

ANNUAL REPORT 2019-2020



Aylesbury Methodist Church & Centre

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Covid-secure church seating layout	



Richard looks ahead

Minister's Introduction – Rev. Richard Atkinson

I write this in the midst of preparing to return to streaming worship from my office and the thought of all the buttons I need to press in the right order while trying to look composed. Life has changed and so we, as the church has always done, have sought to adapt as best we can. Worship is different but happening, much has been put on hold, some new elements have emerged and so our communal life goes on. I want to commend our pastoral and property teams for all they have done in this period to keep us connected and ensure our building is Covid secure. They show how in a variety of ways the life of the church goes on even in uncertain times.

Then there is the question of how this year will change us? Will folk now used to sitting at home with coffee by their side in worship want to do the same in church? Have the singers who have blessed our worship added a dimension we might want to stay? Are Zoom meetings a way forward? We will not be the same and we have the opportunity to talk about what else might enhance our journey into the future? How do we build on who we are and listen to the various voices within our community?

From the darkness of Covid, my prayer is that exciting times might emerge when we all will see our God active in our midst. Blessings, Richard.



OUR ORGANISATION



Aylesbury Methodist Church & Centre is a town centre, multi-racial, inclusive, welcoming church with a growing membership, pre-Covid-19 of 240 and average Sunday attendances of 150. We are one of 17 churches in the Vale of Aylesbury Methodist Circuit. This, in turn, is one of the 29 Circuits making up the Northampton District, whilst 36 Districts make up the Methodist Connexion. An annual conference, which this year had to be a virtual conference, agrees policy that is set out in The Constitutional Practice & Discipline of the Methodist Church (CPD).

The Church Council is the local decision-making body of each church. Its constitution and the appointment of its members are set out in CPD. Church Council members are also the church trustees.

The Leadership Team is appointed by and reports to the Church Council and acts as their executive arm. Chaired by the minister, it seeks to co-ordinate and guide the activities of the church and centre. Also appointed by the Church Council are the Church Stewards, who are responsible for the smooth running of the Sunday services and for being a two-way communication conduit between the minister and congregation.

LEADERSHIP TEAM – Peter Green

Chaired by Richard as our new minister, in 2019 B.C. (Before Covid) our early meetings enabled the Friday Food initiative for homeless people to begin, led by Karen Crussell and Ken Harris. In 2020 D.C. (During Covid), we were supportive in the transfer of food provision to the government-funded hotel accommodation for these clients.

Supported by Church Council, we also sought grants for a full-time Community Development Worker. The feedback was that in normal times the position would have been fully funded but because of the pandemic, all Methodist funding is on hold for a year. We are encouraged to try again when new funding criteria is finalised. Coronavirus put our plans for a Welcome Listening service on hold. Security, safeguarding and community centre user groups have also been regular topics for review and action where needed.

Since lockdown, meetings by Zoom have enabled us to organise the streaming of services from the manse and implement Richard's initiative for daily 'Thought For The Day' videos by the circuit ministers and local preachers. To ensure that pastoral and financial challenges caused by the pandemic were properly supported, Pauline Noble and Roger Kirk were

seconded to the team. Zoom meetings have also enabled detailed planning for a socially distanced safe return to church worship in September.

Members of the Leadership Team this year have been Rev. Richard Atkinson, Peter Green, Kevin Hardern, Vivienne Kemp, Gill Marks, Margaret Miskin, Trevor Nord, Albert Odro, Tim Olufosoye and Jennie Torpey.

Stewards' Report – Gill Marks



Our 2019 harvest congregation before the pandemic

Due to the restrictions of the Covid Pandemic AMC has been closed for a lot of this year. But once we were able to open again in September our stewards have been busy with the organisation of having a socially distanced church service. They have been responsible for setting out the seating in church and determining how many people we are able to seat, therefore allowing those who wish to come back to worship.

We welcomed Gill Nord into the group of stewards this year but unfortunately said goodbye to Trevor Nord but thank him for his hard work and commitment in the past. We are grateful at the moment for the help of some past stewards who have come forward to volunteer as we find the need for more help on a Sunday morning with the safe flow of people. Many of our annual services have of course been cancelled but we look forward to the future when we will be able to get back to normal gatherings and of course singing in church. We think

particularly at this time, as arrangements are being made, of what we might be able to do over the Christmas period.

We would like to thank the congregation for being patient with us during this time as regulations change so often it is sometimes difficult to keep up with what and how we are able to do things.

Property Report – Kevin Hardern



The resurfaced hall with badminton court markings for future use

This was indeed a year of two halves. The Autumn brought about a leak in the upstairs room from the roof, which eventually was found to be some sponge lagging that the local birds had taken to, in order to warm their nests over winter we assume. Bob taped it all up, Albert and Harry repainted, and all was well after a bit of a scare. We also engaged builders to clear side hoppers and repair the front walling corners, which were issues raised by the five yearly Quinquennial inspection that the church undertakes to make sure we are maintaining the premises in good condition. Also noted was a wall at the side of the fire escape, which was being destabilised by a neighbour's tree. Paul Ingram has arranged for the tree to be removed, but we still need to repair the wall.

