

There have been no major changes in the year, but we believe that there has been an ever deepening relationship between God and our folk within the regular congregation. Answered prayer has been a regular part of many of our services and members meetings. There have also been several who have been supported by the fellowship through difficult times.

We have continued to see good numbers of young people and again were blessed with another teenage baptism, indicative of the growing faith experience of those especially who have grown up within the family of Westlea Church and are now relating that to the adult world.

This report has been produced by the leadership group of Westlea Church, on behalf of the members, in line with the terms of the Charities Act 1993 and its updated recommendations (SORP 2005). We hope it gives a clear picture of the life of Westlea Church, the way in which our members have sought to fulfil our stated objectives and our aims for the next year.

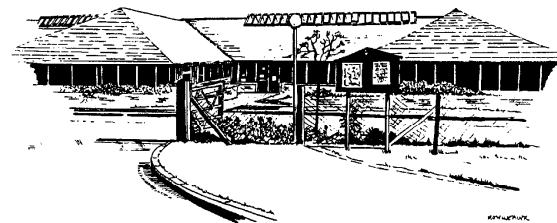
Westlea Leadership Team

On behalf of Westlea Church. February 2011



Westlea Church

Annual Report 2010



The Partnership of West Swindon and the Lydiards
Baptist • Church of England • Methodist • United Reformed Church

Objectives

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

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

Organisation

Westlea Church is one of five churches in the Ecumenical Partnership of West Swindon and the Lydiards. The trustees of Westlea Church are the Members and three of these members represent Westlea on the Partnership Council (PC).

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

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

Meetings

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

During 2010 the Members met five times including the Annual General Meeting (March). The leadership group met four times in the same period.

At the end of 2010 there were 26 members of Westlea Church and of these members 21 are joint members of all the four denominations (Anglican, Baptist, Methodist, and United Reformed), 4 are Baptist members, and 1 is an Anglican member.

gift aid tax claims, included in this is the final claim for the year that is awaiting payment.

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Regular Gift Aid agreements	15	15.5	14.5	14	12
Av. Gift Aid £/week	£16.04	£16.62	£16.83	£17.20	£22.18

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

10% of our income is given away to the charities we support. Once our commitment to Toybox is covered, of the remainder, 40% is given to both Emerge and Tear Fund with the remaining 20% to a charity nominated on an annual basis. The charity in 2010 was Swindon Food Bank.

All our property is housed in our only building, a shed, situated in the school grounds. It is insured for approximately £3,861, although it has no resale value. Our property contents are insured to the value of £7,236. We have Public Liability insurance for £5,000,000.

Targets for 2011

Our targets for 2011 are as follows:

- Healthy Church Check - We shall carry out a “Healthy Church Check” and use this to identify how our lay members may best be enabled.
- Youth Work - We will focus on how best to support our youth work particularly as the ages of the young people change and the group sizes change.
- Mission - We will work to reach out to those connected with, but not yet a part of our church community. This will include continuing “Men’s’ Might” on an irregular basis with a predominantly social and inclusive agenda. As well as the membership acting as “Salt and Light to our community.

Summary

Westlea church has changed over the year in that some have moved on and we have seen some new faces. We are becoming increasingly multinational in our membership.

highlighted above members have helped with REMIX and served on the steering and management committees of the Partnership Emerge Project.

Three of our members have assisted with the Partnership organised Messy Church during the year.

In the wider community we rely on our members to be “salt and light” in their workplaces and dealings with friends. Several members assist with such organisations as the Swindon Autistic Support Group, Girlguiding UK, a committee member of “The Harbour” an asylum seekers support group, NCT, Lower Shaw Farm Children’s Project and many who help in school classrooms and clubs. Our members are also involved in School Governance and Parent Teacher associations and one serves as a Special Constable with the Wiltshire Constabulary.

In the wider church we have members involved at Synod and national committee level in the URC.

We continue to support the Toybox Charity which works with street children in Central America. The way this support now works is for the money donated to go to a specific project represented by a Child Ambassador; during 2010 we were assigned a new Child Ambassador who represents one of the projects in El Salvador. With thanks to one of our members, we approached our fundraising for Toybox in a slightly different way this year and collected the money saved by our abstinences during Lent in little jars. Over the six week period we were more than able to meet our annual financial commitment. We hope to try this again in 2011.

