



Annual Report 2013

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INDEX

3. AGM Agenda 2014
4. AGM Minutes 2013

8. Team Vicar's Report
10. Youth & Children's Work
12. Church Warden's Report
13. DCC Secretary's Report
15. Deanery Synod Report

16. 18-30 Group & Connect
17. CAMEO
18. Community
19. First Steps Toddler Group & Flower Ministry
20. House Groups & Men's Group
21. Monday Café
22. Music Group
23. Oasis & Prayers and readings
24. Prayer Co-Ordinator
25. Prayer Ministry & Pastoral Visitor
26. School Of Ministry
27. Side Persons & Parent Café
28. Soaking & Worship Drop-ins

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

MEADGATE CHURCH

GREAT BADDOW

HELD ON 19TH APRIL 2013.

The meeting was preceded by a short Holy Communion service.

Revd. Mones Farah welcomed everyone to the AGM. There were 31 members present. Jill Smith-Hughes was appointed as AGM Secretary.

Apologies for absence were received from:

J. Davidson, R. Davidson, D. Pye, D. Mead, D. Chasmer, G. Marriott, S. Farah, A. Harverson, T. Knights, E. McKenzie, J. Sach.

AGM Minutes 2013. These were approved unanimously, with one abstention, following an amendment to the section on Reports, where the number on the Electoral Roll should read 159 and not 59.

Matters Arising. There were no matters arising.

Vicar's Address.

Mones led a time of Open Prayer and read from Romans Ch. 4. Abraham was justified by faith. He believed in God and this was credited to him as righteousness. Our amazing God does this and showers us with love and blessings. Our righteousness is not dependent on what we do - we cannot take the credit and it is not as a result of our own efforts, but through the hand of God upon us. We can only go so far without God and this keeps us humble. In every area, we can reach the heights with God. Jesus was the only sinless man and yet, He too, was most reliant upon God. We must beware of self-satisfaction. God wants to do the ultimate with us!

Mones was keen to thank everyone for all their wonderful contributions to church life. It was great to see so many involved in different ministries – we know there are always pressures to maintain this level, but praise God for His provision!

Church activities were running smoothly on a day to day basis and Mones thanked those from the congregation who volunteered to help with cleaning and maintaining the kitchen and other parts of the building. He wished to make special mention of Judith Shepherd who made a great contribution in this area. He and Judith had trained together to gain important food hygiene certificates and these would soon require renewal. Health and

Safety requirements were in place and strictly adhered to and the District Church Wardens worked very hard to ensure this.

The District Church Council strived to keep on top of policies and regulations and in their general overview of church matters.

The Ministry Leadership Team also worked very hard to keep their eyes on the ball and the development and progress of the church.

Meadgate was blessed with so many organisations and this year, Mones wanted to focus on the Thursday Club and he thanked the whole team and especially, Sue Marriott, for her brilliant leadership over the past 5-6 years and Jean Hoare for her faithful support of the group over many years. There would be a link with the mid-week Holy Communion Service and the introduction of a new fortnightly Lunch Club, which, it was hoped, would encourage non-churched Senior Citizens to attend. This would come under the Community Worker's brief and Kirsty was very happy to work with Mones on this. Toni, the Pastoral Worker, would also be involved in the mid-week Communion.

In our 50th Anniversary year, it was exciting to see the on-going growth of the church, blessed with so many young people and our top priority must be provision for the young.

May was to be a month of prayer and a box would be placed for requests and answers. It was great to see so many contributions on the back wall.

Michael Green, the renowned speaker and writer, with a real passion for the lost, was booked to speak on 1st September and Eric Dell was to speak at a Men's Conference on 1st June.

During the celebrations, our Mission and Purpose Statement would be displayed in the entrance as a reminder of what we are here for – Jesus loves us and we love Him back. Jesus committed to us and we commit to Him. Mones thanked Emma and Chris Smith and Tom Warmington for their inspired work on the display.

On 28th April, Bishop John Rowe, a very reflective speaker, was to visit.

Mones concluded by saying what an amazing place Meadgate was to work in and to be in partnership with everyone.

Acceptance of Reports.

Electoral Roll/Congregational Register. David Pearce explained that this 'snapshot' had been taken on 18th April 2013. We were unique with both an Electoral Roll and a Congregational Register. The Electoral Roll stood at 134 (residents 73 and non-residents 61), compared with 159 in March 2012. There were 21 new members, including 2 transfers from the Congregational Register. The Congregational Register stood at 27 (residents 11, non-residents

16), compared with 10 in March 2012. There were 24 removals from the Electoral Roll and there were 22 new members on the Congregational Register of which 12 came from the Electoral Roll. There were 2 removals from the Congregational Register to the Electoral Roll. So, combining both rolls, we had a total of 161 church members. Mones thanked David for his hard work on this data.

The Deanery Synod Report was accepted unanimously by the meeting, as were all the Organisation Reports.

