

# St Matthew's Church Report

## AGM

# May 17<sup>th</sup> 2009

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# **Vicar's Report**

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2. The pattern of Church Life
3. Staffing
4. Facilities
5. School Governor Links

## **Introduction**

I am writing this report at what I truly believe is one of the most significant moments in the life of our church. Those of us that gather to pray on a Monday morning have been reading through Acts in recent months, and as I am sure you are aware that there is a reoccurring pattern in the life of the early church. It is a pattern of growth, challenge, change and then continued growth. The church grows and then that growth slows as it runs into difficulties or faces challenges born out of its growth. The church responds to those difficulties and this in turn leads to a new phase of growth.

Since the reordering we have seen a period of growth – in ministry, numerically, and financially. It has been an exciting time to be involved in the life of St. Matthew's. I believe that we are now at a point where we need to make some significant changes, changes that have the potential to lay the foundations for the next period of growth. There are three key areas which I think we need to develop. 1. Pattern of church life, 2. Staffing 3. Our facilities

## **The pattern of Church life**

Earlier this year we conducted a survey on our pattern of worship at St. Matt's (A copy of the results is included with this report). Part of the reason for conducting this questionnaire was the need to find a way forward in our morning worship where we are increasingly full. We had initially thought about moving to two morning services. However that would require doubling children's teams etc. A better solution we believe would be to establish a new contemporary service in the evening. You will see from the questionnaire that there was significant interest in the possibility of an evening contemporary service.

### **A new service or a new congregation?**

I don't believe that what we really need is "Another service" Rather I think what we really need to do is develop another congregation. Several years ago Dave Green conducted a survey of our community and identified the significantly larger than average number of single occupancy homes mostly made up of the young and single, within our part of the parish. This represents a section of our community we have so far failed to reach effectively. Part of the brief for this new service would be to provide something for our existing membership but also to develop a

service with appropriate associated ministries that would reach out to this section of our community.

### **What about our existing evening service?**

This sort of change however will be costly. We remain committed to providing a liturgical service for those who prefer a more traditional type of worship, and we will need to resolve the conflict over timing in particular. One of the suggestions made in response to on the questionnaire was to move existing evening service to the afternoons during the winter months. What we therefore plan to do is use the autumn and winter to experiment with a new pattern of worship. An afternoon liturgical and hymn based service and a new contemporary evening service. We want to use this change as an opportunity to breathe new life into our traditional worship as much as to develop a new expression of church in the evening slot.

## **Staffing**

**Associate Minister:** If the new Evening congregation is to grow and develop it will require a strong leadership team. We believe that Rich would be the ideal person to develop and lead a team to oversee this new service. While Rich will maintain overall responsibility for youth and children's work we believe it is time to recognise his role is changing and becoming more much that of an Associate Minister than a youth worker. This will mean that Rich will need to lay down much of what he is currently doing – to develop this new area of ministry at St. Matt's and to take a great role in overall church leadership.

**Youth Minister:** We believe this is God's timing with Ali reaching the point in his training that he will become a qualified youth worker and not simply a trainee. This means Ali will have more time for youth ministry at St. Matt's and will need to be given more responsibility for the running of our youth ministry. It is important to be clear though that although Ali will have more time from August, it will not completely make up the amount of Richards time we will be losing from the youth ministry at St. Matthew's. This means that we need to consider others ways of strengthening our staff in the youth team. There are three possible ways of doing this. 1. To make up the hours with volunteers, 2. To have a second 'Kairos' student next year, 3. To apply to Oasis for a new youth work placement student to replace Ali.

**Children's ministry:** For some time we have been talking about the appointment of a children's worker. We have said that we will not make that appointment until funding is available. However it is quite clear that the need for this role to be filled is increasing with every passing month. We are simply not providing as well as we should be for the children in our care! There is also as we have seen with EnCounter Culture an incredible opportunity to work with the community in this area.

For some time I have been struggling with this. At the Diocesan Conference Mark Russell the new head of the Church Army laid down a big challenge: "Are we taking risks for the kingdom God" – and "how big is our vision of God" and what he will do? Sadly most of the churches represented at the conference responded to Marks message by making excuses why they could not take risks. I believe there is a real danger we are doing the same! Whenever we have expanded our staff in the past it has always been a step of faith, for a variety of reasons (and many of them good ones i.e. the recession) we are saying that this time we want the finance in

place first – I cannot help but wonder if this is right though? The first priority for whoever takes on this role would be to support our existing team of volunteer children's workers and to develop our ministry to our youngest members. In the longer term there are many opportunities to develop links with children and families in our community.

**Operations and Admin:** You will be aware that Jennie has stood down, and we will shortly be interviewing for her replacement and hope to have made an appointment before our AGM. There is also a need for some re-evaluation of the role. As part of that re-evaluation we need to consider how the office can co-ordinate and support more effectively every area of church life.

