

We are still without a minister in our church but with the help of visiting lay preachers, our own lay preacher Barbara and members of the congregation we have been able to continue regular worship. Our organist Ruth ensures we have music each week, for which we are very grateful. John has admirably stepped up to help out if Ruth is indisposed. Our aim to provide a service for members and any other worshippers who might like to attend was achieved and we managed a regular attendance of 14 plus, in fact over the year we have welcomed new members, which is a very positive sign for the future. We have been very fortunate in receiving an application from a local gentleman for the position of minister in our church, and we are currently following the employment process for the post and hopefully he will be insitu by March, 2024.

Church Events:

We have enjoyed several social events over the year, and took part in the Annual Oakamoor Festival when our church participated by hosting a special exhibition in the church of art and craft work, this as usual was very well attended and the whole event was enjoyed and any monies raised was donated to local charities. We held our usual Christmas Candle light Service which is always well attended, many thanks to John for setting up the candles and making a beautiful setting for this service. We all went out for a Christmas meal together at the Queen's Arms, Freehay, this again was a very pleasant occasion and enables us to enjoy each other's company on a social level. King Charles Coronation was celebrated and we joined with the village in the many events arranged, and this was a happy community celebration

We are delighted that the church now supports a fortnightly Wednesday Club where members of our local community visit our school room premises and get together to have guest speakers, crafts, and a general get together over tea and biscuits. Two of our members, a husband and wife team arrange the fortnightly meetings and we're pleased to report it has been very successful with an average attendance of 20 people.

Charity Giving:

Our Charity giving for this year: Our Lenten giving was donated to the Local Air Ambulance and we also supported the Turkey and Syria earthquake appeal , We give to Christian aid annually, Our Harvest Festival Sale proceeds were given to The Alzheimer's Society, The Salvation Army is supported annually as we hold a Christmas Toy service ,this went to the Tunstall Christmas Appeal where the given toys are distributed in the Staffordshire area to disadvantaged children and their families.

Property Repairs

We are always aware that our church is Grade 2 listed and was opened in 1878, whenever we have to restore or repair any features we try to be as discreet as possible and are always mindful that we are in a conservation area. Following extensive work in our school room it is finally completed with the replacement of heaters which are more economical. The organ is tuned regularly and any work needed is done without delay. All safety checks are completed to comply with Health & Safety regulations. We give special thanks to John for keeping our church clean and tidy on a weekly basis and helping out with key holding as well.

We have excellent tenants in our two cottages; the solar panels on the roof of each cottage are generating power which provides help to defray the ever increasing and challenging rising cost of energy. All regulatory checks have been undertaken

Grounds:

The grounds and churchyard are kept in excellent condition by our ground men Norman and John. The approach drives are included in their work. We thank them both for their conscientious work throughout the year as our church is in a conservation area; John consults with them regarding any work that needs to be done with felling of branches etc. so we comply with the current legislation regarding the grounds.

Following the King's Coronation an Oakamoor village Group was set up to commemorate this event with something permanent in the village, the church has leased a piece of ground to the village in front of the church for use as a Village Orchard, the responsibility of planting fruit trees and keeping the area clean and tidy and a pleasant visiting area for the village rests with the Village Group, while the church retains the ownership of the land.

A very successful year!

Dorothy Clowes (Hon Sec) February, 2024

D. Clowes

MEMORIAL FREE CHURCH,OAKAMoor.					
2023 -TRUSTEES CURRENT ACCOUNT 75446367 -DEBIT					
		£	p		
Church Insurance		3500.19			
Manse/Bluebell cottage/study insurance		911.53			
Treasures Expenses		318.00			
Cleaning Treasurer to J.Jervis		300.00			
Churchyard Maintenance (N.Edwards)		2072.00			
Churchyard Maintenance (J.Redfearn)		379.00			
Cong Fed afil fees		291.25			
Service books (Rebecca Wilson)		39.98			
John Oakes (organ tuning & cello stop)		315.00			
ADT security system contract		303.72			
Schoolroom electric		921.39			
Church electric		1675.02			
I Marsh Landlord checks + work at manse		783.66			
SSR outside lights (D.Harrison)		203.00			
Water rates Water Plus		167.33			
North Staffs fire		89.38			
M&G Securities Investment (fund closure)		11999.40			
repointing (Paul Beardmore)		2695.00			
Utch Scaffolding L.E.Pollard		1020.00			
Visiting Clergy		655.00			
Expenses to Trustees meeting H.Bolton		300.00			
D.Harrison SSR new heaters x3		3595.00			
M&G Securities Investment		20000.00			
Organist Weddings/funerals		170.00			
TOTAL EXPENDITURE		£52,704.85			

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The Memorial Free Church , Oakamoor accounts for 2023 were audited by Judy Ford FCCA on 10th October 2024 and were found to be a correct record of the financial affairs.