THE TREASURY REPORT

The Treasurer, David Belbin, referred to the Financial Statements for the year ended 31st December 2012 and he started by thanking Roy Davidson and Peter Petitt for all the additional support they gave him by counting and banking the Sunday giving. He also thanked the patient wives, Judy, June and Linda for their forbearance. He went through the accounts and looked particularly at sections M1 and M3, drawing attention to a large donation and expenses for Mones' sabbatical in M3. The incomes for outreach and courses were up in M1 and grants and salary costs were up, matching well. Some monies were simply 'in and out' e.g. through the Car Boot Sale. David referred to minimum wage requirements in M4, with particular mention of our new Pastoral and Community Workers. Interestingly, youth work costs had gone down, despite greater activity in this area, but again, monies were 'in and out' and salary costs were therefore subsumed. General running costs were down overall, despite some increases, as were administration costs. There was a big increase in other mission costs, particularly in connection with the Car Boot Sale, with expenses for the van, coffee machines and charity (Changing Faces) giving. The minibus reduced in value every year.

Our Parish Share was to go up significantly under a new, 'stand alone' formula.

David still had to register for Gift Aid from January 2013 and this would amount to more than £20,000.

David explained that there was a deficit of £12,000 on the General Fund and that a lot of activities were not funded by church giving. This was the 3rd year of the recession and we were now being hit by it. David warned that we needed to be careful.

Elizabeth Minnican wondered why we needed to pay for a TV licence, paid in 2012 under admin expenses, as she felt this was a waste of money. She also asked why the water bill was so cheap and David explained that this was a good deal available to charities.

Melvyn Sach referred to the monthly outgoings and asked if we could have more regular updates of the situation and also of large donations, perhaps quarterly, on the news sheet. He also said he would appreciate more news generally on the news sheet. He calculated

that the average monthly tithe for the church was £500 and asked where this went. David explained that we regularly gave money to CADEF and the Church Army and put aside £500 for mission (see M6), which was regularly agreed by the DCC. There were also outgoings for the community festivals, which came under the mission heading. Melvyn felt that the church should know that an anonymous donation of £23,000 had been sitting in the funds for over a year. Mones explained that 25% of the budget was set aside for evangelism and the DCC was due to discuss the allocation of this gift.

Chris Smith encouraged more prayer for money to come in so we can do more outreach work and he pledged that the Friday evening intercession group would do just that.

Nardia Tokawira wondered about the equipment repairs heading and David explained that repairs came out of the Building Development Fund and the cost of the large screen had been easily met from that fund last year.

Mones thanked David for all his hard work on the church finances and the accounts were accepted unanimously, following a proposal by Ed Buetow, seconded by Elizabeth Minnican.

Appointment of Sidespersons. The following were appointed unanimously as Sidespersons and Gail Brown and Mones thanked them for their much appreciated service: - Denise Hom, Gail Brown, June Davidson, Sue Marriott, Graham Marriott, Bill Rogers, Linda Belbin, David Belbin, Melvyn Sach, Jean Sach, Jill Smith-Hughes, Derek Stone, Jan Stone, Stuart Sadler, Angela Sadler, Judith Sheppard, Thelma Stokes, Sue Passfield.

Elections.

Two nominations had been received for District Church Wardens and so, Alison Mead and Duncan McKenzie were duly elected, unopposed.

Three nominations had been received for 3 vacancies on the District Church Council and so, Ros Coleridge, David Pearce and Jill Smith-Hughes were duly elected, unopposed, for a 3 year term of office.

There was 1 vacancy for 3 years on the PCC and no-one had been put forward for this, ahead of the AGM. However, Sarah Dixon expressed an interest and, following a proposal by David Belbin, seconded by Bill Hill, she was elected, unopposed and unanimously.

Open Forum. No questions had been received by the closing date and none were forthcoming at the meeting.

TEAM VICAR'S REPORT

In 2013 we celebrated our 50th anniversary as a church, so we have interspersed the year with regular focus and celebration, all in all an exciting busy and successful year. We had the highest numbers of guest preachers in any year, Bishop John, all my predecessors, all ordained and ministers sent out from Meadgate over the last 16 years, Sandy Southee, Peter Wyatt, Mark Petitt, Gemma Stock, as well as inviting Jeff Hill to preach at our main Sunday when we celebrated our birthday with an all age worship service. In addition we gave our morning service in November to our youth group 'Activate'.

As much as we looked to the past, we also looked to the future by starting two new groups to continue our support our community. The first is a replacement of our senior citizen 'Thursday club' while the second is a completely new group reaching out and supporting individuals with dependency issues 'Celebrating Recovery'.

The Thursday club changed and now meets fortnightly on the 2nd and 4th Wednesday of the month, it is now a lunch club following the midweek communion service, which meant that we added another midweek monthly communion to the one we have been doing already and both are followed by lunch, the new name for the club is Connection. And it is usually attended by 14-22 individuals. The club is supported by our pastoral and community workers in addition to other volunteers, a wonderful cook and a couple of others who give lifts to those who need it.

Celebrating recovery has been long time in planning and a team was put in place and the initial phase has already began with 4 leaders all from the church and two others who are happy to serve this group from outside the church with understanding and experience of dependency issues.

All of our other clubs are in good heart including the three groups started in 2012, Two Fat Men cooking club, meeting every six weeks, with the number of guests having stabilised at 17 but sometimes has risen to over 20, still most coming from outside our church membership.

The 18-30 club; has met fortnightly for social activities as well as two worship and teaching trips to Soul survivor Watford. We have tried to increase the leadership numbers from among its members, a thing we are still trying to do.

Creative Hands club continues to its weekly gathering for those who are creative and would like to join others to knit, sew, create cards etc. It has been well supported by members from both the Meadgate community and the church. And during our Christmas Festival it raised a considerable amount for charity.

