

*Annual
Reports
for
2009*



**Mount
Pleasant**
BAPTIST CHURCH



SENIOR PASTOR AND TEAM LEADER'S REPORT

"I hereby command you: Be strong and courageous; do not be frightened or dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go." Joshua 1:9 (NRSV)

The purpose of my report is not to tell you everything that happened during 2009 - our church secretary will give us many details of the important facts and figures of 2009. There are many great things I do not mention - the Holiday Bible Club, Holiday at Home, mission and evangelism at home and abroad, as well as faithful ministry week after week in so many different parts of the church's life and witness. My report is by its very nature, a personal snapshot of some of my activity during the past year. I cannot mention, for obvious reasons, the pastoral conversations, nor can I detail the prayers offered at bedsides in hospital, the visits made, the sermons prepared, the study undertaken in order to be in better shape spiritually as a disciple of Jesus, and the meetings attended. I am not even certain of the number of meetings I may have attended, nor if I was awake in all of them! But of this I am certain as I write; God has blessed us as a church in so many ways during the past year! We can indeed face the year ahead with strength, courage and faith, for we have just passed through a year where God has been with us in each and every venture undertaken in His will.

2009 has been a year of many changes at Mount Pleasant Baptist Church. Much has been undertaken, and there have been many obvious developments in ministry and mission, and

many plans laid for the future. We continue to lay great emphasis on seeking the Lord's will through prayerful waiting on Him, and my desire is that as we go forward into the year ahead we will continue to pursue that intention to walk closely with God. I long to see us continually seek God's will for our life together as a church for the sake of the people around us in Northampton; our town needs Jesus, and for their sake and for God's sake we need to be useful in His hands - unless we are wholly set apart for Him we will only succeed in offering to God less than 100%.

We continue to be committed to our strategic plan, adopted by the church in November 2008. I am pleased to see so many of these goals under God coming to fruition. May we continue to work hard at being faithful in the year ahead. Please continue to pray for the Elders and Deacons as they seek to work together with the church in the task of spiritual and practical leadership of our church community. It is certainly true that, arising from our week of prayer in January 2009, there has been answered prayer and, as well as calling on God to move in certain situations within our church and locality, God spoke powerfully into people's lives.

It was good to be able to attend, with Judith, the Baptist Assembly in Bournemouth at the beginning of May. This is always a time of great fellowship, teaching, and vision catching! What a great privilege to catch a glimpse of what God is doing throughout our Baptist family in the UK! MP was well represented, with Micky and Sue Munroe acting as church delegates and Jeff and Pauline Taylor attending as Jeff

continues his leadership within BMS World Mission on the Council of Reference.

In June of 2009, the Church meeting made the formal decision to go ahead with redevelopment of the worship area, as soon as there was the sufficient release of finances to undertake the work. We were, through the Lord's generosity, able to pay back our outstanding loan to the Baptist Union Corporation, 4 years early, and then in November, we held a gift and pledge day, which now sees the redevelopment fund hold, in pledges and gifts, in the region of £200,000. Praise God! There is much work still to be done, and we have many important decisions to take, but we are grateful for all that God has provided thus far, and look with faith to what the future may hold. In engaging Kelvin Sampson and Christopher Haire as Architect and Quantity Surveyor respectively, we have the services of two good and faithful workers, who advise us well.

It was our joy as a church to send a BMS World Mission Church Team to Sao Paulo, Brazil under the leadership of Micky Munroe. It was truly wonderful to see the church come together in practical and prayerful support both ahead of the trip, as well as during it, and I know that for all those who went it was an experience of God's faithfulness that will not quickly be forgotten.

The biggest area of change for us during the past year has been in the area of staff. In May, the church meeting invited Micky Munroe, our Minister in Training to become our

Assistant Minister upon successful completion of this training at Spurgeon's College during 2010. The future promises to be exciting for us, as Micky will take up this role, and we pray for him and for Sue and the children as they walk with us and God into the future.

At the same time, we were pleased that Fran Jaggard was called to be our Youth Worker in Training here at MPBC. God had begun to speak to Fran during the week of prayer in January and, following a time of discernment and interviews, Fran has begun her studies at the Oxford Centre for Youth Ministry, as well as working part-time for us here as her placement. We give thanks to God for the way in which our youth work has taken steps forward during the past year, building on the legacies of the past, and we continue to seek God's blessing upon Fran and all those who serve in this area

We were delighted to be able to appoint Keith Dragon earlier this year as the Open Door Centre Community Worker, and we are pleased with the way Keith has served and led in this area. We are also pleased that he has recently become the outreach worker with StreetChurch Northampton, and look forward to the ways in which God will bless us and our community through Keith.