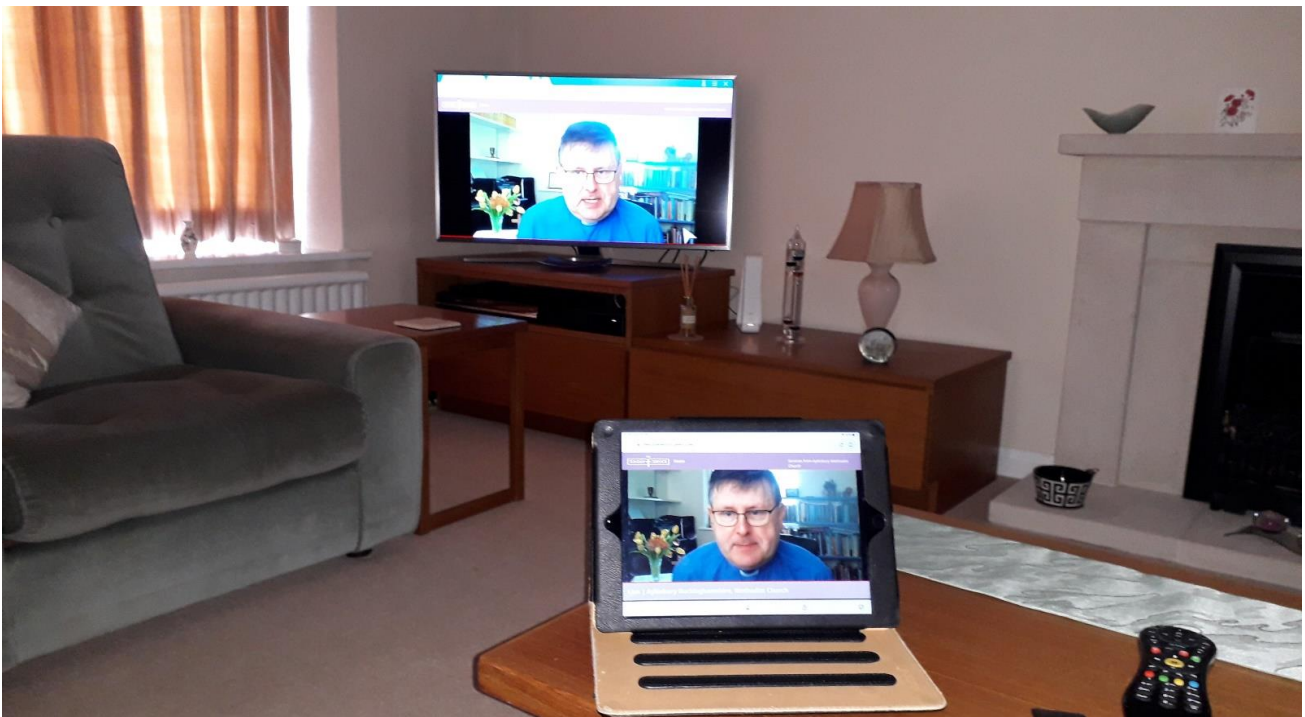
The major project this year was the sanding down and resurfacing of the hall floor, a combined effort over the early part of the pandemic period, but we managed to get it completed along with laying out a badminton court for future use. A full 10 year check of the electricity has been undertaken during the year, and during heavy rain in Spring we had a major overflow of water due to a blocked roof exit, all of which was dealt with and dried out within a week. Great team effort, which is evident in everything we do here at AMC, including the weekly premises inspections during lockdown and closure. Thanks to Bob, Tim and Steve for their efforts during this period.

Community Centre – Peter Farmer

During the first half of the year, the Community Centre provided a warm welcome, training, support, encouragement, and companionship to a very wide range of individuals and groups – including the very young to the most mature, the active and the disabled, the vulnerable and those lacking confidence or self-esteem, - all in a safe, friendly and caring environment.

The Coronavirus epidemic led to the closure of the Centre for much of the second half of the year except for the NHS Blood and Transplant Service, providing an essential service in the fight against the epidemic. Towards the end of the year, and subject to the most onerous social distancing and hygiene safeguards, accommodation was opened for those caring for individuals with severe learning disabilities and for those providing a safe environment for children from broken families to meet their absent parents.

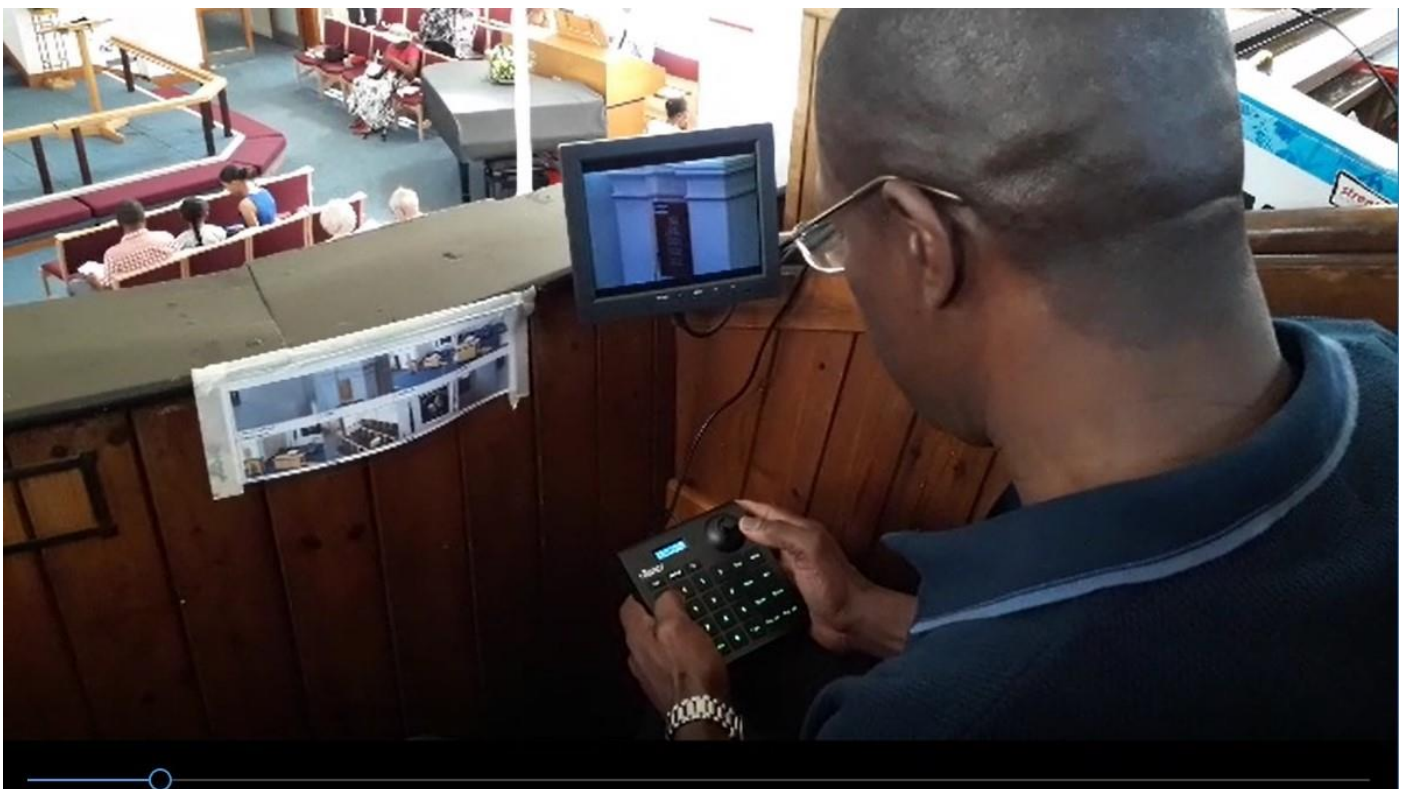
Website & Streaming – Peter Green



Our streamed services could be accessed on a variety of platforms, such as smart phones and TVs, laptops, and tablets

