

ANNUAL TRUSTEES REPORT FOR THE SQUARE METHODIST CHURCH

September 2024 - August 2025

Name of Church: The Square Methodist Church, Dunstable

Address: Ashton Square, High St South, Dunstable LU6 3SN

Correspondence address: as above

Name of person to whom correspondence should be addressed:

Rev Claudia Lupi

Names of those who have served as managing trustees in the year (Church Council):

Rev Claudia Lupi **[Minister]**

[Church stewards]

Debbie Mitchelmore

Wendy Armiger

Jenny Smith

Abel Bunu

Maria Simon

[Treasurer]

Jenny Frith

[Pastoral committee secretary]

Bridget Gavanga

[Council secretary]

[Council members elected by the AGM]

Sharon Andrew

Marjorie Samudzimu

Linda Berry

Jan Rollings

Stewart Mitchelmore

Barrie Wells

Armund Kouadio

Adelaide Nartey

[representatives from areas of church life]

Ian Ellis **[Property team]**

Carole Pratt **[S Club]**

Debbie Mitchelmore **[Safeguarding Officer]**

Ivor Mitchelmore **[Worship Leader]**

Wendy Armiger **[Worship Leader]**

Tania Stanford **[Circuit Steward]**

Ivor Mitchelmore **[Circuit Steward]**

Structure

The Square is part of the South Bedfordshire Methodist Circuit. The decision-making body is the Church Council, but all members are involved in the running of the church and setting its strategy at the General Church Meeting.

Aims and Mission

A new Vision Statement was developed and approved in the autumn of 2024:

We are an inclusive, dynamic, flourishing Christian community seeking to radiate God's love for all, through our worship, prayer and service, to both the local community and the wider world.

Review of the year (September 2024 – August 2025)

Sunday worship services

Traditional services, led by our own minister, visiting ministers or lay preachers, take place on all Sundays except the first Sunday of the month when we hold a Café style worship, Café Church. Traditional services may be partially interactive, with time for conversation, as well as the use of pictures and videos for reflection. Café church also takes place on the third Sunday of the month giving the congregation a choice of either attending the traditional service or the Café Church. Café Church is an opportunity for outreach into the community and is well attended by church members and people from our local area. The atmosphere is very warm and welcoming, and this type of worship is very popular. For most services we have approximately 60 people attending. As of 31st October 2025, our community roll stood at 228, an increase of 16, of which 99 are Church members, an increase in one from the previous year. During the year these numbers continue to fluctuate.

Other forms of mission or 'church' (e.g. church-led community groups, etc.)

A number of different groups/clubs run by members of the church family operate within the church:

- **Pastoral care** - We have a team of Pastoral Visitors and Group Leaders who have pastoral care alongside our minister, Reverend Claudia Lupi. Pastoral Visitors and Group Leaders have a list of church members whom they contact regularly. The Pastoral Team meet quarterly to discuss the Pastoral situation of the Church. During this last year we have established a Pastoral Care Policy to help us carry out this work. We have also instigated a Church Prayer Diary which is now being produced quarterly. The minister offers pastoral care and practical help to those in need, both Christians and Muslims, as well as members of the wider community who seek support.
- **Baptism, Membership and Bible classes** - We continue to run these classes during the year and are led by the minister and an accredited local preacher. These offer teaching on the Bible, as well as Protestant history, basic theology, and ethics open to all those who seek to be baptised, to become church members or to learn more about Methodism.
We have baptized 13 asylum seekers and 3 of them were also welcomed as Church Members between Sept 2024 – August 2025. Bible classes are also taking place for the Asylum Seekers we support.
- **'House groups'** - We have three house groups who meet in members' homes:
 1. **Priory House Group** - Priory House Group's aim is:
 - To encourage and support each other in our daily lives

- To help each other to grow in prayer, faith and spiritually
- To pray for our church and each other

Priory House Group meets in member's homes on a Tuesday evening between 7.30pm and 9.00pm. The group find support and fellowship which supplements our Christian living during the week.

Typical activities include Bible studies for Lent and Advent. These were based on resources from the Methodist Church. The house group discovered 'Conversations Against Mundanity' which encouraged them to talk about various topics from a chosen theme. Priory House Group watched two inspiring films: 'Ruth and Boaz' and 'One Life'. Creative sessions involving Bible Journalling using mix media and collages were popular as were the social buffets for members and family at Christmas and during the summer. Priory House Group also hosted several fund-raising activities to raise funds towards the church kitchen project.

