



# **Dursley Tabernacle United Reformed Church**

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# Dursley Tabernacle United Reformed Church Reports 2011

## Minister's Report

Our church vision statement (adopted in 2010) reads:

*Called to be God's people; Transformed by the gospel; Making a difference in the world*

An AGM report is an opportunity to look back at the last year and see whether we are fulfilling our vision.

*The calling to be God's people* involves strengthening the bonds of fellowship, care and compassion to one another, recognising Christ in our midst. We received ten new members this year and our community seems to continue to grow with new people continuing to appear at Sunday worship. For this we give thanks to God.

Sadly we have also lost some dear friends in the last year. Ken Shillitoe and Ken Woodman died in March. Ruby Leonard died in July. Ron Jones died in September. Bill Exell passed away in October. Margaret Turner (although strictly speaking not a member at the Tab, regularly attended here as well as being an elder at the Quarry and a member of the pastorate council), died in November. All of these individuals were much loved and had made their contribution to our fellowship over many years. We remembered Ken Shillitoe's sense of humour, Ken Woodman and Ruby Leonard's singing, Bill Exell's time as deacon and odd job man. Ron Jones had made a huge contribution to our church community as an elder and as a fabric steward. Ron Heathman quoted the story of the visitor to St. Paul's Cathedral asking a member of the clergy there "where is the memorial to Christopher Wren?" The clergyman replied "look around you, all what you see is his memorial." Ron Heathman then commented 'One way we all can remember Ron is to look around as we enter this church for we then shall see his handywork'. Ron was always positive and made so many things happen. He was a good and faithful servant of the church. All these members we miss dearly but give thanks for their contribution to our lives and our church.

Last year Hilary Green and Martine Carter were instrumental in setting up the Tab friends for those who are bereaved. The work has grown and provides valuable friendship and support to the widows in our congregation. It has been a great initiative and expression of care. Sadly the Ladies Group finished this year after over 40 years of meeting. They were able to look back on some happy memories of time spent together. Some of the group have now joined the reformed Women's Guild.

We hold before us the aim of being a caring church community, valuing each other as loved children of God. We will inevitably make mistakes and overlook certain needs but I hope that is never deliberate. Our thanks go to the elders who offer that pastoral care, (we particularly thank Peggy Tresise who retires from the eldership at this AGM). Many others visit and help others and various volunteers are part of such things as the flower distribution team, those offering hospitality and welcome, catering, and coffee making, those looking after our buildings, especially the Fabric Panel and cleaners

(this year saw Gill and Vic Watts retire from being church cleaners and we noted our gratitude to them for their hard work) all of you maintain and build up our community. You all play an important role in a caring church.

Our work with children and young people has gone from strength to strength. Zoe Avastu took over from Jayne Parsons as Junior Church leader. Jayne had done the role of Junior Church Superintendent for over thirty years and we paid tribute to her (and her assistant, Iain Hearn) for their faithfulness and dedication during that period and for laying the foundations for the growth we are seeing now. Both Jayne and Iain became our new Church Stewards and their presence and help on Sunday mornings is invaluable. Well over a couple of dozen people are on the rota for helping out on Sunday mornings with our children. An army of people assembles for the yearly Bible Holiday Club. Our children's work is such a vital ministry and we pray God's blessing on Zoe and her team.

Debbie Helme retired, after 11 years of faithful service, from being a leader with the Sunday morning youth. She has been an inspiring example to young people during that time and we are grateful for her commitment and service (although personally I think she just wanted to get out of my sermons!). The work with young people has been strengthened with Emma Irvine's appointment as our part time youth worker. She has brought vision, energy and enthusiasm to the role. The Sunday evening Fury meeting is packed out, with a lot of non-church attending youth. There is real outreach taking place in this work but there is a real danger of being a victim of her own success due to a lack of volunteer helpers. We pray that God will provide people with a conviction and desire to be alongside young people at a vital and often decisive point in their faith journey.

Jenny and John Heslop moved to the south coast. Jenny had served for many years as one of our elders and occasionally led worship. John had been our church treasurer having taken over from Ken Fullard and had guided us through a period of readjustment and transition. We gave thanks for their contribution to our church. We are fortunate to have in Dennis Allen and Terry Larkham two very capable individuals who have smoothly taken over the joint role of treasurer. Their first year in the role has seen the blessing of a £21,000 surplus of income over expenditure. Our giving has increased by over a third this year, which makes a real difference for our ministry and mission. Rental income has also increased by a significant amount and we thank Jan and Gray Strutt for their three years as Bookings Secretary and are grateful to Sylvia Woods in taking on the role.

We had a number of standout events that offered us the opportunity to enjoy fun and fellowship together. Fifty plus people enjoyed a church weekend at Lee Abbey on the north Devon coast. We had another enjoyable Sunday School Anniversary and garden party. Easter morning breakfast happened again and so is now becoming a tradition! We even had a New Year's Eve Party in the church which was packed out and enjoyed by all. The conga down the high street at midnight was very memorable. If the party happens again we will have to issue tickets.

We have also expressed our unity with God's people in the wider world. We hosted the West Midlands Synod in March, for the first time in 15 years. 200 delegates came to us and heard a key note address by Roberta Rominger, the URC General

Secretary, on the URC's Radical Welcome Campaign. We undertook the Synod's Local Ministry and Mission Review which celebrated our growth but also highlighted the need to strengthen our relationship with our pastorate partners of Sharpness and the Quarry. We had a visit from Revd Pratap Kumar Nayak, a minister in the Church of North India, our Council for World Mission partner. Liz Swanwick, our church secretary, paid a return visit in January with a team from the Synod.

*We are God's people seeking to be transformed by the gospel.* That gospel calls us to bring good news of hope and healing. Last spring we had a visit from Peter McIntosh to explore Christ's healing ministry and the churches role in that. A group of people have undertaken a prayer ministry course and prayers for healing are being trialled in occasional Sunday morning worship. In a broken and hurting world we pray God's blessing on this sensitive and compassionate ministry.

Our fellowship groups have continued to meet in people's homes, offering the fortnightly opportunity to reflect on the gospel challenge to our lives. We have run a couple of Alpha Courses to allow people to explore the faith. A School of Theology has met monthly throughout the year to engage in deeper issues of Christian doctrine. Our Sunday worship is the prime focus for our gathering together before God. I thank Simon and Pat and the members of our music group for providing our musical accompaniment. We have continued to experiment with differing styles of service to meet the differing needs of our congregation. I hope it can't be said that our worship is static and predictable. Since January, many of us have undertaken the challenge to read the Bible in a whole year. God's Word is new every morning and we pray that Word continues to transform us and bring us life.

