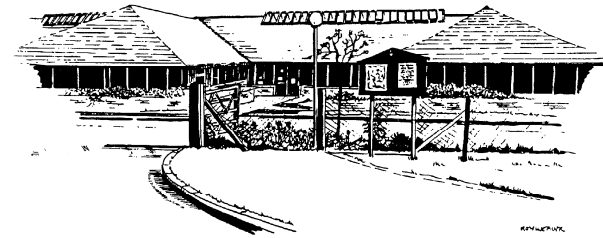




Westlea Church Annual Report 2016



West Swindon and Lydiard Tregoze Church Partnership
Baptist • Church of England • Methodist • United Reformed Church
Registered Charity: 1141341



Summary

Westlea Church continues to serve the community and to reflect the multi-ethnic character of the area. Our membership has remained largely stable in 2016 and we have been able to offer support and encouragement to members and others in times of need.

During 2016 we continued to be encouraged by the number of our members and wider church family who continued to 'step up' to take on additional responsibilities, particularly in leading worship on a much more regular basis than before, we have also continued to play our part in the wider Partnership through involvement on Partnership Council and other activities such as Messy Church, the worship planning group and the Emerge Project. We have also been encouraged by being joined by new members of our church family who have added to our fellowship.

We are a church that believes passionately in prayer being the core of our individual and corporate relationship with God and we endeavour to foster and encourage personal relationship with God through sharing of prayer needs and answers to prayers received in both Sunday worship and house group. Our house group has continued to be a place where we have actively engaged with the Bible and current issues.

Whilst numbers attending our Sunday services have declined a little and the age profile has continued to change, our membership has increased slightly and we have been able to continue our children's and young people's work. We are blessed by the way our youth involve themselves in the many activities of the church, especially those who have grown up within the family of Westlea Church and are now moving into the adult world.

This report has been produced by the Leadership Team of Westlea Church, on behalf of the members, consistent with the terms of the Charities Act 2011. We hope it gives a clear picture of the life of Westlea Church, the way in which our members have sought to fulfil our stated objectives and our aims for the next year.

Mike Dilly, Peter Gilder, Pam Ray, Chris Scarisbrick, Julie Scarisbrick, Andy Vernon and Sarah Wilmott,

On behalf of Westlea Church, March 2017

Objectives

Our vision: A community of people worshipping in Westlea who believe in God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit, as revealed in the Bible, and who accept Jesus as their Lord and Saviour.

Our mission: To take the Good News about Jesus to every person in Westlea and encourage them to receive Him as their Lord and Saviour. Care for and teach every Christian believer so that they can become mature disciples of Jesus.

Organisation

Westlea Church is one of four churches in the West Swindon and Lydiard Tregoze Church Partnership. Governance of Westlea Church is by the Members and three of these members represent Westlea on the Partnership Council (PC).

Members are followers of Jesus Christ who wish to commit themselves to the life of the local church in Westlea. An application form is signed before being formally welcomed at a Sunday Service.

The members of Westlea Church have the responsibility of cooperating with the Partnership Staff Team in promoting the work of the church in the areas of Westlea and Eastleaze. Drawn from the members of Westlea Church is a leadership team of five elected leaders, the secretary and treasurer along with representatives of the Partnership Staff Team.

Meetings

The leadership team meets to discuss church business and make "small scale" decisions. They discuss major issues before presenting them to the members at the Members Meeting.

During 2016 the Members met 4 times including the Annual General Meeting in March. The leadership team met 5 times in the same period.

At the end of 2016 the (31) members of Westlea Church were:

Micon Alojado
Marjay Alojado
J Alojado
Sophie Ambwene
Chris Brill
Marion Cahill
Mick Dams
Mike Dilly

Local Pastor and member of wider Partnership Ministry Team

Joan Flack

Katherine Gilder	Child Advocate
Peter Gilder	Leader until AGM 2018, PC representative
Edward Glennie	Child Advocate, Community Advocate
Stephanie Glennie	Community Advocate
Sajida Javaid	
Wilson Javaid	
Norris Kiddle	
Ruth Kiddle	
Steve Pearce	Sunday School Superintendent
Nick Pegg	
Ruth Plumridge	
Pam Ray	Leader until AGM 2018, Pastoral Advocate
Christine Rogers	Gift Aid Secretary
Peter Rogers	
Chris Scarisbrick	Leader until AGM 2017, PC representative, Partnership Safe to Grow Co-ordinator, Partnership Secretary
Julie Scarisbrick	Treasurer, PC representative
Gemma Scarisbrick	
Andy Vernon	Leader until AGM 2017 and Leadership team Chair, Church Safe to Grow Co-ordinator
Sue Vernon	
Loraine Weston	
Richard Williams	
Sarah Wilmott	Leader until AGM 2017, Secretary

Of these members 28 are joint members of all the four denominations (Anglican, Baptist, Methodist, and United Reformed), 2 are Baptist members, and 1 is an Anglican member. A total of 31 is an increase from 30 at the beginning of 2016.

