



# Unity Methodist Church

Registered Charity 1173520

## TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31<sup>ST</sup> AUGUST 2024

### STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Unity Methodist Church (UMC) is based in Sandbach, Cheshire. It formally came into being in September 2020 and was formed with the merging of three Methodist Churches, Sandbach, Wheelock and Sandbach Heath Methodist Churches.

UMC is part of Cheshire South Methodist Circuit and is an active member of Churches Together in Sandbach.

In the spring of 2024, UMC sold the site of Sandbach Heath Methodist Church, which means that UMC now has responsibility for two sites and over 110 church members. Now that the sale of Sandbach Heath has gone through, steps have been taken to start the next part of the project – to refurbish and redevelop the Hancock Hall in the rear-half of the New Horizons site, to provide a modern and welcoming space for church and community activities in Wheelock, but particularly to be the centre for UMC's work with children, young people and their families.

All our buildings at Wesley Avenue and at New Horizons are used by the church or hired out for a wide range of community activities and organisations throughout the week.

Trustees 2023/24:

Jayne Bunn  
Karen Foster  
Carolyn Lawrance  
Pauline Sherwin

Ellen Cieka  
Robert Glassonbury  
Katy Lowe  
Norma Stolworthy

Timothy Cooke  
Ann Horsfield  
Stephen Parker-Aiken  
Elizabeth Trinder

Nilda Eyre  
Cynthia Kelly  
Alan Pimlott

### OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

Our weekly prayer group continues to meet both in person and on Zoom. An Advent study group met in December 2023 and a new Fellowship group has started in September 2024.

We continue to worship weekly at the Wesley Avenue site in Sandbach, with a monthly "Breakfast Church" for young families at our New Horizons site in Wheelock and an All-Age service four times a year at New Horizons, where we welcome children and families from Scouting and Guiding groups who meet on the premises. We also continue to hold a monthly Contemporary Worship Service.

Our Saturday Coffee Mornings are particularly appreciated by those living alone and by members from the local Dementia Friendly Sandbach group. In addition, Unity provides a monthly community hot lunch meal at its Wheelock site, which is well received with a variety of other social events provided during the year.



Our two toddler group sessions, Stepping Stones, continue to thrive, under the supervision of our Circuit Children and Family Workers. We have welcomed children from the local primary school to New Horizons for a session on Baptism and In December 2023 we hosted "Hope Journey" for a local Primary School, explaining the Christmas story through drama/role play. We also ran a Holiday Club for primary-age children over four days in August 2024, called "Whizz! Bang! Wow!" where we explored the wonders of Science and Faith.

Unity continues to serve the local community through its partnership with other churches in Churches Together in Sandbach. Together we have held an outdoor carol service in the centre of town, provided a Christmas Day lunch for those who would otherwise be on their own, welcomed a drama group who performed a moving Passion Play for the community at Easter and had a "Christians together" stall at the Sandbach Pride Festival in September.

The Foodbank, based in the Wesley Centre Sandbach, continues to operate and is reporting a steady increase in numbers of those being referred. It remains an internal organization of Unity but with support from members of other local churches. The Community Food Pantry is also based in The Wesley Centre, and is continuing to support local households to cope with the cost of living by offering food and toiletries at substantially reduced rates. This is an internal organisation of Unity Methodist Church and is run by volunteers from Churches Together and from the local community. It has been a vital source of support to many in the area including a warm space for a chat over a cup of coffee and prayer support when requested. In 2024 the Pantry has also been building links with other agencies who can offer support to pantry members. Mentell, a mental-health charity for men, has visited and it's hoped that Citizens' Advice will be able to visit in the near future.

Unity also aims to be informed about the needs of the wider world, encouraging its members to pray and work for peace and justice and continuing to support the work of Christian Aid and the Methodist development and aid agency, "All We Can".

In September 2023 Unity welcomed a new Minister, Revd. Carolyn Lawrance on a 5 year invitation.