2. **Buttercup House Group** – This group meets once a month, usually on the third Wednesday of the month. It is a small group of seven members, mostly of advancing age but have been delighted to have recently welcomed a much younger new member. There is friendly and informal discussion around biblical and current social and community issues and how they relate to our faith in Christ. Twice a year, in the summer and at Christmas time we meet for a social, just chatting and eating!
 3. **Village House Group** – This is now a small group of three members who meet monthly. The group takes turns to lead the meeting which usually consists of prayers, a hymn, a religious topic or a quiz followed by discussion and refreshments. A buffet and social afternoon are enjoyed in December and in the summer.
- **Meeting Point** is a Bible study and fellowship group that meets fortnightly on a Tuesday morning at the church made up of eight people of both church and community members. Our minister, Reverend Claudia Lupi, leads the session once a month with a variety of topics. It is a time to reflect on the Bible on the personal journey of believers, and to share support, solidarity and encouragement. In other sessions, the group has used some reflections by Sheridan Voysey, based on the Sermon on the Mount.
 - **Prayer Meeting** – This takes place on the first Monday of each month where a small group meet to share private and shared prayer for the church, our local community, and the wider world.
 - **'Ladies Thursday Club'** – Ladies Thursday Club' meet twice a month and enjoy refreshments, develop friendships, and have a varied programme of visiting speakers, chair exercises, crafts, game afternoons and quizzes. The group has 30 members made up of ladies from our church, the community, and ladies from other denominations and to anyone who wants to join, though most of the members are 70+.
 - **Armchair exercise group** – Between September 2024 and September 2025 the group met weekly for chair exercises. Any money that we accrued over and above expenses was donated to the church. The exercise group ended in September 2025 and are hoping to integrate it into the Ladies Thursday Club.
 - **Gather Round** – Gather Round is a social group that welcomes new members. Meetings are held at 2pm on the second Tuesday in the month. Over the last year the programme of events has included such things as tabletop games, a well contrived quiz, a picnic in the park, dinner out, and a variety of discussion matters.

As with all sociable groups of elderly people a good deal of nattering, reminiscing and tea drinking also features.

- **The Square Drama Circle** is a multi-generational community group of people who love to act and bring productions to the local community. In October 2024 we put on a production called Agatha Crusty which was well attended. We received two nominations for this production from NODA who are the UK's leading amateur theatre organisation. In March 2025 we performed our family pantomime Goldilocks and the Three Bears, which was well received by all families and adults that attended. Here's to lots more drama and laughter in years to come.
- **Gardening Team** – Following on from our Garden Project, where both the gardens on the north and south sides of the church have been developed, a small team meet on a Wednesday afternoon to care for the gardens. Members of the community often stop to comment on how nice the gardens are looking. As we are in the town's Heritage Action Zone, Dunstable Town Council have continued to provide on-going maintenance advice for our garden spaces. Our gardens were again part of the town's entry to both Anglia in Bloom and Britain in Bloom. We once again received a Thriving Neighbourhood Award from The Royal Horticultural Society. We also achieved 2nd place in Best Community Garden, and we came first in the 2025 Wheelie Fantastic competition.
- **The Living Room** – This has now been running for four years, opening every Friday from 10.30am to 1.30pm. Our wonderful volunteers set up the Assembly room every week with board games, sewing, knitting, newspapers, books, colouring, painting, crafts etc. We provide fresh rolls and toast, with the local Co-op donating end of shelf-life pastry goods every week. Numbers attending vary from week to week, with our guests tending to be asylum seekers living locally, some adults with learning disabilities, members of the church, passers-by and a core group of regulars who have been coming for some time. We are able to provide gifts for our guests at Christmas and Easter.
- **Asylum Seekers** - Help is still being provided by the church for many of the people staying at the local hotel. This help comes in a wide range of areas, practical help, wellbeing, administration, Pastoral support etc. Some attend the weekly Living Room at the church. Some have also been encouraged to attend weekly Bible classes, which has led to baptisms led by Rev. Claudia Lupi. We not only have a good number of volunteers supporting asylum seekers at the Living Room, but also two Care4Calais volunteers who are members of the church. They support hotel-based asylum seekers and refugees who have settled in the UK.
- **Square Singers** – is an informal group of singers established in 2024 and have taken part in various services throughout the year. The group also took part in the local Twilight Market in December 2024 and provided singing in the church during the Festival of Carols where members of the public joined in.

