

**ST JAMES' METHODIST & UNITED
REFORMED CHURCH
WOOLTON L25 7RJ**

**ANNUAL CHURCH MEETING REPORTS
2018**

MINISTER'S REPORT

Thank you for your warm welcome to me as your Minister when I started in September. You have offered Anne and me friendship, kindness and support which have been much appreciated. This has enabled the settling down process to be as easy as it could have been. We feel blessed to be part of the Church family of St James'. Thank you to each one of you who has taken the time to make us feel welcome and to share something of yourselves with us. I still don't know all your names, so please be patient!

The Church weekend in Llandudno was a great opportunity to begin to get to know many of you in a relaxing and beautiful place. I have also enjoyed sharing in the Tuesday and Saturday coffee mornings where there have been some great conversations and times of fellowship.

I have appreciated the opportunity to lead one of the Housegroups and take part in the other two. The worship at St James' is varied and well-resourced with talented people leading music, prayers and readings. I have valued your positive feedback after services. Harmony Café events, the Marie Curie Service and the Christingle planned by the Worship Team have been particularly memorable and inspiring times.

Sharing in the Christmas and Easter experiences with the children of Woolton Primary School and the members of our uniformed organisations has been a wonderful experience. It is great that we are able to share our Christian faith in a way that enables the children to learn and make their own response to the love of Jesus.

I have benefited from coming to a Church where the worship area is so flexible both for worship and for offering a welcome to people during the week. The challenge we now have is to do a similar thing in the halls. The plans agreed by our Church Council will enable us to make our halls fit for purpose and welcoming to visitors; an area that expresses in physical form the message of God's grace which is at the heart of who we are.

I enjoy sharing Wednesday morning prayers with the other local clergy. I am inspired by the giving that we do through the Benevolent Fund and at times like Harvest and Christmas. Often the charities we support help the most vulnerable people in the UK and around the world. We need to focus on issues of justice and peace so that we pray and act on behalf of people as well as give money to them.

Changing from one Minister to another is always a challenging experience both for the congregation and the ministers involved. It takes a while to get used to new people and new ways of working. The group of Churches I care for have never shared the same minister before and the amount of time available for each is affected by the shrinking number of Ministers. The fact I do not live in Woolton is something different from previous arrangements. Thank you for coping so well with this and for being realistic in your expectations. Unfortunately these sort of challenges are not going to go away in the future as staffing the Methodist Circuit and the URC Synod becomes ever more challenging. We all need to play our part in both these bodies which are there to support us and enable us to work together across Churches and the area.

I will always seek to give priority to those ways in which we can grow together and reach out. Our Mission Priorities help to ensure that we build God's kingdom rather than just maintaining the structures of the past. It is good to work alongside the team of Steward Elders who support me and serve all of us in so many ways. Looking forward we are always seeking new and exciting ways to be God's people and to share our faith with others. During April several of us went on Messy Church training and we are seeking God's guidance as to whether this may be one of the ways forward.

Thank you again for your welcome and the start of our life together.

Peter

GIRLS' BRIGADE REPORT

Girls' Brigade meets every Thursday in the church hall 6.30-7.30pm. We currently have 20 girls on our register with an average company night attendance of 12-15 girls aged 4-14. We currently have 3 leaders Amy Bates (Captain), Jayne McLaren (Leader), Jan Underwood (Leader). Our purpose is to enrich the lives of young girls through a variety of activities and to help them grow in confidence and help them on their faith journey to seek, serve and follow Christ. Over the past 12 months we have had many highlights. We started last term with a sleepover in the church hall with 10 girls, we watched a film at Woolton Cinema and enjoyed pizza, the girls had a great night and then came to church on Sunday morning. In October for Harvest we created food parcels to send to churches' chosen charities. In November, we explored the Williamson Tunnels with Boys' Brigade. For remembrance Sunday we created Lanterns which the girls wrote poems on, some were very poignant and meaningful. We also held a Lush Soap Party with the parents. We enjoyed learning sign language, to sing (with one of our parents Julie Guy), and to perform at Roy Barker & Friends sing a long in December. In December we held a cake stall at the Christmas fair

and raised £135.00. Our new term has started with a music evening lead by Rob Swindells, a Chinese food evening (food always goes down well) and a World Book Day evening. We have also enjoyed the Christmas and Easter Experience lead by members of the church.