During the Boot Fair season at Boreham, from the beginning of April until mid October, on most Sundays Meadgate was again able to provide between four to six team members to make it possible to continue to run this outreach ministry, this venture having been entered into in partnership with 5 other Churches in Chelmsford.

The Thursday café continued to meet each week during term time, with the church taking only lead role, a change from previous years as we were in partnership with the local school. The main hall in Meadgate church is transformed to function as a Parent Café, staffed by four members of our church family.

School work - the youth team still supports the School and Youth Ministry providing help in the running of two lunch-time clubs at Sandon and Great Baddow High Schools. The vicar and the youth minister continued to lead assemblies in the local primary school.

Our Admin, Youth, community and pastoral team remained unchanged but we had three new interns, starting in September 2013, one for the autumn term only while the other 2 until the end of Aug 2014.

Youth: Our youth sector had an amazing year with three regular midweek meetings for different age groups, and the annual Soul Survivor summer camp.

Cafés: The term-time weekly café on Mondays has stabilised and grown, with regular guests from our community dropping in to spend time in a warm welcoming atmosphere. This is led and run by an amazing group of volunteer members of our church. Furthermore, the monthly Oasis Café on Saturdays has grown immensely with so many guests from our local community frequenting the café and becoming well-known faces, both of these cafes have grown so much that it is now necessary to hold the monthly Saturday cafe in the main hall.

Clubs: The Wednesday ladies club which has an open membership, continues to thrive and has a busy and exciting programme. Furthermore the Men's club has stabilised with monthly meetings (still alternating between a breakfast and a dinner on Saturdays) and a day conference at Meadgate Church organised by our Men's group and worship band (men only) and led by Eric Delve.

YOUTH AND CHILDREN'S WORK

2013 holds many great memories and achievements for the Children's and Youth Ministry Team. God has been so good to us!

At the end of the academic year India Passfield-Fisher and Adam Brown came to the end of their youth internship. India moved on to a role as a trampolining coach at Riverside Ice and Leisure Centre and Adam started his studies in Theology and Youth Work at Moorlands Bible College. The youth team was replenished in September 2013 when Becky Rose, Courtnie Reeve and Alexandra Potton started their youth internships. Becky was with us for one term and left in December for a 6-month trip to South Africa where she will be continuing to work with children and youth in schools. Thomas Fance completed his first year at Ridley Hall College and he continues on his three year placement with us as part of his studies.

As well as running four weekly clubs and one fortnightly club in the church building (see separate reports), the team have continued to run Emerge (Christian Union) groups at The Sandon School and Great Baddow High School, where we were asked to assist at a second group from September onwards. Mones and Emma took regular assemblies at Meadgate Primary School, as well as hosting their Easter and Christmas services. The youth team also supported the summer fete and Christmas bazaar. These were all good opportunities to invest in our local community and build better links with the staff and children.

Our additional in-house events in 2013 included a free-running and parkour workshop run by Team Kinetix, an outdoor games event, three family movie events and our annual visit to Soul Survivor's summer festival. On a trip to Soul Survivor Watford in February four of our young people responded to a call to go forward and give their lives to Jesus. This was greatly celebrated by all!

As part of our 50th birthday festivities, the church celebrated a different part of church and community each month of the year. August was 'youth' celebration month and so our annual Summer Festival became a family fun day for 'kids' of all ages. We provided a free, exciting celebratory event that brought together children and those that once were children to enjoy a range of activities, both old and new, where they could be in good company, recall past memories and make new memories as they became a 'kid' for a day.

At the Seven Thirty Celebration Service on Easter Sunday, we were delighted to share with two of our young people and one of our interns as they were baptised by full immersion.

Each of our regular clubs and groups were once again blessed with a team of dedicated and talented leaders – most of which did so in a voluntary capacity. Without the commitment of these volunteers, the majority of the children's and youth activities at Meadgate Church simply could not function so it is important that their efforts in 2013 are recognised and celebrated.

Cherished/Chillies AGM Report 2013

The teenage girls' group, Cherished, grew in number throughout the year from 2 regular members to 7 regular members. Chillies, for teenage boys, had 3 consistent members, with one or two others joining on occasions. The groups continued to meet fortnightly and enjoyed

activities and trips such as bowling, circuit training and pamper evenings. The groups were also merged at regular points throughout the year for outings including laser tag and a running buffet.

As the leaders reflected at the end of the academic year it was felt that, though it had been beneficial to spend time building relationships through fun social activities, it was the right time to shift the focus, to go deeper and spend more quality time together as group in order to form stronger support networks and friendships. As a result, in September 2013, Chillies began meeting at the church and Cherished met at a local home. Both sessions were loosely structured in a similar way to what might be called a 'home group' - opportunities to talk, play, pray, eat, drink and (most importantly) question and discuss real life topics from a Christian perspective. The numbers in each group have remained stable since the change and the new format has been a positive move. Social outings involving both groups are still on the agenda for school holidays; everyone was enthusiastic about our Christmas Scavenger Hunt at the end of the year.

ACTIVATE

2013 was an exciting year for ACTIVATE, the School of Ministry for teenagers. With an average of 10 to 15 young people each Tuesday night we were able to learn about God's heart of love for each of us and the supernatural gifts that ordinary people can use to demonstrate the power of our extra-ordinary God.

