

Accounts and Financial Statement and the Annual Reports from all our Local Churches.

This composite Report and associated Accounts are prepared under the guidance of Charities Commission requirements and SORP 2005 recommended practice guidance.

Partnership Website: <http://WSwinLyd.org.uk>

This report will be posted at or below <http://WSwinLyd.org.uk/council/report/>

A Prayer for our Partnership

Gracious God, we bring to you our history as a Partnership and ask that you will continue to be the centre of this story as the journey unfolds. May our way forward be guided by your Spirit and full of surprises! Help us to learn from disappointments and trust that together we can discover how to be disciples in West Swindon, ready to proclaim Jesus as we go. May we glimpse your glory in 2008 and witness signs of your kingdom. Amen.

Jane Skinner



The Ecumenical Partnership of West Swindon and the Lydiards



All Saints Lydiard Millicent



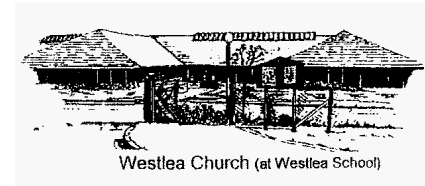
St. Mary's Lydiard Tregoze



Holy Trinity Shaw



Toothill Church



Westlea Church (at Westlea School)

Annual Report of the Partnership for the year ending 31 December 2007

Values

We want to affirm a number of distinctive values, which we hold as being of particular importance for our Local Ecumenical Partnership (LEP):

- We accept the Lordship of the risen Jesus Christ – alive still today.
- We are Bible-based – accepting Scripture's inspiration and authority.
- We are evangelical – in doctrine and its application to contemporary life.
- We believe that Jesus Christ is the ground of our salvation and model of our mission, inspiring us in service to a materially and spiritually needy world.
- We depend upon the dynamic power of the Holy Spirit – to renew us and impart charismatic gifts for healing, deliverance and other ministries.
- We are committed to a collaborative style of ministry – with all God's People.

Covenant

We specifically commit ourselves:

- To seek prayerfully to understand more clearly the Vision of God and His calling to grow His kingdom here.
- To discover more from the Scriptures about the theological basis for our unity-in-mission, and its practical consequences.
- To conform ourselves to the values of Jesus, as enshrined in his teaching on discipleship and our 'Declaration of Intent'.
- To share together in missionary outreach to the people that God leads us into contact with through our daily lives.
- To serve all the people of West Swindon & the Lydiards with the same unconditional covenantal love that God has for them.

Mission Statement

We affirm, together with Churches Together in England that our understanding of the practical outworking of our shared Mission is:

- To proclaim the good news of the Kingdom;
- To teach, baptise and nurture new believers;
- To respond to human need by loving service;
- To seek to transform unjust structures of society; and
- To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth.

leadership teams about the possibility of getting involved. If you're like me...not young...find ways to support the emerge activities. Pray, send money, drive a mini-bus, shift chairs, etc; it's all needed. You may also see Bee, Chris, Ellen, Jen and Nikki from the new Collective Band around...continue to pray for the schools work.

Chris Scarisbrick

Secretary's Report

It has been a demanding year in this still-developing and varied role. Recent average is 2 days per week with the Partnership, alongside my other roles elsewhere. The main functions continue – support for Partnership planning and development; some delegated initiatives and liaison with Local Church Secretaries, Ministers and Administrator; resourcing and pursuing occasional projects; and external contacts on all these activities. My overall aim has been to support the ways in which Local Churches and the Partnership relate to each other.

The Baptist and Anglican Staff appointments and a renewed drive to complete the long-running new Constitution have all taken time. Other work has been more fragmented and self managed - including Renewal of Membership Lists/ Electoral Roll, the Diocesan Growth Programme, and support for members wanting help and practical advice.

Personal support and organisational isolation remains an issue (a common need among officers and staff in volunteer-based organisations). There will be a review early in 2008.

From contact with people around the Partnership, I confirm our considerable indebtedness for the effort and faithful service of volunteer officers and members in all our Churches. Many carry significant responsibilities in support of others, and set a positive tone for the Partnership's witness in the wider community. Thanks to those who give me personal support too.

Ed Poole

And finally...

We believe this report gives a clear picture of the life of the Ecumenical Partnership of West Swindon and the Lydiards, and the ways in which members of the ECC have sought to fulfil the responsibility placed on them as Trustees. This report should also be read in conjunction with the Annual

Pray faithfully for your friends, neighbours and work colleagues. Practise talking about your experience of Jesus (not church, Jesus), and look for the opportunities to tell the people you've been praying for. Those opportunities will occur. (OK, I admit that's at least 5 things...)

Equip and Encourage - Support, develop and affirm church members in their contribution to church and community life

We need to discern giftings among us, train, mentor, and recognize the ministries of people already in our churches.