Finally as GB enters its 125th Year we are looking forward to a term of celebrations including a celebration/reunion day on Saturday 12th May where we are hoping to gather together past and present members of our company over tea, coffee and cake and on Sunday 13th May we will be having a celebration parade service.

Amy Bates

STEWARDS' ELDERS' REPORT

I took over the Senior Steward role in September 2017 when Pam Alexander's term ended. It came at a sad but good time for me as it coincided with the events to celebrate the end of the Rev. Alan Crump's service with us and the arrival of our new Minister, Rev. Peter Hughes, where it has been nice to tread new ground and find our feet together.

I am grateful that I have such a wonderful group of dedicated people to work alongside in such a privileged role. We are just about to elect 4 new Steward Elders as Pam and Margaret finish their term and Ian and Pauline stand down due to relocating nearer their family.

The Steward Elders team consists of 10 elected church members and the Minister. Our function in this role is to work alongside the Minister to provide a Leadership Team to represent the Church.

We have a meeting once a month and share a meal together every January. We are there to support our Minister with his workload and discuss any matters which may arise in the day to day running of St. James'. We make recommendations to Church Council when needed. We are responsible for overseeing the Steward nominations and elections, for collating a list of charities we support through our monthly Benevolent collections, and organising rotas so that each duty needed is fulfilled, to ensure all services and events take place efficiently and as planned, and much more.

The future plans for our Church are just under discussion as we explore the ways in which we can upgrade our church hall for our own use and also for all who make use of the hall and provide us with a good income. We also have many varied and wonderful things planned through our mission for the coming year.

Jayne McLaren

PROPERTY AND FINANCE REPORT

At this time of the year it would be appropriate to thank our members and congregation for your amazing support for all that we accomplish here at St. James'.

Every year the finance is challenging as we strive to support our church in our fundraising and general offertory to enable the running of the church general expenditure and giving our support to the assessments, which helps in part to support some churches less fortunate than ourselves.

As everyone knows we are all trying to raise the funds and apply for grants so that St. James' can complete the bold vision we had for our church and the community back in 2013 with a three phase plan to repair and refurbish our buildings over the next 7 years.

Thanks to your overwhelming generosity and support we are well on our way to achieving this bold and courageous vision within our mission to engage many more people to come and know the love and witness of the presence of Jesus Christ in our lives.

We are hoping to have completed our church hall refurbishment by the time we meet for our annual meeting in 2019.

Our property and finance committee work so hard and are dedicated and proud to serve God with their gifts to benefit our church life at St. James'.

We are always open to new members who may have an interest in our buildings or financial planning and willing to join our lovely dedicated team at this exciting time, as we plan for the future generations of families that will join our fellowship at St. James'.

Once again many thanks. Annual church meetings are a good time to celebrate and give thanks for God's blessings. Without your financial commitment, love support and prayers, we would not be able to achieve the many requirements that we need to keep our church and buildings open in Woolton and the community.

A sincere and heartfelt thank you

Steve Skyner Chairman, Property and Finance

SPECIAL PROJECTS

Another busy year again, with lots happening in the church calendar with many events that have been organised to help raise funds for both St. James' and the many charities both local and worldwide.

This could not be achieved without your wonderful support and participation and your help encouragement and financial assistance.

We meet every few months to discuss and plan activities and social events to help with fundraising and consider other special projects that we can consider to further enhance our spiritual and Christian experience here at St. James'.

Our meetings are open to everyone and we welcome anyone that feels they would like to make a difference and be part of our exciting plans for St. James'. I would like to thank all our committee members and our congregation and friends of St. James' for your loyal support.

The special projects committee was set up by Gerald Tedcastle a previous minister who served us with his ministry, when it became apparent we had to extend our hall premises almost 30 years ago, to accommodate our many young families, uniformed organisations and youth fellowship.

The committee has been an integral part of St. James' with many original members still serving today.

