

Waterlooville Baptist Church

REPORTS

Year ended 31st December 2008

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Church Officers (December 2008)

Minister - Rev Bill Longley

Minister in training - Mr. Sam Owoo

Secretary - Mr. Richard Ostler

Treasurer - Mr. Alan Perry

Deacons

Mrs. Mandy Bowpitt

Mrs. Barbara Cariss

Mr. Ray Evans

Mr. Jack Houlston

Mrs. Sally Jackson

Mrs. Janet Peck

Mrs. Maureen Walker

Mr. Derek Williams

ORGANISATION LEADERS AND CHURCH OFFICE HOLDERS

December 2008

Organisation Leaders

Junior Church	Co-ordinator Crèche Co-ordinator Cross Trainers J Force Y Zone	Mrs. Lynda Nel Miss Laura Gray Miss Margaret Penson Mrs. Lynda Nel Mrs. Heather Owoo
RockSolid	Leaders	Mr. Ray Evans, Mrs. Philippa Williams
Cornerstone	Leaders	Mrs. Barbara Cariss, Mr. Ray Evans
Girls' Brigade	Captain Lieutenant / Treasurer Lieutenant	Mrs. Philippa Williams Miss Margaret Penson Mrs. Mandy Bowpitt
Boys' Brigade	Captain Lieutenants	Mr. Trevor Giles Mrs. O'Linda Giles, Mr. Roland Wort, Mr. Mark Sayers
Friday Kids	Leaders	Mrs. Mandy Bowpitt, Mrs. Lynda Nel
Toddlers' Club	Leaders	Mrs. M Barker, Assisted by Mrs. Maureen Walker
Women's Fellowship	President/Secretary Vice Presidents Assistant Secretary Treasurer	Mrs. Barbara Ostler Mrs. Peggy Chamberlain, Mrs. May Tyler Mrs. Lucie Whittaker Mrs. Peggy Chamberlain Miss Mavis Prince
Women's Prayer Groups	Leader Group Leaders	Mrs. Angela Perry Mrs. Gill Cawte, Mrs. Sally Jackson, Mrs. Angela Perry
Thursday Group	Chairman Secretary Treasurer	Mr. John Everett Mr. John Chamberlain Mr. Alan Perry
Coffee Break	Leader	Mrs. Barbara Ostler
Luncheon Club	Organiser Treasurer	Mrs. Doreen Everett Mr. John Everett
Craft Group	Leader	Mrs. Jacqui Thompson
Delta Divas	Leader	Mrs. Caroline Skeet
Alpha Follow up	Leader	Mr. Sam Owoo

Church Office Holders

Administration	Administrator	Mrs. Lynda Nel
AA group	Liaison Officer	Mr. Richard Ostler
Baptist Times	Distributor	Mrs. Ruth Holden
BMS Birthday Scheme	Secretary	Miss Pat Knowles
Bookstall	Managers	Mr. Jack and Mrs. Rosemary Houlston
Care Groups	Co-ordinator	Mrs. Valerie Lindridge
Catering Committee	Convenor	Miss Margaret Penson
Caterpillar Craft Group	Co-ordinators	Mrs. Caroline Skeet, Mrs. Lynda Nel
Child Protection	Co-ordinator	Mrs. Mandy Bowpitt
Church Cleaning	Convenor	Mrs. Barbara Ostler
Church Flowers	Steward	Mrs. Pat Key
Church Magazine	Editor	Mrs. Sian Evans
Communion	Co-ordinator	Mrs. Barbara Cariss
Copyright Licence	Administrator	Mrs. Lynda Nel
Door Stewards	Chief Steward	Mr. Will Barker
Fabric	Convenor	To be appointed
Fire Prevention	Officer	Mr. Tim Shucksmith
Food Hygiene	Officer	Miss Margaret Penson
Garden and Grounds	Steward	Mr Brian Pethick
Growbag	Co-ordinators	Mr. Ray and Mrs. Sian Evans
Health & Safety	Officer	Mrs. April Brooks
Home Mission	Distributor	Miss Janet Webb
Leprosy Mission	Representative	Miss Pat Knowles
Membership	Registrar	Mr. Gordon Peacock
Missions Council	Convenor	Mr. Jack Houlston
Operation Agri News	Distributor	Mr. Darrell Griffin
Organists		Mr. John Bennett, assisted by Mr. Ron Forshaw, Mr Richard Wort.
PA System	Co-ordinator	Mr. Julian Saines
Room Bookings	Administrator	Mrs. Lynda Nel
Wellness - Art Group - Chairbics - Singing for Health	Co-ordinators	Mrs. April Brooks, Mrs. Sally Jackson
The 'Weekly'	Administrator	Mrs. Lynda Nel
Video Projection System	Monitor	Mr. Trevor Giles

Church Officers (March 2009)

Minister - Rev Bill Longley

Minister in training - Mr. Sam Owoo

Secretary - Mr. Richard Ostler

Acting Treasurer - Mr. Ray Evans

Deacons

Mrs. Mandy Bowpitt

Mrs. April Brooks

Mrs. Barbara Cariss

Mr. John Fowler

Mr. Jack Houlston

Mrs. Sally Jackson

Miss Pat Knowles

Mr. Alan Perry

Mrs. Maureen Walker

Mr. Derek Williams

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March 2009

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Finance Administration	Administrator	Mrs. Janet Peck
Fire Prevention	Officer	Mr. Tim Shucksmith
Food Hygiene	Officer	Miss Margaret Penson
Garden and Grounds	Steward	Mr Brian Pethick
Growbag	Co-ordinators	Mr. Ray and Mrs. Sian Evans
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MINISTER'S REPORT

“ I press on towards the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenwards in Christ Jesus.” Philippians 3:14

SPIRITUAL

We have seen good attendance at many Sunday services with a full Church on Parade Sundays and special events. All-age services have been appreciated by many in different age groups, as have the occasions when we have offered prayer for healing during or after services. We continue to hold something of a balancing act between more modern music and traditional hymns. For some we shall get the balance wrong, but overall a continuing stream of visitors and new attendees, a number of whom are making WBC their spiritual home, endorses this approach.

On Sunday evenings in addition to the ALTERN8 approach, aimed towards a younger constituency, we have held a couple of very successful TEA & SONGS OF PRAISE services and plan to continue these perhaps twice a term.

COMMUNITY & OUTREACH

We are seeing the fruit of a change in Church culture enabling people to step forward with new ideas and a “let’s try it and see” mentality. This has resulted in a number of new groups springing up most of which operate on the “fringes” of Church & community life with a core involvement of Church members: Delta Divas, Chairobics, Art & Craft groups, Singing for health etc. A number of these are under the umbrella of the new Wellness Mission Team. As this side of Church life increases we may soon need to explore the need for a caretaker! The extended Harvest celebrations, with a Barn Dance one week followed by a Sunday Supper the next, combined well with Back to Church Sunday as part of our emphasis on using the major Christian festivals as an outreach focus.

