



In our journey towards God, we proceed like those  
small birds whose flight is in loops.  
They always seem to be about to drop,  
but the drop in their flight seems to urge them forward.

- Gerard W. Hughes

## MINISTER'S LETTER

At last year's General Church Meeting members were invited to offer written feedback on how well the church was meeting its aims, and also to offer suggestions for developing our ministry in each of the four areas of our vision (worship, learning and caring, service and evangelism).

This feedback was very helpful and led the Church Council to agree some specific suggestions of how we develop our work as we seek to work towards fulfilling our vision.

The Stewards, along with many, many church members, have been working hard on these ideas over the last year. Although not everything has yet been put into effect, it is pleasing to note just how many different things have been achieved or developed over the year. You will read more of many of these things in the Reports that follow:

- Parenting Course has now run for the 2<sup>nd</sup> time helping us to deliver on our commitment to caring for families.
- The Eco-Congregation Award has been achieved and duly celebrated in our Eco-Fair.
- The "Lighting up Bramhall" event in December 2008 drew a crowd of 600-800 people creating an impetus from the community for a similar event next year, together with a new Bramhall Community Event in June.
- A Church Centre Review group has been established to explore how we can refresh and improve the access and facilities of our Church Centre.
- Light lunches are now being offered at the Coffee Shop on Thursday, Friday and Saturday as a trial.
- A discovering Christianity course, "Start!" is being offered at Indulgence.
- We partnered with Queensgate School in staging "Pop Connection" where the children learnt, and then recorded a CD of 7 Christian songs before performing them in concert at our church.
- A new website has been created which will be built up and expanded further over the coming months.
- "Loaves and Fishes" lunches offered to Parents after Little Fishes Toddler Group on a Friday is proving very popular and providing a means of building relationships and community.

- The Hope 2008 Initiative resulted in increased ecumenical activity, perhaps most notably with the ecumenical Fun Club and "Holiday at Home" over the summer period.
- Life Groups, a new stream of small group, were established after Easter 2008 and now comprises a network of 7 groups.
- A small group has been reviewing, on behalf of the Pastoral Committee, our Pastoral Care system to find ways of offering more consistent pastoral care to all our members.
- The Celebrating Marriage event, comprising Wedding Fayre, Bereavement Support Evening, Valentine's Ball and Renewal of Marriage Vows, has yielded some wonderful stories in people's lives.
- "The Marriage Course" - a Marriage enrichment course - is being planned to launch in April 2009.
- A new Family Church Weekend has been planned for October 2009 and bookings are proceeding well.

So much to celebrate! And so much more of course – because in addition to all the above is the ongoing ministry – just as important, just as valued – which has been running for longer. We really are an astonishingly rich church in terms of premises, people and gifts. It is so good to see these being used with such commitment for the Lord's work in Bramhall. Thank you!

Last September, of course, we said goodbye to Chris Cowlshaw after his deeply effective ministry in our church, and in February we welcomed Bob Bartindale as our new Lay Pastor. I am so pleased to have Bob "on board" and I know that he will be a great encouragement and help to us all in fulfilling the vision that God is giving us.

It is so good to be part of a growing, vibrant church. There is so much more to do – we live in a world all too dominated by pain and fear. But through both the long-standing and the new we are making Kingdom progress.

Thank you for all you are and do, and thank you for your love and care of me and my family too.

Leslie

## **WORSHIP**

### **JUNIOR CHURCH (JC)**

All JC groups are very active and are seeing increases in numbers as more families join the life of our church. We are absolutely blessed with dedicated leaders and helpers, including some brilliant youth helpers. Apart from Parade services, JC ran every week in 2008 with combined JC in August seeing great turnout. December saw 47 regulars take part in the nativity, some energetic parties and also saw the release of the Junior Church DVD and leaflet within worship and outreach events. We look forward to welcoming more families in 2009, to having more fun and doing some new activities.

Lisa Tyler-Brough

### **CRADLE ROLL**

During 2008, 15 children were welcomed into the Church family through Baptism. All were beautiful services with the children and their families being warmly greeted as is usual at Bramhall! My thanks as usual to Iris Stinton for her lovely posies of flowers and stepping in when I was unable to be present.

Jane Lepp

### **ORGAN MUSIC**

During the past year the practice of commemorating the anniversaries of the births/deaths of prominent organists/composers has been continued. Thus in the Sunday Services and Thursday concerts, pieces by Ralph Vaughan-Williams (d.1958) have been performed; other music has included compositions by British, European and American organists of the 18<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Eight morning coffee concerts were given in two series and the retiring collections were donated to local charities. We are indebted to Messrs Frank Walton and Charles Stowman for their contributions to these concerts as guest organists.

Plans are being made for a further series of concerts in the spring/early summer of 2009. The assistance of Mesdames Reindel and Sargent, and Messrs Jones and McPhail, together with the Music Group is warmly acknowledged.

Neville H P Smith

### **CHURCH FLOWERS**

Flowers in the church main building are usually given by church members in memory of a loved one.

We have a group of a dozen arrangers, and would welcome newcomers to our "team". Our thanks go to both givers and arrangers - and if you would like to join us, please contact:

Glenda Connor on 439 6297

### **SUNDAY CHURCH TRANSPORT**

Church members continue to provide an invaluable service in bringing the less mobile members of our congregation to Church. We currently have 6 members who require help with transport and this need is serviced by 26 volunteer drivers working on a rota basis.

A huge thank you to you all, without your continued support, this important service would not be possible.