We have continued our support for the Filling Station, a local charity helping the homeless around Swindon, through preparing sandwiches and providing provisions and clothing, which are then distributed. We also contributed to Operation Christmas Child donating presents in shoe boxes for children in Eastern Europe.

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

Material Resources

As with many others, our financial position during 2010 has deteriorated with income reducing and expenditure remaining constant.

The total value of planned giving has decreased. Our income totalled £18670.52 a small increase on last year. This represents an average of £13.81 per member per week. We hope to recover approx. £3003 through

Their roles within the Church and Partnership community included:

- Leadership Team, Treasurer, Secretary, Child Advocates, Sunday School Superintendent; Gift Aid Secretary, PC Representatives, PC chair, PC treasurer and Partnership Safe to Grow Co-ordinator.

The Christian Community

Westlea Church meets to worship week by week in Westlea School, which we hire for the purpose. There is a morning service held at 10:00am. Year on year the average attendance at Sunday services in 2010 is constant although can be erratic on a weekly basis.

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Adult attendance	22	21	20	22	22	22	22
Child attendance	15	14	12	11	11	12	12

On our Contact list there are currently 27 families with 16 younger people 16 and under. No births were celebrated with Thanksgiving Services or Baptisms, although 1 Believer’s Baptism was celebrated at Holy Trinity Shaw.

Our youth work on Sunday mornings has continued to be a priority; 15 young people attend regularly and are split equally between Sunday Club (primary school) and Godzone (secondary school). We meet on the first and third Sundays of the month. On the fourth Sunday we have our monthly swop over service where the children have the opportunity for a more active session in the hall while the adults meet in a classroom. As part of our annual Nativity service some of the children were able to share their musical talents with the congregation. As a congregation we renewed our commitment to our “Safe to Grow” policy.

Our “First Steps” group for pre-school children and their carers meets once a week for an hour and a quarter of singing, stories and craft on a Christian theme. Over the last year it had on average 8 adults and 5 children. Currently there are 6 children on the register but numbers fluctuate widely. Four church members as well as the Partnership’s Careforce worker help to run it and make coffee.

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

- URC's Vision for Life studies on Prayer
- The Partnership's Lenten studies based on Characters around the cross
- A study on some of the characters within Judges
- The Baptist Union study on "small church"

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

Outreach

We support the Emerge youth groups run at a Partnership level including support for REMIX which meets weekly on Tuesday evenings. This is well attended by a variety of young people, most of whom have no church links. Several of our members help run these sessions and members are also involved in the running of the Emerge project. No younger members of our church attend this at the moment.

As many of our First Steps carers are not in regular church attendance encouragement is given to them to join us, especially at our Christmas events.

Our Men's Might group meets occasionally, when we meet together with some on the fringes of the church for social activities. We see this as a way to reach out to those with whom we already have connections. Activities Men's Might have been involved in include garden clearance work, repair of our shed and other practical activities around the church family.

As in previous years, we have delivered literature to every household in Westlea and Eastleaze, inviting people to our special activities at Christmas. We were pleased with the feedback from the Christmas cards and the subsequent attendance, at many of our Christmas services.

We have continued to deliver prayer cards to all the houses above sharing the fact that we are praying for a particular set of streets each month. We did not have many responses requesting prayer this year and are considering how to proceed with this in 2011.

We encourage our members and regular attendees to speak to their friends and neighbours about Jesus and what he offers them for their lives.

Through this personal witness by our members and in the church groups and activities, and we hope that God will continue to use us to reach out to the people with whom we come in contact, and nurture lasting Christian friendship with them.

Some of our outreach activities have included opportunities to meet together to eat including barbecues and walks that have involved several friends who do not usually attend church. Although this year we have not managed to undertake as many walks as in previous years, we had a successful walk amongst the Bluebells of West Woods along with other members of the Partnership.

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

Christian Service

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

We have been greatly blessed by the help and assistance of our shared staff team. We have 2 staff members both of whom are non-stipendiary, and contribute both to worship and service in Westlea, the Partnership and further afield. This includes going into Westlea School on a regular basis to take assemblies.

A number of our members are actively involved in work with young people, both within our church, teaching in Sunday Club, and in the wider youth community by helping with Emerge as well as serving on the steering and management committees of the Partnership Emerge Project.

During the year, one of our members served as treasurer as well as Chair of the Partnership Council and we have members involved with developing the Partnership Constitution and maintaining the Partnership web site. Two of our members are also the Partnership Safe to Grow co-ordinators. As