



To Worship God To Know Jesus To Serve Others

HALL GREEN UNITED COMMUNITY CHURCH

Annual Report September 2015- August 2016

Charity number 1162079

Letter from the Chair of Trustees

Dear friends,

Taking over as Chair of Trustees from our first chair, Nick Jones, was a great honour that gave me a hard act to follow. However, I am happy to contribute to this, our second Annual Report as Hall Green United Community Church.

In a challenging year we were glad of the support of our parent denominations, the Methodist Church, The United Reformed Church and the Moravian Church.

Much progress has been made especially in our plans to reorder our premises to be able to better serve our local community. I have been overwhelmed by the support shown by the congregation for these plans and their acceptance of the responsibility of fundraising so that we can achieve them.

This report highlights the many and diverse ways that we seek to serve the local community, to be a place where hospitality is found, where signs of God's love abound and where we shared together in God's mission. Our ongoing task is to continue and expand our efforts in all these areas.

Of course, nothing is achieved without the huge number of people at HGUCC who unstintingly give of their talents and time. Behind every article in this report there is hours of dedicated commitment.

I am happy to commend this report to you and all the people that make HGUCC the inspiring and life filled place that God has called it to be.

Blair Kessler

Chair of the Managing Trustees

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About Hall Green United Community Church

The church was formed in 2014 by the coming together of Hall Green Methodist Church and Sparkhill United Church (Moravian/URC).

The two congregations have been worshipping together since January 2008 and unanimously agreed to form the new church in order to better follow our aims: "To Worship God, To Know Jesus, To Serve Others".

The original churches have a long history in this area. For more information about our past and the denominations of which we are a part of please visit our website, www.hgucc.org.uk. This also features regularly updated news.

The majority of our members hold joint membership of the Methodist Church, the Moravian Church and the United Reformed Church. We make every effort to be fully involved in the life and work of those denominations whilst recognising our responsibilities to the wider church and the community in Hall Green and across our city.

Managing Trustees

Elected Trustees

Pauline Astartjian

Peter Astartjian

Christine Bourne

Brian Dickens (Treasurer)

Leeford Dixon

Dolvis Ferdinand

Sarah Fidler

Keith Dennis

Joy Johnson

Nick Jones

Blair Kessler (Chair)

Norma Maynard (Secretary)

David Howarth

Susan McIlwaine

Alan Perkins

Linda Ramdharry

Co-opted Trustees

David Harwood (Safeguarding Officer)

Julia Parkes (Pastoral Committee)

Other Offices

Access to building and bookings officer

Mark Thomas

All-age Worship Co-ordinator

?

Baby and Co

Julia Parkes

Bible Reading notes

Enid Allen

Brownie Leaders

Ann Ford

Alison Raybould

Christian Aid Co-ordinator

Vacant

Cleaning Staff Supervisor

Barbara Dennis

Communion Steward Co-ordinator

Margaret Lilley

Creche Co-ordinator

Barbara Kessler

Directory/Newsletter Editor

Blair Kessler

Disciples of Steel Director

Paul Fidler

Discoverers Co-ordinator

Maggie Lewis

Editor of 'The Magazine'

Pam Smith

Flower co-ordinator

Pauline Astartjian

Health and Safety Co-ordinator

Christine Bourne

Lotubai Project

Elaine Spencer

Musical Director	Val Dickens
MWA Circle Leader	?
Safeguarding Co-ordinators	David Harwood Sarah Harwood
Traidcraft Sales	Valmai Crocker
Vestry Steward Co-ordinators	Enid Allen Sue Sainsbury
Website Manager	Blair Kessler
Welcome Stewards Co-ordinator	Pauline Astarjian
Youth Club Leaders	Sarah Fidler David Harwood Sarah Harwood David Moore

Activity Reports

AgeUK Info and advice

The church has maintained its links with AgeUK Birmingham although during the summer of 2016 their staffing situation led them to withdraw from the monthly information and advice for older people which they had been running at the church. We are currently pursuing the possibility of developing our own Advice Service which would provide a service to all adults.

AgeUK now runs a monthly footcare session at the church, staffed by their own trained personnel and we look forward to its expansion in the future.

We are also jointly exploring ways in which we can provide a focus for networking between statutory and voluntary resources provided for the older people in the community in order to improve communication of, and knowledge about the many activities and services available..

Baby and Co

Hall Green Baby & Co. is an informal stay and play group that meets in the Church hall on Thursday mornings during term-time.

We provide books, toys and a safe environment in which both adults and children can socialise. We have drinks and biscuits mid-morning.

We have occasional visits from Chinnbrook Childrens Centre who provide information and advice for families.

Our numbers vary from week to week as there is no formal membership.

Baby & Co. has been running for almost 29 years and we hope that it will continue.

Brownies

The pack continues to thrive and we regularly had more than 20 Brownies each session.