Anne and Tudor have experience using "Willow Creek" and "Freedom in Christ" material respectively. Willow Creek materials are particularly valuable in helping Christians to realize their gifts and in enabling leaders to grasp fresh dimensions of Church development and growth. Tudor has used Freedom in Christ in his last church as a good way of teaching people who have done Alpha and want something more.

Training too, is being discussed. For example most churches recognise they need help training those helping with children's and youth work. To this end we have John Hardwick coming for the weekend of 29th and 30th November with some training and a joint service. He has written lots of materials, and has a gift for enabling others in story telling and action songs. Please let us know of any other areas of training that you would be interested in exploring.

There are communities out there, where we don't have much natural contact yet, communities that have needs we may be able to address. Doing so effectively, even if in small ways will encourage us to try more, and more importantly will give the credibility among those communities that will allow us to witness to our faith, so, look for news later in the year about more ways we may be able to work in our communities. When you see it, support it.

Emerge - Start-up the Partnership's new youth work with Ncounter

One specific community we've only just begun to contact is youth. There are a lot of young people out there who don't ever go anywhere near a church but who need healthy relationships with one another and with society. Apart from our own children and their friends, they won't come to us. We must allow, encourage, enthuse and resource our young people to get out there and serve their community. Ncounter have teamed up with lots of new skilled and enthusiastic youth workers to help us. If you're less than about 25 or have gifts around working with 11-16 year olds, talk to your

Organisation and Trustees

The Partnership comprises five churches:

All Saints Church, Lydiard Millicent
Holy Trinity Church, Shaw
St Mary's Church, Lydiard Tregoze
Toothill Church
Westlea Church

The Partnership is recognised by the Baptist Union, Church of England, Methodist Church and United Reformed Church, and serves over 30,000 people living in West Swindon, The Lydiards and associated rural areas. It looks to the Swindon Churches Together as its Sponsoring Body for guidance and oversight.

Our Bank Account is with CafCash P.O. Box 289, West Malling, Kent ME19 4TA

Our Auditor is Monahan's, 38 – 42 Newport Street, Swindon SN1 3DR.

The Ecumenical Staff Team of Ministers comprises those who have been duly authorised and appointed by the four participating denominations (Article 5 of the Constitution).

| | |
|--|---|
| Team Rector (Church of England) | Revd Stephen Skinner |
| Team Vicar (Church of England) | Revd Peter Knight (until 28th January 2007) |
| Team Vicar (Church of England) | Revd Tudor Roberts (from 20th September 2007) |
| Minister in Local Appointment (Methodist, part time) | Revd Jan Partridge (until 31st August 2007) |
| Honorary Curate (Church of England, part time) | Revd Jane Skinner |
| United Reformed Church Minister (self-supporting, part time) | Revd Dick Gray |
| Baptist Minister | Revd Anne Carter (from 24th November 2007) |

Committee Structure

The trustees are the members of the Ecumenical Church Council (ECC) (Article 8 of the Constitution). Anglican Members also constitute the Parochial Church Council (PCC) when needed to conduct Anglican specific business. The members of the ECC are the Partnership's Trustees for Charity Commission purposes.

| | | |
|---------------------------|---|--|
| The Ecumenical Staff Team | As above | |
| ECC Chair | Chris Scarisbrick | |
| ECC Vice Chair | Revd Stephen Skinner | |
| Churchwardens | Maureen Anderson (R) Ivan Gilmore Lesley Franklin (A) Debbie Fleet | |
| Senior Steward | Mark Dowling | |
| Treasurer | Revd Dick Gray | |
| Secretary | Ed Poole | |
| Elected Members | Eileen Sawyer (A) David Ratnam John Halstead Mark Dowling Rachel Dowling Pat Langton Lesley Franklin | Peter Gilder Steve Pearce Chris Scarisbrick Jane Skinner Angela Mak |
| Co-opted members | David Tapscott (Deanery Synod rep) | |

(A) Appointed during year (R) Resigned during year

We are recognised by Churches Together in England as a Single Congregation Local Ecumenical Partnership. The ECC is the main governance and representative body. Its main responsibilities are broadly grouped as Regulatory, Oversight and Governance. Other responsibilities are devolved to the Local Church Committees (LCC) / Leadership Teams - in the areas of Partnership, Ministry / Mission, Pastoral care and Leadership. A fuller description of the current functions of the ECC, PCC and LCC's can be found in the current Partnership Constitution (1988) and in draft Standing Orders for the revised Constitution (2006).

