STRATHMORE ROAD METHODIST CHURCH, ROWLANDS GILL

England & Wales · Charity number 1179206

Details

Other names	SRMC
Status	Registered
Legal form	Other
Registered	2018-07-16
Register	View on the Charity Commission register

Contact

Address	2 Derwent View Chopwell Newcastle Upon Tyne NE17 7AN
Phone	01207542396
Email	minister@rowlandsgill.org.uk
Website	www.rowlandsgill.org.uk

Activities

Objects: THE PURPOSES OF THE METHODIST CHURCH ARE AND SHALL BE DEEMED TO HAVE BEEN SINCE THE DATE OF UNION THE ADVANCEMENT OF -(A) THE CHRISTIAN FAITH IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE DOCTRINAL STANDARDS AND THE DISCIPLINE OF THE METHODIST CHURCH;(B) ANY CHARITABLE PURPOSE FOR THE TIME BEING OF ANY CONNEXIONAL, DISTRICT, CIRCUIT, LOCAL OR OTHER ORGANISATION OF THE METHODIST CHURCH;(C) ANY CHARITABLE PURPOSE FOR THE TIME BEING OF ANY SOCIETY OR INSTITUTION SUBSIDUARY OR ANCILLARY TO THE METHODIST CHURCH;(D) ANY PURPOSE FOR THE TIME BEING OF ANY CHARITY BEING A CHARITY SUBSIDIARY OR ANCILLARY TO THE METHODIST CHURCH.

Activities: SRMC seeks to be a loving, welcoming and active Christian community, serving and sharing with the world around us, following the example and teaching of Jesus Christ.We serve the world and community by providing premises in Rowlands Gill and Chopwell for church, community and charitable use, as well as working with children and youth, refugees, the elderly and the socially disadvantaged.

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Classification

- **How:** Provides Buildings/facilities/open Space, Provides Services, Other Charitable Activities
- **What:** General Charitable Purposes, Religious Activities
- **Who:** Children/young People, Elderly/old People, People With Disabilities, Other Charities Or Voluntary Bodies, The General Public/mankind

Geography

- Durham
- Gateshead

Finances

Period end	Income	Expenditure	Assets	Employees
2025-08-31	£230,784	£239,729	-	-
2024-08-31	£227,910	£203,194	-	-
2023-08-31	£188,772	£110,433	-	-
2022-08-31	£93,736	£99,916	-	-
2021-08-31	£80,490	£88,451	-	-
2020-08-31	£91,552	£92,707	-	-

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Trustees

Name	Role	Appointed
April Marie Sidgwick		2024-05-12
Boomie Shodeinde		2024-05-12
Bryn Robert Lauder		2025-02-06
Colin Robson		2021-10-19
DAVID THOMPSON		2023-06-08
David Robson		2019-06-01
Eileen Milsom Wright		2019-11-07
Eunice Noreen Peacock		2019-06-01
GILLIAN ELIZABETH JOHNSON		2006-05-01
Gillian Ruth Gordon		2025-05-11
Hannah Dawson		2022-06-01
Helen Lesley Braun		2023-06-01
JILL NICOLA WARDEN FCA		2012-09-01
Janette Taylor Charlton		2025-09-01
Jill Emmanuel		2023-06-01
John Friedrich Campbell Gordon		2025-05-11
John Sinclair Clark		2023-06-01
Joshua Paul Simpson		2024-09-01
KEITH JAMES CRULLEY		2001-07-01
Keith Stamp		2022-10-20
Linda Mary Innes		2017-10-12
Marie Hutchinson		2023-06-01
Mary Glease		2019-11-07
Peter Hutchinson		2023-06-01
Rev Dr Stephen John Lindridge		2025-09-01
Ruth Elizabeth Hallett		2023-06-01
SANDRA DIXON		2018-05-01

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Name	Role	Appointed
Sellapulige Ranjith Sirilal Rosa		2019-06-01
Sharon Anne Mackie		2023-06-01
Simon Neville Mackie		2022-06-01
Susan Robson		2022-10-20
TREVOR PEACOCK		2024-10-15
Tracy Lauder		2023-06-01

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STRATHMORE ROAD METHODIST CHURCH, ROWLANDS GILL

England & Wales - Charity number 1179206

Accounts

Year ended 31 August 2025 Charity: 1179206

Trustees' Annual Report

Strathmore Road **Methodist** Church

rowlandsgill.org.uk

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Structure & Management

The Methodist Church is said to have been created after John Wesley's conversion and is a Free Church. Strathmore Road Methodist Church (SRMC) includes premises both in Rowlands Gill and Chopwell and is part of the South West Tyneside Circuit and Newcastle upon Tyne District of The Methodist Church, the governing body of which is the annual conference of The Methodist Church. The Methodist Church Act 1976 gives the authority under which The Methodist Church acts. The constitution, practice and discipline of The Methodist Church, together with The Deed of Union (Act of 1929 adopted 1932), govern the objectives and activities of The Methodist Church.

In general, The Methodist Church is excepted from the need to register as a charity by the combined effects of Section 46(4) (A) of The Charities Act 1993 and Paragraph 4(2)(C) of the Charities (exception from registration) Regulations 1996 as amended by Statutory Instrument 2014 No 242. SRMC however, registered as a separate Registered Charity in England and Wales, effective from 16 July 2018.

The Managing Trustees of SRMC (see page 26) are all lay people, with one exception: the Minister, Rev. Ann Varker, who is ordained by The Methodist Church and was stationed to the South West Tyneside Circuit. The Youth Worker, Keith Crulley, and the Children's and Families Pastor, Ruth Hallatt, are employed by SRMC, along with two Youth Outreach Pioneers, Heather Woods and Barry Watkin.

The Managing Trustees convene at least three times a year as the Church Council, where they make all major decisions. They delegate some day-to-day responsibilities to a Leadership Team, all of whom are also Trustees. The Church Council is chaired by the Minister.

Trustees who have served during the year or since the year-end are appointed annually by the church, either through a general meeting or as ex-officio members.

The church's day-to-day operations are overseen by those appointed by the Church Council, including the Leadership Team, the Pastoral Committee, the Finance and Property Committee, the Worship Team and the Youth Workers.

Our Objectives

SRMC aims to be a warm, inclusive and vibrant Christian community. We strive to reflect the love and teachings of Jesus Christ by serving others, sharing our resources and fostering connections.

To effectively support our local and global neighbours, we align our efforts with The Methodist Church Act (1976). Our premises are dedicated to church activities, community initiatives and charitable work. We also engage in outreach programmes focused on children, refugees, the elderly and those facing social or economic challenges.

In September 2019, SRMC in Rowlands Gill merged with Chopwell Methodist Church, creating a single church with two sites. Together, the congregations have worked to build a unified church family, sharing a mission across both sites. This partnership allows us to nurture lifelong learning in the Christian faith and create opportunities for spiritual growth and discipleship.

SRMC is committed to the safe recruitment and support of all who work with children and vulnerable adults. Our safeguarding practices are guided by the Church's Safeguarding Policy, current legislation and established best practices.

Our Mission Statement

With the help of the Holy Spirit, we seek to live our lives as a loving community with each other and the world around us, following the example and teaching of Jesus Christ and worshipping God.

As a loving community, we:

·Warmly welcome everyone, fostering a true sense of belonging and family.
·Share God's love with people of all ages through our words and actions.
·Provide pastoral care, fellowship and prayer to support one another.
·Champion social justice, peace and positive change in the world.
·Collaborate with other churches, charities and organisations to amplify our impact.

Following Christ's example, we:

·Support spiritual growth through biblical teaching and prayer.
·Inspire everyone to use their unique gifts in both church life and daily living.
·Encourage whole-life discipleship, emphasising responsible stewardship of time, money and resources.
·Carefully nurture and guide children and young people in their faith journey.

Worshipping God, we:

·Worship in ways that honour Him, centre our focus on Jesus and deepen our awareness of the Holy Spirit.
·Create worship experiences that are inclusive, uplifting, meaningful and of the highest quality.
·Actively encourage and celebrate the diverse talents of our congregation in worship.

Sunday Worship

Worship at Rowlands Gill

SRMC has 122 members, encompassing all ages, including a thriving ministry amongst families, children and youth. Within the church, people appreciate different forms of worship and the church values being able to offer a diversity of styles in its services to enable all people to encounter the living God.

Our Sunday morning services at Rowlands Gill are geared towards all ages and use contemporary worship, interactive activities and different media. Most Sundays have a short time of worship together before the children and young people move into Sunday Club where there are groups for children aged 1 to 16. Once a month, the young people attend a Forest Church service in the grounds of the church, an expression of worship which continues to thrive.

We also have regular Local Worship Sundays – here we work without a local preacher or minister and invite speakers from a range of organisations and charities to hear about their work and explore how we might get involved.

During the summer, we ran a café church service each week. This is a rich worship space for our congregation but also an inclusive welcoming space for the wider community to stay connected whilst other groups take a summer break. We also hold bi-monthly 'Together' services where we seek to meet God together as an intergenerational family.

The Sunday evening services held at Rowlands Gill also aim to utilise the best in traditional Methodist worship, often with the aid of a pipe organ.

We are delighted that throughout this year our services have continued to grow, flourish and develop in their own unique ways, connecting with a diverse wider community.

Worship at Chopwell

At Chopwell, our Sunday morning worship is a more traditional Methodist style, though as new families continue to join us, this congregation and worship is developing in response to the needs of those who attend.

Community Hub

Every Monday, SRMC's Community Hub brings together a variety of activities.

With support from Gateshead Metropolitan Borough Council (GMBC), SRMC continues to operate a weekly 'Warm Space' on Monday mornings. The aim of Warm Spaces is to provide a safe and respectful atmosphere for anyone having difficulty with energy costs and keeping warm. Anyone in the community is welcome to use the building to keep warm, meet friends over a free hot drink and use our Pay As You Feel Cafe. We also offer free Wi-Fi access, mobile phone charging and a small bring-and-take library. Although initially intended for winter months, GMBC and SRMC quickly recognised the year-round value of providing a warm welcome and a positive friendly environment for people to come together. During the year, the Hub hosted various 'road shows' on energy efficiency, volunteering opportunities, and housing advice.

Since February 2021, a weekly Rescued Food Market has operated from SRMC. This offers surplus food collected from Fareshare and local supermarkets in return for a donation. The market is open to anyone and attracts a wide range of customers from those in financial difficulties, to people concerned about the environment and wishing to reduce food waste.

The market has the twin benefits of helping meet our Eco Church objectives while providing a further opportunity to serve our local community. Over 20 volunteers from SRMC, nearby local churches and the wider community are involved in collecting food, welcoming customers, running the market and clearing away.

The Pay As You Feel Cafe run by volunteers from SRMC and the wider community is open for breakfast alongside the Market and provides hot sandwiches, cakes and biscuits throughout the morning with a soup and roll lunch served later.

Since 2021, members of the community can visit a trained Citizens Advice advisor at SRMC on a drop-in basis. This dovetails well with other Community Hub activities as visitors can use the Cafe, Warm Space and Rescued Food Market before or after their appointment. Clients appreciate having the service based in the local community as it enables return visits without inconvenience and costs of a visit to central Gateshead.

A peer support group supported by professional mental health nurses is also available on site as part of the Community Hub and provides valuable help to visitors suffering from anxiety, depression and other mental health concerns.

Alpha

The Alpha Course is an evangelistic initiative designed to create a welcoming space for people to explore the Christian faith, ask questions and encounter Jesus Christ. Running from the New Year through to Easter, Alpha provided a structured yet informal opportunity for our community to consider the foundations of Christianity in the context of food, friendship and honest conversation. Its central objective is to introduce people to the good news of Jesus and to invite them into a deeper relationship with God through the work of the Holy Spirit.

Alpha has contributed meaningfully to the church's mission statement. Through Alpha, we have intentionally created a loving and hospitable community, reflecting Christ's example. The course has strengthened relationships within the congregation while also engaging those beyond our regular worshipping community. By inviting friends, neighbours and local residents into our space, we have fostered deeper connections in the wider community and provided a gentle, accessible pathway into church life and relationship with Jesus.

"Alpha has been a time for learning, caring, discovering and re-discovering. It's also been a community for me and about making friendships. It's a safe place for me to discover my own faith through the videos and through the others in my group."

Discipleship Groups

Our Discipleship Groups form a central part of our church's commitment to nurturing faith and deepening Christian community. These groups provide intentional spaces for spiritual growth, prayer and biblical study. We currently have seven house groups that meet weekly, some hosted in the church building and others in people's homes. Together, they reflect our desire to be a church that grows not only in numbers but in maturity and Christlikeness.

The primary aim of each group is to study the Bible and grow in faith with one another. Open to all, they cater for different ages, stages of Christian journey and a range of theological perspectives. Whether someone is exploring faith more deeply, newly committed or has been following Christ for many years, there is space for them. By gathering in smaller settings, members are able to ask questions, share insights, pray together and support one another in everyday discipleship.

Through regular fellowship, shared study and mutual care, the groups cultivate loving community and help participants follow the teaching of Jesus more closely. They have strengthened relationships within the church and extended hospitality beyond Sunday worship, enabling faith to be lived out in homes and daily life.

Bridges

The Bridges group has been active for more than 30 years, evolving with changing members throughout that time.

The group's core aim is to 'bridge the gap' between the church and the local community. Their mission is to create opportunities for building relationships with those on the fringes, both within the wider church and among local residents. They also welcome spouses, family, neighbours and friends who may not wish to attend church but want to be involved in the broader community at SRMC.

A key focus of Bridges is fostering intergenerational connections, encouraging generations to mix and engage with one another.

Annual Church Family Picnic

This event brings together church families and others the church has built relationships with, such as local Syrian families and attendees of the church hub.

Bridges Walk

Last year, Bridges organised a walk between Christmas and New Year, which encouraged over 60 people to exercise and enjoy fellowship during the holiday period.

Support for Other Groups and Events

Bridges provides organisational expertise, funding and practical help for various church and local community events, including a community BBQ at the church featuring food, drinks and games for all ages.

Church Family Holiday to Keswick

This year, 106 people participated in the trip, including families, couples, singles, young and old - ranging from 3 weeks to 79 years old! The week is a time to chat, listen, break bread, walk together and live in community. For many, it serves as both a holiday and a spiritual renewal. Strong relationships are formed and deepened, accompanied by much laughter and joy.

Spread Drama Group

Throughout September to early December Spread worked alongside 25 individuals of diverse ages, backgrounds and needs, some regular attendees of the church and others from our local community. We met to develop their theatrical skills, strengthen their confidence and grow their social skills. As well as being a theatre group who perform productions, Spread is a loving, supportive and caring community group that supports people onstage and offstage. In December, we welcomed over 500 people from across the community to watch our pantomime, offering a community event featuring entertainment for all ages, at an affordable price. Following the pantomime, we resumed weekly meetings, gathering to explore theatre, support one another and have fun. Spread is a community that reminds us that church doesn't always look like a traditional service with a sermon, it can indeed look like a community of people singing, dancing and enjoying time together.

Eco Church

SRMC recognises its responsibility of stewardship of the Earth and has retained its Eco Church Silver status to support its aims. SRMC continues to improve energy efficiency by the installation of a new boiler and solar panels which have reduced emissions. We continue to recycle pre-loved adult's and children's clothes and household items at the Community Hub.

With financial support from the Gateshead Food Partnership, of which we are members, fruit trees have been planted in the church garden at Chopwell which also hosted two events with the Chopwell Regeneration Group.

Open Doors

Rowlands Gill's Open Doors is an inclusive women's fellowship group that gathers weekly. Its purpose is to create a warm, supportive environment where women from all faith backgrounds — or none at all — can connect and grow together. Over the past year, the group has explored faith through personal stories, tackled pressing issues and engaged with thought-provoking discussions on social justice.

Creative mornings and fun quizzes have strengthened bonds among members, while opportunities to lead sessions have helped build confidence. The group's fundraising efforts for charity have been both successful and enjoyable, fostering deeper ties within the wider community. Regular prayer and reflective mornings have deepened spiritual understanding and strengthened members' grasp of Christian teachings.

The strong sense of community has attracted new members this year, offering a nurturing space for exploration, learning and spiritual growth. Looking ahead, the group hopes to expand on this foundation, warmly welcoming and supporting even more women into their church family.

Wednesday Morning Gang

For several years now including throughout this last year, a small dedicated team has worked hard to maintain our premises and grounds at both Rowlands Gill and Chopwell. As well as putting the world to right over a cuppa, this 'more mature' group of retirees, spend the morning every week doing odd jobs around the premises and grounds and also provide the very necessary mandatory premises inspections and checks on a weekly, monthly and annual basis.

In addition to the administrative side of the activities, the volunteer work centres around practical odd jobs including repairs to chairs, doors and windows, fixing leaks, clearing leaves, planting and pruning, drainage clearance, fence repairs, minor decoration and other general repairs. We are fortunate to have 'skilled contributors' within the team who are willingly able to provide a competent response to both specific emergency and ongoing general maintenance and repairs, so supporting our user groups in providing wide ranging activities in safe, secure and comfortable facilities.

Monthly Coffee Mornings

Throughout the year, various groups within the church at Rowlands Gill have hosted one of our monthly Saturday coffee mornings. Those attending have been treated to a myriad of cakes, biscuits, pastries and treats to accompany their morning drink, whilst enjoying each other's company in a pleasant social environment. At Chopwell, our members have provided a welcoming warm space meeting place for their coffee mornings, cakes and biscuits.

The mornings at both locations have been well attended and appreciated by attendees from all walks of the church from our young Sunday Club members to our more mature members. The opportunity to come along and just to participate in a friendly chat has been commented on as very welcome by many folks. In addition to the valued friendships and conversation, the coffee mornings have been successful in raising some significant and very welcome funds, for our church over the year...long may the coffee continue!

Men’s Breakfast

The Men's Breakfast continues at SRMC with the mission to create a safe, non-judgemental space for men to improve their mental health, reduce isolation and foster open conversation. The Men’s Breakfast group aim to cement their relationship with Christ and each other through shared experiences and spiritual discovery.

Our activities over the year began with the group hosting the first coffee morning of the Methodist year which included a photo competition judged by an external expert. We then enjoyed a guided tour of the Locomotion Museum in Shildon and our annual retreat in November, led by one of our circuit ministers, explored the concept and nature of evil. The Christmas dinner and quiz was attended by around 25 men, with some non-church members coming along. In the new year we were treated to an illustrated talk on the theme ‘Berlin to Bavaria’. We also invited the Deadlifting preacher, a curate from the Magdalene Community Church in Chopwell, who joined us to give a powerful and moving account of her journey to faith, from atheist army captain to ordination.

Moving forward it is the group’s intention to rebrand and relaunch the group in order to attract some of the new people attending SRMC.

Chopwell

Monthly Coffee Mornings attract a steady crowd, offering a warm and welcoming space for locals to connect. Our Community Garden and church grounds have been transformed with the help of local fruit and tree projects. This space not only engages families and communities but also provides a productive and eco-friendly environment where people can tend to fruits and herbs.

Each Wednesday at Chopwell begins with prayer, leading into ‘With Refresh’ — a chance for the church to open its doors to the community. We’ve partnered with Welcome Warm Spaces to offer soup and a roll, and our presence allows us to extend Jesus’ love to anyone who passes by. ‘With Bairns’ is a free stay-and-play session for parents and carers of children aged 0–5 in Chopwell. Held every Wednesday at noon, it features toys and a sensory exploration area. The goal is to engage families, support their needs and introduce them to church services and events throughout the year. One parent shared, “It’s been wonderful for my daughter’s confidence and my mental health too.”

Over the year, we opened our doors for special events too. Our Christmas Cracker was a festive highlight, featuring market stalls, refreshments, live music and activities for children. The event thrived with a beautiful atmosphere and a heartwarming joint carol singing moment with another local Community Church. Held in July, Chop-Fest is designed to bring people together in a welcoming outdoor community space opposite the church. We collaborated with local organisations, the council and volunteers to create an inclusive event for all ages. Around 200 attendees and 40 volunteers joined us for an afternoon of fun, connection and celebration. This festival allowed us to engage with the community, highlight local activities and build relationships with other organisations. It also gave us a chance to show our presence and openness in the area, fostering conversations and interactions that share the love and hope of Jesus.

Spiritual Art Journalling

We started the monthly Spiritual Art Journalling group in 2024 with the intention of giving people a creative way to express and explore their spirituality. We are not accomplished artists; but we are open to learning, playing and practising the God-given creativity within us all. We begin each session with a prayer and a few words to spark our thinking. We aim to be accessible to those of all faiths and none, so we use a mixture of the religious and secular – Bible quotes, poetry, lyrics and prose – to inspire each session. Then we try out different art mediums and techniques to enable us to express our feelings in a creative way. When we are working with our hands, conversation flows more easily and people can share their troubles, their faith and their artwork without judgement. It is amazing just how cathartic art can be.

“The group helps to deepen my connection with God and has nurtured my creativity.”

“The group is the highlight of my month! It is a special, welcoming space to slow down, reflect and connect with God in a really meaningful way. I always leave feeling uplifted, grounded and grateful.”

“You can let your thoughts wander, share them if you want to and enjoy creating artwork for your personal journal in a kind and supportive environment.”

Children & Youth

Over the last year we have been able to expand the groups that we offer to children both within our church and the local area. Our activities enable the church to reach children ranging from newborn up to 16 years old.

Holiday Fun

For a decade, Holiday Fun has partnered with churches in Rowlands Gill to provide meals and activities for children from families on limited budgets during school holidays. The programme works closely with local schools and GMBC to reach eligible families.

- Christmas theatre outing
- With support from GMBC and funding from the Brighten the Day fund, children and their accompanying adults enjoyed a coach trip to Northern Stage in the City Centre. They watched Christmas Carol followed by a meal together.
- Summer community activities
- This year, without GMBC funding, the programme adapted to continue supporting families through four Holiday Fun Lite sessions during the summer holidays. Sports activities were led by coaches from GMBC, hosted in the church. Volunteers from SRMC supervised children and assisted coaches. A two-course cooked lunch, prepared by a contracted caterer and served by volunteers, was provided.

Holiday Fun benefits from a large and diverse group of volunteers from all partner churches. This year, a young volunteer from one of our local Syrian families joined the team - a meaningful sign of the relationships built, as he had attended Holiday Fun sessions with his brothers after arriving in the UK.

Little Gems

This year, Our Little Gems baby and toddler group embraced change and new opportunities. Although we experienced a slight dip in numbers due to other local groups running at the same time and changes in 2-year-old funding, the team responded with thoughtful adjustments. By moving sessions to the afternoons, we successfully reduced scheduling conflicts within the village, welcoming more little ones and families from the area. This shift has truly helped us connect with a broader community. Our dedicated Gems team has also grown stronger and more collaborative, planning sessions together to create a warm, supportive environment. We are delighted to continue supporting new parents and carers on their wonderful journey.

Play and Praise

Play and Praise is a vibrant new group this year for little ones aged 1 to 4 years. This special space invites children to explore Bible stories through playful activities, with plenty of dancing and singing to spark joy and learning. We're thrilled to see a steady and growing attendance, including families new to the church community. One parent shared,

"It's a really wonderful way to introduce children to the Bible. There's nothing more important than children knowing the word of God to help them navigate life."

Sparks

Sparks continues to grow and attract new young people on a Saturday afternoon. The focus is to invite primary-aged children in from the local area and to explore who Jesus is together. It is also an opportunity for the children from our church community to invite their friends to hear about who Jesus is too. The children have loved engaging with Bible stories re-enacted through Lego animations and love to create their own versions as part of their reflections.

Rock Solid

Rock Solid is our vibrant group for older primary-aged children, where curiosity and energy come together. Recently, the children have been enthusiastically exploring their ‘big questions’ — from topics like bullying and racism to the origins of the world — in a supportive group setting. This lively group thrives on thoughtful discussions as much as on fun and active play, creating a balanced space where children can both think deeply and enjoy themselves.

Highfield Community Football

This activity remains popular and well-loved by both young people and parents/carers in Highfield (neighbouring area). Designed to engage children of different ages across the school years, it also provides valuable opportunities to connect with adults and young people as they wait for their turn to play. On the pitch, participants develop important values such as exercise, respect, and teamwork. Each session concludes with a brief prayer, bringing the group together in reflection.

Rooted

Rooted is a youth group which has developed from Highfield Community Football. We take a group of teenage boys down to the church for pizza, hot chocolate and sports, and explore life and faith. We regularly have 12 attendees from the local community and have some wonderful conversations about who Jesus is. We have had opportunities to share sport and faith with other organisations including football matches with Sunderland Samba and Football freestyler Al Johnson visited to teach new skills.

Embers

Embers are young people growing in their faith and getting used to praying, singing, worship and reading the Bible together.

Wonder

The purpose of this group is to provide young women with a safe space to discuss the issues affecting their lives and the wider society, while also offering an opportunity to explore faith and build a personal relationship with God. It has been truly inspiring to witness friendships grow among the young women, as they become comfortable opening up to one another and to leaders, sharing and praying for each other's needs.

ID

The ID group has been thriving as the teenage boys from the church and local community increasingly enjoy taking on more challenging crafts and activities. Recently, they had a blast building their own dens and designing spaceships to protect an egg dropped from height - sparking creativity, teamwork and problem-solving. Beyond the fun, ID continues to be a trusted space where the boys feel comfortable discussing any topics or issues in their lives, fostering openness and support.

Fuse

Our young people's house group has continued this year and has seen the relationships of the group really grow. We have loved seeing the young people step out in prayer, get excited to delve into God's word and learn from each other.

Youth Band

The group is now well established and growing with up to 12 young people meeting monthly to play instruments, sing and experience being in a worship band. They have helped lead worship services and special events over the year and many of them are regulars with our church's main worship band. We are hoping to see our youth in our Sunday morning bands and circuit service bands more over the next year.

Kairos

This year we were particularly thrilled to take 12 young people to a Christian youth camp, 'Kairos'. The teenagers really enjoyed meeting Christians from other youth groups and exploring faith together. The camp included worship, seminars, prayer and a whole host of activities to enjoy together as a youth group.

Christmas

This year, we were able to provide an interactive Nativity experience for over 250 local school children. It was Lego-themed and a huge church-team effort. Following the schools' event, we hosted a community celebration called The Surprise Spectacular, where we opened our doors and invited the wider community in. Visitors came to explore the Lego Christmas journey, enjoy a hot sandwich, meet Santa, listen to live music and take part in Christmas crafts.

Easter

Over Easter, we opened up the worship space at SRMC to explore the Easter story. We changed the space every day and explored the story through activities like washing each other's feet and being on an unfair trial. We also tried out our first ever Family Faith Feast on Good Friday and welcomed over 70 people. It was a chance for all generations from the community to come together over food and talk about their life's journey.

Schools

We have continued to strengthen our links with our four local primary schools. We have developed volunteers to deliver monthly prayer spaces and assemblies and have supported pupils in Year 6 with their transition to secondary school. We had lovely feedback from a school who said, “The delivery of the sessions were perfectly pitched for the children, adding in your own personal experiences really helped support their transition.” Over the next year we are hoping to expand our schools work further to include Chopwell Primary School and to use our site in Chopwell to do this.