At the end of the December we were sad to learn that Annie Groom would be leaving her role with us as Caretaker, though continuing in membership and fellowship. I would like to place on record my thanks to Annie for her hard work over the past two and a half years and for the way she has served us so well.

She will be missed.

So the church staff, employed and set apart by the church meeting, is now made up of the following individuals: -

Paul Lavender (Senior Pastor and Team Leader)

Micky Munroe (Assistant Minister from July 2010)

Fran Jaggard (Youth Worker in Training)

Jane Wake (Open Door Community Shop Manager)

Keith Dragon (Open Door Community Worker)

Sue Nettleton (Church Administrator)

Annie Groom (Caretaker until 15th January 2010)

Please remember us all in your prayers, that we may be led more by Jesus, and that through our ministries, many more may be led to Jesus.

It was my privilege in the first part of 2008 to be asked to provide some pastoral and preaching help to Kislingbury Baptist Church as they looked for a Minister who would also help with their intended outreach into the Upton housing development. This involved some preaching and midweek teaching, as well as meeting with the church leaders. We are delighted to have welcomed The Revd Marilyn Webb as their Pastor last autumn, and pray for God's continued blessing around that church, in such a strategic location.

I was also able to service our wider Baptist family during 2009 by being elected to serve on the Central Baptist Association Council, and by being part of the steering group for the

Baptist Union of Great Britain's Larger Churches Forum, especially as various training events were held to help churches respond to the tasks of mission during these challenging times. These are wider opportunities for ministry, and I am grateful to the church for this privilege.

I am grateful to God for the ways in which the church has responded to preaching and teaching ministry during the past year, and also for the way in which so many of you have responded to what God may be saying to you in faithful obedience. There is no better way to spur the Pastor on to more faithful service than to be faithful and joyful in your service of your Lord and Saviour Jesus!

Now, as we read these reports, they can be a basis for thanksgiving for past mercies, intercession for the year ahead, and also an opportunity for us all to consider new ways in which God may be making his will known to us as a church. Following Jesus in today's world is not always easy; indeed, we may need fresh wisdom and courage for the facing of these days, but we can be sure that God will indeed guide us and lead us securely. Our ability to rely more and more upon the Holy Spirit of God for this inspiration will indeed be a sign of our growing maturity in the faith, and an indication that we are growing to become more like Jesus in every way. May God Himself be with us and bless us, and make His face to shine upon us all, today and always.

Your brother in Christ

The Revd Paul J Lavender

Some of the high points of 2009 from Micky

I am writing my review after what has been, personally, a very different end to the year to the one I was expecting. I had been looking forward to being actively involved with the many church services and activities that form part of our Christmas celebrations. Instead I have spent much of the last month confined to the house on doctor's (and Bridget's!) orders.

Although frustrated by being halted from doing most things, I have been given lots of time to think, reflect and pray, for which I am very grateful. A perfect opportunity then, to reflect on some of the high points experienced in 2009. This is going to be a very personal report, focusing on just some of the many high points. This does not mean that the regular activities of church life are unimportant to me, but there is opportunity for them to be featured in other reports. I would just like to take this moment to say how grateful I am to all who give so sacrificially of their gifts and energies throughout the year to serve the Lord at Mount Pleasant.

So, here are some of the high points I've selected from 2009:

- The year began with a wonderful service of praise and testimony early in January when Madge, Annie and Michael shared how God had changed their lives as they went through the waters of baptism. It was equally special later in the year when there was more proof that God is in the business of changing lives as we celebrated the baptism of two of our young people, Faith and Joel Knight.
- It has been wonderful to see MP's ministry to young people developing over the year with the continued success of iD on a Friday evening. Many of the kids who regularly attend

have no knowledge of the gospel of Jesus Christ and it has been our privilege to provide a safe and fun environment where they can be themselves and also be introduced to the difference Christ can make in their lives. As I reflect on the task of developing our work with young people I'm so grateful to God for His calling of Fran to lead the work. As 2010 unfolds we need to remember Fran and all the children's and youth workers who serve so joyfully and diligently.

- As the summer approached, once again our Holiday Club was a great hit with children and their parents. Now a regular event, Holiday at Home, continued to build on the popularity of Songs of Praise, again a wonderful time for all who attended.
- August heralded a very significant time for me, with my first experience of overseas mission. Ali, Sheila, Matt, Fran, Fiona, Andy, Sarah and I spent two weeks in Brazil, working with BMS World Mission. We all have so many memories of the Lord's provision and protection as we encountered so many wonderful and inspirational people living and serving God in the favelas of the crazy city of Sao Paulo.
- Last year was significant for our outreach through the activities of the Open Door Centre, as Keith joined the team as our Community Worker. It is so encouraging to see how Keith (in his colourful tropical shirts!) has gone about the work of representing the Open Door Centre and building lasting bridges into the community. This was so evident with the community carol service, when the church was full of our neighbours, young and old, many for the first time.
- Again throughout last year, I was so encouraged by those

who have given of their time and energy in such powerful Christian witness to the people of our town by becoming Street Pastors and joining in the ministry of StreetChurch. This is such important work in bringing hope to the lost and marginalised, which brings glory to the name of Christ.