Margaret McKee

### **TAPE LIBRARY**

The Church Tape Library consists of tape recordings of the service in the main building on Sunday mornings which are recorded by Mike Calow. There are also many other tapes available of general Christian interest. There is no charge for this service, so please borrow and enjoy the tapes which are situated near the glass doors in the Church.

Mary Langton

## **LEARNING AND CARING**

### **PASTORAL CARE**

There are now 47 pastoral visitors who provide care for the Church family. Twice a year we meet with Leslie to encourage one another and discuss ways we can engage with people.

A small group are looking into ways that care can be extended, particularly with young families, newcomers and those needing specialist care.

Four times a year a newsletter is distributed by pastoral visitors so that everyone is kept up to date with what is happening in the life of the Church.

Two 'Songs of Praise' tea parties and also a memorial service (for anyone wishing to remember someone special) have been held during the year.

June Nightingale

### **FRIDAY NIGHT BIBLE STUDY**

The group meets on alternative Friday evenings in various members' homes with an attendance of 10-12. Our study over the past twelve months has been on the books of Daniel, Jonah, Haggai, Philippians, Philemon and most recently Samuel. At the end of a busy week, it gives time for reflection, with others, on the Bible and in prayer when concerns about friends and relatives can be shared. Venues and subjects are published in the weekly news sheet.

Brian Couch 440 8959

### **LIFE GROUPS AND HOUSEGROUPS**

This year has seen good progress in pursuing our vision of developing and growing the small group structure within the church so that everyone can join a small group easily, and find their mutual care, bible study and prayer.

The Life Groups began after Easter 2008 and we now have 7 groups meeting each fortnight. The groups use the same resources, with space for groups to "do their own thing" sometimes. There have been two Life Group Gatherings where all Life Group members have been invited to come together, and these have been good occasions for developing enthusiasm and vision for the groups. We continue to work towards existing groups growing and multiplying into new groups.

The well-established housegroup network has also continued to thrive. A diversity of approaches from visiting speakers, to social events to a gradual working through Bible passages or devotional books have all helped to deepen fellowship and discipleship.

It is a sign of growing spiritual depth that more and more people are joining small groups – and I do encourage everyone to join one – they are such a great way of deepening a sense of belonging and working out faith.

Leslie Newton

### **CAMEO**

CAMEO is now in its eighth year. We have welcomed eight new members from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2008 and the average attendance remains constant. We meet on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday of the month at 11.00 a.m.

Coffee and chat is followed by worship led by our members and we are entertained by an eclectic range of speakers while lunch is being prepared by the Pop-In staff.

The Enterprise bus provides transport where required.

Isabel I Parsons

### **CHRISTIAN EDUCATION LECTURES**

The Christian Education lectures continued through Lent 2008. Attendance was down on the previous year, but still worthwhile.

The lectures were on the theme of 'Response to Christian Mission in Asia and Africa'. Geoffrey Barnard looked at the growth of the church in Africa from the earliest days of the spread of the gospel in North Africa but more particularly

from the 19<sup>th</sup> century onwards. He focussed on the growth of the church in Central, Southern and East Africa.

John Parry returned from his travels in Bangladesh and Madagascar and focussed on the growth and nature of the church in Samoa and Taiwan while also sharing something of his recent experience in the Indian subcontinent.

Both lecturers stressed the importance of understanding something of this story, now that many Christians from Asia and Africa live in Britain and have established significant church communities in our major cities.

The lectures this year will be given by Glenn Marshall, Baptist minister on the staff of Luther King house, on the subject 'Mission in Britain today –Questions and Challenges'.

Geoffrey Barnard

### **THRIFT SHOP NEW BOOKS AND GREETING CARDS**

In the year ending 31st August 2008 greeting cards to the value of £2148.20 were sold compared with a total of £1830.75 the previous year. This shows an increase of sales but also an increase of prices charged by the suppliers and therefore the sale price. The prices are still well below the recommended sale price however.

90 Christian books were sold in the period totalling £589. This compares with 75 books sold at a total price of £649 the previous year. This indicates that more books were sold but more were obtained and sold at sale prices. I can usually obtain any book requested in a few days if it is currently available.

Tony & Rosemary Fawthrop 0161 440 7490

### **LINK WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP**

Since the last report to the Church Annual Meeting in 2008, LINK has had a full and varied programme. Excellent speakers have informed us, made us laugh, and given us an insight into situations of need in this country, and other parts of the world. Our Christmas Carol Service, and the Maundy Thursday service remind us

where the foundations of our group lie. Visits to theatre and concerts, meals out together enable us to enjoy each other's company in a different setting from "the back hall".

Meetings have been well supported and we have been glad to welcome a number of new members. We look forward to the rest of the year's programme and extend an invitation to any ladies who would like to join us on alternate Thursdays at 7.30 p.m. You will be very welcome.

Audry Barnard - Secretary

### **FRIDAY NIGHTERS**

We continue to enjoy parlour games and members' evenings in one another's homes, whilst also visiting local theatres and concerts, and eating together both "in house" and at local hostelryes.

Jane Taylor

### **THE 'NOT THE FRIDAY NIGHTERS'**

The group which has now been going for 23 years, met intermittently through the year enjoying the usual relaxing social activities, including shared meals, a theatre trip, canal trip and BBQ.

We are looking forward to 2009 when we have a full programme planned.