Activities aimed at young people

- **'S Club'** meets on Sunday mornings when we cater for children and young people to learn and share about Jesus' love. We have two groups: under 11's and 11–18-year-olds with a good number attending the older group. Our sessions are based on a Bible reading. The two groups come together for Big Breakfast every two or three months when they enjoy food and activities together, which have included making a Fair Trade poster, planting daffodils, creating a display for the Festival of Carols, creating an Easter Garden, had an Easter egg hunt and an Easter Quiz and fun and games outside in the park opposite the church. The young people

have participated in services including the Nativity Service where they took part in a sketch about two lads 'Searching for Christmas'.

- **3-Generate** – Eleven young people, attended 3-Generate, a National Youth event, at the NEC in Birmingham, in October, where there is time for interactive Bible studies and worship as well as a full programme including crafts, reflective opportunities, sporting and physical activities.
- **Friday Youth club** continued to meet monthly on a Friday evening running from 6.30pm-8.30pm on the last Friday of each month. Typical activities included: preparations for a youth weekend run by the Methodist Church: 3Generate, stained glass window workshop, and Easter crafts session, games and sports evenings, and a chip chomp survey! Each evening included fellowship and refreshments which enjoyed by all.
- **Uniformed groups:**
 - **The Scout Group** includes Squirrels aged 4-6, Beavers aged 6-8, Cubs aged 8-10 and Scouts aged 10-14. The sections have all been up to various exciting things. The Cubs and Scouts each had a summer camp filled with activities at Tolmer Scout Activity Centre. The Beavers and Squirrels joined together to go to Climb Quest in Milton Keynes. As normal we ran our jumble sale in March and made a good profit which will be going towards a group camp in 2026.
 - **Guiding groups** include Rainbows aged 4-7, Brownies aged 7-10 and Guides aged 10-14. The Brownie pack celebrated their 90th birthday at the local campsite when activities included archery, making friendship bracelets and racing balloons along a pieces of string. The Brownies were treated to a Birds of Prey display when the girls were able to hold different species of owls. Previous Brownies that had gone through the unit joined the celebrations with the lighting of a birthday cake.
Parties were held to celebrate Brownies that had received their gold awards. Due to a shortage of girls and few on the waiting list a decision was taken to close the unit in July 2025. Prior to their final evening lots of exciting activities had been planned including a visit to a local swimming pool with inflatables, pottery painting, trampolining, bowling and a chip shop romp around the town tasting chips and voting to see which chips were the best.
The final evening consisted of water games, a treasure hunt and picnic at the local campsite where the girls performed two farewell songs to the parents who had been invited to join them.
For the Brownie leader this meant the end of 48 years enjoyment with the pack, something she will never forget.
The Brownie pack kindly donated £500 to be used to purchase two microwaves for the new kitchen at the church.

Outreach events

The Festival of Carols 2024 ran on Friday and Saturday 13th and 14th December in conjunction with the town's Twilight Market when we had a steady flow of visitors into the church.

The children's crafts were very popular with craft supplies being donated by volunteers.

Volunteers distributed Christmas service flyers.

Earlier in the year, a quiz raised £275 for children's outreach books, with £276 spent on books, which were given to children both visiting and passing by our church.

We held a craft stall run by a member of our church who kindly donated the profits of £540.46 to our Kitchen Project.

Our refreshment stall donations raised £108.76.

Resources

We have a large church building with a number of halls to the rear, which are available to hire to the local community. The halls are used regularly by our own church groups, but we also have regular bookings with Slimming World, Local History Society and U3A groups, plus numerous short-term lets from both individuals for parties and organisations for events. We have now taken on a new regular booking with a Romanian Church hiring both the church and some of our halls for use for their services twice a week.

We are located in the centre of town with a large town centre car park adjacent to the building. The church itself is able to accommodate a large number of people and hosts concerts by Vauxhall Male Voice Choir, Shambles Band, drama productions amongst others.

Lettings income is a vital and necessary part of being able to run and maintain the buildings. An Administrator is employed part-time to manage existing lettings and seek to promote further lettings.

During the year 2024-2025 our church fundraising project was for our Kitchen Project. Two grants were applied for in the spring/summer of 2025, and we hope to be able to progress the kitchen refurbishment in early 2026. The refurbished kitchen will then be made available to the wider community through our hall lettings.

