



PASS IT ON FOLDER

FOR
MISSION AND OUTREACH

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

In March 2003 the 'Pass It On' folder, containing practical mission and outreach projects, was issued to all our churches in the British Province. From time to time the Renewal Committee has been informed of new projects and these have been forwarded to all congregations for them to add to their folder.

Mission and Outreach are two of the major tasks still facing the Christian Church. So the Renewal Committee has decided to update the folder and add a number of new ideas. The logo has also been updated and an index has been added making it easier to find projects which you may want to adopt.

We do realise that a mission or outreach project that is successful in one area may not suit another and it is up to congregations to assess their own particular situation. Not all projects will appear to have immediate success and may need modifying along the way, but all will contribute to the developing of a positive image of the Church.

Please let the Renewal Committee know of any new mission or outreach projects you are trying and if you would like them adding to the 'Pass It On' folder for others to try.

The Renewal Committee are here to help in the very important task of Mission and Outreach so if you need help please contact us, that is what we are here for.

Paul Greenhough
Chairman, Renewal Committee - June 2012
paul.greenhough@moravian.org.uk



Pass It On Ideas

10.9.2013

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Café Church

W1

Wellhouse and Lower Wyke - 2007

From Dave Bull

This Mothers Day service marked a year of Cafe Church events that we have been enjoying at Wellhouse. We felt we had to do a different style of service on our special family service days for people not familiar with the traditional Church service. Tinkering, or relaxing the church service was not enough. So, when we heard a speaker at a district event explaining the way cafe church can work, we just had to give it a go!

Basically every 3rd Sunday in the month we now throw out everything we know about a 'normal' service, apart from a 'message of the good news', a passage or two from scripture and prayers. Add in; informality, fun, mistakes, humour, emotion, absence of hymn book, no pews, refreshments throughout the event and a sense of spontaneity. All our celebration days have increased the number attending by around double! One event drew nearly 70 people, which would normally be around 25!

Firstly, we call it a 'celebration' and not a service, 'Service' sound too formal! We always try to work the event around a theme people outside the church can understand in an instant. That way they think they know what the day is going to be about. Obviously we work the 'good message' into it. We celebrated sports day during the Football world cup and Sport relief weekend, expanding the message of Paul to run the race. For Halloween we showed, how the darkness will never put out the light. Once you have the theme you'll soon find there is loads of material and inspiration on the web!

Involve everyone! - No one person runs the whole event. One person welcomes everyone, one will say the prayers, another will oversee a game to play which illustrates a point, another group will do a puppet sketch, another will read, another will give a short talk (and I mean 5 minute maximum), another group will tell a funny story. And, there is always audience participation, which involves everyone! People feel very comfortable to speak out and talk at any point to add to the celebration.

So; are you sitting comfortably? - At Wellhouse we have a modern building with no pews so we arrange the chairs informally around tables - cafe style. On the tables we decorate with flowers, pumpkins, or whatever seems appropriate, together with ample sweets, biscuits, pencils, paper, plasticine or something for little ones to play with.

Tea and biscuits - and juice by the jug full - no charge please!!!! - As soon as people arrive we GIVE refreshments, just like you would do at home for visitors. And anyone is welcome to help themselves to a top-up at any time during the celebration.

No hymn books to jungle with! - All the words to all the hymns are projected via the laptop and a projector on to a 3m x 2m screen. That way people are looking up and singing out. We can clap, move do actions whilst singing rather than hiding behind books and sheets of paper. We can even write our own words to popular tunes.

A picture paints a 1000 words! - The laptop and projector also allows us to project images during meditation times and Powerpoint style presentations to illustrate a talk. We can also play interactive games - on Mothers Day we played Family Fortunes, where the audience had to think of words, which describe the perfect mother!

Preparation - Where possible we to prepare something on the Friday youth group before the Sunday event which will give the young ones a reason to turn up on the Sunday! For mothers day we baked biscuits for their mothers, who then had to arrive on Sunday to be given the biscuits. Last year they made up bunches of flowers for their mothers.

Engage - We usually aim to have at least 6 different items to present, breaking the message into 2 or 3 parts, which will either make people laugh, or cry, or both. If we can engage people with emotion, then we feel that the spirit has a greater chance of breaking

through. Jesus engages his 'audience' with stories and with actions that changed people's lives. If we can begin to do that in a small way, then maybe we will be able to fulfil the commission to make disciples of all men, women and children!

From Ken Evans

For about 18 months both Churches of Wellhouse and Lower Wyke have been thinking about embarking upon a new style of worship, but more importantly, reaching out to those around our Churches who are searching for meaning within their lives. We want to give them an opportunity to learn something of the love of Jesus, in an atmosphere in which they felt comfortable and at home. When we asked people their opinion they said they wanted something more informal but they did not want a wishy washy message

So after a number of meetings within each Church, both Churches launched their Café Church style of worship. Wellhouse launched on Mothers Day 2006 and Lower Wyke in January 2007. Both Churches have enjoyed immense success since the launch, with an average attendance being about 100% of the usual attendance. Each service is planned with a theme eg Mother's Day, Father's Day, Reaching out to those in need, Sports Day, Youth, Harvest and an alternative to Halloween.

Both Churches have a nucleus of people willing and able to plan these services, with or without the assistance of the minister, who is on hand if require to do his bit. Without the enthusiasm and commitment of these dedicated members, Café Church would not have got off the ground, because it cannot be left to one individual to plan it. There must be ideas and input from other people as well as support within the service itself. The service involves lots of people, some to welcome, prepare and serve the tea, coffee, juice as the people arrive, someone to lead prayer, read a bible passage, give a short address or one of a number, introduce the service and close with a summary and blessing, also included are games, puppets (Wellhouse), Belleplates (Lower Wyke), funny stories within the theme and most important of all, audience participation.

At Wellhouse we are lucky with a multi purpose building, at Lower Wyke we use the Sunday School Hall, no pews, we sit round tables, we can put on the tables things to use during the service, pencil and paper, sweets, biscuits etc and of course something to keep the really young occupied and interested.

We use no hymn books, everything is on Power Point, we use modern songs and quite often un-usual tunes to which our own words can be added, we can sing out without hiding behind hymn books and sheets of paper, the laptop and projector allows the projection of images, during the hymns, during times of meditation, even during the address, it can be used for games, Family Fortunes, Mr and Mrs or rather Parent and Child, this can get quite controversial. Quite often a picture paints 1000 words.

Plenty of tea, coffee and juice, homemade biscuits and cakes, which people can have all through the service, although we do encourage that use be made at the beginning and end, if possible.