Ruth Ainley – 485 4855

### **NOUVEAU FRIDAY NIGHTERS**

We meet mainly on Saturday nights once a month, primarily as a social get together. The programme varies, but highlights of the last year have been a Christmas party, summer barbecue, and a walk in Macclesfield Forest. New members are always welcome.

Karen and Chris Booth

## **SERVICE**

### **CHRISTIAN AID**

Firstly, thank you to all who support Christian Aid.

In 2008 the Bramhall and Woodford Christian Aid Committee sent £17,798 to Christian Aid accumulated from 6 Lent Lunches, the popular Spring Quiz and the challenging "Count Your Blessing", the Bread Stall, the Music Hall evening and the Stockport Schools' Brass Band..

Our main event - the House to House collection raised the marvellous sum of £12,405.

During 2009 we look forward to a Book Sale, the Laurence Singers, Lent Lunches, the Spring Quiz, the precinct Bread Stall and the House to House collections. Later we will have a Brass Band Concert and a Christmas Quiz for all age groups. Watch the Notices!!

BMC Co-ordinator :Margaret Simpson Tel 440 0315

### **CENTREPOINT COFFEE SHOP**

The Coffee Shop provides an unthreatening and friendly place where we hope all our customers feel welcome and valued. It provides a point of contact, a place to unwind and relax.

From October 2008 the Coffee Shop extended its opening hours until 2pm on Thursday, Friday & Saturday and now serves light lunches on those days from 12noon until 1.30pm. The afternoons are staffed mainly from our church, but there are a few volunteers from other churches and it is hoped that this will grow. Our volunteers include a 15 year old student working towards his Duke of Edinburgh's Silver Award. The number of volunteers, from the 'Churches together in Bramhall & Woodford', is now approaching 200! Most of those who work on the days we serve food have attended a 'Food Hygiene Awareness Session' and our recent inspection by Stockport MBC Environment & Economy Directorate was

very positive. Many of our products are Fair Trade. Last year the profits were given to help with youth work in Bramhall and Woodford.

Chrys Guneratne - 440 8194

### **CHARITABLE POLICY GROUP**

The total amount raised in 2008 from collections at Communion and special Christmas Services was £13,017, plus a tax benefit to the charities from gift aid donations of £903. The charities supported, covering a range of local, national and international organisations, included Leprosy Mission International, MENCAP, The Children's Society, Self-Help Africa, and Mary's Meals. We also responded to emergency appeals following cyclone and hurricane disasters in Burma and the Bahamas, whilst continuing to support our regular causes - Methodist World Mission, MHA, Christian Aid, Wellspring and Action for Children.

We are grateful to those who have suggested charities we might support, some of which we were able to use during the year, and it should be remembered that the Thrift Shop and other church organisations also make their own direct charitable donations. In these difficult economic times it is encouraging that folk continue to be so generous in giving to those in need.

Ann Durnford 440 0603 Ken Foden 439 7874 Ted Maskell 439 3874

### **DAY CENTRE**

Each Thursday the laughter and chattering that emanates from the Fellowship Room, and the succulent smells that come from the Church kitchen tell us that Day Centre is in full swing.

About 20 old and new friends gather in the mornings to socialise, exchange news and comment on world affairs. A number of members demolish newspaper crosswords.

In the afternoons a wide range of activities is enjoyed by all. Particularly memorable this year was when "the little ones" from upstairs came to give us their Christmas play – it was delightful. Another occasion was our Tea Dance. One elderly member wearing her red tap shoes, gave an exhibition to "The sunny side of the Street".

As always we are grateful for our lovely 55 volunteers who all contribute to the success of the Day Centre, be they cooks or carers or drivers. If you would like the pleasure of taking part as a volunteer, please contact me. We Need you.... Come and have fun.

David Sargent

### **ECO CONGREGATION**

In the summer of 2008 our Church gained the Eco Congregation Award and we have the plaque to prove it. This was the culmination of almost 3 year's work in which we had to prove that in our outreach to the community both locally and overseas, in practical ways, such as saving energy at home and in church and recycling, and spiritually we are showing our concern for the world which God has made.

To celebrate gaining the Award we held an Eco Fair last October when the Mayor of Stockport officially presented us with the plaque. There were various displays and stalls in the back hall, and two people from Stockport Council gave an illustrated talk about recycling and energy saving. The Award lasts for 2 years and then we have to reapply, proving that we have undertaken new projects. So where do we go from here? We must continue to recycle and save energy in every way possible, that's for sure. We are hoping to team up with the Energy Saving Trust, and Cheadle Hulme Methodist Church on a new project, but we need new ideas and more help. Come on folks, the Eco team needs you!!

Jean Taylor

### **METHODIST INTERNATIONAL HOUSE**

This academic year MIH continues to offer a warm welcome and excellent facilities to students from China, Spain, England, Latvia, Taiwan, Singapore, Iran, Oman, Israel, Lebanon, Greece and several parts of the African continent. Most of the students are Post Graduates and find the situation at MIH, an ethos conducive to study.

Colin and Rosemary Morton, the present Wardens will be leaving this year. Interviews for the appointment of new Wardens will take place in March, and I would ask you to remember the Management Committee as they seek to find suitable candidates for this most important job. Alan Jacobs and Chris Hartley from Bramhall serve on that Committee. My thanks to those who have supported MIH financially and in many other ways.