- In December, the Hope Concert, conceived, produced and performed by MP's *Inspire* group of young people, was a very special night at Mount Pleasant. To see youngsters from all over Northampton filling the church and praising the name of Jesus was indeed an inspiration. We are so blessed to have so many young (and not so young) people, responding to God's call to use their musical and creative gifts in leading worship.
- Finally, it's hard to believe that in less than six months I will complete my training at Spurgeons College. Can it really be three years since I began the task of going back to study? In all this time I have been so grateful to God for His continued trust in me and your patience in providing me with the many opportunities and challenges I need to fulfil my call to be a pastor in the church of Jesus Christ. I look forward to seeing you all in June when - God permitting - I will be ordained into ministry and inducted as your Assistant Pastor.

As I said at the beginning of this review, these are just some of the highlights of the year from my point of view. I know there are so many of you unmentioned, who serve the Lord humbly and obediently, who look for no honour or reward from others.

Thank you all for being a part of our journey through 2009, May you know the Lord's blessing in the year ahead.

Micky Munroe

Youth Ministry

Rock Solid continues to meet on a Sunday morning for the 11+ age group. They do a variety of activities with a Bible based learning outcome and then a discussion-based Bible study. The group is very diverse and there is a possible need for the group to be split again as has been the case in the past. The group really enjoy getting together and there have been some really good discussion times.

Inspire has gone from strength to strength this year. It provides peer support for young people in all the issues they face as Christians in the youth culture. A typical evening consists of food, a silly game, Bible study and then an extended time of sharing, prayer and discussion. The young people have come to see this as an essential part of maintaining a passionate, faithful Christian life. The concert they planned and ran in December was a huge success with the gospel being spoken to many non Christians and several responses were made. Please pray for the efforts made to follow up these responses.

On Friday nights in both iD groups, the majority of the young people attending are not from MP families and some of them have almost no knowledge of Christianity. There are also a

number of young people who have major troubles / issues in their lives that they are opening up to us and sharing. Praise God that they see us as people they can trust with their struggles - we pray that God will use us to support them, care for them and reveal His love to them.

Another point for prayer and praise is that we are getting to know the parents of these young people too as they stay and chat when they drop off and collect their children.

As always, there is a need for more people to help with activities, either on a one off or regular basis. If you have a hobby that you think you could share with a group of young people for an hour, be it anything from hair braiding to football to sewing, I'd love to hear from you!

Wholehearted is the youth worship group that has restarted on Monday nights. They are starting to settle and come together well as a group. Musically there are challenges as the young people have very different abilities although the sense of learning to worship together is relevant to all.

Youth Housegroup is currently studying Luke and the young people appear to be genuinely exploring their faith and asking questions. The group is growing in trust and it is so encouraging to see the way the young people share and pray together.

On looking back over the past year, my main feeling is one of gratitude. God has blessed the youth ministry in many ways and it's encouraging for me to realise the new opportunities He's offered, resources He's given us and ways in which He's

worked amongst the young people and leaders, changing lives. There are still many needs and ways in which the youth ministry can be developed, but God is a faithful God who works in surprising and amazing ways and can be completely trusted for the future.

Fran Jaggard

Community Worker Open Door Centre

I feel somewhat of a bit of a fraud because since commencing employment at the Open Door Centre most activities needing to be reported on in this report are the efforts of the Community Action Team (CAT) who had instigated and carried out most of the preparation prior to my arrival on the scene, and I have merely picked up on it and helped to carry it through. Nonetheless, I am more than happy to be associated with their efforts and only hope this short report does them justice.

The CAT is the powerhouse of the community work branch of Mount Pleasant Baptist Church and consists of a small but dedicated number of folk (average 6-8 at each meeting from a pool of 10-12). Some of these folk are members of MPBC whereas others are not but all have a real passion for 'getting things done' in the community. I am a firm believer in the church 'getting out there' rather than expecting the community to come to us and so I feel privileged to have the support of like-minded people. However, and I make no apology for this, this group of people cannot do everything and with a church the size of MPBC, I am eager for other people to

catch this vision - after all the community is our mission field and we all have a responsibility towards bringing in the harvest. We know that when many events and activities are organised other members of the church come on board to help out but often the work needing to be done is in advance of the day, not just on it.