Our church website is designed to give people outside the church 'a shop window' of who we are, what we do and why we do it. In addition, it seeks to give our own church members up to date news. One part of this has been the posting of five news items each week, with a linked Tweet and Facebook posting. Since the lockdown, there have been fewer postings but six Thought for The Day videos each week presented by the circuit ministers and local preachers. They were based on various themes and showed the relevant Bible passages. It thereby provided those with internet access some spiritual nourishment and a means of continuing to feel part of the church family.

Being one of eight U.K. churches involved in an experimental project to provide a streaming capability has proved hugely beneficial, especially during the pandemic. Before lockdown, The Sunday Service charity had overcome initial teething problems and had been providing a consistently reliable service. With the lockdown and closure of the church, they also enabled Richard to stream weekly services from the manse, with access via the Streaming button on our website. Our provider's figures show an average of 234 viewings for each of the live streams between April and August. There were additional viewings of the recorded versions. With Covid-19 restrictions reducing our camera operators from four to two (Harry Darku and Albert Odro), we may need to recruit other helpers in the coming year.



Albert Odro operating the streaming equipment provided by the Christian charity, The Sunday Service

YOUTH ACTIVITIES

Boys' Brigade – Steve Kemp

Our year got off to a good start with steady attendance and a small increase in numbers. Keeping hold of the older ones is still difficult as they are always busy. Covid-19 lockdown prevented face-to-face activities, but Headquarters produced excellent weekly resources under #BBatHOME which many boys engaged with. Parents proved key in supporting this amongst home working and home schooling. We will return to face-to-face activities after the Summer Holidays with non-overlapping sessions for the different age groups and social distancing in place for boys and parents.

As always, I am very grateful to all the officers and helpers and the continued support from all parents/carers that enables BB to run, I truly believe we make a difference to the boys' confidence, outlook and sense of community.

Girls' Brigade – Sarah Davidge & Dawn Wright



Where to start with a review of our last year. One thing has remained consistent in uncertain times - the friendship and kindness shown to each other by our girls. They never cease to amaze us with a thoughtful remark or a smile during hard times.

Over the last year we have continued to see over 20 girls come along each Monday to share fellowship, games, Bible stories, discussions, prayer, cookery, and craft. Each week the rooms of the church were heard to be full of chatter, squeals, and laughter. We were getting ready to say goodbye to Jen and Hannah as they headed to new adventures at University. They were our longest serving girls who had attended for 13 years and been such a huge and special part of Girls Brigade. But then came COVID 19 and everything changed....

Like all organisations it has been challenging over the last few months. We have been unable to meet face to face, but resources have been sent out to the girls and we are now back meeting each week through zoom. We all start together then divide into breakout rooms and come back as one for a prayer before we finish - not how any of us would want it but it means we can still share smiles and fellowship. We pray that in the next few months we will be back face to face and despairing at how loud girls' squeals can be when they are all having fun!

J Team and Creche - Vivienne Kemp

Numbers have remained steady this year and several youngsters have moved up from Creche to join J Team. We regularly have about 10-15 children who attend our activities. However, Coronavirus has rather stopped us in our tracks. It had been intended that our older

members of J Team would lead a service in June 2020, but lockdown happened even before we'd started our initial planning. J Team was suspended from March and it was agreed to wait until the schools returned and we could better understand what safety measures needed to be put in place before resuming J Team Activities.

Several of our members have departed to go to university or pursue a gap year and we send them our love and best wishes in their new endeavours. My thank, as always, to the members of the J Team staff who give up their time to plan and run sessions with our youngsters.

Sunbeams – Margaret Miskin



What a mix of a year we have had. Numbers have been steady on a weekly basis with new parents/grandparents joining us. It is so lovely to have such a large space for the children to play in. Our activities have been varied to include all ethnicities in the group. We celebrated Christmas, Easter, Diwali, Summer, Autumn and Spring. The children (and adults) enjoy doing craft activities. During lockdown we managed to do a few zoom meetings so that we could keep in touch with our families. We were so sorry to

have to say a sad farewell to Mel, our Youth worker. She has been such a bonus to our group and will be greatly missed by all.

Youth Exchange - Vivienne Kemp and Dawn Wright



For the first time in its 57-year history, we have had to suspend our annual German Exchange for 2020. We had successfully recruited 13 youngsters to take part and were finalising the partner matching exercise when Coronavirus struck. We waited to see how the situation would develop over the Easter holidays but were then forced to make the decision to suspend the exchange for this year.

Initially our German partners were surprised as the virus does not seem to have had the same effect in Germany but as they saw the infections rise in Britain, they began to appreciate how serious the situation was over here. It is unlikely that we will know before spring whether there will be an Exchange in 2021.

Youth Report – Charlie Levitt



*Charlie Levitt – A member
of the District Young
Leaders' Scheme*

Between September 2019 and March 2020, the youth group met weekly at the church site on Wednesdays between 7.30 and 8.30pm. Each month had a 4-week plan, so each week had a different plan (i.e. social, discussion, drama and singing) with the occasional 5th Wednesday also being a social week. Mel, our Family & Youth Worker, led the sessions, giving options of cooking nights, karaoke, board games and more. There was a core group of attendees of around 6, with a usual attendance of 8-10. Each attendee was supposed to pay £1 on entry, but this was not enforced, and snacks and drinks were provided each week out of the youth fund. In December we threw the 2nd Christmas Ball, with the help of some of the young people on planning, and had a higher attendance compared to the first - around 40 young people.