Audry Barnard – MIH Representative to Bramhall Methodist Church

### **THRIFT SHOP**

Day by day, over the past year, goods have flowed through the door and on into the storeroom. A team of over 20 staff sort and price and put them out on the shelves. Over the counter and into the till has flowed £32,000, of which £3,300 was Traidcraft goods and £2,600 from the sale of new Christian books and Greetings cards. Donations of £3,800 to 14 charities were made, plus £10,000 to Youth work at the Mill.

We await the effects of the "credit crunch", but nevertheless our trust is in the Lord.

Joyce Curtis

### **POP-IN**

Pop-In has had another successful year with the number of customers increasing all the time. The numbers range from 40-60 every week so we are kept very busy. It is our 30<sup>th</sup> birthday this year and we are going to have a party on 22<sup>nd</sup> September to include all those who have helped in the past as well as the current helpers and our customers. If you know of anyone or have been involved with Pop-In yourself please could you inform either Olive Steele or Sue Rossall so an invitation can be sent, Thanks.

If anyone feels they could help out once a month, we meet every Tuesday and arrive at the church centre at 9.45.a.m. to prepare the meal and serve lunch at 12 p.m. If you cannot help for all of the morning but could help serve and clear up afterwards that too would be appreciated. Please inform Olive or Sue if you would like to be involved in this worthwhile event in our church life. Thank you.

Sue Rossall

### **WORLD AND SERVICE**

The World Service & Missions Committee has not been formally constituted for quite a number of years now. However in its absence a lot of good work has occurred and this year has been no exception with, for instance, generous charitable giving and support for special collections, continuing support for Traidcraft, and the excellent ecumenical efforts for Christian Aid.

Nevertheless we can do more, and it has been agreed that a new Team be formed which look at coordinating and stimulating our work further – both in our own locality and in the world at large. Sylvia Cowling has agreed to chair this team, and we look forward to the progress that this team will enable our church to make in this important area.

Leslie Newton

### **TRAIDCRAFT**

Another year has passed, bringing almost 100 months trading in the Thrift Shop for Fair Trade goods. May I express a big thank you to Joyce and all her team for their dedicated work. The expansion in the Café has increased sales too – thank you.

Across the village there is a monthly turnover of about £900, though the months up to Christmas with Christmas card sales are the highest.

I can obtain almost anything from the Traidcraft catalogue – free of carriage cost to you. I'm always pleased to receive orders. Thank you to everyone for support of Fair Trade. You are giving hard working folk a chance to help themselves and their families.

Howard Fox

### **ACTION FOR CHILDREN**

The Bramhall Support Group which comprises the Methodist churches in our circuit was awarded the Stephenson Award in 2008 for “outstanding commitment to the work of the NCH and as a recognition of the considerable contribution made in a voluntary capacity to the lives of some of the United Kingdom’s most vulnerable children, young people and their families”

The support group as a whole has raised over £100,000. The Bramhall and Wilmslow Methodist churches are some of the largest donors of voluntary income in the whole country.

Later in 2008 the charity changed its name to Action for Children.

As always BMC concentrated its efforts for AFC at Christmas by Carol singing outside Boots, and the Retiring Collection on Christmas Day.

It is a wonderful start to the Christmas Festival carolling outside Boots. As well as benefiting so many children it is also a wonderful and effective public witness and evidence of our Christian community getting into action in the wider community.

Terrie Baker

## **EVANGELISM**

### **3Ts**

3Ts is the mid-week youth club for 10 to 13 year olds which meets on a Tuesday evening at Church with alternate club nights with trips out to fun activities and interesting locations. It remains popular, with new members joining and a regular attendance of over 20.

We have a small team of leaders who help with craft, games or sporting activities. All the leaders take time to listen and share and have built great relationships with the young people, who in return respect them greatly.

David Halford and Terrie Baker

### **LIVIT!**

Livit! is the mid-week youth club for 13 to 16 year olds which meets for two hours on a Thursday evening at the Mill. Following the re-launch of the club (formerly Quest) we have begun to build this discipleship group. The group is small and draws from a wide area.

We have a small number of dedicated leaders, who work hard to build relationships with the members of the group.

David Halford

## **LITTLE FISHES**

Little Fishes toddler group meet every Friday and is regularly attended by over 35 children and their carers. At Little Fishes we try to understand the concerns of the

mums and children and offer much fellowship and support.

Children need a 'family' to which they can belong and which they can grow safely and develop relations based on trust, stability, commitment and friendship. Creating a sense of 'family' within toddler groups is an important part of demonstrating God's love, compassion and forgiveness. By offering support and encouragement to those at the toddler group, we are acting as facilitators of God's love, enabling children and adults to experience loving and caring relationships.

A Big Thank you to everyone who gives their time, energy and continue to be salt and light at Little Fishes. You are all very much appreciated.

Carol Halford

## **FUN WEEK 2008**

HOPE 2008 encouraged us all to work together and reach out into our community through Churches Together and I think it is fair to say at Fun Week 2008 - "Champion's Challenge" – we managed both those aims and many more. Around 130 children from Bramhall and Woodford, some church goers, others not, joined together to share the love of Jesus together with nearly 60 adults.

Throughout the week we encouraged the children to discover more about Jesus and his life through varying stories of people in the Bible. A sporting theme was portrayed through Bible and creative teaching, drama, craft and music, all of which helped inspire the children in their learning.

Saturday afternoon concluded the week in great style with a Family BBQ and disco with tbc girl band leaving a great feeling of 'let's do it again next year!!'  
Anne Clayton

## **THE MILL**

### **Monday Evening - 7:00 – 8:15pm-Ignition**

This ecumenical group has been running since the start of last autumn, with some really positive results. The session started with six young people, and now we have over fourteen attending, which includes young people from other church groups within Bramhall. Alan Poolton (URC Minister) and Andrew Brownlee (full time youth worker – Fords Lane) are supporting young people as they grow in faith and develop a greater understanding of the bible.