The ECC met 6 times in 2007 [Jan (twice), May, June, Sep, Nov] in addition to the Annual General Meeting on 14 March. A Special General Meeting met on 5 Aug to endorse the appointment of the Baptist Minister Revd Anne Carter. Main ECC topics during the year were:

Main topics discussed were:

- Arrangements for All Saints interregnum, Toothill and Holy Trinity ongoing
- Liaison with 2 Staffing Groups; progress updates to Churches. Welcoming and induction arrangements
- 2007 Partnership Goals
- Income and expenditure; property refurbishments; review of budget planning process
- Youth activity reports; strategic proposal from Ncounter
- Appointment and role of External Consultant to Staff Team
- Partnership Profile and Minister's profile for Team Vicar appointment

time to develop well. My hope is that Toothill and Westlea will also use this Diocesan initiative to assist in their plans for growth.

In essence the Diocese is encouraging us to grow in 4 dimensions:

- **In Commitment:** Loving God and each other more, taking our discipleship of Jesus seriously (for example in releasing spiritual gifts and equipping).
- **In Partnership:** Looking for opportunities to work with others, both within the church and beyond it (for example with schools, community projects).
- **In Influence:** Engaging with people where they are, living with integrity, and speaking prophetically into the world around (for example in social justice).
- **In Numbers:** Bringing others into relationship with Christ through faith, so more enter His Kingdom (for example using evangelism courses).

I am glad to say that our churches and our individual members already practice these 4 dimensions in many ways, and this Annual Report bears witness to this. However, there are many more opportunities to be grasped by individual churches and the partnership as a whole. Our Partnership Goals which the Partnership Council (E.C.C.) will be proposing for adoption by the A.G.M. will all be oriented towards aspects of Growth such as mentioned above. They will all be expressions of Christ's call to Mission which is so central to our faith. As we continue to participate in these together, we pray that God's Spirit will so bless us that we turn the tide in our partnership from our long numerical decline into sustained growth.

Stephen Skinner

Partnership Council Principal Goals for 2008

Prayer and Spirituality - Develop and extend prayer commitment throughout the Partnership and Local Churches

We aim to build upon this Goal of 2007 by continuing to encourage the building up of praying communities around the Partnership. We will offer a greater variety of ways to pray; informally, liturgically and through silent waiting on the Lord. We will offer opportunities for people to discover other forms of spirituality in the Christian tradition to enrich their own lives and to assist in mission.

So, take advantage of the opportunities to develop your personal spirituality, allow our churches to equip and encourage you in your faith.

Wider Church

Deanery Synod

The Deanery of Swindon holds Synod Meetings three times a year. Two of those held in 2007 used venues in West Swindon: the Trinity Centre – home of Swindon Family Church, and Toothill Church. The other was held at St. Peter's Penhill.

The following issues were discussed over the year:

- The mission opportunities in the challenging estates of Penhill and Pinehurst. Plans are being formulated for a mission priest to undertake 'front line' outreach in these areas, collaborating with other local churches. St. Peter's church requires a lot of redevelopment to assist this outreach.
- Diocesan Budget for 2008. The aim was to only increase Parish Shares by 3.5% on average. This would entail further cutbacks in stipendiary clergy numbers across the diocese as a whole. Even then the projected deficit for the diocese in 2008 runs to over £100,000.
- A lengthy presentation on the opportunities presented through 'Extended Schools'. The government scheme is to use school sites as bases for offering extra services for families, such as parenting support. Opportunities for the churches to get involved in these key community centres.

There are vacancies for 4 people to be elected to serve on Deanery Synod from 2008, for the next 3 years. It is important we are well represented. See Stephen for details.

Stephen Skinner

Growth Plans & Mission Strategy

The Diocese of Bristol has for several years been actively encouraging every Parish to develop strategic plans for different ways to encourage Growth. There have been a number of Conferences, Leaflets, a DVD, and even a specially written Course to assist in this. Two such Conferences were held at Toothill Church at the end of November 2007, and we had several delegates from our partnership at these events.

Three of our five partnership churches have been forewarned by the Archdeacon of Malmesbury that in his 2008 "Articles of Enquiry" he very much hopes we will include a "Local Growth Plan". These are Holy Trinity Shaw, St. Mary's Lydiard Tregoz and All Saints Lydiard Millicent (because these are Anglican – owned buildings). The Plan would set out a number of areas where each church will be planning actively for Growth over the next few years. Several churches have begun work on this, but they will take

- 5th Sunday common services

The ECC Standing Committee met 6 times in 2007, at intervals between ECC meetings – to plan agendas and follow up on ECC decisions.

Appointed Sub Groups handled specialist areas of work on behalf of the ECC, and gave reports on progress. They included for 2007:

- Staffing Consultative Group (ongoing with Baptist appointment) – 6 group meetings, plus meetings visiting ministers, within the Baptist process
- Staffing Consultative Group (Anglican appointment) – 9 group meetings, plus 1.5 days selection, following the Anglican process
- Constitution Group (ongoing) – 8 group meetings and development work
- Youth Leaders Group
- Emerge Consultative / Working Group

Risks

The Partnership has a number of risks to its activities which have been assessed at either ECC or Standing Committee levels. These include:

- Risk of financial commitment, particularly with 3 full time clergy. Reserves have been strengthened to cover approx 1 year's stipend and expenses.
- Organisational risks due to limited deployment of Staff for a large part of the year, Limited resources available for work delegated to the Officers and ECC Standing Committee.
- Organisational and accountability risks relating to the Partnership's Policies and Procedures, and extended work to revise the Constitution
- Structural risks due to the Partnership's Ecumenical nature, and membership trends in some churches

The ECC considers that these risks have been mitigated to the best practicable extent. They are monitored within the Partnership's governance processes.