At the Annual Church Meeting in May 2025, it was suggested that the work needed on our Church Tower become the new project, but having been blessed with a generous gift this put us in a position where these works could be progressed and grants applied for. We hope to be able to progress these repairs in the near future.

Our organ had to undergo a costly repair during the year, and fundraising has taken place to cover this cost.

Looking forward

The Property Team continue to care for our extensive and aging Grade II listed building which presents many challenges for us.

We continue to be challenged by the fact that we have an aging congregation with limited capacities and abilities to carry out the many weekly housekeeping tasks of the church. We continue to be encouraged as we welcome newcomers to the church.

We have consulted with the church to review our practices around the worship life of the church, and many suggestions have been taken on board and implemented. This is an on-going process.

THE METHODIST CHURCH
STANDARD FORM OF ACCOUNTS

THE METHODIST CHURCH, THE SQUARE

Church

FOR THE YEAR ENDED

31 August 2025

SOUTH BEDFORDSHIRE

Circuit

Circuit no.

34/04

Registered Charity - Charity Registration number

1126936

If not a registered charity **His Majesty's Revenue and
Customs Gift Aid number**

(The HMRC number is equivalent to a registered charity number in terms of evidence of charitable status and may be used to give to donors or grant funders wishing to see evidence of the organisation's charitable status. Methodist charities in England and Wales that are not registered charities are excepted from registration under Statutory Instrument 2014 No.242)

Minister:

REV. CLAUDIA LUPI

Church Stewards:

Wendy Armiger

Debbie Mitchelmore

Abel Benu

Jenny Smith

Rachel Bond (2nd Steward)

Pierre Ricco (2nd Steward)

Treasurer:

DR MARIA SIMON

SECTION A			Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Totals this year	Totals last year
			£	£	£	£
a1	RECEIPTS	Note				
a2	Offerings and Tax recovered		56977		56,977	61,302
a3	Bank and CFB interest and Investment income		1183		1,183	1,489
a4	Lettings		31079		31,079	15,394
a5	Other receipts		49248	28825	78,073	14,900
a6	TOTAL RECEIPTS		138,487	28,824	167,312 (a7)	93,085

SECTION B						
b1	PAYMENTS					
b2	Circuit Assessment or Share		60954		60954	58,937
b3	Donations		200		200	25
b4	Repairs and Maintenance		6535	4,474	6535	18,472
b5	Utilities (Insurances, water charges, heating & lighting)		18333		18333	20,236
b6	Property employment costs				9137	
b7	Other payments		9137	275	4474	11,824
b8	TOTAL PAYMENTS		95,159	4,749	99,908 (b9)	109,494

SECTION C						
c1	NET RECEIPTS/PAYMENTS FOR THE YEAR	(a6-b8)	43,328	24,075	67,403	(16,409)
c2	Total funds brought forward from last year		48,504	2,189	50,693 (c6)	68,020
c3	Sub total	(c1+c2)	91,832	26,264	118,096	51,611
c4	Transfers and adjustments			(39)	(19,832) (c7)	(918)
c5	TOTAL FUNDS AT END OF YEAR	(c3+c4)	91,832	26,225	98,264 (c8)	50,693 (c6)

SECTION D				
FOR INFORMATION ONLY: MONEY RECEIVED AND PASSED ON TO EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS				
d	(these amounts are not to be included in total receipts/payments figures above)		£	£
d1	Balance brought forward from last year		39	10
d2	Offerings/Gifts - received for external organisations		385	1,897
d3	Offerings/Gifts - passed to external organisations		424	1,868
d4	BALANCE STILL TO BE PAID (d1+d2-d3)			39

SUMMARY OF CHURCH ACCOUNTS AND INTERNAL ORGANISATIONS REPORTING TO THE CHURCH COUNCIL

SECTION E

Please follow the Guidance Notes to complete this page

Summary of the Church accounts for the year ended 31 August 2025 and Internal Organisations reporting to the Church Council/Church Meeting. Note that the funds of an Internal Organisation would normally be Restricted funds unless it could be clearly shown that they could be used for any Methodist purpose. This section must be completed to arrive at the gross income and expenditure totals of the Church. If gross income exceeds the Accruals threshold, then the Accruals method of accounting AND A DIFFERENT FORM must be used to report the accounts (see Methodist website). Please refer to the guidance notes regarding transfers between the District and connected District Organisations.