We organise clean ups around the community in support of the local resident associations, which always gets a good response, as does the flower baskets that we put up around the area to give a lovely splash of colour in Spring and Winter. The community barbeque equally so is well attended and supported (estimates of 250+) and is a golden opportunity to reach out more to the community and has so much more potential if we could guarantee more help in organising it. The carol service was a great success and already plans are afoot to include other groups from within our community so as to give it a more cultural feel this year. Being the first one it was difficult to estimate how many people would show up but I think most of us were pleasantly surprised when around 120 people turned up, and this year's plans are even bigger. Other Christmas events have included the Christmas carol singing around the streets where some 35 of us 'invaded' the area, the Christmas Gift Day where some 75 people took advantage of our invitation to choose a present and have it wrapped and of course, Christmas Day itself, where a meal was put on for around 50 people

On a day to day basis, we are to commence mid-January 'well being/health check' clinics for men, run by NHS and Trilogy Health & Fitness on Tuesday evenings, which again we

encourage you to support. An over 50's health and fitness group are also carrying out a taster session in January and if successful, would like to use MPBC as the venue for a 12 week course. Community groups are encouraged to make use of the Open Door Centre and we are more than happy to assist in bringing any ideas you have to fruition should you think of anything that you would like to try. Who knows, you may find that other people share a passion for the same hobby as you and could possibly make a community group from it.

At the beginning of December, as a result of my other work at Streetchurch, a need was identified to provide a safe, warm, friendly environment for the 'street' community to come to simply to relax and 'chill out' and play games 'youth club' style. This got off to a slow start until word got around but we now, after 4 weeks, have an average of 10-12 people coming along. We wish to extend this group from one day a week (currently Tuesday afternoons) to 2 days and then so on until we give coverage from Monday-Friday. This however, is beyond the resources of the current staff and volunteers and help is needed to achieve this vision.

Finally, I would just like to give you a taster of some of the other events, activities and services that we would like to offer. Please don't just read and discard it. I ask you to give all of these items listed some serious thought and prayer and ask yourself whether this might be an avenue of service you could offer the Lord and His church.

Money advice centres

Credit Union

'Goody' boxes for our local troops on deployment in
Afghanistan

All age football tournament

Art/photography exhibition

Local history exhibition

Community quiz nights

Police and council surgeries

.....and don't forget your ideas count as well!

Keith Dragon

Secretary

Another year has sped by - where does the time go?!

The year has been an exciting one in many ways. We appointed Keith Dragon as our Community Worker in March and he has really begun to make an impact on the area. Two more appointments were then made - Fran Jaggard became our Youth Worker in Training (undertaking a college course alongside working with our young people) and Micky Munroe (currently our Minister in Training) has accepted a calling to become our Assistant Pastor this summer once he has satisfactorily completed his studies. We are thrilled to welcome both on to our Leadership Team and both appointments are exciting and challenging to us as a fellowship!

At the beginning of the year we hosted the AGM of Churches Together in Northampton and the Unity Service which followed it. It is good to be able to worship our one God with those of other denominations.

In August we sent a BMS Summer Mission Team to Sao Paulo in Brazil. Eight of our members felt called to spend 2 weeks helping the BMS workers in part of this needy city. I'm sure they all gained enormously from their experiences and achieved things that previously they would have thought impossible! In 2010 we are planning a mission to Romania - could YOU be a part of it?

In October we again held a College Sunday when one of our former members, Paul Scott-Evans, came to preach. It's good to know that MP has provided able preachers over the years and continues to do so.

Towards the end of the year we were privileged to have the Rev David Coffey, President of the Baptist World Alliance, visit us to preach at both morning and evening services. Members from other churches in the Northants Forum of the Central Baptist Association joined us for the evening service and it was a very uplifting day.

For those of you who like statistics, we start 2010 with 271 members, again 2 less than last year! Over the year we welcomed 6 new members to the fellowship and we thank God for them. Sadly, 3 of our older members were called home and we are grateful for their many years of service to our Lord. Two other members were transferred to a church in the antipodes and 3 resigned their membership. Our baptistery was opened twice and it was with great joy that we shared with 5 of our friends as they publicly witnessed to their faith in our Lord.

Please do read the following reports which give a snapshot of the life and work of MP. Please also pray for these activities and their leaders as they serve our Lord week by week and month by month. As with last year, not everyone who was asked has submitted a report but you can still pray for their activities!