Once again Sam & Heather took a group to Soul Survivor, this and the Holiday Club and Check it out @ Christmas outreach concert have progressed into what is fast becoming a vibrant children & teens ministry.

EQUIPPING & SENDING OUT

It has been a joy to have 3 people on the FOOTSTEPS course (previously Open College) and to hold a training day for Care Group leaders, which we plan to continue. Delta Divas & Alpha Plus have continued as support and fellowship groups. The Lent course on The Lord’s Prayer was well attended with around 40 people in various groups. Ministerially, in addition to benefiting from our training role with Sam as Minister in Training, we have sent out Paul & Rachel Burnish as Paul combines training at Regent’s Park College with a pastorate at Colne Avenue, Southampton. We have also sent out Elgan and Wendy Evans, as Elgan takes up the pastorate at Immanuel Baptist Church, and Ray and Flo’ Burnish into retirement at Christchurch. The BUGB “Fresh Horizons” Day, which combined with one of two deacons days, gave a helpful focus and impetus to work amongst the 3rd agers (active retired) and 4th agers (becoming more dependent) of our community.

SOCIAL

Growbag events, talent evenings, a One man show and the very successful Christmas Fayre along with the activities of Thursday group, Lunch club, Coffee Break and various group outings have all indicated a growing sense of social cohesion within the Church as well as a willingness to have “fluid edges” by including others from the fringe and beyond.

PRACTICAL

What a joy to see the car park finally resurfaced at no cost. This along with new notice boards and a continuing refurbishment programme around the Church has continued to give the Church an image that is more welcoming as well as being clearly “open for business”. It has been good to have unsolicited community feedback that WBC is a place where “good things are happening”. Special thanks to those who do many routine maintenance jobs behind the scenes and to Vic Phillips who has planted and maintained the North side borders.

LEADERSHIP

We shall need to keep in mind that administration and support systems are there to facilitate the Church’s mission rather than drive it. Thus the “transitions” of Church life continue with a number of organisations handing over leadership to new people, this inevitably means changes will take place. Often these are not to be seen as right/ wrong or better/worse but merely a different approach.

For the first time in many years we end the year with a full complement of Deacons. However, we also have the challenge of continuity in the Treasurer ship and Secretary ship of the Church. These roles will continue to be important as we move towards the adoption of a new foundation document as a precursor to Charity Registration during the coming year. Particular thanks to Alan Perry (the retiring treasurer) and all those involved in setting up and administering the new server based accounting system. This will devolve much of the routine work previously laid at the Treasurer’s door. One of the challenges is to accept new ways of approaching tasks, which may not always sit comfortably with the way things have functioned in the past.

As I complete my fifth year at WBC it is amazing to see how much has been accomplished by God’s grace. As we look to the future may we *press on towards the goal* as we honour our Lord’s great commission by reaching out into our community and finding fresh ways to draw alongside those whom he is calling to faith.

Bill Longley

SECRETARY'S REPORT

How should the life of a church be recorded in an annual report? In terms of baptisms, marriages and deaths we have had a more quiet year. In terms of spiritual life it has been a vibrant year. We have sensed that God is taking us on a journey involving changes, which a few may find difficult, but we have seen people coming into the life of the fellowship because they are aware that God is amongst us. There is love between members and purposefulness about what we are doing. This is the working of the Holy Spirit amongst us, made possible because we are learning to allow Him to redirect us. We are immensely grateful to our minister, Bill and his wife Sue and to Sam and Heather for their leadership and encouragement to us. We are privileged to have their gifts and commitment which our Heavenly Father has used to develop our vision and to lead us forward, step by step. We are grateful also to our Administrator and the Deacons who work with the ministers to develop insights and bring them to fruition.

We owe much to others who have contributed to the Sunday ministry - Diane Cooper, Rev. Richard Walker, Rev. Elgan Evans (and Wendy), Rev. Raymond Burnish, Paul Burnish, John Bennett, John Chamberlain and Trevor Giles. Sadly for us because of health Rev. Richard Walker will not be able to lead us in future. Rev. Elgan Evans has become minister at Immanuel Baptist Church Southsea, Rev. Raymond Burnish has retired and moved away, and Paul Burnish is now Minister in Training in Southampton. We are grateful to visiting preachers, including Derek Hayman of Open Air Campaigners, Brian Goldsmith of The Barnabas Fund (for the Church Anniversary) and Rev. Grenville Overton (for "Men's Sunday").

Much of our strategic thinking this year has related to future ministry. We have been greatly encouraged by the generosity of fellowship members as we have seen the weekly offerings increase, making it possible to look to expansion of the ministry. We do not yet know the outcome but we are convinced that we must develop, for children, young people, families and older people. We continue to seek guidance both for ourselves and for Sam and Heather. It is a stressful time for them, as they seek to be open to the Lord's leading and as Sam works so hard with college studies, supporting the family and pastoral and preaching work amongst us.

Highlights of the year include the "multi-media prayer evenings", the "Altern8" services, Harvest and "Back to Church Sunday" and in the latter part of the year "Songs of Praise" evening services. The August Holiday Club was bigger and better than ever before. Many people made it possible but the energy and enthusiasm of Mandy Bowpitt and Philippa Williams amaze us! The Christmas Fayre called for many hours of planning and preparation but proved to be well worthwhile. We especially thank Sally Jackson and Janet Peck for their steadfast commitment to making it a success. "Check It Out" was a bold venture to reach young people through a concert just before Christmas. Faith was tested during preparations but over 50 young people came and a number enquired about going further with Jesus.

During the year the car park was resurfaced and also the new notice board was completed in the autumn. These contribute to the caring and welcoming message that we are trying to give to our community. More subtle changes during the year include Deacons, Door Stewards and leaders wearing name badges on Sundays to make us friendlier to visitors and also the provision of Church Meeting Minutes Summaries for anyone to see, removing the mystery of these meetings.

Scripture uses the picture of stones in a building to describe our inter-relationships but whereas a building is static the church is a dynamic group of people with multiple connections. It is amazing that it works so well with up to 200 people contributing as volunteers in all sorts of ways. We are thankful to everyone, both those who work behind the scenes with flowers,

cleaning etc. and those who are “up front” leading organisations, providing music, cooking lunches etc. I will not attempt to list everyone, but to mention a few - the PA system operators and the video projector operators, the door stewards, the Deacons, the Magazine Editor. The spirit of adventure in the church has shown itself in new ventures such as the rapidly expanding “Wellness Mission” Team with activities such as “Chairobics”, “Singing for health” and more recently the “Art Group”. We also have the Craft Group for adults and The Caterpillar Craft Group.