We endeavor to engage with the people by breaking the message into a number of shorter parts with laughter, crying or both. Jesus used emotion on more than one occasion with the people of his day. We hope that in so doing we can fulfill the 'great commission' to make disciples of all nations, men, women and children. This what we have endeavored to achieve, with, I feel some degree of success. I would encourage any congregation looking to reach out to those around who are searching for something of meaning in their lives but don't feel comfortable in the traditional service, then think seriously about Café Church, it has proved a great success for us.

Back to Church Sunday

2012

W2

From Colin McIlwaine

Those of us who are in ministry have probably heard a wide variety of reasons and excuses as to why people no longer attend church. Some are undoubtedly genuine, others can sound fairly plausible and there are still more which it is better to take with a pinch of salt. Whatever the reasons may be, there has been a sharp decline in church attendance in Britain in recent years and the question, "What can we do to get folk back into church?" is often asked.

One of the ideas suggested in recent years, has been the "Back To Church Sunday" initiative. The basis of this is very simple. Think of someone you know who used to be a churchgoer, but whom, for whatever reason, has drifted away. The idea is that there is a designated Sunday when a personal invitation is extended to that person and anyone else you may know who has stopped attending over the years to come back to Church. A number of Churches have come together to provide resources for this day, now nationally held on the last Sunday in September and more information can be found on

www.backtochurch.co.uk. However there is no reason why the idea of "Back to Church Sunday" cannot be used on other Sundays during the year.

The worship and message for this particular day should be appealing and relevant to those who may feel slightly uncomfortable with the situation or who have hesitated in coming back into Church after a number of years absence. Often Churches put on special refreshments after the service to give people a chance to relax and chat afterwards.

One thing which we must always remember, is that God is often at work in ways which we cannot fully understand and our invitation may lead to the beginning or renewing of a journey of faith for the person concerned. Having tried "Back To Church Sunday" in one of my own congregations, I would encourage all of us to give it a try. We may not pack the church out with former members, but if even a few respond positively to the invitation and there are fruitful results then it is worth doing. A return to church may also be a return to (or the beginning of) a relationship with the Church's Lord and Master.

So give "Back To Church Sunday" a go and I hope and pray that it will have a positive influence in the mission and outreach of our church.

Morning Prayers

W3

Fulneck 2013

From Michael Newman

In September 1996 Br David Dickinson brought a proposal to the Fulneck Church Committee that a weekly prayer service be held in church. This was agreed and the weekly services began on 10th October. They have continued every Thursday ever since. For many years Br Dickinson led the services until ill health forced him to stop in 2005. From that time on Sr Vi Hayton has coordinated the prayer services. The minister has been included in the rota, but the number of different lay people who have also led the service is now in double figures.

The services begin at 9.45am and last for about 15 to 20 minutes. There is a series of eight liturgies which are used in rotation to provide the main structure of the service. Some include a hymn verse which is sung unaccompanied. Each liturgy includes a Bible reading and a responsive psalm which is chosen from the selection in the Moravian liturgy book. The prayers of intercession are the only part of the liturgy which is not prescribed and it is up to the service leader to find or prepare something appropriate *and this time can be used for prayers from the congregation*. In 2012 the liturgies were updated to reflect the language of the new Moravian liturgy book from which parts of the liturgies are derived.

The attendance has grown over the years and we sometimes reach twenty or more. The lure of tea, coffee and cakes at Zachary's Restaurant following the service may have a part to play in this! But it has become a valued part of the weekly routine for many people. When asked about what the service means to them, people's comments included "uplifting", "a time of peace and calm", "good fellowship", and "helps to put life into perspective". Using another of the comments, I think the services will continue to be "an important time for regular, simple, quiet reflection and meditation" for many years to come.

Renewal Committee commend the practice of regular prayer together. This structure of weekly prayer using a simple liturgy is an excellent way to help people lead prayer groups, develop devotional use of the Psalms and give space for intercessions for the Church, the local community and the wider world. A PDF of these liturgies can be downloaded from the Renewal pages on the Moravian Church Website www.moravian.org.uk. We have attempted to trace all the copyright holders of prayers in these liturgies – if we have missed a copyright holder please let us know and we will make the necessary corrections.

Christmas Tree Festival **S&C1**

Brockweir 2006

From Beth Torkington

In order to hold a Christmas Tree Festival it is important to invite participants some months in advance to allow the various groups time to organise. The church provided a number of small trees (approximately 2' high) which were placed in the church window recesses, as well as a large tree at the front of the church.

The central idea was to decorate a tree reflecting each group's work within the village, as well as a suitable carol. By the side of each tree, words from the carol were displayed, as well as an A4 sheet with information highlighting the work of the various groups. Whilst Brockweir is a small village, it has an active social life and the following groups were approached and responded favourably:-

- Sunday Adventurers (Sunday School)
- Moravian Women's Association
- The Social Club
- The Parish Grassland Project
- HAPPA (Horse and Pony Protection Association.)
- Table Tennis Club
- The History Society
- The Bridge Committee
- The Bonfire Committee
- The Village Shop
- The Book Club
- Church Flower Arrangers

The various groups and societies were very creative in their choice of decorations, for example, the Table Tennis Club chose 'Ding Dong Merrily on High' as their carol and ping-gong balls featured quite heavily on their tree! The History Society had various photographs of village elders, who had contributed to the oral history of the village and sparked off many reminiscences.

The trees were 'unveiled' at the Christingle Service and were well received. The festival publicised the work of different church and village groups and brought people together, putting the church at the heart of the village once more. We hope the ripples of this are still travelling outwards. As the church is always open at Brockweir, we don't know how many people viewed the Christmas trees but we did have some favourable comments in the visitor's book and within the village generally. It is something we will do again changing the theme so that it remains fresh and vibrant. It was also very good fun!

Flowering the Cross

S&C2

Baildon 2004

From Sarah Groves

Every Easter Sunday the young people in Baildon Moravian Church decorate a large wooden cross with paper flowers. The flowers, made of crepe paper, are stapled onto the Cross whilst the rest of the congregation listen to the Easter Sermon. The decorated cross is then brought out into Church during the last hymn.

The young people make the flowers during the service. They can be as simple or complicated as you like. Ours are very simple - crepe paper strips approx 10 cm deep and 30 cm long. Two contrasting colour strips are laid on top of each other and then the bottom of the strip is twisted tightly whilst the top of the strip is left open. The twisted bottom is then stapled on the Cross and the open end is flattened out. These are not very elaborate close up but they are quick and easy to make and give a great splash of colour when the Cross is covered with them.