Finally, I would like to thank you all for your continued support and prayer. I am grateful to God for the privilege of serving both Him and you as Secretary for further term. However, after much prayer, I have decided that this next 3 years should be my last in this role and I will have completed 12 years service by then. I would ask you to pray that, when the time comes, God will have identified someone to take over this role. Please continue to pray for the leadership as we go into another challenging year.

Bridget Ringrose

Prayer Ministry Team

There are currently 27 people on the team.

We have the privilege of praying with and for people Sunday by Sunday, inviting Jesus into each situation. This year we have had two training days - a New Wine training day at Emmanuel Church in March and another at Mount Pleasant, led by Vicky and Stuart Sharkey from Weymouth Baptist Church, in September. Many people were encouraged by the teaching and found the times of prayer powerful and moving.

We also pray for healing, including anointing with oil, during communion services twice a month.

Please pray:

1. That we would continue to be channels of the Holy Spirit, by discovering and developing our spiritual gifts.
2. That we would have humility. We have a responsibility to be in the right place with God as we serve on the prayer team. Satan can use so many things to hinder the work we do such as jealousy of others, discouragement or tiredness.
3. For the further development of a regular healing ministry.

Louise Thomson and Sheila Crouch

Open Door Shop incorporating Community Action Team

We have had a wonderful year in the shop with an increase in takings which represents an increase in sales and obviously customers. God has blessed and increased and we have been able to fund several community activities, including a new Residents Association and Friends of the Racecourse. Another two highlights of the year for funding opportunities were the appointment of Keith Dragon as Community Worker and the Community BBQ in September.

We continue to have our regular customers who come in for

tea and a chat, and we have a steady flow of donations, for which we thank God.

I am so grateful to our volunteers - 25 in total - for their commitment to the work of the shop, and can't thank them enough.

Our dreams and plans for our extension have finally come to fruition and the work has started.

We are going forward in faith with this project as the costs have increased, so please pray that as God tests our faith in Him for provision we will step out believing that 'He is able to do exceedingly, abundantly above all we ask or imagine'

Other CAT activities through the year have been weekly conversation classes for speakers of other languages, an Easter Coffee Morning, hanging summer and winter baskets in Cowper Street, and Litter-picks. As I am writing this report we have just held our Community Carol Service - a new initiative which was a wonderful success with about 150 people attending, many of which were from the community. Also our Christmas Gift Day took place on Dec 12th. This is always a very special day when we take brand new gifts that have been donated to the shop through the year, put them in the Open Door Centre and invite the general public in to choose one and have it wrapped - absolutely free. The concept of a gift given freely is a reminder of the gift of forgiveness and salvation that God gave us through his son Jesus. About 75 people came through the doors! Then on Christmas Day volunteers will host a Christmas Day Dinner for those who would otherwise be alone on Christmas Day. Isaiah 58 vs 6-12.

Jane Wake

Chatterbox (Carers & Tots)

Thank you for praying for us and supporting us during 2009! We have seen real growth numerically and in the ministry of Chatterbox during the past year. Under the leadership of Judith Lavender, there are over 100 children on the books - Praise God! Together with a team of Vicki Knight, Mary Sanders, Sheila Crouch, Graham and Jane Fletcher, Sue King, Alison Church and Marion Lacey, between 15 and 25 mums, dads and carers attend each session with their children, on Monday, Wednesday or Friday mornings between 9.30 and 11.15. There are always at least four members of staff in attendance at each session, where there are fun and games, healthy snacks and drinks, crafts and singing for all to join in.

We look back with gratitude to God for a number of things during 2009: -

1. At almost every session we are welcoming a new parent, often through positive recommendation, or through accessing our website.
2. The ministry which is provided is greatly appreciated. It is not unusual to hear comments like, "we don't know what we'd do without Chatterbox"; "That was the best party for children I've ever attended!"
3. Positive, healthy relationships are being built with mums, dads and carers - and it is becoming quite natural to ask, "Would you like me to pray?"
4. We have been able to purchase new toys and resources especially for craft times, and now have up to date resources which compare well with other parent and

toddler groups which the mums attend.

5. Another successful day trip took place to Rookery Farm when the weather was very kind!
6. Opportunities to express practical concern and help to families in need has been an important part of building bridges and relationships with families.
7. Evidence of 'joined-up' ministry - mums being invited to come as a result of attending the English conversation classes, coming to Chatterbox, and then attending services in the church and the Christmas Day Open Door Centre Meal.
8. The Chatterbox Christmas Party where over 100 (!) enjoyed a party, received a gift explaining the true meaning of Christmas, and ate a hot meal together!!
9. The excellent Crib service planned by Graham and Jane Fletcher
10. Community Carol Service, where a number of families from Chatterbox came along and almost "demanded" (!) to take part!!
11. The mums coming along with their children as part of our Advent celebrations to take a turn one week in lighting the Advent Candles.
12. The Memorial Hall is too small for our sessions!