Sadly each year we have to record the deaths of dear friends in the fellowship. Doris Penson, a member of the church for very many years, died in June. Wyn Vibert died in October. The funerals for Henry Littlemore and Gwilym David Stephens, not generally known in the fellowship, were also held during the year.

It was a joy to witness the baptisms of Liz Hodges and Richard Bowpitt. We look forward to more baptisms in the New Year as candidates currently are completing their preparation. It is exciting to see numerical and spiritual growth. Unknown changes are ahead of us. Our Heavenly Father, who has blessed us greatly in 2008, will take us through 2009.

Richard Ostler

REGISTRAR'S REPORT 2008

Membership Statistics

Membership on 31st Dec 2007 was:

Active - 129. Inactive - 5. Associate - 6.

New Members added in 2008:

By Baptism	2
By Profession of Faith	2
By Transfer	1
Reinstated	2
(1 from Associate List)	

Members lost in 2008:

Transfer to other Church	2
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Total: 7

Total: 2

Membership on 31st Dec 2008 was:

Active – 134. Inactive list – 5. Associate – 4.

It has been good to see the church fellowship developing over a number of years now. Particularly encouraging has been the increase in the number of families and to see so many children and young people at our services. We give thanks to the Lord for the way in which he responds to our prayers and leads us forward.

In 2008 we had the joy of welcoming five new members to the fellowship. Richard Bowpitt and Elizabeth Hodges came into membership following their baptisms. Tony and Valerie Ormonde-Dobbin on Profession of Faith and Nadia Martin on Transfer. We have also reinstated Doug Bowen and Fiona Cariss to the active list.

Unfortunately we live in a mobile society and people do move on and so we have had to record the loss of two members over the year. It was with mixed feelings, joy at their response to God's calling but sadness at seeing them move, that we have said farewell to Paul and Rachel Burnish, not forgetting Naomi, as they transferred to Southampton on Paul's appointment as Pastor in Training. We wish them all well as they respond to God's calling.

However the above figures do not tell the full story. Do remember that during 2008 we have seen Ray and Flo Burnish move from the area to a well earned retirement. We pray that they will soon settle in to their new area and we can commend them to a new fellowship. Also Elgan and Wendy Evans will be moving to Southsea on Elgan's induction as minister at Immanuel Baptist Church in early 2009, we wish Elgan, Wendy and the boys every blessing as they take up this new calling. These changes have yet to be reflected in the membership figures.

Gordon Peacock

ADMINISTRATOR

Another busy twelve months have passed with a wide variety of different tasks having been completed. Some visible, such as completing the “Weekly” notices each week, note taking for and production of minutes for Deacons' and Church Meetings, putting together rotas (an art form in itself!), production of leaflets for communication, and purchasing refreshments for Sunday mornings. Some tasks are less visible, such as responding to general email queries, completing the room booking diary, the updating of a data base of children and young people's contact details, the completion of the annual records for the CCLI report (Christian Copyright Licensing International), photocopying of the worship team's music, and the ordering of stationery and cleaning and toiletry materials. I have been pleased to be able to work more of my hours in the Church office as James' pre-school hours have increased, and appreciate an excellent working relationship with all of you.

Lynda Nel

BOOKSTALL

The Bookstall once again has been a blessing to those that used it and found it to be helpful to a better understanding of their faith and knowledge of God.

The service is open to all who would care to browse, a free service that the church provides. Our only request is that you sign the book provided when you borrow a book. Please note that shortly there will be some new titles available.

The Bible reading notes are ordered from our Christian Bookshop and if you require some, please let me know (there is a price for these.)

Once a month we visit the Women's Fellowship with Christian greetings cards, items not easily available in the local shops. This service is open to anyone, especially the ladies of the fellowship.

So again I'll say, look forward to meeting you at the bookstall,

Jack and Rosemary Houlston

BOYS BRIGADE



I am pleased to report that another 6 boys have chosen to join us during the year bringing Anchor and Junior section membership to numbers that allow for a wider range of group activities. It is also encouraging that it is unusual for a boy not to remain with us once having given us a try. This must reflect on the friendly and welcoming atmosphere created not only by the staff but by all existing members.

The new material for the older boys was introduced in September and, while proving to be something of a challenge for the staff, the boys seem to appreciate the wider range of topics on offer, and the fresh, modern approach.

There was, as usual, a Waterlooville presence at all Battalion events, and the efforts of our boys gained well-earned achievements.

Two of our Anchor boys, Samuel Parkes and Justin Sabatino, were best in their years for the Battalion colouring contest, and Jared Parkes won the 2nd year Junior contest. Our Juniors

won the board games and Unihoc (indoor hockey) competitions, and Justin Sabatino and Rueben Shucksmith won the Anchor and Junior potted sports respectively. The newly re-formed 4th Portsmouth Company squeezed us to 2nd place in the Bible Drama, something we'll have to work on this year.

Having given a significant amount of our time to practicing for the Drill contest, the Company section were once again disappointed when, with just one week to go, we heard that no other entries had been received and the event was cancelled. We do hope that this contest either gets more support or is dropped from the list of events, it's getting difficult to motivate the boys when they believe it is unlikely to take place. It is good to hear from the Battalion visiting officer that no-one else was likely to beat us anyway, as our standard was so high!

The results of some Battalion competitions and events are combined to give an overall picture of proficiency and, for yet another year, our boys gained the 'Best Overall Company', 'Best Company Section' and 'Best Junior Section' trophies, and also retained the 'Barry Mills Sports Trophy', a clean-sweep of Battalion trophies.

For our Junior Holiday weekend, we were joined by boys and staff from Havant & Leigh Park and the 4th Portsmouth Companies, and were based at the Guide HQ at Alton. On-site activities proved hilarious (for some) and we also spent a day on the Watercress Railway. During the day three different people remarked on the boys good behaviour, something that gained them access to an otherwise restricted engine shed where they were able to clamber through Thomas the tank engine's cab. The day was enjoyed by all, and included a very necessary visit to the railway volunteers quarters for a good wash down.

In July, the Company boys returned to the Tile Barn Centre at Brockenhurst for it's annual camp. With all modern facilities, the site is now a firm favourite with many of our boys. This year we were joined by boys and staff from 4th Portsmouth and I was pleased to see the 2 groups quickly get to know each other and become a single unit. With better weather this year, we were able to enjoy forest walks and other trips out, as well as on-site sports and games. Many of you will recall the very successful 'Talents Evening' held in February. We are grateful to Paul Burnish for all his efforts and were pleased with the support, both of artists and audience, many of whom asked when we were to hold the next one!