## Facilities

Recently the leadership team took an evening to seek God and share our hearts and desires with regard to what we felt God saying to us for our ministry areas and the church as a whole. We are currently using what came out of this time to develop a five year plan for St. Matt's. Some of what was shared that evening is already reflected in the points I have raised above. However one other key area that we all felt strongly about was a sense that the building was at bursting point. If we are going to continue to grow we will have to develop the site to provide more space for ministry. David Johnson had already anticipated this to some degree and has begun the process of planning out how we could do this. Our thinking and plans are at an early stage, however we do believe that this is something that will require our time and energy in the near future. I am raising it now because it has implications for what we are trying to do at the moment, but also I want to take this opportunity to put it on the longer term agenda. In many ways it feels like complete madness to be talking about these changes when our nation is in the middle of a recession, and many of our church members are facing uncertain futures. However we believe that the recession can only heighten the need to reach out to our community and to minister to those who are broken. Whilst this presents a huge challenge to us as a church, ultimately the challenge is to trust God and be obedient to what he is calling us too.

Chris Wicks

## School Governor Links

The Head teacher Mandy Crossan is continuing to encourage the links between Church and School. Ali and Rhian lead Collective Worship each Tuesday using a mix of drama, Christian songs, Bible stories, practical application, quizzes – which the children enjoy.

The church welcomes the school to celebrate Harvest, Christmas, Easter and Pentecost (new for 2009) in the church building. Many parents join in with the Christmas carol service and the service for leavers in July; on this occasion the children receive a book to help with the transition between primary and secondary school.

The foundation Governors are: Chris Wicks (Vicar)

David Johnson

Margaret-Anne MacMurchy

Jean Best

We are all willing to use our particular abilities to help the school and other church members are involved with fund Raising, and listening to children read on a regular weekly basis, to name two of many instances.

This year the school library has had a complete transformation and the church has donated money for new books and Bibles. The member of staff responsible for R.E. has chosen a selection suitable for all ages, to include some books of prayers for class use.

I have visited the school several times this year and have always been made very welcome by staff and children. I have appreciated invitations to celebrate achievement of dramatic, artistic and musical talent and this has given me opportunities to praise and encourage.

Please, as Church members do all you can to support the children and parents you come in to contact with – showing the love of God in practical ways and praying for a growth of spiritual understanding.

Jean Best  
Church Member and School Governor

# **Production Report**

## **Contents**

1. Worship
2. PA / AV
3. Flowers and Décor

## **Worship**

Worship has continued to develop this year at St Matthew's with the introduction of various new songs, greater attention being given to worship that children can enter into and the addition of new people to the worship teams.

We held a 'Jam' night last year and this was a real success providing people of all abilities to come together and play worship music. As a result a number of people were added to the regular Sunday morning teams. We are planning to hold another similar night this term.

If you are interested in joining the worship teams do speak to Richard and watch out for the Jam Night date!

## **PA / AV**

The technical side of the church has changed little over the last year. Since the re-ordering in 2006 we have held back on spending in this area since our equipment is of a high standard. This year we are looking to improve this area with the purchase of new microphones which will improve the flexibility and quality of what we can do and offer.

## **Flowers and Décor**

We no longer have weekly flowers in church but instead have focused on developing themes for seasons and occasions notably the huge balloon cross at Easter and the Stars at Christmas. We feel this has been successful and easier than having to provide flowers each week. If you are interested in being part of this kind of creative team do speak to Richard, Jane Taylor or Anita Coombs.

Richard Thomas

# **Prayer Report**

## **Contents**

1. Healing Ministry Training Course
2. Healing Ministry Team
3. Visits to other Churches
4. Regular Prayer Meetings
5. Prayer Board
6. Conclusion

## **Healing Ministry Training Course**

A new healing ministry training course was launched in February this year. This course is led by Bob and Mary Groves and is designed to be a rolling programme over two years.

## **Healing Ministry Team**

Our Healing Ministry team continue to work hard. They have been supplemented by a few new members over the last year and the Ministry Fair resulted in several enquiries from people new to the church.

## **Visits to other Churches**

Several visits to other churches have taken place over the last year and on several of these ministry team members have accompanied Chris and myself to pray with people afterwards.

## **Regular Prayer Meetings**

The regular prayer meetings have continued during the past year. During August 2008 we held a weekly prayer meeting during August which resulted in several new people coming into the life of the church.

## **Prayer Board**

At the beginning of this year Jane Taylor designed a new Prayer board in the form of a prayer 'net' on which people can tie their individual prayer requests. This is proving popular both with adults and children.

## **Conclusion**

I would like to put on record my thanks to all those who have come along regularly to the different prayer meetings and also for their personal support over the last year. I believe that unless our church life is firmly under-girded by prayer, it will not bear lasting fruit.

Helen Steven

# **Evangelism and Mission Report**

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## **Barnetts Wood**

Year Twelve. Door to Door is going out of fashion as an evangelistic method but the reasons motivating it HAVE NOT; to go in to the world with the message of Jesus. Jesus said GO. It may be Africa, South America, Europe or Asia. Or it may be High Brooms.

This year has been a good one. I say that because despite the hive of activity that is St Matts church there is still room for every conceivable ministry involving everyone. Special thanks to Jean, Gill, Clive, Richard and Giles, without you we could not go on.

Speaking for my last door to door trip, taking news of St Matthews church activities and giving away Easter Eggs I made three new contacts, opportunity to pray for people on the door step and had to turn down cups of tea! This is the hospitality of people and there is so much good will towards Jesus Christ.

