

Ebenezer Baptist Church, Magor

Registered Charity no. 1136850

Annual Report

Year ending 31st December, 2023

The Diaconate (the Charity Trustees of Ebenezer Baptist Church)

Minister	Rev. Mark Thomas
Acting Secretary	Kathy Allen
Assistant Secretary	Vacant
Treasurer	John Loeb
Deacons	Beverley Davies, Christine Foster, Phyllis Jones, Andrew Leighton, Christine Miles, Davina Thomas

Diaconate meetings

The Diaconate has met 11 times for business meetings and a number of times for fellowship over the course of the year 2023. Fb4j

New Diaconate appointments

This year, at the AGM in March 2023, we welcomed one new deacon, Davina Thomas, on to the Church's leadership team, and Kathy Allen became Acting Secretary. Keith Arnold had indicated his intention to resign after 6 years as Church Secretary. We are truly grateful to Keith for his commitment to our fellowship, as well as his being a major part of the work in leading us through the transition period occasioned by our previous minister, Harry Place's, retirement.

Transitional Arrangements

The Church had appointed Reverend Mark Thomas to act as Moderator during the Transition period. Although not a registered charity trustee, he attended meetings and continued to act in an advisory capacity to the Church trustees.

We appreciated the work of Thomasina Brown, our church and community worker who continued to lead work with children and families during the transition. We wished her well in her new employment from August 2023.

On September 16th 2023, after his application had been considered by the diaconate and the church meeting, Reverend Mark Thomas was inducted as minister of the church.

Church Leadership Report

Achieving our objectives

Our principal activities as a Church are:

- Worship and prayer.
- The teaching and sharing of the Christian Faith.
- The pastoral care of the individuals.
- Service to the local community and the wider world

This report gives an indication of the wide range of activities we undertake as a church and how we fund them.

Our accounts show that we have continued to be able to be a generous charitable church, supporting a wide spread range of organisations both at home and overseas. This is for example through monthly charitable giving in our communion offerings, to a charity decided by the church meeting for each month for that year; and also through responses to emergency situations in the wider world.

At the beginning of the year the Church was still in a period of transition, seeking a new minister. We are grateful for the work of those who supported the ongoing work of the church in that time, including our regional minister Rev Mark Fairweather-Tall. Rev Mark Thomas continued, with the agreement of the deaconate and the church meeting, to support the church as our Moderator, until taking the role of our minister in September 2023.

We continue to pursue our aims of creating stronger links between the Church and the communities of Magor and Undy with the aim of bringing more people to faith in Christ. One baptism took place during the year, with Rev Mark Thomas leading the service.

Membership and Adherence

We note the home call of Dorothy Petersen and of Joan Collings, both local to Magor and Caldicot from childhood. Both Dorothy and Joan were well-loved members of the fellowship for much of their lives, and will be much missed.

There were 7 resignations from membership. Two were occasioned by the retirement of Harry Place and his wife Alice Place, and their subsequent move to membership of a different church, and two by members who moved to support another local church. Thomasina Brown has moved to new employment and she and her husband Simon Brown resigned. A member who is no longer in contact with the church has agreed to their name being removed from the membership list.

Reverend Mark Thomas and Anne Thomas became members in September 2023. We also have a new member, who was baptised after moving to worship in our fellowship. At the end of the year there were 96 members and some 30 adherents (people who worship with us regularly or occasionally).

Connections

We have maintained the relationships with our fellow Baptist churches at Caldicot, and Underwood and with the Christian centre being established by Jeremy Lock in Sudbrook. In addition, we have also met up with St Mary's Church in Wales for Remembrance Day and Christmas carols.

Following the move of Our Church and Community worker, Thomasina Brown, to new employment, Jeremy Lock, who worked with Thomasina, has continued to maintain relationships with Magor Church in Wales School and Undy Primary school by providing school assemblies. One of our members continues to serve as a school governor for Magor Church in Wales primary school.

We were delighted to host nursery children from Magor school for a session about the nativity in November, and children visited our coffee morning on one occasion to share time with local people there. We very much welcome opportunities for multi-generational time together.

The Christingle service and the nativity service provided opportunity for families who have not necessarily been part of our worship to join in with us. Mark and Anne Thomas provided an effective and thought provoking all age nativity service.

