 1814 Covenant will be just as much needed in the future as it was in the past.

Roger Whitehead

WORSHIP GROUP

The Worship Group has continued to meet most months during the year and have nearly completed the TLS LITE course which they started over six years ago!

The Study sessions are always put on hold when the Group is scheduled to take a Service for we like to have at least two months to prepare for such an event. We first look at the Revised Common Lectionary Readings for the appropriate Sunday, and see what 'message' comes out of them for us. Then each member takes a Reading and prepares a relevant message which a month later we hear, discuss and amend if necessary. We are then in a position to decide who will do which prayers, and choose the hymns to fit in with the different aspects of the message. Finally we like to have a rehearsal in the Church in the week previous to the Sunday in order to make sure we can be heard, and to know exactly where and when we shall be positioning ourselves during the Service.

June Wilson led the Christian Aid Service in May as neither Rychard nor I were available; and Rychard and June took the Service on the last Sunday before Advent (while Jean did what they had prepared together at the Methodist Church!)

Elwyn our organist is always very obliging in our requests for hymns and special music or a Choir contribution to the Service, and for this we thank him.

Jean Potter

COFFEE AND KIDS

Coffee & Kids has grown to a much bigger group recently – we regularly have 12 – 15 children with their grown ups which makes for a busier time but great fun. Its lovely to see the children that have been with us for over a year grow and develop their different interests and personalities.

We have been meeting in the hall since the building work started but will move into the auditorium after the Easter break. We are also going to start asking for a 50p donation per family to cover the cost of snack & activities.

Marie Whitehead

THE STRAND CENTRE

The church's mission to the community is undertaken mainly through the Strand Centre - see www.StrandCentre.org.uk.



FAIRTRADE

We have continued to ensure that Fairtrade coffee, tea and sugar are available at all events when refreshments are served in the Church and Centre.

New Directories were prepared at the beginning of 2012 to cover two years. They were ready to be launched during Fairtrade Fortnight in February and March. During that time an Afternoon Tea was held in the Strand Hall at which a speaker from Pakistan was due to speak. Unfortunately he had to return home because of an unexpected death in the family, but we were able to watch a power point presentation of the production of dried fruit in Pakistan, especially apricots which were his particular line.

We also had an event in the Auditorium with Brownies when they played games associated with Fairtrade. Jo Austin and I have spent half days at Cockwood and Kenton Primary Schools promoting Fairtrade in which schools are beginning to become more interested.

Because by the time One World Week came round in October, one of the Dawlish Brownie Packs was using the Strand Hall for their weekly meetings while their new Headquarters was being built, we were able to arrange an event for them in the Hall and Auditorium. We had asked them to 'spot' Fairtrade items which were 'hidden' in shop windows, and those who found most were given Fairtrade prizes.

We co-operated with Teignbridge Environmental Department in the production of re-usable ONYA bags to cut down on the use of plastic carriers which are so harmful to wildlife. These have been given free to Dawlish residents providing they sign a pledge to use them regularly.

During 2012 we had to re-apply for status as a Fairtrade Town, which meant showing that we had at least maintained, if not improved, the amount of Fairtrade promotion in the town. I am pleased to say that we achieved the renewal.

We have good support from the Co-op which supplies vouchers for those of us who are Members to buy Fairtrade goods from them for our special events.

I hope you will continue to support all we do during the coming twelve months, for the more support we get, the more likely we shall be to re-gain our status when it next comes up.

Jean Potter

COMMITMENT FOR LIFE

Our annual Service on 26th August was taken by Barbara Madge who told us, with illustrations, about the work which C4L supports in Palestine, Bangladesh, Jamaica and Zimbabwe, the last of which we support. C4L envelopes were distributed at the Service, and collected in over the following two weeks, as well as the boxes which some people keep in their homes in order to collect odd coins. As a result £273 was set in order to help the projects run by C4L in Zimbabwe

[Please note that the C4L Service this year will be on 23rd June when Miriam Webb, who has spent time in Zimbabwe, will tell us of some of her experiences there.]

Jean Potter

KNIT AND CHAT

We started 'Knit and Chat' in May 2005, with eight members; we now have 18 members, meeting every fortnight on a Tuesday afternoon. Not all members come to every meeting, but all knit at home. Not all members can knit! But they are happy to wind wool and make tea.