Please pray for us, that

1. We would know how we can share more effectively with all who come about the difference the Lord Jesus makes in our lives, and can make in their lives too.
2. That the Staff would continue to be encouraged in all

their efforts and work.

3. That we may have more helpers to resource and develop the work further.
4. That we would rely on the Lord for all we seek to do, and that he would bless and anoint our work.

Judith Lavender

Housegroups

Numbers in housegroups remain around 160 - 170 with one or two groups finishing but others springing up. Some of the new groups have members from previous groups - so overall numbers are near enough the same.

The new groups that have sprung up are the Kingsthorpe group which is hosted at the Gheorges and led by Jeff Taylor and a new group hosted and led by Sue Monroe.

It has been particularly pleasing to see the nurture group grow out of an Alpha course and it is hoped that in time this will be the nucleus of a new group.

Many will know that we have been trying to discern God's will over the pastoral care within small groups and this culminated in a questionnaire going out to all groups to try to ascertain the good and the bad points within the housegroup structure. After receiving these questionnaires back and in consultation with Hefina, who also did a lot of research, we have been looking into the possibility of reorganising small groups with a view to improving the pastoral care within the church as a whole with small groups having an integral

part. This is still a work in progress and will aim to enhance the fellowship and study within a small group.

Prayer point:

That God will give wisdom to those who are working on this area that they will prayerfully listen to His spirit's prompting and bring about a system that will glorify God in all walks of life.

Neil Smith

Children's Work (for those from birth to around eleven years)

Sadly the BB Juniors and Anchor Boys Sections closed in the summer as numbers were still low. However the other regular meetings continued throughout the year:

Rainbows

We are now gradually seeing our girls move on to Brownies so have vacancies. If you know of any 5/6 year olds who would like to join us let us know. Rachel Page has also left us and we wish her well at Uni.

Since writing last year's report we sang at Carols by Candlelight, which went down well. Also we have introduced a banner for Church Parade and hope this will encourage more girls to join us at Parade. Again this year we have been to an interactive theatre performance which was very popular. We also went to Abington Park on the 5th September to celebrate the beginning of Guiding's Centenary year.

Please pray for continued close relationships with our Rainbows families and for more opportunities for them to join us on other church occasions. Also pray for the leaders: Meryl, Sharon and Lesley as we meet week by week

Meryl Jones

Brownies

Brownies meet on Tuesdays 6.30-8pm. We have 18 girls one Brown Owl and four helpers :Liz Milburn, Valerie Peart, Sue Buckby and Amy Clark.

We have had a busy year completing our Writers, Circus performer and World culture badges. Also we enjoyed a swimming evening in June and attended the Centenary party in Abington Park for Guiding's 100th birthday celebrations 2009-2010.

The last few weeks the girls have been practicing singing two different Christmas songs to sing one at the community carol service on 9th December and one at the church Carol service on 20th December. We thank God for these two opportunities to witness to the girls and their parents.

Prayer requests:

- 1 For more girls to attend church parades with their parents.
- 2 For God's grace for the leaders to show the love of God to the Brownie sand their parents.
- 3 That non-church Brownies and their families would come to know Jesus as their saviour.

Kathy Coombes

Junior Church

This year has seen a few changes in Junior Church. A long serving leader, Joan Onley, felt it was time to retire - she will be sorely missed. Fran Jaggard and Sharon Page have also left the fold to pursue other projects within church. So therefore we are low on numbers of staff.

We have noticed that the number of children has also gone down this year. We think this is due to the fact that the number of church families with children has decreased. On an average morning there are between 20 and 24 children from Baby Church through the age groups to Discoverers.

Due to less staff we have had to extend Baby Church to include children until they have had their 3rd birthday and amalgamate the other three groups into two groups. This is not ideal.

On a better note, we all feel it is a privilege to be teaching the children of God's love.

Liane Preece

In addition, there were a number of other events:

Holiday Club - once again we had 5 mornings when the building was filled with around 100 children enjoying the 'Show Stoppers' theme through singing, Bible stories, crafts, puppets, games and a variety of other activities, led by a team of over 40, attired in their bright yellow shirts! Many of the children and their parents joined us at Danes Camp Leisure Centre on

the Saturday for swimming, ball games and more fun on the Bouncy Castle. Eleven of the children were 'regulars' at MP but 42 had no connection with any church. A great outreach!

Pancake Day - youngsters from Junior Church joined the uniformed organisations and a number of parents for a fun evening of games and - of course - pancakes, and even our own pancake races!