## FINANCIAL REVIEW

### FINANCE REPORT

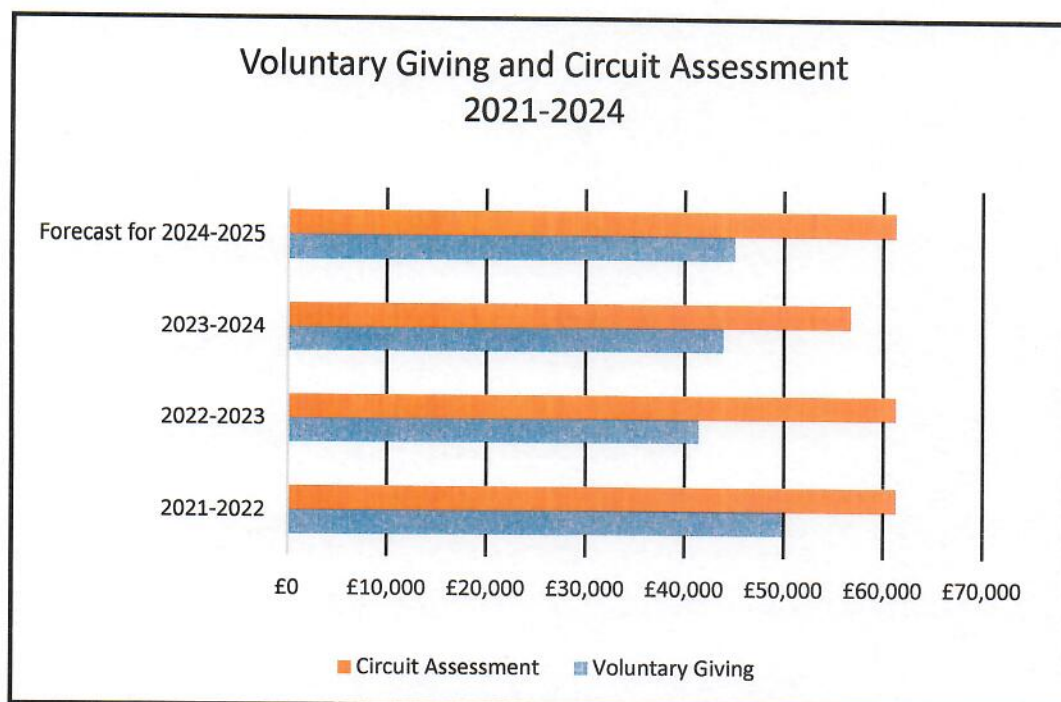
The method of accounting used is that of Receipts and Payments and the Methodist Standard Form of Accounts, which is attached to this report, summarises the Receipts and Payments for the year ending **31 August 2024**.

Church Receipts were **£130,905** and Payments amounted to **£132,617**, leaving a shortfall of **£1,712**, which is much lower than forecasted because at the end of the year we received two refunds: **£9,407** from the Circuit for the costs of maintaining the Sandbach Heath property during the sale period, and **£5,428** from the Connexion, being a refund of the £5,000 donation made to the Pension Fund in 2022 with interest.

Voluntary giving in the form of regular giving, tax recovered and one-off donations amounted to **£43,848** which is an increase of **£2,456** on the previous year.

The biggest outgoing was the Circuit Assessment of **£56,681**. The chart below illustrates the gap between Voluntary Giving and Circuit Assessment for the past three years.





Ideally, we would like Voluntary Giving to increase to cover the Circuit Assessment as our income from Lettings and Fundraising is needed to cover other expenditure such as buildings repairs and maintenance, insurance and utility costs. An urgent repair to the roof of the Wesley Centre this year incurred a cost of over **£9,000** and utility costs rose to **£25,030**, a 56% rise on the previous year.

In view of rising costs and the original forecasted deficit of **£8,000**, it was agreed that a reduction in the amount of donations paid out from funds this year should be made. **£3,825** was made in donations in comparison to **£7,598** last year.

Volunteers work hard to look after the premises and to organise fundraising events and it is thanks to their efforts that income from Lettings was **£45,489** and Fundraising Events raised **£18,168**.