Further afield we have supported the work of the Baptist Missionary Society, and the work of the Kasozis in Uganda that continues to prosper, Peter and Rose Kasozi have supported the formation of a number of churches local to their area, and more recently set up a health clinic. Education is provided for children in that area at both primary and secondary levels.

Church teams

Part of the Trustees' main responsibility is that of ensuring that the teams of volunteers are in place to run and deliver the wide-ranging programme of events and activities in the community.

Pastoral care is overseen by a small dedicated team of people who continued to provide pastoral care following the retirement of Harry Place. Mark Thomas has been developing planning with them since September 2023.

Bible Study leaders continue to deliver a well-supported and varied programme. We have the new and welcome addition of Mark Thomas' input.

As a fellowship we continue to be able to function well because of the ongoing commitment of a number of individuals whose work in maintaining rotas, and our heating, and the rearrangement of furniture for different events for example, may often seem invisible but is always necessary, and is much appreciated.

Kathy Allen
(Acting Church Secretary)

Sunday Club

The five leaders of the Sunday club team work on a rota so that every Sunday service of the year is covered.

In July we said farewell to Mrs Thomasina Brown, our community worker, as she took up a new post. She was given a farewell lunch in the church grounds after the summer camp. We look forward to new leadership when God calls the right person to the vacant post.

We only have a few regular children, and we kept contact with a faithful family (connected to the church but not living in this community) by Zoom. As attendance is spasmodic, our lessons have had "stand-alone" subjects (e.g. stories from Jesus' ministry and seasonal topics such as Easter, Pentecost and Christmas) rather than following a series. We long to see an increase in numbers and are always ready to welcome new children.

We have maintained contact with both local schools. In November we were able to set up a Nativity scene in the church so that each school's nursery staff could bring their children into the church to see it and explain the Christmas story to them. A Nativity story book was given to each child.

Our new minister Mark Thomas and his wife Anne attracted a number of new children to both a Sunday afternoon Christingle service and a Sunday morning Nativity service. We look forward to working beside them as the New Year begins.

Phyllis Jones

Toddlers

We continue to gain new members each week.

We offer tea, biscuits, and toast, A variety of age-appropriate toys, Play-Doh, jigsaws, and mark making activities are also available. The session ends with singing accompanied by musical instruments. We sing Happy Birthday to anyone celebrating, they also receive a card and a bible story book.

Older children leaving to go to Nursery are given a book of bible stories to remember us by.

Thank you to the Toddler team who work hard to provide this outreach service.

Bev Davies

Superheroes

Childrens work has continued throughout 2023.

The Superheroes after school club continues to meet in the school room on Thursdays during term time, from 3:30 pm - 4:30 pm. Children enjoy learning about the bible through craft, drama, song and reading the Bible. Some have taken part in family services lead by Tomi.

The summer term ended with a family camp, a family service and a farewell lunch for Tomi, who had decided it was time to move on to pastures new.

School assemblies are continuing, and we have welcomed both Undy and Magor CIW schools, to listen to the Easter and Christmas stories.

We are thankful for a new team of helpers so that superheroes can continue.

Bev Davies

Light Lunches at Magor Baptist Church

We are now in our second year of Light Lunches held in the chapel on the 1st Monday of the month.

We provide a warm lunch of soup or jacket potatoes with a hot dessert, of which crumble is the most popular, and a cup of tea or coffee.

The aim of our lunches is to provide a warm friendly atmosphere, where folks from the community can come and share fellowship.

Our numbers have steadily grown and we now serve on average 25-30 people.

We are so grateful for all the volunteers who faithfully come and put up tables, lay the tables, serve, shop, cook and wash up

We keep our price low at ,2.00 or ,3.00. But people are very generous and want to give more. They say it is well worth it as they love coming.

We were pleased to earn a food rating of 5 stars after an inspection from The Food Standards Agency.

We aim to share the love of Jesus and welcome non-church members as well as members of the fellowship into the building as part of our witness.

Christine Foster

Knit and Natter

We are a group of 16 - 20 ladies who meet every Monday from 1.30pm to 3.00pm. We get together in a friendly atmosphere to knit and do lots of nattering.

This year we have been able to support agencies by knitting chicks for the charity Ready Steady Go towards their Christmas Fayre who support the premature baby unit, Cardiff. We also knitted Christmas stockings, baby hats, baby cloths and squares to make blankets which have been donated to the Refugee Centre in Newport.