Light Party - again we held this event on October 31st to provide a Christian alternative to Halloween. Although we circulated the 'non-church' children who had attended Holiday Club we only had about a dozen children present - but they enjoyed a variety of games, crafts and refreshments - including traditional apple bobbing and the less traditional eat-a-doughnut-on-a-string!

The All-Age Services which had begun in 2008 continued with four more this year, linked with Valentine's Day, Palm Sunday, Pentecost and All Saints' Day. Each of these has developed its theme in a different way, though all have included activities which involve congregation participation and something to take home as a reminder of the main message.

Safe to Grow training has continued with 3 sessions organised by David Dyson who, as our Co-ordinator, has also been keeping us abreast of the new legislation. After many years service Wendy and Len Howard have retired from their roles as Advocates and we are very grateful to Aidan and Liane Preece for joining Ruth Osborne and Steve Merryshaw in this role.

Much thought has gone into filling the gap in provision for boys and Judith Lavender has co-ordinated a team which will lead a new venture beginning in January. 'Kidzone' will meet every Friday from 6 till 7 for children between 5 and 10. This will be a natural 'partner' for ID and will also answer requests from ID parents for something for younger siblings.

There is much to celebrate and many to thank for their continued commitment and dedication to Children's Work but there continues to be a need for more volunteers in all areas. Please pray for:

- All the children who attend the various groups, activities and events
- All the leaders - old and new
- God's guidance and blessing in all we do

Jackie Coles

Rock Solid

This past year we have seen a larger number of youth attending Rock Solid (the Sunday morning sessions). Numbers can vary from approx 10 - 18 and we thank God for the increase in numbers. Although the Rock Solid materials originally were aimed for 11-14 yrs olds we have seen this age group widen and therefore have had to adapt as necessary. During the first half of the year we continued to do a number of Bible study based sessions, based on Jesus encounters with people. We also talked about the various forms of worship.

During the summer Rock Solid took one Saturday to get to know one another better and have fun! So we met up to have a big buffet style lunch in order to cater for hungry teenagers and then set off to play rounders at Abington Park. All in all the day was a great opportunity to talk to the youth outside of the usual church setting.

In the autumn we started to use the new resources Word Search and have had a series of Threes to discuss matters relevant to the youth:

A. How To's: , How to deal with Parents, How to deal with Conflict, How to Know God

B THE 3 Ds: Dating, Drinking & Drugs

During 2009 we had Jane, Steve and I leading with the much appreciated help from Ali, Alina and James. However we were sad to see Steve Johnson (Big Steve) leave us at the end of the year and hope he and Jacqui will find a suitable church nearer their new home. We know both of them have been extremely active and served many years in this ministry and we pray God continues to guide them in their next steps. Don't be too surprised to see them popping back though occasionally! Prayer matters: The youth are at a crucial time in their lives where they need to figure things out and start making their own decisions, pray that we as a church can equip them with the essential armour of God so they can be guided in the right way and deepen their relationship with God and to start to understand the world they live in.

Of course we are now looking for another leader for Rock Solid and would especially want willing hands and hearts to

help out. If you feel you can help in any way big or small please let me or Jane know.

Alice Mak & Jane Clark

Boys' Brigade

It is with a deep sense of sadness that I write what will be the last annual report from the Boys' Brigade. The sad decision to wind up the company was made back in the early summer due to a lack of boys. Many companies which fold do so because of a lack of leaders and helpers, we at the 14th were blessed to have a group of very dedicated staff to the end and I would like to take this opportunity to publicly thank them for all their hard, often unnoticed and sometimes thankless, work.

I would also like to use this report to recognise the work done by all the staff, helpers and supporters during the lifetime of the company. The faithfulness of these many people has had an impact on countless young lives and we have seen many who have come through our ranks give their lives to Christ, often due to the relationships that have been built within Brigade. I cannot talk about the officers who have worked in the company without giving a special mention to Fred Wilson, who it seems has a unique bond with the 14th. I would like to thank him personally for his many years of service until ill health forced him to reduce the work that he did, though he will be thought of very fondly by many who have been connected with

the 14th.

Over the life of the company there are many happy memories, many lifetime friendships formed, many young lives that have been influenced for good and many campsites that will never be quite the same again! Although the company is no more, I am certain that the impact of the 14th Northampton Boys' Brigade (Mount Pleasant) will live on for many years to come.

Teresa Brady

Luncheon Club

Luncheon Club continues to flourish with a membership of 42. We have 17 regular staff, plus helpers, who work on a 3 weekly rota, and 8 hosts who work in pairs on a monthly basis. We are sad to say 'goodbye' to Elsie & Peter Pearmain, two of our hosts, as they are moving away and we would like to thank them for their support over the past year. We welcome Pauline & Jeff Taylor on to the team in their place.