Induction and Training of Trustees

There is at present no formal process for training of new or existing Trustees. However ECC members are aware of their role and responsibilities, through discussion and briefing before and at meetings. Further attention will be given based on the provisions of the new Constitution when completed and adopted. Arrangements will also be made in relation to the requirements for the Partnership's Charity Commission registration by October 2008.

Review of 2007 Goals/Tasks

Prayer

Become a stronger and more committed praying community, both within each Local Church and across the Partnership.

We started by sending out a prayer questionnaire to find out what actually was going on in our churches. We discovered that there were many prayer activities but they were not always well attended. Several churches have implemented various recommendations that arose from the questionnaire.

In November about 20 people met for a day of listening, exploring and sharing in the discovery of prayer. This was very well received with people learning much that would not only help them in their personal prayer life but also that of their churches.

One Church laid on a Prayer day on the theme of "Hands". People could come and go whenever they wished and spend time exploring various aspects of hands at different stations.

For Lent 2008 the Partnership will study the Grove Spirituality course "Soul Spark", a short course exploring prayer and spiritual growth.

This goal is not one that has a finite end but we have taken steps towards being a more prayerful community.

Janet Gray

Ministry

Ensure that the Partnership's Staff Team is brought up to its allocated number as soon as possible.

After an extended search with the Baptist Union process, Revd Anne Carter received a unanimous call in August from Toothill Church and Holy Trinity Church Shaw to become the new (joint) Baptist Minister. Recommendations were warmly and promptly endorsed by the ECC, and Anne was welcomed

Toothill Manse is now managed by the ECC, and a committee has been formed. Apart from the Toothill Manse there is no direct financial involvement from the ECC for the upkeep, repair or development of the buildings. Further information about works undertaken in each church during 2007 can be found in the Local Churches' annual reports.

Finance

The ECC carries the responsibility of handling payments for:

- Our share of contributions to the Sponsoring Parent Bodies via: the Bristol Diocese, The Upper Thames Methodist Circuit, The West of England Baptist Association and the United Reformed Church. These payments contribute towards the cost of the full time stipendiary clergy and wider ministry.
- Ministerial and church fees for weddings and funerals
- Staff Expenses
- Salary for Partnership Administrator
- Stipend for a Baptist Minister when one is appointed
- Expenses incurred during a pastoral vacancy
- Support for Partnership-wide Youth work

More detailed information about Partnership Finances is in the Annual Accounts and Financial Statement.

For 2007 the Partnership made a small loss, mainly due to the costs of refurbishing the manse. However our reserves are healthy and exceed 1 year's stipend.

For 2008 the budget is for a loss as churches are unable yet to meet the significantly increased costs from the Diocese. Our Diocesan share is increased by 13%. We plan to undertake an income survey in March 2008.

The Budget for 2008 shows a deficit of £11,500. There will be a major problem in 2009 unless we can increase church giving. We have reserves of £40,000 at the end of 2007, which should enable us to manage the deficit in 2008. (DG)

Partnership Office

Our Administrator Claire Beaton has left us in January 2008. We thank her for her significant contribution to the Partnership over the last 3 years. We are looking at what our needs are for the next couple of years.

Dick Gray

Practices are usually well supported and have had at times over 12 people with visitors from as far as France, we have several regular visitors from Purton & Lydiard Tregoze there have been only a few occasions when we were unable to practice due to low attendance.

Going forward we hope to learn a new method and hold an open morning to encourage new ringers

Mission

Publicity and Communication

- We advertise monthly in the local Link Magazine, which includes information about our Partnership, the Office telephone number and email address.
- We especially promote our major festivals of Christmas, Lent, Holy Week and Easter. Cards are produced and delivered by some local churches. This year we produced joint information leaflets, through the Partnership Administrator, with our Mission Zone partners in Purton. These show all the special Services and Events of this period. We also produce a joint Christmas Services card for distribution in the local hotels and when we are out carol singing.
- Generally each local church is responsible for its own publicity – this is through their Monthly Magazines or Weekly Notice Sheets. Plans are in hand to reintroduce a shared Partnership Bulletin or Notice Sheet, so that there can be a better interchange of information between our churches, without duplicated effort.
- Our web sites are becoming more comprehensive and traffic is building up, mostly as a result of the regular partnership news being read online, or downloaded.
- Browse over to <http://WSwinLyd.org.uk/council/webbery> to see the usage graph.