We have been fortunate to be able to donate a total of £325.00 which has covered heating and service's expenses, also the Earthquake Appeal, Ravenhouse Trust and Parkinson's charities.

In July we took a trip to Tintern Abbey, which included lunch at The Anchor. Despite the weather all the ladies had a wonderful day out, and the same enjoyable evening was spent at the Wheatsheaf for our Christmas meal, albeit in January.

Jean Smith (Chairlady)

Ladies Friendship

We began the New Year with a film night, popcorn, ice-cream, and a wonderful film >Miss Potter=. It beat going to the cinema, as all the ladies agreed. A super evening, rounded off with our usual tea/coffee and biscuits.

Christine Miles delivered a fascinating insight of Taiwan, and how open and far-sighted the country is. Considering how small it is they do amazing things with regard to democracy, equality and freedom.

Our March AGM was attended by approximately a dozen ladies. Topics discussed were, places of interest, evenings of entertainment and varied speakers. The Annual Report was read with committee members agreeing to stand for another year in office. Pat Edlin discussed the up-to-date accounts, and it was agreed we donate ,50.00 towards the heating expenses. The latter half of the evening was an enjoyable number of Beetle Drive games, ending with our usual tea/coffee and biscuits.

Mr. John Sheen entertained us at our April meeting with poems, and experiences of AThe (his) Happiest Days@, including school escapades. A memorable and joyful evening as always. We were invited to join the Ladies Circle in May, when Jenny and Stan Griffiths gave us a detailed and highly entertaining evening of their experiences travelling around the Inner Hebrides on a Vespa. They could also give us first hand advice as to the best places for Ascones and tea@!!.

On the 13th June, we had a most delightful evening, walking and viewing the idyllic Veddw House Gardens, situated in the Welsh border countryside. A flora gem hidden away in the woods, with history dated back 200 years.

We ended our year at The Rose in Redwick where the food and ambience added to a most enjoyable social evening of good conversation, laughter and wonderful company. After a summer of unpredictable weather, we had refreshed our autumn season with a fascinating and different aspect by Jan Potter, on the survivors of the Titanic. A wonderful turn out of ladies including many new members.

In October we were joined with the Ladies Circle once more to hear a talk by Toity Deane, who is a volunteer for SARA. It was a most moving and over whelming account of the lengths the volunteers go to, saving and rescuing people, not only at sea but in other situations. It was heartwarming to hear from Toity informing us of the amount we donated to their most worthy course of ,263.00.

November, we were entertained by Pat Taylor Jones, with a highly humorous account on how she came to take up drama later in life, and her history and monologues from Joyce Grenfell.

December took us to the Wheatsheaf for our Christmas meal. A full complement of 26 ladies enjoyed wonderful food and superb service along with fantastic company and festive cheer.

Jenny Tilton (Chairperson)

Friday Coffee Morning

We continue to open every Friday from 10 am until 12 noon and provide a friendly atmosphere where we welcome folk and visitors from the village to share coffee/tea with freshly cooked scones (and sometimes cake).

All are served by our faithful band of ladies (who serve with a smile) and this year we have also been able to serve a few light lunches.

All donations go to worthwhile charities.

The Coffee Morning takings were shared between:-

Raven house Trust	Macmillan Cancer Care
Kidney Research	Undy School
Sight Cymru	Ty Hafan
Turkish Earthquake appeal	Magor Scouts

The proceeds from the light lunches were donated to Children's Cancer Care.

On various occasions during the year we have been blessed by the visit of Children of all ages, together with their teachers, from Undy School who entertained us by singing and acting their plays for us, which have been excellent. It has been a busy year and I would like to thank all members and helpers for their tireless work and support.