*Making a difference in our world* is the final focus for our life together. This year has seen the growth of the Family Café in its ministry of welcome and hospitality. It is standing room only at times on Wednesday mornings as the popularity of the café has soared. We hoped that it would break down barriers and help people step over our threshold and experience a positive welcome from the church with no strings attached. That seems to be happening. Without us pushing, a few individuals have made the further step from café to church, asking about baptism and coming to worship. Heidi and Emma have worked extremely hard and are grateful for the team of helpers they have. Please continue to support them.

The government's austerity measures and financial cutbacks led to concerns over the future of the Dursley Training Unit to which many members of our Open Door Club belong. We have played a part in the campaign to save the Unit but the battle is not over yet. The financial crisis has affected many people and it prompted a discussion among the churches of the district how best to practically respond to those in need in our community. The setting up of a foodbank, offering donated food free to those in short term financial crisis, has been a genuine ecumenical endeavour. We have been heavily involved and our premises play host to the foodbank. We continue to host and are actively involved in the Child Contact Centre, and both the outgoing Co-Ordinator, Carol Bye, and the incoming Joint Co-Ordinators, Bobbie Spears and Kathryn Tearle, are part of our church community. Martine Carter is trying to start a group, called Connect At, that seeks to work with young people with special needs. Many more of our members engage in voluntary work outside of the Tab and play a vital role in the well-being of our town.

Our buildings are a way we can offer support for the various groups in our town. The community rooms are currently undergoing redevelopment with the building of an access ramp, disabled toilets, new kitchenette, new floor and insulation and lighting. We managed to raise most of the money by external funds and without the need for an appeal to church members. Lionel Jones has been heading up the redevelopment project. His expertise and attention to detail leaves qualified architects and builders looking novices at times. We are deeply indebted for all his hard work carried out with such patience and diligence. We hope that the end result will greatly improve our facilities for our community groups, many of whom work with vulnerable individuals.

On a personal note, I have felt more vulnerable and fragile this year. I have at times felt exhausted trying to lead three churches, be chaplain to Dursley Police Station, be chair of the Child Contact Centre, be involved in the establishment of the Foodbank and be line manager to the Synod Ministerial Training Officer. In September I took on the Convenorship of the Churches Together in Cam and Dursley at the same time as starting a Master's Degree in Christian Spirituality. What I didn't know then was that my wife would be diagnosed at Christmas time with a rare liver disease and my mother would break her hip and need numerous visits up to Lancashire to help her rehabilitation and rehousing. Our own housing, the Parsonage, has become more of an issue, as the level of activity in the church buildings has increased causing even greater lack of privacy and tensions in my own household. Thank you all for your support and patience towards both me and my family. In particular I thank all the elders for helping me carry the load, especially Liz, our church Secretary, whose energy, vision and competence has been invaluable both to me, my family and to this church in taking us to where we are now.

Where we are now is a very exciting if not altogether scary place. The growth of our church in faith and resources over the last decade or so has led us to a point where we are poised to make an even greater impact on our local community in the name of Christ.

The Synod has agreed to purchase a new manse for us and we are presently searching for appropriate accommodation. Plans to use the existing Parsonage are developing and could offer exciting and innovative opportunities for youth work, ministry, mission, GAP year/training placement accommodation, and possible office space. There is even the option of linking developments in the Parsonage with the redesigning and refurbishment of the upper hall and kitchen. A lot of creativity is being unleashed and we will have to discern as a church where God is leading us in all of this. The scale of our operation and impact as a church would seriously increase as a result. That growth will require increased manpower, money and a missionary heart.

The URC's Campaign for Radical Welcome is planned to launch in May and we want to be involved. We will have to look at how welcoming we really are and confront difficult issues of inclusion and exclusion.

Our youth work needs more involvement and investment in order for it to realise its potential.

The rise in funding has been encouraging but the reality is that if the church is to move on to the next stage we will probably need to consider funding more paid staff. We also know that we are not paying our fair share to the national church and want to address that shortfall in the coming years.

John Brown, the URC's National Youth and Children's Work Secretary, on a recent visit to the Tab, commented to me how many churches are paralysed through fear and become inward looking. Their insecurity leads to their demise. I thank God that we seem to be an outward looking church that wants to make a difference. We may not have the manpower, nor the money to do all we want to do at the moment, but let faith not fear be our calling. Let us cultivate that missionary heart and lose ourselves in God's work for our community. We are God's people, transformed by the gospel, hoping to make a difference to those around us.

May God, the faithful provider of all our needs, bless us all in Christ's service.

**Simon Helme**  
**Minister**

## **Secretary's Report**

It is a great privilege to be church secretary of the Tabernacle and to be part of such a wonderful team. Simon's report covers our year comprehensively and I have little to add.

Apart from the weekly routine of administration for the church including church notices, correspondence and elders and church meetings, I have also continued to take on the role of verifier for all the Criminal Records Bureau checks required for church activities with Children and Young People.

This year we undertook the Local Ministry and Mission Review and the Tab was the second church in the Synod to complete the process. It gave us the opportunity to review our progress with our 2020 Vision and to look in more detail at our Minister's Role Description. This enabled a fruitful conversation with our friends in the Pastorate at The Quarry and Sharpness to delineate more clearly the time allocation of the Minister to each of the churches in the Pastorate. As a Pastorate we meet each quarter and share our news and concerns.

On behalf of the church I attend Synod Meetings which take place twice a year. Last year's residential meeting took place in Synod and was a lively occasion with some good speakers and a chance to look in more detail at the work of the URC at a national and synod level.

More recently I have been chairing the Parsonage Working Group which is tackling the issue of the new manse and the development of the existing building. This is a daunting task and I am grateful for the support of the members of the group and all their expertise. This coming year is hopefully see some of those ideas come into fruition.

A Church can only be as strong as the members within it and this year's reports are evidence of much activity both within and outside the church. We are among a small number of growing thriving churches and for that we must thank our Minister, Simon. Without him and the support of his family we would not be in this position and on your behalf I would like to thank him for his teaching, his leadership, his wisdom, his spirituality and his energy. But we must remember that we all have a part to play, so do always think and pray about what your contribution is and could be in the coming year to the life of the Church whether it be to its witness among the faithful members or to the outreach in the community. There is always more to be done and the need for more people to help.

**Liz Swanwick**  
**Church Secretary**

## **Ministries Reports**

**This is the second year since we adopted our 2020 Vision that we have presented reports for our five areas of Ministry which came into being in September 2010. These reports give an overview of our Mission, Property, Administration, Pastoral and Youth, Children and Education Ministries. Each Ministry is led by dedicated elders along with our Minister. These reports will be included in our annual Report of the Trustees for the first time.**

### **1. Mission Report 2011**

We continue to be a Fairtrade church serving fairtrade tea and coffee at our meetings. We thank the congregation for its support of the Leprosy Stamp Bureau. 5 large parcels have been despatched this year. Please continue to save the commemorative stamps that will be produced later this year. Thank you, too, for topping up the "Bible a Month" jar. We have decided to place a second one in the reception room on a Sunday morning as well as the one in the vestibule.