ACTIVATE was always intended to be a practical School of Ministry, so opportunities were given for their new found knowledge and gifts to be practised. During 2013 our teenagers were able to offer 'prophetic pods' at the Shrove Tuesday event, run two special Soaking evenings and on 3rd November they planned and ran the whole 10.30am Sunday Service.

In addition to these special events, the ACTIVATE teenagers have been increasingly involved in the 7.30pm and recently the 10.30am Sunday Services; using their gifts for prayer, leading the service, leading worship and manning the PA desk.

Chris Smith

CHURCH WARDEN'S REPORT

We praise God that our Meadgate Church building is so fully used by a wide variety of groups with meetings, worship and events for our local community and the church family.

Such use does, of course, mean that the building requires a lot of cleaning and work to keep it in good repair and our particular thanks for helping with this go to; Fitz Grant, our cleaner, Judith Shepherd who oversees the maintenance of the kitchen and Mike Fisher and Chris Smith who carry out invaluable specialist work.

A recent improvement, installed by Chris and Mike, for those who use the crèche room during the family service, has meant that the sound from the service can now be directly accessed and other media can be displayed directly onto the television in that room giving a much better connection to the main service or for meetings held there.

The kitchen has finally received its repairs after flooding last year and, with a thorough clean and re-decoration, is now looking much brighter!

We continue to experience water leaking into the building, however, at the entrance to the large hall and in the small hall. This is where we connect with the local housing and this is now in the hands of our insurers.

We have had an exciting and eventful year with the 50th anniversary celebrations and look forward with positive expectation to what God has in store for the church in 2014.

Alison Mead and Duncan McKenzie

DCC SECRETARY'S REPORT

During 2013, 7 meetings (+ 1 short, extraordinary meeting) of the Meadgate District Church Council were held. There were 3 vacancies on the DCC at the time of the AGM in April 2013, and Ros Coleridge, David Pearce and Jill Smith-Hughes were elected to the DCC.

Council meetings start with a Bible reading and prayer.

Items discussed by the Council in 2013 were: -

Finance:

The Treasurer's Report – at each meeting, David Belbin presents the accounts, updating members on the current financial position of the church. The overall financial situation has been encouraging, in the light of recent uncertain economic times and increases in church running costs. There has been a rise in giving compared with last year.

Parish finances and Meadgate's agreement to pay an increased share of the 'Family Purse'.

Gift Day in October – more than £3,000 received in gifts.

Welcome extra monies from Gift Aid.

Church Hall income.

Church @ Boreham Boot Sale expenditure and income.

Expenditure on repairs, general maintenance and improvements to our building.

Employees' salaries.

Decision to contribute £400 to support mission in Beaulieu Park.

Giving to mission, at home and overseas, and charities.

Ministry and Mission

Reports and updates from PCC and Deanery Synod.

The Parish Review.

Church @ Boreham Boot Sale.

Meadgate School of Ministry.

Oasis Café.

Alpha update and use of pre-Alpha course.

Plans and preparation for 50th Anniversary Celebration events, including Summer Festival in August. Re-vamp of entrance hall and display for Anniversary.

Wednesday Worship and Intercession sessions, change of time to 4.00pm – 7.30pm

Harvest Festival, support for Food Bank and Gift Day in October.

Christmas - arrangements for special Christmas Festival, Gospel Choir Guest Service and Service of 9 Lessons and Carols. Distribution of leaflets to local community.

Arrangements for Confirmation Service.

Consideration of 'Caring for Ex-Offenders' project.

Consideration of 'Celebrating Recovery' (from addiction) course.

Membership of Ministry Leadership Team.

Closure of Thursday Club and subsequent launch of fortnightly Thursday Communion Service, followed by Lunch Club for Senior Citizens.

Overview of Sunday services.

Overview of the calendar of social and fund-raising events.

Fabric/Maintenance

Annual PAT (Portable Appliance Testing) carried out.

5-yearly review of electrical installations.

Preparation for Diocesan Quinquennial Review.

Repairs and decoration in the kitchen.

Liaison with CHP re. repair to Small Hall roof leak and repair by the swing doors.

On-going discussion of the unsuitability of the Vicarage and its possible replacement.

Possible use of the old Meadgate Infant School building as extra premises for us. On-going negotiations with Essex County Council.

Installation of Wi-Fi in the church building.

DEANERY SYNOD

The main business of Deanery Synod, this year, has been to further progress the strategic priorities outlined in Bishop Steven's visionary document, 'Transforming Presence'.

Priority 1, 'Inhabit the world distinctively'

Priority 2, Evangelise effectively

Priority 3, 'Serve with accountability'

Priority 4 'Re-imagine ministry'

This year has focussed on ways in which parishes can link together and exchange ideas about what is being done and what could be done in future, particularly how we can undertake evangelism. We have been encouraged to think about those people with whom we already have some contact, how we can meet their needs and put on a variety of events. (Priority 2) We have taken part in a Deanery Consultation about how to develop local leadership teams. As Reimagining Ministry puts it, "each local church needs to change from being a community dependent on a Minister to being a ministering community. "Part of re-imagining ministry will be to group churches into UNITS, so that there will be access to a variety of skills in youth work, evangelism, preaching and pastoral work. Lay leaders will be supported by ordained clergy, working as a team. How this happens will probably vary in each UNIT according to local circumstances. (Priority 4) Various churches gave examples of how they are blessing their communities, and how links have been established with other organisations such as the hospice movement and the Children's Society, as part of Priority 3, serving with accountability. We have also looked at how we are already helping people to become full time Christians and what more could be done to support people in their everyday lives. (Priority 1)

Other business has included reports from the Treasurer, General Synod and the Diocese.