As we entered lockdown, we transferred to online sessions initially run on Zoom, and later, Google Meet. For practical reasons, we ran both at the same time. The core number dropped slightly, and the attendance decreased too. No fee was charged. Sessions were still led by Mel with a few sessions handed over to the young people; July was completely run by young people and August sessions were run by me as the new leader of the youth group. The sessions leaned more towards discussion, but Mel continued to provide variety with drama and quizzes.

Since schools have returned, I have been looking to organise a face-to-face youth group, but this has not yet happened. The sessions have continued each Wednesday, with discussions and quizzes. Attendance has dropped again with young people returning to school and university, so the numbers are usually around 3 or 4 young people. The sessions aren't focused around a Christian message, but do include weekly prayers and opportunities for the young people to discuss religion and its meaning to them.

Looking forward, I am hoping to find some helpers to help engage with the young people and give a different face and voice. I am also looking for a replacement leader for the youth group from around January time, most likely. The club needs more advertising to be done to attract more young people and more variety to keep them attending. Hopefully after this lockdown, if the situation allows, we will be able to use the church hall and meet in person, which should attract back a couple of members who are not currently attending. I do not plan on running a virtual Christmas event this year but may run a summer event if the situation allows. The details of this have not yet been decided.

Thank You Mel Brown – The Aylesbury Church Family



Melvina Brown – Former AMC Youth & Family Worker & newly appointed Northants Methodist District Community Chaplain

Mel was our Youth & Family Worker for three years to the end of August 2020, when the funding for her contract ended. Latterly, she worked with the Leadership Team to ensure continuity of her work. The young people presented her with a scrapbook filled with over 40 appreciative messages from those in the church and related organisations who she worked with. We are grateful for the amazing job she did, not just with the young people but also by sharing her faith and good spirit with everyone she met. It had been hoped to get her back to express our thanks in public, but Covid-19 got in the way.

We had also hoped that Mel would apply for our planned Community Development Worker post, but due to the coronavirus, all Methodist funding was temporarily frozen in the summer and so our plans had to be put on hold. However, we are pleased to announce that our District have now appointed her as Community Chaplain for some new housing developments. The key role is “To enable and equip local Christians, within the Northampton Methodist district, in responding to new housing in their local context, particularly being a Christian presence on the new housing estates of Overstone Leys and Overstone Green.” Mel has said she is happy, honoured and grateful for the job and that her journey with the Methodist Church continues. On behalf of all the church family, we send our love, prayers, congratulations and best wishes to her in her new role.

OUR ACTIVITIES

Banner Group – Brenda Horne

Since September, the group has made some new bright and cheerful covers for the floor cushions belonging to the Child Contact Centre. As usual we were asked to make the banner for this year's World Day of Prayer. This proved to be another challenge involving fabric painting as well as sewing! A new banner for Action for Children incorporating their new logo was started in the spring and then Covid struck and we haven't met since March 10th. We are hopeful of getting back to creating some exciting new banners, one day!

Bedgrove House Group - Rosemarie Bucknell

What a strange year it has been. Our group met in November 2019 and planned our events calendar. Two more people joined us which makes us a group of seventeen. We did not meet in December because of the demands on all of our time at this point in the year. So January

saw us gathered together for a lunch out at The Harrow at Bishopstone where we had a great time. February found us gathered together to play those board games that we used to play in our youth, a delightful change from the electronic sort.

Then lockdown came and isolated us all in our own bubbles. I emailed the group monthly which sort of kept us together. One of our group sadly caught Covid-19 but recovered well. Another group member kept our musical interests alive by notifying us of The Scot Brothers recitals which we could log onto through our computers. Thought for the Day from various members of the Methodist Circuit and Morning Service on a Sunday from the study of Rev. Richard Atkinson kept us fed spiritually.

New skills have been learnt such as communicating through Skype and Zoom especially poignant for those of us who have not seen our families in person for months. I for one have attended lectures online. Some of us managed chats in gardens or company on walks, keeping the appropriate distance of course, and have had our senses refreshed with the beauty and sounds of nature. So uplifting for the soul.

Coach Outings – Pauline Noble

Owing to the pandemic, the only outing we had was last December to Christmas Celebration at the Royal Albert Hall when 49 of us thoroughly enjoyed an evening with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra and Temple Church Choir celebrating a pre-Christmas evening of festive fun and great music.

Flower Arrangers Report - Janice Matthews



Every Sunday a fresh arrangement of flowers is displayed at the front of the church, appearing as a decorative symbol of God's love. These displays are created and provided on a roster basis by our small team of flower arrangers, Janice, Melanie, Edith and Ruby with occasional help from others.

Most weeks the cost of the flowers is met by a church member, usually in dedication and memory of a lost family member. Vacant Sundays remain, so anyone wishing to make such a donation should please contact Janice. In normal years (no Covid 19), the Flower Arrangers team also provide the fruit, vegetable and floral displays for the Harvest Festival service, likewise the holly and decorations for the Carol Service. They also provide flowers for the vestibule and elsewhere on the premises, including the provision and caring of the decorative shrubs outside the front of the church. Furthermore, they provide appropriate flower displays for Weddings as and when required.

Friday Food – Karen Crussell

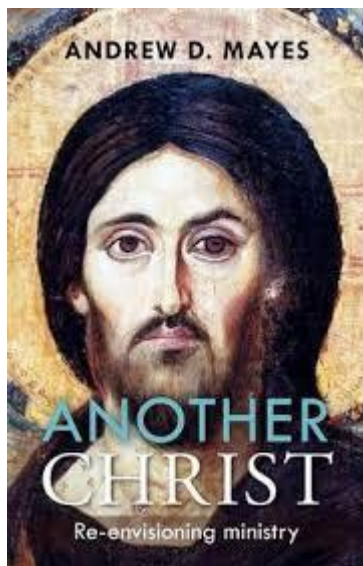


Started in November 2019, Friday Food provides a free, hot nutritious meal for the homeless and those who struggle to feed themselves. During its first three months, 54 different people have used the drop-in facility with an average of around 10 guests each night. The meals are provided by 9 different volunteers and a rota of 27 people, all recruited, trained and DBS checked, and who share a rota of Team Leader, Security, Hospitality and Kitchen. The meals have been much appreciated, and while the primary aim of

the project has been to provide good food and a welcome to people on the margins of society, it has also been able to provide some additional support in particular circumstances.