Immediately after the service the cross is taken out and firmly staked into the Church grounds that front onto the main road. We have found that many people look forward to seeing the Cross there on Easter Sunday and the days following Easter. Members of the public phone up to ask if it going to be put up each year and others come to photograph it. We hope the Flowered Cross reminds them of the heart of the Christian Faith - the resurrection of our Lord Jesus.

One thing we have to remember is to take it down once it has suffered a heavy rainstorm, as crepe paper does not look its best after a good soaking!!

Nativity Walk

S&C 3

Brockweir 2006

From Beth Torkington

The idea for a Nativity Walk arose in Brockweir because of the proximity of the church, the horse and donkey sanctuary and village inn. It was an opportunity to re-tell the birth of Christ at its simplest level and forget the commercial trappings of Christmas, if only for a while. It also proved to be incredibly popular and the members of the congregation were almost fighting to get a role, so beware!

The idea was shared with churches in St Briavels and the Nativity Walk was performed first in St Briavels village and then in Brockweir on two consecutive evenings. The walk began with the singing of a hymn and then there were various re-enactments from the Bible, from villagers' upper storey windows to the crowd below. A narrator kept the story flowing, as we moved from one location to another following Joseph and Mary on a donkey to the village inn. We continued to sing hymns as we encountered shepherds in the fields and wise men on our journey. We didn't have any live music but this could be added to give greater atmosphere.

Elaborate costumes were not used and the story was told simply as if it was happening for the first time. This straight forward approach seemed to strike a chord with villagers. The walk ended at the stable with prayers and a hymn after a real baby Jesus appeared in a manger. Over eighty people gathered in the Sunday School for tea and biscuits and a chance to thaw out having actually gained from the experience. At the stable we had a collection for the horse and donkey sanctuary.

Christmas at the Stables

Leominster 2006

From Beth Torkington

In your context try going to a local farm or stable very close to Christmas, in the evening either on Christmas Eve or the day before, and holding a very simple service of well-known carols and the Christmas readings actually in the animal quarters. Lit only by torches and surrounded by the smells and sounds of the animals, this seems to touch people profoundly. Hot drinks and mince pies, and carrots and apples for the animals, are a good way to finish. We found that when we organised this for the young people at Leominster several sets of parents wanted to come too, the first time they had really joined in.

Evangelism at Christmas

Renewal Committee 2002

S&C4

We have collected together some ideas and we hope that some of these might be useful in your situation or could be adapted for your situation.

- Invite everyone to a mince pies and mulled wine carol singing event.
- Have a Christmas games night for the children – bring a friend from school or open it up to anyone in the area.
- Put a huge Christmas card on the Church notice board – Happy Christmas to You from the xxxx congregation and light the church with Christmas lights round the door – make sure it's a fun place to do (and make sure it's warm and welcoming inside, of course!)
- Invite people from the area to come in and make Advent Stars on a craft evening or afternoon and hand them out to people with a little note about the meaning of them.
- Get your local radio station to record your carol service – send copies of the recording to people in hospital or hand out as gifts to people in the area.
- Could you put a really good quality large reproduction of the Nativity scene somewhere very visible outside the Church – something that people will take notice of.
- Get details of your Christmas services in the local free paper – make something different happen so that you get in the news (skateboarding ministers race through the service etc)
- Stick really nice nativity Christmas cards in the local phone boxes
- Use the local papers to raise the Church profile – don't hide your light under a bushel. Make sure they know about the Shoe Box collection, the Christingles you've made, the Toy Service that produced a lorry load of gifts, the pantomime that rivalled the professionals – or what ever. Make sure there is a contact name and number if someone wants to find out more.
- Send a woolly sheep kit to everyone you would like to invite to a special service, assembling the Christmas Nativity scene. It can be assembled with appropriate readings and carols and each family/child can bring forward the sheep they have made and add it to the scene. This would be especially suitable for the Cradle Roll.
- Send a Christmas Card to everyone in the Church's orbit with the details of the Christmas services – include a brief detail of each service so that people know what they are being invited too.

Reflections on a Beer Festival

Baildon 2004

From Sarah Groves

We have just finished our first full scale Congregation Beer Festival and these are a few thoughts on what we have learnt from the venture.

Many of the people who came to the Festival had never been inside our Church premises before - the local window cleaner, leading members of the local Horticultural Society, teachers, accountants, the District Nurse, one of the local Parent Teacher associations, and local politicians. In fact the first night of the festival was the day after the local elections and on our first night we had both the unsuccessful candidates and their friends in. It was a wonderful pastoral opportunity for me to chat to so many people that I do not normally meet, in a situation where they were just enjoying themselves. They were able to experience the Church linking into the culture in which they inhabit.

The second reflection is that it was such good fun. For a number of people it was the first time they had enjoyed making money for the Church. Too often we have persuaded people to spend hours working at fund raising projects that they do not really enjoy themselves. At the Beer Festival we had people volunteering because they wanted to help - we even had people with no Church connection phoning up to volunteer and joining in fully. Good friendships were made that way.

To the uninitiated beer is just a brown liquid in a glass. To those who love real ale it is a many-splendoured thing, capable of great variety dependant upon (a) the source of water used, (b) the barley maltings used, (c) the hops used and (d) the temperature of brewing. And just like wine the tasting experience of the beer is affected by the time of day and the food being consumed. A Beer Festival is the chance to taste and compare a number of different beers in peak condition and to enjoy them with like-minded drinkers.

To put on the Festival we had to build partnerships - one with the local pub who sold tickets for us, another with the local branches of the Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA) who helped us and lent us equipment and glasses and another with a licensee who obtained our licence and ordered much of the beer for us.

Lastly the Beer Festival energised the men of the congregation - it was their event and they ran it enthusiastically. Husbands who are rarely seen, local dads and good friends joined in and worked as a team. It drew together people who hardly knew each other and gave them a leading role in one aspect of our Church life.

It was fun - life in its abundance, an enjoyment of life, of each others company and of well made local drink. It was about bringing together the culture of ordinary working men and women and the culture of the church, and building bridges between the two. Jesus engaged with the ordinary people of his time not just the holy ones.

It was not all take either - we provided free food during the Festival; bread, cheese, peanuts and pickle and a free quiz. We had a bookstall with an honesty box and a CAMRA stall to give out more information about local beers and activities and a free programme with tasting notes. We enjoyed the Festival - Those who came to the Festival enjoyed it - We plan to hold another one next year!