Summer Holiday Club

We held our first Bible summer holiday club this year with a deep sea diving theme. We had children attend who had never explored the Bible before, children who love Jesus and were excited to learn more about Him and children who loved getting to know more about under the sea! It was amazing to hear the discussions during the Bible study times, to see children from our community engaging with worship and witnessing the children reflecting on how precious they are.

Financial Review

The Accounts for the year ended 31 August 2025 are set out on pages 28-33. The church funds are made up of a general unrestricted fund, a restricted fund – the Benevolence Fund, an endowment fund – the Development Fund and the funds of three Internal Organisations – the Children and Youth Project, Bridges and the Spread Drama Group. Only the unrestricted fund is available to meet the day to day running costs of the Church.

Unrestricted Fund

During the year ended 31 August 2025 there was a surplus of receipts over payments of £4,959 (2024: surplus of receipts over payments of £30,198) before an internal transfer to the Children and Youth Project of £7,000 (2024: £6,000 and a transfer from Spread of £500 resulting in a net transfer of £5,500). Bills were paid promptly and the outstanding liabilities at the year-end (i.e. invoices relating to before the year-end paid after the year-end) amounted to £348 (2024: £367). Collections and funds raised specifically for other charities or external organisations are excluded from both receipts and payments. At the year-end the balance on the Unrestricted fund stood at £86,564 (2024: £88,605).

The Finance and Property Committee prepares a budget each June for the following year. The net deficit after internal transfers of £2,041 for the year compared favourably with the budgeted deficit at the start of the year of £19,500 (after budgeted internal transfers). The main reasons for the lower deficit were: higher than expected letting of the premises, a number of one-off donations, refund of a contribution to the Methodist Pension Reserve Fund (made in December 2021) and a higher Gift Aid refund.

Offerings and tax recovered via Gift Aid totalled £94,126 (2024 £91,042). Letting receipts from hiring out the premises, although higher than expected, reduced slightly from £16,343 last year to £15,517 this year, which includes letting of the former caretaker's flat.

Within payments from the Unrestricted Fund there are three major areas over which the church has little control: i) the Circuit assessment; ii) property repairs and iii) utility bills. Repairs at Rowlands Gill in the year included the following major, non-routine items: repairs to the coping stones £8,500; tree surgery and removal £3,860; reupholstering a significant number of chairs in the worship area £1,350. Utility costs are monitored very closely and steps taken to obtain the most cost-effective, green energy contracts. We wish to record our grateful thanks to all those who work tirelessly to carry out repairs and maintenance to the church buildings and grounds, clean the premises on a regular basis and minimise the utility and other costs.

Restricted Fund

The Benevolence Fund is available to make payments at the Minister's discretion in cases of individual hardship or poverty. There were receipts of £20,848 (2024: £5,236) and payments totalling £13,442 (2024: £3,194), resulting in a balance carried forward of £9,786 (2024: £2,380). Receipts included three grants from GMBC totalling £8,925 (2024: £3,675) to help support individuals and families suffering hardship as a result of the cost-of-living crisis.

Endowment Fund

The Development Fund was established to finance the redevelopment of the church buildings at Rowlands Gill. In accordance with guidance issued by the Methodist Church in July 2019, 'Accounting for tangible fixed assets', donations intended to provide an asset for long-term use, i.e. a fixed asset, should be classified as an expendable endowment and not a restricted income fund. Consequently, the Development Fund has been classified as an expendable endowment in the accounts. During the year, the fund received £18,428 (2024: £3,134) from a donation and grants for the installation of solar panels and battery storage. The Fund made payments of £21,360 (2024: £6,150). Payments during the year included the repayment of the fourth instalment of £6,000 of the loan of £30,000 received from The William Leech Charity in the year ended 31 August 2021. The balance on the Fund carried forward was £3,244 (2024: £6,176).

Internal Organisations

The Internal Organisations manage their finances separately from the main church funds but report to the Church Council.
The Children and Youth Project made net payments during the year of £22,944 (2024: £8,729) before receipt of the transfer of £7,000 (2024: £6,000) from the church's unrestricted fund. The balance at the year-end was £53,584 (2024: 69,528).
Bridges made net payments for the year of £164 (2024: net receipts of £196). This resulted in a balance of £8,839 (2024: £9,003) at the year-end.
Spread Drama Group had net receipts of £1,798 (2024: £1,009 before a transfer to the church unrestricted fund of £500), leaving a balance carried forward at the year-end of £7,285 (2024: £5,487).
Further information on all funds is provided in the accounts and the notes to the accounts.

Reserves Policy

Unrestricted funds

The church recognises the need to maintain a reserve in the General Fund to enable it to function effectively. Additionally, the church considers it appropriate to maintain a reserve as a contingency, for unplanned expenditure or indeed, reduced income. The Trustees have established their mission aims, including the resources available in terms of people, property and money. Mission initiatives and projects are fully costed or estimates made of projected costs which incorporate the needs of the buildings and the necessary requirements of the Quinquennial Inspection Report(s). The Church Council is aware of the continuing need to maintain an appropriate level of reserves and has agreed that any Unrestricted Fund reserve should be a minimum of £40,000 and not normally exceed six months operational expenditure. In conjunction with the Finance and Property Committee, the Treasurer monitors the reserve and reviews this policy annually.

The Church Council recognises the need to be accountable as Charity Trustees for all income and expenditure and in that regard, submits an Annual Report in accordance with the requirements of the Methodist Conference and the Charity Commission guidance in CC19. The Reserves Policy set out herein is recorded in the Trustees' minutes and the Annual Report.

The church running expenses for the current year ending 31 August 2026 are expected to be around £147,095 (2025: £125,835). Therefore, the required reserve for the Unrestricted Fund is between £40,000 and £73,548 (2025: £62,900). The Unrestricted Fund at 31 August 2025 was approximately £13,000 more than six months operational expenditure, primarily due to a number of one-off donations during the year and cost savings in some areas, such as utilities. Also, some £10,000 of property work anticipated was unable to be executed in the year and has therefore been carried forward and is included in the figure of £147,095 above. The reserves now available will assist with a budget for the church to carry out some important refurbishment work at Chopwell and thereby to continue its outreach work in the local community there.

Restricted Fund

The Benevolence Fund is distributable at the Minister's discretion to those in need. During the year ended 31 August 2025, grants totalling £8,925 were received from GMBC and collections at Communion Services have been made in favour of the Fund. The result of which is that the church has been able to significantly increase the support it is able to offer those in need. This support has been co-ordinated by a small team led by the Minister, in conjunction with the Rowlands Gill Community Hub Team.

Internal Organisations

Children and Youth Project – this account receives funding from time to time which is allocated to particular projects however, all funds held in this account are treated as restricted to paying the salaries of lay employees and supporting activities such as Sunday Club and for children and youth generally. The sources of funding vary, however, it is important to retain an appropriate level of reserves to enable the project to continue planned operations for at least six months in the event of an unexpected fall in income. The Project currently employs four part-time Children and Youth workers. Consequently, all funds are committed until 2027 at the earliest.
Bridges and Spread do not aim to make a significant surplus and any reserves are held to enable them to carry on with their activities, including their community projects, in the following year.
Funds held by the Internal Organisations are not available to meet general church expenses.

Endowment Fund

The Development Fund is made up of specific donations, grants and a loan, net of payments, relating to the development of the church building at Rowlands Gill, the first phase of which started in summer 2020 and was largely completed by December 2020. An interest free loan of £30,000 was secured in October 2020 from The William Leech Charity to cover a short-term funding gap and is repayable in 5 equal instalments of £6,000. The balance remaining at 31 August 2025 was £6,000. In the year ended 31 August 2025, grants of £15,300 were received to provide solar panels, which were installed and are now making electricity cost savings. The balance of the endowment fund is required to make the final loan repayment, the small shortfall of around £250 will be covered by a temporary loan from the church until the Gift Aid is received. Certain parts of the development had to be postponed until additional funds could be secured and at 31 August 2025, applications for grants were in progress to fund further energy-saving projects.

Trustees

- Helen Braun
- John Clark
- Lily Collinson - until May 2025
- Hannah Dawson
- Ann Dixon - until May 2025
- Sandra Dixon
- Jill Emmanuel
- Mary Glease
- Gillian Gordon - from May 2025
- John Gordon - from May 2025
- William Gray
- Marie Hutchinson
- Pete Hutchinson
- Mary Imlah - until March 2026
- Linda Innes
- David Johnson - until Sept 2025
- Gillian Johnson
- Helen Johnson - until Feb 2026
- Bryn Lauder - from Feb 2025
- Tracy Lauder
- Sharon Mackie
- Simon Mackie
- Christine Middlemiss - until May 2025
- Eunice Peacock
- Colin Robson
- David Robson
- Sue Robson
- Ranjith Rosa
- Boomie Shodeinde
- Marie Sidgwick
- Josh Simpson
- Keith Stamp
- David Thompson
- Jill Warden
- Eileen Wright

- Keith Crulley - Youth Worker
- Ruth Hallatt - Children and Families' Pastor
- Rev Ann Varker - Chair (Minister) - until Aug 2025
- Rev Stephen Lindridge - Chair (Minister) - from Sept 2025

Declaration

The Trustees declare that they have approved this Annual Trustees' Report.

Signed on behalf of the Charity's Trustees:

Signature(s)

Full name(s)
Stephen John Lindridge

Position(s)
Chair of Trustees

Date
3rd June 2026

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES OF STRATHMORE ROAD METHODIST CHURCH Charity no 1179206
ON THE ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025

Respective responsibilities of Trustees and Examiner

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 (the Charities Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under Section 145 of the Charities Act,
- to follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Charity Commission (under Section 145(5)(b) of the Charities Act), and
- to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of Independent Examiner's Report

My examination was carried out in accordance with general Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from the trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair' view and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

Independent Examiner's Statement

I have completed my examination and confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination which give me cause to believe that, in any material respect:

- the accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Charities 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 not obtained independent verification of all investments with the Trustees for Methodist Church Purposes ("TMCP") or held in other Trusts, Bank balances and Funds at the Central Finance Board of the Methodist Church ("CFB"), which are individually in excess of £10,000 (ten thousand pounds) at the balance sheet date.

Signed by Date 5th June 2026

Peter Nelmes FCCA
Glenavon, Peth Lane, Ryton, NE40 3PB

STRATHMORE ROAD METHODIST CHURCH
YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025

RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS ACCOUNT

CHURCH **excluding Internal Organisations**	**Note** **1**	**Unrestricted Funds** £	**Restricted Fund Benevolence** £	**Endowment Fund Development** £	**Total Funds 2025** £	**Total Funds 2024** £
RECEIPTS	2					
Offerings and Tax recovered	3	94,126	2,447	3,120	99,693	95,723
Bank interest		3,895		8	3,903	3,789
Lettings		15,517			15,517	16,343
Other receipts		10,798	18,401	15,300	44,499	20,539
TOTAL RECEIPTS		124,336	20,848	18,428	163,612	136,394
PAYMENTS	4					
Circuit Assessment	5	73,593			73,593	64,744
Donations		8			8	8
Repairs and Maintenance		20,090			20,090	4,900
Utilities		15,079			15,079	15,961
Endowment payments				21,300	21,300	6,090
Other payments		10,607	13,442	60	24,109	15,467
TOTAL PAYMENTS		119,377	13,442	21,360	154,179	107,170
NET (PAYMENTS)/RECEIPTS FOR THE YEAR		4,959	7,406	-2,932	9,433	29,224
Total funds brought forward		88,605	2,380	6,176	97,161	73,437
Transfers with Internal Funds & Organisations	6	-7,000			-7,000	-5,500
CHURCH FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD	8 & 9	86,564	9,786	3,244	99,594	97,161

STRATHMORE ROAD METHODIST CHURCH
YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025
RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS ACCOUNT

INTERNAL ORGANISATIONS REPORTING TO THE CHURCH COUNCIL	Notes	Receipts	Payments	Net receipts/ (payments)	Transfers with Church	Opening balances	Closing balances
		£	£	£	£	£	£
Children & Youth Project		76,271	99,215	-22,944	7,000	69,528	53,584
Bridges		2,967	3,131	-164	0	9,003	8,839
Spread Drama Group		6,362	4,564	1,798	0	5,487	7,285
Total of Internal Organisations		85,600	106,910	-21,310	7,000	84,018	69,708
Church totals from previous page		163,612	154,179	9,433	-7,000	97,161	99,594
TOTAL FOR CHURCH INCLUDING INTERNAL ORGANISATIONS		249,212	261,089	-11,877	0	181,179	169,302

STATEMENT OF ASSETS AND LIABILITIES

CHURCH FUNDS HELD AT 31 AUGUST	Notes	Opening balances 2025	Closing balances 2025
		£	£
Cash in hand		658	1,075
Bank Current accounts		8,538	8,538
Central Finance Board of the Methodist Church Deposit account		87,965	89,981
Total of Church accounts		97,161	99,594
Total funds held by Internal Organisations		84,018	69,708
TOTAL CASH FUNDS		181,179	169,302
OTHER ASSETS AND LIABILITIES			
Land and buildings	10	4,058,832	4,168,905
Plant and equipment at insured value		178,898	184,265
Loan for redevelopment	11	12,000	6,000
Other liabilities		367	348

Signed on behalf of the Trustees by:

Rev Stephen John Lindridge, Chair

Jill N Warden, Treasurer

Date 3rd June 2026

STRATHMORE ROAD METHODIST CHURCH
YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025
NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS

1 **Accounting basis** - The accounts have been prepared on the cash basis. "Gross income" for the purpose of determining whether accruals accounting is required, excludes receipts of endowment capital. The gross income of the Church for the year ended 31 August 2025 for this purpose is therefore, total receipts of £249,212 less endowment receipts of £18,428, giving a figure of £230,784. As this is less than the threshold of £250,000, accruals accounting is not required.

2 **Receipts** do not include collections or funds raised specifically for other charities or external organisations. See note 7 for details of these amounts.

3 **Offerings and Tax recovered** for 2025 for the Church Unrestricted funds includes Gift Aid of £18,896 (2024: £15,030).

4 **Payments** do not include the passing on of amounts collected or raised specifically for other charities or external organisations. See Note 7 for details of these amounts.

5 **The Circuit Assessment** is the Church's share of the Circuit's annual costs, primarily relating to Ministers' salaries and housing.

6 **Transfers with Internal Funds & Organisations** - During the year the Church transferred £7,000 to the Youth & Children Project. (2024: Transferred £6,000 to the Youth & Children Project and received a transfer of £500 from Spread.)

7 **Money received and passed on to external organisations**

	2025				2024
	Church	Youth	Bridges	Total	Total
	£	£	£	£	£
Brought forward	182		660	842	990
Collections/Receipts	492		14,319	14,811	14,198
Payments	-674		-14,979	-15,653	-14,346
Balance still to be paid at 31 August	0	0	0	0	842

The receipts and payments for Bridges relate primarily to the annual Church holiday to Keswick.

8 **Restricted Fund** - The Church has one restricted fund known as the Benevolence Fund, which is available for the Minister to spend at his discretion in cases of individual hardship or poverty. As this Fund has grown in recent years, there is now a team of individuals who assist the Minister with the distribution of support.

9 **Endowment Fund** - Development Fund

In accordance with guidance issued by the Methodist Church in July 2019, "Accounting for tangible fixed assets", donations intended to provide an asset for long-term use, i.e. a fixed asset, should be classified as an expendable endowment and not a restricted income fund. Consequently, the Development Fund for the extension and redevelopment of the Church building at Strathmore Road has been classified as an expendable endowment.

The receipts and payments of the Endowment Fund have been shown in a separate column and an analysis is provided below, showing the comparative figures for the prior year.

	Year ended 31 August	
	2025	2024
	£	£
Receipts		
Donations and grants	18,420	3,120
Bank interest	8	14
	18,428	3,134
Payments		
Building project payments - installation of solar panels	-15,300	-90
Bank charges	-60	-60
Loan repayment	-6,000	-6,000
Net (payments)/receipts	-2,932	-3,016
Funds brought forward	6,176	9,192
Funds carried forward	3,244	6,176

10 Land and buildings - The Church land and buildings are owned by the Trustees for Methodist Church Purposes as custodians.
The Church at Strathmore Road opened in 1902 and the halls were added in 1958 but there is no information available about their historic costs. In conjunction with the redevelopment of the Church buildings, the Trustees have estimated the value of the land, based on average land values in Gateshead. The land value was based on a valuation in 2019 and after 5 years in 2024, the value was reviewed and was increased by £2,000. It will be reviewed again in 2029.
The existing buildings are included at their insurance value in accordance with Methodist Church guidance.

	2025	2024
	£	£
Land at Strathmore Road - estimated value	390,000	390,000
Insurance value of redeveloped buildings	3,347,507	3,250,000
	3,737,507	3,640,000
Chopwell Methodist Church - insurance value	431,398	418,832
	4,168,905	4,058,832

* Note only: Cost of redevelopment to 31 August 2025 £707,441.

11 Loan - In October 2020 The William Leech Charity made a loan of £30,000 to cover completion of the redevelopment of the Church buildings, prior to receipt of an equivalent amount of pledged donations. The loan is interest-free and repayable in 5 equal, annual instalments, the first being paid in October 2021 and the final repayment in October 2025.

Strathmore Road Methodist Church

Strathmore Road Rowlands Gill
Tyne and Wear
NE39 1HX

Charity: 1179206

rowlandsgill.org.uk

STRATHMORE ROAD METHODIST CHURCH, ROWLANDS GILL

England & Wales - Charity number 1179206

Accounts

Year ended 31 August 2024

Charity: 1179206

Trustees' Annual Report

Strathmore Road Methodist Church

rowlandsgill.org.uk

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Structure & Management

The Methodist Church is said to have been created after John Wesley's conversion and is a Free Church. Strathmore Road Methodist Church (SRMC) includes premises both in Rowlands Gill and Chopwell and is part of the South West Tyneside Circuit and Newcastle upon Tyne District of The Methodist Church, the governing body of which is the annual conference of The Methodist Church. The Methodist Church Act 1976 gives the authority under which The Methodist Church acts. The constitution, practice and discipline of The Methodist Church, together with The Deed of Union (Act of 1929 adopted 1932), govern the objectives and activities of The Methodist Church.

In general, The Methodist Church is excepted from the need to register as a charity by the combined effects of Section 46(4)(A) of The Charities Act 1993 and Paragraph 4(2)(C) of the Charities (exception from registration) Regulations 1996 as amended by Statutory Instrument 2014 No 242. SRMC ('the Church') however, registered as a separate Registered Charity, number 1179206, in England and Wales, effective from 16 July 2018.

The Church's Managing Trustees listed below are all lay people, except for the Minister (Rev. Ann Varker), who is ordained by The Methodist Church and stationed to the South West Tyneside Circuit. The Youth Worker (Keith Crulley) and Children's & Families Pastor (Ruth Hallatt) are employed by SRMC together with two Youth Outreach Pioneers (Heather Woods and Barry Watkins).

The Managing Trustees meet at least three times per year as the Church Council. They take all major decisions and delegate some of their day-to-day responsibility to a Leadership Team, all of whom are Trustees. The Church Council is chaired by the Minister.

The Trustees who have served during the year and since the year-end are appointed annually by the Church, by the general meeting or by being ex-officio. The Church's day-to-day activities are managed by those appointed to do so by the Church Council, including the Leadership Team, the Pastoral Committee, the Finance & Property Committee, the Worship Team and the Youth Workers.

Our Objectives

Strathmore Road Methodist Church (SRMC) seeks to be a loving, welcoming and active Christian community, by serving others, sharing our resources, and following the example of Jesus Christ.

To best serve our local and global community, we follow the guidance of The Methodist Church Act (1976). We devote our premises to church, community and charitable use, as well as working with children, refugees, the elderly and the socially disadvantaged.

On 1st September 2019, SRMC in Rowlands Gill joined with Chopwell Methodist Church to become one church on two sites. The members of both churches have sought to explore together what it means to be one church family, with two centres of mission. In so doing, we encourage lifelong learning in the Christian faith and seek to provide opportunities for people to develop their discipleship and understanding.

The church commits to safely recruiting and supporting all those with any responsibility for children and vulnerable adults, in accordance with the Church Safeguarding Policy and informed by current legislation and accepted good practice.

Our Mission Statement

With the help of the Holy Spirit, we seek to live our lives as a loving community with each other and the world around us, following the example and teaching of Jesus Christ and worshipping God.

As a loving community:
We welcome all and create a sense of belonging and family.
We share the message of God's love with people of all ages.
We offer pastoral support, fellowship and prayer.
We promote social justice and peace and bring good to the world.
We engage with other churches, charities and organisations.

Following the example of Christ:
We help people grow in faith through biblical teaching and prayer.
We encourage everyone to use their gifts in church and daily life.
We promote whole-life discipleship that recognises the call for responsible stewardship of money, time and resources.
We nurture and develop children and young people in their faith.

Worshipping God:
We worship in ways that honour God, help us focus on Jesus and increase our awareness of the Holy Spirit.
We worship in ways that are accessible to all; that are uplifting, relevant, challenging and of good quality.
We encourage the use of talents of the congregation in worship.

Activities

Sunday Morning Worship

SRMC has 123 members, encompassing all ages, including a thriving ministry among families, children and youth. Within the church, people appreciate different forms of worship and the church values being able to offer a diversity of styles in its services to enable people to encounter the living God and express their worship. Our Sunday morning services at Rowlands Gill are geared towards all ages and use contemporary music, media and performing arts. Most Sundays have a short time of worship together before the children and young people move into Sunday Club where there are groups for children aged 4 to 16. Once a month the young people attend a Forest Church service. We also have regular Local Worship Sundays – here we work without a local preacher/minister and invite speakers from a range of organisations or give a platform for testimony within our own church. This year, Sunday mornings have included themes on war in Gaza and the plight of Palestinians, poverty, supporting families and climate change, along with powerful testimony from the everyday lives of our congregation.

During the summer we ran each Sunday morning service as a Café Church. We are on a journey to make our Sunday morning worship as rich and inclusive as possible. We are planning in the upcoming year to hold monthly 'Together' services as we seek to meet God together as an intergenerational family. We also have several members of the congregation training to be Worship Leaders. Through this we hope to widen the net of worship styles, liturgy and voices within our services.

Over the past year, Sunday morning worship has changed at Chopwell due to new families who have joined us. The regular congregation has welcomed these families and continue to have a traditional Sunday morning service. Due to the growing numbers of children, there has been the introduction of children's activities during the Sunday services.

The Sunday evening service held at Rowlands Gill also aims to utilise the best in traditional Methodist worship with the aid of a pipe organ. Holy Communion is celebrated on a monthly basis in all three services.

Sunday Club continues to comprise of two groups for ages 4-16 on a Sunday morning split into ‘Bubbles’ and ‘Xstream’. Everybody begins the service together then the children go into their own groups for games, Bible stories, crafts, chat and prayer. The volunteers from SRMC have been able to get together twice over the past year to have training sessions. In the training sessions we have clarified our vision of Sunday Club, learnt more about supporting all children in groups and have had time to pray and worship together.

Forest Church happens monthly in place of Sunday Clubs. It is a relaxed, inclusive space where we seek to increase our spirituality through engagement with nature. Using a small wooded space behind the church, we meet in a circle, usually round a fire pit. The group is aimed at children and their accompanying parents. Throughout the year we have celebrated the solstices, Candlemass, Advent and Easter. We have looked at the importance of trees, observed the season changes, planted potatoes, scattered wild seeds, toasted apples, crumpets and marshmallows, practised gratefulness, mindfulness, meditated and sang songs.

This year we have introduced curiosity bags for little ones and diggers and spades to facilitate muddy play. Although we meet primarily for families, we have held a winter solstice gathering for adults and ran Forest Church events at coffee mornings, services and Christmas events. We have seen regular faces and new ones this year, with several families coming especially because it is Forest Church. The outdoors allows an informal space for those who find church intimidating or triggering. It also allows young people who need space to move and explore the opportunity to do so. We have an excellent team of volunteers who value the child and nature-led ethos and who bring their own outdoor skills to the sessions.

Next year, we hope to run more Forest Church events outside of the usual time, engage more young people in leading, make our space more inclusive of neurodiversity and include a space for babies and their parents.

Children & Youth

Over the last year we have been able to expand the groups that we offer to children both within our church and the local area. Our activities enable the church to reach children ranging from newborn up to 16 years old.

Sparks is a group for children in Reception to year 4 who meet on a Saturday afternoon once a month. The children play games, enjoy a Bible story and then complete crafts based on the story. We have been able to advertise this club in our local primary schools over the past year which has introduced us to new families.

Little Gems is a well-established group for toddlers and babies, together with their parents and grandparents, from the church and community to join together and build relationships. It meets fortnightly on a Wednesday morning for two hours where people can drop in for a play, a cuppa and a chat. The play activities for the toddlers in the sessions have had more of a faith focus over the last year to support our aim of sharing Jesus with our local community. The Little Gems team of volunteers has grown in the past year to support the set-up, set down, welcoming, serving drinks and engaging in conversations with all those who attend. There continues to be a clothes swap rail and parents frequently exchange toys and books. We have also supported local businesses with Christmas and summer fayres and baby photoshoots.

Rock Solid meets every other Sunday evening and is for children in school years 5-7. A fun-packed evening of games, discussion, competitions and thoughts about the big issues that affect life: friends, parents, school, the future...and what God has to say about them. We recently thought about the connection between science and religion and looked at how God is seen in the scientific world. Rock Solid are an inquisitive group that don't mind asking the hard questions.

I.D. is a group for boys in school years 8+. It takes place on alternate Sundays to Rock Solid. I.D. is a great opportunity for lads to hang out, play games as well as chat and discuss issues that affect their lives.

Wonder is a group for young women who are in Year 8 or above. This group was born out of the need for a group for girls at the church who have come through Rock Solid and aims to provide a safe environment to explore friendships with peers, discuss important societal topics and pray. Aspirations for the coming year are to continue to build a safe and encouraging environment for girls where they can feel valued.

For the older children, we started a house group style session aimed at the Rock Solid aged group where we explore our faith through discussions, Bible studies and learn more about prayer and worship. They are a lively group who come with lots of questions and ideas. Recently we based our studies on people in the Bible like Samuel, David and Ruth.

At the end of the summer we take interested young people aged 11-18 to a Christian youth camp near Thirsk called Kairos. This is an opportunity to meet other Christians from other youth groups and explore faith together. Lots of sports, crafts, activities and fun during the day with great teaching and worship too. Young people enjoy experiencing worship in a lively setting and often connect with God in new ways away from their home church setting. The young people often describe it as a ‘mountain top’ experience helping them to grow in their faith.

One of the areas that we would like to see grow is young people leading worship in the church. We have started a youth band practice once a month where young people who might never have picked up an instrument in their life are welcome to come and be part of a worship team in a safe and nurturing environment. We have been blown away by the first few practices and can’t wait to see the young people leading worship in services for the whole church.

