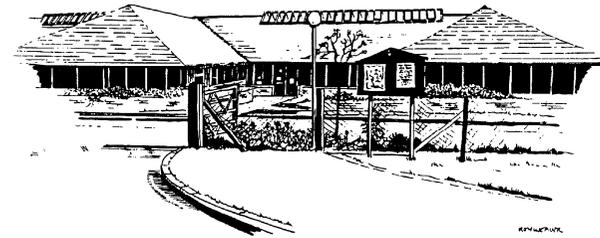




# Westlea Church Annual Report 2017



*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 2017 and we have been able to offer support and encouragement to members and others in times of need.

During 2017 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 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 housegroup. Our housegroup has continued to be a place where we have actively engaged with the Bible and current issues.

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.

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

On behalf of Westlea Church, March 2018

Our challenge will be to read this your report and reflect how many others helped deliver that event or activity, in our own context and wider. God is moving vocations are growing so from litter picking to Emerge, how can we join in and expand what they/we are doing as we join in God's Mission.

Reverend Captain Clive Deverell

*"Four things to learn in life: To think clearly without hurry or confusion; To love everybody sincerely; To act in everything with the highest motives; To trust God unhesitatingly."*  
— **Helen Keller**

## **Looking Forward to 2018**

As we head into 2018 we will face continuing challenges as we seek to continue filling the ministry and pastoral work gap left by Mike Dilly's departure. As well as looking inwards we must continue to look outwards to see how we can best serve our community. We anticipate this happening through further encouraging the skills of members of the Church family in all areas of church life including:

- continuing to develop and implement our pastoral care plan.
- continuing to seek how to best serve our children and young people.
- participating in acts of worship.
- looking for further opportunities to develop our community outreach.

## **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 a new member is formally welcomed during a Sunday Service.

The members of Westlea Church have the responsibility of cooperating with the wider Partnership 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.

## **Members & 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 2017 the Members met 5 times including the Annual General Meeting in March. The Leadership Team met 6 times in the same period.

At the end of 2017 the (31) members of Westlea Church were:

Micon Alojado  
Marjay Alojado  
J Alojado  
Sophie Ambwene  
Chris Brill  
Marion Cahill  
Mick Dams  
Mike Dilly  
Joan Flack  
Katherine Gilder  
Peter Gilder

Child Advocate  
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  
 Moya Pinson  
 Ruth Plumridge  
 Pam Ray Leader until AGM 2018, Pastoral Advocate  
 Christine Rogers Gift Aid Secretary  
 Peter Rogers  
 Chris Scarisbrick Leader until AGM 2019, PC representative, Partnership  
 Safe to Grow Co-ordinator, Partnership Secretary  
 Julie Scarisbrick Treasurer, PC representative (until AGM 2017)  
 Andy Vernon Leader until AGM 2019 and Leadership Team Chair,  
 Church Safe to Grow Co-ordinator  
 Sue Vernon  
 Loraine Weston  
 Richard Williams PC representative  
 Sarah Wilmott Leader until AGM 2019, Secretary

Of these members 27 are joint members of all the four denominations (Anglican, Baptist, Methodist, and United Reformed), 3 are Baptist members and 1 is an Anglican member.

## ***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 remains largely stable although, with a relatively small congregation, numbers on a week by week basis can be erratic.

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Adult attendance	23	24	24	25	22	21	22
Child attendance	11	10	9	9	10	5	5

On our Contact list there are currently 25 families with 9 young people aged 16 and under. 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) age groups though numbers in these groups have remained small. Sunday Club and Godzone continued to meet on the first and third Sundays of the month. On other Sundays we have 'all-ages welcome' services often led by our church family.

## ***Partnership Minister's Report***

*"Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much"* — **Helen Keller**

Your report gives you a snapshot of what it means to belong to the community of your Church and fellowship. The many different ways in which we engage with one another and the wider community, as we seek to live out our faith in Christ Jesus. Some of which I have been part of others not.

I hope that this report provokes you to think more widely, I ask that because I am having to myself, for many of you this year has been difficult with illness and bereavements, taking a heavy toll in our Churches.

Yet as I reflect since I arrived over seven years ago, a massive amount of transformation has taken place across the partnership, to my mind the people of God have been set free to use their gifts. Every member Ministry through mutuality through and in our Baptism.

A few examples would be, this year alone we have a number of people pushing forward with vocational training "the cork is well and truly out of the bottle". We share our buildings with others, our work with younger people has expanded considerably, and we recognise the importance of the opportunities our buildings and our people bring however old they and we might be. Each and everyday the normal things continue and I am grateful for every piece of work from Pastoral to Leading worship that you do.