Roma Hibberd started the group when the Banner Group closed because we had no more wall space. When, last December, Roma was unable to continue, we were sorry to lose her leadership and wish to thank her very much, and give Best Wishes for the future.

There have been no meetings during the building work. New comers are always welcome whether church members or not.

We are not a fund-raising group. Each member pays 50p each meeting to buy wool and give a £50 donation at Christmas. Fortunately we have wool given to us and members sometimes use their own.

This year we made 134 jumpers, 50 comfort dolls and 12 blankets.

When a consignment is ready, we display them in the corner of the church; they are blessed by the Minister, and then bundled up and stored in an Elder's spare bedroom. Another Elder then transports them to the point of departure for Malawi. We would like to thank them both.

Stella Hughes

MESSY CHURCH

It's been another messy and fun filled year! But..... we have been reminded by the National Messy Church movement that we are "a church for families", so we took a two month break and started again in March with family groups only. Messy Church is not meant to be a children's club but a Church for families who may not feel able to come to traditional Church service on a Sunday. So we now have activities for adults and a 'Big Question' discussion area where anyone can talk about deeper faith issues.

Our first 'new-style' Messy Church had 40 participants and chairs for all which meant everyone sitting round the tables together - sharing and being busy! If anyone feels they can come to pass on their craft/knitting/sewing skills for one session we'd be very happy to see you.

Team: *Marie Whitehead, Pam Mann, Pat Willis, Jean Potter, Jan Adams and Christine Hattersley*

CHRISTIAN AID

A total amount of £8,732.17 was raised in 2012 for Christian Aid by the Churches in Dawlish. £325.80 was our contribution for the street collections and £213.60 for Lent Lunches. Geoff and I would like to thank all who helped with the House to House collections.

As always, there is a general lack of helpers for the door to door collections, so for 2013 we are only collecting in Brunel Court and Stonelands Mews. This will mean that our contribution will be smaller in next year's report.

Thank you also to all those who helped with the Lent Lunches for this year. We have raised a total of £249.01 which is very good. The Churches that have participated in serving Lent Lunches have agreed that all the monies collected will be sent to the Christian Aid Syrian Appeal.

If anyone would be interested in organising one of the Lent Lunches for 2014, please let either Geoff or I know. Christian Aid week is the Sunday 12th – Saturday, 18th May 2013.

Thank you.

Geoff and Pat Willis

FLOWER GROUP

It has been a busy but enjoyable year for the three of us. Normally we meet after the Sunday Service to discuss what is to be done during the coming week.

The general theme is to follow the Church Calendar and the Seasons. During 2012 there were several special occasions to celebrate.

In February Averil asked us to arrange some flowers in memory of Crawford, her late husband. Elwyn and Joan celebrated their 65th wedding Anniversary in March and requested that we made a floral arrangement to mark the occasion. The Violet Ball took place in May and help was given to the local Cancer Research Committee to decorate the Hall.

For the Wedding in July we were delighted to receive a generous allowance for flowers from the bride and groom. It was a very colourful occasion. The Harvest Festival took place in September and the Church was decorated in the usual way. Then towards the end of November our plans were made for Christmas, starting with the large Advent Ring and later in December with a pedestal arrangement of seasonal foliage and flowers and the Christmas tree.

Donations, however small, towards the provision of flowers are always welcome!

Gwen Davies, Marie Coulthard and Eric Carless

THE CHOIR

2012 has followed the usual routine for the Choir. Practices were held in the Foyer on Fridays from 5.45pm to 6.45pm, except for a few weeks in the winter when the days were short and it got dark early.

We have sung hymns mostly, with Anthems for special Services at Easter, Harvest, Advent and Christmas and occasionally in between. We enjoy our singing and helping to lead the Worship in Church and we thank Elwyn for leading us with the music.

We always welcome new members, and one new person joined during the year.

Joan Jones

FOR MORE INFORMATION

For details of our weekly activities visit www.StrandChurch.org.uk



Hot Cross Bun Service



Burns Night: bringing in the haggis



Our church's mission statement

Following the example of Christ,
our Church Fellowship exists to love God
and our neighbour with sincerity;
through worship, prayer, fellowship, guidance and healing
to help deepen our relationship with God
and to equip all to serve the community
with care, compassion and commitment
to the glory of God.



Queen of Smoke rock concert



Knit & Chat's work for orphans



Friendship Hour