The Dancing School Entertains

E2

Wellhouse 2004

From Ken Evans

For many years the Church at Wellhouse has been holding a Birthday Tea, as a fund raising social activity. The tables are decorated the tables for the seasons or with something to denote the months of the year. Everyone then sits on the appropriate table for to their birthday. These Birthday Teas have been relatively successful over the years, but as with most events held on a number of occasions, the numbers attending have declined. This year we thought we would put a different emphasis on the event, and use it to reach out into the community.

We have a Dancing School which uses the Church Building each day of the week, except Sunday, and so we invited them to come along and give us a short programme of entertainment after the tea. We also invited each child taking part to come along for the tea and bring along one parent 'FREE OF CHARGE', this they all did, and we even got some other parents and children coming along for tea and to watch the programme.

This had a twofold effect, firstly the congregation got to meet the young people using the building and the young people and their parents got to share in the warm and friendly fellowship of the church.

The response after the event was overwhelming, the parents thanked us for the invitation, it gave them the opportunity to see their children perform, and they were totally surprised at the tea and the welcome they received. They'd expected a cup of tea and a cake and they got meat salad, sweet, cakes and tea. The children had a special table with sandwiches and chocolate biscuits etc, where they could be grown up and sit away from their parents, they really enjoyed that! About 100 people sat down for tea.

We even received a card the following week from one of the children who came down to Church specially to say how much she and her friends had enjoyed the afternoon. We are certainly going to give it another go, next year, particularly as the Dancing Class leader and helper said they will be only too pleased to come again because they too enjoyed being together with the Church.

Sunday School Anniversary with a Twist

E3

Wellhouse 1997

From Dave Bull

We wanted to refresh our Sunday School Anniversary and include past Sunday School members as well as present members. So we sent out a '**Party in the Pews**' invitation to everyone who had been associated with the Wellhouse Sunday School , past present and future. We planned this as a special celebration event and promised a relaxed time of fun and friendship looking backwards and forwards at the Sunday School! We printed up special invitations and invited all past scholars we could find.

It started at 3pm with light refreshments on arrival and continued until around 4pm. There were various fun activities designed to say a big 'thank you' for the Sunday School and for all who have passed through its doors over the years.

Harry Potter Day

Lower Wyke 2005

C1

From Paul Greenhough

Background

It was decided by the Sunday School teachers and the Church Committee that an outreach project aimed at the children and young people in the community should be perused. It was decided to have a "Fun Day" for children aged 6-11 years old.

Planning

First of all a plan for the day was drawn up. Harry Potter was chosen as the theme. The number of children we could accommodate and how many adults we would need to supervise was carefully considered in line with our Child Protection Policy.

500 fliers advertising the day were professionally printed (we considered that the quality of the publicity material is very important) and sent them out with the church news letter around the area, also targeting the local school. A tear of return slip was part of the leaflet.

A co-ordinator was appointed who would receive the returned slips, (their phone number and address on the publicity leaflet) so that we could make sure that we were not over subscribed and that parents could ask about any worries they might have. Admission on the day was strictly only for those children who had booked through the co-ordinator.

The Day

When the children arrived, (33 the majority with no church connections) they were booked in and checked against the pre-booked list and any changes in contact numbers were noted. This complete list of all children attending could be used for a roll call if needed. The contact names and addresses can be used to let the parents know about any future activities.

The children were given a stick on badge with their name on. It also had a house name on which came in useful for later on when they played team games. When all the children had all arrived they were introduced to all the staff and rules regarding discipline, safety, evacuation of the building in case of fire, and what to do if there was an accident was explained.

To start with there were some games, on the Harry Potter theme, to get the children mixing and to let off steam. A Harry Potter story was read and there was a craft session where the children made an owl. They brought their own lunch and two helpers came and made welcome cups of tea for the staff and juice for the children.

After lunch one of the leaders did a sketch about praying and a mobile phone, then it was out to the paddock for out door games. (there were contingency games planned for inside if the weather had been wet) Back into Sunday School the children settled down to listen to a sketch based on the Lords Prayer performed by two members of staff. The day ended with a sing song, which went rather well.

The parents arrived at the allotted time. The children collected their owls, and were given a bar of Harry Potter chocolate to take home. We asked if they had enjoyed themselves? and the roof nearly came off with their "YES" and when asked would you come again it was a definite " YES PLEASE". So it was all worth while.

Follow up

A follow up letter was sent to all parents/guardians telling them about future activities, Sunday School, and Adventurers youth group.

Children's Activity Morning **C2**

Lower Wyke 2012

From Paul Greenhough

Every other month on a Saturday morning our Church holds a FREE Activity Morning for children in the Sunday School building. This is open to children and their parents or carers. Various craft activities and games are provided along with juice, coffee, tea and biscuits. Although we set no age limit we have found that most children that come are between 5-11 yrs old

The purpose is to provide a safe and friendly place for those in the surrounding area to pop in and enjoy fellowship with others. It is also an opportunity for parents to leave the children while they go shopping.

The morning gives us an opportunity to advertise other events at Church that are suitable for children i.e. Sunday school, Youth Club and Family Café Church. As a result some children now come to Sunday School, Family Café Church and the Adventurers Youth Club.

Each Activity Morning is advertised in our monthly newsletter (500 of which distributed throughout the area) and in the local press. A big poster outside the Sunday school building is displayed during the week prior to the event.

At the beginning of the year the dates for all the Activity Mornings throughout the year is provided in the form of a fridge magnet.

Setting up a Toddler Group **C4**

2012

Joy Raynor

Why start or develop your parent and toddler group?

- Toddler groups are by far the easiest way to make contact with large numbers of people who don't normally attend church activities
- Church toddler groups are commonly accepted by those who don't attend church, but who want a place to make friends while the children learn and play. Parents often appreciate the good wholesome values that such groups espouse
- Church will be known in the community in a positive way
- It allows Christians to get to know parents on an individual basis, and meet real needs
- It builds trust, over time, which provides the basis for offering parenting/debt courses etc
- Some groups directly share the Christian message through story and song, others are 'bridge-building' - both have their place

Bridge-building is most effective when a toddler group is closely aligned with church vision and activities – toddler groups need the backing and support of the church leadership if they are to make the most of the [opportunity for engagement](#).

So, how do you set up a parent & toddler group?