If anyone would like to be initiated in to the Grand Order of Door Knockers please let me know!  
This may be for you!

Trevor Long

## Alpha

As usual, Alpha was run for twelve weeks in the Autumn Term from our home. We had five people attending. We started the evening with a meal which was followed by watching Nicky Gumbel on the Alpha dvd. About half an hour was allowed at the end for questions, although it was rare event if ever we finished on time as discussions often ran away with us. We had a good time when we were joined by New Life Church (hosted by us) for the Alpha Away Day. Throughout the course many questions were asked and by the time we were half way through, we were delighted when one of our 'rank outsiders' was evangelising the rest!!! Here are a few quotes from some of the group....

*"Attending Alpha has been a profound and thought provoking experience, which has enlightened me to speak directly to God and by doing so He has given me the gift of the missing piece of the jigsaw of life. What good is knowledge without wisdom and what good is wisdom without faith... Alpha gives you all three!!"*

*"I may not have totally made up my mind about whether there is a God, but the teachings of Christianity have made me reassess many of my behaviours, eg: helping me to be a better mum!"*

*"My preconceived idea of a 'Christian' has been blown away!"*

*"Alpha has been brilliant and thanks to Alpha I am learning how God can be a big part of my life. I have always felt that there was something missing in my life and I am proud to say that I am becoming a Christian. I am excited about where my life will go from here and feel like it is just starting again."*

At the end of the course we had a close knit group which was keen to stay together and they were able to join the small group formed after last year's Alpha. They continue to meet led by Fleur Parratt and Wendy Dean.

Last year, as a result of the enthusiasm for the Autumn Alpha, we ran a Spring course, also in the evening. This Spring, we ran a day-time Express course. This was as a result of a few enquiries made at the Friday Breakfast Café, a new venture. (There is a report on the café in the following pages.) Seven people attended this course which ran from 10.30 – 11.45am every Friday following the breakfast café and we were very pleased to welcome by Cindy Whybra who helped us lead the group. The group have asked that they continue to meet as a day-time small group and Cindy is now running this group.

We are already planning for September and have had a number of enquiries! Gill and I are continually amazed at the way God works through the Alpha courses!!!

Jess Fuller

# Evangelists

## HMP Blantyre House

As a Licensed Evangelist and Lay-Chaplain, I work with Dee and other lay and paid ministers of all faiths at HMP Blantyre House, a Resettlement prison for long sentenced Determinate and Life Sentenced prisoners near Goudhurst. I continue to stand in for the Prison Chaplain where necessary, primarily in respect of pastoral care, worship and Prison Chaplaincy related administration. I continue to assist, when necessary, in the delivery of group-work run by the Prison's Chaplaincy. This includes victim awareness groups (The Sycamore Tree Course), Prison Alpha, Emmaus, and discussion groups both general and faith based. I am also called on to lead worship/speak or preaching, as required, at the Chapel Services on a Sunday evenings. As the former Probation / Throughcare Manager and Deputy Lifer Governor at the Prison, I am still called on to attend Parole Board Hearings, held at the Prison. Since early 2006, Dee has now taken on the lion's share of the ministry within the Prison, enabling me to concentrate on the community ministry, more suited to my physical constraints. This has reduced my ministry within the Prison.

William Harper

Due to death of my father April 2008, and ongoing issues connected with my Mother's diagnosis with cancer, I have not been able to visit the prison twice weekly as I used to. However, I do intend to resume the ministry to offenders at the resettlement prison as soon as I am able to and give my support to the Prison Chaplain and the Chaplaincy team.

Dee Harper

## St Matthew's Church

I continue to offer a Diocesan resource to the Parish. With Dee's assistance, I continue to co-ordinate and deliver St Matthews' ministry to offenders / ex-offenders within the Parish, the Tonbridge and Tunbridge Wells areas, where such offenders are connected with the Parish of St Matthews, HMP Blantyre House, or the HTB Ex- Offender Releasing Scheme. This work involves visiting other prisons and participation in the Parole Process, continuing to attend both Parole Boards and Recall Hearings at HMP Blantyre House and other Prison Service within the National Prison Establishment. In the year under review, visits in all capacities have been made to prisons in Kent and Buckinghamshire, with visits shortly to offenders in the Midlands and Suffolk.

William Harper

## **Community Lunch**

The Community Lunch was set up a year ago to meet the needs of the local community, many of whom attended the Age Concern Day Centre before it closed in December 2007. We provide a 2 course meal and drinks for a suggested donation of £2.00 (although several people like to give more). We are indebted to Helen Steven for providing several of the lunches and also for her catering experience.

Sue Andrews produces a lovely hot meal, ably assisted by 4-5 volunteers each week. The fact that we usually cater for around 28-30 people is proof that we must be doing something right! Although the volunteers are not all church-goers, they are very supportive of the outreach run by St Matthews.

Alan Thomas introduces a 'thought for the day' last September and this is led by several church members who usually come to the lunch and chat with the guests. At Christmas we were able to provide a free meal, present and 'home grown' entertainment due to a generous donation from Toc H. We were also had another generous donation from someone in March so we were able to offer the Easter meal for free.