Then Covid-19 and the lockdown happened. However, within a week, rough sleepers were being housed by the council in a local hotel. After a flurry of emails and phone calls, we had arranged for the Quethodists (Quakers and Methodists!) to provide a hot meal four days of the week. The Catholics and Labour Action Against Poverty committed to provide the rest. We are hugely grateful to our volunteers who are catering for around a dozen people each time.

Good Faith Book Club – Peter Green



In November, the book club led the service at Aylesbury in a local arrangement, referring to several of the books we have read over the years. We also took part in the Christmas Tree Festival with decorations based on Dickens' Christmas Carol.

We had two 'normal' meetings at church this year, then due to Covid-19 restrictions, we had two books where we all submitted and shared our individual reactions. Latterly, we had to settle for Zoom meetings that enabled most, but not all of us, to share our thoughts together. We hope to move to both an actual meeting and a Zoom meeting in the new year, to help ensure everyone can take part in one or the other, but this will depend on how the pandemic develops.

This year's books included three contrasting faith journeys of a banker, TV presenter and Methodist President, an inspirational story of the growth of a charity to feed over a million children, a look at the good and bad in religion and a fresh exploration and richer insights into the life, teachings and images of Christ.

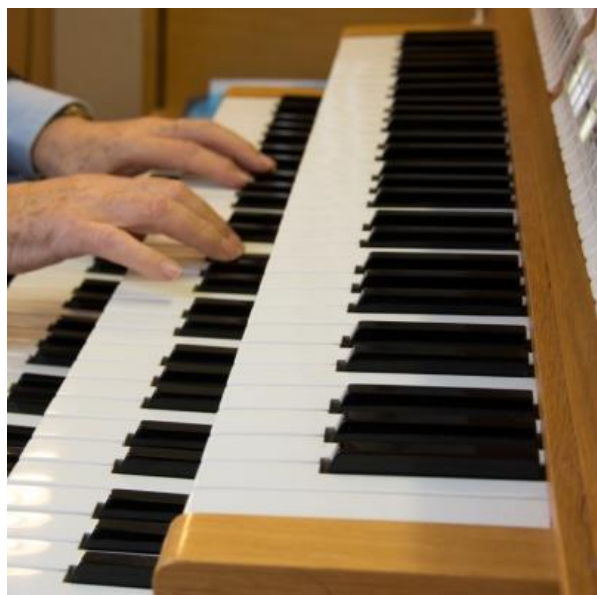
In Stitches – Pauline Latham

Like other church groups, we have had to suspend our meetings during the coronavirus lock down. We all look forward to meeting again when conditions allow.

Mahjong Club – Pat Martin Seehusen

The Mahjong club started with 4 members, two with experience and two who were new to the game. The club met on alternate Fridays and progress learning the game was steady. Interest in the game was such that the evenings extended from the original hour and a half to two hours. A new member boosted the numbers and all regularly attended until the national lockdown in March. Ideas to play the game while taking account of current social restrictions are being considered.

Music Director's Report – Derrick Matthews



Up until the outbreak of the Coronavirus, the Choir and Organists had continued to provide a strong lead to the music in our worship. I particularly highlight the Carol Service where we were joined by singers from the Music Group, in the singing of anthems by Rutter and Joubert. In association with the Music Director and Choir from Tring Parish Church, preparations had begun to present another rendering in Passiontide of John Stainer's moving worship cantata 'The Crucifixion.' Sadly, this had to be cancelled. Furthermore, plans had begun for the Annual July Circuit Service 'Songs of Praise', but this also was not possible.

Likewise, the acclaimed Annual Organ Concert (35th Year) was to have taken place in May by one of this country's leading recitalists, Ian Tracey of Liverpool Cathedral. We look forward to rescheduling his visit in another year.

Since services, though limited, resumed at AMC, on various Sundays the organists have provided accompaniment to volunteer solo singers enabling the inclusion of at least three hymns. Their contribution has been greatly appreciated. The choir recently made presentation and tribute to tenor Michael Clark, a dedicated and valued member of the choir for over thirty years. His contribution will be greatly missed. Choir Members and Organists greatly miss providing their service to the worship of our church and hopefully it will not be too long before 'normal service can be resumed!'

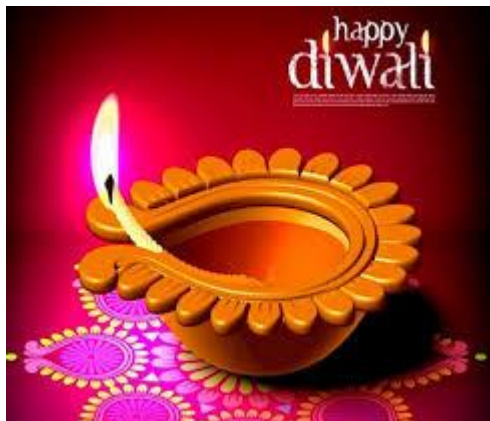
The Preachers and Stewards give generous support to the Choir and this is greatly appreciated.

Music Group – Julie Maguire & Sue Kirk



Before the coronavirus caused the closure of places of worship, we had been singing and playing at the monthly family services and at occasional special services. Since returning to worship in church, we have been able to lead some services whilst observing social distancing requirements. We look forward to seeing what the 'new normal' will look like when the pandemic threat is overcome.

SOS – Lynn Bernstone



SOS is a fellowship group which always seems to revolve around food. In September we all had to create a meal for four people for under £5, and we gathered with our creations for an evening of eating and friendly banter. During the latter part of last year we celebrated Diwali with a fabulous selection of Indian dishes which we had created surrounded by candles and laughter. After our traditional new year's meal, sharing delicious food and wine, we met in February to plan for the year ahead. No one could have foreseen the way the year was about to unfold.