We worked towards a few badges during the year including the communicator, Brownie skills and hostess. Following a visit from some exotic animals we used some of the things we had learned and observed in the agility and artist badges! We explored the topics of you, your community and the world via the Adventure badges, looking at amongst other things recycling, food banks and fair trade. We made pictures from items found on the floor of the church garden. The older Brownies planned and ran two very successful meetings as part of their More Adventures challenges. We will miss them when they move on.

We continued to grow our money for HGUCC and raised a whopping £542 over the year.

The Brownies had fun with other units at the Division Disco in January. A trip to the Variety Club Special day at the West Midlands Safari Park was enjoyed by all who went and very successful Pack holiday in July saw 13 excited Brownies and leaders enjoying themselves at Dodford Children's Farm.

We are all very proud of Ann Ford for achieving her 30 years long service award this year.

Disciples of Steel

Disciples of Steel (DOS) has had a year of consolidation and growth.

The older band continues to learn new pieces, while our newer and younger members are increasing their repertoire by learning some of the songs that the older members teach them. This is enabling us to invest in the future, while developing the skills and playlist of the older and more capable members of the band.

We continue to rehearse fortnightly in the Upper Room and split our rehearsal time between the younger and older members. Our performances this year have included a variety of event types, having played for a church member's private birthday party, All Age Worships, Hall Green Community Day and in the Swan Shopping Centre to raise money for the Blue Cross Charity.

The growth of the band has prompted us to acquire more pans (purchased using an anonymous donation) so that all members have a chance to play. We have been able to add another set of 'double tenors' and a set of 'tenor basses'. The tenor basses do the same job as the big 6 basses we have, but in half the space, making them more attractive for transporting too!

We have also, due to a kind donation from a parent and helpful advice and sourcing from a local theatre supplies company, been able to afford to equip the band with a sound system, meaning that we can perform in larger venues and still be heard. The sound from pans can be picked up by microphones and mixed with our backing music to provide a sound that can be heard over a greater distance. Members of the public commented that we could be heard throughout the Swan Shopping Centre; there is no longer a chance to escape us! The sound system also has the added benefit that we can increase volume on certain pans if we don't have a full band and it therefore allows us to play at an event which we would have previously been unable to fulfil.

The pans had not been tuned since we were gifted them in 2009, although they really should be tuned every couple of years, minimum. We have rectified this and had them tuned in the summer of 2016 and are pleased with the result.

The band needs to raise more money over the coming year to pay for the recent tuning of the pans and further replacement of equipment, such as cases and music stands. It is also intending to raise money for the church's 20:20 vision fund too.

Discoverers

The Discoverers is going Great! Maggie Lewis joined the team late last year as one of the leaders. There is currently just 3 Leaders which includes Zoe Ferdinand and Joy Fisher. We are very pleased with all the support from the Helpers. It is invaluable to have them support the leaders.

The children enjoy sharing their ideas and thoughts about the passages that we read on Sundays and the activities that take part with it. It is nice to encourage all the children to try and take part, but they are never forced, but we find some of them need a little encouragement more than others.

The main thing is that the children are happy and always appear excited to go back into church to share what they have learnt. It is a very proud moment to watch! It is also nice to see the children taking an active part in All Age worship. Feedback from the children is that they like this. Can they do more? i.e supporting with collection, giving out worship sheets etc..

Chaos continues to be very successful and it is always nice to see new faces!

Our future goal is to get the children involved in the 20 20 vision. Watch this space!

Sparkhill Foodbank

The Trussell Trust runs a network of over 400 foodbanks giving emergency food and support to people in crisis across the UK, where 13 million people live below the poverty line.

There are now 11 Trussell Trust foodbanks across Birmingham, as well as independent ones set up by churches, mosques and other organisations.
The Sparkhill foodbank has been open for 5 years.

During the 12 months this report covers, we have delivered over 650 kg of donations to the Sparkhill foodbank. This is approximately equivalent to 3-day food parcels for 60 - 65 people. Over the same period, the foodbank distributed a total of almost 56 tonnes of food in 5,123 separate food parcels.

Almost half of all referrals to the foodbank are due to either changes in benefits, or a delay in them being paid. As well as providing emergency food parcels, the foodbank supports its clients through its Money Advice Team and other projects designed to help people break the cycle of poverty.

The Sanctuary

The Sanctuary, a joint venture of St. Chad's Cathedral and the Salvation Army, operates 5 days a week with over 70 volunteers supporting asylum seekers, refugees and immigrants.

About 150 clients use the Sanctuary every week with an urgent need for practical items. Many are newly arrived and still wearing what they wore on a long and hazardous journey. Most are seen only once or twice before they are moved elsewhere in the country or face deportation.

A further 150 are regular attenders at English classes and other workshops.

We are always made most welcome, and our gifts appreciated, by both volunteers and clients, when we take clothing, hygiene and household items donated in the boxes at the back of church.

Grow Baby

During the year we have also been able to make donations of toys and 'nearly new' clothing for under 5s at a new 'Stay & Play' group run by Birmingham Vineyard Church in Digbeth.