The Christian Community

Westlea Church meets weekly to worship in Westlea School, which we hire for the purpose. There is a morning service held at 10:00am. Year on year the average attendance across the year at the Sunday services has declined a little further although, with a relatively small congregation, numbers on a week by week basis can be erratic.

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Adult attendance	22	23	24	24	25	22	21
Child attendance	11	11	10	9	9	10	5

On our Contact list there are currently 25 families with 8 young people aged 16 and under. We celebrated the Confirmation of one of our church family during the year. There were no funerals for members of Westlea Church during the year. Regular attendees at Westlea Church cover a wide range of ages and originate from many different countries.

Our children's and youth work on Sunday mornings has continued to be a priority, being split between Sunday Club (primary school) and Godzone (secondary school)

Looking Forward to 2017

As we head into 2017 we will face new challenges as Reverend Mike Dilly will be leaving us and we seek to continue the ministry and pastoral work which he has faithfully undertaken in Westlea Church and the wider Partnership over many years. As well as looking inwards we must continue to look outwards to see how we can best serve our community. We anticipate this happening in the following areas:

- Pastoral Care - Implement the pastoral care plan which we have developed ahead of Mike's departure, through appointing and training a pastoral care team.
- Leadership and Skills – Further develop the skills of members of the Church and church family in leading worship particularly through sharing ownership of those Sunday services led by our members (Team services).
- Youth and Children's Work – continue to review and refocus this work to better serve our children and young people whilst making best use of the resources we have available. Also to develop the youth housegroup to encourage our young people as they grow.
- Mission - Develop our community outreach litter picking- to be "Salt and Light" to our community.
- Practical – Install a hearing loop in the school hall where we meet.

Material Resources

Our income totalled £15,411, a decrease of around £1,500 on last year reflecting changes in members' personal circumstances and also changes to personal tax codes resulting in some no longer paying tax. We hope to recover approx. £2,000 through Gift Aid tax claims, included in this is the final claim for the year that is awaiting payment.

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Regular Gift Aid agreements	12	12	14.5	17.5	14.5	16
Regular non-Gift Aid agreements						5
Av. Gift Aid £/week	£21.42	£21.41	£17.17	£22.26	£18.86	£14.88

We still rely on a minority of members for the majority of our income, and our cash flow can therefore be easily influenced by changes in the circumstances of individual members.

10% of our income is given away to the charities we support. Once our commitment to Toybox is covered, the remainder is divided between Emerge and the Swindon Foodbank.

All our property is housed in our only building, a shed, situated in the school grounds. It is insured with Ecclesiastical Insurance for approximately £4,371, although it has no resale value. Our property contents are insured to the value of £8,189. We have Public Liability insurance for £5,000,000 and Employer's liability for £10,000,000.

groups though the recent decline in numbers and change in the age demographic has continued. Sunday Club and Godzone continued to meet on the first and third Sundays of the month. On the second Sunday of the month we have an 'all-ages welcome' family service. The swap-over services which we ran for many years have been replaced by all age services led by our membership and where we have attempted to investigate and encourage deeper understanding of worship topics.

Our youth housegroup has continued to meet roughly fortnightly on Monday evenings, and we still also welcome young people from the wider Partnership.

We hold a Communion Service on the third Sunday of each month and we continue, to meet together for joint services with the rest of the Partnership. These services rotate around the Partnership Churches and during the year Westlea hosted the service held on 29th May.

We did not hold a Nativity service in 2016, but again encouraging those with younger children to attend the Partnership's 'Descendent' Nativity Service held at Holy Trinity, Shaw. Our Carols by Candlelight service, as is our practice, involved many of our church family including one of our young people accompanying the piano. It was again well attended by both church members and visitors.

As a congregation we renewed our commitment to our "Safe to Grow" policy.