### **Wednesday Evening - 7:30 – 9:30pm -Drop N (Senior Youth Club / Years 10 onwards)**

This evening is for ages 14-18. The session provides a safe place where they can participate in issue based subjects that have been identified by the young people themselves. The session has recently seen new young people attending, who are

more 'needy' than the original group and have fewer opportunities to access additional support and resources within their daily lives. A smoking cessation worker offers advice and guidance and highlights the dangers to their health from smoking. A number of young people have now decided to stop or reduce the amount they smoke.

### **Saturday Evening -7:00 – 9:00pm -Fever ( years 6 – 9)**

Saturday night provision is for our junior members between the ages of 11 – 14. This session has direct Christian input each week through our 'Talky Bit' which is delivered by the main youth workers. The numbers have increased to between 20 and 25 every week. The young people have the opportunity to sign up for our annual residential that provides sports and outdoor activities, with the aim of increasing self confidence & esteem

### **Monday & Wednesday 10.00 – 12 noon – YIP & Activate (Youth Inclusion Programmes)**

Monday - This provision has been running between Sept 07 till Sep 08, with the aim of supporting young people from BHS who are at risk of NEET (Not in Education, Employment and Training) and are referred through 'The Centre' at Bramhall High School. The session currently has one young woman who is not engaged in school. This young person is undertaking an art project, through which she will produce a piece of artwork for the youth centre and will be awarded an accreditation.

Wednesday – Five young people will be starting a twelve-week music video project. Through this process, young people will discuss the issues that maybe currently affecting their lives and possible explanations as to why they find engagement in school and society difficult.

Activate has received a grant from the Congregational & General Insurance /Reform magazine, back in May 2008, which will be funding both these innovative programmes.

### **Pure – Christian Union (Bramhall High School – Lunch Time)**

Continues to be a positive session with good links with the Junior Christian Union (Hot Chocolate) and the \*CIST worker, Jonathan Wilson.

### **\*Christians In Schools Trust**

The session averages 10-12 each week. Some of the members aren't attending a church and have expressed they have no faith, as such. However, the club provides a safe place where young Christians can fellowship together, whilst spending time with their non-Christian friends. Young people enjoy meeting with Denise & myself each week where we have the opportunity to share the gospel through discussions and games. This session has the greatest value in terms of meeting young people who may never engage with the gospel or attend church. Also, the session allows the Mill to make positive relationships with teaching staff

### **Café Youth – Every Saturday Morning**

This session is our busiest session, with numbers reaching 45 - 50 most Saturday mornings. As stated before, this session 'feeds' our Saturday Night (Juniors). The Café Youth allows young people from local primary schools from year 6 as well as high school aged young people. This has proved crucial in allowing a healthy intake of members into other provisions. In addition, the session allows senior members of the centre to gain accreditations through our community placement award

### **After School - HUB**

**Monday:** Games and competitions to promote self-confidence and fellowship

**Tuesday:** Baking and basic food hygiene

**Wednesday:** The session provides opportunities for young people to learn various life skills and basic DIY. Since the session has started young people

have made the following items: Tying Dye pillowcases, Bird Boxes, Robot building and have also made bird tables for local nursing / care homes. All the activities which young people participate in will receive an AQA Accreditation. This session is run by our resident DIY expert, Graham Perkin. In addition, young people have also designed and produced 'Hobby Horses' for Wood Street Mission.

**Thursday: Community & Project day:** The young people are encouraged and supported by staff to develop projects which will enhance their youth centre and community.

**Friday: Arts/Crafts:** This session offers the young people the opportunity to be creative using a wide variety of materials.

Provision	Males	Females	11-13	14-16	17+	Total
HUB	50	141	78	106	10	194
Pure (incomplete data)	24	19	n/a	40		46
Activate	10	0				10
Seniors-Wed	170	138	n/a	302	6	308
Juniors - Sat	52	33	70	15		85
Cafe Youth - Sat New Joining	388	157	407	136	3 99	545
Discipleship Course	63	68	84	47	0	131
Grand Total						1319

### **YOUTH FELLOWSHIP**

Youth Fellowship (YF) meets on Sunday evenings, fortnightly in term time (give or take). We have a core of 8 young people aged from 14 through to 17. We combine learning with fellowship, social time and fun. We have continued to follow the Youth Emmaus course and are on the second series of this. In particular we have learned about the core values from the Sermon on the Mount which was used to put together an evening service presented by the youth in November. A real highlight of the year was the trip to Diggerland that we had in November which helped to further friendships within the group.

YF has a relaxed atmosphere in which the young people can discuss their faith and concerns openly. We thank God for the steps the young people in YF have made on their Christian journey this year.

Katie Smith

## **PRE-SCHOOL**

Monday to Fridays between 9.15 and 11.45 a.m.

Monday to Wednesday between 12.30 and 3.00 p.m. (Both term time only)

Our aims are:

- To provide a happy, caring and safe environment in which children can develop at their own pace.
- To share responsibility for children's development with parent/carers and other agencies.
- To encourage and assist with staff development.

Pre-School is authorised by the Local Authority to provide nursery as well as pre-school education, and is inspected by Ofsted.