Friendly Corner

Friendly Corner is our Community Cafe, serving coffee, tea and light lunches on Tuesdays. We usually have around fifty customers. We are entirely staffed with volunteers, several of whom are not from the Church congregation. We make a modest profit, although charges are very reasonable.

Over the last year we have been able to make donations to Birmingham City Mission, St Basil's, Sparkhill Food Bank, Send a Cow, The Parkinson's Society, and Victoria Special School. We also regularly donate to both the general Church funds and the 20/20 Vision fund. Profits from the 'Bring and Buy' stall go entirely to Church - and we thank the people who run the stall.

There is a music recital most weeks at 1 pm. in the Church.

We are very grateful to all our loyal volunteers for their time and dedication.

House groups

Three bible study house groups meet in the homes of their members on average twice a month, holding their meetings on weeknights or during the day.

The groups choose their own study material including York Course Studies and other published material. These enable study of the Bible and provide questions which promote serious discussion among the members.

Meetings usually last for about 1 ½ hours and the sessions include prayer and refreshments. In some groups, members take turns to lead and prepare the material and programme for the evening.

Members of these groups also support the Hall Green Churches Together 'Lent Courses'.

Moravian Women's Association

The HGUCC Moravian Women's Association continues to meet after worship once a month for ten months of the year. We share a letter from the President or Vice President, a devotional paper and a home and overseas paper with questions for discussion. The theme for the current year is 'Messages from the Mountains'. Papers are forwarded to anyone unable to attend so that they can keep up-to-date with what is happening.

Our current membership stands at 18.

On 18th April 2015 a coach set off from HGUCC. for the MWA Away Day at Dukinfield (and a trip to Manchester for some). We had a great journey (arriving first!) followed by a fabulous time meeting up with old friends, sharing in worship and participating in workshops throughout the day.

We finished the year by making plans to have/provide a light lunch for the congregation after worship on 24th January 2016 and to host the next Away Day on 9th April 2016 here at HGUCC.

Property Maintenance

By September 2015 most of the work on Project B had been completed and from the beginning of the new Church year the Maintenance Team and other volunteers were finishing off any outstanding work. It is worth mentioning that aside from professional tradesman, the completion of this Project was helped by the considerable number of voluntary hours given (approximately 1820 in total for the duration of the project) by Team members plus a number of church members and volunteers from the nearby community. This extra help was very much appreciated by the Maintenance Team.

There has been a steady flow of general maintenance work most of which could be managed in house, though contractors were needed to carry out some additional roof repairs in February and the pruning of one of our larger trees in March. Our thanks go to church members who record any problems or issues in the Maintenance Notebook, which enables the Team to keep up to date. Also during the year General and Fire Risk Assessments have been undertaken and all annual service checks have continued.

We are happy to say that there are just a small number of outstanding issues from the 2013 Quinquennial report which the Team will continue to deal with where possible.

2020 Vision - Property - future plans

The past year has seen significant movement in realising our vision to improve access, modernise and provide premises better able to serve the community and meet our own needs as a church. The local need for community space has been highlighted by community consultation and backed up by the growing number of bookings and we are enthusiastically looking forward to a time when church and community activities are no longer as restricted by outdated facilities.

By January 2016 the initial phase of the project (to refurbish and redesign the rooms to the rear of the building) was completed at a total cost of £20,000 and many voluntary hours of work. All costs were met by the church congregation.

Plans for the major part of the renovation have been finalised by the architect and costed. Almost all the necessary surveys and assessments have been completed giving us confidence that the scheme is practicable. All building users have been both consulted and kept informed of progress.

Although projected building costs increased during the early part of 2016 it is very encouraging that by the end of the reporting year a significant proportion of the total project cost had been assured through gifts, grants, fund-raising events and promises. We are very grateful to individuals who have been so generous with their time and money and to many grant-making trusts and organisations for making this possible. The Design Team, consisting of Manalo & White architects, Bond Foster/Felton Consult Quantity Surveyors and the church's Building Strategy Group, aims to commence work on this project during 2017.

Youth Club

The youth club meets on a Tuesday evening, during term time, between 7:30 and 9:00 pm. It caters for young people from school year 6 upwards.

Over the last year the club has had an average of 15 young people meeting with us and they are a mix of members who have been with us for a few years and 5 new members from Church families. We enjoy a wide range of activities – pancake races, bucketball, volleyball, table tennis, Wii, quizzes, table football, craft evenings, Easter egg hunts, Summer BBQ and stir fry nights to name just a few.

Additionally there have been trips to laser quest and the annual New Year trip to the local Indian restaurant. We are currently planning this year's Comic relief venture and will let you know what we will be up to shortly. There are planned changes in leadership later this year and we will be looking to recruit a couple of new leaders starting in September. Anyone interested??

Safeguarding

The past twelve months have passed with out any concerns in Safeguarding. It has been five years since we all completed

our mass CRB(DBS) enrollment and this year we will all need to undergo refresher training and renew our DBS,

I intend to ask the circuit if it is possible to arrange the refresher training to be held here at Hall Green which should make it more convenient for us all. Details to follow.