Eileen Saunders

18 - 30 GROUP

The group met regularly throughout the year, to begin with fortnightly but following the summer break it dropped to monthly. We had games nights, outings for food and drink, a pancake and a Christmas party, film nights as well as two trips to Soul Survivor Watford.

The group was led by Mones Farah and Lauren Amundsen, but the thought was that Steph and Luke Ridgwell will take over from Mones and lead the group with Lauren, our average number of attendance at our meetings were 7, lowest number 5 and highest 13.

Rev. M. Farah

CONNECT

Connect was set up in September 2013 by Mones Farah, Toni Knights and Myself. Its aim was to provide the older members of the community and church alike with a space that they could 'connect' with others whilst having a yummy lunch, lovingly prepared by Sarah Dixon.

The group runs bi monthly on the 2nd and 4th Wednesdays of the month during term times. Between September and December, we have seen the group grow from 10 to a regular 16-20.

We look forward to seeing the group develop further in the coming year.

Kirsty Pearce

CAMEO

The CAMEO Ladies' Group has continued to meet every other Wednesday evening in the Small Hall for caring Christian fellowship, friendship, enjoyment and fun. At times, numbers have been rather disappointing, unlike our usual 30 – 40, and we have pondered on the reason for this. We have prayed about it and informally questioned the ladies, but it seems that it has been the result of individual circumstances and, of late, numbers have been up again. There is a strong core of ladies who are really supportive and appreciative, for whom we are truly grateful.

We start each meeting with our special CAMEO prayer and there is always some further Christian content, either via an invited Christian speaker or by the personal testimony of a CAMEO member in the Thought for the Evening at the end of the meeting.

There has been a lovely balance of interesting meetings this last year, with speakers on Fingerprints, Vietnam, the Helen Rollason Charity, the Writtle Jewellery Shop, Albania and Armchair Fitness. Angela and Ed Buetow inspired us all with their amazing story, Melvyn Sach amused and instructed us with his anecdotes, Linda Belbin taught us how to make impressive Christmas cards and we were grandly entertained by the theatrical Doreen Potter, Dance 21, our own talented Andy Brown at Christmas and by the Shows' music of Martyn Harrison. The Main Hall has been transformed into the Meadgate Cinema on 2 occasions, with CAMEO usherettes handing out popcorn, ices and soft drinks!

Our support for our adopted local charity, The J's Hospice, is faithful and strong, as is the ladies' keen interest in, and generous heart for, the annual Operation Christmas Child Shoebox Appeal.

My grateful thanks go to the 'CAMEO' Committee who all give me such wonderful support, who keep having brilliant ideas for our programme and who contribute so willingly to the smooth running of our meetings. We all love our involvement in CAMEO and our mission among our lovely local ladies!

We are grateful for your prayers and interest and would ask you to pray for us as we start putting together our next programme commencing September 2014. May God give us His ideas, as we seek to communicate the love of Jesus through our meetings and through our care and concern for all CAMEO members.

Jill Smith-Hughes

COMMUNITY REPORT

I was appointed Community Worker for Meadgate Church in July 2012. My job involves creating, planning and executing events for the church and community alike.

In August, I organised two trips for local families in the community. Firstly, we went to Braintree Discovery Centre. This involved transport for the families and a sense of fellowship amongst all who went by sharing a picnic and watching the children play in a safe, fun environment. The day was thoroughly enjoyed by all who went!

For the second trip we went to Walton-on-the-Naze. We took families from the community to the beach for the day and for £2 they got transport there and an ice cream! We all had a fabulous family day, surrounded by friends old and new.

The other event I held in August was the Disney Family Movie Day. I had four films running back to back from 11am- 5pm. Unfortunately the date I had planned to host this event fell on the hottest day of the year! I still had attendees, but not as many as I had hoped!

In October, together with the youth team, we held the first of many 'Light Parties', as an alternative to Halloween. We had a carnival theme and had various carnival games that the children could play for free to win sweets. We also had a bouncy castle and hotdogs! The event was a roaring success, connecting families that attend the church on a regular basis with the families in the community.

December brought a month packed with events to celebrate Jesus' birth! I personally organized the Christmas Festival, and with the help of lots of volunteers, another annual event was launched. The Festival included a BBQ, market stalls and a raffle with all proceeds going to 'EveryChild' the charity that was chosen. The festival had a brilliant community atmosphere, again, bringing members of the church together with the community.

Over all as Community Worker, I feel, I have built bridges, learned lessons and I look forward to another successful year!

Kirsty Pearce

"FIRST STEPS" TODDLER GROUP

It has been another good year for toddlers. Our numbers remain steady with many mums and carers returning for a second or third time. We love to see the children and carers enjoying the wide range of activities we provide and feel greatly appreciated by those who attend. In May, we celebrated our 10th birthday with a party for the carers and children. Lots of lovely food, including jelly, ice-cream and cake was provided along with a party bag for each child. A game of pass the parcel rounded off a lovely fun morning. We finished the year with our usual Christmas party when we had more lovely food and lots of fun.