The Coffee and Car Wash morning was well supported again, and resulted in a much needed boost to our funds. We are grateful to those who attended the open evening in May where the boys gained their various awards and were able to show something of our weekly activities.

Similarly, your jar and bottle contributions for the Church Christmas Fayre helped to make our stall attractive, adding to the overall effect on the day, as did our wandering doughnut salesman!

Adrian Williams and Aaran Smith were invited to attend the parade at the London Guildhall to commemorate the 125th anniversary of the BB, and a good number of the BB in our area took part in the sponsored walk from Emsworth to Hayling and back. The walk, and other on-going initiatives by the Battalion, have raised nearly £3,000 for the BB nationally adopted charity, Childrens' Hospice, and Naomi House in particular, a magnificent effort.

I would imagine that the most memorable event, for those who attended, was the 125th anniversary parade at Romsey Abbey. BB members, parents and friends filled the Abbey to over-flowing, and we all came away with a real 'BB-Buzz'. We are grateful to Mr John Bennett for playing the organ for us and trust he enjoyed leading the singing in this way. Our own

Battalion parade, held at WBC in December, was also well attended and we are grateful to all who helped to make that parade so successful.

There have been some changes in staffing during the year, and we were sorry to lose Paul and Rachel Burnish in July when Paul began his training and ministerial placement at Southampton. We were fortunate to have Mrs Dawn Trimby step in to take over the Anchor section, and some of the senior boys now arrive early to help with some aspects of the younger sections.

The steadily increasing membership leads me to believe that the BB is still relevant, and has a contribution to make among the youth of our fellowship, yet there is still no sign of a replacement Captain for July 2010. Some of the existing staff are happy to continue in service beyond this date, but cannot do so unless someone is appointed as Captain. We have experienced staff, we have an increasing boy membership, but at the end of its 50th year the Company will close if a solution is not found. Please give this matter your prayerful and practical support.

Trevor Giles

CARE GROUPS

There are presently 263 people being cared for in the church Care Group system and there are 18 groups. There used to be 20 groups in all but 2 of the group leaders decided to put down their duties and their groups have been amalgamated with other groups. As a result some of the groups are rather large. If anyone would like to find out about being a Care Group Leader, just contact me for information. The groups are still largely arranged in geographical areas but this is very flexible. If someone wants to be in another group with their friend or if a Care Group Leader wants to keep a member of their group if they move out of the area, that is perfectly fine.

We continue to be extremely grateful for all the Care Group Leaders who have carried out their work over very many years. We are also grateful to the newer leaders who are also doing sterling work. Janet Peck, Althea Lee, Una West, Edna Dore and Sally Jackson have all decided to put down the role in the last couple of years and we thank them for all their service. Newer Care Group Leaders who have taken over their groups in the last few years are Rita Pethick, Pam Gray and Jill Bowen. We are grateful to Gill Phillips for taking over Janet Peck's group and adding them to her own. Sally Jackson's group has been incorporated with my group.

The Care Group Leaders met in July 2008 for a Pastoral Care Seminar, which was well attended and very useful and informative. Another seminar is presently planned for March 2009. It is hoped that this training opportunity with Bill Longley will carry on as a yearly event.

The chance for Care Groups to sit together after the morning service went very well during 2008 and another such event is planned for 10 May 2009. Space is at a premium in the hall and it is a bit difficult to guesstimate just how many people from each group may attend church that particular morning, but it is a chance for people to get friendly when they are sitting close together!

When it comes to Harvest and Christmas, the Care Group Leaders give me a list of people they think should receive a gift from the church. People can receive a pot plant or a Christmas present because they are over 80, are ill, have been in hospital, have a disability, have suffered a bereavement, need encouragement, need to feel loved, are celebrating a special anniversary, etc. We are very grateful to all those who help deliver the pot plants after Harvest

and to all the Care Group Leaders who buy, wrap and deliver the Christmas presents from the church. Many of the Care Group Leaders are also involved in distributing the church flowers on Monday mornings and we are very grateful to them for all their hard work, along with the other people who help deliver.

If anyone does not know which Care Group they are in, or if anyone is not in a Care Group and would like to join the system, please do give me a call on 023 92641172 and the matter will be put right!

Valerie Lindridge

CATERING COMMITTEE

This year has seen another busy year for the catering committee.

We have been pleased to provide refreshments for many families who have been sadly bereaved during this year, for anniversary and birthday celebrations, and the Harvest Supper. We were also asked to provide breakfast for the Solent Youth for Christ group meeting at WBC.

Another new venture saw the start of the Songs of Praise evenings where a homemade tea is served beforehand. Look out for these monthly evenings, commencing in February.

Once again we served drinks and mince pies after the joint ecumenical Advent service, and to round off the year for the catering ladies we organised the mince pies & drinks after the carol service.

Thank you to everyone who provided mince pies and more on these occasions.

On a personal note I would like to thank those ladies of the committee who so willingly give of their time and expertise, and to welcome Rita Pethick to our team.

We are few and would love to have new members join us. No experience needed just a willingness to help. Men not exempt! Please speak to me for more information.

Do you handle food for the church organisation you are involved with?

If so there will be a day Food Hygiene course run professionally with an examination, (as required by law for food handlers) on February 21st 2009. There are a limited number of places available. Please see me as soon as possible for more information and to book a place.

Margaret Penson

CHURCH CLEANING

2008 has seen an increase in the number of groups using our rooms – that's a great encouragement to know that we are extending our contacts! However it also means that there is more "housework" to be done – bins need to be emptied more frequently and tables especially have to be wiped more often.

We would urge all leaders of organisations to make sure that cleaning up and wiping down is done after each session – as yet we don't have a "caretaker" so we are all responsible for taking care of the rooms we use. There is a brush and pan in each room with a rubbish bin.

Wiping cloths and cleaning stuff can be found in the kitchen cupboard and vacuum cleaners are situated in the Tooke Room and Vestibule cloakroom, so no excuses!.

Thank you again to those gallant few who regularly clean the sanctuary and other areas of the building, your work is appreciated. If you would like to offer help in any way, please speak to Jill Bowen or Barbara Ostler.

Barbara Ostler

COFFEE BREAK

Coffee Break continues to be the mid-week meeting point for friends and a useful drop-in for folk doing jobs in and around the building. On Wednesdays the door is open from 10.00am until the Lunch Group is assembled around 12.15 p.m.. It has also been good to welcome occasional visitors and introduce them to our church informally.

Our charge for a hot drink and choice of snack is now 50p – still a modest amount but this is because fund-raising is not our aim, rather, we're here to give a warm welcome and an opportunity to chat.