Before you start:

- Enlist support from the church community and permission from the committee. Ask for, and expect, prayer support from church members
- Recruit your team, ensure relevant reference are taken up and CRBs done for the group leaders at least, and be clear about your vision
- Research your local area; network with other group leaders, check what else is offered in the area – there is no point in setting up a group that runs at the same time as the church round the corner
- Find premises, equipment, funding (this is sometime available from secular sources)
- Do risk assessments of your premises and equipment, implement any modifications required to make them safe
- Prepare policies, check insurances etc
- Prepare a programme and 'welcome' information
- Publicise your group, contact local community bodies
- Make sure the team members know their roles
- Arrange a launch event.

Once you've got going

- Think about pastoral care and support for parents
- Keep improving - aiming for a safe and stimulating learning environment
- Consider how to stay in touch with parents and kids when they leave
- Perhaps look for other opportunities such as a dads' group
- Review regularly and ask for feedback.

Resources to help you

'**The Good Practice Guide to Parent and Toddler Groups**', jointly produced by Care for the Family, the Mothers' Union and the Salvation Army. This 32-page guide provides the information you need on setting up and running a toddler group.

'**Almost Everything you Need to Know about Working with Under 5s**' by Judith Wigley, published by Scripture Union. Explains the 'why' of working with under fives, as well as the 'how'. Inspiring, encouraging and practical, it is suitable for ministers, family workers and toddler group leaders.

Useful websites:

- Engage - <http://www.engagetoday.org.uk/playtime>
- Salvation Army - http://www2.salvationarmy.org.uk/uki/www_uki.nsf/vw-sublinks/EC470D61C5CAEECE8025720600391B3F?openDocument
- Early Childhood Education - <http://www.earlychildhoodeducation.co.uk/setting-up-baby-toddler-activity-group.html>
- Grandparents Association - http://www.grandparents-association.org.uk/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=308&Itemid=208
- Local council

Who is the group for?

- **It's easy to think that the group is predominantly for the children.** But of equal importance is the benefit derived from the group by the parents. This is not simply the ability to meet with other parents, but it also provides an opportunity for input around issues of parenting from health visitors, parents who are further down the line and can share their stories, and parenting courses. It's also worth remembering that they were people in their own right before they were parents, and they have needs that the church - via the group - can meet. The need to invest in their relationship with their spouse or partner, for example, or to have time apart from the children. (One church started pamper nights, reasonably priced evenings out, and a babysitting service.)
- **Some groups on the other hand, are run predominantly for the adults.**
The rooms and activities should be laid out with the child in mind. We

must not underestimate the importance of the first three years of a child's life. This time will lay the foundations of their emotional, social, physical and spiritual growth. Of course, the group can help children to socialise, to learn motor skills, and to prepare them for nursery or school. But it can also act as a fine introduction to the world of faith and other church-based activities.

- **The group may be part of the church's engagement with the community, but success should not be measured by the number of families who start attending church.**

It may be that as a by product of the conversations within the group, or some of the group's activities (such as toddler services in the context of Easter, Harvest and Christmas; or participation in the church's charitable works – supporting the Blue Peter Appeal; Children in Need; a local family charity, etc; or including some biblical songs and stories alongside more secular fare) there will be those who will respond positively and want to find out more. They might want to attend an Alpha course with a Christian member of the group, for example. But the group should be seen primarily as a way of supporting and strengthening family life, and building genuine and meaningful relationships between the church and the parents.

Ideas for churches who want to take things further with those who come to their P&T group

1. Who Let the Dads Out? See www.wholetthedadsout.org for more information.
2. A group for first time mums
3. A group for babies
4. A group for grandparents who are primary carers
5. A group for nannies and carers

Many groups and their leaders are too under-funded and under-staffed to do more than meet the most basic needs of the children and maybe the adults. Consider putting more funding into your church's group, if you're able to – and if at all possible, go along yourself – it will provide fantastic support and encouragement. A church toddler group is such an opportunity to develop relationships with those who attend.

Modified from information provided by Care for the Family via the engage website (<http://www.engagetoday.org.uk/playtime/resources/the-good-practice-guide-for-parent-and-toddler-groups>)

Help is available from the Provincial Youth and Children's Officer
youth@moravian.org.uk

Flower Arranging with a difference

T1

Wellhouse 2002

From Ken Evans

We invited the whole of the local community to a FLOWER ARRANGING morning 'FREE OF CHARGE'. We sent out about 400 flyers like the one attached to every household in the area and waited for the response. We got a limited number, but it was a start.

We invited a lady to come and give a demonstration at the start of the morning and she was then on hand throughout the rest of the morning, to offer help and advise. After the demonstration as everyone went to their own table to create their own masterpiece, there were some quite spectacular arrangements.

Before the event we took advice from our flower arranging expert about what we would need for the morning in terms of dishes, oasis, and tape, size and number of flowers, space to work, equipment etc. We over catered on flowers, but we'll learn from our mistakes, and fewer people in the area will get free bunches of flowers next time.

The Flower Arranging Morning was set for Harvest Weekend, and we used the theme of 'God's Creation'. There was a good mix of ages from the young to the not so young but all had a good time of creativity and fellowship. Tea and biscuits were supplied should anyone start to flag. Everyone left their arrangements in Church, some making up the creation story, others arranged around Church ready for our Harvest Thanksgiving Service the day following.

Everyone was invited to Church on the Sunday to the Harvest service, and following the service they were able to take home the arrangement or arrangements they had created.

Drawing and Painting Day

Wellhouse 2004

T2

From Ken Evans

We set up a Drawing and painting day at Wellhouse Moravian Church. Advertising leaflets were sent round the neighbourhood to invite people to the event. People were reassured that previous experience was not necessary and that everyone including children would be welcome at the art Drawing and painting day day.

The day started at 10am with tutorial instruction and a practical lesson

At 12.30pm there was a break for light lunch

After lunch there was an optional afternoon period to continue with the drawing or painting if people so wished

All the paper and art materials provided and lunch were provided free of charge

This activity was put on by a graphic designer and artist who are part of the congregation

Forming a Reading Group T3

Brockweir 2004

From Beth Torkington

A reading group was established in Brockweir to provide an opportunity for individuals who would not necessarily attend a religious service to explore spirituality in a 'non threatening atmosphere'. An advertisement was placed in 'The Record' - the church magazine - and flyers were handed out and left in the village shop. Initially 10 people turned up as well as the Minister and though we have lost 1 member, the numbers have remained consistent. The group usually meets once every 4 to 6 weeks and rotates from house to house, A chapter is read by the group prior to the meeting and is later discussed within the meeting. It was decided by members very early on that the meeting should start with 10 minutes meditation. This aspect has also grown and some members meet regularly for 20 minutes of meditation each month. The meetings usually end with tea and coffee *and* cake and this allows the group to unwind.