Our links with the local primary schools have really flourished over the past year as our Children and Families’ Pastor has visited schools to deliver assemblies and support RE sessions. She has also supported after school clubs and invited schools to visit our church building for various events. A team of volunteers have set up prayer spaces in our local schools at prominent times in the year.

Holiday Fun

We have now been running Holiday Fun for nine years. Working with our partnership churches in Rowlands Gill, we aim to provide meals and activities for children of families on a limited budget during the school holidays. During the year September 2023 to August 2024, we ran the club during Christmas, Easter and summer holidays providing breakfast and a two course cooked lunch for the children. In compliance with the Brighten the Day Fund, our meals are nourishing and healthy. We provide activities that are enriching and we aim to give the children an experience of things they may not have had an opportunity to try before. This year's activities included a scientist who led the children in experiments and made science fun, ukelele playing, modelling with recycled waste and problem solving. Physical activities included mini Olympics, Kalma Yoga, wide games and archery. Each week a craft or artistic activity was planned. As in previous years, we took the children on a coach outing to Lanchester and used a school site to do den building, cooking on a fire pit and other forest fun activities. We are fortunate to have a large number of volunteer helpers for Holiday Fun. The age of volunteers varies, however most are in the over 60s age bracket, bringing a wonderful inter-generational aspect to the club. Most meals were prepared and cooked by our volunteers, but we have also used a Communities Gateshead C.I.C to provide two of our cooked lunches this year. We work closely with our local schools to contact eligible families and also with GMBC.

Discipleship Groups

SRMC encourages lifelong learning in the Christian faith and seeks to provide opportunities for people to develop their faith and understanding.

These groups offer encouragement, fellowship, Bible study and prayer. Where a series is being followed in the Sunday services, the discipleship groups will often follow the series with Bible studies. At other times groups will decide on the topic to study. We held an Alpha Course this year which led to new groups forming. We have groups now meeting during the day as well as in the evening and look forward to a new evening group for parents which will meet on Zoom.

We have several groups that meet with a pastoral focus. For us at SRMC ‘Learning and Caring’ truly belong together.

Quiet Space

Quiet Space is where we practise the ancient Christian tradition of contemplative prayer. It is held monthly in the church and open to the church, circuit and local community. It is an opportunity to gather together to seek God in a time of silence and is a welcome break from the hurry of the day.

Waiting on God in stillness allows our bodies and minds to relax as we seek to hear and be transformed by God.

Coffee Mornings

We have been pleased to hold two regular coffee mornings over this last year, on the first Saturday of each month - one at Chopwell church and one at Rowlands Gill. Our Chopwell coffee morning has been going strong for several years now and is visited by a dedicated and regular group of coffee drinkers! The morning welcomes all visitors and provides the opportunity for them to spend some social time together. At Rowlands Gill, our coffee mornings started in September 2022 as a response to 'post-Covid blues' and also to raise much needed funds. These mornings are hosted by different groups in the church throughout the year and have been really appreciated in bringing people across the wide spectrum of the church together. It was originally planned to run the mornings for a year or so however there's a definite movement towards continuing the effort for the foreseeable future.

Wednesday Gang

Wednesday mornings have been the time when a small group of members have gathered together to address all sorts of property matters. This happy band of pilgrims willingly give their time and talents to not only look after the large grounds surrounding the church, but also to attend to all sorts of manual jobs from leaf clearing to roof repairs, from unblocking drains to woodwork painting and everything and anything in between. We are thankful for the time that the group offers freely and the dedicated attention to the many jobs completed in order to help maintain the premises and keep them in good order.

Rescued Food Market

Since February 2021, a weekly Rescued Food Market has operated from Rowlands Gill. This offers surplus food collected from supermarkets in return for a donation. The market is open to anyone and attracts a wide range of customers from those in financial difficulties, to people concerned about the environment and wishing to reduce food waste. The market has the twin benefits of helping meet our Eco Church objectives while providing a further opportunity to serve our local community. The market is attended by up to 50 people each week and it is estimated to have rescued over 18 tonnes of food each year that would otherwise have been wasted. A number of volunteers from the church, nearby local churches and the wider community are involved in collecting food, welcoming customers, running the market and clearing away. At the beginning of August 2024, the three year partnership with The Pickle Palace (a local community interest company) came to an end. Since then the SRMC Community Hub has taken over the operation of the market and plans to more fully integrate it into other community activities.

Citizens Advice

Since 2021, members of the community can visit a trained Citizens Advice advisor at SRMC on a drop-in basis. This dovetails well with other Community Hub activities as visitors can use the cafe, Warm Space and Rescued Food Market before or after their appointment. Clients appreciate having the service based in the local community as it enables return visits without inconvenience and costs of a visit to central Gateshead.

Warm Spaces

With support from Gateshead Council (GMBC), Rowlands Gill church continues to operate a weekly ‘Warm Space’ on Monday mornings. The aim of Warm Spaces is to provide a safe and respectful atmosphere for anyone having difficulty with energy costs and keeping warm. Anyone in the community is welcome to use the building to keep warm, meet friends over a free hot drink and use our pay as you feel cafe. We also offer free wi-fi access, mobile phone charging and a small bring-and-take library. Although initially intended for winter months, GMBC and the Church quickly recognised the year-round value of providing a warm welcome and a positive friendly environment for people to come together. During the year, the Hub has hosted three ‘road shows’ on energy efficiency and housing advice. Visitors to the Warm Space also benefit from the cafe, Citizens Advice drop-in and the Rescued Food Market.

Spread Drama Group

Spread Drama Group returned following its usual summer hiatus in September 2023 heading straight into rehearsals for our December pantomime. Throughout September to early December we worked alongside 20 individuals of diverse ages, backgrounds and needs, some regular attenders of the church and others not at all, developing their theatrical skills as well as building up their confidence. We work hard throughout the year to create a loving, caring and supportive community within our cast and wider team, and this is always incredibly evident as we prepare for the pantomime. In December we welcomed over 500 people from the community to watch our pantomime, offering entertainment at an affordable cost, whilst also bringing the wider community together on the church site. Our mission as a team has nearly always been two-fold. Firstly, supporting the individuals who join us regularly throughout the year and join the cast of our pantomime: building them up, supporting them and creating an environment where they feel safe and valued in. Secondly, to offer something to the community. Something of value that brings the community together that reminds them that church comes in many different forms: sometimes it's a traditional service with a sermon and some hymns and at other times it's a community of people singing, dancing, wearing silly costumes and supporting one another through life.

"Spread for me is an escape from the real world. Whenever I'm there, I forget about everything else going on. The people, the atmosphere, the chaos leads to an enjoyable time every Wednesday, regardless of whether we're in panto season or not. I love going, and I'm gutted any time I have to miss it. It's the most fun I have and I have the people/the family that we have there to thank for that."

Justice Group

The Justice Group was formed in October 2023 in response to the tragic events in the Middle East. Our original mission was to reflect and explore how we as a whole church might respond to the events in Israel/Palestine and support the ongoing work of other organisations working for peace and stability in the region. Initially a small group of individuals met to pray, talk, discern and to act. We arranged for Rev David Hardman to join us in June, when we hosted an open evening in a local pub. We invited the wider congregation, Circuit and District to join us for an opportunity to learn and ask questions about what was happening in the Middle East and consider how we might respond as individuals and communities. As well as the open evening, David led a challenging act of worship during our morning worship service which has inspired us to plan further action throughout the year. It became quickly evident that this group was also passionate about wider issues of justice and so we decided to expand its mission and continue to explore and inspire action regarding other justice issues such as the climate crisis and poverty.

Eco Church

SRMC recognises its responsibility of Stewardship of the Earth and uses the Eco Church framework to support its aims. SRMC retained its Eco Church Silver status and continued to hold activities to maintain awareness of our role in protecting and enhancing our environment. Of particular note was a Repair, Reuse and Recycle event held in partnership with Transitions in West Gateshead at Rowlands Gill. The event showcased local environmental groups such as Gibside Community Farm, the local community orchard and ‘Recyke yer bike’. A bring-and-take table enabled unwanted items to be shared with the community. Repairs were made to prolong the life of clothing, mechanical and electrical items brought on the day. Information boards and screens presented information on global environmental issues. Flower bulbs were planted in the church garden to encourage wildlife and pollinators. The event was attended by over 100 people from the church and local community. Chopwell church partnered in a similar event focusing on clothing repairs and a bring-and-take table. Climate Sunday Services were held during the year and Forest Church enabled younger members to celebrate God in the church garden, which is regularly maintained to promote and encourage bird and insect life. We continue to recycle pre-loved adult’s and children’s clothes and household items at various events taking place in the church. Further improvements to the energy efficiency of the building are required to enable us to apply for Eco Church Gold Award. To this end a funding application was made shortly before the year end to support our progress to ‘net zero’ carbon emissions.

Chopwell

The monthly Coffee Mornings are well attended. The Community Garden is regularly tended and is used occasionally by church members and more so by the local youth.

On Wednesdays, our Youth Outreach Pioneers hold a coffee morning in conjunction with members of the congregation. It aims to open the doors of the church to the local community and provide an opportunity to meet and engage with others. It is our opportunity to show Jesus' love to anyone that comes.

With Bairns is a free stay-and-play session for parents or carers of children in Chopwell that happens weekly on Wednesdays after the coffee morning. We have toys and a sensory exploration area laid out in the church for children aged 0-5. This is the newest of our outreach provisions and the aim is to engage with families and carers, bringing them into the church and introducing themes through play. This will hopefully give us a space to help with the needs of families in the area, as well as provide an opportunity to invite them to church services and events throughout the year.

Chop-Fest

Chop-Fest was a community festival in Chopwell that we held on the 27th July 2024. The aim was to bring members of the community together on grounds opposite the church at a free event. We collaborated with local organisations, the council and volunteers to make this happen. We had over 160 people attend plus approximately 35 volunteers across the four hour event. It gave us an opportunity to speak to the community, show them what was happening in the area over the summer, build relationships with other organisations and place value on a community that hasn't always felt seen. We plan to do it again in 2025 to show that as a church, we are here for the long haul. We hope that this leads to conversations and interactions about the community's understanding, perception or own experiences of the Christian faith and relationships with Jesus.

Bridges

The Bridges group aims to provide a ‘bridge’ between church and the locality. Their mission is to create opportunities to build relationships with those on the fringes and across the wider church and local community. They also provide opportunities for spouses, family, neighbours and friends who don’t wish to attend church to be involved in the larger community here at SRMC. Generations mixing and connecting is an important element of the group’s focus. They run an annual church family picnic which includes church families and those in the community that the church has built relationships with e.g. local Syrian families. Bridges organised two walks last year and also support other groups in the church with events. They provide organisation, funding and ‘graft’ when needed. This year, Bridges supported a community BBQ at the church to mark the new academic year. This included crafts, games and free food and drink. They also supported the Youth Outreach Pioneers to hold Chop-Fest in Chopwell. This included a free BBQ, music, stalls and games. The heart and soul of the Bridges calendar is the church family holiday to Keswick. This takes place over a week in February half term. This year the holiday saw 90 people attend for some or all of the week. This includes families, couples, single people, young and old. During the week there is worship, walking, meals, entertainment and an annual car treasure hunt. The accommodation includes the Keswick Convention Centre and some local holiday homes. Over the week we take time to chat and listen, break bread, walk together and live in ‘community’. For many attendees it is both a holiday and a spiritual top-up. Relationships are formed and solidified – alongside much laughter.

“A group of about 25 walked from Warkworth to Alnmouth along the beach. A distance of about six miles. Having stopped for a picnic we were about to set off again but had to wait while a young lady aged about 6 months had her nappy changed. **It struck me that there can’t be many organisations where a group with ages spanning 8 decades (with people representing all of the decades) could join together for such a pleasant sociable event!”**

Community Football

This continues to be a popular and appreciated activity for the young people and parents/carers in Highfield. Continuing to cater for different ages across the school years, there are four age groups that play for 30 minutes each. We have good opportunities to speak with the adults that are with the young people as well as the young people as they wait for their turns to play. On the pitch, exercise, respect and teamwork are just some of the values gained.

Rooted is a youth group which follows football at Highfield, held at Rowlands Gill church for year 9, 10 and 11. Starting in May, the group emerged out of the oldest football group and developed into a core group of six lads. We use Scripture Union's resource, 'Rooted' and put a sports theme to it. We have fun together doing sports, eating food, exploring life and faith. During the summer, we took the group for two sessions of kayaking and raft building. This was something that none of them had done before, and they said: "This is the best thing we have ever done" as they were challenged in many ways, being pushed out of their comfort zones, achieving beyond what they believed possible.

Open Doors

Open Doors is an ecumenical women's group which meets weekly at Rowlands Gill. The aim of the group is to provide friendship in a supportive, caring community for women of all church backgrounds and none. Over the past year, speakers have given personal testimony of their faith, considered issues of environmental importance and challenged the group with topics of social justice. Craft mornings and quizzes have built relationships and members have been encouraged to lead sessions thus fostering greater self-confidence. Charity fundraising activities have been very successful and enjoyable and have led to wider community links. Regular times of prayer and devotional mornings have increased spiritual awareness and built up members' knowledge of the Christian faith. The close relationships within the group have welcomed several new members this year and have provided a safe space for exploring, learning and discipleship. Over the next year the aim is to build on these foundations to welcome and support more women into the church community.

Men’s Breakfast

The Men’s Breakfast is a long-established group which offers opportunities to develop friendships through a programme of interesting events and activities. Although the group is primarily aimed at men, the activities are open to all. Meeting for an early Saturday morning breakfast or over a pint in a local pub on a Friday evening, activities range from Christian testimony or talks to visits to places of interest and guided walks. The year commenced by helping out and cooking at the church’s community barbeque and family fun day. In October, some of the younger guys from the church joined us for our annual retreat at Minsteracres and it was great to reflect on the Bible and worship together. Our Christmas celebration meal attracted 24 men with ages ranging from 20s to 80s. On a cold and bright January morning the group donned hard hats and high-vis vests for an extremely interesting tour of the Council’s Waste Disposal and Recycling Centre. On a beautiful spring morning in April we enjoyed breakfast overlooking the peaceful Derwent Reservoir. This was followed by an introduction to the art of sailing by one of our group members. To celebrate the 20th anniversary of the introduction of Red Kites into our valley, we were given a special presentation by the Friends of the Red Kites. An early morning city centre breakfast and a guided walk around Graingertown and Newcastle’s famous Grainger Market concluded our programme before the summer break.

“Having recently been welcomed into the congregation at SRMC, I was invited to join their Men’s Breakfast group, which I have found to be a marvellous informal way of getting to know members of the congregation outside of church. After the fellowship of breakfast, informative visits to local places of interest are organised, where the chat continues.”

Financial Review

The Accounts for the year ended 31 August 2024 are set out at the end of the Trustees' Report. The Church funds are made up of a general unrestricted fund, a restricted fund – the Benevolence Fund, an endowment fund – the Development Fund and the funds of three Internal Organisations: the Children & Youth Project, Bridges and the Spread Drama Group. Only the unrestricted fund is available to meet the day-to-day running costs of the Church.

Unrestricted Fund

During the year ended 31 August 2024 there was a surplus of receipts over payments of £30,198 (2023: surplus of receipts over payments of £32,395) before an internal transfer to the Children & Youth Project of £6,000 (2023: £5,000 and the Development Fund of £2,000) and a transfer from Spread of £500 (2023: £750 and Bridges of £660) totalling a net transfer of £5,500 (2023: £5,590). Bills were paid promptly and the outstanding liabilities at the year-end (i.e. invoices relating to before the year-end paid after the year-end) amounted to £367 (2023: £119). Collections and funds raised specifically for other charities or external organisations are excluded from both receipts and payments. At the year-end the balance on the Unrestricted fund stood at £88,604 (2023: £63,906).

The Finance and Property Committee reviews the budget each June for the following year and the net surplus after internal transfers of £24,698 compared favourably with the budgeted surplus at the start of the year of £3,600 (after budgeted internal transfers). The reasons for the surplus were primarily due to increased letting of the premises, successful fundraising events, a legacy and higher interest income, together with cost savings on property maintenance. During the year a new photocopier/printer was purchased at a cost of £2,340, which is included in 'Other Payments'.

Offerings and tax recovered via gift aid totalled £91,156 (2023: £91,391). Letting receipts from hiring out the premises improved from £10,610 last year to £16,229 this year, which includes letting of the former caretaker's flat.

Within payments from the unrestricted fund there are three major areas over which the Church has little control: the Circuit assessment; property repairs; utility bills. Repairs at Rowlands Gill were kept to a minimum again this year following the redevelopment of the building in 2020. Utility costs are monitored very closely and steps taken to obtain the most cost-effective, green energy contracts. We wish to record our grateful thanks to all those who work tirelessly to carry out repairs and maintenance to the Church buildings and grounds, clean the premises on a regular basis and minimise the utility and other costs.

Restricted Fund

The Benevolence Fund is available to make payments at the Minister's discretion in cases of individual hardship or poverty. There were receipts of £5,236 (2023: £285) and payments totalling £3,194 (2023: £124), resulting in a balance carried forward of £2,381 (2023: £339). Receipts included two grants from GMBC, totalling £3,675, to help support individuals and families suffering hardship as a result of the cost-of-living crisis.

Endowment Fund

The Development Fund was established to finance the redevelopment of the Church buildings at Rowlands Gill. In accordance with guidance issued by the Methodist Church in July 2019, 'Accounting for tangible fixed assets', donations intended to provide an asset for long-term use, i.e. a fixed asset, should be classified as an expendable endowment and not a restricted income fund. Consequently, the Development Fund has been classified as an expendable endowment in the accounts. During the year, the fund received £3,134 (2023: £3,154 and a transfer from the Church unrestricted funds of £2,000, as a contribution towards the cost of the refurbishment of the former caretaker's flat). The Fund made payments of £6,150 (2023: £28,763). Payments during the year included the repayment of the third instalment of £6,000 of the loan of £30,000 received from The William Leech Charity in the year ended 31 August 2021. The balance on the Fund carried forward was £6,176 (2023: £9,192).

Internal Organisations

The Internal Organisations manage their finances separately from the main Church funds but report to the Church Council.
The Children & Youth Project made net payments during the year of £8,729 (2023: net receipts £43,931) before receipt of the transfer of £6,000 (2023: £5,000) from the Church unrestricted fund. The balance at the year-end was £69,528 (2023: £72,257).
Bridges had net receipts for the year of £196 (2023: £439 before a transfer to the Church unrestricted fund of £660, being the proceeds of a fundraising event). This resulted in a balance of £9,003 (2023: £8,807) at the year-end.
Spread Drama Group had net receipts of £1,009 (2023: £1,412) before a transfer to the Church unrestricted fund of £500 (2023: £750), being a donation towards heating and lighting costs, leaving a balance carried forward at the year-end of £5,487 (2023: £4,978).
Further information on all funds is provided in the accounts and the notes to the accounts.

Reserves Policy

Unrestricted funds

The Church recognises the need to maintain a reserve in the General Fund to enable it to function effectively. Additionally, the Church considers it appropriate to maintain a reserve as a contingency, for unplanned expenditure or indeed, reduced income. The Trustees have established their mission aims, including the resources available in terms of people, property and money. Mission initiatives and projects are fully costed, or estimates made of projected costs which incorporate the needs of the buildings and the necessary requirements of the Quinquennial Inspection Report(s). The Church Council is aware of the continuing need to maintain an appropriate level of reserves and has agreed that any General Fund reserve should be a minimum of £40,000 and not normally exceed six months operational expenditure. In conjunction with the Finance & Property Committee, the Treasurer monitors the reserve and reviews this policy annually.

The Church Council recognises the need to be accountable as Charity Trustees for all income and expenditure and in that regard, submits an Annual Report in accordance with the requirements of the Methodist Conference and the Charity Commission guidance in CC19. The Reserves Policy set out herein is recorded in the Trustees' minutes and the Annual Report.

The Church running expenses for the current year ending 31 August 2025 are expected to be around £125,835 (2024: £96,900). Therefore, the required reserve for unrestricted funds is between £40,000 and £62,900 (2024: £48,450). The General Fund at 31 August 2024 was approximately £25,700 more than six months operational expenditure, primarily due to a large number of fundraising events during the year and some one-off grants and legacies received. Also, some £10,000 of property work anticipated was unable to be executed in the year and has therefore been carried forward and is included in the figure of £125,835 above. The reserves now available will assist with a budget for the Church to carry out some essential repair work to its buildings and thereby to continue its outreach work in the local communities of Rowlands Gill and Chopwell.

Restricted Fund

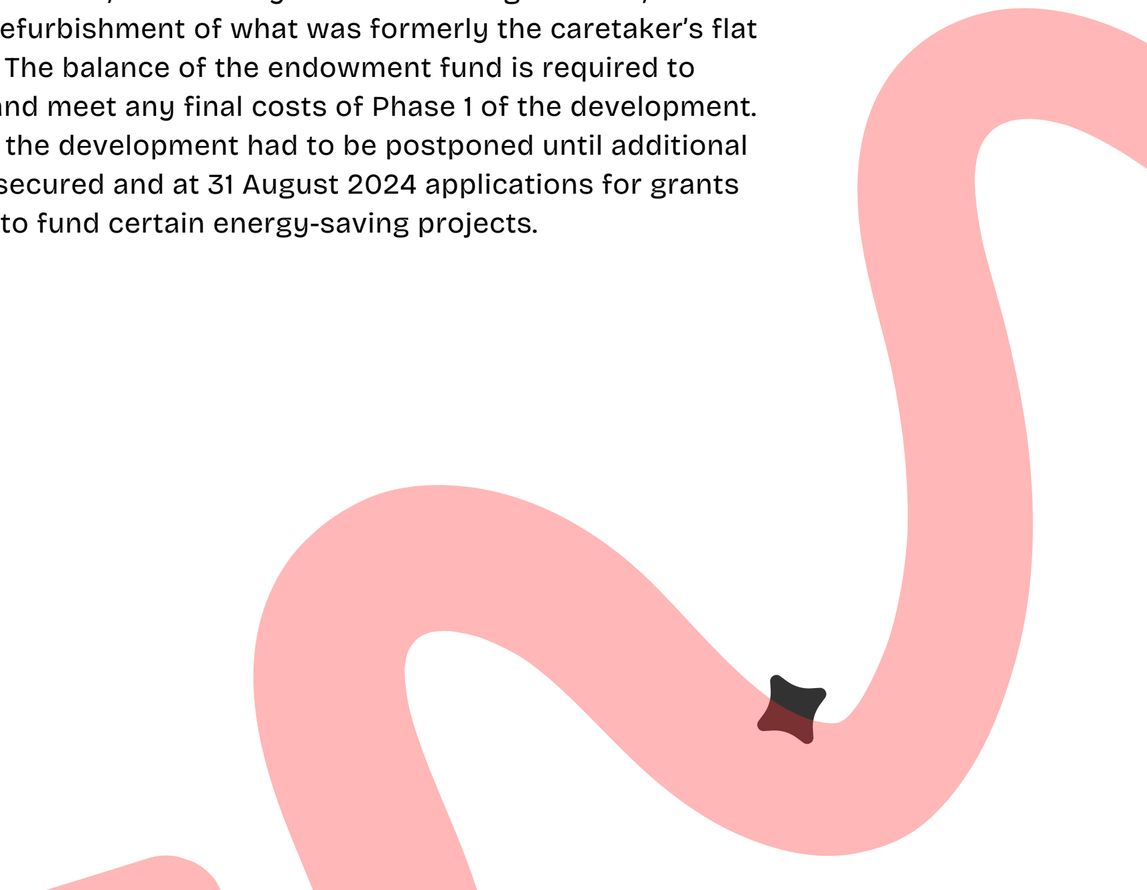
The Benevolence Fund is distributable at the Minister's discretion to those in need. During the year ended 31 August 2024, grants totalling £3,675 were received from GMBC and collections at Communion Services have been made in favour of the fund. The result of which is that the Church has been able to significantly increase the support it is able to offer those in need. This support has been co-ordinated by a small team led by the Minister, in conjunction with the Community Hub. See Page 14 of the Report for more details.

Internal Organisations

Children & Youth Project – this account receives funding from time to time which is allocated to particular projects however, all funds held in this account are treated as restricted to paying the salaries of lay employees and supporting activities such as Sunday Club and for children and youth generally. The sources of funding vary however, it is important to retain an appropriate level of reserves to enable the project to continue planned operations for at least six months in the event of an unexpected fall in income. The Project currently employs four part-time Children and Youth workers. Consequently, all funds are committed until 2027 at the earliest.
Bridges and Spread do not aim to make a significant surplus and any reserves are held to enable them to carry on with their activities, including their community projects, in the following year.
Funds held by the Internal Organisations are not available to meet general Church expenses.

Endowment Fund

The Development Fund is made up of specific donations, grants, and a loan, net of payments, relating to the development of the Church building at Strathmore Road, the first phase of which started in summer 2020 and was largely completed by December 2020. An interest free loan of £30,000 was secured in October 2020 from The William Leech Charity to cover a short-term funding gap, and is repayable in 5 equal instalments of £6,000. The balance remaining at 31 August 2024 was £12,000. In the year ended 31 August 2023, the upgrading and refurbishment of what was formerly the caretaker's flat was completed. The balance of the endowment fund is required to repay the loan and meet any final costs of Phase 1 of the development. Certain parts of the development had to be postponed until additional funds could be secured and at 31 August 2024 applications for grants had been made to fund certain energy-saving projects.



Trustees

- Helen Braun
- John Clark
- Lily Collinson
- Hannah Dawson
- Ann Dixon - from May 24
- Jill Emmanuel
- Sandra Dixon
- Mary Glease
- William Gray
- Marie Hutchinson
- Pete Hutchinson
- Andy Innes - until May 2024
- Linda Innes
- David Johnson
- Gillian Johnson
- Helen Johnson
- Bryn Lauder - until February 2024
- Rachel Lauder - until February 2024
- Tracy Lauder
- Sharon Mackie
- Simon Mackie
- Christine Middlemiss
- Eunice Peacock
- Trevor Peacock
- Colin Robson
- David Robson
- Sue Robson
- Ranjith Rosa
- Boomie Shodeinde - from April 24
- Marie Sidgwick - from May 24
- Josh Simpson - from May 24
- Keith Stamp
- David Thompson
- Eileen Wright

- Keith Crulley - Youth Worker
- Ruth Hallatt - Children and Families' Pastor
- Jill Warden - Treasurer
- Rev Ann Varker - Chair (Minister)

Declaration

The trustees declare that they have approved this Annual Trustees' Report.

Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees:

Signature(s)

Full name(s)

Ann Margaret Varker

Position(s)

Chair of Trustees

Date

30/04/25

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES OF STRATHMORE ROAD METHODIST CHURCH Charity no 1179206
ON THE ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024

Respective responsibilities of Trustees and Examiner

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 (the Charities Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under Section 145 of the Charities Act,
- to follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Charity Commission (under Section 145(5)(b) of the Charities Act), and
- to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of Independent Examiner's Report

My examination was carried out in accordance with general Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from the trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a "true and fair" view and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

Independent Examiner's Statement

I have completed my examination and confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination which give me cause to believe that, in any material respect:

- the accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Charities 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 not obtained independent verification of all investments with the Trustees for Methodist Church Purposes ("TMCP") or held in other Trusts, Bank balances and Funds at the Central Finance Board of the Methodist Church ("CFB"), which are individually in excess of £10,000 (ten thousand pounds) at the balance sheet date.