We have kept in touch with regular zoom meetings and quizzes during lockdown, and on one evening we managed a small, socially distanced, picnic as things eased a little. We are just starting up our zoom meetings again with the promise of a virtual meal one evening and I'm sure a few more quizzes. We have much to look forward to as our program for 2020 will now become our program for 2021

Tuesday Fellowship – Coral Soulsby

We met fortnightly on Tuesday afternoons as usual, until the coronavirus restrictions forced us to close. As several of our members are in the vulnerable age group, it may be some time before we are able to meet again.

Welcome Space Coffee Bar - Pat Martin Seehusen

The coffee bar has continued to have loyal customers, some visiting almost daily; also groups from the Strength and Stability class on Wednesdays and the knitting circle who meet on alternate Fridays continued to use the facility. From those who visited daily, it was clear that some valued the welcome and company.

We are grateful to volunteers who give up their time and to Sees the Day for their support; also thanks to the many cake bakers for their regular contributions. We always welcome new volunteers.

In March, the coffee bar closed when the national lockdown was announced. In mid-October it reopened one day a week. Many of the original volunteers were unable to make a commitment but we are optimistic that the service can continue at the reduced level.

OUR SUPPORTED CHARITIES

Action for Children – Pauline Noble



This has become a very difficult year for so many involved in fundraising including the work the church undertakes for Action for Children. During the year from April we would normally have held, or would be holding, a fundraising event at the local Aylesbury market, cake stalls at the Church, our annual Quiz, a popular Christmas Gift stall in Friars Square and would also have a couple of very valuable church collections. Another annual asset is the small change

that members and friends collect in Home Collecting boxes; these have yet to be collected in.

On a much brighter side in our year April 19 to the end of March 2020 we had raised £2925.22 from our events including £783.27 from the Home Collecting Boxes, plus a couple of donations which included £31.24 from Helen's penny bottle (too heavy to be included in her move to the north!). Separately we also paid in £50 from Cheddington and £125 from Wingrave Chapels. Thank you to everyone who supports the work of Action for Children; their work is so needed for vulnerable children, teenagers and parents with young children in this country, and no more so than in these difficult days of the pandemic.

For many years in this Church we have held a Toy and Gift Service and these donations have gone to one of the local Action for Children centres. Last year was a slight change. With no Action for Children Family Centre locally it was decided to support vulnerable children and families in our own area through the family centres run by the local council. This was a great success, the response was excellent, and Richard and I visited one of the centres with our cars bulging with presents. The presents would be given where the need was in Aylesbury and the staff were overwhelmed with the generosity of the giving including the beautiful knitted garments by a few of our church ladies and friends. Thank you to everyone who made a contribution.

Cards for Good Causes – John Miskin



After 32 year of selling cards & gifts for Card for Good Causes Christmas our shop has now raised over £667,000. Our usual team of duty managers and volunteers, made up of people from the various charities and from the church, sold £14,071 of cards and gifts this year. Once again, these generous people gave their time to help run the shop. We were very busy this year as, due to concerts, festivals & funerals we had to move the shop 9 times, not counting moving it every Saturday evening & Monday

morning.

Cards for Good Causes managed to raise over £5 million for the charities in 2019. These charities range from national charities to local charities. A special thanks goes to my duty managers, Steve Marks, Bob Bucknell, Geoff Nicholson, Arthur Sara and Cliff Darlington and the two assistants, Brian Taylor and Peter Watkins. A special thanks to my wife, Margaret, who helped sort out and display over 2000 gifts & advent calendars.

Karibuni Children – Joy Murphy



Chairman John Cotton, seen here with a Karibuni friend, wrote to thank all supporters for their help with the 700+ sponsored Karibuni children.

For everyone, this Methodist year, from September 2019, has presented challenges in many ways. In September Karibuni started the year with optimism and anticipation; this is our 25th anniversary year since Karibuni was founded by Corinne, supporting the projects in the Methodist Church in Kenya. 2020 was to be a year of events and a celebration of the many changed lives of children from the most deprived situations – children who had no hope and no future, many with no parents. And we had cause for celebration as we thanked God that the children were now healthy, bright, and confident. Through the years, we watched

them growing and maturing. We met them as they progressed through various stages of education and qualified in various roles, from a university lecturer through nurses, teachers, masons, dressmakers, car mechanics, accountants, social workers... and so on. The sky really is the limit.

Therefore, we continued planning – after all, coronavirus was happening far away in China! We went ahead and the trustee visit (including two new trustees) to all the projects happened in February and March where we were delighted to be with the children again,

meet with the management committees and see all the improvements in the projects and the personal developments the different staff had made.

We arrived back in the UK a week before Kenya confirmed their first case of Coronavirus and they went straight into lockdown – and the UK followed a few days later! We cancelled all the events we had planned and settled into a totally different life with everyone else. We became ‘experts’ on Zoom (had you heard of it before?).

The schools in Kenya had been closed and we realised that none of the children we provide with meals were getting any food – their only source of food is at school through Karibuni! Many would be existing on black tea and what they could scavenge! An appeal was quickly made to all our supporters and donors and thanks to their generosity – your generosity – Karibuni has sent enough money for every child to be given monthly food parcels and soap for their families to collect. You will see photographs of them happily receiving their parcels on the Karibuni, AMC and Circuit websites. In addition, Karibuni has been able to provide solar radios to younger children and small tablets to enable the children to get some education during these months. Those taking national exams have returned to school and as the others prepare to return to school, possibly in January, we are providing masks, hand sanitisers and water stations at nurseries and schools.

We continue to thank God for the generosity and faithfulness of our supporters who have enabled Karibuni to continue supporting the children and young people in the projects, especially in these challenging months when many people and charities are struggling.

Asante sana na Mungu Awabarike – Thank you and God Bless you all.

Link To Hope – Margaret Miskin

Our annual family and elderly shoebox appeal was down a little from last year. We managed to send 175 boxes from our local area plus a substantial amount of money donations. Link To Hope sent out 37,400 shoeboxes which had been collected throughout the UK. These were greeted with delight from families in Romania, Moldova, Bulgaria and Ukraine.

MHA – Jennie Torpey



MHA (originally called Methodist Homes for the Aged) is a charity founded in 1943 by members of the Methodist Church. The charity provides care, accommodation, and support services for older people throughout Britain.