We have a home group meeting fortnightly on Tuesday evenings providing fellowship, Bible study and pastoral care for our members and friends. Each session is led by different members of the fellowship and is normally preceded by a meal. Over the year we have followed the following themes:

- 'Aaron
- Open Doors' course 'The Step of Yes'
-
- We also prepared and led the Partnership Lent course on "The Lord's Prayer"

Our members took an active part in the Partnership 'Alpha' course during the year being involved in organising, leading discussion groups and providing meals.

We hold regular monthly prayer meetings at which we pray for God's guidance and help; locally, nationally and internationally. We also seek guidance on our Christian service and how to best reach our community. Although these prayer meetings are not particularly well attended, there are a number who regularly attend. Prayer continues to be an important aspect of all our meetings.

We were generally able to lead at least one service each month from amongst our lay membership and we are grateful to those who have made themselves available and sought to develop their own skills to the benefit of the church family.

Outreach

We support the Emerge youth groups that are run at a Partnership level, including REMIX which meets every Tuesday evening. REMIX is attended by many young people, most of whom have no church links. Some of our members help with both the running of REMIX and the Emerge project and one of our young people has been volunteering at the project on a Monday afternoon during the last year as part of her Duke of Edinburgh's Award.

Our Men's Might group meets albeit occasionally, when we meet together with some on the fringes of the church for social activities. We see this as a way to reach out to those with whom we already have connections.

As in previous years, we have delivered Christmas cards to households in Westlea and Eastleaze, also inviting people to our special activities at Christmas. We were pleased with the feedback from the Christmas cards and the subsequent attendance at our Christmas services. We also encourage those who are not in regular church attendance to come and join us at our Christmas events.

We encourage our members and regular attendees to speak to their friends and neighbours about Jesus and what he offers them for their lives. Through this personal witness by our members and in the church groups and activities we hope that God will continue to use us to reach out to the people with whom we come in contact, and nurture lasting Christian friendship with them.

Through our charitable giving we have supported the Emerge Project, Tear Fund (the evangelical relief and aid organisation which aims to help poor and oppressed people in many countries around the world providing for both physical and spiritual needs) and the Swindon Foodbank which provides food for those who are in need throughout Swindon. We have supported this latter charity with both financial and practical gifts.

In addition to our planned giving, during 2016 we also gave through one off collections towards Water Aid and Combat Stress. During our harvest service we collected food and money for the Swindon Foodbank.

Christian Service

The church is blessed by the range and number of skills and gifts offered by its (comparatively small) membership. As we meet in a school hall the church equipment has to be set out and taken down each week. Many members contribute to this task, as well as being on duty, playing music, welcoming people, reading lessons, leading prayers, providing refreshments, and clearing up again afterwards.

We have continued to be blessed by the help and assistance of the Reverend Mike Dilly, who is non-stipendiary, and contributes both to worship and services in Westlea, around the Partnership and further afield, including going into Westlea

School to take assemblies. We are also supported by Reverend Captain Clive Deverell and members of the wider Partnership ministry team.

During 2016 the Partnership's children's worker also engaged with Westlea School in various activities

A number of our members are actively involved in work with young people, both within our church, teaching in Sunday Club, and in the wider youth community serving on the management committee and volunteering with the Partnership Emerge Project. During the year one of our members served as Secretary of the Partnership Council and on its executive subcommittee and we have members involved with maintaining the Partnership web site.

Three of our members have regularly assisted, and others have helped from time to time during the year, with the Partnership organised Messy Church.

In the wider community we rely on our members to be "salt and light" in their workplaces and dealings with friends. Many members are involved with supporting local organisations on a voluntary basis and support neighbours during times of ill health or distress. Our members are also involved in School Governance and Parent Teacher associations and we have a significant presence in local schools via both paid and unpaid work.

In the wider church Reverend Mike Dilly has represented us with the West of England Baptist Association.

We continue to support the Toybox Charity which works with street children in Central America, particularly El Salvador.

We have continued our support for the Filling Station, a local charity helping the homeless around Swindon, through preparing sandwiches and providing provisions and clothing, which are then distributed.

As in previous years we supported Christian Aid Week by undertaking a collection in our local area.

One of our members has organised a programme of litter picking in the local area and this has been well supported by our members and well received by the local community.

We are dependent on the time and gifts that the members voluntarily give to the running of Westlea Church. During 2016 we estimate that, with more lay people taking additional roles in Christian Service just over 56% of our services and almost all of our other activities were convened by lay people (the rest by clergy). We will continue to ensure all people who work with us have mentoring and supervision, clear understanding of their role and regular review opportunities. We benefit from the sharing of knowledge and resources from our friends across the Partnership to help with this.