Signed by Date 07/05/25

Peter Nelmes FCCA
Glenavon, Peth Lane, Ryton, NE40 3PB

STRATHMORE ROAD METHODIST CHURCH
YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024

RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS ACCOUNT

CHURCH **excluding Internal Organisations**	**Note** 1	**Unrestricted Funds** £	**Restricted Fund Benevolence** £	**Endowment Fund Development** £	**Total Funds 2024** £	**Total Funds 2023** £
RECEIPTS	2					
Offerings and Tax recovered	3	91,042	1561	3,120	95,723	94,511
Bank interest		3,775	0	14	3,789	1,662
Lettings		16,343	0	0	16,343	10,610
Other receipts		16,864	3,675	0	20,539	15,172
TOTAL RECEIPTS		128,024	5,236	3,134	136,394	121,955
PAYMENTS	4					
Circuit Assessment	5	64,744	0	0	64,744	61,024
Donations		8	0	0	8	8
Repairs and Maintenance		4,900	0	0	4,900	4,249
Utilities		15,961	0	0	15,961	15,282
Endowment payments		0	0	6,090	6,090	28,703
Other payments		12,213	3,194	60	15,467	5,742
TOTAL PAYMENTS		97,826	3,194	6,150	107,170	115,008
NET (PAYMENTS)/RECEIPTS FOR THE YEAR		30,198	2,042	-3,016	29,224	6,947
Total funds brought forward		63,906	339	9,192	73,437	70,080
Transfers with Internal Funds & Organisations	6	-5,500	0	0	-5,500	-3,590
CHURCH FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD	8 & 9	88,604	2,381	6,176	97,161	73,437

STRATHMORE ROAD METHODIST CHURCH
YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024
RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS ACCOUNT

INTERNAL ORGANISATIONS REPORTING TO THE CHURCH COUNCIL	Notes	Receipts	Payments	Net receipts/ (payments)	Transfers with Church	Opening balances	Closing balances
		£	£	£	£	£	£
Children & Youth Project		81,890	90,619	-8,729	6,000	72,257	69,528
Bridges		6,458	6,262	196	0	8,807	9,003
Spread Drama Group		6,302	5,293	1,009	-500	4,978	5,487
Total of Internal Organisations		94,650	102,174	-7,524	5,500	86,042	84,018
Church totals from previous page		136,394	107,170	29,224	-5,500	73,437	97,161
TOTAL FOR CHURCH INCLUDING INTERNAL ORGANISATIONS		231,044	209,344	21,700	0	159,479	181,179

STATEMENT OF ASSETS AND LIABILITIES

CHURCH FUNDS HELD AT 31 AUGUST	Notes	Opening balances 2023	Closing balances 2024
		£	£
Cash in hand		228	658
Bank Current accounts		14,574	8,538
Central Finance Board of the Methodist Church Deposit account		58,635	87,965
Total of Church accounts		73,437	97,161
Total funds held by Internal Organisations		86,042	84,018
TOTAL CASH FUNDS		159,479	181,179
OTHER ASSETS AND LIABILITIES			
Land and buildings	10	3,767,407	4,058,832
Plant and equipment at insured value		174,536	178,898
Loan for redevelopment	11	18,000	12,000
Other liabilities		119	367

Signed on behalf of the Trustees by:

Rev. Ann Varker, Chair Jill N Warden, Treasurer Date 30/04/25

YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024
NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS

1 **Accounting basis** - The accounts have been prepared on the cash basis. "Gross income" for the purpose of determining whether accruals accounting is required, excludes receipts of endowment capital. The gross income of the Church for the year ended 31 August 2024 for this purpose is therefore, total receipts of £231,044 less endowment capital receipts of £3,134 giving a figure of £227,910. As this is less than the threshold of £250,000, accruals accounting is not required.

2 **Receipts** do not include collections or funds raised specifically for other charities or external organisations. See note 7 for details of these amounts.

3 **Offerings and Tax recovered** for 2024 for the Church Unrestricted funds includes Gift Aid of £15,030 (2023: £15,058).

4 **Payments** do not include the passing on of amounts collected or raised specifically for other charities or external organisations. See Note 7 for details of these amounts.

5 **The Circuit Assessment** is the Church's share of the Circuit's annual costs, primarily relating to Ministers' salaries and housing.

6 **Transfers with Internal Funds & Organisations** - During the year the Church transferred £6,000 to the Youth & Children Project and received a transfer of £500 from Spread. (2023: transferred £2,000 to the Development Fund, as a contribution towards the cost of the refurbishment of what was formerly the caretaker's flat, and received transfers from Bridges of £660 and Spread of £750.)

7 **Money received and passed on to external organisations**

	2024				2023
	Church	Youth	Bridges	Total	Total
	£	£	£	£	£
Brought forward			990	990	1,260
Collections/Receipts	1,218		12,980	14,198	13,050
Payments	-1,036		-13,310	-14,346	-13,320
Balance still to be paid at 31 August	182	0	660	842	990

The receipts and payments for Bridges relate primarily to the annual Church holiday to Keswick.

8 **Restricted Fund** - The Church has one restricted fund known as the Benevolence Fund, which is available for the Minister to spend at her discretion in cases of individual hardship or poverty.

9 **Endowment Fund** - Development Fund

In accordance with guidance issued by the Methodist Church in July 2019, "Accounting for tangible fixed assets", donations intended to provide an asset for long-term use, i.e. a fixed asset, should be classified as an expendable endowment and not a restricted income fund. Consequently, the Development Fund for the extension and redevelopment of the Church building at Strathmore Road has been classified as an expendable endowment.

The receipts and payments of the Endowment Fund have been shown in a separate column and an analysis is provided below, showing the comparative figures for the prior year.

	Year ended 31 August	
	2024	2023
	£	£
Receipts		
Donations and grants	3,120	3,120
Bank interest	14	34
	3,134	3,154
Payments		
Building project payments	-90	-22,703
Bank charges	-60	-60
Loan repayment	-6,000	-6,000
Net (payments)/receipts	-3,016	-25,609
Funds brought forward	9,192	32,801
Transfer from/to Unrestricted Funds (see Note 6)	0	2,000
Funds carried forward	6,176	9,192

10 Land and buildings - The Church land and buildings are owned by the Trustees for Methodist Church Purposes as custodians.
The Church at Strathmore Road opened in 1902 and the halls were added in 1958 but there is no information available about their historic costs. In conjunction with the redevelopment of the Church buildings, the Trustees have estimated the value of the land, based on average land values in Gateshead. The 2023 land value was based on a valuation in 2019. After 5 years the value has been reviewed and has been increased by £2,000.
The existing buildings are included at their insurance value in accordance with Methodist Church guidance.

	2024	2023
	£	£
Land at Strathmore Road - estimated value	390,000	388,000
Insurance value of redeveloped buildings	3,250,000	2,970,787
	3,640,000	3,358,787
Chopwell Methodist Church - insurance value	418,832	408,620
	4,058,832	3,767,407

* Note only: Cost of redevelopment to 31 August 2024 £692,141.

11 Loan - In October 2020 The William Leech Charity made a loan of £30,000 to cover completion of the redevelopment of the Church buildings, prior to receipt of an equivalent amount of pledged donations. The loan is interest-free and repayable in 5 equal, annual instalments, the first being paid in October 2021.

Strathmore Road Methodist Church

Strathmore Road Rowlands Gill
Tyne and Wear
NE39 1HX

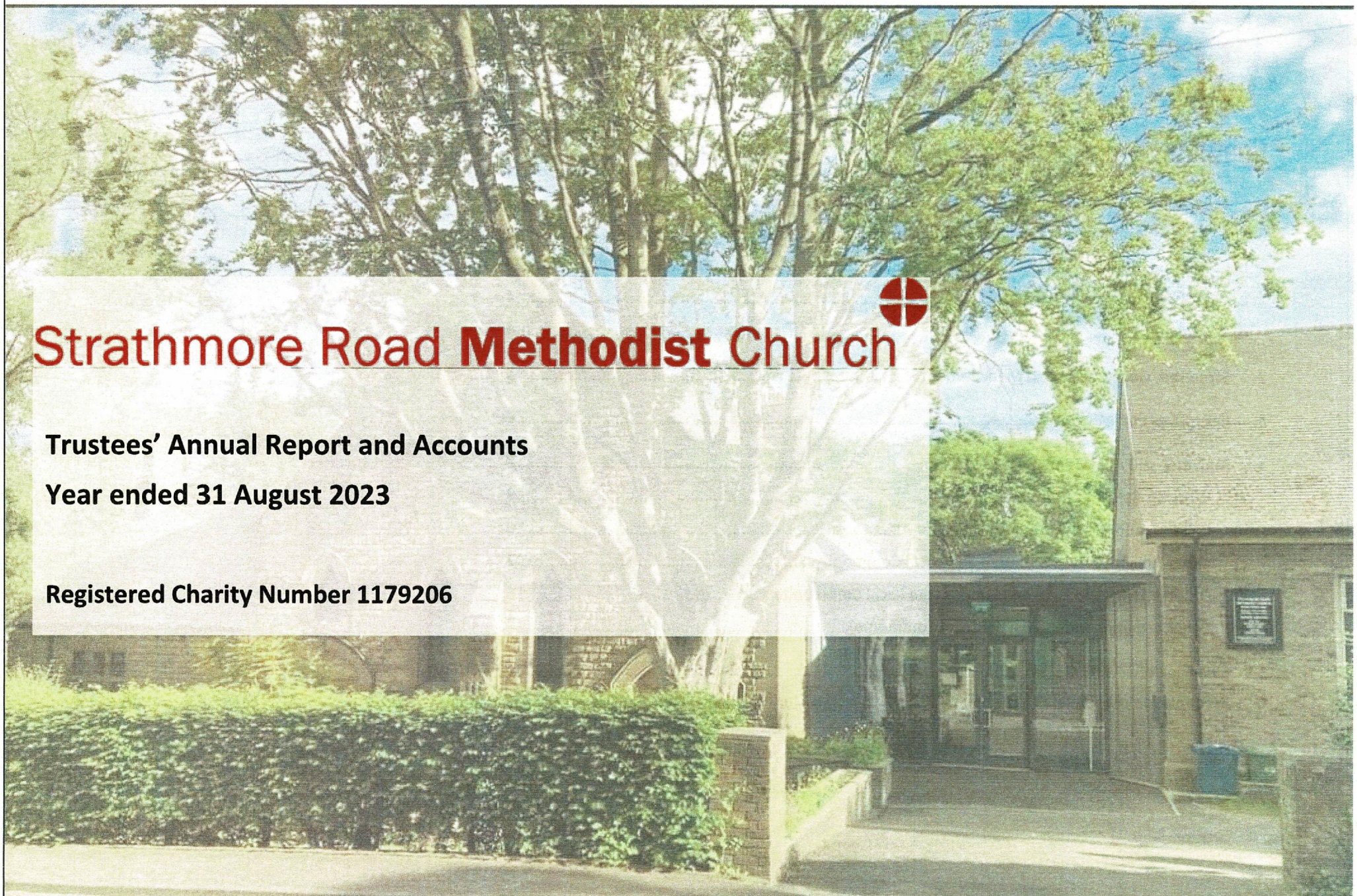
Charity: 1179206

rowlandsgill.org.uk

STRATHMORE ROAD METHODIST CHURCH, ROWLANDS GILL

England & Wales - Charity number 1179206

Accounts



Strathmore Road **Methodist** Church

Trustees' Annual Report and Accounts

Year ended 31 August 2023

Registered Charity Number 1179206

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1. Legal and Administration Information

a. Trustees and Responsibilities (at date of approval)

Ex-officio Members of Church Council

Rev. Ann Varker..... Minister

Gillian Johnson..... Pastoral Committee Secretary

Jill Warden..... Church Treasurer

Keith Crulley..... Lay Youth Worker

Sue Robson..... Church Council Secretary

Co-opted Members of Church Council

William Gray..... Children and Youth Matters Convenor

Ruth Hallatt ..... Children's & Families Pastor

Trevor Peacock..... Property Steward

Colin Robson..... Property and Finance Committee Chair

Keith Stamp ..... Eco Church

Leadership Stewards

Linda Innes

David Johnson

Helen Johnson

Christine Middlemiss

Sharon Mackie

Chopwell Stewards

Lilly Collinson

Mary Glease

Eileen Wright

Church Member Representatives to Church Council

Helen Braun

John Clark

Hannah Dawson

Sandra Dixon

Jill Emmanuel

Ryan Heslop

Andy Innes

Simon Mackie

Eunice Peacock

David Robson

Ranjith Rosa

Keith Stamp

David Thompson

b. **Principal Address**

Strathmore Road Methodist Church
Strathmore Road
Rowlands Gill
NE39 1HX

c. **Property Custodian Trustees**

The Trustees for Methodist
Church Purposes
Central Buildings
Oldham Street
Manchester
M1 5JQ

d. **Bankers**

Lloyds Bank plc 44 Front Street Whickham Newcastle Upon Tyne NE16 4DS (until February 2024)	The Co-operative Bank plc 1 Balloon Street Manchester M60 4EP (from February 2024)	Central Finance Board of the Methodist Church 9 Bonhill Street London EC2A 4PE	CAF Bank 5 Kings Hill Avenue Kings Hill West Malling ME19 4TA

2. Structure, Governance and Management

The Methodist Church is said to have been created after John Wesley's conversion on 24 May 1738 and is a Free Church. Strathmore Road Methodist Church (SRMC) is part of the South West Tyneside Circuit and Newcastle upon Tyne District of The Methodist Church, the governing body of which is the annual conference of The Methodist Church. The Methodist Church Act 1976 gives the authority under which The Methodist Church acts. The constitution, practice and discipline of The Methodist Church, together with The Deed of Union (Act of 1929 adopted 1932), govern the objectives and activities of The Methodist Church.

In general, The Methodist Church is excepted from the need to register as a charity by the combined effects of Section 46(4) (A) of The Charities Act 1993 and Paragraph 4(2)(C) of the Charities (exception from registration) Regulations 1996 as amended by Statutory Instrument 2014 No 242. Strathmore Road Methodist Church ("the Church") however, registered as a separate Registered Charity, number 1179206, in England and Wales, effective from 16 July 2018.

The Church's Managing Trustees listed above, are all lay people, except for the Minister (Rev. Ann Varker), who is ordained by The Methodist Church and stationed to the South West Tyneside Circuit. The Youth Worker (Keith Crulley) and Children's & Families Pastor (Ruth Hallett) are employed by SRMC.

The Managing Trustees meet at least three times per year as the Church Council. They take all major decisions and delegate some of their day-to-day responsibility to a Leadership Team, all of whom are Trustees. The Church Council is chaired by the Minister.

The Trustees who have served during the year and since the year-end are appointed annually by the Church, by the general meeting, or by being ex-officio. The Church's day-to-day activities are managed by those appointed to do so by the Church Council, including the Leadership Team, the Pastoral Committee, the Finance & Property Committee, the Worship Team and the Youth Workers.

During the year ended 31 August 2023 and up to the date of approval of the Report and accounts, the following changes in Trustees took place:

New appointments:
October 2022 - Keith Stamp
June 2023 - Ruth Lindridge, Sharon Mackie & David Thompson

Retirements:
May 2023 - Ian Holmes, Jim Clark & Lesley Stamp; July 2023 – James Clark; September 2023 - Ruth Lindridge; February 2024 - Bryn Lauder & Rachel Lauder

3. Objectives and Mission

SRMC seeks to be a loving, welcoming and active Christian community, serving and sharing with the world around us, following the example and teaching of Jesus Christ. Currently, to serve the world and community by providing premises for church, community and charitable use, as well as working with children and youth, refugees, the elderly and the socially disadvantaged.

Section 4 of The Methodist Church Act 1976 states:
The purposes of The Methodist Church are and shall be, purposes deemed to have been since the date of union the advancement of

a) the Christian faith in accordance with the doctrinal standards and the discipline of The Methodist Church
b) any charitable purpose for the time being of any Connexional, District, Circuit, local or other organisation of The Methodist Church
c) any charitable purpose for the time being of any society or institution being a society or institution subsidiary or ancillary to The Methodist Church
d) any purpose for the time being of any charity being a charity subsidiary or ancillary to The Methodist Church.

SRMC Mission Statement

With the help of the Holy Spirit, we seek to live our lives as a loving community with each other and the world around us, following the example and teaching of Jesus Christ and worshipping God.

As a church we seek to be:

A loving community to

- Offer pastoral support, fellowship and prayer to all recognising that it is an expression of God's love
- Be a welcoming church that promotes a sense of belonging and values every member
- Share the good news of God's love made known through Jesus Christ with all ages
- Be aware of the needs that arise in the local community and wider world and respond as we are able
- Engage with other Churches and organisations to promote justice and peace and bring good to our world as part of God's mission

Following Jesus to:

- Help people grow and sustain their faith through Biblical teaching, fellowship and prayer
- Encourage everyone to use their gifts and exercise their ministry in the church and in daily life
- Provide opportunities for people of different stages of faith to explore the way of Christ
- Promote a pattern of whole life discipleship that recognises that being a Christian impacts all aspects of life and calls for responsible stewardship of money, time and resources
- Enable the nurture and development of children and young people in the Christian Faith

Worshipping God:

- Worship in ways that are honouring to God, that help us focus upon Jesus Christ and increase our awareness of his presence through the Holy Spirit
- Develop opportunities for prayer and spending time seeking God
- Provide worship that is welcoming, family friendly, and accessible to people of different abilities
- Encourage participation in worship, recognising and utilising the talents and gifts of the congregation
- Develop forms of worship that are relevant to the world in which we live, that are uplifting, challenging and of good quality.

Strathmore Road Methodist Church in Rowlands Gill joined with Chopwell Methodist Church on the 1 September 2019 to become one church on two sites. The members of both churches have sought to explore together what it means to be one church family, with two centres of mission. In so doing, we encourage lifelong learning in the Christian faith and seek to provide opportunities for people to develop their faith and understanding.

The Church commits to safely recruiting and supporting all those with any responsibility for children and adults, in accordance with the Church Safeguarding Policy and informed by current legislation and accepted good practice.

Strathmore Road Methodist Church at Chopwell

www.rowlandsgill.org.uk

4. Activities and Achievements

a) Worship Activities and Groups for All

The Church currently has 123 members, encompassing all ages, including a thriving ministry among families, children and youth.

Within the Church people appreciate different forms of worship and the church values being able to offer a diversity of styles in its services, to enable people to encounter the living God and express their worship.

Our Sunday morning services at Rowlands Gill continue to be geared towards all ages and use contemporary music, media and performing arts. Most Sundays there is a short time of worship together before the children and young people move into Sunday Club where there are groups for children aged 4 to 16. Occasional all-age services are held on Sunday mornings to enable all generations to worship together.

At the same time, a morning service is offered at Chopwell which includes traditional elements of worship with space for conversation and prayer.

The Sunday evening service held at Rowlands Gill also aims to utilise the best in traditional Methodist worship with the aid of a pipe organ. Holy Communion is celebrated on a monthly basis in all three services.

The church organised a prayer vigil regarding global warming and has regular Climate Sunday Services as part of our commitment to Eco Church

Discipleship Groups

SRMC encourages lifelong learning in the Christian faith and seeks to provide opportunities for people to develop their faith and understanding.

These groups offer encouragement, fellowship, Bible study and prayer. Where a series is being followed in the Sunday services, the discipleship groups will often follow the series with Bible studies. At other times groups will decide on the topic to study.

In addition, there is also a pastoral group which meets informally for fellowship and support.

Prayer Chain

A number of years ago a WhatsApp group of 27 members was started to provide prayer support to those in need, ill health and difficult situations. Prayer needs are identified and information is shared to the group, with strictest confidence observed. Members pray individually in their own homes. Regular responses are shared. The prayer chain has provided great comfort to many people.

Strathmore Road Methodist Church at Chopwell

Chopwell Methodist Church has a traditional Sunday worship. There is a small regular congregation who welcome everyone to the services. The Monthly Coffee Morning is also well attended.

The Community Garden is regularly tended and is used regularly by church members and the community for quiet reflection.

b) Children and Youth Group Activities for All

The Church has a well-established children, youth and families ministry, based around a few regular core groups as well as a number of different one-off events. Our activities enable the Church to reach children ranging from new-born up to 18 years old. Regular activities include Sunday Club (a weekly club for children of all ages taking place alongside Sunday morning worship), Sparks (a monthly Saturday morning club for children aged 5-10) and several other groups aimed at young people.

Sunday Club

Sunday Club provides two groups for ages 4-18 on a Sunday morning split into 'Bubbles' and 'Xstream'. Everybody begins the service together then the children go into their own groups for games, Bible stories, crafts, chat, and prayer. It is a lively and thriving group that enjoys getting stuck into the theme of the day. Once a month they meet together for 'Forest Church' around a campfire where the addition of marshmallows and hot chocolate is a welcome treat. They have enjoyed getting to know the church grounds and helping with the church's commitment to 'eco-church' status.

Sparks

Sparks is a group for children aged 5-10 held monthly during term time. We meet from 2:00pm-3:30pm on a Saturday where we learn more about God, Jesus and The Bible together. There is also plenty of time for games, crafts, and snacks.

Rock Solid

Rock Solid meets every other Sunday evening and is for young people aged 9 to 13. A fun-packed evening of games, discussion, competitions and thought about the big issues that affect life, friends, parents, school, the future and what God has to say about them. They also enjoy regular socials like movie nights.

ID

ID is a group for boys aged 13 and over. It takes place on alternate Sundays to Rock Solid. ID is a great opportunity for youngsters to hang out, play games as well as chat and discuss issues that affect their lives.

Girls Group

Girls group is a new group for girls aged 9-14 meeting on Sunday nights every other week. They play games, chat, pray, get to know the Bible and enjoy keeping their own journals of their faith journeys. They are a lively bunch who enjoy looking at creative ways to pray and worship.

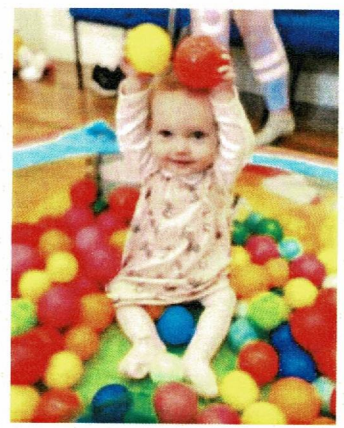
Children's & Families Pastor

After a lengthy recruitment process, the Church was delighted to welcome Ruth Hallatt as the new Children's and Families Pastor from 1 June 2023. As well as being involved in the children's activities within the Church, her role includes building effective working relationships with staff in local primary schools, and leading assemblies, classroom sessions and extra-curricular activities in these schools.

c) Other Activities for the Church and Local Community

Little Gems

Little Gems is community focused and is made up of parents from the local area with their babies and toddlers who meet on alternate Wednesday mornings in term time for play, coffee and crafts. The aim of Little Gems is not only to allow our children to socialise and develop new skills, but for parents, grandparents and carers to relax, chat and compare joys and troubles on all things parenting. Meeting in the large hall, hot drinks and snacks are served in the small hall. There is a clothes swap rail and parents frequently exchange toys and books. The willing team of volunteers from SRMC support the set up, set down, welcoming, serving drinks and engaging in conversations with all those who attend.



Bridges

The Bridges group was formed in 1992. It aims to make a bridge between the Church and the local community. Over the years the group has organised many community events and festivals. Some of the Church's current community projects eg the drop-in for local refugee families, community football and the 'holiday fun' scheme for local children - all originated from the Bridges group. Many fundraising events have been organised for the benefit of various charities.

The programme of events started with an annual walk again this year following the St Cuthbert's Way to Lindisfarne. In the Christmas holiday 50 people joined in a family walk in the local forest park, concluding with a buffet lunch in the nearby golf club. More than 70 people attended a week-long holiday in the Lake District, partaking in a variety of outdoor and indoor activities.

In June the group organised a farewell celebration for one of our families leaving the area. The annual Church family picnic rounded off the year on a lovely summer's day.

The group continues to focus on building and maintain relationships with the wider church family and the local community.

Men's Breakfast group

The Men's Breakfast group has been meeting for more than 30 years. It offers the men of the Church opportunities to meet together, invite friends and socialise around a varied programme of events and activities.

Meeting monthly over an early Saturday morning breakfast, or a pint in a local pub on Friday evenings, activities include speakers from charities and other organisations, visits to places of interest, local history and countryside walks. Around 12 to 18 people regularly attend each month.

Activities in 2022 started with an open evening in a local pub and a talk by one of our members on ' The Camino de Santiago de Compostela' which attracted over 40 people. The group hosted a coffee morning and fund raising car wash and then in November we held an annual retreat. The year was rounded off with an annual dinner in the local pub.

The new year saw us exploring Blanchland Abbey, spending a morning at The Chopwell Regeneration Project and a guided walk around Sunderland. Our programme ended with a visit to a local garden reclaimed from an open cast mining site.

Open Doors

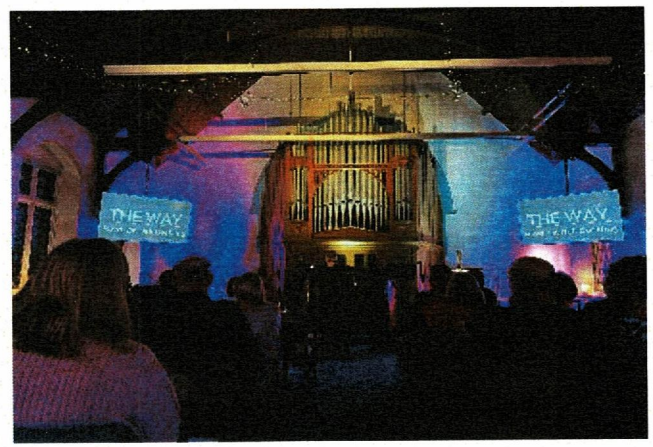
Open Doors began over 40 years ago as an open and ecumenical group for women of all ages from Rowlands Gill and the surrounding area, to develop friendship and fellowship by sharing different Christian viewpoints and common concerns in a friendly and caring atmosphere. Open Doors is a welcoming fellowship for women and meets on Friday mornings during school term time. There is a varied programme with speakers (some informative, some inspirational) and activities (sometimes creative, sometimes recreational). The group meets informally and chat over coffee, with no fixed membership as such and friends drop in and out as often or as rarely as they wish.

Spread Drama Group

Spread is a performing arts group that meets weekly during term time. The aim is to provide an inclusive drama group rooted in the belief that drama enables confidence building, socialising, and aids mental health. The group is intergenerational and is accessible for all. Young learn from old and old from young. The group performs at least one production a year, including an affordable pantomime for the community.