We planned for future generations then, as we are still doing now, with our mission here in Woolton and the community.

We continue to ask your support and inspiration as we meet the many new challenges set before us as we seek to serve our heavenly father.

Many many thanks

Steve Skyner Chairman. Special Projects.

SCOUT SECTIONS REPORT

All our sections Beavers, Cubs and scouts are flourishing, plus we have had a good number of Scouts who have graduated to Explorer Scouts who are run by the Scout District. We have a strong team of fully qualified leaders. All our sections are running to their maximum practical numbers. We have waiting lists but we manage the numbers so that members have places available to them as they progress from each section.

Financially we have managed to build up a small surplus after we have made a donation of £1200 towards hall running costs.

I would like to congratulate Vicky Hyland and Hannah Withey on their award of the Wood Badge. This badge is a continuation of the tradition established at the first Scout Camp run by Baden Powell, when it was awarded to the first Scout Leaders who had completed their training. Today, this award is made by headquarters to leaders who have completed their training and demonstrated significant achievement in leadership and direct service to young people.

Beavers meet on a Monday and are led by Vicky Hyland whom I also congratulate on gaining her Nights Away permit. This qualifies her to run camps and other overnight activities. The Beavers have enjoyed a full range of indoor and outdoor activities. As well as working on badges they shared a great camp with the Cubs at Tatton Park Scout Activity Centre.

Cubs also meet on a Monday and undertake a wide range of activities with an emphasis on both Scouting and Personal Skills. Our Cubs have majored on outdoor activities. One highlight was an astronomer themed camp which included a visit to Jodrell Bank. Another was the Tatton Park camp where they enjoyed bell boating on the lake and exploring the extensive parklands. The cubs invited the Beavers to join them on their tradition of going to the "Rock" pantomime at the Everyman.

Scouts meet on Fridays. Most members have been with us since being Beavers. In the troop the scouts take a major role in planning and running their programme. They have been dragon boating, indoor rock climbing, held two camps, hiking and cooking challenges, plus a mountaineering weekend in Wales in February.

When Scouts reach the age of 14, they are eligible to move into Explorers. This section is run on a local area basis and our members meet on Wednesday at St Peter's scout hut. Almost a third of our troop moved up this year, which is great for us to see them flourish in a more adult environment. This year they plan to do an expedition to climb the highest mountain in Ireland. Some have trained as young leaders and come and help at section meetings. One James Murphy has managed to win through a stiff competition to represent Merseyside Scout in the 2019 Jamboree in America.

Scouting is a team based activity. All that we achieve is dependent on the time and enthusiasm of our leaders. They are supported by a wider team of parents,

friends and St James Church. To each I would like to give a hearty vote of thanks.

Skip / Colin Howard / Scout Group Leader.

ST. JAMES PRE SCHOOL

The pre-school is a registered charity, non for profit organisation that serves the local community and is affiliated to St. James' URC/Methodist church. The pre-school is managed by trustees / governors. We have at least three representatives including the minister on the governing body. There is a vibrant parent and toddler session every day as well as the pre-school. Operating strictly within the Ofsted and charity commission guidelines and requirements. This is a morning only term time setting. The pre-school organisations finances are independent of the church. They pay rent to St. James church for the use of the hall, which helps meet the expenditure of our church with our overall costs. If anyone would like any further information, please contact the manager or any church representative on the governing body

Steve Skyner chairman of the governors. /. Trustees

PROPERTY

I report as usual on a very busy year. General maintenance to buildings is continually monitored and work carried out as quickly, efficiently and cost effectively as we can arrange.

Annual checks are carried out as follows: Central heating boilers in both buildings. Servicing and maintenance of all fire extinguishers and other firefighting equipment. PAT testing of all electrical appliances etc. Service to the Lift in church. Gutters are checked and cleared.

Gardens to the church are looked after by Margaret Dee with invaluable help from Billy Edwards. We now have a firm who come in fortnightly to cut the grass during the spring to autumn months. Anyone who would enjoy working in our gardens would be very welcome! Please contact myself or Margaret if you have an hour or so to offer.

