

## **Mission Statement**

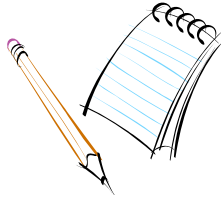
**“We who trust in Christ should be for the  
praise of His glory”**

**(Ephesians 1:12)**

**Our primary aim is at all times to put God  
first, and in all activities we will endeavour to  
glorify God**

### **Aims**

- To share our enjoyment of God by developing an environment where enjoyment of God can take place
- To declare our unity in Christ by regularly praying together as a whole church
- To be available to God in taking the gospel out to the world by preparing the ground for evangelism and by seeing seed planted and reaped
- To build each other up in the body by actively loving and caring for each other as Christ loves and cares for us



## **SECRETARY'S REPORT**

**Dave Chambers**

For the first part of the year our search for a minister continued, and the church continued to meet together to pray and seek God's will. We were delighted when we read David Mann's profile and the search committee invited him to a meeting with them. This went very well and the whole family came with David for the first time he preached at Bethel. The service was memorable, involving brussel sprouts and cabbages and we were all encouraged to lay our burdens (whatever the size) at the foot of the cross.

The second visit involved a lunch, and then an open question session with members of the fellowship. This was chaired by our moderator Rev. David Morris, who has given many hours of his time to help in the search for the minister for Bethel.

The special church meeting for members of the church resulted in a unanimous vote to call David as the minister for Bethel Baptist Church. David accepted the call and was inducted on 10<sup>th</sup> May 2008.

The whole process has required an enormous commitment of time and effort, particularly for the people involved in the search committee, and it is very appropriate to record formally our thanks and appreciation to them.

Our work with young people continues to be a real strength, especially the Monday clubs which continue to grow in numbers and open doors to the parents of the young people as well. The Monday club leaders deserve our thanks for all their work. We have seen considerable talent in music, drama and dance and the youth worship band has now amalgamated with the adult worship group.

Jason Dear continues to organise Club Zero, with the assistance of a number of adults. The club has a professional Christian DJ, and our thanks go to Jason, and the other adults involved, for the success of this venture.

Jason continues to run the Bible study group "Chewitt" for the young people who are in their mid teens upwards.

Becky Snead is now working for Wycliffe Bible translators in Togo and is producing a dictionary to enable access to the Bible in the local language, Tem.

John Hibberd continues his work with "Through Faith Missions" and has been heavily involved in the organisation of a number of Walk Missions.

Nick Blackburn completed a year working for Viz a Viz ministries as a member of the Christian Rock Band "Taste". On his return to Cambridgeshire, he has become one of the leaders for "Footsteps", plays in the worship group, and recently led some of the sessions at Leading Edge for the young people attending the Eastern Baptist Association week at Warwick.

HOPE 08 has been embraced by the church, and the church has participated in a range of activities during the year. We opened the doors for an alternative market which was held in the church to encourage local businesses and craft makers to have the opportunity to sell their goods to local people. We have held quiz nights, organised walks and pushed barrels in the annual barrel rolling in the village.

Swavesey Festival week was very busy and we were asked to run a barbecue stall at the Festival, we opened the church for the Flower Festival and entered a team for the (very wet) it's a knockout competition. We also ran a Traidcraft stall at the festival and enjoyed the opportunity of meeting friends and neighbours at the festival.

There are many people who have continued to serve the church and special thanks are recorded to Helen our administrator, Wendy who has organised the leading of worship and all those who play or sing in the music group, Jan and everyone involved in Willows, the leaders of all the young people's groups and also the deacons.

The efforts and willingness of people to take on the various responsibilities is encouraging and much appreciated.

The House groups have continued to be a vital and flourishing part of the church life providing the opportunity to get to know each other in a smaller group and to study the material on various topics, much of this provided by John Hibberd.

We are pleased to see the new group which meets on Thursday afternoons, hosted by Tony and Jenny, has really taken off and is providing an opportunity to several people who would not otherwise be able to get to a house group. We hope that even more people will become involved during the next year and hope to be able to start new groups as needed.

We are also very grateful for the willingness of everyone who has come to preach, both from within our fellowship, and from the wider Christian community.

Without the extra contributions of many people within the fellowship the church would not have functioned as smoothly as it has in the past year.

Our membership numbers have increased as Sue Ollive and Emma Sweetman have come into membership. We have also seen other new families join our fellowship, taking part in a number of activities, and we hope that they too will want to take the next step into membership.

In my last report I encouraged us to follow the advice given to Solomon as we sought a pastor for Bethel. The advice is still relevant as we now seek to build God's family by taking His message to the people of Swavesey.