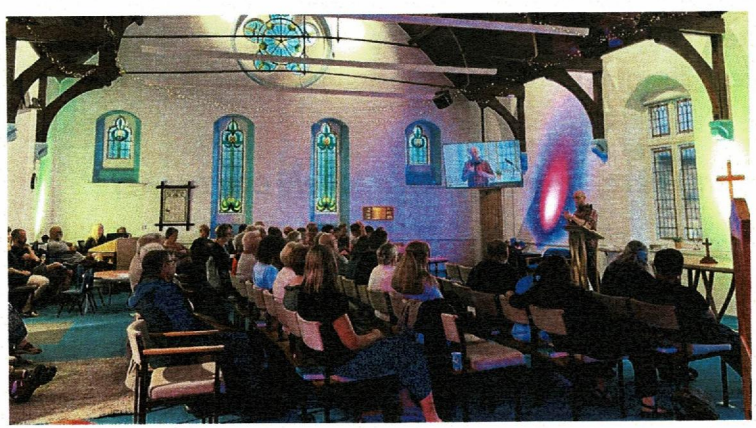
The Way Weekend

In October 2022, SRMC hosted a Circuit event named THE WAY. Taking inspiration from the bible passage in Acts which tells of the first followers of Christ who followed 'the way'. This was a whole weekend of Worship, Prayer, Preaching, Teaching and Fellowship. The weekend was made up of main worship meetings, talks and seminars led by both local and visiting speakers from other churches and denominations.



As well as providing space to discuss and share our faith walk with each other, it was a wonderful weekend of drawing closer to God as a family and spending time in His presence together. A full children's programme was also arranged and facilitated by Circuit Children and Youth Workers.

The weekend was well attended and very much enjoyed by everyone who came along.



The Way

Following the success of the weekend, there is now a monthly Way service which takes place across different churches in the South West Tyneside Circuit. An informal style service which gathers together to seek Christ through biblical teaching, worship and prayer to which all are welcome.

d) Other Activities to Help and Support the Local Community

PROVIDING SPACES WITH RESPECT, DIGNITY & WARMTH

Warm Spaces

Gateshead Council has encouraged local organisations to offer their accommodation as Warm Spaces in winter in order to support those struggling with the cost of living crisis. The warm spaces are places where people can come and receive a warm welcome, get warm, have a free hot drink, maybe grab a snack and charge their phone. The opening hours for SRMC Warm Space have been increased over the winter months with soup and a roll being offered as well as hot drinks, biscuits and cake. A bring and swap library is now available with visitors often sharing their recommendations and comments on the books available. Free Wi Fi and phone charging is available.

Rescued Food Market

Since February 2021 a weekly 'rescued food' market has operated from the Church halls. This offers surplus food collected from supermarkets Customers pay a £3.00 donation in return for a large bag of groceries including fresh fruit and vegetables, tinned and frozen food as well as pastries, bread and dried goods. For those in financial difficulty a 'pay forward' system is in place so food can be offered free. The market is open to anyone and is attended by up to 60 people each week. It attracts a wide range of customers from those in financial difficulties, to people concerned about the environment and wishing to reduce food waste.

Customer comments include ***'this has been a life saver for me', 'we love coming here, there is such a lovely atmosphere'.***

The market is run in partnership with The Pickle Palace a local community interest group which has operated in the area for about 7 years. A number of volunteers from the Church and the wider community are involved in collecting food, welcoming customers, running the market, and clearing away.

Pay as You Feel Café

The Church Café is open on Mondays (excluding bank holidays) from 9am until 1pm. It's a Pay as you Feel Café where you'll receive a warm welcome. We serve cereals, pastries, cake, biscuits, soup, tea, coffee and cold drinks in a pleasant room overlooking the garden. Food choices vary according to what is available from the rescued food market. Numbers attending the cafe have increased recently with more people staying for the soup and roll lunch and using it as a warm, comfortable place to relax and chat to volunteers and other customers.

The café operates alongside a rescued food market and a Citizens' Advice Drop-In.

Partnership Churches

Along with partnership churches of St Barnabas and St Patricks, SRMC is honoured to work and support friends from Syria and more recently the Ukraine.

Note: SRMC premises

The major premises redevelopment at Strathmore Road site was completed in early 2021 and it has been pleasing over the last couple of years to see how much more the premises are now being used by the Church membership and by the local Community. The fully accessible Worship area and both Main and Small Halls are regularly booked out for activities and events for some part of each day of the week. Whilst this naturally carries a cost for running and maintenance of the premises, particularly Utility costs in winter months, the Trustees are confident that the increased use of the premises is only to the benefit of members and visitors alike.

Ukranian refugee `drop in`

The Drop In was meeting weekly on a Wednesday morning at St Barnabas Church Hall for part of the year and was run by volunteers from both Strathmore Road and St. Barnabas Churches. It was attended by several of Gateshead Council support team with the aim of supporting Ukranian refugees in matters such as housing, employment, school placements and accessing services. The Support team members and volunteers, provided the environment where refugees were helped to familiarise themselves with their local surroundings, whilst providing a comfortable and friendly meeting space.

"Holiday Fun" – held over Easter & Summer school holidays

This group originated from the "Holiday Hunger" concerns over 6 years ago. Meals and activities are provided for local disadvantaged children during the Easter and Summer school holiday period when free school meals are not available. The aim is to befriend and build relationships with the families of those children attending.

This activity has now run for 9 years missing one year due to Covid. It is held weekly on Wednesdays during the Easter and Summer holidays at Strathmore Road Church and this year there were 40-50 children attended each week. There were 48 volunteers sought from each of the churches in Rowlands Gill. Two meals were provided each day - breakfast and a two course lunch. Healthy meals are served up including several portions of fresh fruit and vegetables. The activities are enriching and aim to encourage exercise and wellbeing. This year there were organised outings on three of the days in summer.

Football

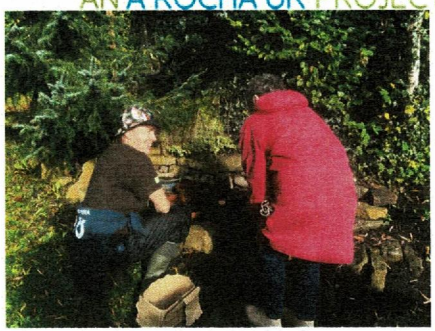
The local community football project has proved extremely popular again this year. Partnering with Ambassadors Football, sessions are run each Thursday evening during the lighter nights April to October, providing age appropriate sessions for children aged 4 and up. As well as providing a healthy physical activity the sessions help to promote community cohesion with groups of parents and carers chatting on the side lines as the games are in progress.

This year continued with the Highfield Community House staff presence and the football sessions provided a great opportunity for the staff team to meet local children and seek to build relationships. On some weeks there were up to 60 children partaking. The young people appreciate the activity and some are now coming to other Church-based events, such as Rock Solid and ID.

e) Other activities wider than the local Community

The Church has a growing awareness of being part of a global community, with ECO Church raising awareness of global issues including deforestation, climate change, food poverty and pollution. SRMC is a registered Fair Trade Church and a partner in Toilet Twinning.

ECO CHURCH
AN A ROCHA UK PROJECT

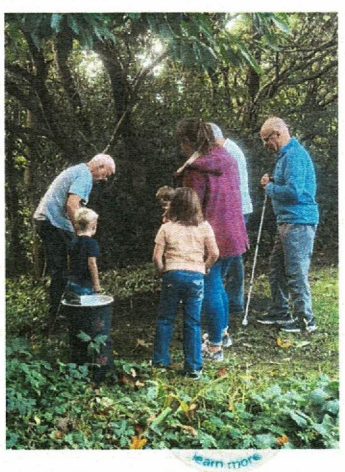


Eco-Church

Responding to stewardship of the planet.
SRMC takes its responsibility for the environment very seriously. Eco considerations impact all areas of Church life and is monitored for performance and improvements through membership of the A Rocha Eco Church Scheme. Eco Church is an ecumenical scheme which assesses environmental performance across a number of areas of Church life: Worship and Teaching, Building, Land and Gardens, Community, Lifestyle

Since achieving a Silver Award in 2022 SRMC has strived to actively demonstrate its 'eco credentials' in several ways;

- Climate Sunday and Eco Church services are held annually
- Demonstrations and prayer walks
- The redevelopment of the building in 2020 saw the installation of more efficient heating and lighting
- An area of the garden has been set aside for re-wilding and more pollinator friendly planting completed
- A weekly 'rescued food' market and a pay as you feel café was set up in 2021 to save waste food from landfill
- Sharing of ideas, tips and support and encourage each other to live responsibly via our WhatsApp group and newsletter



SRMC was delighted to receive a Silver Award in May 2022 and look forward to further improvements progressing towards 'Go for Gold'. In the last year there have been tree planting and bulb planting events which involved the wider community and ran alongside Eco Church Coffee Mornings. Also, SRMC has been working alongside the local authority, Citizens Advice and other charities to host an Energy Saving workshop to provide advice regarding the cost of living and fuel poverty.

5. Financial Review

The Accounts for the year ended 31 August 2023 are set out at the end of the Trustees' Report. The Church funds are made up of a general unrestricted fund, a restricted fund – the Benevolent Fund, an endowment fund – the Development Fund, and the funds of three Internal Organisations – the Children & Youth Project, Bridges and the Spread Drama Group. Only the unrestricted fund is available to meet the day to day running costs of the Church.

Stewardship Initiative

In April 2022 SRMC launched a *Stewardship Initiative* amongst its members, drawing attention to three key tenets of Membership namely, the giving of time, talents and money to support the work of the Church in the community. Additional activities and events over the year require additional volunteer support, together with additional finances. Also, the ever increasing cost of living over recent years was impacting general Church funds. The membership has responded to the Initiative brilliantly in every respect, with the consequence that the Trustees can move forward with planning and execution of existing and new events and activities in confidence that volunteer and financial support is available.

Unrestricted fund

During the year ended 31 August 2023 there was a surplus of receipts over payments of £32,395 (2022: deficit of payments over receipts of £3,056) before internal transfers to the Children & Youth Project of £5,000 and the Development Fund of £2,000 and transfers from Bridges of £660 and Spread of £750, totalling a net transfer of £5,590 (2022: transfers from the Development Fund of £1,491 and Bridges of £405, totalling £1,896). Bills were paid promptly and the outstanding liabilities at the year-end (i.e. invoices relating to before the year-end paid after the year-end) amounted to £119 (2022: £89). Collections and funds raised specifically for other charities or external organisations are excluded from both receipts and payments. At the year-end the balance on the Unrestricted fund stood at £63,906 (2022: £37,101).

The Finance and Property Committee reviews the budget each June for the following year and the net surplus after internal transfers of £26,805 compared favourably with the break-even budget at the start of the year (after budgeted internal transfers). The reasons for the surplus were primarily due to increased regular giving, a large number of successful fundraising events, and some one-off grants and legacies, together with cost savings on property maintenance and printing.

Offerings and tax recovered via gift aid totalled £91,391, which was significantly higher than last year's total of £65,235. Letting receipts from hiring out the premises improved from £6,021 last year to £10,610 this year.

Within payments from the unrestricted fund there are three major areas over which the Church has little control: i) the Circuit assessment; ii) property repairs; and iii) utility bills. Repairs at Strathmore Road were kept to a minimum again this year following the redevelopment of the building in 2020. Utility costs increased by 90% compared to last year. These are monitored very closely and steps taken to obtain the most cost-effective contracts. We wish to record our grateful thanks to all those who work tirelessly to carry out repairs and maintenance to the Church buildings and grounds, clean the premises on a regular basis and minimise the utility and other costs.

Restricted Fund

The Benevolent Fund is available to make small payments at the Minister's discretion in cases of individual hardship or poverty. There were receipts of £285 and payments totalling £124, resulting in a balance carried forward of £339 (2022: £178). During the year, the Church also received a donation of supermarket vouchers worth £340, which were used to buy food and other necessities for families suffering hardship.

Endowment Fund

The Development Fund was established to finance the redevelopment of the Church buildings at Strathmore Road. In accordance with guidance issued by the Methodist Church in July 2019, "Accounting for tangible fixed assets", donations intended to provide an asset for long-term use, i.e. a fixed asset, should be classified as an expendable endowment and not a restricted income fund. Consequently, the Development Fund has been classified as an expendable endowment in the accounts. During the year, the fund received £3,154 (2022: £5,627) and a transfer from the Church unrestricted funds of £2,000, as a contribution towards the cost of the refurbishment of what was formerly the caretaker's flat. The Fund made payments of £28,763 (2022: £10,404 and a transfer of £1,491 to the Church unrestricted funds, being the refund from the builder of energy costs used during the redevelopment). Payments during the year included the repayment of the second instalment of £6,000 of the loan of £30,000 received from The William Leech Charity in the year ended 31 August 2021. The balance on the Fund carried forward was £9,192 (2022: £32,801).

Internal Organisations

The Internal Organisations manage their finances separately from the main Church funds but report to the Church Council.

The Children & Youth Project had net receipts during the year of £43,931 (2022: £5,339) before receipt of the transfer of £5,000 from the Church unrestricted fund (2022: £0). The balance at the year-end was £72,257 (2022: £23,326).

Bridges had net receipts for the year of £439 (2022: £1,368) before a transfer to the Church unrestricted fund of £660 (2022: £405), being the proceeds of a fundraising event. This resulted in a balance of £8,807 (2022: £9,028) at the year-end.

Spread Drama Group had net receipts of £1,413 (2022: £849) before a transfer to the Church unrestricted fund of £750 (2022: £0), being a donation towards heating and lighting costs, leaving a balance carried forward at the year-end of £4,978 (2022: £4,315).

Further information on all funds is provided in the accounts and the notes to the accounts.

Reserves policy

Unrestricted funds

The Church recognises the need to maintain a reserve in the General Fund to enable it to function effectively. Additionally, the Church considers it appropriate to maintain a reserve as a contingency, for unplanned expenditure or indeed, reduced income. The Trustees have established their mission aims, including the resources available in terms of people, property and money. Mission initiatives and projects are fully costed, or estimates made of projected costs which incorporate the needs of the buildings and the necessary requirements of the Quinquennial Inspection Report(s). The Church Council is aware of the continuing need to maintain an appropriate level of reserves and has agreed that any General Fund reserve should be a minimum of £40,000 and not normally exceed six months operational expenditure. In conjunction with the Finance & Property Committee, the Treasurer monitors the reserve and reviews this policy annually.

The Church Council recognises the need to be accountable as Charity Trustees for all income and expenditure and in that regard, submits an Annual Report in accordance with the requirements of the Methodist Conference and the Charity Commission guidance in CC19.

General Church running expenses for the current year ending 31 August 2024 are expected to be around £96,900 (2023: £91,000). Therefore, the required reserve for unrestricted funds is between £40,000 and £48,450 (2023: £45,500). The General Fund at 31 August 2023 was approximately £15,400 more than six months operational expenditure, primarily due to increased regular giving, a large number of fundraising events during the year and some one-off grants and legacies received. This reverses the trend of deficits in four out of the last five years and places the Church in a healthier position to meet its general commitments and to continue its outreach work in the local community.

Restricted funds

There is a very small Minister's Benevolent Fund, which is distributable at the Minister's discretion to those in need. It is hoped this can be increased in future years.

Internal Organisations

Children & Youth Project – This account receives funding from time to time which is allocated to particular projects however, all funds held in this account are treated as restricted to paying the salaries of lay employees and supporting activities such as Sunday Club and for children and youth generally. The sources of funding vary however, it is important to retain an appropriate level of reserves to enable the project to continue planned operations for at least 6 months in the event of an unexpected fall in income and also, to meet any redundancy and related costs in the event of its termination.

A part-time Children and Families Pastor was employed from 1 June 2023 and two part-time Youth and Community Outreach Pioneers were

employed from 1 September 2023. Consequently, all funds are committed until 2027 at the earliest.

Bridges and Spread do not aim to make a significant surplus and the reserves at the year-end are held to enable them to carry on their activities, including their community projects, in the following year.

Funds held by the Internal Organisations are not available to meet general Church expenses.

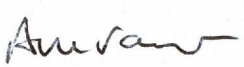
Endowment Fund

The Development Fund is made up of specific donations, grants and a loan, net of payments, relating to the development of the Church building at Strathmore Road, which physically commenced in summer 2020 and was largely completed by December 2020. An interest free loan of £30,000 was secured in October 2020 from The William Leech Charity to cover a short-term funding gap, and is repayable in 5 equal instalments of £6,000. In the year ended 31 August 2023, the upgrading and refurbishment of what was formerly an attached caretaker's flat was completed and the Trustees are currently considering best use of the facility going forward. The balance of the endowment fund is required to repay the loan and meet any final costs of the development.

Ethical Banking

For a number of years Church Council has been looking at the subject of Ethical Banking and considering the option of moving its banking facilities to a more ethical provider. The report "Choosing an Ethical Bank account" produced by The Ecumenical Council for Corporate Responsibility (ECCR) and information on the Ethical Consumer website, were used to inform the debate. The decision was taken by Church Council in June 2023 to move its banking arrangements to The Co-operative Bank and the application process began shortly thereafter. The switch to The Co-operative Bank was completed in February 2024.

Signed on behalf of the Trustees by

Rev Ann Varker  Date: 16/04/24.

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES OF STRATHMORE ROAD METHODIST CHURCH (Charity no. 1179206)
ON THE ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2023

Respective responsibilities of Trustees and Examiner

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 (the Charities Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under Section 145 of the Charities Act,
- to follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Charity Commission (under Section 145(5)(b) of the Charities Act), and
- to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of Independent Examiner's Report

My examination was carried out in accordance with general Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from the trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair' view and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

Independent Examiner's Statement

I have completed my examination and confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination which give me cause to believe that, in any material respect:

- the accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Charities 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 not obtained independent verification of all investments with the Trustees for Methodist Church Purposes ("TMCP") or held in other Trusts, Bank balances and Funds at the Central Finance Board of the Methodist Church ("CFB"), which are individually in excess of £10,000 (ten thousand pounds) at the balance sheet date.

Signed by Date 18/4/2024

Peter Nelmes FCCA
Glenavon, Peth Lane, Ryton, NE40 3PB

STRATHMORE ROAD METHODIST CHURCH
YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2023

RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS ACCOUNT

CHURCH excluding Internal Organisations	Note 1	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Fund Benevolent £	Endowment Fund Development £	Total Funds 2023 £	Total Funds 2022 £
RECEIPTS	2					
Offerings and Tax recovered	3	91,391	0	3,120	94,511	70,860
Bank interest		1,628	0	34	1,662	127
Lettings		10,610	0	0	10,610	6,021
Other receipts		14,887	285	0	15,172	4,694
TOTAL RECEIPTS		118,516	285	3,154	121,955	81,702
PAYMENTS	4					
Circuit Assessment	5	61,024	0	0	61,024	59,350
Donations		8	0	0	8	141
Repairs and Maintenance		4,249	0	0	4,249	3,001
Utilities		15,282	0	0	15,282	8,010
Endowment payments		0	0	28,703	28,703	10,311
Other payments		5,558	124	60	5,742	8,724
TOTAL PAYMENTS		86,121	124	28,763	115,008	89,537
NET (PAYMENTS)/RECEIPTS FOR THE YEAR		32,395	161	-25,609	6,947	-7,835
Total funds brought forward		37,101	178	32,801	70,080	77,510
Transfers with Internal Funds & Organisations	6	-5,590	0	2,000	-3,590	405
CHURCH FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD	8 & 9	63,906	339	9,192	73,437	70,080

STRATHMORE ROAD METHODIST CHURCH
YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2023
RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS ACCOUNT

INTERNAL ORGANISATIONS REPORTING TO THE CHURCH COUNCIL	Notes	Receipts	Payments	Net receipts/ (payments)	Transfers with Church	Opening balances	Closing balances
		£	£	£	£	£	£
Children & Youth Project		56,607	12,676	43,931	5,000	23,326	72,257
Bridges		7,884	7,445	439	-660	9,028	8,807
Spread Drama Group		5,480	4,067	1,413	-750	4,315	4,978
Total of Internal Organisations		69,971	24,188	45,783	3,590	36,669	86,042
Church totals from previous page		121,955	115,008	6,947	-3,590	70,080	73,437
TOTAL FOR CHURCH INCLUDING INTERNAL ORGANISATIONS		191,926	139,196	52,730	0	106,749	159,479

STATEMENT OF ASSETS AND LIABILITIES

CHURCH FUNDS HELD AT 31 AUGUST	Notes	Opening balances 2022	Closing balances 2023
		£	£
Cash in hand		200	228
Bank Current accounts		38,349	14,574
Central Finance Board of the Methodist Church Deposit account		31,531	58,635
Total of Church accounts		70,080	73,437
Total funds held by Internal Organisations		36,669	86,042
TOTAL CASH FUNDS		106,749	159,479
OTHER ASSETS AND LIABILITIES			
Land and buildings	10	3,457,362	3,767,407
Plant and equipment at insured value		158,523	174,536
Loan for redevelopment	11	24,000	18,000
Other liabilities		89	119

Signed on behalf of the Trustees by:

Ann Varker. Jill N. Warden 16 April 2024

Rev. Ann Varker, Chair Jill N Warden, Treasurer Date

STRATHMORE ROAD METHODIST CHURCH
YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2023
NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS

1 **Accounting basis** - The accounts have been prepared on the cash basis. "Gross income" for the purpose of determining whether accruals accounting is required, excludes receipts of endowment capital. The gross income of the Church for the year ended 31 August 2023 for this purpose is therefore, total receipts of £191,926 less endowment capital receipts of £3,154 giving a figure of £188,772. As this is less than the threshold of £250,000, accruals accounting is not required.

2 **Receipts** do not include collections or funds raised specifically for other charities or external organisations. See note 7 for details of these amounts.

3 **Offerings and Tax recovered** for 2023 for the Church Unrestricted funds includes Gift Aid of £15,058 (2022: £10,234).

4 **Payments** do not include the passing on of amounts collected or raised specifically for other charities or external organisations. See Note 7 for details of these amounts.

5 **The Circuit Assessment** is the Church's share of the Circuit's annual costs, primarily relating to Ministers' salaries and housing.

6 **Transfers with Internal Funds & Organisations -** During the year the Church transferred £5,000 to the Youth & Children Project and £2,000 to the Development Fund, as a contribution towards the cost of the refurbishment of what was formerly the caretaker's flat. The Church received transfers from Bridges of £660 and Spread of £750 (2022: received transfers of £1,491 from the Development Fund, which was the reimbursement from the builder for energy costs used during the redevelopment, and £405 from Bridges).

7 **Money received and passed on to external organisations**

	2023				2022
	Church	Youth	Bridges	Total	Total
	£	£	£	£	£
Brought forward			1,260	1,260	2,350
Collections/Receipts	2,738		10,312	13,050	13,664
Payments	-2,738		-10,582	-13,320	-14,754
Balance still to be paid at 31 August 2022	0	0	990	990	1,260

The receipts and payments for Bridges relate primarily to the annual Church holiday to Keswick.

8 **Restricted Fund** - The Church has one restricted fund known as the Benevolent Fund, which is available for the Minister to spend at her discretion in cases of individual hardship or poverty.

9 **Endowment Fund** - The Church has one endowment fund known as the Development Fund which is for a major building project to extend and redevelop the Church buildings, which took place primarily in the years ended 31 August 2020 and 2021.
In accordance with guidance issued by the Methodist Church in July 2019, "Accounting for tangible fixed assets", donations intended to provide an asset for long-term use, i.e. a fixed asset, should be classified as an expendable endowment and not a restricted income fund. Consequently, the Development Fund has been classified as an expendable endowment.
The Endowment Fund has been shown in a separate column in the Receipts and Payments Account and an analysis is provided below, showing the comparative figures for the prior year.

	2023	2022
	£	£
Receipts		
Donations and grants	3,120	5,625
Bank interest	34	2
	3,154	5,627
Payments		
Building project payments	-22,703	-4,311
Bank charges	-60	-93
Loan repayment	-6,000	-6,000
Net (payments)/receipts	-25,609	-4,777
Funds brought forward	32,801	39,069
Transfer from/to Unrestricted Funds (see Note 6)	2,000	-1491
Funds carried forward	9,192	32,801

10 Land and buildings - The Church land and buildings are owned by the Trustees for Methodist Church Purposes as custodians.
The Church at Strathmore Road opened in 1902 and the halls were added in 1958 but there is no information available about their historic costs. In conjunction with the redevelopment of the Church buildings, the Trustees have estimated the value of the land, based on average land values in Gateshead. The land value will be reviewed every 5 years.
The existing buildings are included at their insurance value in accordance with Methodist Church guidance.

	2023	2022
	£	£
Land at Strathmore Road - estimated value	388,000	388,000
Insurance value of redeveloped buildings	2,970,787	2,698,231
	3,358,787	3,086,231
Chopwell Methodist Church - insurance value	408,620	371,131
	3,767,407	3,457,362

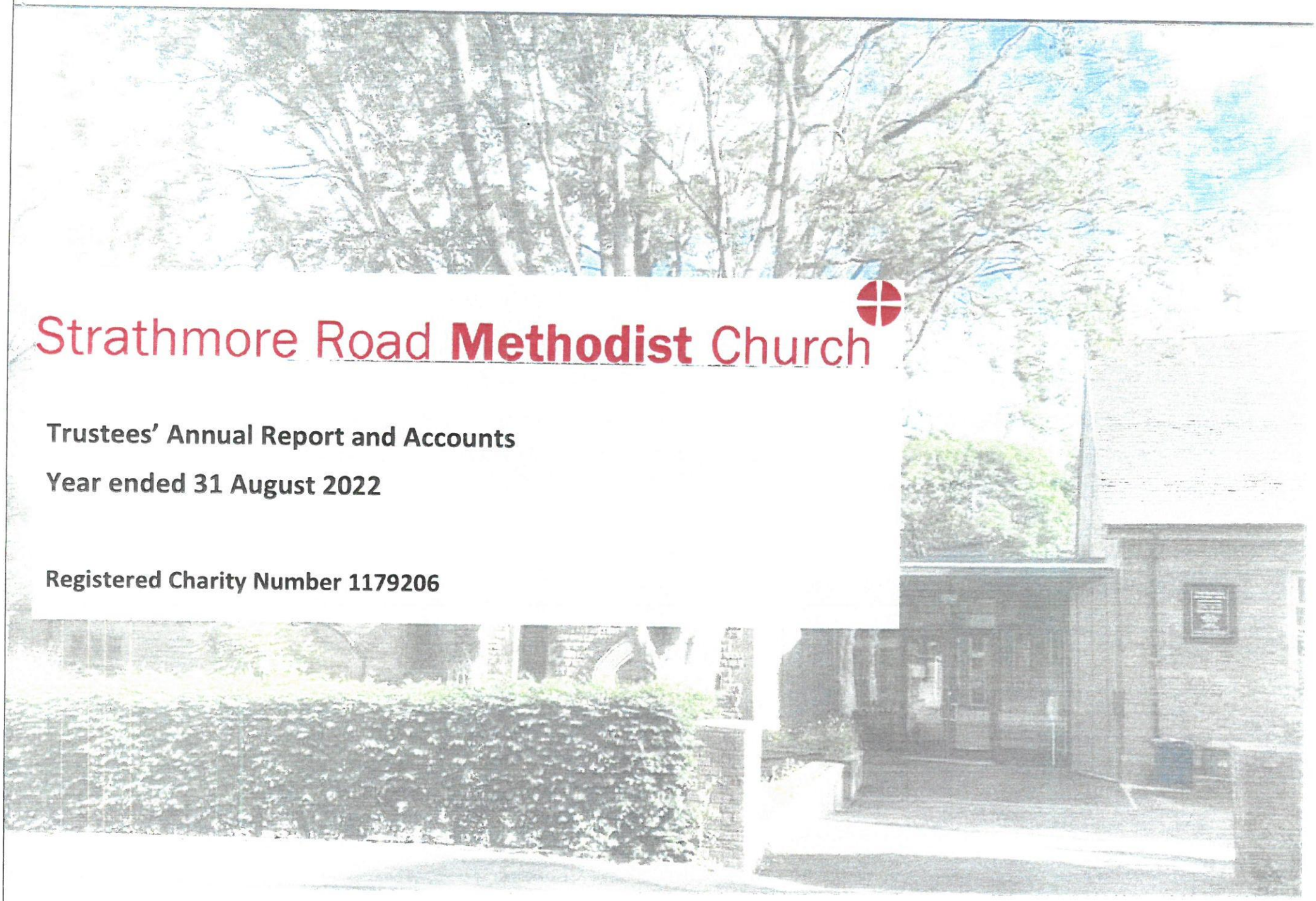
* Note only: Cost of redevelopment to 31 August 2023 £692,051.