Jean Smith

MAGOR BAPTIST CHURCH

INCOME & EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT

INCOME	2023 £	2022 £	EXPENDITURE	2023 £	2022 £
Total Church Giving	46,170	44,928	Total Ministerial/Mission Costs	20,028	43,794
Communion Offerings	4,750	9,758	Utilities	6,408	3,684
Special Offerings	4,419	3,348	Preaching and Moderator Fees	1,945	175
Uganda	5,162	5,238	Printing, Publications and Stationery	827	696
Gift Aid	14,603	14,335	Subscriptions and Licences	2,234	1,890
Gift Boxes	344	349	Cleaning	2,709	2,637
Room Hire	4,189	3,705	Maintenance and computers	1,908	767
Investment Income	4,397	1,680	Professional services	876	1,015
Trustees Contribution in lieu of manse	0	4,000	Communion Offerings	5,810	11,830
Miscellaneous	736	360	Special Offerings	5,677	3,584
Home Mission - Sudbrook	800	4,600	Uganda	6,580	6,610
			BU Home Mission	6,000	5,550
			BMS World Mission	6,000	5,600
			Miscellaneous	1,656	2,078
			Sudbrook	0	3,580
Total Income	85,570	92,300	Total Expenditure	68,658	93,491
Total Income excl Sudbrook	84,770	87,700	Total Expenditure excl Sudbrook	68,658	89,910
SURPLUS/DEFICIT	16,912	-1,191	SURPLUS/DEFICIT Excl Sudbrook	16,112	-2,211
Reduction in Pension Liability		24,000	Total Magor Baptist Church Surplus	16,112	21,789

MAGOR BAPTIST CHURCH 2023

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2023

COMMUNION OFFERINGS		SPECIAL OFFERINGS AND GIFTS	
	£		£
Jan LATCH	410	Tearfund Earthquake Syria	1,840
Feb Sight Savers	438	Mayday:- BMS - Ukraine	362
Mar Multiple Sclerosis	355	Raven House	503
Apr MAF	504	Ready Steady Go	150
May Cardiff Baptist Colleg	301	Princes Trust	100
Jun Ty Hafan	509	Tearfund Quiz	213
Jul Uganda	485	Christian Aid - Gaza	712
Aug Natalya's Fund	522	Shelterbox	135
Sep Tearfund	596	Raven House (10% interest)	430
Oct BMS Harvest - Uganda	823	Frost Fayre:- BMS - Ukraine	120
Nov Christian Aid	407	Raven House	140
Dec Raven House	460	Ready Steady Go	120
		BMS Christmas/Lesbos	852
Total	5,810	Total	5,677

CURRENT ASSETS	£	2022	£
Current Account	8,718		6,623
Monmouthshire Building Society	165,755		202,796
Baptists Together	141,372		89,514
CAF	85,000		85,000

Total Current Assets 400,845 383,933

Less Current liabilities due less than one year 2,785 1,985

Total Magor Baptist Church Funds 398,060 381,948

2023 2022

Average weekly offering £871 £864 **Change +1%**

Money given away £30,067 £33,174

As % of total expenditure 43.8% 36.9%

Although the original budget for 2023 projected a breakeven position due to ministerial vacancy and the investment in our children's and community work, the surprise resignation of our children's worker in July and the delay in appointing a new minister meant that the underlying surplus for the year was £16,112. It is encouraging to note that giving to the church (mainly through electronic payments) has stabilized at a level just above the previous year. However giving for good causes, has continued to be very generous. Other income such as Gift Aid and room hire have also contributed significantly to church funds, as well as the contribution now (with higher interest rates) from invested funds. The church is having to manage the increased energy bills and most other costs. These figures are disclosed fully in the Income and Expenditure account. The Church is hugely grateful to everyone for their continued giving over this period. All costs are continually monitored by the Deacons to ensure our funds are spent wisely.

As stated above, the Church has made a surplus of £16,112 in 2023. The surplus has been added to the investment funds and is available for future needs. The overall reserves policy of the church is currently under review with a view to agreeing a policy by the end of the year.

As at 31 December 2023, the Church held £2,785 on behalf of the Mission at Sudbrook.

Signed *John Lach* (Treasurer) Date *5 Feb. 2024*

Report of the Independent Examiner to the Deacons and members of Magor Baptist Church.

In accordance with the provisions of the Charities Act 2011, I have examined the Income & Expenditure Account and Statement of Financial Position of Magor Baptist Church relating to the year ended 31st December 2023. This examination did not extend to a comprehensive audit of such accounts or statement. I confirm that the accounts and statement accord with the accounting records of the church and that such records satisfy the requirements of the Act. I am not aware of any matter to which attention needs to be drawn in order to obtain a proper understanding of the accounts.

Signed *309ac* Date *19 February 2024*