Hearing aid batteries, Jean's cards supporting Geita, Tanzania, Traidcraft goods and eggs are available most weeks. A visit arranged through the TW Baptist Church Good Neighbourhood Project saw everyone exercising in church before lunch in February and, at the end of March, we had a visit from a Fire Safety officer, who gave a talk and presented a video which was very interesting. (He thoroughly enjoyed his liver and bacon as well!)

It is good to see the Church Centre being used each Tuesday and to hear a happy 'buzz' once again. Many people would like to have another lunch during the week, but the church has run out of days, such is the activity and outreach taking place now.

Rosemary Blanchard

## **Breakfast Café**

You might remember from last year's report that I was hoping to run a café in the church centre. This opened on the 8<sup>th</sup> August 2008, but not quite as we had thought! It had become a breakfast café and is open to the public from 8.30 – 10.30 am every Friday (except holidays).

My hope was that the café would be an instrument for showing the love of God to those in our community. I wanted it to be a place where people could sit and chat, read the paper, enjoy good quality and good value food; a place where new friendships might be made but most of all, a place where people felt welcomed, safe and loved. I really hoped that it would cause them to ask why we were doing it, so that we could tell them why.

I specifically targeted the local shops taking laminated posters which each have displayed. The proprietors responded well, one saying that he would support anything that strengthened our community.

Our most popular sales are bacon baguettes with a drink for just £1 or a full English breakfast with toast and a drink for £3!! As the smell has wafted out of the church centre, we have served a wide range of customers. There are mums who on the way home after dropping their children to school or nursery; mums and dads just enjoying the food and a place to meet where the children are welcomed; youths on the way to school; commuters heading for the train station; lonely people looking to fill their day; builders looking for breakfast and finally I get regular orders which I deliver to the businesses!!

The café would be impossible to run single handed so I want to take this opportunity of thanking those who so selflessly give up their time and come every week in order to make the café the success it is. So thanks to David Johnson who slaves over a very hot stove cooking all the food; to Julie Sewell who makes the drinks, clears the dishes and keeps the kitchen running so smoothly; to Cindy Whybra, the linchpin who holds everything together, taking the orders and making sure that nothing slips through the net; to my wife Gill who puts the orders together, briskly buttering baguette after baguette. Thanks also to those who fill in when the regulars take time off for good behaviour.

We were very excited when we had an enquiry from a customer about Alpha and from that came the decision to run an Alpha Express course following on from the café. (See Alpha Report) At this point a special vote of thanks goes to Gordon Blanchard who came in every week of the course to wash all the greasy pots and pans so that Gill and I could run Alpha.

Jess Fuller

## Mission

### Summary

Our 'official' church links currently comprise 4 main overseas links and 1 UK based link. These are:

1. AFRICA- Tanzania *(Church contact for info: Fleur Parratt)*
  - a) With the Diocese of Geita, Tanzania (AICT – Africa Inland Church of Tanzania)
  - b) With Samuel and Pendo Limbe based in Mwanza, Tanzania (AICT)
2. AFRICA – Sudan *(Church contact for info: Sarah Johnson)*  
With Ruth Radley (CMS mission partner) based in Yei, Southern Sudan
3. SOUTH AMERICA – Peru *(Church contact for info: Mary Wilson)*  
With Pat Blanchard (SAMS mission partner) based in Lima, Peru
4. FRANCE *(Church contacts for info: Steve & Isobel Broadie)*  
With Ted and Christina Burrows (International Teams mission partners) based in Montpellier, Southern France
5. UK  
With Tom Lane (Nexus), based in Coventry, UK

As a church we are also currently supporting 'Tear Fund' *(Church contact for info: Liz Johnson)*, 'Questscope' *(Church contacts for info: Gordon & Michelle Shirley)* and a number of other national and local organisations. We held a Hunger lunch in June 2008 to raise money for the Tear Fund 'Burmese Cyclone Appeal'. We also donated money to Tear Fund through our Harvest offering.

## **AICT - Geita and Mwanza, Tanzania**

Chris Wicks and the Kairos Gap Year workers (including St Matt's worker Claire Steven) went out to Geita and Mwanza in June 2009. This continued the partnership between ourselves and the diocese and Samuel & Pendo. The Kairos workers found it to be a really valuable experience. A particular highlight was a visit to the Orphanage in Geita which we subsequently made the focus of our Christmas Gift Day. Chris was able to have discussions with the Bishop, Samuel Limbe and other leaders about the particular issues and challenges currently faced by the African church.

## **Ruth Radley – Sudan**

Ruth Radley has just completed her first year in Africa having gone out in April 2008. She is based in Yei, Southern Sudan. Ruth is working in the child and youth department of 'Across' (a Sudanese organisation working to reach those whose lives have been affected by the war.) She has already been working on materials, structures and training for supporting Sunday school ministry for children. She is also developing a ministry of 'trauma healing' specifically for children.

## **Pat Blanchard – Peru**

Pat has continued her work in Lima as minister of the 'El Nazareno' church. She is involved in many different projects; one that has seen real blessing and expansion over the last year is that of 'Shalom' – a ministry to disabled children. The church in Shalom continues to reach out to the community; they are in the process of trying to build a new centre for this growing work.