Chris Scarisbrick

Buildings and Resources

Church Buildings

The ECC devolves the care and maintenance of our church buildings to the respective Local Church Councils whilst still being the legal body charged with their management. So, for example, applications for Faculties to allow work to be done in St Mary's, All Saints or Holy Trinity are brought to the ECC/PCC before being sent to the Diocesan Office for approval; work at Toothill Church needs Methodist approval.

and inducted in November, along with husband Dave now living in Toothill Manse.

With the departure of Revd Peter Knight in January, a second Staffing Consultative Group was set up to collaborate with the Archdeacon on the new Team Vicar appointment (Anglican process). With extensive collaboration between the Partnership and All Saints and writing the Partnership and Church Profile document, the advertising and selection process led eventually to four short-listed candidates in June. Revd Tudor Roberts was then appointed, and welcomed to All Saints Vicarage along with his wife Revd Tricia and children Harriett and Theo, just in time for the children to start at their new school....

The Manse and the Vicarage were also extensively refurbished over the summer period, and redecorated throughout. Huge thanks go to the teams of Local Church members and others who planned, led and helped with this work. We think they all liked the results! Both Ministers are settling quickly into Church life here, and have been supported in learning about Partnership and Local Church matters, continuing into 2008.

Warm thanks are due to members of both Staffing Groups (from within the Partnership and Ecumenical friends) for their service. The whole Staff Team (existing and new) has now started a series of whole-day sessions with an experienced External Consultant, supporting their collaboration in leadership and ministry together. These also continue into 2008.

Stephen Skinner & Ed Poole

Fellowship

Strengthen bonds of friendship and support, reaching out to others across the Partnership with Christ's love and care (Biblical 'koinonia'.)

This fellowship goal was set when 3 of our 5 churches were in interregnum. The nature of our fellowship activities from the informal, to the more formal, was therefore often very influenced by our interregnums. Fellowship activities often included, and were linked, with the other two 2007 goals - prayer and ministry.

Anglican and Baptist staffing/appointment groups, included from across the Partnership churches ministers, lay representatives and other non Partnership reps. E.g. Deanery and beyond. These staffing groups had possibly the widest Partnership fellowship connections seen in recent years.

This wide and close fellowship connection of staffing groups occurred again in events around /at interviews, with viewing of preaching, hosting, cooking, interview bases, with all our churches working together as one wide fellowship team to achieve our the 2 much needed appointments for our ministry goal.

Has this wide and close purposeful fellowship experience across the Partnership fellowship ever been as successful before? It seems to have a 'digging for victory', as well as a Christ like supportive to all attitude. The success of this cross fellowships experience in our Partnership is an important success to reflect on and learn from in 2008.

- **Alpha** course (usually based at and led by one church, All Saints) was jointly led, supported, hosted by 3 churches working closely and prayerfully together St Mary's, Toothill, All Saints (Purton Methodist Church was a fourth church involved, in hosting our memorable spirit filled Alpha Away day)
- A well attended **Bunko** dice game evening was hosted by H T Shaw, and superbly led by St Mary's and several non Partnership people, who enjoyed leading the Partnership mob in a fast moving and meet lots of folk game.
- **Carol singing** a small group sang carols and handed out leaflets in the West Swindon District Centre.
- **Prayer day fellowship** - much spiritual and often close fellowship was enjoyed all day, between all our churches, throughout the day, whether in large or small groups.
- **Christmas Concert Wootton Bassett Brass Band** enjoyed strong Partnership fellowships support, for a super friendly Partnership event.

In 2008 may we build on the supportive fellowship links that especially our interregnums forged, out of need, and also keep enjoying a variety of fun and stimulating events across our church fellowships.

Eileen Sawyer.

The three Church of England Schools within our Partnership are Lydiard Millicent VC Primary, Oliver Tomkins VA Infants, and Oliver Tomkins VA Juniors. We continue to develop our special responsibilities towards these schools in various ways, especially through some of our Ministers. We are able to offer annual grants for the purchase of Christian resources through the Lydiard Education Trust. St. Mary's Church has this year begun to hold special seasonal Services at the Oliver Tomkins Schools on Sunday afternoons – they have been well supported.

We are beginning to build our links more strongly with Greendown Secondary School. This is through Governor Involvement, and through the Emerge youth project. We hope that this will lead to some fruitful partnerships with the school in the future.

Stephen Skinner

From the All Saints Bell Tower

The ringers have continued to progress, some are now able to ring a touch of Grandsire and Bob Doubles, and others are beginning to learn how to hunt to a method.

We have gained 2 new ringers one who has returned after many years break and is doing well along with her daughter who has only learnt to ring in the last 6 months but is now able to join us on a Sunday morning.