11 Loan - In October 2020 The William Leech Charity made a loan of £30,000 to cover completion of the redevelopment of the Church buildings, prior to receipt of an equivalent amount of pledged donations. The loan is interest-free and is repayable in 5 equal, annual instalments, the first being paid in October 2021.

STRATHMORE ROAD METHODIST CHURCH, ROWLANDS GILL

England & Wales - Charity number 1179206

Accounts



Strathmore Road **Methodist** Church

Trustees' Annual Report and Accounts

Year ended 31 August 2022

Registered Charity Number 1179206

SRMC

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SRMC

1. Legal and Administration Information

a. Trustees and Responsibilities (at date of approval)

Ex-officio Members of Church Council

Rev. Ann Varker..... Minister
Gillian Johnson..... Pastoral Committee Secretary
Jill Catterall..... Church Treasurer
Keith Crulley..... Youth Worker
Sue Robson..... Church Council Secretary

Co-opted Members of Church Council

Trevor Peacock..... Property Steward
Colin Robson..... Property and Finance Committee Chair
William Gray..... Children and Youth Matters Convenor
Keith Stamp ..... Eco Church Co-ordinator

Leadership Stewards

James Clark
Linda Innes
David Johnson
Helen Johnson
Bryn Lauder
Lesley Stamp

Chopwell Stewards

Lilly Collinson
Mary Glease
Eileen Wright

Church Member Representatives to Church Council

Ian Holmes
Rachel Smith
Jim Clark
Evelyn Kane
Sandra Dixon
Andy Innes
Ryan Heslop
Ranjith Rosa
David Robson
Eunice Peacock
Hannah Dawson
Simon Mackie
Christine Middlemiss

b. **Principal Address**

Strathmore Road Methodist Church
Strathmore Road
Rowlands Gill
NE39 1HX

c. **Property Custodian Trustees**

The Trustees for Methodist
Church Purposes
Central Buildings
Oldham Street
Manchester
M1 5JQ

d. **Bankers**

Lloyds Bank
44 Front Street
Whickham
Newcastle upon Tyne
NE16 4DS

Central Finance Board of the
Methodist Church
9 Bonhill Street
London
EC2A 4PE

CAF Bank
5 Kings Hill Avenue
Kings Hill West
Malling
ME194TA

The Trustees for
Methodist Church Purposes
Central Buildings
Oldham Street
Manchester
M1 5JQ

2. Structure, Governance and Management

The Methodist Church is said to have been created after John Wesley's conversion on 24 May 1738 and is a Free Church. Strathmore Road Methodist Church (SRMC) is part of the South West Tyneside Circuit and Newcastle upon Tyne District of The Methodist Church, the governing body of which is the annual conference of The Methodist Church. The Methodist Church Act 1976 gives the authority under which The Methodist Church acts. The constitution, practice and discipline of The Methodist Church, together with The Deed of Union (Act of 1929 adopted 1932), govern the objectives and activities of The Methodist Church.

In general, The Methodist Church is excepted from the need to register as a charity by the combined effects of Section 46(4) (A) of The Charities Act 1993 and Paragraph 4(2)(C) of the Charities (exception from registration) Regulations 1996 as amended by Statutory Instrument 2014 No 242. Strathmore Road Methodist Church ("the Church") however, registered as a separate Registered Charity, number 1179206, in England and Wales, effective from 16 July 2018.

The Church's Managing Trustees listed above, are all lay people, except for the Minister (Rev. Ann Varker), who is ordained by The Methodist Church and stationed to the South West Tyneside Circuit. The Youth Worker (Keith Crulley) is employed by SRMC.

The Managing Trustees meet at least three times per year as the Church Council. They take all major decisions and delegate some of their day-to-day responsibility to a Leadership Team, all of whom are Trustees. The Church Council is chaired by the Minister.

The Trustees who have served during the year and since the year-end are appointed annually by the Church, by the general meeting, or by being ex-officio. The Church's day-to-day activities are managed by those appointed to do so by the Church Council, including the Leadership Team, the Pastoral Committee, the Finance & Property Committee, the Worship Team and the Youth Worker.

During the year ended 31 August 2022 and up to the date of approval of the Report and accounts, the following changes in Trustees took place:

- Appointment effective from 19 October 2021 – Colin Robson
- Appointment effective from 24 April 2022 – William Gray
- Appointment effective from 17 June 2022 – Sue Robson
- Appointment effective from 20 October 2022 – Bryn Lauder
- Appointment effective from 20 October 2022 – Keith Stamp

- Retirement effective from 16 February 2022 – Ali Clamp
- Retirement effective from 24 April 2022 – Fiona Buckley
- Retirement effective from 24 April 2022 – Deborah Proud
- Retirement effective from 19 October 2022 – Kris Manuel

3. Objectives and Mission

SRMC seeks to be a loving, welcoming and active Christian community, serving and sharing with the world around us, following the example and teaching of Jesus Christ. Currently, we serve the world and community by providing premises for church, community and charitable use, as well as working with children and youth, refugees, the elderly and the socially disadvantaged.

Section 4 of The Methodist Church Act 1976 states:
The purposes of The Methodist Church are and shall be, purposes deemed to have been since the date of union the advancement of

a) the Christian faith in accordance with the doctrinal standards and the discipline of The Methodist Church
b) any charitable purpose for the time being of any Connexional, District, Circuit, local or other organisation of The Methodist Church
c) any charitable purpose for the time being of any society or institution being a society or institution subsidiary or ancillary to The Methodist Church
d) any purpose for the time being of any charity being a charity subsidiary or ancillary to The Methodist Church.

SRMC Mission Statement

With the help of the Holy Spirit, we seek to live our lives as a loving community with each other and the world around us, following the example and teaching of Jesus Christ and worshipping God.

As a church we seek to be:

A loving community to

- Offer pastoral support, fellowship and prayer to all recognising that it is an expression of God's love
- Be a welcoming church that promotes a sense of belonging and values every member
- Share the good news of God's love made known through Jesus Christ with all ages
- Be aware of the needs that arise in the local community and wider world and respond as we are able
- Engage with other Churches and organisations to promote justice and peace and bring good to our world as part of God's mission

Following Jesus to:

- Help people grow and sustain their faith through Biblical teaching, fellowship and prayer
- Encourage everyone to use their gifts and exercise their ministry in the church and in daily life
- Provide opportunities for people of different stages of faith to explore the way of Christ
- Promote a pattern of whole life discipleship that recognises that being a Christian impacts all aspects of life and calls for responsible stewardship of money, time and resources
- Enable the nurture and development of children and young people in the Christian Faith

Worshipping God:

- Worship in ways that are honouring to God, that help us focus upon Jesus Christ and increase our awareness of his presence through the Holy Spirit
- Develop opportunities for prayer and spending time seeking God
- Provide worship that is welcoming, family friendly, and accessible to people of different abilities
- Encourage participation in worship, recognising and utilising the talents and gifts of the congregation
- Develop forms of worship that are relevant to the world in which we live, that are uplifting, challenging and of good quality.

Strathmore Road Methodist Church in Rowlands Gill joined with Chopwell Methodist Church on the 1 September 2019 to become one church on two sites. The joint churches have sought to explore together what it means to be one church family, with two centres of mission. The Church is now seeking to develop its mission and witness across the Derwent Valley. In so doing, we encourage lifelong learning in the Christian faith and seek to provide opportunities for people to develop their faith and understanding.

Strathmore Road Methodist Church at Chopwell

The Church Council of SRMC, meeting on 21 June 2022, gave consent to the solemnization of marriages of same-sex couples at the Church. An application is in process to register the building situated at Strathmore Road, Rowlands Gill, for the marriage of same-sex couples.

4. Activities and Achievements

a) Worship Activities and Groups for All

The Church currently has 152 members, encompassing all ages, including a thriving ministry among families, children and youth.

Within the Church people appreciate different forms of worship and we value being able to offer a diversity of styles in our services, to enable people to encounter the living God and express their worship.

Our Sunday morning services at Rowlands Gill continue to be geared towards all ages and use contemporary music, media and performing arts. Most Sundays we have a short time of worship together before the children and young people move into Sunday Club where there are groups for children aged 4 to 16. Family services are held throughout the year when all ages worship together.

At the same time, a morning service is offered at Chopwell, which is more traditional in style. This is led once a month by the minister with other Sundays led by Circuit preachers.

The Sunday evening worship at Rowlands Gill aims to utilise the best in traditional Methodist worship with the aid of a pipe organ. Holy Communion is celebrated on a monthly basis in all three services.

Discipleship Groups

We encourage lifelong learning in the Christian faith and seek to provide opportunities for people to develop their faith and understanding.

We have small group meetings which offer encouragement, fellowship, Bible study and prayer. Where a series is being followed in the Sunday services, the discipleship groups will often follow the series with Bible studies. At other times groups will decide on the topic to study.

In addition, there is also a pastoral group which meets informally for fellowship and support.

Prayer Chain

A number of years ago a WhatsApp group of members was started to provide prayer support to those in need, ill health and difficult situations. Prayer needs are identified and information is shared to the group, with strictest confidence observed. Members pray individually in their own homes. Regular responses are shared. The prayer chain has provided great comfort to many people and we hope it will continue.

Strathmore Road Methodist Church at Chopwell

Chopwell Methodist Church has a traditional Sunday worship where there is a small regular congregation, and we welcome everyone. The Wednesday Morning Coffee Pop-In is well attended as is a regular Monthly Coffee Morning. A 'Quiet garden' has been developed in the church grounds, with the installation of raised flower beds and living willow hedging. This is used by members of the church and community for quiet reflection.

b) Children and Youth Group Activities for All

The Church has a well-established children, youth and families ministry, based around a number of regular core groups, as well as a number of different one-off events. Our activities enable us as a church to reach children ranging from new-born up to 18 years old. Our regular activities include Sunday Club (a weekly club for children of all ages taking place alongside Sunday morning worship), Sparks (a monthly Saturday morning club for children aged 5-10) and several groups aimed at young people.

Sunday Club

Sunday Club provides two groups for ages 4-18 on a Sunday morning split into 'Bubbles' and Xstream'. Everybody joins in the service together then the children go into their own groups for games, bible stories, crafts and chat. It is a lively and thriving group that enjoy getting stuck into the theme of the day. Once a month they meet together for 'forest church' around a campfire, where the addition of marshmallows and hot chocolate are a welcome treat. They have enjoyed getting to know the church grounds and helping with the Church's commitment to 'eco-church' status.

Sparks

Sparks is a group for children aged 5-10, held every second Saturday of the month during term time. We meet for plenty of games, crafts, snacks and lots of opportunities to 'pie' leaders in the face! Each week there is a visit from our resident storyteller, who brings us a new and exciting Bible story. Sparks is an afternoon of fun and noise for kids in the church main hall and an afternoon of peace and quiet, the Saturday papers and a freshly brewed tea or coffee for the parents in the small hall. Sparks also hosts a number of different events throughout the year, including a Christmas party and Summer BBQ. During the Covid-19 pandemic we have held Sparks get togethers online.

Rock Solid

Rock Solid meets every other Sunday evening and is for boys and girls aged 9 to 13. A fun-packed evening of games, discussion, competitions and thought about the big issues that affect life friends, parents, school, the future and what God has to say about them. They also enjoy regular socials like movie nights.

ID

ID is a group for boys aged 13 and over. It takes place on alternate Sundays to Rock Solid. ID is a great opportunity for youngsters to hang out, play games as well as chat and discuss issues that affect their lives. They got used to meeting around a campfire during Covid restrictions and have kept this as a regular feature as part of their activities.

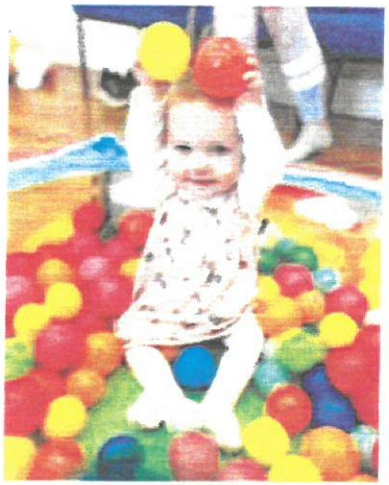
Girls Group

Girls group is a new group for girls aged 9-14 meeting on Sunday nights every other week. They play games, chat, pray, get to know the Bible and enjoy keeping their own journals of their faith journeys. They are lively bunch who enjoy looking at creative ways to pray and worship.

c) Other Activities for the Church and Local Community

Little Gems

Little Gems has been running for four years now and has become a huge success. Our group is community focused and is made up of parents from the local area with their babies and toddlers. We meet fortnightly on Wednesday mornings in term time for 2 hours of play, music, coffee and crafts. The aim of Little Gems is not only to allow our children to socialise and develop new skills, but for parents to relax, chat and compare joys and troubles on all things parenting! Due to the popularity and growth of the group, with an average of 25 children per week, we meet in the large hall with hot drinks and snacks being served in the small hall. We have a clothes swap rail and parents frequently exchange toys and books. We have a superb team of volunteers from SRMC who support with set up, set down, welcoming, serving drinks and engaging in conversations with our lovely 'little gems'.



Bridges

The Bridges Group was formed in 1992. It aims to create a bridge between the Church and the local community. Over the years the group has organised many community events and festivals. Among the Church's ongoing community projects - the Drop-in for local refugee families, Community Football and Holiday Fun scheme for local children, all originated from the Bridges Group. Many fundraising events have been organised for the benefit of various charities.

This year began with our Annual Walk, when 50 people enjoyed walking along the Northumberland coast and visiting Bamburgh Castle. Our traditional post-Christmas Family Walk took place in the local forest park but had to be scaled back due to ongoing Covid concerns. Having missed out on the Bridges church Family Holiday in 2021 because of lockdown, over 70 people safely enjoyed a week-long holiday together in the Lake District in 2022.

Getting people back together was the focus in the Spring and Summer with a party night in the local Community Centre and a Picnic for 100 people including local Syrian & Ukrainian families.

The group continues to prioritise on building and maintaining relationships with the wider Church family and the local community.

Men's Breakfast group

The Men's Breakfast group has been meeting for more than 30 years. It offers the men of the Church opportunities to get together, invite friends and socialise around a varied programme of events and activities. Meeting monthly over an early Saturday morning breakfast or a pint in a local pub on Friday evenings, activities include speakers from charities and other organisations, visits to places of interest, local history and countryside walks. Around 15 to 18 people regularly attend each month.

Newcastle Victorian Tunnel

This past year's activities have once again been curtailed due to lockdowns and Covid-19 restrictions however, meeting online, the group enjoyed presentations on mission work in Kenya, an Arctic Circle adventure and a local history talk.

A virtual tour of Newcastle's old inns and taverns provided the annual Christmas get together. On the relaxation of Covid restrictions, the group were able to meet outdoors with a local village heritage walk and a visit to a nearby community garden.

Open Doors

This began over 40 years ago as an open and ecumenical group for women of all ages from Rowlands Gill and the surrounding area, to develop friendship and fellowship by sharing different Christian viewpoints and common concerns in a friendly and caring atmosphere. Open Doors is a welcoming fellowship for women and meets on Friday mornings during school term time. There is a varied programme with speakers (some informative, some inspirational) and activities (sometimes creative, sometimes recreational). We meet informally and chat over coffee, with no fixed membership as such - friends drop in and out as often or as rarely as they wish.

Ladies Club

The Ladies Club first met in 1962 and continues to meet now on a monthly basis on the second Friday of each month. Speakers are invited from various walks of life to address a well-attended number of friends in the group. This year the Ladies Club celebrated their 60 years of fellowship and friendship with a special Songs of Praise Service on 15 May, followed by refreshments.

Spread Drama Group

Spread is a performing arts group that meets weekly during term time. The aim is to provide an inclusive drama group rooted in the belief that drama enables confidence building, socialising, and aids mental health. The group is intergenerational and is accessible for all. Young learn from old and old from young. They perform at least one production a year, including an affordable pantomime for the community.

Church Community WhatsApp

This group continues to offer support and friendship in an instant, direct way. The space continues to be used for prayers, news, sharing photographs and experiences, chit-chat and supportive encouragement. Both clergy and laity use the group, and it connects members across a wide age span and background. It has been a lifeline to those who are restricted to their homes particularly during times when we have been unable to meet face to face. This relatively new method of contact is something we are now actively seeking to expand.

The Way Weekend

In October, SRMC hosted a Circuit event named THE WAY. Taking inspiration from the bible passage in Acts which tells of the first followers of Christ who followed 'the way'. This was a weekend of Worship, Prayer, Preaching, Teaching and Fellowship.

The weekend was made up of main worship meetings, talks and seminars led by both local and visiting speakers from other churches and denominations. As well as providing space to discuss and share our faith walk with each other, it was a wonderful weekend of drawing closer to God as a family and spending time in His presence together. A full children's programme was also arranged and facilitated by Circuit Children and Youth Workers.

The Weekend was well attended and very much enjoyed by everyone who came along.

d) Other Activities to Help and Support the Local Community

Warm Spaces

Gateshead Council have encouraged local organisations to offer their accommodation as Warm Spaces in order to support those struggling with the cost of living crisis. The warm spaces will be places where people can come and receive a warm welcome, get warm, have a free hot drink, maybe grab a snack and charge their phone. SRMC was one of the first to respond to this initiative and has been accepted as part of the scheme, which will be publicised locally and on the Council website. From October 2022 we look forward to developing our offer to meet the needs of our local community.

Rescued Food Market

Since February 2021 a weekly 'rescued food' market has operated from the Church halls. This offers surplus food collected from supermarkets which was initially free to visitors, however a financial donation of £3 is now encouraged to defray ongoing costs. The market is open to anyone and is attended by up to 50 people each week. It attracts a wide range of customers from those in financial difficulties, to people concerned about the environment and wishing to reduce food waste.

The market is run in partnership with *The Pickle Palace* a local community interest group which has operated in the area for about 5 years. A number of volunteers from the Church and the wider community are involved in collecting food, welcoming customers, running the market, and clearing away.

Pay as You Feel Café

Our Church Café is open on Mondays (excluding bank holidays) from 9am until 1pm. It is a Pay as you Feel Café where all visitors receive a warm welcome. We serve cereals, pastries, cake, biscuits, soup, tea, coffee and cold drinks in a pleasant room overlooking the garden. Food choices vary according to what is available from our rescued food market.

The café operates alongside the market and a Citizens' Advice Drop-In each Monday morning.

Partnership Churches

Along with our partnership churches ie. St Barnabas and St Patricks we are honoured to work and support our friends from Syria and more recently the Ukraine.

Syrian refugee `drop in`

The Drop In meets weekly on a Tuesday morning at our neighbours St. Barnabas Church Hall and is run by volunteers from both Strathmore Road and St. Barnabas Churches. We aim to befriend and support the Syrian refugees living in the area. Our support takes the form of familiarising the families with the local community, bus travel and surrounding amenities, also encouraging English conversation to aid integration and independence. All our families are adapting to their change in environment at their own pace. We are aware that the families who have been here the longest require less support now and in turn, offer relevant support to those that have arrived more recently.

Ukrainian Refugee 'drop in'

The Drop-in started in May 2022 and met weekly on Wednesday mornings at St Barnabas church hall and is run by volunteers from both Strathmore Road and St. Barnabas Churches. In the latter part of 2022 the Drop-in moved to a fortnightly activity. It has been attended by several of the Refugee support team from Gateshead Metropolitan Borough Council with the aim of supporting Ukrainian refugees in matters such as employment, housing, school placements and accessing services. Along with volunteers, they help the Refugees familiarise themselves with their local surroundings. Some of the Refugee hosts also attend. We aim to provide a comfortable and friendly environment for all that attend.

Summer "Holiday Fun"

This group originated from the "Holiday Hunger" concerns over 6 years ago. We provided meals and activities for local disadvantaged children during the summer school holiday period when free school meals were not available. We aim to befriend and build relationships with the families of those children attending. Food bank vouchers are available each week.

We have run this activity now for 7 years, missing one year due to Covid. It runs weekly on Wednesdays during the summer holidays and is held at Strathmore Road. This year we had 50 children attend. There were 48 volunteers sought from all the churches in Rowlands Gill. We provided two meals each day, breakfast and a two-course lunch. We aim to provide healthy meals to include several portions of fresh fruit and vegetables. The activities are enriching and aim to encourage exercise and well-being. This year we organised outings on three of the days.

Football

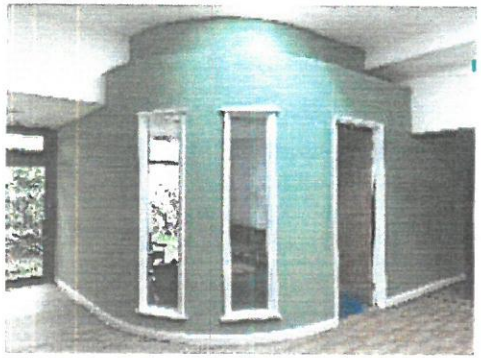
Our community football project has proved extremely popular again this year. Partnering with Ambassadors Football we run each Thursday evening during the lighter nights April to October, providing age-appropriate sessions for children aged 4 and up. As well as providing a healthy physical activity the sessions help to promote community cohesion with groups of parents and carers chatting on the side lines as the games are in progress.

This year the Highfield Community House opened and the football sessions provided a great opportunity for the staff team to meet local children and begin to build relationships. On some weeks we had up to 60 children partaking. The young people appreciate the activity and some are now coming to other Church-based events, such as Rock Solid and I.D.

Church Redevelopment Project

The year started with our celebration weekend in September 2021 to formally open the buildings and to celebrate the very special achievements. The event was well attended and it was great to see all areas of the building and grounds in use. For some people it was their first opportunity to see the building post Covid. Feedback from those attending was extremely positive.

As the year progressed the contractor has been addressing identified defects and SRMC has been completing some of the Direct Works items that had been identified to be completed locally, outwith the building contract. The final sum for the contractors account was agreed and settled with a final retention payment to be made once all the contractor defects have been made good. With some small elements of work to complete the development account has not yet been finalised but it is now evident that the project will complete within budget.



During the year user group gradually began returning to the building and attendances began to grow slowly towards pre Covid levels.

Some new groups have now started using the building and it is wonderful to see many of the facilities in use, the flexibility being utilised and the building beginning to realise some of its potential. Our aim was to provide 21st Century facilities in order to serve our community and enable our mission to grow. Only time will tell if we have succeeded however, the early signs are encouraging. Spaces can be booked online via our website.

e) Other activities wider than the local Community

The Church has a growing awareness of being part of a global community.

Eco-Church

Responding to our stewardship of the planet.
SRMC takes its responsibility for the environment very seriously. Eco considerations impact all areas of church life and we monitor our performance and improvements by our membership of the A Rocha Eco Church Scheme.
Eco Church is an ecumenical scheme which assesses environmental performance across a number of areas of Church life:

- Worship and Teaching
- Building
- Land and Gardens
- Community
- Lifestyle

Since achieving a Bronze Award in February 2020 further improvements have been made in all areas. Here are some examples:

- Climate Sunday and Eco Church services are held at least annually and prior to COP 26 we held a prayer vigil and attended demonstrations and prayer walks
- The redevelopment of the building in 2020 saw the installation of more efficient heating and lighting
- An area of the garden has been set aside for re-wilding and more pollinator friendly planting completed
- A weekly 'rescued food' market and a pay as you feel café was set up in 2021 to save waste food from landfill
- We share ideas, tips and support and encourage each other to live responsibly via our WhatsApp group and newsletter

We were delighted to receive a Silver Award in May 2022 and look forward to further improvements as we 'Go for Gold"

South Africa

Our Church community continues to support the work of Ebenezer Mission in Izingolweni, South Africa where all aspects of their work are growing. More and more people are attending worship and Bible study and the work among the young people is also thriving. The creche now has full time teachers and numbers are rising rapidly. The after-school homework club which helps young people with their schoolwork and offers them a meal, has been very successful. One of the young men has now been accepted for a place on a college course which will lead to an Engineering degree. This involved him having to move away from Izingolweni to be within traveling distance of the college and a donation was sent from our Church to help support him in his new venture.

5. Financial Review

The Accounts for the year ended 31 August 2022 are set out at the end of the Trustees' Report. The Church funds are made up of a general unrestricted fund, a restricted fund – the Benevolent Fund, an endowment fund – the Development Fund, and the funds of three Internal Organisations – the Children & Youth Project, Bridges and the Spread Drama Group. Only the unrestricted fund is available to meet the day to day running costs of the Church.

Unrestricted fund

During the year ended 31 August 2022 there was a deficit of payments over receipts of £3,056 (2021: £1,418) before internal transfers from the Development Fund of £1,491 and Bridges of £405, totalling £1,896 (2021: transfer to the Children & Youth Project of £5,000). Bills were paid promptly and the outstanding liabilities at the year-end (ie. invoices relating to before the year-end paid after the year-end) amounted to £89 (2021: £129). Collections and funds raised specifically for other charities or external organisations are excluded from both receipts and payments.

The Finance and Property Committee reviews the budget each June for the following year and the net deficit of £3,056 compared favourably with the forecast deficit at the start of the year of £6,600 (before internal transfers), despite the continuing impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. The reasons for the lower deficit were increased giving and a number of fundraising events, together with cost savings on property maintenance and spreading of insurance costs.

