

ANNUAL REPORT

Year ending

31 August 2022



THE GROVE METHODIST CHURCH
HORSFORTH, LEEDS
Registered Charity No. 1129305

Dear Friends,

This is the last annual report I shall contribute to as minister of The Grove as I shall be finishing my ministry at the church at the end of August. As many of you will know we shall be retiring to Harrogate in the Nidd Valley circuit this summer. I will no longer have pastoral charge of any churches, but will continue to lead worship and help out in whatever ways seem to be appropriate.

How does one evaluate five years of ministry? Many things have happened over the time we have been here. As opportunities have arisen some new activities and groups have been launched to develop our outreach in the community and to help people to grow and develop spiritually. Most of those things have only been possible because people have been willing to use their God given gifts and talents in the service of the church. I wish to thank you for all the help and support you have given as we have shared in the work of God here.

Moving will not be easy for us as we have made many friends in the five years we have lived in Horsforth. Times of change and upheaval are never easy to cope with, but we know God is always with us whatever we may face. Looking back, it is often during those very times of change and upheaval that we are led into a deeper experience of God's love and care. We have greatly enjoyed the time we have spent among you, and we are grateful for all the love and support we have received. It has been good to see how God has been at work among us, touching our lives and deepening our faith and commitment.

Thank you for your friendship and care. I am sure you will give the same support to the Rev Jo Lightowler as she comes to minister among you in September. We wish you all every blessing in the future.

With best wishes,
Mark

AIMS AND ORGANISATION

The aims of the church are set out in its **Mission Statement** as follows:

The Grove Methodist Church is called to respond to the Gospel of love in Jesus Christ and to live out its discipleship in worship, service and mission.

In seeking to live out our mission statement we are **committed to:**

Worship - which takes into account the needs of the whole church family, preserving all that is good from the past while being open to the new.

Fellowship - which seeks to make all welcome, builds up our faith and enables us to care for one another.

Spirituality - believing that Bible Study, Prayer, Worship, Giving and Service are vital, we seek to order our lives on the pattern of Jesus.

Serving God in the World – by seeking to live out our faith where we work and live, witnessing by word and deed in the local community, fostering interest in world affairs, engaging in world-wide mission and seeking to enhance the lives of those in our neighbourhood.

Working together - committed to the whole Church of God and seeking greater awareness of, and co-operation with, other faiths and denominations within our community.

Evangelism - sharing our faith in Jesus Christ with others and bringing them into fellowship.

Secure Foundations - ensuring that we have a sound working base, since our commitment to worship, fellowship, spirituality and service requires us to provide premises that are structurally sound, well maintained and underpinned by effective finance.

The church seeks to carry out its stated aims and objectives through:

- Sunday services and other acts of worship.

- Various meetings for prayer, fellowship, Bible study and outreach.
- Membership of 'Leeds (South & West) Circuit (16/01)'
- Membership of Horsforth Churches Together and support of its activities.
- The Church Council and its appointed Committees, which act under its direction.

Review of progress and achievements

“I will praise you, O Lord, with all my heart; I will tell of your wonders.” (Psalm 9:1)

And so, in gratitude, the Psalmist opens his hymn to extol the wonderful deeds and mighty things that he has witnessed God accomplish. Of course his psalm has its personal concerns but it also has a bigger relevance for a world in turmoil and with a confused sense of direction. The noted Old Testament scholar, Walter Brueggemann classifies psalms into those of orientation, disorientation and re-orientation, three experiences that are to be met in a life centred on God. Psalm 9 he sees as 'a counter to conventional social reality', a good place to focus when faced with issues over which there is no immediate and obvious solution.

In addressing this year's presbyterial session of Conference, the Rev. Richard Teale, out-going President of Conference, referred back to comments he had made 12 months earlier in which he used Brueggemann's classification to apply to the religious setting in which churches can find themselves. It is against this background that this Annual Report outlines the developments, progress and achievements of The Grove Church over the last year.

From a pre-COVID baseline in which much of what the church was doing seemed to make sense, the pandemic caused a huge feeling of instability and confusion throughout the world and amongst organisations beyond, but including, the church. Whilst the last twelve months might not have finally enabled The Grove to reach a new and fully articulated perception about life and God, it has been a significant step on the way. The report outlines a growing sense of understanding, somewhere between Brueggemann's disorientation and re-orientation, as the church begins

to recognise a redrawn foundation upon which it can finally stabilise itself and move forward. Although the opportunity for formal review was not possible (page 12, point 3), as time moved on, so the church's new position, possibilities and resources began to surface clearly. Some previous activities had to cease (page 10 pt 2), others emerged in altered forms (page 8 pt 6), and yet new initiatives began to take shape (page 8 pt 1). All these are mentioned in the pages below as part of the church's onward movement.

With trends indicating fewer numbers in church (page 15 pt 1), tighter budgets (page 15 pt 4) and reduced opportunities to serve the community (page 15 pt 6), across the year thoughts ran from confusion, perhaps even despondency, but at times, into exhilaration as a degree of 'normality' started to resurface. Whatever, always there was that sense of praise at the heart of what the church sought to do. Praise helped the people of The Grove to sustain hope at a time when members began to recognise the need to refocus inclinations, realign priorities and restore hearts. Praise was most obvious when at the centre of those activities outlined in section 1 of the report, 'Worship'. And yet, praise is the bedrock upon which the church and its adherents live from day to day and so it underpins all the other events and undertakings listed in each section. Together these record the out-working of the church year.