The rota of helpers fluctuates and changes, as rotas do, but we thank the following folk for their involvement – Doreen Figgins, Josie Noyce, Gill Cawte, Joyce Nixon, Denise Brewer and especially Joan and Ron Welch who have been part of the team since September 1991 when Coffee Break first opened!

Barbara Ostler

COMMUNION STEWARDS.

It is a special “Thank You” to Doreen Everett, who has faithfully served for many years preparing the evening communion. She now feels it is time to come off the rota. Also due to health reasons Dorothy Earley temporarily came off the rota, and so we are grateful to Brenda Bennett and Lucie Whittaker who stepped in to enable the evening communion service to continue.

Thank you again to the dedicated team who prepare and wash up the morning communion, which enables the smooth running of morning communion.

Barbara Cariss

CORNERSTONE

“I’m setting a stone in Zion, a Cornerstone in the place of honour.
Whoever trusts in this stone as a foundation will never have cause to regret it.”
1 Peter 2 verse 6

The end of the year saw many answers to prayer; namely an increase in the number of young people attending. Some of the new members are those that previously went to Rock Solid and so we give thanks for the transfer across the organisations.

The summer started a very busy time for Cornerstone. Most Cornerstone members became involved in holiday club and found that helping and learning the songs encouraged their

faith. Following that, several were taken by Sam and Heather to Soul Survivor, where they enjoyed mud sliding and the rain along with the teaching and exuberant worship. On return Chris Black and Alex Fellows showed off their decorating and church cleaning talents. Aaron Smith also proved invaluable in helping with the decorating of the Tooke Room.

At the start of September a number of them went to NE Youth and experienced their bimonthly youth event. Apart from it being an excellent evening with Dave Aarons as the speaker, it gave them the idea that as a group they were capable of doing something similar. As a result Richard Williams has started a young people's music group which will perform for the first time in the New Year.

The Christmas Fayre showed the skill and talent of another member. Richard Bowpitt made an excellent 'roll the coin game', that proved to be very successful with the younger attenders of the Fayre.

Check it out at Christmas was attended and enjoyed by all from Cornerstone. The impromptu Friday follow up evening of Pizza and hot chocolate was well attended and allowed for the more serious reading and calmer thinking about the fuller message of Christmas.

It has been tremendous to see the Lord working and developing the lives of the young people as they meet on Sunday evenings, and then to watch as their individual skills are used throughout the church.

Barbara Cariss

FLOWER MINISTRY

I trust I speak on behalf of those in our Church Fellowship when I express a sincere "Thank you" to all providers of flowers, to the team of 14 ladies who arranged them throughout the year and to those who distributed the flowers to the housebound.

It is hoped our arrangements (and the flowers from them) brought visual enjoyment, happy memories and a lifting of spirit to all those who saw, or received, them.

Maureen Walker has now taken on the role of Co-ordinator for the Flower Ministry and I look forward to being a member of her team for 2009.

Pat Keay



FRIDAY KIDS

We have 40 + names of children who come to Friday Kidz – fortunately the most we have had in one evening was 32 – which was a particularly loud evening!! Generally 24 to 26 come regularly, and we all have lots of fun with energetic games, interactive bible stories and messy craft. And the parents seem very grateful for a few hours of peace and quiet across at the Woodpecker.

Lynda and I are particularly grateful to Margaret Barker who has come regularly to help supervise such numbers! Our young people come, organise and run the games each session, Richard Williams, Bexx Williams, Richard Bowpitt and Bethany Bowpitt, and we couldn't do it without them! We have had some guest helpers when one or other of us have been unable to get

there and we say thank you to those who have given up their evening to come and support this outreach work. Many of our Kidz are not church children and this is their only contact with the story of God and Jesus.

We use the Energize material supplied by Urban Saints, which covers many topics and is an exciting resource! We make use of the patio when able through what summer we had, and ended the year with a Christmas party which was loud and messy!

Should anyone feel able to offer a couple of hours once or twice a month to help out (no teaching needed – you just need to be able to help children cut, colour, or stick!) please see me or Lynda Nel.

Mandy Bowpitt



GIRLS BRIGADE

2008 was another strong and steady year for the GB. Our badgework this year included Party Dances, Badminton, World Current Issues, My Church (when we had visits from Bill, Alan and Lynda, explaining their church roles) and Junk to Treasure – when the girls took items of rubbish and recycled them into useful items including the old wooden chairs which we obtained from Bedhampton Methodist and which you probably spotted around the church for a while. I hope you got to see some of the lovely newly painted chairs that the girls created before they took them home to pride of place in their bedrooms.

In February, as usual we hosted the Solent District Young Leader Training Weekend and three of our girls were put forward for training; Bexx Williams and Harriet Glass at Foundation and Marina Granger-Brown Intermediate. They all passed their assessments and we joined with the District for their presentations at a service of celebration at Bedhampton Methodist in April.

We have been able to welcome Cerys Mainwaring both to help in the company and also to the church this year. Cerys has moved to Waterlooville from the London area where she was a GB officer. We had the exciting news also that she was expecting a baby, due to be born in March 2009.

Jane Smith continues to help on a Tuesday evening and Sandie Davies also joined us as a regular helper from September 2008. With so many girls in each of the sections, we are grateful for the help of these willing volunteers, who are now very much part of the team.

In last year's report, I mentioned that we were losing Elly Bryan as she was off to Brighton Uni, but in fact it didn't take her long to come back to us on a Tuesday evening and is very much part of our company again.

The highlight of the year was our company camp during October half term, when 28 of us went to Oxford to stay in the scout accommodation and activity centre at Youlsbury, which the girls affectionately christened 'the shed' !! We had a fantastic week which included snow on the Wednesday! The theme for our worship for the week was Girl Power, when we looked at girls from the bible: Deborah, Mary, Ruth and Rahab. We learned how God had used these young girls to do amazing things and thought about how God might use us in today's world. All the girls were given red wrist bands, to remind us of the red rope that Rahab put out and the promise

the spies made to keep Rahab and her family safe. A reminder to us that God can use us if we are willing to trust him.

December included a special National event, "Seek, Serve, Follow" for the officers of the district which Waterlooville hosted and the evening was led by Ruth Gilson, the National Director of the GB and Dennis Pethers, the director of Viz a Viz ministries. GB finished a week early this year, making way for the youth event Check it Out at Christmas, when many of our older girls came back to enjoy the Christmas themed evening led by the Viz a Viz band Taste.

All in all, another good year for the GB, when our numbers reached 50 in the company and we look forward to what 2009 holds for us.