Their mission is to inspire the best care and wellbeing at every stage of later life and are proud to be recognised as a leading provider of care and support in later life. They provide:

- care homes, many offering specialist dementia or nursing care.

- retirement living communities, with access to social and leisure facilities and flexible care if and when needed.
- 'Live at Home' community services to support those who wish to live independently in their own homes.

At AMC we usually have an annual retiring collection in June on MHA Sunday, sometimes inviting a speaker to tell us more about their work, especially about the local project, Hillside Care Home, just along the road.

Sadly, due to the church closures during the Covid-19 pandemic, MHA Sunday collections were unable to take place.

We have strong ties with Hillside, partly as a result of our close proximity, since AMC is more accessible for residents to attend our Sunday services. Our Minister and others regularly hold a short communion service for the residents at the home, and Hillside have often held a service at AMC for families and friends to remember those residents who have passed away. Funerals of Hillside residents also sometimes take place at our Church.

However, again, as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, communion services at Hillside were required to cease in March 2020, although one of our Church members regularly keeps in touch with some of the residents by telephone.

Whitechapel Mission – Ruth & Peter Watkins



As with so many things our work for the Mission has stalled this year; the Covid19 restrictions came in before Easter so it was not possible to hold the Easter Breakfast and we now enter the season of harvest with some restrictions still in place and no harvest services.

We have kept in touch with the Mission who are doing sterling work with increased numbers needing help and they report that although they have little money to fall back on supporters have managed to match the enormous outgoings. We know that folk at AMC have sent monetary donations and we are looking forward to Advent and being able to give food and money to try and make up for the harvest loss.

OUR FINANCES

Notes to the accounts – Roger Kirk

Basis of accounts

This year our formal accounts will be submitted, through the formal Methodist channels, on the Accruals basis. This allocates income and expenditure to the year to which they relate rather than in which they were received or paid thus providing a more meaningful picture of the accounts.

The year 2019/20 - General Fund

The accounts were badly affected by the closure of the Church during April to July 2020 due to the Corona Virus pandemic. Although the hall was used by the Blood Donor service during this time no other lettings took place and income from lettings were only £29,281 compared to £50,748 last year.

To compensate for the loss of lettings income, savings were made on several expenditure headings and an appeal for funds raised £6400. In August we needed to refurbish the badly worn hall floor at a cost of £ 5778.

The net result for the year was a deficit of £1,778, reducing our general fund balance to £35,089. This is £19,000 short of our target balance of £54,000, 33% of turnover.

Restricted Funds

The Welcome Area Fund shows expenditure on cafe furniture and a compensating grant from the Harding Trust. It just remains to pay the 2.5% retention to the contractor once a remaining job has been done. Any resulting surplus will be transferred to the general fund.

Balance Sheet

Assets and Liabilities include the following debtors and creditors.

Debtors and prepayments	£
Tax refund	7,414
Letting fees	4,209
Payment in advance to Circuit	6,218
	17,861
Creditors and receipts in advance	
Electrical inspection	3,500
Telephones	579
Utilities	230
Organ repair	1,500
Donation in advance	
(Young Leaders' Scheme)	2,000
	7,809



*Roger Kirk – Our Covid-19 safe
Treasurer*

AYLESBURY METHODIST CHURCH
Informal income and expenditure account for the year ended 31st August 2020
General (Unrestricted) Funds on accruals basis

Note: The full accounts submitted to the Vale of Aylesbury Circuit will be found in an appendix to the Trustees Report.

2018/19 £	GENERAL FUND	2019/20 £
	INCOME	
89,449	Offerings & tax recovered:	87,993
73,021	Collection (services, standing orders and annual)	69,455
16,428	Income Tax refund	18,538
111	Bank & CFB interest and investment income	131
50,748	Lettings	29,281
36,798	Other income, detail in shaded area below:	44,250
3,935	Fund raising	3,470
2,449	Donations and legacies	7,805
27,290	Layworker grants & donations and relevant gift aid tax	27,302
	- Government Job Protection Scheme re Covid 19	3,205
530	Weddings and funerals	881
1,848	Coffee Bar profits	1,488
746	Miscellaneous	100
177,106	Income Grand Total	161,655
	EXPENDITURE	
81,456	Circuit contribution	83,184
1,500	Donations and subscriptions	-
27,425	Repairs & maintenance, detail in shaded area below:	21,298
4,114	Building maintenance	11,014
8,998	Cleaner's wages and supplies	7,704
14,313	Equipment maintenance (incl. organ & piano £1,550)	2,581
15,270	Utilities & insurance, detail in shaded area below:	13,159
11,802	Heat, light, water and refuse	9,612
3,468	Insurance	3,547
43,872	Other expenditure, detail in shaded area below:	45,419
3,722	Administration	3,537
7,461	Administrators - wages	9,599
27,278	Layworker	27,552
2,132	Telephones	2,264
2,320	Church Activities	1,570
959	Publicity & miscellaneous expenses	897
169,523	Total Expenditure, excl. Welcome Area Improvements	163,060
7,583	NET INCOME/(EXPENDITURE) FOR THE YEAR accruals basis	(1,405)
29,404	Balance brought forward 1/9/2019	36,867
36,987	Subtotal	35,462
(120)	Net transfers between funds, excl. Welcome Area Fund	(373)
36,867	Subtotal	35,089
	Welcome Area Improvements:	
111,990	Funds transferred from the Welcome Area Fund	-
(111,990)	Above funds then expended on the Welcome Area and capitalised	-
36,867	GENERAL LIQUID FUNDS AT 31/8/20 C/ FWD.	35,089

AYLESBURY METHODIST CHURCH
Informal Income and Expenditure Accounts for the year ended 31 August 2020
Restricted Funds, Endowments and Church Organisations

Note: The full accounts submitted to the Vale of Aylesbury Circuit will be found in an appendix to the Trustees Report.