This 2021 – 2022 Annual Report charts another eventful period in which The Grove has ventured to retain its commitment in response 'to the Gospel of love in Jesus Christ and to live out its discipleship in worship, service and mission'.

Peter Mawson
Church Council Secretary

Worship (Grove objectives: Worship, Spirituality)

The Church exists to increase awareness of God's presence and to celebrate God's love.

This is underpinned by God-centred worship, prayer and spirituality and this has continued to be at the forefront of how The Grove has responded

to the pandemic situation and beyond. With the closure of the church building at the start of the year, followed by a gradual return to 'normal' services with precautions for the rest, an additional important intention has been supporting people who have been at home to participate in communal worship, as well as to provide opportunities for them to develop their spirituality. Despite lower attendance in church compared with pre-COVID levels, by the end of the year numbers participating in worship in the church building had built up to an average of 60 whilst additional zoom worshippers were around 10 – 12.

To achieve these ends the church has:

- Encouraged people to find ways for regular weekly worship, prayer, reflection and study that are in line with individual health conditions. Over the year The Grove has followed guidance on gathered worship that has eventually led towards the restoration of modified pre-COVID communal worship. This has been complemented by the use of alternative worship opportunities when needed. Video calling has been continued for those able to participate in this way of communication. The church has carried on with access to the download app, Zoom, to engender a sense of communal worship through entry to weekly Zoom services as well as offering opportunities for fellowship on the lines of coffee mornings and church quiz evenings.
- Although face-to-face services began again in September, numbers of children attending were much reduced and so the church provided materials for regular worship and personal reflection: Families and children were included in Junior Church through introductory information, activity sheets, colouring sheets and pictures for reflection. To support video access to weekly worship, for the earlier part of the year adults have been offered, by email and post, weekly service scripts, Biblical reflections, a Minister's letter, extracts from the Circuit Prayer Diary and details of the circuit night prayers on zoom. Feedback indicates that the weekly documentation was much appreciated and allowed readers to reflect at length on the service content.
- Bearing in mind COVID restrictions, the choir were able to restart practices and lead congregational singing in worship before returning to fuller service contributions with introits and anthems from April 2022.

- Maintained the structural rhythm of annual worship. At key times the church brought together individual and communal devotion around shared special service opportunities. In November the annual Remembrance Sunday Service was held and a modified Carol Service took place during December morning worship. To open the 2021-2022 new Connexional year worship in church followed the Methodist Covenant Liturgy with the covenant prayer being publicised in the weekly bulletin. Another regular service was on Good Friday, carrying the cross between the churches of Horsforth, its use as a place for private prayer and a short livestreamed service. This proved invaluable as did Easter Day celebrations. During Bible Month there was also the opportunity to focus upon the Old Testament book of Isaiah throughout each Sunday in June.
- The regular pattern of worship included opportunities to join in the evening circuit zoom service that at times attracted around 70 devices. Combined church worship included Christmas Eve service at Central and Christmas morning service, face-to-face and on zoom, at The Grove.
- Sought ways of providing a 'communion' service in church that was adapted to COVID requirements and considered the suitability of the experience for those accessing worship on zoom. The Trustees discussed the role of 'Spiritual Communion' and an opportunity was provided for zoom worshippers to think about this during the September communion service whilst the distribution of elements took place within the church building.
- Encouraged the use of resources for reflection: the 2020 leaflet 'Grove Methodist Church: Praying for each other' remained in use with the aim of providing a daily prayer focus; opportunities have been given for private reflection and study through-out the year; individual use of prayer materials continued, particularly the Methodist Prayer Handbook and the Leeds Lent Prayer Diary, individual use of daily Bible notes obtained from the International Bible Reading Association or Scripture Union; and the sale of spiritual magazines such as Magnet, the Christian publication nurturing faith in thoughtful, challenging ways.
- Provided a range of prayer initiatives: These have included use of the Methodist Prayer Handbook and participation in circuit prayer activities, particularly Circuit Night Prayers, the monthly prayer diary and the Lay Pastor's prayer meetings.

- Recognising the ongoing uncertainty of life due to the fluctuations in the COVID pandemic, early in the year, the church provided 'A Brief Guide to a Methodist Way of Life', that enabled members and adherents to shape their current situation by providing a reminder of the commitments and practices that encourage and equip people to live better a Christian life.
- Despite COVID restrictions, throughout the year the church has provided a point of spiritual contact for those in the neighbourhood who have identified their own personal or family needs. In this connection there have been conducted 1 wedding, 1 baptism, 10 funerals and 5 membership transfers into church.
- Explored ways of gradually opening the building within the restrictions of Covid-19 rulings for personal and communal use.

Learning and Caring (Grove objectives: Fellowship, Spirituality)

The Church exists to help people to grow and learn as Christians, through mutual support and care. Actions this year include:

- The bond of fellowship and caring is encouraged by organising members into pastoral groups, each led by a Church Visitor. Their watchful oversight of individual welfare is also extended to regular adherents.
- Early in lockdown, The Grove recognised that keeping in touch would be essential but could be difficult. Consequently, pastoral visitors continued to be the starting point for contact procedures that have involved all those with church links. To meet considerable pastoral needs amongst all members and adherents use has been made of telephone, social media, letters and cards. In addition, groups such as Thursday Bible Fellowship, Ladies Group and Uniformed Organisations created systems for weekly links to members.
- In September, Messy Church restarted after the break caused by COVID restrictions. The monthly meeting of junior aged children proved popular and enabled those attending to enjoy craft and other activities planned around suitable biblical themes. As numbers attending Sunday morning Junior Church have been much reduced, Messy Church has proved to be an effective replacement for keeping in touch with families.