Philippa Williams



GROWBAG

2008 got off to a flying start with a Winter Wilderness Experience at Queen Elizabeth Country Park at the end of January. The weather was not as kind as last year and fewer turned out, but we all had a great time orienteering, exploring and eating muffins! By way of a change we are taking this event to Hayling Island sea front at the end of March, and there will be a choice of cycling or walking. There might even be a possibility of a ride on the Hayling Billie miniature railway.

Our second event was the heading towards annual Quiz and Fish and Chip Nite, ably quizmastered as ever by Alan Perry and catered by a local chippie. This again will be repeated in 2009, toward the end of the year.

We introduced a new event in May, the Magnificent Movie and Curry Nite, when the sanctuary and Tooke Rooms were transformed into "cinemas" and the Owens Hall resembled an upmarket Indian Restaurant. This was extremely well supported and will definitely be one to remember for the future. It was just a shame the caterers forgot to serve the salad until everyone had finished their first plateful so we all had to go back for seconds. Lynda and Sian would be very pleased to hand it over if someone else thought they could do a better job!

Another annual event followed, the Barbecue and Open Garden at Sian and Ray's. An extra feature this year was the paddling pool for the youngsters, who had a wonderful time splashing anything and anyone within range. Thanks to the Evans for their hospitality and for being willing to have us back again this summer.

Our Harvest Family Barn Dance with Live Band was another very well supported event and we have booked the Harvesters again for 2009. We also managed to make a small donation to the Operation Agri Annual Appeal.

The final event of the year took us off the premises to the Kings Head, Wickham for Skittles Evening and a Basket Meal. Although this was a fun evening and again well supported, we are not very happy with the venue and are searching for an alternative. They seem to have been the best of the ones we have tried, but are getting more and more expensive, which makes it hard to run a reasonably priced event. There is a suggestion of the former Football Club, any other ideas would be gratefully received.

We have now been running Growbag events for nearly six years, and we hope that you enjoy them. Our aim is that although we focus on family events, over the course of a year we

will provide at least one occasion that everyone can enjoy. We want to encourage church folk to get to know each other better and offer an event that you can bring your friends to as a gentle introduction to what church is about. We are not into heavy evangelism, most times we say grace at the mealtime but we never preach. If anyone would like to join us on the planning committee or you have an idea for an event we could run, please speak to Lynda, Claire or Sian.

Sian and Ray Evans

JUNIOR CHURCH

The Junior Church has continued well over the past year and has also seen an increase in the number of children attending on a regular basis; some as a result of new families attending, but more specifically in the YZone age group, where work within the Cornerstone and Rock Solid groups, and attendance at Soul Survivor, has influenced attendance at YZone.

A committed group of Crèche ladies look after about 4 babies each Sunday, a few of the older children having recently moved up from the Crèche, with more babies expected soon! It has been pleasing to find ladies willing to be involved in looking after the children regularly. Our thanks to Laura Gray, Linda Beamish, Rosemary Black, Mary Coe, Hazel Lapworth, Annie Harding and Sian Evans.

With overall attendance at Junior Church reaching nearly 40 on a busy day, it was necessary to reorganise the groups and the ages attending the groups at the beginning of the new academic year in September 2008, and to move groups around to maximise the rooms available.

This included broadening the age range of the original Sparkles group to include 3 to 6 year olds, with a name change to Cross Trainers to accommodate the larger group. About 8 children now attend this group regularly, and they make use of the newly redecorated Tooke Room. Our grateful thanks to Margaret Penson, who has resumed overall leadership of the group, and is ably assisted by Lucie Whittaker, Angela Perry, Ruth Smith and Sue Taylor.

The J-Force group continues to function as a single group, with about 12 enthusiastic youngsters attending regularly. We continue to use the “Energize” material from Urban Saints, which includes high-energy (and sometimes noisy) games to keep the children on their toes! The J-Force group now use the main hall to allow more space for moving around. A special vote of thanks to Steve Harding, Claire Shucksmith, Alastair Pethick and Richard Williams who continue to work with this group.

The Y-Zone group continues to grow from strength to strength, and we are particularly thankful to Heather and Sam Owoo who have been able to provide a more regular and consistent teaching style. A group of up to 15 attend each week, now in “their own” Youth Room, making use of interactive discussion material from the YouthWorks magazine resources and other worship material. The group look forward to more baptisms expected early in the new year, and have begun rehearsing as a small worship team to provide youth lead services - we look forward with eager anticipation to their new venture.

Most of the Junior Church children also attended or helped with the annual and ever more successful Holiday Club. Some families attended a Doug Horley Praise Party together in Southbourne in early September, with the 11-16 year olds attending a Viz-A-Viz ministries Taste band at their “Check It Out At Christmas” event in December, with a total of nearly 60 young people attending.

We remain grateful to the group of teachers and helpers who have proven their commitment to teaching our church-going children more about Jesus.

Lynda Nel

LUNCHEON CLUB

Lunch Club has had another successful, enjoyable year. We average 40-42 diners each week who all say that they enjoy the meals and the social chat. It is a meeting place for established friends and the making of new friendships. Our minister makes good use of this opportunity to mingle with us.

We are indebted to the four teams of cooks for supplying such a wide variety of menus. Not forgetting those who prepare the vegetables most Tuesday afternoons, those who set up the tables and those who clear away, run the dishwasher(!) and leave the kitchen looking pristine. With many who come to us from other churches or who have no church connection we feel that we are doing our bit towards the church's community outreach.

Through the clever budgeting of the cooks we have been able to fund replacement / additional equipment for the kitchen, which of course is to the benefit of all kitchen users. It has also been possible to send a substantial donation to the BMS Disaster Relief Fund.

Overall, a satisfying year, in many ways! If you would wish to join us, at any time, do not hesitate to contact Jean Evans or myself (preferably with a few days notice). Any offer to assist with the cooking, even occasionally, would be more than welcome.

Doreen Everett

MISSIONS COMMITTEE

The Missions Committee has endeavoured to keep the work of "Mission" in the thoughts and minds of the Fellowship in their forward planning programme. The monthly Mission Spot gives an opportunity for this and has covered many subjects including The Leprosy Mission, Fairtrade, Christian Aid, Easy Fund Raising, Release International, Operation Agri, Open Air Campaigners, Samaritans Purse (Shoe Boxes) and the Christmas Charities – Village Africa and Smile International. We have welcomed visitors to present some of these causes and thank members of our own Fellowship for their contributions. We were to have had a visit from David Treagust in April representing the Bible Society, but he was snowed in! Hopefully he will visit in 2009.

Our Link Missionary, Pat Woolhouse, working for the Baptist Missionary Society in Congo, is very grateful for the support we give her both in sending letters and parcels, but also for our prayers. Pat is now on e-mail for any who would like to contact her in this way. pwoolhouse424@gmail.com We will have an opportunity to meet her as she is planning to come to the UK on Home Assignment sometime in 2009. Watch the "Weekly" for further details.