## **Ted and Christina Burrows – Montpellier, France**

Ted and Christina arrived in Montpellier, France in June 2008 for their first term of service there. They are attached to the 'L'Eglise Evangelique Protestante de la Pompignane' and are involved in developing three new areas of ministry to: youth, university and North African (Muslim). Ted and Christina have settled in very well; Christina is enjoying the Literacy classes for North African women and providing hospitality for students. Ted has just completed his language study and amongst other things has been speaking in the church. (NB They include recipes on their prayer letters! –brilliant! – Ed)

## **Tom Lane – Nexus, Coventry**

It is Tom's 3<sup>rd</sup> year at Nexus and his official title is 'Trainee Staff'. His main responsibility is in the Drum Department. He teaches drumming to 16 students. He leads a group of 10 first year students in a 'Discovery Group' where they study, pray and learn what it means to be a disciple. He is also Head of Hospitality for Nexus events such as Open Days and Concerts. Outside of Nexus, he does some private drum tuition and is part of a function band called 'Function Fever'.

Mary Wilson

# **Pastoral Care report**

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2. Woman's Day
3. Coffee Mornings
4. Christmas Event
5. Men and Woman

## **Introduction**

Most Pastoral Care at St. Matthew's is carried out within Small groups. However there is a team of people available to assist with visiting in homes or hospital as the need requires. We also try to offer meals to anyone who needs them, perhaps after a stay in hospital.

In January we held a Ministry fair at St. Matthew's, this gave us an opportunity to share with everyone what Pastoral Care is about, and to encourage more people to be part of the pastoral care team. For some people needing extra support we offer pastoral prayer, where issues can be talked through and prayed about in a more in depth way.

## **Woman's Day**

Our first ever Women's day with Christine Perkin speaking, this happened in November. Over 100 women attended giving us the chance to worship, hear and receive from God, and get to know each other better. Women from many other churches came.

After this we started in February -Revive... a time for women to be supported, receive ministry, worship and be encouraged. This now happens every 6 weeks, starting with a croissant breakfast, followed by worship, teaching and ministry.

## **Coffee mornings**

Coffee mornings have been held for the retired, each term. They are now held in the church centre to attract people who come into the church centre for other activities ie community lunch and breakfast café.

## **Christmas event**

An opportunity for women to come together and be creative for the Christmas season.

## **Men and Woman**

In February we held a ladies pamper evening, and on the following evening we had a men's beer and curry night, a great way to relax and enjoy one another's company.

Carole Wicks

## **Small Groups Report**

In December 2008, Chris and Alan Thomas stepped down as overall co-ordinators of 'Small Groups' after a number of years in this role. Mary and Ian Wilson have taken this over.

There are currently 9 groups – 8 of which meet in the evening and 1 in the daytime.

Last summer the groups followed a series on 'Our Identity in Christ' – prepared by Ted & Christina Burrows (which ran concurrently with sermons). In the autumn there were 3 weeks reviewing the Church's vision; studies in John's gospel and 1 John – "Love one another" and a look at some of the 'Nooma' DVDs. In Lent groups followed a series on the 'Beatitudes'.

One exciting development has been the running of an "Express Alpha" group following the Friday Breakfast Café which plans to continue meeting as a daytime small group.

Some of the groups are reforming to allow for change of leaders and numbers; there are also plans for possible new groups. The hope for the future is to see even more of our church family attending a small group so that as the church congregation grows we try to make sure that we are all connected with others!

Mary & Ian Wilson

# **Children and Youth Report**

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## **Vision**

The vision for the Youth and Children's Work at St Matthew's remains largely unchanged. We long to be able to reach every child and young person in the High Brooms community with the good news of Jesus. Our strategy for doing this consists of three key elements; Open Doors, Uprising and Small Groups.

'Open Doors' is our point of contact with unchurched young people. Detached work and open youth projects form a large part of this work. Uprising is our fortnightly youth service. We hope it is a place where young people can come and hear about Jesus in a relevant way. Small Groups are our pastoral and discipleship element. They are the places in which deeper relationships can be built.

Over the last year we have learnt to focus less on the transition from one element to the next and have tried to value each individual component as a means to see young people's lives changed. God can work on the streets or in the café just as much as he can at Uprising. This has been a significant lesson for us.

Over the last year I believe we have seen God work in numerous ways. Our relationships with young people have increased in number and in depth. We have seen behaviour slowly change. We have had numerous conversations with young people which I believe have been significant. We have seen some young people make first time commitments and others going deeper with God and experiencing him for the first time.

We are constantly encouraged by what God is doing and believe that he is using us to be his hands and voice in this community.

May I take the time to say a huge thank you to all who are involved in the youth and children's work at St Matthews. You're time and effort is not unnoticed and it is genuinely appreciated.

Richard Thomas

## **Sunday Mornings**

### **Matt's Monkeys**

Over the course of the year our Sunday morning work with pre-school children has continued to grow and sometime ago out grew the Church Centre as a venue. The issue with numbers and space has made the group both an exciting and at times stressful experience for those involved. Recently we have been able to make the necessary changes and have divided the group into two, one for 0's – 2's and one for 3's and 4's. Although it is early days for these groups we believe that this change is essential in ensuring that we maintain a high standard of children's work. This change would have been made earlier if it hadn't been for the lack of an alternative venue, something that has recently been resolved. Lois Fryett is now heading up the Crèche and Julie Thomas continues to work with Matt's Monkey's.