We continue to hold our Corrymeela Lunch, at which over £400 was sent to the Reconciliation Centre in N. Ireland, and our Leprosy Mission Coffee morning, which is also supported by the Dursley churches. More than £900 was raised last year. This year we have changed the day for the Corrymeela Lunch to Thursday and the date is April 19<sup>th</sup>.

Martine Carter organises the Christian Aid collections and will be grateful for offers of help to distribute and collect the envelopes. She also collects old mobile phones, which raise £4 for Christian Aid and cartridges, which raise £1 each. Christian Aid week starts with a service at St. George's church, Cam at 6.00p.m. on May 13<sup>th</sup>. That same afternoon, Ronnie Harding will organise a cream tea at the Methodist Church to raise money for Christian Aid. More people signed up to gift aid their donation this past year and we would like to encourage folk to do the same this year as it increases the value of their gift by 25%.

We started a section in "Wot's On" entitled "Share a Prayer" where we offer an item concerning our own church, the local community and the international Christian family for you to pray about. These are just specific suggestions for you, but we are also grateful for your prayerful support for the work undertaken by the church.

Following the closure of the Vale of Berkeley College Martine with the help of Pat Allen from Sharpness URC started to plan to open a Youth Club for teenagers who are particularly on the Autistic spectrum. This plan was supported by the Community police and PCSO Clare Nutlands received support for this venture from Churches Together, who agreed to allow us to use any of the church premises in Cam or Dursley free of charge at least in the first instance. We plan to start the club regularly after Easter in the Tab community rooms and we are grateful for the help from 10 church members as well as 5 others who have experience of working with children or adults with Special needs and the support from the Community Police. We would be grateful for any more volunteers who would like to work with the children training will be provided.



Fairtrade are asking us to help make 1.5 million steps for them this year. It could be buying a new item or asking a shop to stock fair-trade products. Fill in a postcard, in the vestibule, or register your step at [fair-trade.org.uk/step](http://fair-trade.org.uk/step).

I would like to thank my committee, Martine Carter, Ronnie Harding, Lilla Jones, and Joan Kingham for their wisdom, loyalty and support.

**Peggy Tresise on behalf of the Mission Ministry**

## **Property Report**

Last year the report concerned mainly the roof & ceiling of the sanctuary, the floor, and the community rooms. This year it concerns mainly the roof & ceiling of the sanctuary, the floor, and the community rooms. No, that is not a typing or editing error. Some things don't seem to change!

### **Roof & Ceiling**

Last year we had to have temporary repairs to the ceiling made by a specialist firm of plasterers, who are currently doing work in St Pauls Cathedral. They, and a firm of structural engineers who examined our roof structure, in conjunction with our architect, recommended a procedure for a permanent repair to the ceiling to be carried out at the same time that we reinforce the roof joints. We have now asked Synod Listed Buildings if they are happy with this. They are not. They want us to consult another specialist plaster firm in the hope of getting a different recommendation. Will we have to consult a second structural engineer, and then a second architect until they get the recommendation that Listed Buildings want?

### **Floor**

As part of the re-ordering of the sanctuary in August 2009 we had a new oak floor laid. This developed faults allegedly due to the absence of a damp-proof membrane and the contractor relaid the floor with new wood and a damp proof membrane in November 2010 at his own expense. Just after last year's report was written, a speed-bump developed in the floor in February 2011. The floor was expanding due to moisture absorbed from the atmosphere. The contractor came back and cut two expansion gaps in the floor. These gradually closed up, and in November 2011 another speed-bump appeared. The contractor came back and widened the old gaps and cut some fresh ones. Last Sunday morning, I found my chair was rocking slightly - the floor is starting to lift again - another speed-bump is beginning to appear.

I have strong reservations about asking the contractor to do more work at his own expense. When we first asked him to quote for the floor, he recommended that we used engineered wood, and when we wanted the faults of the first floor rectified he again recommended relaying the floor with engineered wood. But both times we insisted on solid wood. Our architect for the reception room specified engineered wood which has caused no problems, and so has our architect for the Community Rooms. Is it time that we accepted responsibility for our own decisions?

### **Community Rooms**

Last year we reported the demise of the gas convector heaters and the urgent installation of a gas boiler and radiator system, and we declared the intention of providing disabled access and facilities in the Community Rooms. It had been hoped to get the work completed in the school summer holidays last year, but planning dragged on and on and work only started on 5 Feb 2012.

As of 14 March, the demolition of internal walls and blocking up of the East door is finished. The hall and kitchen floors have been removed and preparations for the new floors are starting. New ceilings are plaster-boarded, new wiring installed, walls and ceilings about to be plastered. Plumbing has been rerouted and the drains rearranged. Bricks from the old walls are being used as the basis of the ramp.

The builder forecast that the work would take about 7 weeks and start on 30 January. But because of sickness it was delayed one week, is getting further behind schedule & I think it is now unlikely that the internal work will be finished by the end of March. The work on the pavement can't even start till all the utility companies have responded with a statement about any services they have under the proposed work. The builders promise they will complete the part of the ramp on our property and provide temporary steps down to the pavement so we can regain use of the building as soon as possible, but disabled access will obviously not be available till the pavement section of the ramp is completed.

### **And now something completely different!**

After rain had left marks running down the inside of the wall below the window on the stairs leading from reception to the upper school rooms, our usual builder David Hill was asked to investigate the roof over this area. He produced photographs showing that several of the large coping stones on the gable of the church have crumbled from frost damage and large lumps have fallen onto the roof of the schoolrooms and down into the parsonage garden. These need to be removed and replaced with fresh stone as a matter of some urgency, but they need to be set in lime mortar, not cement, and lime mortar should not be exposed to frost before it has fully set. Hopefully in April we should be clear of hard frosts and able to do this work. We have similar rows of coping stones in five other places on the church. One of them has already had repairs done, on the North side of the small side gable over the parking area. The other four have been inspected with the aid of binoculars from ground level and no frost damage could be seen. But without physical access we can't be sure.

### **Parsonage**

The proposed acquisition of a new parsonage, and the consequent need to think of alternative uses of the existing building, have already raised questions about the water and electricity supplies, possible double glazing of the windows, and the need for disabled access to yet another vertical level of our rabbit warren. The fabric of the buildings will always be "work in progress".

### **Lionel Jones on behalf of the Property Ministry**

## **Work of the Fabric Panel in 2011**

Obituary. Last August, the Fabric Panel suffered the loss of one of its long standing members with the death of Ron Jones. Ron had considerable DIY skills and his absence from the Panel's work is sorely missed.

The Fabric Panel comprises a small number of DIY enthusiasts who between them cover a multitude of jobs relating to the maintenance of church property.