My thanks go to Betty, Jean, Coral, Wendy and Helen for being such a great and supportive team.

Denise Hom

FLOWER MINISTRY

We have had people leaving and new people coming to join the team and we are always on the lookout for new people to join the flower ministry team, we like to think of it is an artistic way of worshipping God.

We have had a couple of weddings to do flowers for which was a great privilege and joy. The budget for weekly flowers has remained the same we tend to spend £10-£15 a week on buying flowers, more for special occasions such as Christmas.

Thank you to all those who give their time and artistic skills to brighten up the church.

Coral Sedeno

HOUSE GROUPS

Godfrey and Angela Harverson took over the coordinating of the home groups in Autumn 2013. There are 9 home groups that meet during the week . Usually the leaders choose a course ,book of the bible or video series to follow but once a year during lent the whole church follows a course decided upon by the leadership. In 2013 the subject was prayer and this year it will be on sharing the good news of the gospel. This is linked to the sermons preached during lent.

A gathering of home group leaders took place in Jan 2014 to have fellowship over a meal and to share about how each group was going and about the new Lent course. We looked at a clip of the prayer course available free on line from HTB and produced by Pete Greig (of 24/7 prayer movement) .

We are so encouraged by the faithful commitment of the home group leaders and participants and that new people are joining the groups. New home groups should be formed this Spring as this is surely the way individuals grow and the church itself grows and matures.

Angela and Godfrey Harverson.

MEN'S GROUPS

The Men's Group met throughout the year, apart from during August and December.

The meetings were split between breakfast gatherings and evening meals.

We had breakfasts at 'Toby's', and 'Weatherspoons' in town. Evening meals were enjoyed at the 'San Chinese' restaurant and an Indian takeaway and film at the church, in addition to a BBQ at the vicarage. Average attendance has been 13, more on some occasions.

The highlight of the year's programme was joining Christian Vision for Men Norfolk for a day with Eric Delve, 16 of us attended that day.

Rev. Mones Farah

MONDAY CAFÉ

My sense is that the Monday Cafe Community has a strong sense of belonging by all –both team members and customers. There has been a growing buzz at the cafe where increasingly new people join us regularly and tend to keep coming back, in addition to our longer term cafe members.

I believe that our priority is to ‘host the presence of Jesus’ among us and see what He does among us. For some that will involve receiving a coffee in a friendly environment and going on their way. For others it is about making deeper friendships and seeking out the God in us.

The cafe runs from approximately 9.00am– 12.30pm followed by a team debrief.

We then run an afternoon small group which has involved evangelism and discipleship. We have taken the ‘Journeys Course’, inspired by Mones. This has involved watching stories of how people have come to faith and then a discussion afterwards.

We have a ‘healing on the streets’ type approach to prayer in the cafe – using authoritative prayer and simple everyday language for those not used to prayer. God has blessed us with his healing presence and people have seen God’s power demonstrated as He heals them.

Within the cafe community we have a number of people with learning difficulties and we seek to share Christ and disciple people in creative ways that do not require high levels of literacy. We have just started to learn about prayer together using the HTB prayer course, adjusting it to our group.

Cafe members are increasingly coming along to Church on Sunday and appreciate the welcome they receive.

We now serve the chemist staff bacon rolls each Monday and they really appreciate this. Our team has grown to include help from the community in addition to church team.

We want to thank the wider church for prayer support and especially the intercessory group without which we would not be enjoying the fruit we see.

It is such an honour and joy to be part of this ministry and I want to thank team and all of you who support us in different ways.

We want to be trees planted by a stream and root ourselves deeply in God and see others doing the same. God has promised to light a forest and we are seeing the start of that. Praise God!

Throughout 2013 there has been an increasing role to nurture Christians and I want to personally thank those who take others under their wing and encourage them in the faith.

I also want to honour all those who have supported us practically in making the cafe a place of warmth, safety and faith. I also want to thank Mones for the freedom he has given to run with this ministry and the support he has provided. Thanks for your prayers and support for all of the team.

Increasingly there may be needs for lifts to assist people to attending on Sunday, so please let Chris or Coral know if you can help.

Chris Porter

MUSIC GROUP

2013 has been another positive year for the music group, with much going on throughout the year to keep us busy!

We have welcomed some new members into the group as well as having seen some members sadly depart for new pastures. Special thanks to Pete Mckenzie, who has been with us for many years; we send him many blessings for both himself, and his fiancée Sophie as they begin their life together in Southampton.

As well as providing for our Sunday services and conference's, the group has continued to be involved in a number of local events; notably the Good Friday celebrations in the town centre, as well as the summer and Christmas festivals in the car park. We were also privileged to be asked to play for the parish council's community award ceremony, which was a new and different experience for some of our members!

This year has also seen the group change leadership as Steve Knights felt it was time to pass the baton onto someone new. Andy Brown has now taken leadership of the team, and is excited about the future development of the team, and the ways God is going to use us over the next season. Many thanks to Steve for all he has done over the years for the church, I think all would be in agreement to say he has done a fantastic job!