Jo retired as Tower Captain and we thank him for all the hard work, enthusiasm and dedication he has given to the tower and its ringers over the many years. He still continues to ring and is an important member of the team.

We have rung for 19 Weddings and have also rung for the majority of Sunday Services. The bells have been rung just over 120 times this year. The Christmas period was a busy time for us and we rang for 7 services. We also were able to ring in the New Year.

The tower has been used on the Branch Training day and was also used for the Branch AGM. We have also had 4 visiting Bands of ringers from as far away as USA

We opened the Tower for the Church Garden Party and had a large number of people come up to the ringing chamber and were able to show people what we did as well as give some of them a chance at having a go themselves.

We look forward to 2008 Services at Shaw (March 30th) and St. Mary's (June 29th).

We held one other very memorable special Service in July, when we welcomed the 'Collective' Band and those involved in Café Base West to take part in an evening Service at Shaw led by Stephen, Claire Camm and Val Jones. We were delighted at the support from both younger people and us older ones! We were able to hear first hand of the youth work in the Partnership, see the Band perform, worship, and pray for the work's success.

Two other huge highlights of 2007 were the Induction / Licensing Services for Tudor Roberts and Anne Carter.

The service in September at All Saints for Tudor required a huge amount of preparation by me and All Saints. The complicated logistics (especially of parking, processions and food!) all came off very well, despite some last minute panics by me!

The Service in November at Shaw Church for Anne was long in the planning, and went flawlessly. The size of the building enabled plenty of space for everyone. The heavy Baptist ministerial involvement was really interesting for many of us!

All these excellent Services prove to me that one of the greatest ways that we feel united as a Partnership is when we come together to worship, and in a larger arena feel God's presence in a specially powerful manner. Praise His Name!

Stephen Skinner

Church & Schools

Our churches have a great deal of involvement in our many local schools, in the following ways:

- Many school Governing Bodies have members of our churches serving on them. Indeed quite a few of their Chairs & vice Chairs are church members.
- Other church members are involved as Teaching Assistants and of course as Teachers.
- Our Ministers regularly take Assemblies in the following schools: Shaw Ridge, Brookfield, Toothill, Peatmoor, Tregoze, Oliver Tomkins Juniors & Infants, and Lydiard Millicent.
- Some local schools visit our churches regularly for lessons, concerts and special Services, and contribute displays to St. Mary's Flower Festival.

The Christian Community and our Worship

Membership

Membership of the Partnership is through the Local Churches, and each congregation is responsible for encouraging regular attendees into membership. Within our different church traditions there are slight differences in understanding of membership.

Membership Summary

| | 2007 | 2006 | 2005 | 2004 | 2003 | 2002 | 2001 |
|--------------|------------|------------|------|------|------|------|------|
| All Saints | 126 | 123 | 118 | 116 | 118 | 120 | 119 |
| St Mary's | 76 | 80 | 87 | 98 | 104 | 102 | 106 |
| Holy Trinity | 37 | 37 | 55 | 57 | 57 | 64 | 72 |
| Toothill | 35 | 34 | 41 | 42 | 41 | 44 | 48 |
| Westlea | 25 | 25 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 29 |
| Total | 299 | 299 | 325 | 338 | 346 | 357 | 374 |

Normal Sunday Attendance

| Church | 2007 | | 2006 | | 2005 | | 2004 | | 2003 | |
|--------------|------------|-----------|------------|-----------|------------|-----------|------------|-----------|------------|-----------|
| | Adult | Child | Adult | Child | Adult | Child | Adult | Child | Adult | Child |
| All Saints | 81 | 20 | 82 | 24 | 81 | 26 | 86 | 27 | 85 | 27 |
| St Mary's | 53 | 10 | 50 | 10 | 57 | 10 | 64 | 11 | 61 | 13 |
| Holy Trinity | 34 | 11 | 32 | 10 | 37 | 15 | 37 | 16 | 37 | 15 |
| Toothill | 23 | 4 | 26 | 8 | 24 | 8 | 33 | 12 | 30 | 16 |
| Westlea | 22 | 11 | 21 | 13 | 21 | 14 | 22 | 15 | 22 | 18 |
| Total | 213 | 56 | 211 | 65 | 220 | 73 | 242 | 81 | 235 | 89 |

Ministry

In addition to Staff Team of Ministers, we are grateful to the following members of the Partnership who assist with the leading of worship in our churches:

| | |
|---------------------------|---|
| Methodist Local Preachers | Mr Mark Dowling Mrs Rachel Dowling Mr Gordon Partridge |
| Anglican Readers | Mrs Di Benbow |
| Non-Stipendiary Ministers | Revd Mike Dilly (Baptist) |
| Other Groups | Westlea Leadership Team Local Church Home Group Members |

Weekly Services

The worship rota is arranged across the Partnership. The Staff Team, Local Preachers and our Reader all lead services and preach not only in their 'home' church but also in the other partner churches and churches in the Methodist Circuit.

