

**MORPETH METHODIST
CHURCH AND
CENTRE FOR THE
COMMUNITY**



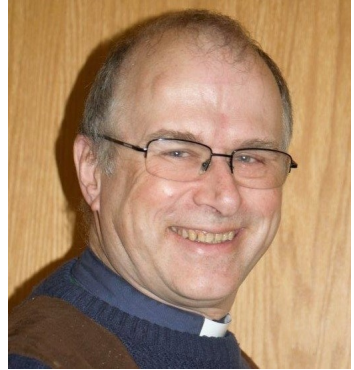
**GENERAL CHURCH MEETING
9TH JULY 2023**

Contents	Page Number
Minister's Letter	3
Baptism Secretary	5
Centre Manager	5
Communion Steward	9
Creche and Junior Church	9
Drop in Lunches	10
Finance Group	11
Flower Group	12
Future Faith	14
GDPR	14
Leadership & Stewards	15
Memory Café	15
Men's Breakfast	17
Messy Church	18
Pastoral Visitors	18
Safeguarding	19
6th Morpeth Scout Group	20
Social Events	24
Toddler's Group	24
Women's Meeting Point	25
Worship Group	27

Minister's Letter

Dear Friends

As we mark another year in the life of Morpeth Methodist Church, I am thankful for all the work, worship and fellowship that has been enjoyed since our last general church meeting in 2022.



I am probably not alone in thinking that life seems to be increasingly unpredictable and that the certainties we once held no longer seem to be quite as dependable as they once were. Change seems to be the only constant and enduring certainty. We do not know what the future holds, but we do know who holds the future.

Perhaps this is a timely reminder of the truth that as disciples of Jesus, we are engaged on a journey. Not only a journey where we are navigating very different waters to which we are used to, but also growing and developing in our un-

derstanding of God and who we are called to be. As society changes so does the way we express Our Calling to be disciples of Jesus.

So, as you read these reports remember that they represent an enormous amount of work from dedicated, committed individuals. Pray for the work that these reports represent and the people behind them. Be thankful for the joys and successes and pray for the challenges that some of these reports represent. Morpeth Methodist Church is not what it was, but is being reshaped for a very different future.

Every blessing,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Antony Oakley". The script is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of "Antony" and "Oakley" being capitalized and prominent.

Baptism Secretary

We have had two baptisms in the last 12 months.

29 May 2022 Robin Anthony Moore

16 Oct 2022 Arabella Beau Murray

There was also a Service of Thanksgiving

4 Dec 2022 Elliot Robert Harry Tongue

Jacob George Robin Tongue

All services were joyful occasions and all were made welcome by Antony and members of the church family who were there. All the children were presented with age-appropriate bibles.

Margaret Moulton

Centre Manager

It has been a very hectic year with reduced staff since Covid, Doug retiring and me unfortunately having to take time out

due to illnesses. We still have Carol working 2 days a week and finally on the 3rd attempt we have a new janitor, who is presently working with me until his DBS is back. I cover most of the annual leave for Carol and the Janitor but due to the long period without a janitor, sickness and annual leave, I have had to rely on a few volunteer members who have been very supportive, opening and closing the building around groups, cleaning on occasions and moving furniture. We wouldn't have managed without them and though it took some organising it worked well for the short period. I would like to send them all a heart felt thank you.

As many of you know we had a bad leak in the tower which took longer than expected and even though it went through our insurance, I was continually having to push them to get the work completed. This did cause us a few issues especially around Christmas when we had concerts and shows. The work is now complete and the tower looks great.

With the building work now 19 years old and many of the

main items in the building coming to the end of their life. I have had to get lots of quotes in for major work including a new fire alarm system, due to faults and the parts being obsolete. We also have external building work to complete including pointing up the building and the surrounding walls and a few major cracks which will be reinforced. This work will be completed over the next few months. I also got cost for a painting the exterior which will be one of our next main projects.

We have many other outstanding jobs within the building and our new janitor, Lee once he is properly in post will be tackling most of them.

Since Covid we no longer have a Centre Management team and this has now been incorporated into the Leadership Team. John Leithead has very kindly agreed to be a support around the continued building issues.

Since Covid we have lost some of our previous clients due

to them deciding not to continue or due to some of the organisations losing their contracts. It has been a struggle to build up our clients again due to the economic crisis at the moment which is preventing many new groups launching. Luckily we are starting to get new clients, weekly, fortnightly, monthly and one offs and are hopeful that this will continue. We continue to get positive feedback around the helpfulness of staff and volunteers and the cleanliness of the building.