Examples of work undertaken in the past year include:- painting of boundary railings and gates; rebuilding vandalised boundary brick wall in the Garden of Rest ; replacing blown electric light bulbs; monthly testing of emergency lights; making and fixing wooden boxing to cover hot water pipe runs in LSR; making good frost protection to water pipes; general painting work; assisting in preparatory work relating to LSR new contract.

Any job which is beyond the capability of the Panel is put out to contract. Even so, the Panel needs to liaise with the contractor in respect to site access and mains services, etc. Such jobs would include small building works, glazing, electrical installation, and roof repairs. Annual contracts with a mandatory safety requirement eg testing and inspection of Fire Extinguishers are also overseen by the Panel.

In the coming year, the Panel will continue to do jobs similar to those above, but it will also have some work input following the completion of major contracts now starting.

The Fabric Panel thanks the church members for their continued support and encouragement and is most appreciative of the refreshments received from the Prayer Group.

For your information, a copy of the Panel's current work list is on the table, and please advise any Panel member details of where you have noticed the need for maintenance work to be done. Thank you.

**Ron Heathman – Fabric Panel Co-ordinator.**

## **Report from the Property Management Group**

### **Introduction**

Elders, as part of their remit, have a responsibility devolved from Synod, for the maintenance and safe operation of the whole property. This is a significant task and there are too many on-going matters for them to be adequately dealt with in an Elders Meeting. The time had come therefore for us to re-think the way in which we manage and maintain our property

As a Congregation we have a duty of care to all users of our buildings. We are also bound by legislation, even though we don't always understand why we are included. It has become increasingly evident that the issues surrounding the improvement and maintenance of buildings need to be given special attention so that we not only meet the legislation but also provide safe and attractive premises for new and current users and for those we invite onto our premises to do specialist work for us.

To date we have relied upon the Fabric Panel to take responsibility for the general upkeep of our premises and our Health and Safety Officer and Fire Officer to meet our duty of care. As time goes by however our buildings are requiring more and more attention, our legal obligations are increasing and as we attract new groups of people to use our rooms the opportunities to carry out essential work are reducing. We also need to ensure that the living accommodation that we provide for our Minister reaches and is maintained to a good standard. Hence the workload for the small but willing band of volunteers on the Fabric Panel is steadily growing – but there is no spare capacity and no new volunteers coming forward to meet this increasing responsibility.

The Elders therefore agreed that a Property Management Group would be established to operate within the guidelines set out below

#### **1. Objective:** To ensure that:

- 1.1. Our buildings and adjacent land within the overall curtilage comply with current legislation
- 1.2. By diligent maintenance, implementation of improvements, up to date documentation and recognition of our duty of care we provide an attractive, functional and ultimately safe space for all users of our premises.
- 1.3. The Parsonage is maintained to a standard that we would expect in our own homes and that it easily meets the guidelines for Manses as set out by the URC

#### **2. Team Members:**

- 2.1. Chaired by an Elder from the Property Ministry
- 2.2. Other members should include: the Health and Safety Officer, the Fire Officer, the Room Booking Manager, the Fabric Panel Convenor
- 2.3. Ex Officio – the Minister, the Church Secretary, the Church Treasurer.
- 2.4. In addition there should be at least two members of the Church, elected by the Church Meeting, to represent the views and concerns of the Congregation.

#### **3. Reporting line**

- 3.1. To the Elders through the Property Ministry
- 3.2. To the Church Meeting

#### **4. Scope** ( \*\* includes the Parsonage)

- 4.1. Conduct of Risk Assessments and pursuance of actions that arise (including the preparation of all Safety Documents and a Property Manual).
- 4.2. \*\* Regular inspection tours of all premises
- 4.3. \*\* Plans and arrangements for all aspects of routine maintenance, matters arising from the routine inspections and any matters reported by our users as requiring attention.
- 4.4. Maintenance of all special equipment (eg fire appliances, lift, gas/electrical appliances, Church Organ)
- 4.5. Maintain currency of our Insurance Cover and all licenses that we need to hold
- 4.6. Regular review of incidents reported in Accident Books and initiation of appropriate action
- 4.7. Regular review of the Standard Hire Conditions for the hire of our rooms
- 4.8. Make provision for cleaning of premises and general tidiness of environs
- 4.9. Oversight of any major development projects
- 4.10. Raise awareness of property and legislative issues within the Congregation

#### **PROGRESS TO DATE**

- Supervision of the use of temporary premises whilst the Community Rooms are being upgraded
- Issued a temporary handbook for all users during the Community Rooms upgrade.
- Conducted a walk round Risk Assessment of the property prior to the temporary occupation during the Community Rooms upgrade work (This supplements the assessment conducted prior to the last inspection of our safety provisions that was carried out by Stroud District Council)
- Manual in preparation including, amongst other documents:
  - Church Rules
  - Manuals for the operation of essential services (boiler, heaters, lift etc)
  - Health and Safety Policy
  - Policy and Room Hire Agreement for all users of the premises (relating to room hire charges, expectations re care and cleanliness, licensing regulations etc)
  - Rules for Kitchen Use
  - Job Descriptions for our employees and other officers of the Church
- On-going Review of all existing documentation. Relevant information will be collected together and held in a central location and hence available for reference by all concerned.

**Alan Simpson – Property Management Group Convenor**

## **Administration Report**

This year there has been some progress in updating our Website and now church services, notices and up to date notices can be found there. It has already drawn some visitors to our church. New signage outside the church and community rooms was completed in time for the Synod meeting last March. There is much still to be done to update policies and procedures but this seems less of a priority than other work and it cannot all be done. I am so grateful for the monthly commitment of Gill and Vic Watts and their production of Wot's On which keeps us informed of all the major activities in the church. This can also be found on the website.

Much of our routine documentation is now stored on computers but I ensure that paper records of church and elders meetings are still kept on file.

**Liz Swanwick**

**Church Secretary**

## **Financial Statements (Approved and Audited)**

### **Appendices A and B will be available at the AGM**

#### **1. Introduction**

The 2011 Financial Statement has been prepared along the lines adopted for 2010, which was in compliance with Statement of Recommended Practice: Accounting and Reporting by Charities (SORP) as revised in 2005. The analysis of income and expenditure reflects the classification of activities, together with the costs relating to administration. The Church does not sell goods or services for commercial profit, but does generate income from hiring rooms, fundraising, the Family Cafe and other events to help defray expenses.

The various types of funds are analysed in accordance with the provisions of the Charities Act 1993, but re-valuation of the Church and Manse are not included, being inalienable and historic property. The insurance values are disclosed but the Church does not own the properties.

A limited version of The Statement of Financial Activities is given in Appendix A. A fuller version is also available to members and other interested parties on request. Appendix B presents a picture of the state of finances at the end of 2011, including a breakdown of what is held in Reserves. The Independent Examiners Statement of Accounts report is given in Appendix C. The commentary below highlights some of the more significant aspects of the Church's finances during 2011. The figures presented below are rounded to the nearest pound.