Richard Thomas

### **Builders**

Builders now has an average attendance of 10 children, however we do occasionally have numbers of up to 15 very energetic children. We currently have 3 leaders; Alex, Sandra & Rhian, and our dedicated helpers; Jean, Julie, Denise & Jane.

We use resources published by Scripture Union called 'Xstream' & 'Splash', which covers a book in the bible over a few weeks. Currently we are looking at the parables, but we have recently covered the story of Abraham and God's Promises. The use of the two resources is to cover the combination of age groups we have and so leaders choose relevant sections from each resource in order to best reach the children.

We have recently moved to the Bethel Hall on a Sunday morning in order for Matt's Monkeys to use the Church Hall, this seems to be a positive move.

## **Footprints**

Footprints has been quite difficult the last year. Finding leaders has been the main struggle but seems to be picking up since the recruitment of a few extra volunteers, although more a still needed. 5-10 kids come out where we play games, learn about God's word, pray together and strengthen one another's faith. The young people have a great faith and it's brilliant to see them pray for each other and encourage each other. Still needs some work to improve it further but it is definitely moving forward out of a 'dry patch.'

Ali F.G

## **Matt's Monkeys Parent and Toddlers**

Matt's Monkey's continues to thrive on a Thursday morning with approximately 30 – 40 children plus parents attending each week. The team provides a range of activities including craft, a reading corner, a story and an opportunity for singing and action songs. The group is appreciated by those who attend and comments are always extremely positive. The group continues to be a hugely valuable link with the community and a number of those attending have begun to take steps towards Jesus and towards church.

Richard Thomas

## **Christingle**

On 14<sup>th</sup> December 2008 we held our first Christingle Service. In the past we had run a Children's Christmas party had wondered whether something more traditional may connect with people better at Christmas time. The service was well attended and feedback was very positive. We hope to make this a regular part of the St Matthew's Christmas celebrations.

Richard Thomas

## **Encounter Culture**

### **Homework Club**

Homework Club has been run for secondary school students and has taken place from 4.30 - 6.00pm on Monday nights during term time in the church centre. Since September the attendance has slowly dwindled, numbers dropping from an average of 5 or 6 young people to only one regular attendee since Christmas. Those that did attend were all from our congregation. The students would arrive any time between 4.30 and 5pm and, after getting a drink and biscuits (and having a short chat) would get their homework out. Unfortunately, as the numbers have dropped so drastically, we have decided to stop running the homework club as of the beginning of the Summer Term.

Rhian Groome

## **Youth Prayer Group**

Recently I have started up a youth prayer group on a Monday after-school. Open to anyone from school years 7-13 this is a chance for a group of young people to get together and talk and pray about things that concern them over a cup of tea and some biscuits.

The group has only been running for a few weeks; however those who have attended so far seem to enjoy the opportunity to have a casual chat and have begun asking specifically for prayer.

I hope that as the group grows it will become a place where people are happy to share issues they face and ask their peers to pray with them and for them.

Rhian Groome

## **Football Club**

Football has been going well this year. We have between 10-25 lads play most weeks. Through the winter we used St John's sports centre, which lead to drop in numbers but since being back on the green numbers are back up. The lads seem to enjoy themselves and our relationship with them and others are growing and strengthening. Some of the boys have started attending other clubs and events, and hopefully in the future they will come to uprising to hear the gospel preached. It has been great to see how they have developed and grown. It is still a struggle sometimes to see how their lives can be transformed, in amongst the stories one hears and the fruitful language but slowly it does seem to be happening.

Ali F.G

## **Dance Club**

Dance continues to see a core group of 10-15 girls come into the church and dance each week. They have bonded as a group and friendships have developed into lasting relationships. 45 minutes is spent learning various genres of dance, and the last 20 minutes is spent talking about relevant issues such as self-esteem, relationships, self-confidence, appearance etc. It is a fantastic example of quality youth work and the girls seem to really enjoy it.

Ali F.G

## **Café Reef**

The cafe is still going strong with between 20-30 young people attending each week. We try to keep them occupied with arts and crafts, games, computer games, tuck shops, snooker and table tennis and this generally works. Recently the relationships have been developing and it was fantastic to see a large number of totally unchurched young people from the cafe attend our residential to Dalesdown. Some fantastic conversations have developed and we can really see a difference in a lot of the young people.

Ali F.G

## **Detached Work**

Detached work is a key part of EnCounter Culture, we consider that actually going out to where the young people of High Brooms are is an invaluable way of reaching out to the community. On Friday mornings we take hot chocolate to the two school bus stops on Powder Mill Lane, which we give out for free, and just spend some time chatting to the young people waiting for their busses. They really seem to appreciate the gesture, some of them are incredulous that we would get up early in order to give them free hot chocolate, but it is also readily noticeable that relationships are being formed. Just through relatively short, casual chats with some of the young people they have started coming to our various clubs and events, we have also found that some of them are beginning to trust us and are consequently able to talk to us about problems or issues they are dealing with.