***9-10 "And you, Solomon my son, get to know well your father's God; serve him with a whole heart and eager mind, for God examines every heart and sees through every motive. If you seek him, he'll make sure you find him, but if you abandon him, he'll leave you for good. Look sharp now! God has chosen you to build his holy house. Be brave, determined! And do it!"***

1 Chronicles 28:9 (The Message)



## TREASURER'S REPORT

### John Snead

At the start of 2008 we were in a very healthy position, finances-wise, following over 2 years without a minister's stipend to pay and after having let the manse to a tenant for almost 1 year. This enabled us to fund completely from capital the building of the extension to the rear of the manse, providing much needed (and long-dreamed-about!) facilities that have made a great difference to the house.

Our budget for last year was presented and approved by the Church Members under the strong expectation that we would soon be appointing a minister. Indeed, the budget agreement was made later in the same Members' meeting that had earlier agreed unanimously to issue a call to David.

As the year progressed it became clear that the projections for both our expenditure and the income required to support that expenditure proved more or less spot on, and we ended the year with both being pretty much what we had hoped.

Last year our Gift Day became "Thanksgiving Day" as we looked back to what God had done over the years as well as looking forward to where he will lead us. Undoubtedly inspired by God, and with a strong feeling of expectation and excitement within the church, the fellowship responded to God's prompting with the largest ever sum given on such an occasion – over £6100, which would rise to over £7600 when Gift Aid was added. After giving 10% of this to Through Faith Missions, we split the remainder between supporting our own "missionary" Becky Snead, working with Wycliffe in Togo, and funding on-going church property development. This work included the removal of the platform in the church later in the year which was also helped by many people responding to an explicit appeal.

The accounts for 2008 have been formally inspected and approved and are available to anyone in the Fellowship to peruse; do please have a word with me if you would like to see them.

As David and I were considering the budget for 2009, we came to the view that setting a target for our income and expenditure at the start of the year, although arguably good financial practice, was in fact tantamount to us limiting what God might do through us.

It was like we were saying "Okay, God, here's your £x000, what do you want us to do with it?" So we worked out what we needed in income just to keep

the church open and running – such as Utility bills, paying the Minister, subscriptions and the like. That would be our minimum required income. Everything given beyond that is in support of the Mission and Purpose of the Church, and for our Giving to external organisations. This then turns our thinking round to “Okay, God, what do you want us to do? We will now trust you to provide the resources!”

Even so, this revised financial planning does require a fairly hefty rise in our income even to support our running costs. Again I can provide more detailed figures to anyone who would like to see them. Do please consider this prayerfully and decide how you can respond. In these recessionary times, we recognise the difficulties many may find themselves in, but if anything the need to give to God’s work is more important in times of recession than in times of boom.

Do you give regularly by monthly standing order? If not then ask me how you can do this. Whether you give by that method or not, remember that if you are a taxpayer I can reclaim from the Government the tax that you have already paid on your giving (“Gift Aid”). This totals several thousands of pounds each year! Please talk to me in confidence if you would like more information about Standing Orders, Gift Aid, or in fact anything to do with the finances of the Church.



## **HILTON HOUSE GROUP**

Heather Chambers

The group meet every Tuesday during term time to study God's word, pray together, laugh a lot and to eat!

We have lots of questions on every Bible passage we study; sometimes we don't understand the questions, sometimes we don't understand the answers but always we share our confusion and together we endeavour to understand and to learn God's will for us through the study.

We have followed the Life Long Learners series, devised by John Hibberd looking at ten studies including "Family Life", "The Apprentice", "Nine to Five" and "More than a personal faith".

We looked at the Stations of the Cross using a range of art to help us understand more about Jesus' life, The colours of the Cross, Prepared for Hope 08 and most recently followed David Mann's series on Journeying with Jesus by reading the first eight chapters of Mark's gospel and applying it to our lives.

One of the most important elements of house group is to get to know other members of the fellowship, to share experiences and concerns, to seek support and comfort from each other and to share with friends the good things that happen to each one of us. We have all been free to do this in the last twelve months and have shared how God has worked in our lives and continues to do so. We share leading the group and as each person has prepared for one of the sessions, they have commented on how much they have learnt during their preparation time.

During the year we continued to seek a minister, and the group devoted some meetings to praying about this and seeking God's guidance. We were delighted when David accepted the call to Bethel.

During the year we have had various informal gatherings, usually involving food, and these have been gate-crashed by "Chewit" and other young (and not so young) people who can detect free food from miles away. It has been great to spend time with everyone on these occasions.



## THURSDAY HOUSE GROUP

Tony and Jenny Miles

During the past year, Thursday afternoons between 2.30 and any time up to 4.45, have become the focus for Bible sharing, prayer and social interaction over tea and biscuits.

Whilst all three of the above are important, it has become clear that the development of relationships, sharing of joys, problems and sometimes sorrows, coupled with taking pleasure in the opportunity to just be together, are particularly important to the group.