I set up our new website, earlier in the year which enables us to amend it and make design changes etc. This can be viewed by the link below.

www.morpethmethodistchurch.co.uk

I know we have many challenges ahead of us but am hopeful that an effective plan will be developed which will enable us to continue to provide a fantastic and well appreciated resource to the community.

Darleen Turner, Centre Manager

Communion Steward

Our numbers for Communion has remained very much the same as last year with around 16 attending the Tuesday service and 45+ joining us for the monthly service.

In addition Antony has visited some of our housebound members which has been much appreciated.

I would like to thank Margaret Houghton for stepping in when I was unavailable and those members who administered the wine for us.

Pat Kennedy

Creche and Junior Church

The Junior Church regularly meets term time and although we are a small group, we have lots of fun! We utilise the Roots booklets which are aligned to the weekly lectionary readings. If the Roots suggestions aren't suitable for the children we will choose an alternative bible reading or reflect on something we've heard in church. We recently

watched a video in Church about a friendly looking sheep called Ellie-May and the following week we made multi-coloured pom-pom sheep which was great fun. There are 4 regular and enthusiastic volunteers. We always welcome more children, of any age, and any volunteers who would like to join our joyful throng!

Susan Edwards

Drop in Lunches

We have three staff helping at the lunch each week. The number of customers ranges from 10 to 18 some of whom have been coming since the lunches started in 2006. About half the customers belong to MMC and the rest feel at home at MMC on a Tuesday lunchtime, where they can enjoy their lunch and chat to friends.

We offer soup, sandwiches, cake and tea or coffee - and fellowship. If they have everything the cost is £5.50, but they can have as much or as little as they like. The profit is donated to church funds.

Eight of the helpers are from MMC, but that is not enough to cover the rota, so we have recruited six other people, not connected with the church, as regular helpers

I think the customers enjoy coming to eat out in a pleasant room, with a friendly atmosphere

Janet Brough

Finance

Economic conditions have continued to be financially challenging for individuals and churches alike. Prices (notably energy) continue to rise, albeit we are seeing inflation beginning to slow.

The congregation give generously and we cover our regular Area and Connexional commitments. The church building increasingly requires significant maintenance which, of course, comes at a cost. The challenge of “balancing the books” gets no easier over time but we persist in our efforts!

The term, “Finance Group” has become somewhat redundant over the last 12 months. I stepped down as Chair to take over as Treasurer last year and Finance oversight is now provided by the Leadership Team. We continue to seek your prayers and support as we look for a new Treasurer.

We are committed, as a church, to the spreading of the Gospel message within our local community, and beyond. This commitment carries with it personal and financial costs and we will continue to prayerfully consider how we act as stewards of the finances with which we are entrusted in this work and mission.

David Simpson

Flower Ladies

We are a small group of ladies (men are welcome) who volunteer to arrange church members and visitors donated flowers for services ,funerals, weddings etc. These flowers are then given or delivered to the sick, bereaved

or people who may be feeling sad or happy as the need arises.

We manage to keep the donations coming in, due to the extremely generous donations of the congregation and this means we have enough in the funds to decorate at Easter, Christmas and Harvest too. We could use a few more donations, if possible, ring 01670 503653 to arrange a date which means something special to you.

If you know of someone who would appreciate flowers then please let Maureen Robson know.

My thanks to Jacqui Hill, Jane Haggie, Lorna Leithead, Judith Quenet, Dorothy Potts, Pat Kennedy and Catherine Harbour who have helped over the past year.

I have tried to phase out the use of non biodegradable oasis and this has proved challenging at times, apologies for the occasional lack of design .

Linda Gibson

Future Faith Future Church

This group does not currently meet

General Data Protection Regulations Officer

GDPR has been a challenge for all of us to get our heads around. With the restrictions on sharing of information without permission and the safe storage of information, which was a change from the previous restrictions. Previously if someone failed to let us know they didn't want their personal information shared, then we had the right to share it. Now we have to get written permission to share personal information and it has to be specific to the roles they have within church. We do have some groups which are exempt but our church groups which hold rotas with personal details and registers all come under GDPR. We are now annually audited by Area and any breaches have to be reported. As GDPR officer it is my role to ensure that everyone is made aware of GDPR and sent the relevant information to ensure that we comply with this regulation.