#### **2. Receipts**

Offerings and Gift Aid recovery in 2011 increased significantly to £49,223 compared with £37,996 in 2010 (an increase of nearly 31%). The Church should give thanks for this blessing. It is due mainly to new members coming into the Church, but also includes a significant enhancement in Gift Aid recovered due to the earlier Sanctuary Refurbishment Project.

Another significant change from last year is the increase in revenue from room hire and fees. This has increased from £2,975 in 2010 to £6,404 in 2011. It is anticipated this growth may slow for the current year (2012), due to disruption with the Community Rooms development, but thereafter may continue to grow when improved facilities become available. In comparison with other churches of a similar size, we still underperform in this respect.

Fund raising remained a significant source of income and in 2011. We raised £6,255 (c.f. £6,479 in 2010). This includes a sum of £1,376 from the Promises Auction which was specifically in support of the Community Rooms Project.

The Family Café is a new activity within the life of the Church. As well as its main role in providing a service for our community, it has also raised some surplus revenue for the Church. The total surplus for 2011 was £1,771, of which £400 has been allocated for donation to a charitable cause of their choice.

Appeals continue to play a major role in the life of this church. During the course of 2011 we made contributions to numerous organisations. These included humanitarian



responses to the situations in Libya and Japan, Christian Aid and the Disasters Emergency Committee.

The Total Operating Receipts for the year was £92,546, which is an increase of 12% over last year's figure (£82,937).

### **3. Payments**

Payments are grouped under two categories – Pastorate Shared Payments and Dursley Tabernacle Payments. Under the Pastorate heading, Quarry and Sharpness contributions (totalling £3,904) are not shown separately. Instead they are offset against the pastorate M&M contribution of £33,948, to leave a total Dursley Tab M&M contribution of £30,044. The total costs for the Pastorate for 2011 were therefore £34,040, after the above offset.

Property. 2011 was a relatively inexpensive year for property costs, with no major repairs required. The total property expenditure was £12,318, which compares with £25,065 for 2010.

The Church's ministry expenditure amounted to £3,491, which includes employing a Youth Worker (offset by Synod grant), pulpit supply and payments to our organist. Other mission costs (largely education and training) amounted to £1,343.

The Total Operating Payments for 2011 amounted to £52,195, which is significantly less than last year's figure of £67,624.

### **4. General Fund Summary**

The general fund finished the year in surplus and a total of £20,900 was transferred to Reserves. This pays off the loan of £3,500 from the Cater Associated Fund, allows for a donation of £400 by the Family Café and still leaves a surplus of £17,000 to be added to General Reserves.

### **5. Reserves**

During 2011 the Community Rooms Project was funded to the tune of £22,031. This was largely from external grants and donations, but also includes £1,376 raised by the Promises Auction. However, by the end of the year, a total of £4,323 had already been spent on architect's fees. It is likely that there could be an estimated shortfall in the funding for this project of ~£14k.

The Cater Memorial Trust capital and Garden of Rest (Lister Grave) resided in a Lloyds Bank fixed rate accounts with a rate of 3%. This matured in September and was promptly re-invested, with its interest (£6,795), in another Lloyds bond with a fixed rate of 3.6% and duration of three years.

The remaining Cater Memorial Trust Fund (Organ Fund) was held in the CAF Bank along with the Cater Associated Fund. However, this account was closed in May and the whole balance transferred to the Lloyds current account. The end of year balance of the Cater Associated Fund stands at £43,677.

The financial year ended with a total balance of £114,783 in the Lloyds Bank current account and £120,048 in a three year Lloyds Bond (Cater Trust Fund plus re-invested interest).

## **6. The Dursley Tabernacle “Treasury”**

This year has seen a departure from the historical practice of having a single Treasurer to undertake all of the book-keeping, banking, analysis, reporting and the many other activities that befall this role. Instead, following John Heslop’s resignation from the role, a team was been established to form what is sometimes humorously referred to as the Treasury. This team consists of myself, Dennis Allen (Treasurer, analysis, reporting and some bill payments), Terry Larkham (book-keeping, banking and most bills payments) and Matt Welsh (Gift Aid). Malcolm Harris also assists on occasions when needed.

I think I can speak for the whole team when I say that this division of labour has been a great success. With the growth of the church membership and its various activities, it was inevitable that looking after its finances would become a team effort; the work is clearly too much for one person. I would like to thank the team for their efforts since I took over this role. It would not be possible without them.

**Dennis Allen**

**Church Treasurer**

## **Fund Raising- Events Team Report**

The Events Team is pleased to report that in 2011 our efforts raised in excess of £6,000. For this we must all thank the team for their individual efforts and team spirit around all the events that were offered, along with all the other helpers.

2011 was a very mixed year, as is often the case with fund raising, with some events being cancelled, some ideas never getting off the ground, and some tremendous successes. Most notably the auction of promises raised £1,376, and was a very entertaining evening with Simon as auctioneer and some wonderful promises from church members and friends. Special thanks to Angela Simpson for her sterling work in organizing this event. We are repeating this in 2012 with Helene Dalrymple at the helm. The general model of working is that someone from the team takes overall responsibility for one event per year with others helping on the day.

The well-established coffee mornings continue to be run by a dedicated team of volunteers and the cumulative effect remains impressive, this year yielding just short of £1,700. By popular request we repeated the Gallery Quire concert and the Rednock Swing Band, along with the Barn Dance. The very popular Bangers and Mash Quiz Night and the May Fayre and Christmas Fayre all did very well. A new Wine and Cheese Tasting Quiz proved very entertaining for those who came. All in all, a good year with a splendid mix of well-tried and tested and new events.

You will have seen in Wot's On that we have a great programme on offer for 2012 and we look forward to having your support. We are always looking for new ideas and additional helpers so please get in touch if you can. The more helpers we have the less there is to do for each individual.

**Ronald Swanwick**  
**On behalf of the Events Team**

## **Pastoral Report**

Our week begins with flower distribution on Monday morning for those who are not well, in difficult circumstances or celebrating memorable occasions. Visiting is of paramount importance particularly for those who are old, housebound, sick and depressed, practical help is also in place but more help is always needed.

On Tuesday at 9.00 am the Minister continues to meet with a group of Elders to discuss pastoral matters. This is followed by prayer group, the numbers attending prayer group continue to grow.

The prayer chain has been in operation for several years, however this has been overhauled recently and now there are 20 people on the chain and we hope this will be fast and effective. Anyone who would like to join the chain please let Martine or Hilary know.

As we receive new friends and members they are added to the pastoral list which is continually updated. All church members and friends are allocated to an Elder of the church, some non-serving elders continue to have pastoral lists.

The welcome team continue to support the Duty Elder on a Sunday morning and there are always some members of the team available to talk and pray in the church after the service, however if anyone would like follow up please let Simon or a member of the team know.