Every Sunday there is a Partnership 8am Holy Communion at All Saints Church, which typically includes two Book of Common Prayer Services, one Free Church Service and one Common Worship Service each month.

Every Sunday evening St Mary's Church holds an Evening Service, typically taken from Book of Common Prayer, Songs of Praise, Partnership Communion and Evening Prayer.

Both services have a regular and faithful congregation with attendees coming mainly from the host church.

Other Evening Services take place elsewhere. These include:

- All Saints: Taize, Iona, Healing, Communion and Praise Services
- Toothill: Meditation Services

Our main Services take place on a Sunday Morning with each of our Churches having a thriving and enthusiastic congregation with crèches, children's and young people groups also being provided. The communion services generally vary between Anglican order and a Free-Church style.

Our most successful attempt at this in recent years has been the biannual Marriage Preparation Course, for all couples getting married in both this partnership and also with St. Mary's Purton. At least 30 couples attended our two courses in 2007, and the feedback we received proved that we 'scratched where they itched'!

We also collaborate with Purton in our joint Confirmation Services. These are held annually, with the Service in 2007 being at All Saints. The retired Bishop who participated in the 'laying on of hands' and led the Communion was surprised by how much he enjoyed the Service! Numbers being confirmed from our partnership have been disappointingly small for the last few years – it seems many young people do not feel the need to make a public profession of faith in this way. Similarly 'Believer's Baptism' by full immersion, which we can gladly offer at Shaw, is also very rarely desired. This requires further reflection by us all.

Stephen Skinner

Special Services

Our pattern of special Partnership Services has changed significantly in 2007, much affected by our "Fellowship Goal". We have felt that it has been time for a change from our recent traditions!

We decided not to hold either the Spring Open Air service in Lydiard Park or the Autumn Partnership Service in 2007. In part this was because the planning and logistics involved in producing such high quality events was consuming too much time for the Ministers and lay people involved.

So, instead, we have begun, as an experiment to be reviewed after the first year's 'cycle', to hold a morning Partnership United Service whenever there is a 'Fifth Sunday' in the month. The idea was to keep the planning of these fairly simple, by asking the Minister leading the Service to conduct it essentially in the same way he or she would if it was a 'normal' Service in that particular Church. This seems to have worked well. There were 3 such Services in 2007:

- **July at Toothill.** Led By Jan Partridge. By a Godly coincidence this was her last full United Partnership Service. We said 'Goodbye' to her with speeches, gifts, cards and prayers.
- **September at Westlea.** Led by Mike Dilly. For some it was their first visit to Westlea School. It was very well attended and brilliantly organised.
- **December at All Saints.** Led by Tudor Roberts. This was a good opportunity for people to meet Tudor who had not already done so. It went very well.

We hope the final adopted version will also be useful and even practical! – usable for training and updating ECC and other members in governance matters, and their trustee responsibilities. It will also support the Partnership's 2008 application for Charity Commission registration.

Ed Poole

Other Joint Partnership Ministries

Joint Thanksgiving & Baptism

Families are strongly encouraged to attend church before and after their child is baptised. Each family is visited at home and a variety of videos about baptism are shown. Normally a Service of Thanksgiving or Dedication will be offered as an appropriate first step. It is not our policy to refuse Baptism to any family living within the Partnership area, but through careful explanation of the privileges and responsibilities of Baptism we urge parents and Godparents to consider their own need to share Christian faith.

Occasional Offices

The Ministers continue to be invited to conduct Weddings, Funerals and Baptisms on a fairly regular basis. They can take up a large amount of minister's time, but they often represent a very special opportunity for both sensitive pastoral care and evangelism. We also offer Renewal of Marriage Vows, Memorial Services, Thanksgivings for Children and Dedications of Children – but these are not so frequently taken up. Most of these Services are associated with the historical and 'pretty' church of All Saints and St. Mary's.

Comparing 2007 with 2006, the overall trends seem to be:

- Reduction in number of Weddings, slightly greater decrease than the national trends.
- Reduction in number of Funerals, especially at St. Mary's and at Crematorium, substantially less than national trends might expect.
- Increase in number of Baptisms, especially at St. Mary's, 'bucking' the national trend.
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However it remains the case that all these 'Occasional Offices' do provide some of our potentially best opportunities for 'outreach', with people coming to us for help. We have not revised our Policies for several years, and the new Staff Team will I suspect be keen to do so – especially in regard to Baptism. In particular to improve our follow up of these contacts, through offering courses other than 'Alpha' which will enable people to explore further the faith they claim to 'own'.