The hall cellar was recently cleared out of a great deal of accumulated rubbish and since the remedial work to a cracked drain pipe I am delighted to report that we no longer have filthy water ingress.

As you are all aware plans are underway to create more storage space in the hall and we will be asking all groups to make a determined effort to look at all of

their equipment and get rid of items which are no longer used, so that when the time comes for re allocation we can have a smooth transfer to new space. May I also ask that everyone using the buildings continues to have consideration for furniture and fittings, switch off lights, turn off taps, check all doors are closed when leaving the building and also consider how rubbish and waste is recycled.

HALL AND CHURCH LETTINGS

Apart from the weekly meeting of our own uniformed groups and the daily term time rental by Pre School and Parent and Toddler Groups, we have on a weekly basis: dance group ETDA. Woolton Drama Group meet on Monday evenings and they have used our hall for a Pantomime in January and have just recently put on a production of Arsenic and Old Lace, there is a Dram Group for young people on Friday evenings. Kumon Study Group runs twice weekly on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons throughout the year. WVRA hold their monthly committee meetings on a Tuesday.

We continue to have party bookings on a fairly regular basis and other one off bookings for various events. Once we have completed the new proposed work to the hall we should an even better space to offer with the option of being able to run more than one event at a time, which will be a great help. The church building is being used more, not only for our own activities (eg The Christmas and Easter Experiences) but also for outside events. Woolton Drama Group presented *Hamlet* last September, we have our first Symposium on 3rd May – Creative Therapies for Complex Trauma – The South Liverpool Orchestra are playing here on the 15th May. We always have great feedback once folk have seen our beautiful church building, and it is good that we can welcome in and offer such a wonderful facility.

Wendy Doig. Property and Lettings Manager

MUSIC AT ST JAMES'

We are indebted to Peter Bounds, Derek Long and Kath Norton for their devotion to playing the organ for our services, and to Dave Bedford, who has been part of the music group and has also stepped in to lead on solo guitar a few times.

Choir

For several reasons, we have not met recently but this will be reviewed periodically.

Harmony Café

We are into our fourth year of Harmony Café Sunday evenings: around 100 people meeting in church to worship, singing a variety of songs and hymns, old and new, played by the band. The evenings are themed, and have readings, reflections and prayers linking the songs. In a relaxed atmosphere, seated round tables, people of all ages enjoy tea and coffee, and lots of cake, prior to the service and half-way through, which gives plenty of opportunity to meet new people and to chat. We meet bi-monthly, with an extra ‘Candle-lit Carols’ evening in December and all are very welcome. Come and join us to sing, or listen, to the wonderful sound of many voices praising God together.

We are grateful to Adam Hardaker (keyboard) and Jamie Bridson (drums) for their commitment to the Harmony Café Band and to all those who provide cake and so willingly give their support in many ways to help the evenings run smoothly.

Roy Barker & Friends Sing-a-longs

We again held a Christmas concert in 2017, our 21st year of concerts! Funds raised are split between a St James’ project and an outside charity. We supported Oakleaf Bereavement and Loss Support Service, a local charity supporting young people. A total of £1,390 was raised on the night and we are very grateful to Karen Skyner, through whom we received an additional £1,000 Barclays Bank match funding, giving the marvellous total of £2,390. Come and join us on 1st December 2018, fun for all ages.

Roy and Lynne Barker

MISSION ACTION GROUP

M.A.G. has met 8 times since March 2017 to plan, deliver and review a varied catalogue of outreach events.

Seasonal ‘Experiences’ were organised at Easter and Christmas 2017, and Easter 2018, with an increasing number of young people and groups visiting on each occasion. The children from Woolton Primary School and the Boys’ and Girls’ Brigades were joined for the first time at Christmas by the Brownies and Guides, and then by the Rainbows, Cubs and Scouts at Easter 2018.