During this last year we have concentrated on the Healing Ministry, we were encouraged by Peter Mackintosh's visit last year and following that a group of members met with Simon and Tony Pitt to follow a training course for healing prayer teams, In His Name by Alison Morgan and John Woolmer. Since then a few members have visited and prayed with people in the community when requested. At present we have also begun to offer healing prayers after selected services, this is on an experimental basis at the moment.

The Tab friends group for single people continues to grow and we have a variety of activities which include, book club, meals out, days out and cinema visits. We would like to thank Enid, Ronnie and Helene for their energy and organisation. It's been good to see that members of this group support each other.

We try to keep up to date with training and recently Martine and Hilary went on a synod training course for pastoral care.

**Martine Carter and Hilary Green on behalf of the Pastoral Ministry**

## **Ladies Group Report 2011**

A decision to disband our group was made at the AGM on the 13<sup>th</sup> June 2011. This decision was made with much sadness because, despite all our efforts, we failed to attract any new members so it was considered not to be viable to continue.

It was Mrs Pat Nun, the wife of the then Minister, who started an evening group for young Wives in 1967 when this Church was of the Congregational Denomination. The 1991/1992 season was the last time we dared to call ourselves "Young Wives" so the name was changed to "The Ladies Group".

On the 13<sup>th</sup> July last year we managed to muster eighteen members and so we enjoyed a farewell lunch at The Old Spot. The first ten pounds of the cost of the meal was subsidised from the group's funds and the remaining balance was divided between two charities, The Teckel's Animal Sanctuary and Winton's Wish.

Since the last report the Ladies Group raised approximately £130 at the 2010 Christmas Fayre and £170 at our January 2011 Coffee Morning and £120 for our chosen charity, Gloucestershire Nightshop.

**Ann Shillitoe: Secretary**

**Audrey Stewart, Rose Sharp: Joint Treasurers**

## **Women's Guild Report**

As our year runs from September to June, I am reporting on our 2010/2011 session.

After some years feeling we were in the Doldrums, I am pleased to say that over this period our numbers have shown a steady increase and we now attract upwards of thirty at our meetings. Part of this increase is sadly due to the demise of the Ladies Group several of whose members have joined with us. We always felt our groups were complementary but do hope the 'Ladies' will be happy with us.

Most of our meetings have speakers and we rely heavily on talents from the Tabernacle, speakers this session included some regulars - David Evans, Gloria Pritchard and, of course, Simon, but I would like to highlight two particular events. On September 14th, Mr Charles Dukes MBE and Mrs Jukes came along to tell us of their wonderful day at Windsor Castle for the investiture, Chas brought the MBE to show us and Jean wore her royal regalia. On March 15th we were delighted to host a meeting at which Angela Simpson gave a presentation including DVD on Food Hygiene, we hope that this important message gave us all much to think about in practices at Church and home.

Outside speakers this session included Jane Ball, the town Mayor, and Mark Bateman from Eastwood Garden Centre showing us how to construct hanging baskets. Our guest speaker at the Christmas tea was Susan Marshfield relating many amusing anecdotes of Christmas Past. At this tea, a collection was held for Corneal Transplant Research at BRI raising £100. Another tea was held in May for the Cotswold Care Hospice which raised £112 for that charity.

Our session ends in June with firstly the Guild Lunch and AGM and a fortnight later our Annual Outing. This year our outing was to lunch at Aston Ingham provided by the local WI, a super meal which is becoming a Guild tradition (I have booked for 2012), followed by a coach tour of the Malvern Hills including a stop at the British Camp for those who wished to walk off some of the fabulous lunch

At the AGM it was decided to hold meetings once a month rather than fortnightly from September 2011. So far this has been a success in that numbers at each meeting have increased. All ladies (and often menfolk as well if appropriate) are invited to join us - 2pm third Tuesday in the month in the Upper Hall - you will be very welcome.

Sally Larkham - President  
March 2012.

## **Dursley Men's Group**

Our first meeting was held last June when 8 men attended. We agreed to try to meet once a month.

1. We had an evening of 10 pin bowling at Stroud.
2. The more energetic men took part in a Saturday cycle ride.
3. An evening meeting was held where each gave a description of their working life.
4. We had an evening walk over to Waterley Bottom.
5. We had an evening to discuss Christmas experiences.
6. A Christmas meal at Reids restaurant was held in December.
7. Recently we visited Retro Engineering at Upthorpe.
8. An evening meeting with a speaker is being arranged for March.
9. A skittles evening in April has been suggested.

Attendance varies from 6 - 18 and we would invite all men of the church to attend our events where we can get to know each other.

## **Victor Watts**

## **Tab Family Cafe 2012**

Tab family cafe has had an amazing year. We launched on Wednesday 23rd March 2011 and have opened almost every week since then. Families arrive from 10am; over the year we have seen many people come through the door. A typical session (10am-1pm) will see us serve between 40 and 60 people. As of last week we used our 1,100<sup>th</sup> tea bag!

Health professionals signpost clients to the cafe and promote it as a safe and comfortable space to bring young children. We have a diverse customer-base which includes some families who have never missed a week! There is always someone around to welcome first-timers to the cafe. Feedback from visiting families has been immensely positive. In our comments book we regularly have requests for a second weekly session. Some parents are gradually offering to help during the cafe, which can be a relief during busy periods.

The cafe team is grateful for the increased storage at the rear of the sanctuary. This has significantly increased ease of set-up and clear up, and removed the hazards of negotiating the balcony stairs. Thank you!

We have a wonderful team of volunteers who make the cafe possible - to them we say a huge thank you. Clearing up after the cafe continues to be hard work and we are immensely grateful to the people that help to put the sanctuary back together once the cafe is closed.

The cafe has never been about money. Our aim is to serve the community, show hospitality, and introduce the wider community to what happens in and around the Tab. We now have Christian music playing in the background during the cafe, which accompanies the gentle biblical messages on the screens. The cafe is very successful; it generates on average £50-70 profit each week. We were delighted to be able to support a local charity with a donation from the cafe profits. In January £400 was donated to Dursley Mobs, which is a highly valued group that supports breast feeding mothers.

We are, as ever, always grateful for more help with the cafe. The cafe is a labour of love for us - however, the more folk on the rota, the more the labour is shared. There is an amazing atmosphere during the cafe - come and see for yourself!  
Want to know more? Call Emma 01453 543760

**Emma Irvine on behalf of the Family Cafe**



## **The Tabard Players**

The Tabard Players is a welcoming group of people of all ages who share an interest in the theatre and love to get together to socialise, read plays, rehearse and perform. They meet on a Wednesday evening. At the present time they are busy preparing for a two act comedy production to be held in the last week of March. The stage in the upper schoolroom has been built and decorated, the actors have learned their lines as well as a backstage team ready to bring the whole production together.