- Opportunities for group study and reflection were held at appropriate times in the year. Throughout Advent the group looked at Stephen Cottrell's book, 'Walking backwards to Christmas', and during Lent the focus had been on Isabelle Hamley's book, 'Embracing Justice'.
- At different times in the year maintaining contact opportunities by organising zoom coffee mornings and zoom quizzes.
- Meditations at particular points in the church year were stimulated by, for example, the distribution of palm crosses in Holy Week and awareness raising of the significance of Psalm 31 to Ukrainians.
- In order to secure a safe environment for all premises users the Trustees have continued to take a keen interest in safeguarding matters, receiving feedback on the Annual Risk Assessment and Check List and reviewing the Safeguarding of Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy. Updated training has been accessed by appropriate office holders. In addition trustees accepted and agreed to Access and Environmental audits.
- In the First Quarter of the year one of the strongest bonds of fellowship included the Flower Guild that had served the church and neighbourhood for nineteen years. It was with great sadness that, having discussed their current situation, members felt the time was right to disband and in their place provide an advisory service to church members who continued the work of providing flowers for Sunday worship and then distributing bunches to those in need within the wider neighbourhood.
- Grove Ladies Group maintained care for each other by regular telephone chats and occasional garden coffee meetings. They reopened face-to-face meetings in the middle of September, on a twice monthly basis.
- With much appreciation, Thursday and Saturday Walking Groups have met throughout the year for local walks and, on occasions, lunch breaks.
- At the opening of the year, communication across church was aided by the continued provision of the church magazine, Grove Vine. This was made available on line to all those able to access the material including Uniformed Organisations and had been supplemented by a small number of printed editions for church visitors and those unable to access the online version. However, as the last few years have proved to be increasingly very taxing for the editors they reluctantly made the decision to cease production in February.

- Since then, although not as detailed as Grove Vine, the weekly bulletin has been the church's means of continuing with written contact. This was made available both on line and in print.
- Mindful of individual rights, the Church Data Protection Officer keeps the Trustees fully informed about General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) and so an agreed GDPR Statement, Policy and Privacy Notice are displayed on noticeboards throughout the premises. This year a data cleansing exercise was undertaken to ensure that personal information was not being retained in church groups longer than was usefully needed. The church's Acceptable Wi-fi Use Policy was added to church practice and information provided on noticeboard displays.
- In order to foster close links to church members and adherents the Data Base Secretary has maintained and updated contact details regularly. This has been particularly important during the second half of the year.
- The Trustees have continued to take a keen interest in safeguarding matters, receiving feedback on the Annual Risk assessment and Check List and reviewing the Safeguarding of Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy. Updated training has been accessed by appropriate office holders.
- The church has continually maintained a web site with useful information for anyone seeking further details of Grove worship and activities. By the start of September the site had been overhauled to ensure its accessibility, with favourable feed back from users.
- A Circuit Lay Worker with an interest in pastoral work amongst older members provided some time to working alongside the church minister in recognition of the latter's heavy workload in the Circuit. He retained pastoral oversight whilst the church presbyter was on sabbatical and prior to his move following circuit staffing reorganisation.

Service : (Grove objective: Serving God in the World)

The church exists to be a good neighbour to people in need and to challenge injustice. Although a negative impact of COVID was to deter people from meeting in groups, the church worked hard throughout the year in the pandemic context:

- Despite uncertainty about national COVID restrictions, in early September many of the church's outreach organisations met to re-connect with members, review available resources and possibilities, and plan tentative yearly calendars. This included Women's Fellowship, Monday Luncheon Club, Line Dancing and Grove Ladies Group. Subsequently, meetings restarted at various times with new timetables that took account of the impact of the last two years.
- Carboy collections under the initiative 'Change for Change', aimed at raising funds for various charity appeals could not be maintained during COVID, however, individuals continued to contribute to good causes including the Bible Society, Mission Aviation Fellowship and Christian Solidarity Worldwide.
- At Christmas printed seasonal greetings replaced the giving of Christmas cards for those who made individual donations to 39 favourite charities in lieu of the expense of sending cards.
- During Christian Aid Week 15-23 May 2022 coronavirus prevented house-to-house collections, but in its place the congregation was encouraged to put envelopes through doors, not to collect but to encourage recipients to return the donations themselves.
- Support continued for the Foodbank through the giving of toiletries and other shortage items, as well as gifts of money in lieu of food donations. As well as using the church collection point, attention was drawn to opportunities provided by the nearby Morrisons store for receipt of gifts. Prior to lockdown foodbanks showed a 30% increase in requests and two new centres were opened. In lockdown food was delivered to clients in need, supplemented by a signposting service over the phone. The church received 'A Big Thank You' card from the Leeds North and West foodbank in recognition of its support.
- Without the provision of an Easter Offering Service from which donations are used to support many overseas church partnerships and projects, Methodist Women in Britain requested individual gifts to be sent direct to the church treasurer.
- Scouting at The Grove has felt the impact of COVID and is now composed of seven sections involving 79 young people. Whilst older members began regular face-to-face meetings out-of-doors gradually moving inside as the year progressed, the Cubs held indoor sessions from the start.