While each Experience is similar, the visual and story elements vary each time to keep the experience fresh. This makes for a huge amount of work, which St James’ folk commit to with enthusiasm and dedication; and at least 600 children and 30 or more group leaders have enjoyed the fruits of their labour over the last

year. In May 2017, St James' became part of the global wave of prayer for Thy Kingdom Come. as the M.A.G. enabled local people to tie a rainbow of 1200+ prayer ribbons to the railings. This quietly inclusive community prayer initiative concluded with a service focussing on individual and church family mission at St James', during which a cross decorated with the ribbons was dedicated and placed in the church garden. The group's discussion of other ways to promote the prayer life of St James' has led to the formation of a confidential and vibrant 'WhatsApp' prayer circle.

M.A.G. has also:

- promoted and supported the educational 'Walk through the New Testament',
- co-ordinated Mary and Joseph's 2nd annual Christmas journey round Woolton to Bethlehem,
- organised the production and distribution of more than 200 knitted angels,
- sought opportunities to work ecumenically on community mission projects, worship and carol singing, and
- reviewed its own tranche of the church's mission priorities as often as possible.

Partly because of all these activities, St James' application to be a Circuit Mission Centre was approved in the summer of 2017.

M.A.G. is a joyful group, overflowing with ideas to share mission inside and outside the church. It is currently:

- exploring ideas for this year's Thy Kingdom Come prayer initiative and the possibility of a Summer Experience for young people based on the history of our church in Woolton, and
- planning single-sitting readings of St Mark's and St Luke's Gospel, and meaningful ways to mark November 11th, 2018.

It is also, always, an 'open' group. Anyone and everyone is welcome to come to the meetings, to contribute an idea, help and support what is being discussed or simply listen. But be warned it is really hard to listen and not want to be involved!!

Lynne Barker

CONSULTATION ON WORSHIP

This group meets 3/4 times a year to discuss past services of worship, and to plan the next series and invite different preachers to bring us their message. During this year, we have said farewell to Alan who, we think, appreciated the meeting as a sounding board for new ideas and a real fellowship of Christians concerned with worship in Church, and on occasions, out in God's wonderful world.

In October, we welcomed Peter to our fellowship and we hope to be a place where he and we can put forward our ideas and beliefs in a welcoming and loving environment. Anyone interested in the conduct of worship is very welcome at this meeting.

Pam Draper, Convenor

ACTION FOR CHILDREN HOUSE-TO-HOUSE COLLECTION

this year raised £670.95, for which they were very grateful. Many thanks to the patient people who pounded the streets to enable us to help in this way.

Pam Draper

MISSION IN BRITAIN

The Women's Guild held their annual open meeting for Mission in Britain in March, when Rebecca Millar, the Methodist Chaplain to students at the colleges and universities in Liverpool, gave us a very interesting talk about her work. A collection will be made in Church in the near future for the Mission's funds.

Pam Draper

WOMEN'S GUILD

With approximately 15 members, and now meeting in the church every Wednesday, we have enjoyed a variety of speakers and subjects – a podiatrist, a Minister for students, and talks on the Seamen's Mission, the Aviation Fellowship, and a visit to Norway. Of course the Guild members are not happy unless we hear from our own church members: namely Liz and Steve, and Ruth Christie, who always amuses us. This year we had a lovely talk from Richard Thwaite who took us back in time on his milk round, and brought a selection of milk bottles which evoked memories.

Our Soup and Sandwiches, once a month in the hall, is proving very popular, especially with the men, who love to eat and chat. We lost dear May Allen, and sadly May Noble who has moved to Essex, but we are pleased to welcome Joyce and Nan from Childwall. Our doors are always open to new members.

Doreen Parker

TUESDAY COFFEE MORNING

The Tuesday coffee morning is maintaining a steady flow of regular members each week who enjoy a coffee and a chat together. Some of whom are not otherwise having a lot of contact with the local community and is giving them a reason to leave their house. Please come and join us if you are able.

Many thanks Jonquil

FLOWER MINISTRY

The flower ministry is a very worthwhile cause; it is such an important ministry as people are very grateful to receive the flowers knowing they have been thought of and remembered in this way. As always, people who receive flowers from church are so pleased, it brightens their day. They tell me they are so lifted that they are being thought of by the church.

The flower ministry rota for the giving of flowers still has some dates available for this year. If anyone would like to take one of the dates, please refer to the printed rota on the notice board by the glass doors in church. If anyone feels called to give or deliver flowers in remembrance etc of someone please speak to me in church. I will be pleased to help.

