

St Peter's Methodist Church Canterbury

Trustees' Annual Report for Year 2024-2025

Inclusivity: Over recent years St Peter's has become an increasingly multi-ethnic congregation, reflecting the changing demography of the city. The church is signed up to the Inclusive Church Network and seeks to uphold the Inclusive Church vision and ethos by ensuring it is a welcoming, accessible and affirming space for all. A rainbow banner, signifying that people from the LGBTQ+ community are welcome, is visible from outside the building and it is one of the Methodist churches registered for same-sex weddings. Our welcome extends to asylum seekers, one of whom was baptised in a morning service at the end of August 2025. The church's ethnic diversity is reflected in its Junior Church which meets each Sunday morning in term-time and which comprises up to 20 children and young people aged from c7 to 18. A children's corner at the back of the church provides facilities for families with younger children and babies, while services of worship are live-streamed on YouTube so that the sick and elderly who are unable to get to church are able to feel part of the worshipping community.

Community Relations: Rooms in our building are available for hire and this is one of the ways in which we seek to provide for the wider community of Canterbury. An Eritrean congregation conducts services in our church and the local Ukrainian Ladies Choir holds rehearsals in it each week. The Eritreans and Ukrainians both mounted displays as part of our Heritage Open Day provision on 14 September 2024, and the Ukrainian Choir gave a well-attended concert. Among the other groups which use our building and provided displays were: Canterbury and District Inter-Faith action, Canterbury Festival, Catching Lives (the local homelessness charity), Kent Refugee Action Network, and the University of the Third Age. Jams and marmalades, made by a church-member who regularly sells them to raise money for 'All We Can', the Methodist Relief and Development charity, were displayed for sale. The Church also supports Christian Aid and Action for Children. Once a week in January/February 2025 the church housed the Catching Lives Night Shelter and church members helped serve teas and coffees during the evening.

Relations with Schools: A new development launched in January 2025 was a Saturday morning Community Cafe run by pupils from a local Methodist school, Kent College. This was normally attended by some 15-20 people, some from the church, some including one or two with mental health issues who came in off the streets. The aims were to enable pupils to engage more with the local community (while also meeting community service requirements of the International Baccalaureate or Duke of Edinburgh Award) and to provide a social space for lonely and vulnerable people at a time when the Umbrella Centre which provides such facilities during the week is closed. Attendees were invited to pay what they could, if they could, with any end-of-year surplus divided between the church and the Umbrella Centre. St Peter's has links not only with Kent College but also with the Methodist Primary School adjacent to it. Our minister continued regularly to conduct assemblies in the church for the school, and two church members served with him as school governors. At the start of March the ecumenical World Day of Prayer service was held at St Peter's and pupils from the school participated in it, leading to comments that this made it a very special occasion.

Financial Matters: St Peter's is part of the Canterbury and East Kent Methodist Circuit and ministers are appointed to – and paid by – the circuit as a whole. At the start of August we said farewell to Rev Danny Wheadon and another circuit minister. The number of ministers in the circuit has been seriously reduced in recent years and while this aids the circuit's financial position,

it puts extra work pressure on both ministers and lay people. The church's own finances remained in relatively good shape, due both to congregational giving and shop rentals, but in the summer of 2025 we discovered that major work was needed on the church roof which would add to our expenses the following year. But we remained aware of our responsibility to take proper care of our listed building and also of the need to ensure that rooms let to other groups are well-fitted to their purpose. To this end the Trustees agreed in July 2025 to use a legacy to pay for the installation of wall and ceiling panels in the church hall. This has massively improved the acoustics of the hall, enabling people to hear each other speak, to the benefit both of St Peter's congregation and to the many groups which hire the hall.

Doreen Rosman
Trustee and Church Council Secretary
8 June 2026.