- One regular service that was available last year, during lockdown, was the Scout Group Bulb Sale 2021, selling bulbs for this year, Spring 2022, in order to support young peoples' activities.
- The Grove Guiding units all returned to indoor face-to-face meetings by November, 2021 with some groups reducing their capacity numbers. The cancelled trip to Switzerland was rearranged and successfully took place in August, 2022.
- A key occasion for Uniformed Organisations was the annual February Scout and Guide Sunday when members and adherents were given the opportunity to renew their promises.
- Traditionally, Tots and Tykes has been one of the church's largest outreaches to young families in Horsforth and beyond. Following closure, from November it reopened its service to the neighbourhood attracting back many previous as well as new users.
- Support for the work of Leprosy Mission, an international Christian organisation aimed at transforming the lives of people affected by leprosy through their diagnosis, treatment, specialist care and rehabilitation, has long been a church focus. This year people were encouraged to help recycle used postage stamps for the charity to raise funds. Additionally, Monday Fellowship raised £115.00 in donations by organising a Leprosy Mission talk on the current work of the Mission throughout the world.
- Liaison - Much service has generally been given through welcoming on site a range of premises users. Keeping in touch with community groups that met regularly has been a valuable part of church outreach. By the end of June the Booking Secretary was receiving enquiries about use of the premises on reopening. Work carried out, as required by government and Connexional requirements, to prepare the building for this included risk assessments and actions to ensure safe return. This involved provision of sanitization stations, marking of restricted access and highlighting one-way walkways as required by government and Connexional rulings.
- Having agreed to a request from West Yorkshire Ambulance Service, a defibrillator for neighbourhood use is now sited on the outside of the premises and awareness training was provided by the Yorkshire Ambulance Service for anyone expressing interest.

Evangelism (Grove objectives: Working Together, Evangelism)

The Church exists to make more followers of Jesus Christ.

Ever mindful of this priority across the year the church has:

- Upheld the wider Methodist Connexion and its outreach by making donations to the Methodist Fund for Church Property, the Fund for Support of Presbyters and Deacons and the Methodist Ministers' Housing Society.
- Strengthened inter-church links and mission by accessing Circuit zoom evening services to enable on line users to worship with others across circuit churches. There have also been cross-church links through zoom prayer and study groups. In March a meeting to discuss circuit leadership was held at The Grove and in July a service to mark the changes in circuit stationing. At the request of the Circuit the Trustees undertook a church consultation on the Connexional report 'God in Love unites us', prior to discussing and agreeing that the church premises could be used for same sex marriages.
- Also at the request of the Circuit, Trustees considered the gains and losses affecting the church through the impact of the COVID outbreak and these were reported to Circuit leadership. Following this, the Trustees planned a day of reflection, 'Moving Forward in Faith', intending to discuss development of The Grove mission over the next 5 – 10 years and identifying appropriate priorities. Unfortunately COVID and other illnesses coupled with the coming move of the church presbyter, prevented this from taking place at the planned time. Since the Circuit then decided to encourage all churches to undertake a similar review and intended to produce a format for that purpose, Trustees agreed to defer the church's review plans and participate in the Circuit exercise.
- As an active member of Horsforth Churches Together (HCT), part of the national ecumenical instrument for mission with other Christian churches to present a united faith, The Grove is one of 10 churches and a Chaplaincy that has retained contact through joint community events. Amongst these, most notably at Christmas and Easter, through support of common projects such as Carols in the Park, distribution of Christmas greetings, assemblies in primary schools, Community Aid Project and Horsforth Chaplaincy newsletters.

- Across the year The Grove has participated in Churches Together worship activities including Advent Carol Service, inter-church pulpit exchange, hosting prayers for Christian unity, and organising the summer Civic Service.
- This successful involvement with churches in the neighbourhood has involved distribution of 8,000 Churches Together Christmas Cards, support for the award winning Horsforth Farmers' Market (2017 Market of the Year), zoom prayer services during the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, involvement in Horsforth Food Bank, and 'Open the Book', a school programme aimed at bringing the Bible to children and young people of school age, explaining the implications of Christian festivals to children.
- In the week before Christmas The Grove Family Recorder Group played carols on the church drive in an attempt to draw the attention of passers-by to the meaning of advent displayed on the church notice board. Support for the Leeds Faith in Schools Worker enabled 42 different forms at Horsforth School to access an on-line fun game and Christmas message. Another initiative saw life sized facsimiles of nativity characters used to create a culminating tableau on Christmas Eve at the bottom of the church drive.
- Support was provided for the Horsforth Christmas Walk of Art, 'Countdown to Christmas'. Similar assistance was provided in July for the 'Thank You Tree' created by use of Grove handprints and displayed outside of the church building during the Horsforth Walk of Art. This also provided the opportunity across the two days of the event to welcome artists at the bottom of the drive. Use of the church drive for these opportunities is not only of benefit to the church but is widely valued by Horsforth Churches Together as an outdoor witness point for all churches.
- Acting as host, in March the church facilitated the Women's World Day of Prayer, an international ecumenical organisation.
- The church has collaborated with other local churches by submitting information towards the updated Churches Together website and creating links to The Grove's own website.
- The church contributed to the work of Horsforth Chaplaincy Project by providing financial support for a co-ordinator. The Chaplaincy aims at working with churches to express 'God's heart and encourage the local community of Horsforth to flourish in every sphere from schools

to High Street'. It has encouraged growth of the 'Church footprint' throughout the neighbourhood as more and more people have felt the impact of Churches Together events and activities.