INTERNAL ORGANISATIONS		Receipts	Payments	Net Receipts/ Payments	Adjustments	Opening balances	Closing balances
e1	SQUARE DRAMA CIRCLE	1,389	3,757	(2,368)		5,251	2,883
e2	LADIES THURSDAY GROUP	1,076	980	96	1	1,038	1,135
e3	S CLUB	250	312	(62)	(1)	1,379	1,316
e4	SQUARE FC					113	113
e5							
e6							
e7							
e8	Sub total of Internal Organisations funds	2,715	5,049	(2,334)		7,781	5,447
e9	Church accounts (totals brought forward from page 2 - totals column)	167,312	99,908	67,404	(39)	50,693	118,058
e10	TOTAL CASH FUNDS HELD BY CHURCH	170,027	104,957	65,070	(39)	58,474	123,505
Continue on a separate sheet if necessary and bring the totals forward		TOTAL RECEIPTS	TOTAL PAYMENTS				

SECTION F

STATEMENT OF ASSETS AND LIABILITIES

CHURCH - CASH FUNDS HELD at 31 August 2025		OPENING BALANCES	CLOSING BALANCES
f1	Cash in hand		
f2	Bank Current Account	24,613	69,971
f3	Bank Deposit Account		
f4	Central Finance Board	26,080	28,107
f5	Trustees for Methodist Church Purposes		19,980
f6	Other funds		
f7	SUB TOTAL - Church accounts	50,693	118,058
f8	Total funds held by Internal Organisations (the closing balance total from above) (e12)	7,781	5,447
f9	TOTAL CASH FUNDS HELD BY CHURCH	58,474	123,505

SECTION G

OTHER ASSETS and LIABILITIES		At 1 September 2024	At 31 August 2025
g1	Investments (include Endowments)		
g2	Land & Buildings (see notes re Insurance value)	10,193,940	10,459,018
g3	Other Assets	203,879	209,181
g4	Loan(s) - show amount outstanding at year end		
g5	Other Liabilities		

f4 Include only Funds held at the Central Finance Board
f5 Include only Funds held at Trustees for Methodist Church Purposes
g1 Include any other investments (not the cash element of TMCP trusts accounts this is included in line f5)

Name of Church ...THE METHODIST CHURCH, THE SQUARE..... No...1126936.....

Declarations and Scrutiny

I confirm that these Receipt and Payment based accounts for the year to 31 August 2025 have been prepared from the records of the Church and that they include all funds under the control of the Church trustees.

Signature of treasurer M. T. Simon Date.....30.09.25.....

Name and address of treasurerDR MARIA SIMON.....

...34 CLARIDGE CLOSE, LEIGHTON BUZZARD..... Post Code.....LU7 4TW...

Presentation to the Church trustees

I confirm that the annual report and accounts for the year ended 31 August 2025 will be presented to the meeting of the Church trustees held in October 2025.

Signature of the Chair of the meeting Claudia Lupi
Name of the Chair of the meeting ...Rev. Claudia Lupi..... Date

Independent Examiner’s Report to the Trustees of the

...The Methodist Church, The Square...

Charity Number ...1126936.....

Responsibilities and basis of report

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the The Methodist Church, The Square for the year ended 31 August 2025 set out on pages 1 to 5. As the Church’s trustees, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 (‘the Act’).

I report in respect of my examination of the Church’s accounts carried out under section 145 of the Act and, in carrying out my examination, I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

* delete or circle as appropriate

Name of ChurchTHE METHODIST CHURCH, THE SQUARE..... No

Independent Examiner's Statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination (other than that disclosed below*) which give me cause to believe that in any material respect:

- the accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Act; or
- the accounts do not accord with the accounting records.

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

I have/have not* obtained independent verification of all investments with the Trustees for Methodist Church Purposes or held in other trusts, bank balances and funds at the Central Finance Board of the Methodist Church which are individually in excess of £10,000 (ten thousand pounds) at the balance sheet date.

Signature of independent examiner 

Name of independent examiner C. J. SHEEHAN

Relevant professional qualification of independent examiner Chartered Accountant

Name of firm (where appropriate)

Address 88 Goswell End Rd, Harlington, Beds

..... Post Code LUS6NX

Date 25/10/25

* delete or circle as appropriate