The purpose of the chosen book 'God in All Things' by Gerard W Hughes is to encourage people to discover 'truths' for themselves, so in each meeting the primary object is to listen to each other, not to argue, advise or sort each other out. It is advisable to make these ground rules clear from the beginning as well as a strict code of confidentiality. We have discovered at Brockweir that no subject is taboo and it is important to let everyone have their say and pause to reflect on each contribution, for sometimes silence can be as important as words.

The group consists of a few Moravians, two Roman Catholics, a Quaker, an agnostic, one Anglican and a Buddhist which generates lively debate. It has resulted in a number of group members attending church services, occasionally, as well as providing additional help with our charity Soup Lunches. The group has gelled together and is a breath of fresh air for those Moravians attending other Moravian activities when the least frequently asked question is:

"Why do we do this the way we do?"

The participants have attended a Blessing of the marriage of two of the members in the church at Brockweir as well as a 'Quiet Day' at Tymawr near Monmouth, with the Society of the Sacred Cross, an Anglican religious community. We are hoping to repeat the 'Quiet Day' where time will be set aside for meditation and reflection as well as other activities, throughout the day.

It is a successful undertaking and it will be interesting to see how it develops in the future.

Heritage Open Day

2012

T4

From Sarah Groves

Many of our congregations have amazing histories, meet in wonderful buildings or are set in special places. Heritage Open Days, on the second weekend in September each year are a great way to publicise the history of the local Church and to invite visitors in. Many of our Churches already open for the Saturday of Heritage Open Days. Tours of the settlement take place, music recitals are given, there are visits to the archives, displays of artifacts and pictures and of course great refreshments with home made cakes. All this make a fascinating day for visitors who learn something about our Christian heritage and living faith.

More information about Heritage Open Days can be found on www.heritageopendays.org.uk

There are also opportunities for Churches to have publicised openings as part of local tourism and interfaith activities. 'Treasures Revealed in West Yorkshire' linked places of worship, of particular interest, together in a leaflet to show the riches of the faith heritage in the area.

Outreach In A Village Using The Alpha Course Lower Wyke 2002

01

From Paul Greenhough

The following is the approach Lower Wyke took to an outreach project in the community which has resulted in three people becoming church members, two of which did not attend church prior to the outreach project.

Lower Wyke Church, for many years, has produced a monthly newsletter which is circulated to 400 homes in the surrounding area. This long standing contact with the church and a letter to each home, made it easier when each house was visited with the 'Jesus the Man of the Millennium' video, as people knew of our existence, activities and that we would be visiting them with the video.

The video was offered to all the homes who receive the news letter.

Three teams of two volunteers did the distribution and talked to every household. Those who wanted to watch the video were asked if they would be prepared to answer a few simple questions after watching it.

The video was then collected the following week and the questionnaire completed and they were told about the forthcoming Alpha course.

Each home expressing a wish to know more about Jesus were delivered a special invitation to the course. This and adverts in the local press and an open invitation to all our congregation resulted in an attendance of 19 on the course.

The course was followed by two further study courses with the result that three people have become church members.

Without doubt the caring and friendly atmosphere at all times has been a big influence on the three people, one of which was a complete outsider who joined as a result of the local press advert.

We believe also that the detailed planning and the total dedication of the team of the initial video distribution volunteers (18 in all) and a non skimping attitude re money for course materials and meals at each Alpha meeting have also played an important part in the success.

Café's in Churches

02

2008

From Beth Torkington

All the sociological research, and our own everyday experience, tells us that people in a modern secular western world are not much interested in going to church. So we have to reach out to them where they are. One of the things they do like doing is going out to meet friends and socialise. Cafe culture is everywhere, from swimming pools to cathedrals and museums, as well as every shopping street.

We probably don't have buildings where we have a ready-made setting for a cafe, or a church where people want to come to appreciate the fine architecture. But there may well be people out there who would appreciate what we could offer.

What do people want?

The local community offers all the basic support services people need, no scope now for Moravians offering education! However there is less sense of being part of a community, indeed some groups feel particularly isolated. They do not always want regular commitment to meetings and they will usually be very wary of an overt Christian presence, fearing 'being got at'. But they do simply enjoy going out to sit at tables with their friends.

What have we got to offer?

One of the things Christians are good at is table fellowship. The cafe would give us the opportunity to extend friendships and to build relationships within an informal setting. Although we would want to avoid being heavy handed I think that people do appreciate a prayer request board or tree and the assurance that their requests would be prayed for. This will sometimes offer us the chance for deeper conversations and support.

But we haven't got the manpower to run a cafe

We don't have to run a proper full-time operation, we could offer one or two cafe sessions of, say, two hours long, once a week. Over a month that could reach out to at least four different 'markets'.

Who would come?

Probably not the young and trendy! We could aim to run specific cafe sessions for particular groups or 'markets'. This would enable us to use our care for and interest in others, as well as our premises, to reach out to those who can especially feel the need to connect up with others. Such groups could include:-

- Under fives and their carers (this session could include a regular story telling spot).
- The elderly

And then there are those who who can sometimes be unwelcome in ordinary cafes, eg.

- Those with learning difficulties,
- Alzheimer sufferers and their carers.
- The deaf community

There may well be local support groups for sufferers from particular problems who would also appreciate such a facility. Opening as a café where the carer is also present gets over protection issues but does allow carers some respite and support so they are not so isolated.

Chaplaincy Work

03

Dukinfield 2007

From Colin McIlwaine

All of us are, I am sure, aware of the role which chaplains play in many walks of life. Hospitals, the armed services, schools and youth organisations, sports clubs and even, the worlds of business, industry and entertainment have benefited from the services of chaplains from a wide variety of denominational backgrounds. The question arises, what exactly is a chaplain and what does he/she do? While there may be several answers to this question, I would like to share something from my personal experience about Chaplaincy Work.

For me the primary purpose of a chaplain is to bring a Christian presence and influence into a situation. This involves taking an interest in what people are doing, being available to talk with them, to share in their joys and sorrows and also, if possible, to share the good news of Jesus in a gentle and gracious way. It is not an opportunity for aggressive evangelism, nor, as the Chaplain of Manchester United points out in his autobiography, is it an outlet for frustrated sports people to meet their heroes, Nor is it a chance to look for "freebies". One of the major advantages of chaplaincy from a Christian minister's perspective is that it gives us opportunities to meet with people who are not regular churchgoers and might not have any other specifically Christian contact in their lives.