- Supporting the Bible Society in the translation and distribution of Scripture through members joining the Bible-a-Month Club and by individual direct giving.
- Outdoor activities included:
 - During lockdown, a display on the church noticeboard for Mothering Sunday to draw the community's attention to mothers across the world.
 - Maintaining the tradition of transforming an empty outdoor cross on Easter Day to reflect the Easter message, by careful placing of flowers along its beams. The transfigured cross, that had been a desolate shell marking the season of Lent, was open to view by everyone who used Town Street, the main road fronting the church.
- Maintaining the contact and presence of the church in August through Picnic in the Park with friends from The Grove.
- The Church participated in discussions on the Connexional document 'God in Love unites us', and agreed to same-sex marriage in church.
- The church reorganised its web site to enable wider public access to opportunities in the community for worship, and welcomed details of its sister church, Central, to be included on the site. Information about meetings and activities that might be of more general interest were also displayed. The Annual Report, Church Magazine (to February 2022), and weekly notice bulletins were also made accessible on the site. Connections on the church site also included the Facebook page created by the 9th Airedale Scout Group.
- In efforts to provide information on church activities for the immediate neighbourhood a volunteer Publicity Co-ordinator remained in post to ensure church events were promoted in the local press.

Secure foundations

The church needs a sound base from which to operate and so, during the year:

- The church has been enabled to weather the current crisis through careful oversight of church finances and by making use of capital

funds that was planned expenditure for the activity room roof in the Centre. It was also helped by maintaining successful access to the Government furlough scheme and by people continuing to support with generous donations.

- Despite a pattern of declining attendance in recent years and the need to run on its reserves, the church has continued to sustain income levels (as outlined below, page 26) that has enabled it to cover running costs and undertake events and activities in line with its stated Mission Statement (page 2).
- The church has organised monthly film nights as a way of meeting community need, encouraging fellowship and raising a regular income that helps meet church expenses. This has proved to be a popular activity across the year.
- Once again, savings have enabled the church to produce sufficient finances to undertake necessary improvements, and, together with its organisations, to make donations to outside charitable bodies as noted above (see e.g. below p. 16, point 6, above p. 12 point 1).
- Since church finances have been adversely affected by COVID and a growing concern about the large increases in energy bills, thought has been given to an appropriate increase in room hire charges and in suitability of fees for weddings and funerals.
- Following COVID impact on bank services, including local branch closures and paying in arrangements, the church sought to adapt to changing circumstances by keeping church users aware of banking developments and systems for making donations. In this situation financial support has continued and for that the Trustees are truly grateful.
- In accordance with Charity Commission regulations, Trustees are mindful of best value when it comes to premises' use and so have maintained fees in line with market expectations for cars parked on church property that belonged to private firms. Through careful negotiation, funding lost in car parking fees through the move of Manse Capital from the old manse site have been replenished with new hirers.
- Throughout the COVID Pandemic community use of the Centre has been very limited, having a detrimental effect upon activity participants as well as church finances. However, by October the Premises Manager was able to report that the church had 'an

amazing range of children's groups meeting here, we have hundreds of children and families coming through our doors every week and we are now busier than ever.' A new group that tried out our premises was Tots Pretend, classes for 4 year olds who were encouraged to walk, through drama and role play, an exciting adventure that uses music along the way.

- As from 1st April 2016 and in pursuance of the Government's pension auto-enrolment legislation, the Premises Manager has been transferred as an employee from The Grove Church to Leeds South and West Circuit so as to benefit from the Circuit's pension scheme arrangements. Under his agreed Statement of Terms and Conditions of Service he remains based at The Grove and with no break in his duties and commitments to the church.
- To take account of the church's changing financial needs and ensure that there are sufficient financial resources for future major maintenance projects, the Reserve Fund was maintained at the equivalent of six months expenditure despite the impact of COVID on the use of the building (see page 25).
- In order to comply with Methodist Insurance requirements a detailed inventory of all church equipment has been maintained. As part of safety regulations the Trustees accepted a Working at Height Policy along with the Annual Risk Assessment and Check List.
- Trustees are kept informed about the state of the premises through submission of the Annual Return formerly known as Schedule A with accompanying notes and the Health and Safety Return, as well as through regular reports from the Property Committee to Church Council.
- In ensuring that the building provides the safe and secure base that is needed for furthering the Mission Statement and working in the community, regular maintenance and improvements are made. This includes the annual cleaning, washing down and restoration of the whole premises at the end of the year. Annual PAT testing of electrical equipment has been carried out and, as appropriate, organisations and groups have been required to undertake COVID risk assessments.
- Given the tight state of church finances, major works of improvement have been placed on hold. However, whenever possible tasks needing urgent attention have been made. Amongst these are the

repair to the Scout Store in the Community Centre and necessary boiler work. The ageing of Centre IT equipment has been noted and, in the light of finances, Trustees have set up a fund to receive direct donations from anyone wanting to give gifts to the church.