So far there are twelve potential members and rarely less than nine gathered together each week, creating what could be described as "close" fellowship in a crowded front lounge at 4 Turnbridge Court

We thank God for all we have experienced, shared, learned and enjoyed over the past year.



## **PASTORAL CARE**

**Tony Miles**

During the period between Ministers, the Pastoral care of the church members has been carried out on a somewhat ad hoc but hopefully no less effective basis.

Those involved have faced a difficult task at times, trying to meet the needs of what seems to have been an unusually large number of needy people.

The involvement of, not just the Pastoral Group, but others in our church family has been very much appreciated.

Now we are moving forward with our new Minister David Mann by considering new approaches to this very important part of church life.

I am sure that as these are implemented, they will enhance the valued efforts of all those involved. We go on in the expectancy of God's presence with us and our thanks for His provision.

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## **FILM MATINEE**

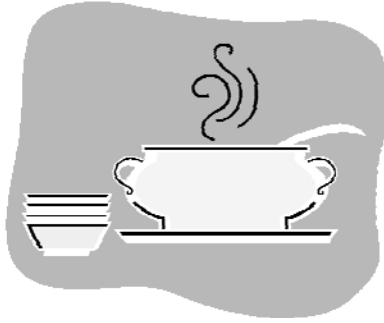
### **Jan Marland**

This will be our third winter of showing different types of films on monthly basis for six months. The idea for the film matinee is to give people a chance to get out and meet people, have a laugh, a cup of tea and a chat. Winter months and weekends can seem a long time.

It starts at promptly 2pm and finishes at approximately 4.15pm so that it isn't too dark for some drivers. Not quite so many people came last year but we are looking forward to more people coming this year. The event is free.

Anybody wishing to give a donation may, and it will be split between the Church and the Ebyon Trust.

If anyone is able to help in any way please contact me Jan Marland.



## **WILLOWS LUNCHEON CLUB**

**Jan Marland**

Another year has come and gone another report is required. We shall shortly be going into our 15<sup>th</sup> year of running in October. (Where has the time gone?) What has been happening at the Willows over the last year? Our numbers have remained constant and once again we have a waiting list. We have had different visitors over the year, both family and friends.

One day a man of the road popped in to visit us. He told us he had been on the road for well over 20 years. He ate and drank well that day.

The festival week luncheon went very well, we cooked approx. 40 lunches. It was lovely to meet new people and the singing afterwards was wonderful, a good time was had by all!

The Willows sponsorship of Winifred continues, we still have letters and photos to see and hear how she is getting on and even school reports. If you would like to see these they are in the top of the Willows drawers. Don't forget to buy your birthday cards they are on the top of these drawers too.

We were very fortunate in having Emma come and volunteer to cook and help which was an answer to prayer for a few months. Thank you, we all loved having you and your sister.

Also a big thank you to Gwen for taking over the book work and transport arrangements. You are doing a grand job, as with ALL that come to help and support the Willows, without you there would be no Willows. We do have a good time singing, dancing, laughter, and supporting each other.



Which brings me nicely into asking for pray for someone who feels led to come and help cook, perhaps once a month/holidays cover. Also someone who would like to help generally in the kitchen. If any one is interested please contact me Jan Marland.



## **FOOTSTEPS**

The footsteps group meet on Sunday mornings during the service and has comprised of Sarah, George, Steph, Alice, Louise, Evie, Rachel and Peter all aged 11-16.

This year we have changed to the Energize materials produced by Urban Saints to help develop our understanding of God's word. The materials are very relevant, include studies on current issues such as the elections in South Africa and used film clips to help us understand what God could be saying to each of us.

The Leaders who share responsibility for Footsteps are: Nick Blackburn, Heather Chambers, David Oakes and Jerry Turner.

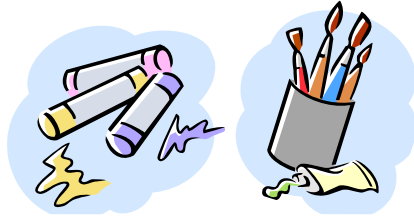
We have been delighted that Jerry and Nick have joined the team, and the first sessions they each led with the group were very memorable as they involved copious amounts of chocolate which were much appreciated by everyone.

However when Nick decided to melt chocolate bars inside nappies there were eyebrows raised and we are still asking him which point he was illustrating at the time!

The group has lots of fun together. We enjoy studying God's word, praying for each other and sharing concerns which we then pray about.

We have been involved in the Alternative Market, were waitresses and served coffee at various events at church and pushed barrels at the Swavesey festival.

We participated in Race for Life for the second year running and this time we dressed as pink fairies raising hundreds of pounds for Cancer Research.