#### RESERVES

A Reserves Policy has been prepared. At 31 August 2024 the General Fund was **£67,494**. In addition, there was a balance of **£4,152** in a designated fund for the preliminary costs in developing New Horizons. Restricted funds total **£3,464**: **£180** for Wesley Guild, **£1,035** in the Charity Fund and **£2,249** given specifically for projects in the Wheelock community. A draft Budget for 2024/25 has been prepared and the forecasted figure for expenditure is **£125,923**. It is our policy to hold 50% of anticipated expenditure in our reserves, which we are able to do this year.

#### THE FUTURE

In 2024-25 Circuit Assessment will increase to **£61,215** and energy costs are likely to continue at a high level. The forecast shows that the shortfall by the end of the financial year could be at least **£7,500**.

Whilst the Reserves will cover this, we need to find ways of raising even more funds in the future so that Receipts and Payments will at least break even. A Gift Day is being considered as a way of increasing Voluntary Giving.

## DECLARATIONS

The trustees declare that they have approved the Trustees' report above. Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees:

Signature



Full name

Carolyn Lawrance

Position

Chair

Date

15.3.25.

**THE METHODIST CHURCH**  
**STANDARD FORM OF ACCOUNTS**

**UNITY METHODIST CHURCH**

**FOR THE YEAR ENDED**

**31 August 2024**

**Cheshire South Methodist Circuit**

**Circuit no.**

**11/8**

**Registered Charity - Charity Registration number**

**1173520**

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 Carolyn Lawrance**

**Church Stewards:**

**Nilda Eyre**

**Cynthia Kelly**

**Ann Horsfield**

**Pauline Sherwin**

**Treasurer:**

**Ann Horsfield**



SECTION A		Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Totals this year	Totals last year
		£	£	£	£
a1	<b>RECEIPTS</b>	<b>Note</b>			
a2	Offerings and Tax recovered	1	43,848	43,848	41,392
a3	Bank and CFB interest and Investment income		2,977	2,977	1,867
a4	Lettings	2	45,489	45,489	41,536
a5	Other receipts	3	37,020	1,219	31,451
	Foodbank, Lifeline and Wesley Guild		352.93	353	10,751
a6	<b>TOTAL RECEIPTS</b>		<b>129,333</b>	<b>1,572</b>	<b>130,905 (a7)</b>
					<b>126,998</b>

SECTION B					
b1	<b>PAYMENTS</b>				
b2	Circuit Assessment or Share		56,681	56,681	45,932
b3	Donations	4	3,075	750	3,825
b4	Repairs and Maintenance	5	27,616	27,616	20,654
b5	Utilities (Insurances, water charges, heating & lighting)	6	34,179	34,179	26,467
b6	Foodbank, Wesley Guild, Lifeline			20	20
b7	Other payments	7	10,296	10,296	4,436
b8	<b>TOTAL PAYMENTS</b>		<b>131,847</b>	<b>770</b>	<b>132,617 (b9)</b>
					<b>126,953</b>

SECTION C					
c1	<b>NET RECEIPTS/PAYMENTS FOR THE YEAR</b>	<b>(a6-b8)</b>	<b>(2,514)</b>	<b>802</b>	<b>(1,712)</b>
c2	Total funds brought forward from last year		73,860	2,962	76,822 (c6)
c3	<b>Sub total</b>	<b>(c1+c2)</b>	<b>71,346</b>	<b>3,764</b>	<b>75,110</b>
c4	Transfers and adjustments		300	(300)	(c7)
c5	<b>TOTAL FUNDS AT END OF YEAR</b>	<b>(c3+c4)</b>	<b>71,646</b>	<b>3,464</b>	<b>75,110 (c8)</b>
					<b>76,822 (c6)</b>