Gillian Monk – 439 1030  
(During pre-school hours)

## **CHURCHES TOGETHER IN BRAMHALL AND WOODFORD**

Hope 08 provided a good stimulus to our ecumenical work, perhaps especially through the ecumenical Fun Club and Holidays at Home activities but also through other events culminating in the Community Carol Service at the High School.

Out of this enthusiastic work the leaders of the churches forming Churches Together in Bramhall and Woodford are working on developing a new structure to encourage similar missionary endeavour in the future.

Alongside this developmental work, the church leaders continue with their pattern of meeting weekly for prayer and monthly for a business meeting. This has enabled arrangements for shared services, acts of witness and Lent Groups to be organised.

Leslie Newton

## **INDOOR BOWLING GROUP**

The Indoor Bowling Group continues to meet on Tuesday afternoons from 2.00 p.m. to 4.00 p.m. during the winter months for an afternoon of non-competitive bowling conducted in an atmosphere of laughter and light-hearted banter.

The average attendance is 12 bowlers per session. We have been able to recruit several non church members during the past year. For various reasons, the Group did not undertake any outdoor bowling last summer.

Gerry Pownall - Chairman

## **LADIES BADMINTON**

Meets Wednesdays between 1.30 p.m. and 3.00 p.m.

The group is thriving with members coming from as far afield as Wilmslow. We have eight or nine attending each week, well matched in skill and fitness despite the wide range in their ages.

Pat Cameron

## **SENIOR BADMINTON**

Despite only having 6 members, Monday night badminton is still going strong. We play from 8 - 10 pm and new members are always welcome. If you are interested, please come along.

Sheila Turnbull

## **ART GROUP**

It is very much the picture as before, with 15-18 people meeting to paint on Monday afternoons. We have 31 names on the register, but several people have not been for a while, and have possibly 'ceased to meet'. We have gained 3 new members just recently, one of whom belongs to our Church, so we do reach out to the wider community.

We are not having a coffee morning/sale/exhibition in April this year. Instead it is planned for Saturday July 4th.

Jean Taylor

### **RAMBLING CLUB**

Membership has declined slightly because some of our stalwarts have left the district, and now stands at about 30, with about 14 being on a typical walk. We provide a walk of between 6 and 11 miles every 2 weeks, though as membership ages, there are more walks nearer the short end than the long.

In 2008 members negotiated 562 stiles and gates, raising £206.21 which has been donated to local charities.  
If you want to enjoy beautiful scenery in good company, and at the same time get healthy exercise, come and join us.

Ivan Hall - Secretary

### **THE SATURDAY STROLLERS**

We are now 20 years old, and in April celebrated this milestone with a Chinese Dinner Evening.

Our walks continue to be very popular, with different people among the group taking turns to organise them. Each 'Stroll' is up to 5 miles, with a stop for a coffee break along the way.

We meet behind the Health Centre at 9.30, normally on the second Saturday of the month and would be pleased to welcome you.

Organisers June and Tony Nightingale

### **11<sup>TH</sup> BRAMHALL METHODIST RAINBOWS**

**Venue / Times:** Upper hall, Church Centre, Mondays from 5.45 to 7.00pm

**Leaders / organisers:** Jenny Wells and Katy Ellison.

**Main Aims:** To introduce 5 to 7 year-old girls to the Guiding movement through crafts, cooking, games and songs.

**Review:** 2008 was the 21<sup>st</sup> Birthday of the Rainbows section of Guiding when the girls enjoyed many special activities including a 'Party Day' held at Stockport School. This was an opportunity to get together with Rainbows from other units and a great time was had by all.

Slightly better weather this year meant that we were able to get out and about more and had a very enjoyable evening at the Lee Wood Field with 1<sup>st</sup> Woodford Rainbows when the girls took part in a scavenger hunt and picnic.

Rainbows continues to be a thriving unit which is currently supported by the help of 2 young Leaders. The help of another adult would, however be greatly appreciated.

Jenny Wells – 439 8689

### **11<sup>TH</sup> BRAMHALL METHODIST BROWNIES**

Due to illness Chris Allen is unable to continue as Brown Owl at present. She is greatly missed. Two guiders and three young leaders have looked after the pack and since September have supported two new leaders: Debbie Bragard and Ruth Cawley.

There are now 17 Brownies and a budding waiting list. The Brownies have worked towards many badges, both individually and as a group. They joined the 12<sup>th</sup> Methodist Brownies to put on a Christmas show and to go carol singing.

They have also enjoyed games, crafts, songs and physical activities.

Ruth Cawley

## 12<sup>TH</sup> BRAMHALL METHODIST BROWNIES

Another happy year with a full Pack of 24 Brownies and a waiting list. We had a busy Thinking Day with a disco, a party and a trip to Liverpool with 7,000 other Guides and Brownies.

We have been out bowling, played rounders, held a sports evening, been orienteering in Bramhall Park and had a wellie paddle in the Ladybrook.

The highlight of our year, as always, was Pack Holiday when we turned the Childrens' Inn into Narnia. Since then, we all gained the Environment badge, then for Entertainer presented 'The Little Fir Tree' to the parents raising £35 for our 2009 project.

Sadly we lost another superb Guider to University and really need another Leader to help us maintain our varied programme.

2009? – Sleepover in London, Change the World project, camp sleepover, Pack Holiday etc. etc.