**Margaret Wilson**  
**Secretary**

## **Worship, Children, Youth and Education Ministry Report**

### **Worship Report**

We praise God for the diversity and enthusiasm of our congregation and the worship we can offer. Most Sundays our worship is a blend of styles that reflect this diversity. It is all centred on scripture and we continue to follow the Common Lectionary which is used by most mainline denominations and which gives us a balanced diet of biblical readings and themes for the church year. The material we use, Seasons of the Spirit, integrates worship and learning across the age ranges so that our children and young people reflect on the same biblical passage as the adults on Sunday morning and those who meet in Fellowship groups during the week. We hope that in this way our worship and education is joined up, balanced and comprehensive through the year.

There have been a number of special services throughout the year including a super participative Sunday School Anniversary, and a charming Nativity Service. A choir has been mustered on a couple of occasions which has added a special dimension. There has been occasional evening services one led by the youth. The mid-week services, the Gatherings, came to a natural end and didn't seem to receive the support necessary to sustain them. One of the meetings involved a guest, Revd. Pratap Kumar Nayak, from the Church of North India.

One of the main issues for us as a church has been to explore the balance of contemporary and traditional style worship. Some want more contemporary, some want more traditional, the majority seem to enjoy the blend we have on a usual Sunday. In 2011 we experimented by having split services (a traditional style followed by a contemporary praise style) on occasional Sundays. In 2012 we are experimenting in having occasional alternative monthly full services in different styles. It should be an interesting discussion at a future church meeting (probably in the autumn).

Simon is still planning on holding a short course to train some more people in the church to play more a role in the leading of worship.

We are immensely blessed in having the talents of Simon Fullard, Pat Roberts and all the members of the Music Group (now organised by Jackie Pritchard).

To God be the glory.

**Simon Helme**

### **Fellowship groups report**

Our fellowship groups continued last year with their usual summer break. About 40 regular attenders go to our four groups on a fortnightly basis. The material is from the Seasons of the Spirit which is always linked to the next weeks worship. We are very fortunate to have people willing to lead these groups and they provide not only a time to reflect on the week's worship theme but a wonderful opportunity for shared fellowship and fun. Most groups took a break during Lent and a few members joined in the Churches Together Lent series. Thanks to our leaders and hosts who make these possible. In September Simon committed to leading a group at The Quarry thus adding to the use of the church building there.

**Liz Swanwick**

**Fellowship Group Co-Ordinator**

## **JUNIOR CHURCH REPORT**

It is wonderful to have a growing number of children and young people with us. They are a blessing and I think all the leaders of Sunday morning groups recognise the exciting and privileged work we have sharing our faith. Together the leaders and helpers make a strong team offering a variety of skills and teaching methods which means the children/young people are nurtured well. Warm thanks are extended to all who help with Holiday Club and Sunday School sessions – you have done and are doing a great job.

### **CHILDREN/YOUNG PEOPLE INCREASING NUMBERS**

- Tab-b-bees: 12 registered with an average attendance of 7
- Tab Tribe: 21 children registered with an average attendance of 11
- Fury: 9 young people registered with an average attendance of 6
- Average attendance has risen to 24 children/young people (from 13 in 2010)

In October 2011 the Sunday school leaders discussed possible ways of restructuring our present groups to cater for our growing numbers. After discussion it was decided to stay with the present grouping but have one leader and two helpers in Tab-b-bees to ensure that appropriate provision could be offered. This is now running effectively.

Bobbie suggested an attendance reward system for Tab Tribe. It is operational and the Tab Tribe children love it!

### **ART**

The young people in Fury responded to a session exploring a passage from Revelation 22 by creating artwork. Jo took it a step further and finished her painting at home which in turn inspired others. Kindly, Ron Swanick lent us some easels which allowed the young people to show their work in the church. Lots of church members commented positively on their wonderful ideas representing the water of life.

### **CHRISTMAS**

The children and young people led the nativity as part of the Christmas service. Annie-May, Ruth and Simon moved us with their beautiful singing and who could forget Emma's horrid Herod or those rascally sheep! It was a great way for us all to remember such a pivotal story.

### **YOUNG LEADERS**

We are beginning to think about ways we can utilise the skills and faith of our older young people in supporting the development of our younger members. As such Jo has started to support with Tab-b-bees once a month. This needs further discussion with leaders to ensure a fair system is in place to ensure this will work successfully for Tab-b-bees and the young people.

### **FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS**

- We want to make stronger links between Sunday School groups and regular services. We will encourage leaders to support our children/young people to

write prayers/paint artwork/create powerpoints linked to Psalm etc to be used by Simon when appropriate.

- We plan to send out photograph permission slips to parents to enable two named people to take photographs during Sunday School sessions and occasionally share them with the church/our website.
- Develop guidance, responsibilities and opportunities for young leaders.
- Sort and organise Tab-b-bees resources.
- Paint Tab-b-bees room.
- Explore setting up the interactive whiteboard/projector, which was donated to us, in the upper room to allow Tab Tribe to view DVD snippets etc with ease.

## **LEADERS**

- Sunday school leaders/helpers: 24 people
- Holiday Club leaders/helpers: 32 people

We have several new helpers/leaders who have started to work with our children/young people this year. This augmentation has strengthened our team further and offered a greater variety for our children/young people when explore their faith. The rota system is working well and leaders/helpers change amongst themselves if they are unable to attend a session. We have a list of Sunday School leaders/helpers numbers to facilitate this. We are presently looking for one Tab-B-Bee helper and one Fury helper for once a month commitment.

## **TRAINING**

Zoe Avastu attended an exploration of childhood in Summer 2011 which was led by the Children's Society and based on a survey of 34.000 children. The Children Society are offering upto £1000 funding for projects which support children and young people. We may be able to access it to fund a paid leader for 'Family Café' or extend this project in some way. This information was passed onto Emma.

## **CHILD PROTECTION**

All leaders who work with children/young people must have undertaken CRB check every 3 years. This has been implemented and a new system developed where responsibilities are clear. Mary Weedon leads and coordinates this area.

First Aid and Fire procedures were discussed in October 2011 with leaders/helpers. Registers are now consistently being used by all leaders.

Chris Burgham led training in October 2011 on the important subject of child protection. He explored safe practice for adults when working with children/young people, adult/children ratios, concern procedures etc. URC child protection cards, which set out the main procedures in case of a concern, were handed out to each person attending and Emma took spares for other leaders. It is vital that we are all up to date on current good practise in this area and as such it was great that almost all of our Sunday School leaders attended. We have adopted the URC 'Good Practice – Safeguarding Children and Young People in the church'

## **RESOURCES**

In October 2012 Sunday School leaders discussed resources used in each of the groups. Most leaders found the 'Season of the Spirit' background information very useful but found the practical ideas for sessions varied. As such we have pooled some of our personal teaching books/CD's in the Sunday School cupboard. We have also bought practical resources to support activities: paints, brushes, face paints, play dough and tools etc..