Steve Knights & Andy Brown

OASIS CAFÉ

A small core of people regularly on the second Saturday of each month has continued with this important role of outreach to the community. Joining them to assist when able are other volunteers from the church. They help in the kitchen, wait on tables, bake cakes, set up, clear away at the end and most importantly to mingle amongst and talk to folks. Everyone works very hard for this to happen and without you all it wouldn't have been possible, so thank you. Very occasionally, volunteers from the community have also helped which has been another way of getting to know and reach out to those outside of the church.

The café has seen new people coming into the church building in recent months on a regular basis. They come not only because of the good food cooked by our very able chefs but to socialise and sometimes to celebrate special occasions such as birthdays.

Numbers of those who come have increased in the last couple of months and it has been a bit tight to fit everyone in the small hall. It is exciting that people are still coming, which means consideration of moving to the larger hall for our guests comfort is seriously taking place.

I am always looking for willing volunteers to come onto the rota, especially if the numbers of folks coming each month continues to grow, more help is needed. Please come and see me if you feel God is calling you into this area of outreach even if you can't make it every month, all help is very much appreciated.

Our ultimate aim is to show God's love and care for each individual by getting alongside folks in an informal atmosphere. Please continue to pray that all who comes will see how much God cares and loves them and will want to know Him more and have a personal relationship with Him.

Gail Brown

PRAYERS AND READINGS

After a few years of doing a fantastic job of the prayer and readers for our morning services, Annie Goss resigned from coordinating the list. We are very grateful for all she has done. The list had more than 20 individuals willing to read and do the prayers, and they do so Sunday by Sunday. Many thanks for all, we do appreciate your offering greatly.

Rev. Mones Farah

PRAYER CO-ORDINATOR'S REPORT

This year has brought some changes in the membership of the Friday morning intercessory prayer group. In January '13 the core members were Angela Harverson, Sonia Kamara, Sue Marriott, Nardia Takawira, Judith Sheppard, Kath Austin and myself. Then during the year God called Kath to another area of ministry and asked Judith to assist with the School of Ministry.

We have faithfully met in church every Friday in term time to intercede for this church's ministry and for many other people and situations. We also pray particularly every week for the Youth work, the Monday café, Oasis café and Thursday's parenting café outreach.

Occasionally we are encouraged when others from our church family come and join us for a morning's prayer time and we would underline that this is the main prayer group meeting for our church and that it is open to everybody to come along at 10.30am-12.00pm, alternatively to contact one of those named in the first paragraph with their prayer request.

In March my husband Ed and I went to Spring Harvest at Minehead with friends from church and we were waiting on a diagnosis for my health on our return. It turned out to be serious and would require 9 months' treatment and follow on consultations. I trusted God in these circumstances but as it meant a very high amount of hospital appointments and operations I asked our vicar Mones to release me from being the prayer co-ordinator. I was called into this role in 2003 when I switched from the post of administrator - which I had greatly enjoyed for three and a half years - to be part of the prayer ministry team run by Sally Farah. About that time Mones set up a ministry leadership structure in the church.

Between my hospital appointments this year I continued whenever possible to attend the Friday prayer group and am so thankful to the ladies for capably taking turns to lead the meetings and bringing a fresh approach. We missed Judith and Kath and prayed for our group to increase. Later in the year we have been blessed by the welcome presence and enthusiasm of Diane Chasmer. We are waiting to hear who will become prayer co-ordinator.

Meanwhile, we sincerely thank Graham and Sue Marriott who have continued to head up the Emergency Prayer Chain team, keeping a current list of people in Meadgate church who very willingly take messages, send them on down the list of phone numbers and intercede for the emergency. They report the scheme has again been well used and greatly appreciated.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank every one of you for your brilliant and loving support which Ed and I have experienced during these months of treatment! The side effects have been low and entirely bearable and never horrendous and that is due to all those prayers you have said for me! I am so very, very thankful and give all the glory to God for granting your prayers, for His peace and love, protection and healing! Also I give thanks for the new ministry I have enjoyed, sharing my faith in Jesus with many people in the hospitals. It has been a joy!

Angela Buetow.

PRAYER MINISTRY

Thank you to all those who have faithfully ministered to others on a Sunday morning, it has been a real joy and honour serving with you.

People have continued to receive from God as they have come forward for prayer, some in response to a word of knowledge or others just to enjoy a fresh touch from God. We have seen healings both physically and emotionally. Recently the prayers have split into two teams one led by myself the other by Sue Marriott with the aim that team members can alternate between ministering and worshipping in the service.

We have managed to meet for training and mutual encouragement as a team on a few Saturday mornings throughout the year and a growing number of prayer ministry members are managing to get to the pre service soaking and intercessions. Thank you to one and all and may God bless you richly as you continue serving him.

Sally Farah

PASTORAL VISITOR

This year, I have visited a variety of people for a wide range of reasons. I have supported people, on a regular basis, with practical tasks and others with spiritual and emotional support. I have been helping those in crisis, those who have been bereaved and have been an advocate in certain situations. I also have had the privilege of taking an elderly person to house group weekly and to Holy Communion so they can engage in church fellowship where they would not be able to otherwise. I have recently started to help with the Wednesday lunch club called connect for the over 60's.

I have met with Angela Harverson (pastoral coordinator) to discuss ideas of how we can support those who are responsible for pastoral care in the church. In addition, make sure people who are not being supported by the pastoral team and not in a house-group don't slip through the net.