Darleen Turner

Leadership and Steward Group

The group is a committee of the Church Council. It comprises the minister, representatives of the stewards, the Church Treasurer, the secretary of Church Council, representatives of Property and members of the Church. We consider headings including finance, children and young people, safeguarding, Centre for the Community including property, pastoral care and worship. At most meetings we hear from groups meeting within the Church including Women's Meeting Point, Toddlers and Alcoholics Anonymous.

We consider the progress of the Church and are able to make recommendations to Church Council

Paul Crook, Senior Steward

Memory Cafe

The Cafe started in 2016 with the aim of providing a meeting place in the Church Coffee Lounge, where those with dementia and their carers, could feel relaxed and accepted and given a non-judgmental listening ear by the vol-

unteers. The cafe meets on the first and third Thursday of the month from 10.30 - 12.00

Reopening after Covid we found that our numbers of attendees had dropped dramatically. We are gradually rebuilding and currently have an average attendance of 11 (those with dementia and their carers) compared to 27 before Covid. We get publicity by posters, flyers in doctors surgeries, social media and word of mouth. In addition the Alzheimer's Society have six part time workers in South East Northumberland, who visit people with dementia in their own homes and pass on information about our Cafe and similar organisations. More recently surgeries in the area have appointed Link Workers who liaise with the patients - progress !

We are grateful to our faithful helpers, three from our church and three others who saw a need and wanted to help.

Janet and David Brough

Men's Breakfast

Men's Breakfast meet on the third Saturday of every month, except for a break in July and August . We start our meeting at 7.30am with a sumptuous breakfast consisting of fruit juice, cereals, cooked food, toast and tea or coffee. The food is prepared by four of our own members with the help of an assistant.

Breakfast over we commence the second part of our meeting with brief devotions led by Rev Antony, followed by our speaker and we look to finish by 9.15 am at the latest. We have a wide variety of speakers and from the £5 charged for the meal, are able to give a donation to speakers representing charities. After paying for food and donations, any surplus is given to church funds.

At the end of September each year we enjoy a weekend of fellowship and last year 16 members stayed at Thornleigh Christian Hotel, Grange over Sands, where we were very happy to meet up with Peter Nicol, a former member of our

church, who lives nearby. He very kindly led our 8 mile hike and Sue invited us for coffee afterwards. We have an average attendance of 25, with 40 ' on the books 'of which 30% are not members of our church. All male (sorry ladies) members of the congregation and their friends are invited to come along

Messy Church

Messy church is currently under review and we are hopeful that this will resume in the near future.

Pastoral Group

There is a small group of church members who form a Pastoral Group.

If any feels there is a pastoral need, please contact the office 01670511078. Any message is confidentially relayed to the group and if a visit is required this is undertaken.

Home Communion is given if requested, by our Minister

Antony and Communion Steward Pat.

Church flowers are delivered by church members some of whom are in the Pastoral group.

Please, if you have any Pastoral needs, issues or requests contact the group via the Church Office.

Vivien Scott

Safeguarding

There have been no safeguarding issues within the church. Safeguarding training has previously been an issue in the past but with online training and Louise, District Safeguarding Officer, carrying out local training we have been able to get many of our members training updated. All members who have an active role within the church are all up to date with their DBSs. I continue to hold records of training and DBSs and send out reminders to member who need renewals and this has been very effective. Our Safeguarding Policy is annually review with reference to the Methodist Safe-

guarding Policy template and is approved annually by Church Council.

6th Morpeth Scout Group

Highlights and Challenges of the past year.

June 2022 we had our first group camp since Covid at Pigdon Scout Campsite. We had all 3 sections camping in tents over on the Friday night which was a first for the Scout group. We organised our own activities which included physical and mental challenges, bug hunting, den building, campfire songs and hikes. **October** we took to the water at Druridge Bay Country Park for canoeing and paddle boarding along with land based activities including archery. **November** and it was our Remembrance Parade. **December** and we took part in the Toy service and went bowling at Cramlington. **January 23** was our annual visit to the outdoor skating rink at the Life Centre and for the first time included the Beavers. We all enjoyed the Morpeth Pantomime Society production of Snow White. At the end of January it was the UK Scout census with capitation fees to pay.

February we entered the District Talent competition held at the Church and won the Beaver, Cub and Scout competitions. **March** and it was church parade with craft activities. The Scouts stayed 2 nights at West Field Scout Activity Centre in South Shields. **April** and it was church parade and the District St Georges Day Parade on the 23rd. **May** we attended Camp Together with over 1500 Beavers/Cubs/Scouts/Explorers/Leaders at Causey Park. In addition to the above we had our regular meetings, badge work, cycling, clip and climb, county climbing competition, orienteering, camp fire cooking and cooking.