Many thanks Jonquil

CHURCH FAMILY LIFE COMMITTEE

In 2017 the committee have been very busy arranging events such as Alan's leaving event, Saturday coffee mornings, Harmony cafés, Easter breakfast, Refreshments after the welcome service at St James' in honour of Peter and Ann along with other activities, Show in a week etc.

We enjoy coming together to serve God and St James' Church in this way. I would like to thank all the other members of the committee for their continued help and support in the work we do in this ministry.

Blessings Jonquil

FAIR TRADE

I am still noticing there are a few non fair trade products in the kitchen cupboards. Please could anyone on coffee rotas after Sunday services or Saturday/Tuesday Coffee mornings use fair trade products where possible?

Many Thanks Jonquil

26TH LIVERPOOL BOYS BRIGADE

Our first event was the Battalion Anchors Cinema trip on 21st January at our local picture house in Woolton and all had a great time including the officers and helpers, some of whom had not visited this fantastic location right on our doorstep. We made bird feeders to entice the wild birds to our gardens as we took part in the RSPB Big Garden Birdwatch on the weekend of 28th 29th of January. We had parades in February (Non Marching) and March the first one we March at around the village having made some more Anchors and Juniors drums in the weeks before. We made our own pancakes and had pancake themed games at the start of Lent and on the 9th of March within Fair Trade Fortnight we prepared Tea Coffee Biscuits and made chocolate crispy cakes and invited mums, dads and carers from BB and GB for the last 20 minutes of the session as we listened to a talk about FAIR TRADE items and shared thoughts of others and raised some donations for the Churches Fair Trade period.

We made mothers' day cards on the 16th March as we were unable to meet on the 23rd due to a situation where we didn't have enough registered leaders to operate.

We had a great 125 years celebration of the Boys Brigade in Liverpool in May which was held at our Church here in Woolton and attended by a record congregation of 316 followed by a fantastic parade around the village, so a big thanks to our Marching Stewards. We had some interesting Thursday nights in June and early July with some time on the field for games.

Our Anchor and Junior Sections started back on the 14th of September with a get to know you evening as we spent time together and discussed the things we had all been up to over the summer and talked about our plans for our time together between September and Christmas.

Our newly appointed minister the Rev Peter Hughes joined us for an evening in September to see what we get up to and we had a great night as we started our Christmas card designs for the Battalion card competition (in which we came first and second, see later).

In early October our meeting was themed Harvest Preparation "Let's Loaf Around" as we made and baked loaves which we took to our Harvest Church Parade on the 8th October along with our gifts of food. We visited the famous

Williamson Tunnels under our city which was a great and interesting evening. We had a fire and fireworks safety video and talk produced by Merseyside Fire and Rescue before Bonfire Night and the week after with a Remembrance Activity of potato printed poppies and a band practice before our parade last Sunday leading BB, GB, Scouts, Guides, the ATC and the Woolton Churches over 250 in number around our Village with our traditional March Past. Our numbers are still lower than previous years with 8 Anchors 3 Juniors and 1 Company section member. Our Anchor and Junior Sections have had a varied programme which following our Remembrance Parade we had a fund raising for Children in need with a sponsored word search and Pudsey Colouring evening. We also started our shoe box appeal.

We had a Road Safety aware Week event with Dark Clothing, Hi Vis reflection comparison experiments using Bike lights and road / street wise pictures and walking and Bike safety stuff, Pavements are for People colouring and all the Boys were given a Hi Vis Reflective arm band for the trips to school, BB and other in the dark activities.

We had to think about our Christmas Tree in Church decorating and our theme was all to do with the Christmas song “Its Somebodies Birthday” so we analysed the song and listed things we could make and the list was as follows:- Crackers, Turkey, Pudding and Cream, Toys, The Inn and the Stable, Jesus, Candles, Presents, Tree Lights and Games to play.

This gave us a few headaches to make but the results made the following week and placed on the tree were great. We then had our annual Christmas Experience in Church with Four thought provoking stations with activities for all.