I have also supported Kirsty Pearce with community events and trips, helping drive the mini bus for community days out to Walton on the Naze and Maldon. This has enabled me to build relationships with parents from the community. I also make myself available at parent café, on an occasional basis, to maintain relationships with parents from the local community.

Toni Knights

SCHOOL OF MINISTRY

The school of ministry has continued to be a fantastic place of growth with God, seeing changed lives and a stepping into callings.

October 2013 saw the directorship of the school of ministry handed over to Sarah Sinclair and the teaching split between Chris Smith, Sally Farah and Mones Farah.

It has been truly exciting to work through the modules of intimacy with God, issues of the heart, evangelism, leadership and all the many other subjects in-between.

The school of ministry in the evenings on Monday and Friday has been equally exciting. Led by Mike Fisher and Mones Farah, the group has grown together as they have worshipped, shared, prayed and listened.

Thank you to all those who have supported this work, through prayer, teaching and leading.

Sally Farah

We started off with eight students in the school of ministry in October 2013. Although the numbers dwindled for various reasons those that participated in the first term before leaving said that they gained so much and it was amazing to see such rapid growth, spiritually and personally.

The group has bonded extremely well and it is wonderful to watch them mature and go deeper. It has been such a privilege to have been part of the school of ministry for the past five years and this year leading as I have got to see so many people healed, walk into their calling and become wonderful warriors and lovers of God.

I would like to thank Sally for entrusting me with this role and for building me up into it also. The teachers in the mornings have been great and the school of ministry continues to be a place of growth and love. Thank you for all of your support.

Sarah Sinclair

SIDE PERSONS' REPORT

Thank you to all on the side persons team for being willing to get up out of bed a little earlier on a Sunday morning to come and welcome people as they come into church. Also for being flexible to ensure someone is always at the front door on a rota basis. The role is important not only to meet and greet but to ensure that all people who are attending, the regulars and those attending for the first time, all feel connected to and are a part of God's family at Meadgate. Working together with the newly formed welcome team will hopefully ensure that no one feels excluded. The team also continue to ensure the smooth running of people going to the front of the church to receive communion. This not only involves ensuring that prayer ministry continues during communion without disturbance but making sure people do not end up accidentally sitting on those in the front row, a good problem to have regarding the number of people attending and using the space available to fit everyone in the building.

The side person's team are always looking for new people to join and be part of the rotation system to take it in turns. If you are interested and feel that you are able to serve in this way by making people feel welcome, please speak to Mones or I before the AGM as the side person team has to be voted in at the meeting by those in attendance. It would be good to build a good number of people on the team to expand and ensure that there are side persons available for every service that takes place at Meadgate.

Gail Brown

PARENT CAFÉ

The Parent Café is aimed at parents primarily from Meadgate Primary School and was set up in September 2011. The group was set up initially by Meadgate Church in partnership with Meadgate Primary School to provide parenting advice and support. However, the school are no longer able to support the group, so we, as a church, have managed to successfully keep the group running for another year!

From January 2013- December 2013, the group was run by Myself, Judith Shepherd and Sonia Kamara. We focused a lot of our time talking about various problems children attending the school were facing due to behavioral problems, or situations arising from both school and home. We have a good group of regular attendees from the community, and the group is a great link for them with each other and with the Church. We have managed to create an environment where parents have a space to relax and off load whilst their children can play safely with adult supervision.

We also managed to incorporate this group with the Monday Café with various trips out over the summer including Walton-on-the-Naze and Braintree Discovery Centre. This has enabled families to have family trips which they would otherwise have been unable, financially, to do.

Kirsty Pearce

SOAKING MINISTRY

The soaking ministry started back early September after the summer break. The team meets at seven on a Monday evening to set up. We gather together to pray before the ministry starts and we also pray for the evening school of ministry which also runs on a Monday evening.

We are blessed to have two worship leaders who give their time to play live worship twice a month. The evening school of ministry join those who have come to soak during worship. It is good to be united in worshipping and praising, giving thanks to our heavenly father. The glory is all his.

As a team we take it in turns to lead the meeting giving a talk which usually lasts about 10-15 minutes. People are then invited to soak in God's presence however they feel comfortable laying down or sitting down. The soaking sessions are led by the spirit and the leader of the evening. We have had a couple of candle light soaking evenings one of which Emma Smith came and played for us it was a lovely atmosphere to soak in the presence of God.

We have been blessed to also have one of the youth interns-Alex come forward offering to do another candle light soaking evening for her to sing worship over us.

The Activate team ran a soaking evening also which enabled the youth to use their gifts in a safe environment. The evening was well attended with positive feedback. I look forward to the coming year. Please come along and join us on a Monday evening from 8.00pm during *term time*.

Judith Sheppard.

WORSHIP AFTERNOONS

The worship drop-in continued throughout 2013, for most of the year it was held on Wednesday afternoons, between 12.30pm-4.00pm. Most afternoon it was attended by 4-8 individuals, we start with worship until 3.00pm and then we spend between 45-60 minutes in intercession.

In the Autumn term we tried to hold it between 4.00pm- 7.30pm to see whether that will attract bigger numbers, but as that didn't materialise and had a negative impact one of our regulars we decided to go back to the original time.

In addition we managed to have 6 evening of praise on Saturday evenings, two of which were led by our worship team, these were wonderful impactful refreshing times.

Rev. M. Farah



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