Rhian Groome

### **Uprising**

Uprising continues to run every other Wednesday at 7pm in the main body of the church. There is a team of about 10 volunteers who run the evening which has an informal service style. The evening involves opportunities to build relationships with the young people through games and cake! The rest of the evening contains worship and a talk, and sometimes a response or prayer activity as appropriate. Attendance numbers have varied slightly during the year and we currently see an average of 15-20 young people each week. There are some regular members who do not attend a church, although a larger number of the young people do. We have had some good opportunities to talk and pray with these young people and we hope this contact continues. We continue to hope that the numbers at Uprising will grow, and that we can bring more young people to know Jesus.

### **Events**

The last year we have held a range of themed events in the evenings for young people. We have held a Christmas ball, a fancy dress and wild west club night and a gig night for local youth bands to play at. The events have been very successful and a lot of fun. Up to 70 young people have been coming along to a safe environment to enjoy themselves and socialize. Many of whom would be out in town or on the streets otherwise. We have very positive feedback from the young people who want us to run more events in the future.

Ali F.G

## **Ali Ferguson-Gow's Oasis Placement**

I have almost completed my two years at Oasis. It has been a lot of fun and I feel as though I have learnt a great deal. We have looked at subjects such as ethics, supervision, cultures, informal and formal education and much more. All the modules have been exceptionally interesting. I have also managed to keep up to date with the huge amount of essays needed, though this hasn't always been easy I have realised they are an important part of my development. I now feel prepared for future jobs and have made some great friendships. I would recommend Oasis to anyone.

Ali F.G

## **Kairos**

This current year has been a more feminine one for the Kairos workers! We have had three students on the course this year; Rhian Groome who has been based here at St Matts, Jem Leanard who is working at St Stephens church, Tonbridge and Fran Ingram who is doing schools work in Tonbridge. This year I have been overseeing the training day which we have moved to a Wednesday to enable us to use the Church Centre. In the morning we have theological training and then practical sessions in the afternoon graveyard shift! We are in the process of organising the mission trip for the group in June/July.

We have a few students already lined up for Kairos next year with a few more interested. We are working to improve the running of Kairos and to raise its awareness around the country.

Jennie Worthley

## **Child Protection**

This year we have continued to be vigilant regarding issues of child protection. We continue to obtain C.R.B forms and references for those working with children and vulnerable adults.

Richard Thomas and Gill Fuller continue to maintain contact with the diocese on relevant matters and policy updates.

Richard Thomas

# **Operations Report**

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2. Administration
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4. Hall
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6. Fabric
  - i. Church Fabric
  - ii. Hall Fabric

## **Introduction**

This last year has been a very busy one in the Operations role, with the start of new weekly activities and a general rise in what comes in and out of the office.

In September I reduced my hours to enable me to begin a degree, a huge thank you to David who has made this possible by taking on much more responsibility within the church building and hall. Sadly in February I decided to step down from the role altogether to be able to spend more of my time pursuing Kairos and Youth work alongside my degree, this will take effect at the end of May.

## **Administration**

Administration involves a lot of office work on the computer and phone, picking up whatever comes along each day. This means dealing with each departments needs, working with other churches and of course anyone in the town who has questions! A lot of work goes in to each Sunday morning, preparing the Newsletter, Orders of Service, words on the screen etc. Without Rhian working with us this year it is very possible that most day to day admin tasks wouldn't be completed!

## **Communication**

Ali Granger is in the process of re-designing our website. We are very sorry for any inconvenience caused whilst this has been ongoing. However we hope to be able to unveil the new website very soon! We are also currently designing some new Welcome material.

## **Hall**

The Church hall continues to be used during the week by the St Matthews Pre-School Group and uniformed organisations and by our 'Builders' children's group on Sundays. However, the quinquennial inspection carried out last year has confirmed that an increasing amount of maintenance work is required for the up-keep of this ageing building. We are considering demolition of the rear hall and possible replacement with a smaller storage facility. The resulting space can be used to enlarge and enhance the external children's play area.

## **Health and Safety**

There have been no major health and safety issues reported this year. Risk Assessments are produced for all our new activities and we are in the process of updating any old ones. We are very thankful to Alison Edmunds for continuing to be our health and safety officer.

Jennie Worthley

## **Fabric**

### **Church Building**

Major work carried out during the year includes repairs to the Church Centre roof. Following a temporary repair to the leaking roof over the North Aisle, the central and west valley gutters have been re-lined with lead and the tiling to the adjacent roof slopes has been overhauled.

Apart from items of general maintenance, minor repairs have been carried out to the internal glazed screen and to the entrance doors of the South Porch. To answer the needs of the weekly Parents and Toddlers Group, a foldaway baby-changing table has been fitted in the Disabled Person's Toilet.

The church building is due for its next Quinquennial Inspection in the Autumn of 2009.

### **Church Hall**

The quinquennial inspection of the Church Hall was carried out in June 2008 and a number of items raised in the report have yet to be addressed. A new gate has been fitted to the side passage, and the drainage system has been cleaned out.