In my own situation, I serve as honorary chaplain to the above-mentioned motorcycle racing club, the Liverpool Motor Club and the Dukinfield Rugby Union Club. This is not as horrendous a workload as it may look on paper, All of it is on Saturday, which is generally my "day off" and consists of five motorcycle meetings, three motor sprints and six or seven home rugby matches. Members of my family often attend events with me and it is all fairly "low key". Quite apart from being able to put something back into sports from which I have derived a lot of pleasure over the years, I have had many opportunities for ministry in these situations, through building up social relations with competitors, officials and spectators, comforting the injured, encouraging the disappointed and supporting the victorious. The door has also opened for meaningful conversations about my faith, especially at Aintree, where I am affectionately known as "the Rev." In addition to the sports chaplaincies, I spend two or three hours per week with colleagues and customers at my local Asda store and pop in once a month to act as "the Padre" to the Air Training Corps.

All of us have interests outside the life of the Church and opportunities to meet people who do not share our faith. Very often, these interests (or, in some cases, our employment) can act as a useful bridge to build common ground. I would like to encourage you to not only prayerfully support the work of chaplains but also to look at possible outlets like this for the sharing of your own faith. In this, we can follow the example of Jesus, who often went to meet people "where they were at." There may well be opportunities for us to be what we are called to be; the "salt of the earth" and the "light of the world."

Prayer Walk 1

O4

2012

From Sarah Groves

On Good Friday many Churches and Churches Together groups hold Walks of Witness, carrying a cross around their local town or area. In Little Horton in Bradford the Walk of Witness has become a Prayer Walk. Members of the local Churches gather outside the Catholic Church and then walk, following the cross around the neighbourhood. The walkers are silent and the cross is usually carried by young people. At various points on the circular walk the walkers stop and prayers are led for the needs of that place and for all it represents to the people living and working nearby.

So outside the local shops the walkers pray for the commerce, the businesses and the places of employment in the area.

By the playground prayers are led for the children in the area.

At the Housing Estate prayers are offered for the people who live in the area.

Outside the Medical Centre prayers are said for the local GP's and primary health care givers and for those who are ill.

Near to the Serbian Orthodox Church there are prayers for all the people who have come to Bradford from across the world and who now call it home.

At an Elder Day Care Centre intercessions are made for all the older people who live in the area and their needs are remembered.

Walking on to one of the local schools, prayers are offered for all the schools in the area, for the staff, governors, pupils, students and their parents

Ending by one of the local community projects prayers are given for all those groups and projects that work for the good of the local area.

Lastly, in silence, the Good Friday Prayer Walk returns to its starting place and worshippers join with the local Catholic congregation for a service of Stations of the Cross

Prayer Walk 2

05

2012

From Sarah Groves

Prayer Walks can be infinitely variable, adaptable and can be laid out in gardens (or large room if wet outside) or set out around a community.

A Prayer Walk in a garden would be suitable for a Congregation Quiet Day or as part of the programme of a Church Family Weekend or Retreat. It could consist of a number of 'stations' where one would reflect on different aspects of life, faith and prayer. The 'stations' can be as varied as your imagination,

For example a Prayer Walk before Easter might include 'stations' with symbols of the crucifixion that can be handled, tasted and smelt. Palm crosses, bread and wine (or grape juice), silver coins, soap, water and towel, nails and hammer (and a wooden cross to hammer the nails into), dice and myrrh. I have constructed a prayer walk around these objects for young people at Youth Fellowship meeting and for a Christian club in a school.

Another Prayer Walk in a summer garden could involve different 'stations' where people stop and reflect on specific texts from the Bible, or, from one of the great Christian spiritual writers. This would need enough space for people to feel comfortable moving around and appropriate seating.

Prayer walks need not be temporary and can be designed to raise awareness in casual visitors. One Church I know in West Yorkshire, St James in Tong, has set up a permanent prayer walk, (they call it a spiritual garden) around its burial ground.



The path through the burial ground is designed to reflect the Church's Celtic roots so uses cairns and stone circles with appropriate inscriptions. There are eight stations along the way including a fingerpost sign, a gate and a cross and appropriate planting schemes

related to the 'stations' are included. Benches are provided for people to rest and reflect. This garden is affiliated with the 'Quiet Gardens Trust' which encourages the setting up of 'quiet gardens' to promote contemplation of the Christian Gospel. If you would like more information about this spiritual garden please contact the Vicar of St James, Tong in the Bradford Diocese. More information about the Quiet Garden Trust can be obtained from their website www.quietgarden.org

People walking in parts of Europe may come across Stations of the Cross set up along country paths, often in memory of a loved one, but again designed to reawaken faith in those passing by. An example I have seen is near Schliersee in Southern Germany around the sides of the lake

For some churches it might be appropriate to design a History Prayer Walk. Gracehill Moravian Church has a History Prayer Walk booklet specifically set up for its many visitors to the Church and village. It engages the visitor in the history of the community and its buildings but then also hopes to draw the visitor into the spiritual significance of what they see.

The Prayer Walk at Gracehill begins in the Church and describes something about the building and the worship that takes place there and then gives a prayer for the reader to use. The walk leads then leads out to the School, the Widows House, Ladies School and the Inn, the Doctors House, the Shop and Manufactory, Boys Academy and then into up into the Burial Ground. At each point history is woven into a spiritual narrative and then appropriate quotations and suggestions for prayers are included. Lastly the visitor is drawn back into Church to rest and reflect. The visitor has moved from being an observer into a pilgrim. If you would like a copy of this booklet please contact me at Gracehill.

Greenfingers

06

Plant Exchange and Gardening Information Lower Wyke 2012

From Paul Greenhough

On the first Friday morning in the month, from March to October, the Sunday School Building is open for people to bring along plants that they wish to give away and pick up new ones. Home made cakes, biscuits and tea and coffee are available throughout the morning. No charge is made but most people give a small donation. These small donations build up and 'Greenfingers' has been able to purchase bulbs and plant them in the village.

'Greenfingers' was started and continues to be run by two members of the congregation. It is very popular drawing people from a very wide area. Most attending are non church members. During the morning there is an opportunity to ask any gardening questions and there is usually someone who can answer your question. Time is set aside to promote other forthcoming social events.

At the beginning of December a one off morning is set aside when a lady from the village demonstrates how to make Christmas decorations from things collected from hedgerows and gardens such as holly leaves and beech twigs.