RESTRICTED FUNDS

2018/19		Welcome Area Fund	Benevolent Fund		Total 2019/20
£		£	£		£
	Income				
140	Offerings		64		64
105,453	Grants, donations, etc & tax recovered	6,272			6,272
105,593	Total income	6,272	64		6,337
	Payments				
100	Other expenses (£102,352 treated in 2018/19 as part of 'Transfer between funds' below)	3,268	155		3,423
100	Total expenditure	3,268	155		3,423
105,493	Net income / (expenditure)	3,004	(91)		2,914
9,637	Earlier years' expenditure capitalised (added to and treated in 2018/19 as part of 'Transfer between funds' below)	-			-
(111,990)	Transfers between funds	-			-
3,140	Net income / (expend.) after transfers	3,004	(91)		2,913
(2,270)	Balances brought forward 1/9/2019	389	481		870
3,140	Net income / (expenditure)	3,004	(91)		2,913
870	Balances carried forward 31/8/2020	3,393	390		3,783

ENDOWMENT FUNDS HELD BY THE TRUSTEES FOR METHODIST CHURCH PURPOSES

Totals 2018/19		Mead Bequest	Stranks & Staley's Bequests		Totals 2019/20
£		£	£		£
		Restricted	Unrestricted		
3,668	Balances brought forward 1/9/2019	210	3,535		3,746
37	Income	2	23		25
(30)	Paid to General Fund	(2)	(23)		(25)
-	Paid to J Team and Choir	-	-		-
70	Change in Value of investments	-	13		13
3,745	Balances carried forward 31/8/2020	210	3,548		3,758

CHURCH ORGANISATIONS

£	Income		£
	Offerings & tax recovered		
	Investment income, etc		
10,272	Other income		5,591
10,272	Total income		5,591
	Payments		
12,095	Other expenses		4,976
12,095	Total expenditure		4,976
(1,823)	Net income / (expenditure)		614
150	Transfers between funds		398
(1,673)	Net income / (expend.) after transfers		1,012
12,374	Balances brought forward 1/9/2019		10,702
(1,673)	Net income / (expenditure)		1,012
10,701	Balances carried forward 31/8/2020 *		11,714
	* Excludes Endowment Mead Bequest Fund, which is shown above.		

AYLESBURY METHODIST CHURCH

Informal Statement of Assets and Liabilities on an accruals basis as at 31st August 2020

Note: The full accounts submitted to the Vale of Aylesbury Circuit will be found in an appendix to the Trustees Report.

Actual 2018/19 £	Funds balances at 31st August 2020	General fund £	Restricted funds			Church orgs. £	Total £
			Welcome area £	Benevol- ent £	Endow- ments		
52,184	Liquid Funds per Income & Expend. accounts	35,089	3,393	390	3,758	11,715	54,345
1,015,720	Capitalised expenditure	1,015,720					1,015,720
1,067,904	Total funds	1,050,808	3,393	390	3,758	11,715	1,070,065
	Represented by:						
	Assets:						
	Capitalised expenditure on fixed tangible assets:						
903,730	Community centre improvements at cost b/f	1,015,720					1,015,720
111,990	Welcome area improvements at cost this year	-					-
1,015,720		1,015,720					1,015,720
	Current assets						
	Bank balances						
22,712	HSBC current	15,125					15,124
6,062	HSBC deposit	9,507					9,507
2,725	Metro current	182					182
14,158	Central Finance Board	972	3,393	390		158	4,912
100	Imprest account	100					100
10,444	Held by church organisations					11,557	11,557
	Endowment funds accounts*						-
3,535	Stranks & Staley's bequests				3,548		3,548
210	Mead bequest (J Team and choir)				210		210
11,189	Debtors and prepayments	17,861				-	17,861
71,135	Total current assets	43,747	3,393	390	3,758	11,715	63,003
	Current liabilities						
1,800	Lettings deposits	850					850
17,151	Creditors and amounts received in advance	7,809					7,809
18,951	Total liabilities	8,659					8,659
52,184	Net current assets (current assets less liabilities)	35,088	3,393	390	3,758	11,715	54,344
1,067,904	Net assets (all assets less liabilities)	1,050,807	3,393	390	3,758	11,715	1,070,064

*Held by Trustees for Methodist Church Purposes

There are differences of up to £1 which are due to rounding.

These informal accounts show the position as at 31st August 2020 before any charge for depreciation of fixed assets.

The formal accounts will include an appropriate charge, yet to be calculated.



Ready for Covid-secure worship

**CONTACT: Mr Roger Kirk, Church Treasurer,
77 Aylesbury Road,
Bierton, Aylesbury,
Bucks. HP22 5BT**

| Tel. 01296 415 312 | Email: kirk.roger@yahoo.co.uk |

ACCOUNTS: Roger Kirk | EDITOR: Peter Green | PRODUCTION: Jennie Torpey

AYLESBURY METHODIST CHURCHNo 1129749

Declarations and Scrutiny

I confirm that these accruals-based accounts for the year to 31 August 2020 have been prepared from the records of the Church and that they include all funds under the control of the Church trustees.

Signature of treasurer R. A. Kirk Date 16/11/2020

Name and address of treasurer: Roger Kirk.....

77 Aylesbury Road, Bierton, Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire, HP22 5BT

Presentation to the Church trustees

I confirm that the annual report and accounts for the year ended 31 August 2020 ~~were~~/will be* presented to the meeting of the Church trustees held on 4/3/2021

Signature of the Chair of the meeting X Richard X

Name of the Chair of the meeting: Rev. Richard Atkinson..... Date 17.11.2020

Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees of the

AYLESBURY METHODIST CHURCH

Charity Number 1129749

Responsibilities and basis of report

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the Aylesbury Methodist Church for the year ended 31 August 2020 set out on pages 1 to 11. As the Church's trustees, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ('the Act').

I report in respect of my examination of the Church's accounts carried out under section 145 of the Act and, in carrying out my examination, I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

Independent Examiner's Statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination which give me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

the accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Act; or
the accounts do not accord with the accounting records; or
the accounts do not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair' view, which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination
the trustees' annual report is not consistent with the accounts

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

I have obtained independent verification of all investments with the Trustees for Methodist Church Purposes or held in other trusts, bank balances and funds at the Central Finance Board of the Methodist Church which are individually in excess of £10,000 (ten thousand pounds) at the balance sheet date.

Signature of independent examiner 

Name of independent examiner: Michael Foote.....

Relevant professional qualification of independent examiner: FCA

Address 8 Bates Lane, Weston Turville, Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire

Post Code: HP22 5SL

Date 15th November 2020