A celebration was held at Oaklands School in June to mark the retirement due to ill health, of Rev Ray Burnish as Area Representative for The Leprosy Mission. Peggy Chamberlain also retired as Church Representative and we thank Pat Knowles for taking her place. Peggy also retired from the Missions Committee, and we thank her for her support over many years.

No Hunger Lunch was held this year on behalf of Christian Aid, but the Church supported the cause by envelope giving.

Gifts for Bosnia have been received during the year in the receptacle in the front vestibule and have been passed to Valerie O'Donnell for distribution. Many thanks to all who contributed.

Following the Harvest Supper on Sunday 28th September, the evening service took as its theme the Operation Agri appeal, "Gaining Ground in Uganda".

The end of the year is an opportunity to send Christmas Cards remembering friends near and far. Although they may not be known to all, the recipients are so grateful to be remembered.

We have looked back over 2008 and now look forward to serving our Lord as we reach out to people and causes around the world in 2009.

Joyce Nixon

NEWSLETTER

The Newsletter has now been in existence for over five years, and there are between four and six editions a year depending on how much material I have to include. Last year was hard work, very few people gave me articles voluntarily, although I am grateful to John Bennett for starting his occasional series on famous Baptists and to Bill for his regular Manse Musings. If little material is submitted, I have three choices: I can either print a small magazine; pad it out with downloads from the Internet; or postpone publication. I have used all three options on different editions in 2008, which is why you may have noticed that the Christmas magazine was conspicuous by its absence. I am pleased to say that I have lots of original, local articles coming in for the next few newsletters because I think that makes for the best read!

Thank you to John Everett, Mavis Prince and Lynda Nel for their help in photocopying, folding and stapling the Newletters for me. I hope that you enjoy reading the magazine and find it beneficial and informative. If anyone feels they would like to find out more about editing, submitting articles or anything else, please come and talk to me.

Sian Evans

PRAYER GROUPS

When Bob and Doreen Simpson were at WBC Doreen started what was then called Women's Prayer Groups with each group reading the book "What happens when Women Pray" by Evelyn Christenson. by way of introduction. There was also a specific Men's prayer group. Many of the people in those groups have now moved elsewhere or been promoted to glory. Sally Jackson took on the mantle after Doreen left and coordinated the groups very ably and would still probably be doing so had it not been for her illness. We are grateful to God for continued answered prayers for her. Subsequently, I have been helping to coordinate the requests with the help of Barbara Ostler and Jan Peck.

As technology has now given us e-mail, we are now able to have the e-mail Prayer chain. Requests are confidential and may be telephoned to Barbara initially and then passed by either phone or e-mail where appropriate. From the end of July there have been over 70 requests and up dates on answered prayer, and it's good to see that "yes, God does answer our prayers"

There are still Prayer groups which meet at different times in the week, one on a Monday evening. We need to pray more together-maybe you might have suggestions on how to go about this? Prayer groups are certainly not exclusive, and it would be good to see some more people joining together to pray.

Another two things that you might consider are Quiet days and Retreats.- Maybe the titles alone are enough to put you off!

A Quiet day is literally just that! We meet for a few hours, sing some worship songs and then are led in a topic by a speaker. Last year it was our own minister, Bill who challenged us gently on how to “Be still and know that I am God”. How often do we get the opportunity to do that for a few hours without interruption?

A retreat, especially a first one takes some thinking about, but is a valuable time spent in the presence of both God and Christian friends. There are many different types some silent, others led, but all who have been on retreat would recommend them. I have lots of information which you would be welcome to read if you wish to consider taking part in one.

The way forward? Well, that’s up to God and us. Pray continually , 1 Thessalonians 5 verse 17 and lift one another up in prayer-it’s not only a comfort in our troubled times, it’s a necessity and we need to be “ plugged into the power” in order to be of use.

Angela Perry



ROCKSOLID

Rock Solid started at WBC in April 2002, with four leaders: Ruth Logan, Dan Jay, Ray Evans and myself. Since Ruth and Dan moved away, Ray and I have been joined by a number of different leaders over the years. The Youth for Christ material requires at least 3 or 4 leaders to get the best out of the material. At the beginning of 2008, Ray, Nigel Smith and myself felt we needed to find an extra leader and out of desperation, I emailed a number of people - most of whom chose not to answer!! However, four did - to which we were very grateful. It's quite a responsibility to keep a group of 15-20 teenagers entertained on a Friday night.

Between January and July we had a “Guest Leader of the Week” with Wendy Evans, John Fowler, Sandie Davies and Claire Shucksmith coming in to help in turn.

In July, we said goodbye to those that had reached our upper age limit of 15, which is always a horrible time of year, but it is good to know that the majority have continued in Cornerstone. We also said goodbye to Nigel as one of the leaders, but are grateful to him for the time he has given to the group.

From September 2008, Ray and I have been joined by Heather Owoo and Steve Harding together with John Fowler as regular leaders.

We started the Autumn term with a number of new members, but the group has been quite intermittent, some weeks having 14 but other weeks having only 6 (with 5 leaders!!) so Rock Solid has felt quite unsettled through to Christmas.

The youth room has benefitted from a lovely new and colourful set of curtains (thanks Mandy) and a new air hockey table with financial contributions from Rock Solid, Friday Kids and Girls' Brigade.

Themes this year have included: making changes to the world around us; showing that freedom and truth is found through Jesus; changing the way we view ourselves once we know how God feels about us; gossip; what motivates us to spend money and life's ultimate questions. We visited QE Country Park twice: once in February for a night hike in the cold and dark, and then again in July for a summer hike and BBQ

We finished the year with our Christmas themed evening, when fun and pizza were had by all!

I'm sure Rock Solid will continue to change, but one thing we can be sure of is that God never changes and we hope and pray that as these young teens pass through they will take this message on board. Please continue to pray for this group who are always a real joy to be around.

Philippa Williams

THURSDAY GROUP

If the maxim "All's well that ends well" has any credence then the past year has been a successful one for the Thursday Group. November the 20th being our last meeting of the year (meeting on the third Thursday of the month makes it difficult in December!) we had an excellent time with Simon Mullett an A&E Consultant from Q.A. Hospital. The Lancaster Room was bursting at the seams with both our own folk and those from other churches who gathered to hear Simon reveal how his Christian faith has influenced his approach to his role and its impact on his colleagues and patients. An overview of the new build at the hospital and the impact on car parking was also addressed. A stimulating and encouraging end to the year. But what of the rest of the year?