On Sunday 10th of December was our last parade of 2017 and our Gift Service and our New Minister the Rev Peter Hughes agreed to be our Companies Chaplain.

Our term ended with our joint Christmas party with our Girls Brigade and we were pleased to welcome Mick Southern who presented the Christmas Card Competition Certificates and the Winner and Runners up prizes to two of our boys and showed us the Freedom of the City Scroll presented to The Liverpool District of the Boys Brigade so a proud evening all round.

Rob Swindells, Officer in Charge

PASTORAL VISITORS

The pastoral visitors along with the minister have responsibility for the pastoral care of the fellowship. In September we were pleased to welcome Peter Hughes to the group as our new minister.

There are currently fifteen pastoral visitors on the committee and we meet with the minister three times a year (January, April and September) to consider and pray for the needs and concerns of our fellowship, and to share and celebrate good news.

Peter Barlow has resigned from the pastoral committee and we thank Peter for his many years of service.

It was agreed, as stated in our mission priorities 2017 that the Pastoral Committee be responsible for looking at aspects of our mission concerning Worship, Learning and Caring. During the year we, as usual, reviewed the membership and community rolls, and made adjustments to the lists. Our membership list at 1st November 2017 was 131 and 164 were on the pastoral lists. In 2017 we had 7 baptisms, and have supported the families of six people who have gone to glory, three of whom were Church members.

The Pastoral committee take their responsibilities seriously, and work diligently to help with the pastoral care of the fellowship of St James. We are always looking for new members of the committee and ask you to consider whether God is calling you to become a Pastoral visitor, to help with the Pastoral care of our fellowship. This is a vital ministry and if you feel able to help please see Peter, Irene, or any of the Steward/Elders.

Irene Elliott

TREASURER'S REPORT

It is good to report that the accounts showed a surplus of £4748, which was slightly higher than the budgeted figure of £4110. Our income from collections and direct giving by standing order increased by more than £2000, and this was largely due to the continued response of the fellowship to the TRIO presentation; and again, our thanks to all those who were able to increase their financial giving. We have lost a few of our members: and we remember the financial and spiritual gifts that they gave to the church over many years.

Our expenses are more or less as expected, with higher gas and electricity costs which were not only the result of increased costs but were also due to the figures being estimated in last year's accounts at lower levels than the actual usage.

Due to the refurbishment our repair bills are still very low, a fact that we will have to consider when budgeting for future years and as such we will need to continue to increase our income in order to cover these extra costs. With this in mind, can we remember to consider increasing our giving at least in line with inflation each year?. If we are lucky enough to receive a rise in salary or in our pensions it would be really appreciated if you could increase your giving at the same time.

Thanks to Wendy who works very hard and is extremely efficient in managing the lettings of our rooms, which showed a significant increase this year. Without the revenues from this valuable resource we would struggle to balance our books.

The Envelope Scheme

People use this so that they can budget their giving each week and so can the church. It also helps people to remember to give on a weekly basis even when they cannot make it to church, as the church costs continue each week even when people are not here.

Standing Orders

Some people don't put money into the collection plate because they have already given their regular collection through the bank either monthly or weekly. We have cards that can be collected as you enter church to put in the offertory during the service to indicate that your offering has been given directly. Giving through Standing Order enables the church to set a budget and reduces the risks associated with carrying cash to the bank. It also reduces the amount of work required counting the cash. This is the church's preferred way for members to make regular contributions.

The Special Projects /Redevelopment account

During the year we have been able to make a small start to the hall refurbishment, with some redecoration, refurbishment of the stage and improvements to the electrics, but this is only a start of the significant works we need to do in our hall.

We have continued to pay back the loan to the Methodist Circuit as agreed. This time last year we were expecting a shortfall of around £12,000 on the Church refurbishment but due to the generosity of our fellowship and continuing fund raising we now have a surplus of just over £8000. With the income from concerts we also raised money for the Street Pastors and Honeysuckle Fund.

Finally, thank you all for all the gifts of time and money that you have given to God through St James' during the course of the last year. Without your dedication, support and sacrificial giving, none of the good work that St James' does in the name of Christ would be possible.

Steve Elliott