- Having experienced leaks from a small expanse of flat roof ineffectively relaid at the time of the refurbishment of the Community Centre, the church has continued to spend much time and energy seeking a solution to the problems so as to ensure the premises remain sound and secure.
- The church organ is 84 years old and, recognising that in recent years there have been a number of organ failures, before the start of this year, the church undertook restoration work at a cost of £15,000 but has been constantly aware that at some point in the future full restoration incorporating modern day standards might be needed. The expense has been estimated at between £60,000 and £100,000.
- Mindful of the benefits of an orderly and well-kept environment, the Grove Gardening Team reviewed their organisation and began the autumn with a comprehensive clear out of the church garden.
- Moves have been made to sustain the church's environmentally friendly approach. The Environmental Audit was updated and in consequence the Centre ceiling lights are being changed for LED lighting. This action has meant the successful reduction in power consumption from 3420 watts to 335 watts. In addition, draught seals have been fitted around all external doors and windows.
- A data protection review has been undertaken to update the church data map.
- When able to open, considerable time and effort has been put into planning and preparation of the church by stewards and Premises manager who have deciphered and instituted COVID-19 instructions

Progress on any special projects

- Afghanistan crisis: At the start of the year the church responded to an appeal through Save the Children for funds to support the people of Afghanistan suffering from drought, economic collapse and rising global food prices. £143.00 was collected and donated.
- Good neighbours: The Circuit, having negotiated the sale on leasehold of Grove House, the old Grove Manse, across the year the Trustees have continued to maintain working relationships with each

of its neighbours. However, at the start of the year the firm occupying the Old Manse was taken over and the organisation moved into the city centre. Near the end of the year, in a sense of goodwill, the Trustees were pleased to grant the new premises users permission to erect a notice board, similar in style and construction to the previous user's board, on church ground.

- Ground upkeep: The Trustees are also keen to bear in mind the needs of neighbours by taking great care to cultivate and trim shrubs on church grounds alongside the borders of their property and by permitting the immediate neighbours to access church land in order to repair their building.
- Dementia Friendly Church: Despite COVID restrictions during Dementia Awareness Week, 16 – 22 May, the church screened the film, 'The Father' concerning a father trying to make sense of his changing circumstances, and donated £100.00 to Dementia Friendly Horsforth. An Awareness information session was also held and other accessible local events publicised.
- Horsforth Live at Home Scheme: This has been a special project that has been running for over twenty-two years. It is aimed at decreasing social isolation and loneliness by supporting the independence of elderly people in their own homes. Currently it supports 630 members and has 75 volunteers. This year the church has given £450.00 in financial support as well as voluntary help.
- Horsforth Community Aid Project – The church supported this multi-agency response to identified need in Horsforth. It sought to support people with shopping, food parcels, regular phone calls, prescription pick ups and cook-along clubs for children on free school meals.
- Harvest: On the Friday prior to the Harvest service food was collected and the church decorated for the Harvest Sunday. Fellowship was encouraged with a Table Top Olympics and a Harvest of the Sea Supper on the Saturday evening. There was also the opportunity to make a financial donation that amounted to £40.00 for the food bank. Gifts of food were gratefully received by Woodhouse Moor Community Centre and the Leeds Foodbank Warehouse. A complementary display on the outside noticeboards read, "We HAVE, they STARVE, so SHARE".
- Action for Children: The Grove usually gives donations from the Christmas services (Christingle and Christmas Day) to this Methodist

charity supporting children, young people and their families. Since this was not possible this year the congregation's attention was drawn to the need for personal giving through the charity's postal address.

- Advent / Christmas: Across the Advent / Christmas season the church supported several special projects including:
 - Within church, the significance of Advent was reinforced by asking individuals and organisations to dress a church window on the theme of 'Nativity'.
 - Throughout Advent a series of fellowship / study sessions on the theme 'Ready, Steady, O Come' were held to help people prepare for Christmas.
 - The gift of toys and games collected during November and early December around the time of the annual Toy Service were distributed to Baby Bank (0-5 years), other places of need and Methodist Homes Communities (ex-Live at Home – jigsaws and box games).
 - The erection of a Churches Together nativity display in the church drive, as culmination of a Horsforth trail.
- Refugee support: In a bid to make a difference, support was provided for the appeal by the Refugee Council of Britain for the collection of men's clothing and, more locally, gifts of footwear were given to the HCT Migrants Support Group to help 120 male asylum seekers (mostly African) currently housed in three hotels within Leeds.

Church's response to important events

- COVID: The major event that has impacted upon global life has been the spread of coronavirus as described throughout this report. The church's response has been particularly noted above in the Review of Progress and Achievements. In addition, March saw a mid-week opportunity, 'Two Years On', to mark the time spent since the first COVID lockdown. With HCT a space at the bottom of the drive gave people a chance to remember their experiences and their losses and give thanks for their heroes by tying ribbons onto the church railings. The day was broken by 3 short prayer services.
- Environment and Climate Change: The church was made aware of the need to support full time Methodist presence in Leeds City

Centre by making knitted, crocheted, embroidered or origami green hearts so as to raise awareness of the International Climate Conference to be held in Glasgow in November (COPS 26).