Offerings and tax recovered via gift aid totalled £65,235 which was higher than last year's total of £60,800. Letting receipts from hiring out the premises improved from £3,260 last year to £6,021 this year. Last year's lettings were affected by the closure of the Church buildings for the redevelopment from September to December 2020 and also restrictions due to the pandemic.

Within payments from the unrestricted fund there are three major areas over which the Church has little control (i) the Circuit assessment (ii) property repairs and (iii) utility bills. Repairs at Strathmore Road were kept to a minimum this year following the redevelopment of the building. Utility costs are monitored closely and steps taken to obtain the most cost-effective contracts. We wish to record our grateful thanks to all those who work tirelessly to carry out repairs and maintenance to the Church buildings and grounds and keep costs to a minimum.

Restricted Fund

The Benevolent Fund is available to make small payments at the Minister's discretion in cases of individual hardship or poverty. There was one receipt of £50 and payments totalling £52, resulting in a balance carried forward of £178 (2021: £180).

Endowment Fund

The purpose of the Development Fund is described above under 'Church Redevelopment Project'. In accordance with guidance issued by the Methodist Church in July 2019, "Accounting for tangible fixed assets", donations intended to provide an asset for long-term use ie. a fixed asset, should be classified as an expendable endowment and not a restricted income fund. Consequently, the Development Fund has been classified as an expendable endowment in the accounts. During the year, the fund received £5,627 (2021: £173,995) and made payments of £10,404 (2021: £461,967) and a transfer of £1,491 (2021: £0) to the Church unrestricted funds, being the refund from the builder of energy costs used during the redevelopment. Payments during the year included the repayment of the first instalment of £6,000 of the loan of £30,000 received from The William Leech Charity in the year ended 31 August 2021. The balance on the Fund carried forward was £32,801 (2021: £39,069).

Internal Organisations

The Internal Organisations manage their finances separately from the main Church funds but report to the Church Council.

The Children & Youth Project made net payments during the year of £5,339 (2021: £5,693 before receipt of the transfer of £5,000 from the Church unrestricted fund). The balance at the year-end was £23,326 (2021: £28,665).

Bridges had net receipts for the year of £1,368 (2021: net payments of £770) before a transfer to the Church unrestricted fund of £405, being the proceeds of a fundraising event. This resulted in a balance of £9,028 (2021: £ 8,065) at the year-end.

Spread Drama Group had net receipts of £849 (2021 net payments: £60), leaving a balance carried forward at the year-end of £4,315 (2021: £3,466).

Further information on all funds is provided in the accounts and the notes to the accounts.

Reserves policy

Unrestricted funds

The Church recognises the need to maintain a reserve in the General Fund to enable it to function effectively. Additionally, the Church considers it appropriate to maintain a reserve as a contingency, for unplanned expenditure or indeed, reduced income. The Trustees have established their mission aims, including the resources available in terms of people, property and money. Mission initiatives and projects are fully costed, or estimates made of projected costs which incorporate the needs of the buildings and the necessary requirements of the Quinquennial Inspection Report(s). The Church Council is aware of the continuing need to maintain an appropriate level of reserves and has agreed that any General Fund reserve should be a minimum of £40,000, up to a maximum of six months operational expenditure. In conjunction with the Finance & Property Committee, the Treasurer monitors the reserve and reviews this policy annually.

The Church Council recognises the need to be accountable as Charity Trustees for all income and expenditure and in that regard, submits an Annual Report in accordance with the requirements of the Methodist Conference and the Charity Commission guidance in CC19.

General Church running expenses for the current year ending 31 August 2023 are expected to be around £91,000 (2022: £88,000) per annum. Therefore, the required reserves for unrestricted funds are between £40,000 and £45,500 (2021: £44,000). The general funds at the year-end are approximately £3,000 less than the minimum required reserve. The Church Council is aware of the continuing need to build up the reserves and has taken measures to do this, such as, a review of giving campaign, and various groups have held fundraising events.

Restricted funds

There is a very small Minister's Benevolent Fund, which is distributable at the Minister's discretion to those in need. It is hoped this can be increased in future years.

Internal Organisations

Children & Youth Project (fully restricted) – This account receives funding from time to time which is allocated to particular projects however, all funds held in this account are treated as restricted to paying the salaries of lay employees and supporting activities such as Sunday Club and for children and youth generally. The sources of funding vary however, it is important to retain an appropriate level of reserves to enable the project to continue planned operations for at least 6 months in the event of an unexpected fall in income and also, to meet any redundancy and related costs in the event of its termination. The reserves in excess of these amounts are committed to fund the recruitment during 2022-

23 of a new Children and Families Pastor and a Youth & Community Outreach Worker.

Bridges and Spread do not aim to make a significant surplus and the reserves at the year-end are held to enable them to carry on their activities, including their community projects, in the following year.

Funds held by the Internal Organisations are not available to meet general Church expenses.

Endowment Fund
The Church Redevelopment Fund is made up of specific donations, grants, and a loan, net of payments, relating to the development of the Church building at Strathmore Road, which started in summer 2020 and was completed by December 2020. An interest free loan of £30,000 was secured in October 2020 from The William Leech Charity to cover a short-term funding gap and is repayable in 5 equal instalments of £6,000. The first instalment was paid in October 2021. The endowment funds are required to repay the loan and meet any final costs of the development. Further details can be found earlier in the Report under 'Church Redevelopment Project'.

Signed on behalf of the Trustees by

Ann Varker

Rev Ann Varker

Date: 15th February 2023

SRMC

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES OF STRATHMORE ROAD METHODIST CHURCH Charity no 1179206
ON THE ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2022

Respective responsibilities of Trustees and Examiner

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 (the Charities Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under Section 145 of the Charities Act,
- to follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Charity Commission (under Section 145(5)(b) of the Charities Act), and
- to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of Independent Examiner's Report

My examination was carried out in accordance with general Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from the trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair' view and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

Independent Examiner's Statement

I have completed my examination and confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination which give me cause to believe that, in any material respect:

- the accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Charities 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 not obtained independent verification of all investments with the Trustees for Methodist Church Purposes ("TMCP") or held in other Trusts, Bank balances and Funds at the Central Finance Board of the Methodist Church ("CFB"), which are individually in excess of £10,000 (ten thousand pounds) at the balance sheet date.

Signed by P N Nelmes Date 14/3/2023

Peter Nelmes FCCA
Glenavon, Peth Lane, Ryton, NE40 3PB

SRMC

STRATHMORE ROAD METHODIST CHURCH
YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2022

RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS ACCOUNT

CHURCH excluding Internal Organisations	Note	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Fund Benevolent	Endowment Fund Development	Total Funds 2022	Total Funds 2021
	1	£	£	£	£	£
RECEIPTS	2					
Offerings and Tax recovered	3	65,235	0	5,625	70,860	204,705
Bank interest		125	0	2	127	146
Lettings		6,021	0	0	6,021	3,260
Other receipts		4,644	50	0	4,694	40,691
TOTAL RECEIPTS		76,025	50	5,627	81,702	248,802
PAYMENTS	4					
Circuit Assessment	5	59,350	0	0	59,350	59,000
Donations		141	0	0	141	436
Repairs and Maintenance		3,001	0	0	3,001	2,779
Utilities		8,010	0	0	8,010	7,746
Endowment payments		0	0	10,311	10,311	461,770
Other payments		8,579	52	93	8,724	6,481
TOTAL PAYMENTS		79,081	52	10,404	89,537	538,212
NET (PAYMENTS)/RECEIPTS FOR THE YEAR		-3,056	-2	-4,777	-7,835	-289,410
Total funds brought forward		38,261	180	39,069	77,510	371,920
Transfers with Internal Funds & Organisations	6	1,896	0	-1,491	405	-5,000
CHURCH FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD	8 & 9	37,101	178	32,801	70,080	77,510

SRMC

STRATHMORE ROAD METHODIST CHURCH
YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2022
RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS ACCOUNT

INTERNAL ORGANISATIONS REPORTING TO THE CHURCH COUNCIL	Notes	Receipts	Payments	Net receipts/ (payments)	Transfers with Church	Opening balances	Closing balances
		£	£	£	£	£	£
Children & Youth Project		6,168	11,507	-5,339	0	28,665	23,326
Bridges		6,666	5,298	1,368	-405	8,065	9,028
Spread Drama Group		4,827	3,978	849	0	3,466	4,315
Total of Internal Organisations		17,661	20,783	-3,122	-405	40,196	36,669
Church totals from previous page		81,702	89,537	-7,835	405	77,510	70,080
TOTAL FOR CHURCH INCLUDING INTERNAL ORGANISATIONS		99,363	110,320	-10,957	0	117,706	106,749

STATEMENT OF ASSETS AND LIABILITIES

CHURCH FUNDS HELD AT 31 AUGUST	Notes	Opening balances 2021	Closing balances 2022
		£	£
Cash in hand		200	200
Bank Current accounts		45,054	38,349
Central Finance Board of the Methodist Church Deposit account		32,256	31,531
Total of Church accounts		77,510	70,080
Total funds held by Internal Organisations		40,196	36,669
TOTAL CASH FUNDS		117,706	106,749
OTHER ASSETS AND LIABILITIES			
Land and buildings	10	3,155,717	3,457,362
Plant and equipment at insured value		142,944	158,523
Loan for redevelopment	11	30,000	24,000
Other liabilities		129	89

Signed on behalf of the Trustees by:

Rev. Ann Varker, Chair

Jill N Catterall, Treasurer

Date 15th February 2023

STRATHMORE ROAD METHODIST CHURCH
YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2022
NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS

1 **Accounting basis** - The accounts have been prepared on the cash basis. "Gross income" for the purpose of determining whether accruals accounting is required, excludes receipts of endowment capital. The gross income of the Church for the year ended 31 August 2022 for this purpose is therefore, total receipts of £99,363 less endowment capital receipts of £5,627 giving a figure of £93,736. As this is less than the threshold of £250,000, accruals accounting is not required.

2 **Receipts** do not include collections or funds raised specifically for other charities or external organisations. See note 7 for details of these amounts.

3 **Offerings and Tax recovered** for 2022 for the Church Unrestricted funds includes Gift Aid of £10,234 (2021: £10,333)

4 **Payments** do not include the passing on of amounts collected or raised specifically for other charities or external organisations. See Note 7 for details of these amounts.

5 **The Circuit Assessment** is the Church's share of the Circuit's annual costs, primarily relating to Ministers' salaries and housing.

6 **Transfers with Internal Funds & Organisations** - During the year the Church received £1,491 from the Development Fund, which was the reimbursement from the builder for energy costs used during the redevelopment, and £405 from Bridges from a fundraising event. (2021: The Church contributed £5,000 to the Children & Youth Project).

7 **Money received and passed on to external organisations**

	2022				2021
	Church	Youth	Bridges	Total	Total
	£	£	£	£	£
Brought forward			2,350	2,350	132
Collections/Receipts	808		12,856	13,664	2,850
Payments	-808		-13,946	-14,754	-632
Balance still to be paid at 31 August 2022	0	0	1,260	1,260	2,350

The receipts and payments for Bridges relate primarily to the annual Church holiday to Keswick.

8 **Restricted Fund** - The Church has one restricted fund known as the Benevolent Fund, which is available for the Minister to spend at her discretion in cases of individual hardship or poverty.

9 **Endowment Fund** - The Church has one endowment fund known as the Development Fund which is for a major building project to extend and redevelop the Church buildings, which took place in the years ended 31 August 2020 and 2021.
In accordance with guidance issued by the Methodist Church in July 2019, "Accounting for tangible fixed assets", donations intended to provide an asset for long-term use, i.e. a fixed asset, should be classified as an expendable endowment and not a restricted income fund. Consequently, the Development Fund has been classified as an expendable endowment.
The Endowment Fund has been shown in a separate column in the Receipts and Payments Account and an analysis is provided below, showing the comparative figures for the prior year.

	2022	2021
	£	£
Receipts		
Donations and grants	5,625	143,905
Bank interest	2	90
Loan received	0	30,000
	5,627	173,995
Payments		
Building project payments	-4,311	-461,770
Bank charges	-93	-197
Loan repayment	-6,000	0
Net (payments)/receipts	-4,777	-287,972
Funds brought forward	39,069	327,041
Transfer to Unrestricted Funds (see Note 6)	-1,491	0
Funds carried forward	32,801	39,069

STRATHMORE ROAD METHODIST CHURCH
YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2022
NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS (CONTINUED)

10 **Land and buildings -** The Church land and buildings are owned by the Trustees for Methodist Church Purposes as custodians. The Church at Strathmore Road opened in 1902 and the halls were added in 1958 but there is no information available about their historic costs. In conjunction with the redevelopment of the Church buildings, the Trustees have estimated the value of the land, based on average land values in Gateshead. The land value will be reviewed every 5 years.
The existing buildings are included at their insurance value in accordance with Methodist Church guidance.

	2022	2021
	£	£
Land at Strathmore Road - estimated value	388,000	388,000
Insurance value of redeveloped buildings	2,698,231	2,433,059
	3,086,231	2,821,059
Chopwell Methodist Church - insurance value	371,131	334,658
	3,457,362	3,155,717

* Note only: Cost of redevelopment to 31 August 2022 £667,358.

11 **Loan** - In October 2020 The William Leech Charity made a loan of £30,000 to cover completion of the redevelopment of the Church buildings, prior to receipt of an equivalent amount of pledged donations. The loan is interest-free and is repayable in 5 equal, annual instalments, the first being paid in October 2021.

STRATHMORE ROAD METHODIST CHURCH, ROWLANDS GILL

England & Wales - Charity number 1179206

Accounts

Strathmore Road **Methodist** Church

Trustees' Annual Report and Accounts

Year ended 31 August 2021

Registered Charity Number 1179206

(England & Wales)

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1. Legal and Administration Information

a. Trustees and Responsibilities (at date of approval)

Rev Ann Varker	(Chair)
Alistair Clamp	(Church Secretary)
Jill Catterall	(Church Treasurer)
Ranjith Rosa	(Development Project Treasurer)
James Clark	(Church Steward)
Lily Collinson	(Church Steward)
Mary Glease	(Church Steward)
Linda Innes	(Church Steward)
David Johnson	(Church Steward)
Helen Johnson	(Church Steward)
Deborah Proud	(Church Steward)
Lesley Stamp	(Church Steward)
Eileen Wright	(Church Steward)

Gillian Johnson	(Pastoral Secretary)
Trevor Peacock	(Property Steward)
Keith Crulley	(Youth Worker)
Fiona Buckley	
Jim Clark	
Sandra Dixon	
Ryan Heslop	
Ian Holmes	
Andy Innes	
Evelyn Kane	
Kris Manuel	
Eunice Peacock	
David Robson	
Rachel Smith	

b. **Principal Address**
Strathmore Road Methodist Church
Strathmore Road
Rowlands Gill
NE39 1HX

c. **Property Custodian Trustees**
The Trustees for Methodist
Church Purposes
Central Buildings
Oldham Street
Manchester
M1 5JQ

d. **Bankers**
Lloyds Bank
44 Front Street
Whickham
Newcastle upon Tyne
NE16 4DS

Central Finance Board of the
Methodist Church
9 Bonhill Street
London
EC2A 4PE

CAF Bank
5 Kings Hill Avenue
Kings Hill West
Malling
ME194TA

The Trustees for
Methodist Church Purposes
Central Buildings
Oldham Street
Manchester
M1 5JQ

2. Structure, Governance and Management

The Methodist Church is said to have been created after John Wesley's conversion on 24 May 1738 and is a Free Church. Strathmore Road Methodist Church (SRMC) is part of the South West Tyneside Circuit and Newcastle upon Tyne District of The Methodist Church, the governing body of which is the annual Conference of The Methodist Church. The Methodist Church Act 1976 gives the authority under which The Methodist Church acts. The constitution, practice and discipline of The Methodist Church, together with The Deed of Union (Act of 1929 adopted 1932), govern the objectives and activities of The Methodist Church.

In general, The Methodist Church is excepted from the need to register as a charity by the combined effects of Section 46(4) (A) of The Charities Act 1993 and Paragraph 4(2)(C) of the Charities (exception from registration) Regulations 1996 as amended by Statutory Instrument 2014 No 242. Strathmore Road Methodist Church ("the Church") however, registered as a separate Registered Charity, number 1179206, in England and Wales, effective from 16 July 2018.

The Church's Managing Trustees listed above, are all lay people, except for the Minister (Rev. Ann Varker), who is ordained by The Methodist Church and stationed to the South West Tyneside Circuit. The Youth Worker (Keith Crulley) is employed by SRMC.

The Managing Trustees meet at least three times per year as the Church Council. They take all major decisions and delegate some of their day-to-day responsibility to a Leadership Team, all of whom are Trustees. The Church Council is chaired by the Minister.

The Trustees who have served during the year and since the year-end are appointed annually by the Church, by the general meeting, or by being ex-officio. The Church's day-to-day activities are managed by those appointed to do so by the Church Council, including the Leadership Team, the Pastoral Committee, the Finance & Property Committee, the Worship Team and the Youth Worker.

During the year ended 31 August 2021 and up to the date of approval of the Report and accounts, the following changes in Trustees took place:

- Appointments effective from 1 September 2020 - Rev Ann Varker
- Appointments effective from 5 September 2021 - Helen Johnson, Deborah Proud
- Retirements effective from 5 September 2021 - David Thompson

3. Objectives and Mission

SRMC seeks to be a loving, welcoming and active Christian community, serving and sharing with the world around us, following the example and teaching of Jesus Christ. Currently, we serve the world and community by providing premises for church, community and charitable use, as well as working with children and youth, refugees, the elderly and the socially disadvantaged.

Section 4 of The Methodist Church Act 1976 states:
The purposes of The Methodist Church are and shall be, purposes deemed to have been since the date of union the advancement of

a) the Christian faith in accordance with the doctrinal standards and the discipline of The Methodist Church
b) any charitable purpose for the time being of any Connexional, District, Circuit, local or other organisation of The Methodist Church
c) any charitable purpose for the time being of any society or institution being a society or institution subsidiary or ancillary to The Methodist Church
d) any purpose for the time being of any charity being a charity subsidiary or ancillary to The Methodist Church.

SRMC Mission Statement

With the help of the Holy Spirit, we seek to live our lives as a loving community with each other and the world around us, following the example and teaching of Jesus Christ and worshipping God.

As a church we seek to be.....

A loving community to:

- Offer pastoral support, fellowship and prayer to all recognising that it is an expression of God's love
- Be a welcoming church that promotes a sense of belonging and values every member
- Share the good news of God's love made known through Jesus Christ with all ages
- Be aware of the needs that arise in the local community and wider world and respond as we are able
- Engage with other Churches and organisations to promote justice and peace and bring good to our world as part of God's mission

Following Jesus to:

- Help people grow and sustain their faith through Biblical teaching, fellowship and prayer
- Encourage everyone to use their gifts and exercise their ministry in the church and in daily life
- Provide opportunities for people of different stages of faith to explore the way of Christ
- Promote a pattern of whole life discipleship that recognises that being a Christian impacts all aspects of life and calls for responsible stewardship of money, time and resources
- Enable the nurture and development of children and young people in the Christian faith

Worshipping God:

- Worship in ways that are honouring to God, that help us focus upon Jesus Christ and increase our awareness of his presence through the Holy Spirit
- Develop opportunities for prayer and spending time seeking God
- Provide worship that is welcoming, family friendly, and accessible to people of different abilities
- Encourage participation in worship, recognising and utilising the talents and gifts of the congregation
- Develop forms of worship that are relevant to the world in which we live, that are uplifting, challenging and of good quality.

Strathmore Road Methodist Church in Rowlands Gill joined with Chopwell Methodist Church on the 1st September 2019 to become one church on two sites. Whilst Covid-19 restrictions have provided everyday challenges, the joint churches have sought to explore together what it means to be one church family, with two centres of mission. The Church is now seeking to develop its mission and witness across the Derwent Valley. In so doing, we encourage lifelong learning in the Christian faith and seek to provide opportunities for people to develop their faith and understanding.

Strathmore Road Methodist Church at Chopwell

4. Activities and Achievements

a) Worship Activities and Groups for All

The Church currently has 152 members, encompassing all ages, including a thriving ministry among families, children and youth. This last year, regular Sunday morning and evening services have been disrupted somewhat by Covid-19 restrictions. However, we have maintained weekly contact with all members by offering an online morning service, which has been well attended. We were able to recommence in-person services towards the end of the year.

Within the Church people appreciate different forms of worship and we value being able to offer a diversity of styles in our services, to enable people to encounter the living God and express their worship.

Our Sunday morning services at Rowlands Gill continue to be geared towards all ages and use contemporary music, media and performing arts. Most Sundays we have a short time of worship together before the children and young people move into Sunday Club where there are groups for children aged 4 to 16. Family services are held throughout the year when all ages worship together.

At the same time, a morning service is offered at Chopwell. Pre-Covid this comprised an informal 'around the table' style that includes traditional elements of worship with space for conversation and prayer. With the need for social distancing during the year, worship offered has been short and more traditional in style.

The Sunday evening service held at Rowlands Gill also re-commenced towards the end of the year and this service aims to utilise the best in traditional Methodist worship with the aid of a pipe organ. Holy Communion is celebrated on a monthly basis in all three services.

Discipleship Groups

We encourage lifelong learning in the Christian faith and seek to provide opportunities for people to develop their faith and understanding.

Pre-pandemic, three discipleship groups were able to meet in homes fortnightly, two in the evening and one during the day. However, following the restrictions brought in due to Covid-19, only one group was able to continue meeting online and one other group met occasionally in open spaces and gardens. These groups offer encouragement, fellowship, Bible study and prayer. Where a series is being followed in the Sunday services, the discipleship groups will often follow the series with Bible studies. At other times groups will decide on the topic to study.

In addition, there is also a pastoral group which met more informally outdoors for fellowship and support.

Prayer Meeting

The Church is committed to regular prayer. Conversation with and listening to God is at the centre of our worship, fellowship and activities. Since the Covid-19 pandemic began in March 2020, the desire and need for prayer has become more pressing. Many members have found comfort in meeting together to pray, as they are connecting with one another and with God.

A regular prayer meeting continued up to May 2021 online with around a dozen people attending, praying for fears, concerns and the needs of loved ones. Meeting in person resumed when Covid-19 restrictions allowed. It has been a source of comfort and inspiration in this extremely challenging time.

Prayer Chain

A number of years ago a WhatsApp group of members was started to provide prayer support to those in need, ill health or difficult situations. Prayer needs are identified and information is shared to the group, with strictest confidence observed. Members pray individually in their own homes. Regular responses are shared. The prayer chain has provided great comfort to many people and has fortunately continued throughout the pandemic.

Strathmore Road Methodist Church at Chopwell

Chopwell Methodist Church has a traditional Sunday Worship but is open to new ideas. There is a small regular congregation and we welcome everyone.

The Wednesday morning coffee pop-in has not yet restarted due to Covid-19 restrictions however it is hoped that that too will recommence in the near future along with the monthly coffee morning.

The Church held an Outdoor Ice-cream Parlour in the Car Park at the end of school holidays for all the children in the community. 'Fortum' held an event in the Church advising on Insulation for homes in the local River Streets, with possible grants for people who are eligible. Chopwell Methodist Church is still being used as a Polling Station every year.

b) Children and Youth Group Activities for All

The Church has a well-established children and families ministry, based around a few regular core groups as well as a number of different one-off events. Our activities enable us as a church to reach children ranging from newborn up to 18 years old. Our regular activities include Sunday Club (a weekly club for children of all ages taking place alongside Sunday morning worship), Sparks (a monthly Saturday morning club for children aged 5-10) and Messy Church (a bi-monthly gathering for families of all ages on a Sunday afternoon based around crafts, worship and a family meal) and several other groups. The Covid-19 pandemic has prevented several of our usual events from taking place such as, our Summer Fair however, WhatsApp groups and online meetings have been used to maintain contact amongst our families.

Sunday Club

Sunday Club is a group that provides for children ages 4-16 on a Sunday morning during church. With Sunday mornings looking very different and not allowed to be face to face, Sunday Club had to adapt to fit the new Church services online. Sunday Club online times include a children's address which was led by the worship leader or a volunteer. The children were often given tasks related to that week's Bible readings or children's address topic. The children would usually complete these tasks throughout the service and were asked to present their work at the end of the main online service. As the summer approached plans were made to recommence face to face Sunday Club meetings again in September 2021, Covid restrictions permitting.

Sparks

Sparks is a group for children aged 5-10, held every second Saturday of the month during term time. We meet for plenty of games, crafts, snacks and lots of opportunities to 'pie' leaders in the face! Each week there is a visit from our resident storyteller, who brings us a new and exciting Bible story. Sparks is a morning of fun and noise for kids in the large hall, and a morning of peace and quiet, the Saturday papers and a freshly brewed tea or coffee for the parents in the small hall. Sparks also hosts a number of different events throughout the year, including a Christmas party and Summer BBQ. During the Covid-19 pandemic we have held Sparks get togethers online. Crafts, stories and interactive games all in the comfort of our own homes. The children have enjoyed seeing each other when they were not able to see friends at school. As restrictions ease, we are planning to meet back again in person.

Rock Solid

Rock Solid meets every other Sunday evening and is for boys and girls aged 9 to 13. A fun-packed evening of games, discussion, competitions and thought about the big issues that affect life... friends, parents, school, the future and what God has to say about them. Rock Solid has moved online during the lockdown and the young people have continued to enjoy meeting for scavenger hunts, games, discussions and Bible studies, not to mention a valuable resource to talk to their friends and catch up with each other's news. We have been able to meet again in person with social distancing guidelines in place and although we can't yet do everything we used to, we have had 'bring your own bean bag movie nights' and socially distanced games. It's been great to be able to get back to some in-person sessions and see how much everyone has changed!

ID

ID is a group for boys aged 13 and over. It takes place on alternate Sundays to Rock Solid. ID is a great opportunity for youngsters to hang out, play games as well as chat and discuss issues that affect their lives. Unfortunately, the Covid-19 pandemic meant that summer youth camps were cancelled and the older group were harder to attract to online sessions. Real life socially distanced meetings occurred throughout the summer, following strict guidelines and it was a real highlight to meet around a fire, share a BBQ and make pizzas in an outdoor setting. As restrictions ease, we are gradually phasing back to in-person sessions at the church but the fire pit is still a big draw!

Messy Church

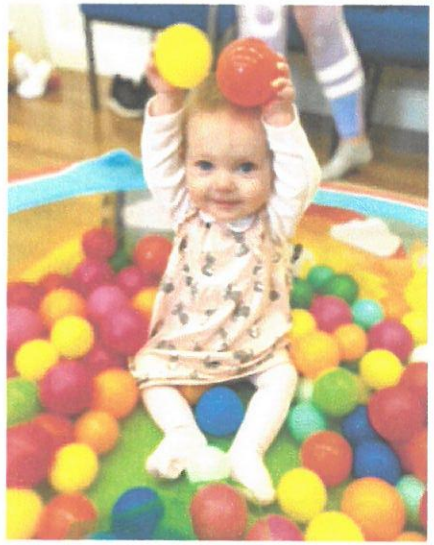
Messy Church is part of the Bible Reading Fellowship. It is a form of church that involves creativity, celebration and hospitality. It is primarily for people who don't belong to another form of church. Messy Church met on Sunday afternoon every two months and was led by the Minister and a group of enthusiastic volunteers. However, since Covid-19 restrictions were imposed, Messy Church has been unable to meet.