Normal Morning Pattern of Worship

| | LM – 10.30 | LT – 10.00 | HTS – 10.30 | TH – 10.45 | We – 10.00 |
|---------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Week 1 | Morning Service | Morning Service | Communion | Communion | Communion |
| Week 2 | Communion | Communion | Morning Service | Family Service | Family Service |
| Week 3 | Family Service | Family Service | Communion | Morning Service | Morning Service |
| Week 4 | Communion | Communion | Family Service | Morning Service | 'Swap Over' |
| Week 5 | Morning Service | Morning Service | Morning Service | Family Service | Communion |

Joint Partnership Worship

Several joint Services feature as part of our annual Worship Calendar. In 2007 these were:

- Ash Wednesday – All Saints'
- Woman's Day of Prayer at All Saints'.
- Holy Week midday meditations at Toothill.
- Easter Sunrise service at St Mary's
- Ascension Day Communion at St Mary's.
- United Confirmation Service at All Saints'.
- Partnership Memorial Service at All Saints'.
- 5th Sunday joint worship at Toothill, Westlea and All Saints

Youth Work

Safe to Grow

At the beginning of last year we started to update the safe to grow policy, the new policy was approved through ECC on 13th November 2007. It has now been put onto the partnership web site for every one to see.

Bristol Diocese has asked all parishes to ensure that their appointment processes are complete, including CRB check, references beginning taken, a confidential declaration, and training. With our new policy we are working towards achieving this for all people who are working with children and young people. All churches are reviewing the policy, and as a partnership we are aiming to get this done by Easter.

All churches are looking at job descriptions for their children's workers, to ensure good practice. A new document introduced this time is 'good practice for transporting children'.

As a partnership we are endeavouring to keep up to date with new ideas and policies, to keep our children and young people safe. This is an ongoing process and we are already working on the 2008 safe to grow policy.

Rebecca Kershaw

Phaze

As part of the whole youth scene stimulated by Ncounter and Collective events at schools and in Purton & West Swindon, growth and development has taken place in the Phaze 2007. With its triple strands of Fun, Food & Faith for 11-14s almost 20 young people are at Holy Trinity Shaw on Fridays, 7-9pm

Our expansion is driven by Phaze members bringing unchurched friends, who naturally see it as a general open youth club. So each year we restart with fundamentals of faith. After 50 minutes of games, and 30 minutes of first rate food, we explore faith in a straight forward way, as well as using drama and puppets to discover the way people experience God and His world. We held a 'sleepover' in the spring - using video as discussion starters - and for the first time we were rained off for our Savernake Stroll (indeed Mike was stuck on the A419 for hours!!!).

Our 6 Junior Leaders are a vital help, and now have evening training sessions 6 times a year as they progress from the top end of Phaze.

As with all the Partnership youth work we are praying for more adult leaders - and we give thanks for some of the Ncounter team who have joined up to help in 2008.

Mike Dilly

Café Base West

In Feb 07 we began to look for a new venue as the cost of Jax Bar rose out of reach. Numbers remained steady around 40-50 and in March we celebrated our first birthday with a fantastic party – Lexie and band (now a professional Christian singer) provided the music as well as a local youth rock band.

After trying different venues, we moved into Shaw Church in September and had a very successful term, in spite of losing 3 leaders, with over 80

young people attending, 45 of those being new contacts, and 4/5 of total unchurched. Attendance has been steady at 30-40 each week. Our fears of not reaching unchurched young people in a Church building were proved unfounded.

The young people worked towards a Talent Show in 3 different groups, (each with some Christian input each week) in aid of Toybox charity. The show was well attended by parents and church members and £180 was raised on the night for Toybox; Peter Byatt from the charity gave a very moving presentation which the young people found very interesting.

This term we welcome new leaders as the emerge programme begins: 2 new gap students from Ncounter and 2 more leaders from within the Partnership. We are running a Youth Alpha course within CBW (10 young people from CBW and 5 from other youth groups as well as 2 young leaders from G2G).

The young people have begun to take more responsibility within the group and many are engaged with the Emerge youth steering group which works alongside the management team to shape and lead the project. We look forward to the next chapter!

Claire Camm

G2G (Year 10+)

G2G meet for vigorous engagement and reflection, learning and growth. Members contribute to the programme and take responsibility of mentoring and maturing with increasing seriousness. A dynamic resource in the Partnership, opportunity in 2008 to contribute to the life of the Churches will benefit all.

Jane Skinner

Constitution

Work started in 2002 to update the longstanding 1988 constitution, to the current standards of Churches Together in England. Surviving members of the Working Group are Stephen Skinner, Dick Gray, Chris Scarisbrick and Ed Poole. Gordon Partridge retired during the year, with warm thanks for his valued contribution. With other priorities also being met by Group members, the focus was mainly to resolve some tricky topics. A joint meeting with some of the External Reviewers gave much practical help and encouragement. This has accelerated progress towards completion. The Group expects to publish a further draft for final ECC consultation early in 2008, and Standing Orders will also be completed.