Members and adherents were also reminded of the small contributions that each of us can make locally including minimising packaging, purchasing local flowers, recycling and wise use of energy and water. Members were encouraged to join people from across Leeds in an afternoon of 'Climate Prayer in the Square', a pre-COP 26 event organised by Young Christian Climate Network and Christian Aid. Consciousness of the wider local community to the United Nations' Climate Change Conference was raised by advertising the focus topics (World Leadership, Finance, Clean Energy etc.) on the outside church noticeboards.

- The Queen's Jubilee: A celebratory lunch was held on 30th May to mark the achievement of the country's longest reigning monarch. Support was given through HCT for fun activities at Horsforth Jubilee Picnic in the Park.
- The death of Queen Elizabeth II: On the Sunday after the announcement of the Queen's death suitable meditations and prayers were complemented by an act of congregational reflection during the morning service.
- Military impact in Ukraine: In response to the on-going distress in Ukraine created by military action on the part of Russia, the church participated in the HCT 'Prayer for Ukraine Tonight', part of the Prayers for Peace across Europe initiative. This was accompanied by Sunday donations of £554.00 and the collection of children's and women's clothing, toiletries, toys and bedding through the charity All We Can. In June, the church hosted and helped organise a fund raising concert given by church members and professional musicians that raised £2,687.50 for the Leeds Together for Ukraine Appeal.
- Fairtrade: Having been awarded Fairtrade status, the church has been mindful of specific world economic situations and throughout the year has continued to emphasise its commitment to serve Fairtrade goods at all church meetings, with a choice of other products on request. It is aware that in the near future the church will have to reapply for Fairtrade status.

Value of the church not in monetary terms

- The range of activities and services outlined above is evidence of the church's particular impact on its immediate locality and its residents, whether they are Methodist members and adherents or non-church neighbours. This outline of the scope of the church's interest and support also indicates a positive, if less direct, influence at national and international levels in a wide number of areas.
- The church continues to offer a welcome place of traditional and varied worship, geographically placed at the heart of Horsforth. COVID permitting, our well-maintained and attractive premises are extensively used by church groups and the wider community throughout each week whenever possible.
- The church community continues to provide the opportunity for spiritual growth to young and old alike, pastoral care to one another and those outside the church, and continues to explore new ways to reach out in mission.
- Above all it seeks to provide a pattern for living that responds to the gospel of God's love in Jesus Christ by following a life of discipleship through worship, service and mission.

Financial information

In addition to the financial activities carried out by the church outlined in the financial accounts, response has been made by the church and its associated groups to appeals and charities across the year, listed throughout the report.

The accounts provide details of major transactions for the year 2021 – 2022. These include the Circuit Assessment for the church, which was £57,469.00. This is a major and ongoing expenditure for sustaining and supporting the ministry and work of the Leeds South and West Circuit of which The Grove is one of twenty-one constituent churches.

This Annual Report outlines the widespread range of events and activities that the church has provided across the year 2021 – 2022. These would not have been possible without the very many hours of dedicated service and voluntary help that have been given by members and adherents.

The Trustees would like to thank all volunteers for their interest, time and energy, particularly given the constraints of COVID and pandemic lockdowns, that has enabled the church to respond in such a positive way to the gospel of God's love in Jesus Christ within this community.

TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st AUGUST 2022

Administrative information:

The Grove Methodist Church, Horsforth, is a registered charity number 1129305. It is governed by the Methodist Church constitution set up by Act of Parliament and by the Constitutional Practice and Discipline (CPD) of the Church as amended from time to time by the Methodist Conference.

Correspondence for The Grove Methodist Church should be addressed to the Rev. Jo Lightowler, The Grove Methodist Church, 4 Chestnut Drive, Adel, Leeds, LS16 7TL.

The Managing Trustees are the unpaid members of the Church Council and for the year ending 31st August 2022 those who have served on Church Council are as follows:

Carole Abel (to 14th October), Philip Abel (to 14th October), Kath Ashby, Ann Bailey, Kay Bassett, Anne Blackburn (to 7th January), Barbara Buckley, David Buckley, Kirsty Butler (Circuit Representative), Judith Chaplin, Alan Firth, Rev. Mark Godfrey (Chair), Carol Hoyle, Graham Hoyle, Gill Jewell, Gill Marley, Christine Mathers, Philip Maud, Janette Mawson, Peter Mawson (Secretary), Anthony Orton, Jean Orton, Sylvia Parker, Margaret Simmons (to 14th October), Paul Thompson, Caroline Turner, Christopher Turner (from 24th April), Andy Walker, Michael Wallis (to 31st March), Helena Watkins, Bryan Whitham (Treasurer), Keith Whitham, Trish Whitham, Sally Wolfe.

Independent Examiner: Amanda Brown (FPC CeMap)

Bankers: Yorkshire Bank plc, Horsforth

As at 14th October 2022 there were 147 church members. Details of a further 120 people are placed on the church data base and altogether 526 on the community roll. Membership numbers continue to fluctuate as new members and adherents are offset by bereavements, house moves and a scrupulous scrutiny of membership names.

Objectives and Activities These are set out in detail on pages 2 to 25.

Financial Review by The Church Treasurer

The ending of Covid-19 restrictions and a return to near normality has regrettably not created a return to pre-Covid finances in terms of the Church and centre. Congregation numbers and regular hirer groups have fallen, resulting in a reduction of income affecting our ability to meet increased costs in fuel, maintenance and everyday materials needed to keep both the Church and the centre functioning.