Wendy Roberts

## 11<sup>TH</sup> BRAMHALL METHODIST GUIDES

At present we have 2 full time leaders, 2 part time leaders, Emma and Alison are both at university, and 2 young leaders to look after 24 guides. This year Emma has obtained her camp permit, taking us for weekend camp at Linnet

Clough and is hoping to take more guides away in June. We have also taken 6 Guides to Guide HQ in London for an overnight stay with the Brownies. This year we are hoping to get involved with the new Guide initiative 'Change the World' when we will be raising money for a chosen charity. The Guides have also enjoyed doing their Chocolate interest badge and having a cake sale at church parade to raise money for our young leader Heidi to help towards a trip to Morocco.

Peta Hill

## 1<sup>ST</sup> WOODFORD & 6<sup>TH</sup> BRAMHALL (METHODIST) SCOUT GROUP

Beavers, Cubs and Scouts all meet at Woodford Scout & Guide HQ and enjoy various activities such as IT, Emergency Aid, crafts, cooking and, of course, games. Many activities go towards the 6 Challenges that make up the Chief Scout's Award in each section. Recently 3 Beavers have gained Bronze, 2 Cubs have gained Silver and 4 Scouts have gained Gold. The Gold Awards were presented by the Chief Constable for Manchester at a special County presentation evening. Outings have included cycling, the indoor climbing wall, ten-pin bowling and swimming. A new staged badge, "Hikes Away" encouraged us to travel to Delamere by train for a hike through the forest and round the mere.

We held our group camp at Linnet Clough in May, the Scouts went to Beaudesert Park in Staffordshire in August and the Cubs attended the Ladybrook Valley district cub camp at Linnet Clough in September.

We entered teams in the Cub Totem Pole competition (an afternoon of games and challenges), the district swimming gala and the Scout table tennis competition and took part in tree planting with the Friends of Happy Valley.

We are always ready to welcome new members in all the sections and also any adults able to help in any capacity. Currently our greatest need is for a Group Treasurer as Duncan is leaving the area with his job.

Jane Parsonage - Group Scout Leader  
Tel: 439 8369  
janeparsonage@aol.com

## CHURCH OPEN FOR PRAYER

- To be an outreach to the community.
- To provide an opportunity for prayer and to be a 'listening ear' when needed.
- To share fellowship and hopefully introduce the love of Jesus to those who are searching.

Church Open for Prayer continues to fulfil a great need within our community. Many people come into the quiet sanctuary of the Church to pray for loved ones and other concerns, some may write a prayer request knowing that others will continue to pray for their concern. People also come in for a time of quiet reflection and often share in fellowship over a cup of coffee. Whatever the circumstances, people continue to express their deep appreciation of the Church being open in their time of need.

It is giving people that precious space to bring their concerns to God and to have the assurance that someone is there to gently come alongside if needed.

We have a wonderful prayer ministry team of almost forty people and have recently had a Thanksgiving Evening to give praise and thanks to the Lord for His faithfulness in all that has taken place within Church Open for Prayer.

Margaret Coulthard – 439 5863

### **PARENTING COURSE**

This was a new initiative which ran in April and October 2008.

The 8 week Family Caring Trust course is a chance to learn new parenting skills in an informal and friendly atmosphere with chance for discussion and sharing together.

Topics covered included : Misbehaviour, Encouragement, Listening, Talking, Discipline, Quality Time and an optional Spiritual session.

17 mums did the course and in January 2009 we had a social get-together. A future plan to meet monthly after Easter was met with enthusiasm.

NB Another course starting October 2009 – already 4 mums have signed up!

Liz Dooley – 439 6015

## **RESOURCES**

### **PROPERTY AND SAFETY**

Once again the members of the property committee have undertaken or managed many repair and maintenance activities during the year and for these very sincere thanks go to all of them. The individual activities undertaken by each person are far too numerous to mention and range from the essential maintenance of the heating and electrics (including the new heating system in Centrepoint), building maintenance, including the hiring of a 'cherry picker' truck to track down the leak in the vestry roof, plastering in the church gallery, regular sand spreading during the bad weather, regular safety checks inside and outside the premises, the addition of electric door stops, kitchen changes and fridge for the coffee shop, new PA desk, new cupboards, new lock for pre-school door, new sink for flower ladies, a variety of new items to support Praise at the Point, new banner store, removal of wasps nest and every day activities just to keep the premises 'roadworthy'.

It is again pleasing to report that no 'reportable accidents' have happened during the year.

This year we have welcomed Angela Watson, who joined us as our cleaner/caretaker and Brian Street who has joined the committee with a specific brief around Centrepoint.

Finally, thanks to all of you who have been affected in any way by our activities. We try hard to work round people and events and to tell people affected by changes, but with such a big church family and so many weekly activities we occasionally get it wrong. Thanks for your ongoing support.

John Theakston, Property Chairman

## **CHURCH GARDENS**

The Church Gardens are looked after by a team of about 10 gardeners meeting on a Monday morning as and when necessary which averages about once every 2 or 3 weeks through the year. Our aim is to make the village centre a more pleasant environment, and to demonstrate that our church is alive, active, and socially aware.

Time takes its toll on team members, and new recruits are always welcome – particularly young retirees. Experience is not necessary, green fingers will be provided. Ivan Hall, who has been team co-ordinator for many years, is one of those who has had to give up, and I have taken his place.

Ray Guha - Gardeners Co-ordinator

## **CONTACT MAGAZINE**

'Contact' is published every 2 months. It's aim is to provide communication between friends & members of the Church, describing past activities & publicizing forthcoming events.