SECTION D			
d	<b>FOR INFORMATION ONLY: MONEY RECEIVED AND PASSED ON TO EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS</b>		
	<b>(these amounts are not to be included in total receipts/payments figures above)</b>	£	£
d1	Balance brought forward from last year		
d2	Offerings/Gifts - received for external organisations	3,297	2,766
d3	Offerings/Gifts - passed to external organisations	3,297	2,766
d4	<b>BALANCE STILL TO BE PAID</b>	<b>(0)</b>	
	<b>(d1+d2-d3)</b>		



**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 2024 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 Sandbach Foodbank	13,495	11,496	1,999	(20)	7,510	£9,488
e2 Wesley Guild - figures included in main accounts						
e3 Lifeline Debt Advice	1,490	3,706	(2,216)		2,528	313
e4 The Pantry @ Sandbach Hub	28,444	35,078	(6,634)		12,221	5,587
e5 Wheelock Baby and Tots				(887)	887	
e6						
e7						
e8 Sub total of Internal Organisations funds	43,429	50,280	(6,851)	(907)	23,146 e11	15,388 (e12)
e9 Church accounts (totals brought forward from page 2 - totals column)	130,905 a7)	132,617 (b9	(1,712)	(c2	76,822 (c6	75,110 (c8)
e10 TOTAL CASH FUNDS HELD BY CHURCH	174,334	182,898	(8,563)	(907)	99,968 (x)	90,498 (y)
Continue on a separate sheet if necessary and bring the totals forward	<b>TOTAL RECEIPTS</b>	<b>TOTAL PAYMENTS</b>	NOTE: The opening balance for The Pantry is £279.51 more than the figure quoted in the previous Standard Form of Accounts.			

**SECTION F**

**STATEMENT OF ASSETS AND LIABILITIES**

**CHURCH - CASH FUNDS HELD at 31 August 2024**

	OPENING BALANCES	CLOSING BALANCES
f1 Cash in hand	4	4
f2 Bank Current Account	6,286	4,592
f3 Bank Deposit Account	1	
f4 Central Finance Board	45,530	70,514
f5 Trustees for Methodist Church Purposes		
f6 Other funds - loan to Circuit	25,000	
f7 SUB TOTAL - Church accounts	76,822 (c6)	75,110 (c8)
f8 Total funds held by Internal Organisations (the closing balance total from above) (e12)	23,146 e11)	15,388 (e12)
f9 TOTAL CASH FUNDS HELD BY CHURCH	99,968 (x)	90,498 (y)

**SECTION G**

**OTHER ASSETS and LIABILITIES**

	At 1 September 2023	At 31 August 2024
g1 Investments (include Endowments)		
g2 Land & Buildings (see notes re Insurance value)	10,499,339	9,323,232
g3 Other Assets - Insurance value of Contents	200,614	207,434
g4 Loan to Circuit - show amount outstanding at year end	25,000	
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 UNITY METHODIST CHURCH No. 11/8

## Declarations and Scrutiny

I confirm that these Receipt and Payment based accounts for the year to 31 August 2024 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 Ann Horsfield Date 15.9.24

Name and address of treasurer ANN HORSFIELD  
31 Fields Drive, Sandbach, Post Code CW11 1YB

### Presentation to the Church trustees

I confirm that the annual report and accounts for the year ended 31 August 2024 ~~were~~ will be\* presented to the meeting of the Church trustees held on 20.03.25

Signature of the Chair of the meeting Carolyn Lawrence

Name of the Chair of the meeting CAROLYN LAWRENCE Date 11.3.25

### Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees of the

UNITY METHODIST Church

Charity Number 1173520

### Responsibilities and basis of report

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the UNITY METHODIST Church for the year ended 31 August 2024 set out on pages 2 to 3. 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 Church ..... UNITY METHODIST CHURCH ..... No 11/8 .....

### 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 ..... Peter Frank Hutchinson .....

Name of independent examiner ..... PETER FRANK HUTCHINSON .....

Relevant professional qualification of independent examiner .....

Name of firm (where appropriate) .....

Address ..... 11 COOKERYERE LANE .....

..... SANDBACH CHESHIRE ..... Post Code CW11 1BQ .....

Date ..... 26.9.2024 .....

\* delete or circle as appropriate