January and February saw the return of two of our old members (not old in years one would hasten add!) David Allison who spoke about church architecture and local village churches. Illustrating his points with his own exquisite drawings; while Terry Stevens gave us an entertaining "Evening with Elgar"

The time spent with the Local Neighbourhood Policewomen was very informative and enlightening. It was good to hear that they shared many of our concerns and to know that they were doing their utmost to address them. They certainly have the right personality for the job they were trying to do, especially among the younger members of our community.

The Revd. Martin Poole led us through his life as an Airport Chaplain and Minister, highlighting the challenges and opportunities that confront him from both staff and passengers.

Our good friend Revd. Elgan Evans came to us as President of BMM speaking on his theme for the year "God's Word in the Modern World"

In March our evening coincided with Maundy Thursday so we joined with the rest of the fellowship for an evening of meditation led by our Minister.

At our Members evening in April we listened to Ted Peck as he relived his "Thirty three years before the Mast". Derek Mundin took us traveling through Australia. Alastair Pethick enlightened us on his activities with Trees, while Trevor Giles gave us an overview of the

building of the “New Waterlooville Baptist Church”. With the aid of a bell they all stuck to their allotted time and the evening proved to be a real success. No doubt it will be repeated next year with different topics of course.

Once again we were indebted to Darrell Griffin for organising our Summer Outing. This year we took a coach to the Vyne, a National Trust property near Basingstoke where we explored the house and extensive grounds, lakes and woodland walks. It is understood that a certain amount of tea and cakes were also consumed!

The real joy of the Thursday Group meeting is the fellowship which ensues over refreshments (thanks to Geoff and Darrell) before the official activity, and informally afterwards. It is the ideal setting for “getting to know folk” especially those new to the fellowship. If you have not tried it, we would love to see you.

John Everett

TODDLERS' CLUB

This will be my last report for Toddlers Club activities as I am stepping down from the leadership and handing over to new and younger people. Caroline Skeet will be starting the new term in January in charge of the group and will be ably supported by Sue Taylor. Val and Tony Ormonde-Dobbin from the fellowship have come along and are getting involved. The new term starts in January with a full register of 40 children.

We would like to thank Maureen Walker, who is also stepping down after many years of loyal service. Her help and support has been invaluable and she will be missed. We would like to thank all the helpers in the kitchen who cater for our needs and are so reliable, also those who set up in the hall and clear the toys away.

Toddlers Club is a busy, exciting place to be on Thursday morning. The parents, grandparents and child-minders bring their children along and stay to look after them so there is a real buzz about the place. We try to provide a safe and friendly place for children to play and to learn their first social skills. It's not easy to have to learn to share. We rarely hear a child crying. It is also an opportunity for carers to meet and make new friends where they can share joys and concerns. We are always ready to listen.

We held a short service in the church at Easter, Harvest and Christmas. The children learnt appropriate songs to sing and there was a talk from Bill or Sam. Our harvest gifts this year were shoe box gifts presented along with the church shoe boxes to be given to children in Africa. The Summer Outing had to be cancelled because of rain but we met in the hall instead and had games to round off the term.

We had an opportunity for Dads to come along on a Saturday morning and bring their children to experience the normal morning routine. Term ended with a Christmas Party and each child was given a Christian colouring book by Father Christmas.

On a personal note, I would like to thank all of you who have helped me over the years in any way at all. There are many of you, too many to mention by name. I ask God's blessing for those who follow on and pray that they will get the same help and support to continue this work among the young families living in this area.

Margaret Barker

WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP

I am delighted to have been asked to give our annual report for 2008.

This is my opportunity on behalf of our ladies to share with you what we have been doing and planning with God's help. First of all we are grateful for the excellent working relationships we have experienced over the past year one with the other. We do believe it is because on the first Monday of the month the Committee meet at Barbara Ostler's house to share our praying for each member of our Fellowship, before God asking for His peace, comfort and healing, if required, for each one.

We can truly say that God has blessed us in many ways. Tuesday is the one afternoon we look forward to. From the very beginning we are given a warm welcome, a friendly smile, and feeling of belonging and love. Again as in so many previous years our afternoons continued to be interesting and encouraging with excellent speakers. There have been two Member's Afternoons, two videos, and two Songs of Praise afternoons with cream teas. One highlight of our year was our Anniversary with Mrs Sue French as our speaker. This was a celebration enjoyed by visitors from local women's groups who joined us as usual. Called "Street Pastors", Sue and husband Roger, who is a minister at one of the Portsmouth churches, together with friends, are working in an amazing way among young people, helping them to find a new and better life with Jesus. Rev Roger French also brought to our meeting at the end of the year a powerful and challenging message.

The outing to the Isle of Wight in July was much enjoyed including a warm friendly welcome from Ryde Baptist Church with a delicious tea. Thanks to Joyce and Mavis for making all the arrangements.

Another "highlight" was our Christmas Carol Service, enjoyed so much. Our Minister Bill was our speaker, several ladies chose their favourite carols, and various ladies gave the appropriate Bible Readings. "Three Kings from Persian Lands Afar" was beautifully sung by a trio of Bill, Arthur Davidge and Trevor Giles, with John Bennett at the organ. After we shared a super ham salad tea with fancy cake etc., thanks to Pat Cornish and her lady helpers.

Besides special speakers we enjoyed our hymn singing, Bible reading, and prayers for our fellowships, their families and loved ones. This we find very helpful and comforting to know we are mentioned before God.

We welcome the "Good News Library", each month with books, videos and cards, thanks Jack for your help.

When our birthday comes around, Pat Davies is always there to present us with a card and gift prepared by her own fair hand - very nice!

Brenda is our Registrar and has reported 66 ladies with an average attendance of 37. Sadly there have been 4 deaths during the year including Iris Sturt, one of our pianists. We are grateful to Lily Burrow, Naomi Skeates, Doreen Everett and Derek Cooper for helping me form a new rota. Stan Hitchens has been very useful too. Thank you all very much.

Mavis Prince our treasurer tells us that our weekly offerings have increased. Together with our "Bring and Buy" stalls and special gifts we have been able to donate to ten different

organisations during the year in addition to fees paid to speakers and supplies of refreshments. Sale of cards from our stall has produced a useful profit.

Throughout the year we are grateful to Doreen Figgins, Josie and Ruth for preparing the tea for our meetings. Many people have contributed to our regular meetings in so many ways. Transport too, what a blessing - an important feature these days so lovingly given.

May God continue to bless us as we enter the New Year 2009 with our Minister Bill leading us forward. A warm welcome is here for all ladies, please come and share our faith together, giving thanks to our heavenly Father for his love and goodness to us all.

May Tyler

Anyone wishing to join or help with any of the activities mentioned in these reports should contact the person listed or any Church Officer for more information.