Preparations are in hand for the external doors and windows to be redecorated and for the hall floor to be sanded and varnished.

The small rear hall continues to give concern as it is now probably beyond repair. A report on possible demolition and replacement has been prepared but a final decision has yet to be made on how to proceed.

David Johnson

## **Treasurer's Report**

2008 was always going to be a challenging year with our budget set at over £148,000, which was 6% more than 2007's income. This situation quickly became even more challenging, as we took on the costs of running the Church Centre with Age Concern deciding to stop their use of the centre.

This meant that we reported last June that we thought spending would more likely be around £156,000, however our actual spending in 2008 was over £164,000. This was affected by high utility bills and by other costs associated with using the church building on a much more regular basis.

People's response was, as in the past, very generous. So much so that we have actually made a small surplus in the year on our income and expenditure, of nearly £5,000 (helped by a trading surplus on the Hall of more than £2,000). If we take into account depreciation on our equipment assets, there is no surplus and we break even for the year (no surplus or deficit).

So overall we have a lot to thank God for!

Looking ahead to this year we have a yet more challenging budget of nearly £173,000. Although this is a small increase in percentage terms, it comes at a very difficult time for a lot of people affected by the recession. Last year we were fortunate to receive a few generous one-off gifts, so the 'routine' income level is still less than what we think we need. However we believe that if it's God's will, He will graciously provide as we have experienced so much in recent years.

Giles Parratt  
Treasurer

**St. Matthew's Finance report for 2008      Budget      Actual**

***Operations: Administration***

Office supplies/stationery		1000	1045	
Printing		250		see below
Office equipment		200	445	
Copier charges		450	309	
Postage		200	137	
Telephone		1000	774	
Mobile phones		500	539	
Broadband connection		300	281	
Subscriptions		100	50	

***Operations: Finance***

Bank charges		0	188	
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***Children & Youth:***

Children and Youth		3000		see income below
Footprints	200		208	
Encounter Culture	1000		321	
Builders	200		159	
Matt's Monkeys	400		88	
Children's Outreach	350			
Schools Work	100			
Publicity	200			
Training	400		216	
Team Building	150			
Christingle party			112	
Café Reef			1016	
Football			306	nett cost
Equipment			407	
Delirious concert			53	nett cost
Annual Ball			10	nett cost
Other			547	

***Discipleship and Leadership Development:***

Leadership development			429	
Training and development		1500	2588	

***Evangelism and Mission:***

Local outreach		1000	47	
Fun Day		600	671	150 donations
Advertising (posters etc.)		400	706	inc. printing, above

Church Centre Lunch	0	1808	see income
Friday Café	0	803	see income
Evangelism	400	180	
Alpha	350	205	
<b><i>Fabric:</i></b>			
Gas	1800	2658	
Electricity	900	2104	
Water	400	332	
Repair fund	0		within central costs
Insurance	2750	2643	
Bethel costs	0	115	insurance (part year)
Building maintenance/improvement	1000	543	
Church Centre Cleaner		800	
Pest control contract		404	
Alarm system contract		89	
Parsonage maintenance	500	0	
<b><i>Pastoral Care:</i></b>			
Pastoral care/ visiting	200	74	
Social events	150	401	
<b><i>Prayer and Prophetic:</i></b>			
Teaching programme; other expenses	250	0	
<b><i>Production:</i></b>			
Equipment purchase and maintenance	1500	1912	
Tuning/repair of instruments	300	274	
Licenses (TV and music)	600	610	
Books and music	50	682	
Service requisites	500	1634	
Catering	1500	1661	
Honoraria/gifts	200	509	
<b><i>Small Groups:</i></b>			
Small Groups	300	238	
<b><i>General Items not allocated to Departments:</i></b>			
<b>Central Contribution:</b>		61468	62652
Parish share	23220		
Stipend	32288		
Expenses	2625		
Repair Funds	3335		

**Staff:**

Youth Pastor: salary + on-costs	22500	23798
pension contribution (5%)	1000	1000
housing allowance (inc. Council Tax)	6000	6000
Operations and Administration	13500	11925
Oasis Student	7000	6458
Kairos	2600	1929

<b>Tithe:</b>	12000	18368
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	<b>150218</b>	<b>16446</b>	148218 with Hall surplus
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>150218</b>	<b>1</b>	£2k

**INCOME**

Cash	7796	
FWO	37577	
Standing Orders	59199	
Gift Aid/CAF	17706	
Tax refunds	31025	
Donations	2804	
Bike ride	157	
Kairos donation	2128	
Boulder Gang contribution to costs they incur	500	
Fees etc.	223	
Interest	1302	
tax discount for on-line filing	85	
Parent and Toddler	1189	inc 375 donation
Prayer conference surplus	307	
NW Networks surplus	157	
Women's day surplus	200	estimated, not all costs in
Encounter Culture	170	
Children & Youth Café	727	
Church Centre Lunch	2458	650 surplus made
Friday Café	1231	428 surplus made

	<b>148218</b>	<b>16694</b>	
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>148218</b>	<b>1</b>	

<b>Surplus on year</b>	<b>2480</b>
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<b>Hall profit</b>	<b>2469</b>
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<b>Overall surplus</b>	<b>4949</b>
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