We have major challenges ahead but the words of Helen Keller above reminded me very much of the way we work in our Churches, look at how we host refreshments, tidy, clean and care for our buildings and people, as God's people we have stepped out of our own contexts, this working together has transformed our work with younger generations.

I want to say thank you to each and every one of you for the support you give the Church you are a part of, the leadership roles you undertake, the prayers you make, all this for our community's sake.

So my thanks to our Wardens, Steve, Sue, Doreen, Jacqueline and Pat, our stewards and senior leaders, inc. Chris you have enabled me to continue to take wider roles. My thanks to those in formal roles, Mary, Jan, Trevor, Claire, Gayle, Rachel, Ian, David and Brenda.

At the beginning of February 2018 the formal separation of Lydiard Millicent from the parish and partnership will take place. It has been a time of sadness for us all. Mark Dowling agreed when appointed as partnership Chair to see us through to this eventuality (the separation) with all its pain and heartache. He has done so and now he has stepped down. In this report to each Church I can record my own personal thanks to him for his leadership and wisdom.

## Material Resources

Our income totalled £17,070, an increase of around £1,500 on last year. We were pleased that a large proportion of our regular givers were able to increase their personal giving during the year. We hope to recover approximately £2,500 through Gift Aid tax claims, included in this is the final claim for the year which is awaiting payment.

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Regular Gift Aid agreements	12	14.5	17.5	14.5	16	16
Regular non-Gift Aid agreements					5	6
Av. Gift Aid £/week/donor	£21.41	£17.17	£22.26	£18.86	£14.88	£17.08

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 £4,555, although it has no resale value. Our property contents are insured to the value of £8,533. We have Public and Products Liability insurance for £5,000,000 and Employer's liability for £10,000,000.

During 2017 we arranged for the installation of a hearing loop in the hall we use within Westlea School for use by ourselves and the wider community. We were pleased to receive contributions towards the cost of this both from the wider partnership and the United Reformed Church.

Our youth housegroup has continued to meet roughly fortnightly on Monday evenings, with an average attendance of six. 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 occasional joint services with the rest of the Partnership. These services rotate around the Partnership Churches and during the year Westlea hosted services on Good Friday, Rev. Mike Dilly's Valedictory/ Partnership AGM, and two services in August.

We did not hold a Nativity service in 2017, but again encouraged those with younger children to attend the Partnership's 'Travelling Together' 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 playing a flute solo. It was again well attended by both church members and visitors.

As a congregation we renewed our commitment to our safeguarding policies (Safe to Grow and Vulnerable Adults) at our AGM.

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:

- our favourite passages
- election preparation
- James
- 'Finding a Voice' - The King's Speech

We hold regular 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 both the Emerge youth groups that are run at a Partnership level, (aimed primarily at young people with no church links) and the Partnership schools work. Some of our members help with the running 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. This year the card featured an image drawn by a pupil from Westlea School. 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 both financially and with practical donations collected at our harvest service. In addition to our planned giving we also donated to Water Aid.

## ***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.

During 2017 we said farewell to Mike Dilly who stepped down from being our locally appointed minister to focus on other areas of his ministry. This left us with a significant gap in our pastoral and teaching resource which we have sought to fill from within our membership and it has been pleasing to see members being prepared to step up and take on roles in these areas.

We have also continued to be supported by Rev. Cpt. Clive Deverell and members of the wider Partnership ministry team. This year Clive has prepared a report which is included in this document.

During 2017 the Partnership's Schools' Worker continued to engage with Westlea School in various activities and has been supported by several of our members in her work both there and in other schools in West Swindon. 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. Three of our members have regularly assisted, and others have helped from time to time during the year, with the Partnership organised Messy Church.

During the year one of our members served as Secretary of the Partnership Council and on its executive sub-committee, one of our members served as Secretary to the Worship Planning Group and we have members involved with maintaining the Partnership website.

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.

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.

Due to pressures on peoples' time we did not undertake a collection during Christian Aid Week in our local area.

Our litter picking initiative in the local area has continued to thrive and been well supported both by our members and others from the wider local community including our local Member of Parliament.

We are dependent on the time and gifts that the members voluntarily give to the running of Westlea Church. During 2017 we estimate that, with more lay people taking additional roles in Christian Service just over 70% of our services (up from 56% in 2016) 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.