Increased use of electronic communication, (emails) has made the magazine easier to produce and improve it's quality.

Greater contribution of articles, pictures & photos, would be welcome, to better reflect the many & varied activities of the congregation of our Church.

Help with interviewing or reporting would be appreciated. Input from a wider group of people, representing as many groups as possible, could make for a more interesting magazine.

Editor : Chris Hall 456 7023

e-mail [chris.david.hall@ntlworld.com](mailto:chris.david.hall@ntlworld.com)

## FROM THE RETIRING STEWARDS

It seemed a long time since we were asked to become Stewards by Ian Coverdale, and in that time the job has radically changed and we have changed with it! We started as “managers” of the 101 things that needed doing week by week, and now our role is that of “leaders”, focusing on the four elements of our 'Vision' document; trying out new ideas, new suggestions, and new ways of doing things. Now, as the leadership team is being widened and extended, this process will continue, bringing more adjustments to the church.

Change can be unsettling, both for Stewards and the wider church family, but on our Christian journey we are not promised an easy ride, or a settled future. To anyone who is feeling unnerved by the changes, we would ask that they think back a few years and compare the successful, but rather static church we had, with the vibrant church we have now, with its mix of traditional and modern, young and old, quiet and extrovert, all rooted in the faith that we profess in God. We have been very blessed in our Ministers and fellow Stewards, who, throughout our four years, have been so kind, helpful and encouraging. We want to thank you all, Leslie for his friendship and leadership, the Stewards past and present, and the whole church family for your unfailing prayers, help and support. It has been a privilege to serve you as Stewards, may we go forward into the future in faith together.

God bless you all, Pam Horrobin and John Cooke

# BRAMHALL METHODIST CHURCH

[www.bramhallmethodists.org.uk](http://www.bramhallmethodists.org.uk)

## STAFF TEAM

**Ministers:** Rev Leslie Newton Tel 440 8007  
leslie@revnewton.co.uk

Pastor: Rev Margaret Hall Tel 440 0796  
Pastor Bob Bartindale Tel 485 2659  
bob@bartindale.com

## CHURCH OFFICE

Office Hours: Monday-Friday 9.00 a.m. - 12.30 p.m.  
Contact: Tel 439 1204

## SUNDAY WORSHIP

8.30 a.m. **Monthly Early Morning Communion.** A Reflective half hour communion service followed by breakfast. (usually 3rd Sunday in the month)

10.00 a.m. **A choice of Two Services.** The service in the Main Building is broadly traditional, whilst the service in Centrepont "Praise @ the Point" is more contemporary and is accompanied by Junior Church. A crèche is available covering both services.

6.30 p.m. **Evening Praise**

## THURSDAY WORSHIP

10.00 a.m. A half hour service with hymns, a brief word and prayer.

## **Financial Summary**

The Church's financial year runs from 1<sup>st</sup> September to 31<sup>st</sup> August. The summary below is therefore for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> August 2008. This report covers the General account, there is also a Property account which handles income and expenditure of the buildings. Copies of the full accounts are available from the Church office.

<b>Income and Expenditure</b>	Actual 2007/08	Budget 2007/08	Actual 2006/07
<b>Receipts</b>			
Direct Giving	131,022	101,964	104,791
Gift Aid Tax Refund	24,835	21,397	22,408
Other Income	<u>16,903</u>	<u>6,072</u>	<u>7,321</u>
<b>Total Receipts</b>	<b>172,760</b>	<b>129,433</b>	<b>134,520</b>
<b>Payments</b>			
Circuit Assessment & Connexion	99,852	98,550	97,676
Contribution to Building costs	12,000	14,000	12,000
Local Church expenses	31,680	20,619	19,534
Gifts to Methodist Funds	<u>5,100</u>	<u>5,100</u>	<u>4,950</u>
<b>Total Payments</b>	<b>148,632</b>	<b>138,269</b>	<b>134,160</b>
<b>Surplus/(Deficit)</b>	<b>24,128</b>	<b>(8,836)</b>	<b>360</b>

The past year is very encouraging as there was a good response to our appeal for increased giving. A legacy and large donations helped considerably and we are grateful to all of you who have increased your giving. Gift Aid continued to help balance our budget and if any taxpayer still has not had a gift aid form to sign please let me know.

On the expenditure side the circuit assessment increased by 4.5% in September 2007 and by 2% in September 2008.

Charitable giving is slightly down because the previous year included the Malawi Hospital appeal. Church Council approved donations from the Special Projects reserve of £8,920 in addition to £11,000 given to the Mill youth project.

## **Summary Balance Sheet**

	<b>31 August 2008</b>	<b>31 August 2007</b>
Net Assets represented by:	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
General account	32,681	22,553
Property current account	15,306	13,434
Property renovation/capital	73,078	57,218
Trust Funds	20,517	13,527
Special Projects reserve	20,373	25,308
Centrepont legacy	<u>39,980</u>	<u>53,976</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>201,935</b>	<b>186,016</b>

To bring you up to date, I am pleased to report that regular giving in the first four months of the current year has increased by 7%. Thanks to the generous giving we are glad to welcome our new Pastor Bob Bartindale. We are also able to support the development of our ministry in line with our Church Vision, for instance in resourcing Life Groups and Parenting Classes as well as large events such as the very successful Wedding Fayre.

We are fortunate to belong to a church family that does so much in many different ways to help those in need both at home and abroad. We give grateful thanks to everyone for all their effort and generosity which enables God's work to continue.

Paul Langton – Church Treasurer