It was with great sadness that we lost one of longest serving team members, Doreen Brown. She had worked for over thirty years with Luncheon Club as a team member, team leader and secretary.

We have only had to cancel 2 meetings - one earlier in 2009 due to snow and the other because of no electricity coupled with a flood in the kitchen!

Luncheon Club is a great outreach for those who are elderly, particularly those on their own. We offer a real fellowship as

well as a three course meal to all our members.

I would like to take this opportunity of thanking all the staff and helpers for all their work over the past year and ask for your prayers that more people will come forward to help as we continue throughout 2010.

Ann Tarry

The Choir

The Choir continues to practise each Thursday evening and we thank God that we have been able to serve Him throughout another year.

We have been very busy in 2009, singing regularly in Sunday services in addition to special events. Particularly noteworthy are the four services over Easter, including that on Good Friday afternoon.

We have presented a special item at most of the Songs of Praise services. The Big Sing in October was also memorable - several of the smaller churches in Northamptonshire joined us for a service of praise and thanksgiving.

We have a membership of eighteen but we are an unbalanced group. Like many other mixed voice choirs we are short of men. We did recruit some additional singers for the biennial Cathedral Festival of the Free Church Choir Union in October, held in Coventry Cathedral. This was the splendid venue where we first took part in a FCCU Festival 21 years ago! The music

was challenging but we had worked very hard and were able to take a full part in the Choir of approximately 400 voices. It was a pleasure to see so many supporters with us too.

I would like to thank the Choir members for all their hard work and Paul Lavender for his suggestions and encouragement. Thanks also to Paul and Sue Rayment for their accompaniment.

Sylvia Hannam

Friday Ladies Bible Study Group

Friday Group takes place on Friday mornings, 9.45 - 11.30. It is a women's Bible study group and on the first Friday of each month we spend time in prayer for the world, our church, and each other.

Our ministry to each other is centred on the Word of God and His Spirit works through and in us in so many wonderful ways. We have seen many answers to our prayers and our studies take us into many and varied discussions. The support that the group gives to each other is very special.

We have been studying 1 and 2 Peter and Jude over the past few months and use Know Your Bible material. In the New Year we will be starting a new study on The Holy Spirit.

We have around 10 members, and would love more to join us - do please speak to me if you are interested in coming along.

Jane Wake

Holiday at Home July 2009

We continue to be encouraged and excited by our work amongst the elderly.

Holiday at Home introduces us to folk from the Venton Centre for the Aged and various residential centres, such as Garfield House, Kingsthorpe, Eleanore House and Simon de Senlis. We are now very well known and received in all.

Our 24 guests included the lame, the lonely, isolated Christians who have no other fellowship as well as the recently bereaved and frightened. This year we made no approach for financial help. Our needs were amply provided for due to the winning of £2,000 in the Pitch your Project competition and £1,300 given by the Northants Community Foundation. This covers, also, our Christmas Reunion for all previous guests. At this moment we are expecting 82 to attend!

During the week of wonderful meals, outings and entertainment, more than 40 helpers were involved. Our guests spoke of experiencing a new lease of life and renewed hope for the coming days.

The joy and love of which all speak are present too at our monthly **Songs of Praise**. Friendships are cemented here as the teatime chatter shows. Between 70 and 80 sit down to tea, now overflowing into the Meeting Room as well as the main hall. Others enjoy special cakes and tea in the concourse. All are welcome!

We thank those who give so unstintingly of their time in preparing food and providing transport. We have enlisted three new members for our planning committee and look forward to great times ahead.

Jean Westwood

Baptist Men's Movement

Mount Pleasant hosts the Baptist Men's lunches on a bi-monthly basis and 6 have been held during the year. Speakers were invited who gave interesting and informative talks on a variety of subjects. The last lunch of the year was held on 15th December and we were entertained by 'Roll the Dice' - a folk trio who played and sang a variety of Irish and English folk songs and a selection of Christmas music. The average number men who attended throughout the year was 20 per lunch and our thanks go to the men from Moulton Carey who attended all the lunches.

The Baptist Men's Movement held a 'Bigger Breakfast' in an attempt to break the world record for the highest number of men sitting down for breakfast at the same time. We were invited to join with Baptist Churches throughout the UK and in North America to try to do this. We held our breakfast at Wetherspoons in the town centre, since they had kindly offered their services to the BMM throughout the country. Although no records were broken, 27 of our men sat down and enjoyed a hearty cooked breakfast.

We invite any men who are free to join us at our regular lunches.

Neil Harris