## **MONDAY NITE CLUB**

**Becky Dear**

Within the senior aged group of Monday Nite Club we have 8 committed girls. They come each week and have bundles of energy!

Within our weekly programme we have regular film nights, we cook and make crafts, we chat and play on the game consoles!

We have had a mixture of different leaders this year; mainly Jason and Becky who have been ably assisted at various times throughout the year by Nick Blackburn, Emma Sweetman, David Mann, Janet King, Bill Gaskin and John Hibberd.

The highlights of the year for most of the girls was the pamper evening when Sue Ollive came to help (Jason decided pampering was not for him!!) the girls applied face masks, had foot spas and ate lots of nice "healthy" foods!

They also enjoyed the weekend at Bethel with a group of Young People from Ashurst Drive Baptist Church.

It was superb to see lots of them join in the morning service talking about the ways they had learnt to worship God.

We continue to find ways in which to talk about Jesus and share his love with the Young People, in the last term we completed a basic Christianity course.

Sadly, due to falling numbers of both children and leaders we had to close the Junior aged group in April.

We are still seeking ways to reopen this group and would value your prayers.

However in February, it was great to see some of the children go away on the children's weekend organised by Scripture Union. They also enjoyed swimming, worshipping God and lots of different skills-based workshops.

## **Praise**

Number of committed Young People.

The hard working and willingness of the  
leaders and adults helping.

The two weekends away where God's love  
was shown in greater depth!

## **Prayer Points**

Finding new ways to link families on  
Monday Night to our church.

Pray for the Young People who went away  
for the weekend that they will become  
more committed to God.

For more leaders.

For the Junior aged group.



## **CLUB ZERO**

Jason Dear

Club Zero happens the second Friday of each month and is for Young People in Years Seven to Ten.

Club Zero has gone from strength to strength this year, there are over 50 Young People “on the books” with roughly 30 attending each month. Adam Swain continues to be our resident DJ, playing a mixture of music which the Young People enjoy. There is also a chill-out room where drinks and chocolate can be brought.

There is a group of committed leaders: Jason Dear, Debbie Gingell, Yinka Opelaye and David Oakes. Each Club Zero sees them making sure the Young People enjoy a safe and secure environment. It is good getting to know them and often chatting to them in the Chill out area!



## **MUSES FROM THE MANSE**

David Mann

Change and Challenge! The thought of a year filled with those two might be enough to send us hiding our head under the bed sheets and waiting for it all to go away. Most of us don't 'do' change very well and challenges seem to have become things to be avoided!

Yet here we are, looking back at 2008, a year filled with both, and somehow we seem to have survived!

Perhaps that's because change and challenge are both essential elements of growth, and they also provide us with great positive opportunities!

For Lucy and I, and the children, 2008 has been packed from beginning to end with both change and challenge! It seemed ridiculous that we should be thinking about moving to a new church at the end of 2007, just as we were getting to grips with Ben's cancer. The idea seemed fraught with dangers and difficulties. Change seemed an unwelcomed risk and challenges we had already had enough of!

I am aware that many in the fellowship have found 2008 equally challenging! The challenge of getting to know a new minister! The challenge of moving out in mission and outreach and of course for some the changes have been more personal and the challenges have been deeper.

Yes! We all face challenges. We all have obstacles to overcome. But if we can keep the right perspective, it will help us to stay in faith so that we can move forward into victory.

You may feel right now like the challenges that you face are too big, or too overwhelming. We have all felt like that before, and I am sure that through the history of Bethel its members have experienced the same – BUT LOOK! God has brought us through!

Recently I read this quote.....

*'One thing I've learned is that average people have average problems. Ordinary people have ordinary challenges.*

*But remember, you're not average. You're not ordinary. You are extraordinary. God breathed His life into you. You are exceptional, and exceptional people face exceptional difficulties. But the good news is we serve an exceptional God!*

*When you have an incredible problem, instead of being discouraged, you should be encouraged knowing that you're an incredible person and you have an incredible future. Your path is shining brighter and brighter.'*

So where is this rambling going?

Well when I look back at 2008, yes I can look at those changes and challenges but they are not what stand out for me! What really stands out is that through all these things a deep Spirit of Joy and Hope have continued to shine out from Bethel.

It is a privilege to stand within a church family that sings out God's praises so strongly and reaches out to all and everyone with love and encouragement so freely.

God has an incredible future mapped out for Bethel; for each one of us. Be encouraged today because our lives are on an extraordinary path.

Keep standing in faith, keep declaring victory over your future, keep declaring the promises of God over your life, keep praising and loving and keep declaring that we are moving forward into the bright, exceptional future that the Lord has in store for us!

*We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed.*  
*2 Corinthians 4:8-9 NIV*