As everyone is now so aware, financial stability is essential to any home, business and our Church and centre; we are all affected. Church finances continue to be carefully monitored and any possible means to save expenditure (without affecting health and safety) is being considered. Essential repairs and maintenance continue as required, but we have needed to stop any expenditure that may be classed as desirable rather than essential.

It must be stressed that even with restricted expenditure, we are in danger – our finances may not support the Church for longer than 2-3 years. We are likely to be faced with more fuel price increases and general inflation, which will inevitably affect our finances even more.

To all Church groups, all our congregation and members, a big thank you for your most generous donations, at such a time when life is difficult for all. The economic climate means we are all facing decisions about the future – being members and custodians of a Church does not exempt us from this. Discussions and decisions will need to take place with some urgency to enable us to move forward into whatever the future may hold.

The full balance sheet and statement of financial activities up to 31st August 2022 can be found on the following pages.

Bryan Whitham.
Treasurer



Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees of
The Grove Methodist Church, Horsforth.

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the Grove Methodist Church (the Church) for the year ended 31 August 2022.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the charity trustees of the Church, 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 2011 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.

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, giving me cause to believe that in any material respect:

- 1. Accounting records were not kept in respect of the Church as required by section 130 of the Act; or*
- 2. The accounts do not accord with those records; or*
- 3. The accounts do not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a "true and fair view" which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.*

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.

Amanda Brown (FPC CeMAP)
Independent Examiner
47 Kirkwood Drive
Cookridge
Leeds LS16 7DY



Dated: 06 February 2023

Reserves Policy

The General Fund comprises the unrestricted reserves of the Church. It aims to accumulate the equivalent of six months potential expenditure, currently estimated as between £60,000 to £65,000. The General Fund can satisfy that requirement at the lower level, at the present time.

Approved by The Grove Church Council on *21st February 2023* and signed on its behalf by Peter Mawson, Secretary to the Church Council.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Peter Mawson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a small dot at the end.

THE GROVE METHODIST CHURCH HORSFORTH
SUMMARY FINANCIAL STATEMENT
for the YEAR ENDED 31st AUGUST 2022

The Annual Report of the Trustees comprises pages 1 to 25 of this booklet.

This Financial Information is a summary of the Independently Examined Annual Accounts which are available from the Treasurer. The Independent Examiner's Report is unqualified.

Approved by The Grove Church Council on

Signed on it's behalf by

Trustee

Trustee

FINANCIAL POSITION AT 31ST AUGUST 2022

		2022	2021
ASSETS			
Church property and organ at insurance value		7,119,698	6,420,000
Bank accounts		50,958	61,749
Debtors		18,874	18,605
		-----	-----
		7,189,530	6,500,354
LIABILITIES			
Creditors		-1,663	3,817
		-----	-----
TOTAL NET ASSETS		7,191,193	6,496,537
		-----	-----
FUNDED BY			
Restricted Funds:	Property valuation reserve	7,119,698	6,420,000
	Benevolent fund	945	888
		-----	-----
		7,120,643	6,420,888
Designated Funds:	Trustees for Methodist Church Purposes	1,983	1,980
	Organ fund	1,267	1,267
	Property fund	13,746	13,746
	Projects for young people	3,414	3,440
Unrestricted Funds:	General fund	50,140	55,216
		-----	-----
		7,191,193	6,496,537
		-----	-----

THE GROVE METHODIST CHURCH HORSFORTH

SUMMARY FINANCIAL STATEMENT
for the YEAR ENDED 31st AUGUST 2022

	2022	2021
RESULTS FOR THE YEAR		
INCOME		
Collections & Gift Aid tax refunds	64,401	59,409
Hire of rooms, car park & use by Church organisations	49,050	19,292
Donations	9,664	11,664
Bank interest & other income	3,156	716
Fundraising events	3,527	692
	-----	-----
	129,798	91,773
Restricted & Designated Funds	66	7
	-----	-----
Total Income	129,864	91,780
	-----	-----
EXPENDITURE		
Circuit assessment	57,469	57,469
Maintenance of the Church, repairs, heating, insurance etc	19,188	14,250
Maintenance of the Centre, repairs, heating, cleaning etc	22,790	8,384
Premises manager salary and accommodation	21,741	13,179
Planned maintenance	130	120
Administration, photocopier, stationery	1,820	1,536
Other expenses, organ & music	3,413	2,062
Outreach	2,365	2,250
Subscriptions & donations	4,396	946
Fundraising Events	1,562	0
	-----	-----
	134,874	100,196
Restricted & Designated Funds	32	44
	-----	-----
Total expenses	134,906	100,240
	-----	-----
SURPLUS/ (DEFICIT) for the year	-5,042	-8,460

Unrealised revaluation property gains for the year	699,698	194,116
	-----	-----
Net movement in funds	694,656	185,656
Funds at the beginning of the year	6,496,537	6,310,881
	-----	-----
FUNDS AT THE END OF THE YEAR	7,191,193	6,496,537
	-----	-----

Grove Methodist Church, Horsforth, Leeds

[Horsforth Grove Methodist Church - Grove Methodist Church \(chessck.co.uk\)](http://chessck.co.uk)