New Youth Team

Our relatively new team of youth leaders formed last year has continued to meet and pray and plan each month as well as planning for when Covid-19 restrictions enable recommencement of previous activities. The team has an oversight of all activities and groups connected with children's and youth work.

c) Other Activities for the Church and Local Community

Little Gems



Little Gems has been running for over three years now and has become a huge success. Our group is made up of parents from the local community with their babies and toddlers. A couple of Church members attend but we are very much a community group. We meet every Wednesday morning in term time for two hours of play, music, coffee and crafts. The aim of Little Gems is not only to allow our children to socialise and develop new skills, but for parents to relax, chat and compare joys and troubles on all things parenting! Due to the popularity and growth of the group, with an average of 30 children per week, we have relocated into the large hall of our refurbished premises and occasionally use the small hall for overspill. We have a superb team of volunteers from SRMC who support with set up, set down, welcoming, serving drinks and engaging in conversations with our guests. Little Gems was unable to meet regularly for a long time during the pandemic, but our group were keen to be back together once restrictions eased and we continue to grow from strength to strength.

Bridges

The Bridges group was formed in 1992. It aims to make a bridge between the Church and the local community. Over the years the group has organised many community events and festivals. The Church's current community projects - a weekly drop-in for local refugee families, community football and the 'Holiday Fun' scheme for local children - all originated from the Bridges group. In addition, many fundraising events have been organised for the benefit of various charities.

With the continuing pandemic and opportunities to meet being restricted, the group have adapted by organising events online. Activities have included a quiz night, a Christmas concert and a 'Geordie Burns night'. Unable to hold the annual Church family and friends' holiday in Keswick in February 2021, Bridges hosted an online holiday event covering 17 Lake District themed activities normally undertaken on the holiday. In addition, the annual car treasure hunt was adapted to an 'on foot' hunt around a local forest park.

The group continues to focus on building and maintaining relationships with the wider Church family and the local community.

Men's Breakfast group

The Men's Breakfast group has been meeting for more than 30 years. It offers the men of the Church opportunities to get together, invite friends and socialise around a varied programme of events and activities. Meeting monthly over an early Saturday morning breakfast or a pint in a local pub on Friday evenings, activities include speakers from charities and other organisations, visits to places of interest, local history and countryside walks. Around 15 to 18 people regularly attend each month.

This past year's activities have once again been curtailed due to lockdowns and Covid-19 restrictions. However, meeting online, the group enjoyed presentations on mission work in Kenya, an Arctic Circle adventure and a local history talk. A virtual tour of Newcastle's old inns and taverns provided for the annual Christmas get together and we were able to meet and get to know our new minister for an online coffee morning.

On the relaxation of restrictions, the group were able to meet outdoors with a local village heritage walk and a visit to a nearby community garden. The group has continued to keep in touch with all its members by telephone.

Open Doors

Open Doors began over 36 years ago as an open and ecumenical group for women of all ages from Rowlands Gill and the surrounding area, to develop friendship and fellowship by sharing different Christian viewpoints and common concerns in a friendly and caring atmosphere. Open Doors is a welcoming fellowship for women and meets on Friday mornings during school term time. There is a varied programme with speakers (some informative, some inspirational) and activities (sometimes creative, sometimes recreational). We meet informally and chat over coffee, with no 'fixed' membership as such, friends drop in and out as often or as little as they wish.

From the start of lockdown, we were one of the first groups at SRMC to utilise online meetings for fellowship and to keep connected. We extended the welcome to friends outside our local area. We have continued to meet weekly online, which has taken us from well-building projects in Burkino Faso, to dog rides in the Arctic Circle. We've shared directly with friends experiencing the pandemic in both Texas and the UAE. We have zoomed with a Youtuber offering mindful drawing and recorded our own online nativity play. A local charity, MHA Gateshead Communities West, gave us a taste of *'Keep smiling through 2020'* with their challenges and successes providing support for older vulnerable people. We've had a virtual Macmillan coffee morning for fund raising. In July 2021 we had a real live garden coffee meet up escaping from our digital screens. Perhaps all these events were summarised by one of our 'in house' speakers reflecting on "the human chain, the power of working together".

Ladies Club

The Ladies Club first met in 1962 and continues to 'meet' despite the hazards Covid-19 has caused. We all kept in touch during the periods of lockdown and are planning to meet for the first time in person in a long while, at the beginning of September 2021. We plan to meet on the second Friday of each month however, this will be with caution and we will take things a step at a time.

Spread Drama Group

Spread is a performing arts group that meets weekly during term time. The aim is to provide an inclusive drama group rooted in the belief that drama enables confidence building, socialising, and aids mental health. The group is intergenerational and is accessible for all. Young learn from old and old from young. They perform at least one production a year, including an affordable pantomime for the community. Lockdown made it hard to meet in person but Spread continued to meet online for drama sessions. Towards the summer, Spread met in person several times for several outdoor and socially distanced drama sessions. The group then started preparations for a winter pantomime of Dick Whittington.

Contact Magazine

The editors of the quarterly Church Magazine 'Contact' have again found this a particularly challenging year, due to the closure of the Church premises for the majority of the time with most worship and meetings ceased because of Covid-19 restrictions. Items in 'Contact' usually reflect the current activities occurring within our Church, and heavily rely on items and reports of events being submitted by its members. The Church year is highlighted in each edition and details of all forthcoming events are advertised.

Notwithstanding the Church closure for many activities, it was felt by the editors that the Church magazine should continue as a way to keep in touch with each other and to provide an additional contact with Church members and friends. The various editions of 'Contact' have featured personal stories of how we coped and survived during complete lockdown, what we've got up to as individuals and providing a wider hope to one another that restrictions will soon be lifted enabling activities to return more to normality.

Church Community WhatsApp

Covid-19 restrictions effectively closed down much of our worship and meetings during the year, so we've continued to maintain the WhatsApp group created in the previous year, to reduce isolation and aid communication. This group continues to offer support and friendship in an instant, direct way. The space continues to be used for prayers, news, sharing photographs and experiences, chitchat and supportive encouragement. Both clergy and laity use the group, and it connects members across a wide age span and background. It has been a lifeline to those who are restricted to their homes particularly during times when we have been unable to meet face to face. This new method of contact is something we are now actively seeking to expand.

d) Other Activities to Help and Support the Local Community

Rowlands Gill & Highfield Mutual Aid Group

SRMC works as part of the Mutual Aid Group which formed early in 2020 in response to the first Covid-19 lockdown. Consisting of representatives from local community groups, councillors and volunteers, the group continues to meet together on a monthly basis in order to support each other and the local community.

At Christmas 2020 the group was able co-ordinate provision of food hampers containing everything required for Christmas Lunch, enough to feed 263 people in 63 families. SRMC was able to provide a Christmas storybook and all of the required items and instructions for each family to make a Christingle, for inclusion in the hampers. Our local community was incredibly generous with donations and we were able to send some donations across to Blaydon Methodist Church who also delivered 50 Christmas hampers. The group also supported MHA Communities to provide 160 Christmas 'bags of joy' to their members and isolated older people in our community.

A main focus of the work during 2021 was supporting Highfield residents with their aim to re-open an empty Council owned building on the Pipe Bridge Estate, the old Children and Families Centre. Work is progressing well and there is cautious optimism that the building will open to the community during 2022 with community support workers based there.

Rescued Food Market

Since February 2021 a weekly 'rescued food' market has operated from the Church halls. This offers surplus food collected from supermarkets free to visitors, some of whom offer a voluntary financial donation in return. The market is open to anyone and is attended by up to 50 people each week. It attracts a wide range of customers from those in financial difficulties, to people concerned about the environment and wishing to reduce food waste.

The market is run in partnership with *The Pickle Palace* a local community interest group which has operated in the area for about 5 years. Several volunteers from the Church and the wider community are involved in collecting food, welcoming customers, running the market, and clearing away.

Syrian refugee `drop in`

The Drop In meets weekly on a Monday morning at St Barnabas Church Hall and is run by volunteers from both SRMC and St. Barnabas Churches. We aim to befriend and support the Syrian refugees living in the area. Our support takes the form of familiarising the families with the local community, bus travel and surrounding amenities, also encouraging English conversation to aid integration and independence. The families are adapting to their change in environment at their own pace. We are aware that the families who have been here the longest require less support now and in turn offer relevant support to those that have arrived more recently. Obviously, due to the pandemic the drop-in has not taken place. However, contact remained with the Syrian families and continuing help is offered with appliance repairs, college assignments and communication. Plans are underway to re-start the drop in, following government guidelines.

Summer 'Holiday Fun'

This group originated from the "Holiday Hunger" concerns over six years ago, providing meals and activities for local disadvantaged children during the summer school holiday period when free school meals are not available. We aim to befriend and build relationships with the families of those children attending. Food bank vouchers are available each week.

In 2020 the pandemic prevented this from happening. However, in summer 2021 due to hard work and planning from a dedicated team, we were able to provide breakfast and a simple 2 course cooked meal, along with sport, crafts and other enriching activities. We also arranged bus excursions to Gibside and Chopwell Woods, where, armed with prepared packed lunches and with the help of local organisations, we provided various activities including nature trails, team games and the ever-popular den building.

Football

Every Thursday teatime (except in Winter) we run an outreach football group on Highfield Green in partnership with other local churches and Ambassadors Football. We run matches for children from 4 years to teenagers with lots of chat and fellowship on the sidelines too. This provides healthy activity for the local children and helps promote community development and cohesion. Several Syrian families have moved into the area and we wanted to support them and assist their integration into their community. The impact this has had on all children and young people in this area has exceeded our expectations. The young people have appreciated the activity and some are now coming to other Church-based events, such as Rock Solid. Again, the impact of Covid-19 restrictions applied to the football. However, recent relaxation of those restrictions has allowed the activity to recommence.

e) Other activities wider than the local Community

The Church has a growing awareness of being part of a global community.

Eco-Church

Responding to our stewardship of the planet.

Work on Eco church continued during the year. Considerable progress has been made in the church garden at Strathmore Road with new wildlife-friendly planting and a new bug hotel and hedgehog house installed. New trees were planted, as well as some fruit bushes and herbs. A botany survey was conducted by Durham Wildlife Trust which gave us some pointers for future improvements. The building energy efficiency has been improved by a more efficient boiler and lighting and improved insulation, installed as part of our redevelopment project. Events involving the local community included bike repair workshops in the Church and in the community. Awareness raising of environmental issues continued in lockdown via the Church WhatsApp group with lots of tips, advice and information being shared. *Plastic free July* and *30 days wild in May* were two month-long events supported by daily tips and ideas on lifestyle and 'eco efficiency'. An online presentation from a Gold Award winning Eco Church in February provided further inspiration and encouragement. We held a Church service focussed on environmental issues on *Climate Change Sunday* and all members were asked to commit to living more sustainably.

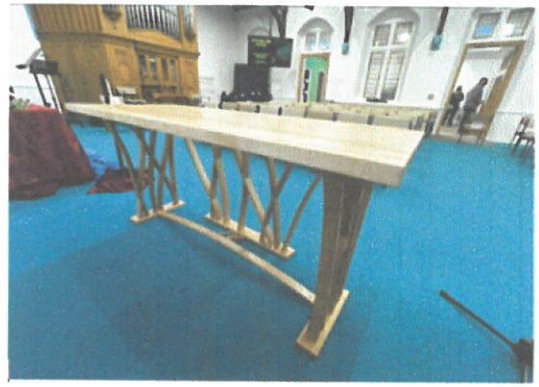
ECO CHURCH
AN A ROCHA UK PROJECT

The Church Leadership Team and Church Council have approved the plan to seek the Silver Award by the end of 2021, delayed from Spring 2021 due to Covid restrictions.

South Africa

Our Church community continues to support the work of Ebenezer Mission in Izingolweni, South Africa where all aspects of their work are growing. More and more people are attending worship and Bible study and the work among the young people is also thriving. The creche now has full time teachers and numbers are rising rapidly. The after-school homework club which helps young people with their school-work and offers them a meal, has been very successful. One of the young men has now been accepted for a place on a college course which will lead to an Engineering degree. This involved him having to move away from Izingolweni to be within traveling distance of the college and a donation was sent from our Church to help support him in his new venture.

5. Opening the Doors – Church Development Project at Rowlands Gill



At the end of the 2020 financial year, we were in the midst of the Development construction period with work progressing well. We did experience some delays, mainly as a result of weather and some small design adjustments being required. The scheduled 18-week programme extended to 22 weeks with the practical completion certificate for the building contract works being issued on 1st December 2020. Furnishings and building contents were then returned from storage and the building was handed over to the Church leadership team on 16th December. This enabled the Church to open for a service on Sunday 20th December. A *Journey To Bethlehem* event was held during the following week with the Nativity story created using a number of stations placed around the building. Church and community members were able to book a time slot and follow a one-way route around the building in a Covid-secure manner. A Christmas Day service was also held.

With the Church having been open for 2 services over Christmas it was then again closed as the New Year lockdown restrictions were imposed. Throughout the Spring and into Summer 2021 we began to slowly open up again with hybrid morning services, restricted numbers of evening services and user groups returning in a distanced and Covid-secure manner.

The project has now been completed as per the contracted design, within budget and we are very satisfied with the quality of work delivered. The visual impact on the building is very evident. The objectives to unite our separate Church and Church Hall buildings, opening them up to be more welcoming, accessible, and comfortable with facilities fit for the 21st Century, have all been achieved as planned. The real impact of the Development project for Church and community users will only become evident as Covid-19 restrictions ease further and the building is able to be fully occupied.

A celebration weekend is planned during September 2021 to formally open the buildings and to celebrate the very special achievements of so many people. We offer our grateful thanks to all those funders who supported us so generously.

6. Financial Review

The Accounts for the year ended 31 August 2021 are set out at the end of the Trustees' Report. The Church funds are made up of a general unrestricted fund, a restricted fund – the Benevolent Fund, an endowment fund – the Development Fund, and the funds of three Internal Organisations – the Children & Youth Project, Bridges and the Spread Drama Group. Only the unrestricted fund is available to meet the day to day running costs of the Church.

Unrestricted fund

During the year ended 31 August 2021 there was a deficit of payments over receipts of £1,418 (2020: surplus £1,817) before a transfer to the Children & Youth Project of £5,000 (2020: £5,000). Bills were paid promptly and the outstanding liabilities at the year-end (i.e. invoices relating to before the year-end paid after the year-end) amounted to £129 (2020: £166). Collections and funds raised specifically for other charities or external organisations are excluded from both receipts and payments.

The Finance and Property Committee reviews the budget each June for the following year and the net deficit of £1,418 compared favourably with the budgeted deficit of £7,239 (before internal transfers), despite the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. The primary reason for the lower deficit was the receipt of a Local Authority Covid Grant of £10,572, to compensate for lost rental income during the pandemic, which is included in "Other receipts" in the Accounts.

Offerings and tax recovered via gift aid totalled £60,800 which was lower than last year's total of £73,289, primarily because last year included gift aid tax refunds for the two tax years ended 5 April 2019 and 2020, totalling £22,047, as compared with the usual one tax refund. Letting receipts from hiring out the premises were affected during the year by the closure of the Church buildings for the redevelopment from September to December 2020 and also restrictions due to the pandemic. Receipts fell to £3,260 from £4,655 last year, reflecting the fact that some hirers did not return following the lifting of restrictions and other groups restarted but for a reduced number of hours per week.

Within payments from the unrestricted fund there are three major areas over which the Church has little control: i) the Circuit assessment; ii) property repairs; and iii) utility bills. Repairs at Strathmore Road were kept to a minimum this year in view of the redevelopment of the building. Utility costs are monitored closely and steps taken to obtain the most cost-effective contracts. We wish to record our grateful thanks to all those who work tirelessly to carry out repairs and maintenance to the Church buildings and grounds and keep costs to a minimum.

Restricted Fund

The Benevolent Fund is available to make small payments at the Minister's discretion in cases of individual hardship or poverty. There was a payment of £20 and no receipts during the year, so the balance carried forward was £180 (2020: £200).

Endowment Fund

The purpose of the Development Fund is described above under "Opening the Doors". In accordance with guidance issued by the Methodist Church in July 2019, "Accounting for tangible fixed assets", donations intended to provide an asset for long-term use, i.e. a fixed asset, should be classified as an expendable endowment and not a restricted income fund. Consequently, the Development Fund has been classified as an expendable endowment in the accounts. During the year, the fund received £173,995 (2020: £276,538) including a loan of £30,000, and made payments of £461,967 (2020: £147,270) resulting in a balance carried forward of £39,069 (2020: £327,041). There was no outstanding payment due at the year-end (2020: £259).

Internal Organisations

The Internal Organisations manage their finances separately from the main Church funds but report to the Church Council. The Children & Youth Project made net payments during the year of £5,693 (2020: £3,955) before receipt of the transfer of £5,000 from the Church unrestricted fund. Bridges made net payments for the year of £770 (2020: £1,215). Spread Drama Group made net payments of £60 (2020 net receipts: £2,174).

Further information on all funds is provided in the accounts and the notes to the accounts.

Reserves policy

Unrestricted funds

The appropriate level of general reserves is considered to be the amount necessary to cover 6 months' operations. General Church running expenses for the current year ending 31 August 2022 are expected to be around £88,000 (2020: £85,000) per annum. Therefore, the required reserves for unrestricted funds are £44,000 (2020: £42,500). The general funds at the year-end are approximately £6,000 less than this required reserve. The Church Council is aware of the continuing need to build up the reserves but this has been difficult while fundraising was focusing on the Development Project and as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Internal Organisations

The Children & Youth Project receives funding from time to time which is allocated to particular projects, but all funds held by this account (£28,666 at the year-end) are treated as restricted to paying the salaries of the Youth worker and the activities, such as Sunday Club and Messy Church, for children and youth generally. The sources of funding vary and it is important to retain reserves of £7,000 (2020: £15,100) to enable the project to continue planned operations for at least 6 months in the event of an unexpected fall in funding, and to meet any redundancy and related costs in the event of its termination. The reserves in excess of these amounts are committed to fund the recruitment of a new Children and Families worker during 2021-22.

Bridges and Spread do not aim to make a significant surplus and the current reserves of around £11,500 (2020: £12,300) enable them to carry on their activities, especially the community projects, in the following year. Funds held by the Internal Organisations are not available to meet general Church expenses.

Endowment Fund

The Development Fund is made up of specific donations, grants, and a loan, net of payments, totalling £39,069 (2020: £327,041), relating to the development of the Church building at Strathmore Road, which started in summer 2020 and was completed by December 2020. An interest free loan of £30,000 was secured in October 2020 from The William Leech Charity to cover a short-term funding gap, and is repayable in 5 equal instalments of £6,000, starting on 1 October 2021. The endowment funds are required to repay the loan and meet any final costs of the development. Further details can be found earlier in the Report under "Opening the Doors".

Signed on behalf of the Trustees by

Rev Ann Varker

Date: 24/04/22

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES OF STRATHMORE ROAD METHODIST CHURCH Charity no 1179206
ON THE ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2021

Respective responsibilities of Trustees and Examiner

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 (the Charities Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under Section 145 of the Charities Act,
- to follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Charity Commission (under Section 145(5)(b) of the Charities Act), and
- to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of Independent Examiner's Report

My examination was carried out in accordance with general Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from the trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair' view and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

Independent Examiner's Statement

I have completed my examination and confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination which give me cause to believe that, in any material respect:

- the accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Charities 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 not obtained independent verification of all investments with the Trustees for Methodist Church Purposes ("TMCP") or held in other Trusts, Bank balances and Funds at the Central Finance Board of the Methodist Church ("CFB"), which are individually in excess of £10,000 (ten thousand pounds) at the balance sheet date.

Signed by Date 3/5/2022

Peter Nelmes FCCA
Glenavon, Peth Lane, Ryton, NE40 3PB

STRATHMORE ROAD METHODIST CHURCH
YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2021

RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS ACCOUNT

CHURCH excluding Internal Organisations	Note	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Fund Benevolent	Endowment Fund Development	Total Funds 2021	Total Funds 2020
	1	£	£	£	£	£
RECEIPTS	2					
Offerings and Tax recovered	3	60,800		143,905	204,705	346,706
Bank interest		56	0	90	146	1,312
Lettings		3,260	0	0	3,260	4,655
Other receipts		10,691	0	30,000	40,691	3,655
TOTAL RECEIPTS		74,807	0	173,995	248,802	356,328
PAYMENTS	4					
Circuit Assessment	5	59,000	0	0	59,000	57,875
Donations		416	20	0	436	200
Repairs and Maintenance		2,779	0	0	2,779	3,514
Utilities		7,746	0	0	7,746	8,883
Endowment payments		0	0	461,770	461,770	147,078
Other payments		6,284	0	197	6,481	7,669
TOTAL PAYMENTS		76,225	20	461,967	538,212	225,219
NET (PAYMENTS)/RECEIPTS FOR THE YEAR		-1,418	-20	-287,972	-289,410	131,109
Total funds brought forward		44,679	200	327,041	371,920	245,811
Transfers with Internal Organisations	6	-5,000	0		-5,000	-5,000
CHURCH FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD	8 & 9	38,261	180	39,069	77,510	371,920

STRATHMORE ROAD METHODIST CHURCH

YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2021

RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS ACCOUNT

INTERNAL ORGANISATIONS REPORTING TO THE CHURCH COUNCIL	Notes	Receipts	Payments	Net receipts/ (payments)	Transfers with Church	Opening balances	Closing balances
		£	£	£	£	£	£
Children & Youth Project		2,257	7,950	-5,693	5,000	29,358	28,665
Bridges		3,426	4,196	-770	0	8,835	8,065
Spread Drama Group		0	60	-60	0	3,526	3,466
Total of Internal Organisations		5,683	12,206	-6,523	5,000	41,719	40,196
Church totals from previous page		248,802	538,212	-289,410	-5,000	371,920	77,510
TOTAL FOR CHURCH INCLUDING INTERNAL ORGANISATIONS		254,485	550,418	-295,933	0	413,639	117,706

STATEMENT OF ASSETS AND LIABILITIES

CHURCH FUNDS HELD AT 31 AUGUST	Notes	Opening balances 2020	Closing balances 2021
		£	£
Cash in hand		314	200
Bank Current accounts		271,708	45,054
Central Finance Board of the Methodist Church Deposit account		39,200	32,256
Trustees for Methodist Church Purposes Deposit account		60,698	0
Total of Church accounts		371,920	77,510
Total funds held by Internal Organisations		41,719	40,196
TOTAL CASH FUNDS		413,639	117,706
OTHER ASSETS AND LIABILITIES			
Land and buildings	9	3,206,372	3,155,717
Plant and equipment at insured value		142,802	142,944
Loan for redevelopment	11	0	30,000
Other liabilities		425	129

Signed on behalf of the Trustees by:

Rev. Ann Varker, Chair

Jill N Catterall, Treasurer Date: 24/04/22

STRATHMORE ROAD METHODIST CHURCH
YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2021
NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS

1 **Accounting basis** - The accounts have been prepared on the cash basis. "Gross income" for the purpose of determining whether accruals accounting is required, excludes receipts of endowment capital. The gross income of the Church for the year ended 31 August 2021 for this purpose is therefore, total receipts of £254,485 less endowment capital receipts of £173,995, giving a figure of £80,490. As this is less than the threshold of £250,000, accruals accounting is not required.

2 **Receipts** do not include collections or funds raised specifically for other charities or external organisations. See note 7 for details of these amounts.

3 **Offerings and Tax recovered** for 2021 for the Church Unrestricted funds includes one claim for Gift Aid of £10,333, compared to two claims in 2020 for the years ended 5 April 2019 and 2020, totalling £22,047.

4 **Payments** do not include the passing on of amounts collected or raised specifically for other charities or external organisations. See Note 7 for details of these amounts.

5 **The Circuit Assessment** is the Church's share of the Circuit's annual costs, primarily relating to Ministers' salaries and housing.

6 **Transfers with Internal Organisations** - During the year the Church contributed £5,000 (2020: £5,000) to the Children & Youth Project.

7 **Money received and passed on to external organisations**

	2021				2020
	Church	Youth	Bridges	Total	Total
	£	£	£	£	£
Brought forward	132	0	0	132	492
Collections/Receipts	355	0	2,495	2,850	11,324
Payments	-487	0	-145	-632	-11,684
Balance still to be paid at 31 August 2021	0	0	2,350	2,350	132

The receipts and payments for Bridges relate primarily to the annual Church holiday to Keswick.

8 **Restricted Fund** - The Church has one restricted fund known as the Benevolent Fund, which is available for the Minister to spend at her discretion in cases of individual hardship or poverty.

9 **Endowment Fund** - The Church has one endowment fund known as the Development Fund which is for a major building project to extend and redevelop the Church buildings.
In accordance with guidance issued by the Methodist Church in July 2019, "Accounting for tangible fixed assets", donations intended to provide an asset for long-term use, i.e. a fixed asset, should be classified as an expendable endowment and not a restricted income fund. Consequently, the Development Fund has been classified as an expendable endowment.
The Endowment Fund has been shown in a separate column in the Receipts and Payments Account and an analysis is provided below, showing the comparative figures for the prior year.

	2021	2020
	£	£
Receipts		
Donations and grants	143,905	273,417
Bank interest	90	1,066
Loan	30,000	0
Fund raising events	0	2,055
	173,995	276,538
Payments		
Building project payments	-461,770	-147,078
Bank charges	-197	-192
Net (payments)/receipts	-287,972	129,268
Funds brought forward	327,041	197,773
Transfers from Unrestricted Funds or Internal Organisations	0	0
Funds carried forward	39,069	327,041

10 Land and buildings - The Church land and buildings are owned by the Trustees for Methodist Church Purposes as custodians. The Church at Strathmore Road opened in 1902 and the halls were added in 1958 but there is no information available about their historic costs. In conjunction with the redevelopment of the Church buildings, the Trustees have estimated the value of the land, based on average land values in Gateshead. Prior to 2019 the value of the land had not been included in the Statement of Assets and Liabilities. The existing buildings are included at their insurance value in accordance with Methodist Church guidance.

	2021	2020
	£	£
Land at Strathmore Road - estimated value	388,000	388,000
Existing buildings - insurance value		2,283,059
Cost of building project (payments from endowment)*		200,987
Insurance value of redeveloped buildings	2,433,059	
	2,821,059	2,872,046
Chopwell Methodist Church - insurance value	334,658	334,326
	3,155,717	3,206,372

* Note only: Cost of redevelopment to 31 August 2021 £662,954.

11 Loan - In October 2020 The William Leech Charity made a loan of £30,000 to cover completion of the redevelopment of the Church buildings, prior to receipt of an equivalent amount of pledged donations. The loan is interest-free and is repayable in 5 equal, annual instalments starting in October 2021.