'Greenfingers' is advertised in our monthly news letter (500 distributed throughout the area) and in the local press. A big poster outside the Sunday school building is displayed during the week prior to the event.

The University Road congregation also have a gardening club that meets through the summer months to visit each other's gardens and share gardening information

Charity Lunches

07

Brockweir 2012

From Susan Groves

The Brockweir Charity (Soup) Lunches were started in 2000 as a millennium project to bring the church into the community and to provide a social activity in the village. At the time the Village shop and Post office had closed and, apart from the single pub, there was nowhere for local people to meet together.

It was a deliberate decision from the start that the lunches should not be a means of fundraising for the Church (though we do run one lunch per year for our Gift Day) but as a means of raising money for a variety of charities, particularly those local and small charities that don't have massive media coverage. Charities to support are suggested by the lunch-goers and helpers and voted on at the annual Church Council meeting.

It was decided to hold the lunches on a monthly basis, fixing on the first Thursday of the month. This was chosen as it immediately preceded a table tennis club held in the Sunday School room whose members would hopefully form our core group of customers. The time range was fixed from 12 – 2 though experience has shown that most customers arrive between 12.30 – 1.00

Lunches are ostensibly 'free' but a voluntary donation towards the charity is requested and we currently suggest around £3.50 which is in line with local charges for a similar meal. A bowl is placed on each table into which people may place their contribution, so that donations are anonymous. Raffle tickets are also sold for a variety of donated prizes and the raffle is drawn around 1.30 when most people have finished eating. This also gives a convenient moment to tell people a little bit about the charity being supported that month. We also have a 'Bring and Borrow' library of books available plus a table for local preserves, surplus fruit & veg etc to be sold.

The meal comprises a bowl of homemade soup, roll & butter, a homemade pudding usually fruit pie with custard or cream, and a cup of tea or coffee. Jugs or bottles of water are placed on all the tables. The soups and puddings are made by various people and usually comprise a main meat (beef & veg) soup and a variety of vegetable soups. If someone is unable to help at the lunch making a soup allows them to remain 'involved' in the process.

Getting a good team of helpers is essential. We needed people to put out the tables the night before, make the soups & puddings, and be present on the day to lay the tables, serve the meal, and clear up afterwards. We have been blessed by a number of people, including several not otherwise connected to the church, who have come forward to help in various way.

We average around 30 lunch-goers each month which comprise local people and visitors. Sometimes people have found us by accident when walking past and have come back again and again!

We do not routinely say grace or hold any prayers during the lunch however on occasion there has been a request to say a prayer or hold a silence and the helpers are happy to lead this and to talk and pray quietly with individuals if needed.

Since the lunches started two other eating & social venues have opened in the village but the lunches still seem as popular as ever and are sorely missed when the helpers take a well deserved 2 month break in the summer. The lunches have proved to be a wonderful opportunity for a wide range of people to get involved and meet the church in a practical not preachy way.

Food Hampers

08

Dukinfield

October 2013

From Christine Storey (on behalf of the Food Hamper Outreach Team).

In 2012 the congregation recognised there was a need to help local families in our area. With the aid of the Children's Centre behind our church, we rallied and the "Food Hamper Project" was born. Initially we sent out eight hampers to make Christmas a little merrier for several homes.

In the New Year we decided to fund raise to make the hampers a more regular event and we put on a concert, "A Night at the Musicals", which raised £1310.00. We then approached the Provincial Board who generously added a further £1000.00 as part of the "Pass It On" grant scheme. This money has meant that we are now in a position to provide hampers on demand as well as seasonal ones. We are aware that fundraising is crucial to maintain an ongoing project like this so we have already done some 'coffee days', which have proved to be a big success, and have more planned for the future. Naturally we are very grateful to those who have helped and supported these events.

Where are we at now?

Our communications with the Children's Centre are blossoming and we now provide between 1 to 5 hampers per week. We are able to tailor these hampers to suit the particular family with the information provided by the Children's Centre although we are not told who these families are or their address. The Social Workers tell us that the hampers not only provide much needed food for the families, but also help them to bond and build trust together.

Food collection points

We have a food collection point at the back of our church for tins, packets, etc and are very grateful for all donations. We have recently set up another collection point at 'The Bread Shop' on Yew Tree Lane.

Food cupboard

We now have a dedicated food cupboard in the church school room which has made access and storage much easier (tins are very heavy!). When the hampers are requested, the Children's Centre staff bring their own trolley up to church, take them back to the centre, and from there by car to the needy recipients.

What else can we do?

Just recently we were asked if we could make use of a few used donated duvet sets and almost immediately the Social Workers found a family in need of some bedding. Wow! Where is this going? Doesn't it make all the effort worthwhile?

We hope it gives you some helpful details of the Hamper Project of the Dukinfield Moravian Outreach Scheme.

Creating a Mosaic

Hornsey 2012

S1

From Susan Foreman

God brought us through a difficult period of grieving when a popular, well loved member abruptly passed away. Other long serving members who had also touched lives at Hornsey also passed away shortly afterwards.

The congregation mourned yet could see a glimmer of light. A suggestion was made by friends of the congregation that a mosaic could be made to commemorate the lives of our members who had deeply touched others including the children.

Although the minister is a “jack of all trades!” he agreed that this work of art should be undertaken with the expertise of a local artist. Planning meetings were held and drawings submitted by the Sunday School children. Then after approximately 3 months the actual design and colours were agreed (the colours being important as when the light hits the glass the colours vibrantly shimmer and light enters the design). The tools and glass shapes were provided by the artist, and after instruction and careful rules the children set out to start the work. As the work progressed the children’s enthusiasm brought parents, visitors and grandparents to join in the cutting, sticking and gluing of each individual piece.



It was painstaking work requiring patience and accuracy and a craft was learnt. We did not miss out on some cuts and bruises, yet with periods of silence, conversation, refreshments and fellowship the work continued for 7 months. He gave us beauty, He tended the broken he changed our mourning into dancing tiles of light.

In the design we focused on the goodness of God, drawing us through life to His open hands in heaven to receive those whose lives had been lived for Him and as part of the church community. The culmination of making the mosaic was a café style service, where family and friends, of loved ones in the congregation who had died in the last twenty years, were invited back. The children had tiles with the initials of these members, and together with family members, they were stuck in place on the mosaic.

This mosaic has been a work in progress, a work in our church as we live out our lives in God’s light and in his timing of when to call us home welcomed by his heavenly light. Do not be afraid – I have come that you may have life everlasting, comes to my mind, life on earth and life in heaven.