### **FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS**

- Write a short practical guide for new leaders.
- Facilitate training in areas identified by leaders.
- Explore the use of borrowing resources such as bouncy castles, ball pits from Kingshill House play scheme (via Tree Tops) for special church events such as Sunday School Celebration service/Friday BBQ at Summer Holiday Club.

### **OUTREACH** **HOLIDAY CLUB**

The 'Mission Rescue' Holiday Club was a great success in Summer 2011. Simon led the children through an exploration of Moses' Mission, Bobbie Spears led some crazy and fun sports while Kathryn Tearle did an amazing job with organising the registration team which meant the club ran smoothly. We had 55 children most days. They engaged well with the Moses story and left humming the Mission Rescue song while smiling! Feedback from parents was very positive.

### **FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS**

- Explore the idea of having a BBQ on the last Friday of Summer Holiday Club to facilitate parents and leaders developing relationships.
- Explore the idea of having a day/weekend club to explore the Easter story. (This year it was clear that we could not get enough adult helpers for this.)

**Zoe Avastu**  
**Junior Church Leader**

## Youth Worker Report



Hi all, and welcome to my annual report. I have been the Tab's Youth Worker since October 2011 and have loads to tell you about! This report is a summary of all the things we've been up to. I am contracted to 10 hours a week, term time only (approximately 42 weeks a year)

### **Sunday Evening Fury**

The Fury programme has been tightly packed throughout the year. The Tab Fury group meet every Sunday evening during term time. We have had games nights with various themes, cinema nights, bowling at Stroud, digital treasure hunts, baking sessions, gardening sessions and many more great activities.

One highlight for me was a session in November last year when we had a guest speaker, Jamie Whitehead, who has just retired from the Army. The session was themed on Remembrance, and it was wonderful to hear Jamie talk candidly to the young people about his experiences and his faith.

When we have regular Fury evenings on site at the Tab, we often close the session with a time of discussion and sometimes prayer. The membership of Fury is a wonderful mix of young people; some are very used to *church*, others are not. We embrace this as leaders and try to deliver a *message* that is appropriate for all; the young people all understand that they are at a Christian Youth Group; most participate well in these quieter activities.

Over the last few months numbers have grown and these discussion sessions are a little crazy; we will look at other methods of delivery for these sessions, and possibly a split group with two sessions. *YouTube* and multimedia clips are often used as a discussion starter, as well as material from printed resources. We talk about topical issues and strive for a balance of faith-based activity and moral-based activity. We attempt some interactive bible study with the group, although this has to be done creatively and sensitively.

We have a tuck shop within the group which is a valuable way of funding table tennis balls and the like. Care is taken about the amount individuals spend and consume(!) during this time. We started in October 2011 with 12 members. To date I have 28 young people registered as members, with a regular 15-20 engaged in Fury activities. They are a close-knit group who are caring and sensitive to each others needs.

### **Residential**

At the end of October last year we enjoyed a residential weekend to The Christian Outdoor Centre at Viney Hill. Thirteen young people enjoyed a weekend of great activities, both in the centre and also in the beautiful countryside; the young people learned some new skills and had a

valuable time bonding as a group. The theme of the weekend was *Living with God*.

The young people also enjoyed an overnight adventure in the Tab buildings where we decorated the new Fury Den and had a film night, along with other activities. The Fury Den has made a huge difference to the group and has enabled visual material from the fury morning activities to be displayed and enjoyed. The young people feel they now have a base of their own—thank you!

A sponsored 24 hour residential is planned for early January 2012 to raise funds for Young Carers (one of our young people is a young carer) and for Fury funds.

### **Assemblies**

I have written eight assemblies throughout the year. Rednock school is the local secondary school that has over 1500 students. It is divided into four communities which contain all the year groups apart from sixth form. Assemblies are delivered to a group of 400 young people ranging from 11—16. The assembly is repeated to other communities; throughout the year, 25 assemblies have been delivered in total to 400 young people at a time. Although the preparation of the assemblies is time consuming it is hugely rewarding when young people engage me in conversation about something from the assembly. A significant example of this has been that students who heard my harvest assembly (in which I talked about the setting up of the Dursley Food bank) and who have jumped on board to support the new Dursley Food Bank; a whole school food collection is scheduled for early December.

### **Rednock School Drop-in Sessions**

After identifying a specific need at Rednock School, we are now running a lunchtime drop in session. The name of the group is CU; Rednock Christian Union, with the tag line *find your missing piece...* We started the group in March, on a Friday lunch time. Activities have included viewing DVD material, games, quizzes, crafts, interactive Bible study, role-play, and discussions on topical issues. Acts of service in the community, some social events, and visiting speakers are just a few things that I hope we will achieve in the future.

The group is made up of a small number of students but we have some big discussions! The sessions usually attract about seven young people each week. Staff at Rednock have commented on how important this drop-in is; young people that attend the drop-in often lack confidence in the classroom—teachers have been pleasantly surprised to witness individuals reading and taking part in activities that they would not normally be happy doing, and that have a meaningful outcome.

### **Praise Rocks**

The 'Praise Rocks' service was successful. It continues to be a challenge to get some of the Fury group into services at the Tab, and it was wonderful to see the Sunday evening group enjoying the service. We looked at the theme of worship during one of our sessions and spent some time thinking about the prayers for the service.



## **Training**

I have spent two wonderful weekends in Eastbourne in November for the Youth Worker Conference 2010 & 2011. I joined 1000 other Christian youth workers in lectures, workshops and worship. It had an immense impact on me and was a hugely valuable experience. Thanks to Synod for helping to fund these conferences; it was wonderful to take one of our volunteers to the conference this year. There is a local one day Emergency First Aid course which I will hopefully complete early in the new year. I also need to attain my Food Hygiene Certificate.

## **Youth Worker Management Team**

I feel very blessed to have the support of a very caring Management Team. The people in the team are a mixture of serving elders and church members. They have been carefully selected and bring a huge amount of experience and wisdom within the youth work field. Simon Helme also provides vital support to me in a pastoral capacity; and we make a fine team when it comes to assemblies! Thank you to you all! (Special thanks to Steve Hubbard for being such a supportive line manager)

## **Targets for the future**

We are considering a change in day for evening Fury; we will explore the possibilities of running Fury on a Friday night; this would give us the option of running a second session slightly later to accommodate the rising 15's in the group and those who are wanting to explore their faith further.

The leadership is keen to establish links with a church in Bristol that has a monthly youth service where 400 young people gather for worship. *The Mix* happens on the first Sunday of the month. Changing to a Friday would allow YP (and leaders) to enjoy the evening services at the Tab on a Sunday. I am hopeful that this might also boost our volunteer numbers; staffing is an issue because of the growth of the group.

Another venture that I am passionate about is the possibility of a youth café in Dursley. We have to tackle the underage drinking in the town with great urgency; a youth café would give the young people of the town a safe venue to meet. We need to meet them where they're at... Watch this space!!

**Emma Irvine**