On a positive note our Wednesday Cubs are progressing well with 13 Cubs and we have just started a new Beaver Colony on a Tuesday which is proving to be very popular.

Challenges continue to be leader recruitment and parent support. If we had the leaders and a healthy executive committee we could really move the group on. Our financial reserves have taken a big hit but we continue to subsidise

camps and other activities. We had our first fundraiser in June with the supply of cakes and teas at the National Garden Scheme at Bichfield Tower.

An indication of the number of people involved (Are you looking for more volunteers or helpers?)

We currently have 22 uniformed leaders, 2 non uniformed members and around 77 children. We have room for more children in Cubs and Scouts with limited space in our Beaver colonies. We can always do with more volunteers especially on a Wednesday evening where we are short of leaders.

If money is involved: A broad outline of your main source of income, together with your main items of expenditure, and if appropriate, details of any deficit or surplus.

Once again we must thank the Methodist Church for their continued support. Without the costs associated with hir-

ing a hall and storage our subscriptions would be a lot higher. We have just increased our subs by £2 so that money is going to the church to assist with the price of energy. As reported we had a fundraiser at Bichfield Tower and recently took part in the Wansbeck Rotary Club raffle which raised over £450..

Some of your aspirations and plans for the next year.

We had a camp in June at Selby Woods camp site and we have an activity day at Druridge Bay Country Park in late September. Our numbers are steadily increasing but we have not yet reached our pre-covid numbers.

March 2024 will see a big change in Scouting with new titles for all with more online training available. It will no longer be compulsory to complete the Wood Badge training for Section and Assistant leaders.

A named contact who can respond to questions or queries.

Graham Langston, Group Scout Leader.

graham.langston@northumberlandscouts.org.uk.

Social Events

The social events group has been largely defunct since Covid 19. However, David Brough has organised a concert given by Felling Male Voice choir which was enjoyed by all. There is to be another concert in September.

There have been occasional Bacon Sandwich Saturday mornings which will continue.

Anyone willing to help organise, arrange an event please get in touch with David Brough or Vivien Scott. All ideas considered!

Humbugs Toddler Group

Humbug the badger, assisted by Louise and Clive Kemp, have run the toddler group at MMC every Tuesday 9.30am-11.15am during term time. Attendance has been excellent, with their associated adults.

We have kept to the same schedule of free play followed

by sit-down snack time at 10.30am and we all sing nursery rhymes in “circle time” at the end.

This only changes on party days, once a term, when there are craft activities and lots of home made food to enjoy! Louise’s sausage rolls and cheese scones are legendary.

We have recently invested in more big red play mats, and will be buying some small play tables and chairs for the kitchen corner.

We always enjoy Humbug’s toddler group and we hope the kids do too!
Clive & Louise Kemp



Women’s Meeting Point

From September we began meeting again twice a month at 7:30 pm on the first and third Mondays of the month in the Church Coffee Lounge.

We try to arrange a speaker on the first Monday of the month. On the third Monday we arrange evenings ourselves including Discussions, Beetle Drive, Sharing Memories, and making our own Memory Book. We always begin with devotions and finish with refreshments.

Our normal attendance is between 12 and 14 ladies.

We are financed by subscriptions of £2 per member each time we meet. Out of that we pay any fees or expenses the speakers may have. We have supported a number charities, including 'All We Can'. The Turkey/Syria Earthquake Appeal via D.E.C. And we had a Reverse Advent Calendar for Wansbeck Food Bank. We have also given to charities relating to speaker's topics.

We have a bank account and our books are audited at the end of each year.

Highlights of our group are the social aspects and the friendship we get from meeting each other.

We warmly welcome any ladies who wish to join us.

Named Contacts for this year are our joint secretaries, Catherine Harbour and Jean Gaunt.

Worship Group—Local Arrangements (L.A's)

The worship group consists mainly of Pam Oakley, Wendy Garvey and Vivien Scott.

The group exists to plan services when a Local Arrangement is on the Preaching plan.

Other people are co-opted and are very helpful and supportive.

If you feel you could assist plan a service or know someone who could contribute to the address service, please speak to one of the above. Thank you to all who have helped in the past.

Mission Statement

Our aim is:

“TO MAKE CHRIST VISIBLE IN THE WORLD”

We seek to do this by:

- * Celebrating Christ
- * Growing in his love
- * Praying and acting for him
- * Being a centre acting as a resource for the wider community

