

BETHANY (ISLE OF WIGHT) TRUST

England & Wales · Charity number 1182622

Details

Other names BETHANY EVANGELICAL CHURCH

Status Registered

Legal form CIO

Registered 2019-03-25

Register [View on the Charity Commission register](#)

Contact

Address Bethany Evangelical Church
8&9 Union Street
Newport
Isle of Wight
PO30 1QB

Phone 01983853446

Email stephenwcrago@gmail.com

Website <http://www.bethanyiow.co.uk/>

Activities

Objects: THE PROPAGATION OF AND INSTRUCTION IN THE CHRISTIAN DOCTRINES AND PRACTICES SET OUT IN SCHEDULE B ATTACHED TO THE GOVERNING DOCUMENT IN PARTICULAR IN THE ISLE OF WIGHT.

Activities: Holding regular church services, including weekly breaking of bread. Providing a building for use by other Christian organisations, including a purpose-built baptistery. Preaching the word of God and teaching from the Bible to facilitate a closer relationship with Him through His Son, Jesus. Raising funds including for other Christian charities and groups to promote the gospel.

Classification

- **How:** Provides Other Finance, Provides Buildings/facilities/open Space, Provides Services, Provides Advocacy/advice/information
- **What:** General Charitable Purposes, Education/training, The Prevention Or Relief Of Poverty, Overseas Aid/famine Relief, Religious Activities, Human Rights/religious Or Racial Harmony/equality Or Diversity, Other Charitable Purposes
- **Who:** Children/young People, Elderly/old People, People With Disabilities, Other Charities Or Voluntary Bodies, The General Public/mankind

Geography

- Isle Of Wight

Finances

Period end	Income	Expenditure	Assets	Employees
2025-12-31	£18,072	£18,614	-	-
2024-12-31	£52,634	£22,216	-	-
2023-12-31	£21,025	£19,958	-	-
2022-12-31	£15,294	£11,832	-	-
2021-12-31	£10,219	£12,665	-	-
2020-12-31	£10,224	£13,001	-	-

Trustees

Name	Role	Appointed
JOHN ERNEST PECK		2022-01-01
PETER CHARLES YOUNG		2026-01-01
Paul Edward Crago		2023-12-02
Philip John HARRIS		2024-03-09
ROBERT WILLIAM WILLS		2026-01-01
STEPHEN WILLIAM CRAGO		2019-04-13
Sharon Marie Bollen		2026-01-01

BETHANY (ISLE OF WIGHT) TRUST

England & Wales - Charity number 1182622

Accounts



**Annual Fellowship
Meeting 9:45am
21st March 2026.
Reports**

Contents.

Elders' Report, March 2026	3
Bethany Evangelical Church Trustees	10
Bible Reading Group	10
Bethany Church web site 2026	11
Tuesday Night (Zoom) Prayer Meeting	12
Bethany WhatsApp Group	12
Coffee and Chat	13
ACCOUNTS	14
Secretary's report 2026	15

Elders' Report, March 2026

The members of the Oversight at Bethany are Steve Crago, John Peck and Robert Wills.

Bethany Trustees are Paul Crago, Phil Harris, Sharon Bollen and Peter Young.

We would like to start by once again saying thank you for your prayers and your support during the past year.

We continue to have a Sunday morning meeting Family Service at 10:30am which incorporated the 2 meetings we used to have. This is followed by refreshments with Tea and Coffee etc. This is a time when we can have fellowship together and discuss what we have heard in the meeting.

On average, 37 people attend the Sunday morning services, with the highest number being 46 in February.

The prayer meeting is in "Zoom" with a Bible reading to start, with a comment on the reading and then we look at the list of prayer items that have been raised. People may raise additional things that they know about for prayer. We don't raise personal items for prayer on behalf of others unless we have been asked to do so by them.

There were various things that happened in 2025/2026.

March:

We had the AGM at the Trustees and Oversight meeting on 8th March 2025 as required by the Charities Commission for a CIO (Charitable Incorporated Organisation).

The reports were compiled at this meeting which were to be handed out at the Annual Fellowship Meeting (AFM) which was to be on 22nd March 2025.

The agenda for the AFM was arranged thus:

Welcome and opening prayers led by Sharon Bollen.

Bible reading and message was from Robert, the subject being Outreach.

Briefly here is what Robert talked about:

Reading was from Matthew 28:19.

We have good news but others don't want to hear it. We would like to see revival but only God can do that.

We should use our gifts and gain the right to speak. We should realise it is the Holy Spirit's work, so we should pray.

We should be polite and give reasons for what we believe (1 Peter 3:15). This means reading the Bible, learning about it and noticing God's working in our own lives.

Don't be religious or a stereotype. Don't defend the indefensible. Don't pretend. Don't focus on others' sins. Don't assume inspiration.

Finally, God calls us to be faithful, not successful. Revival starts with prayer.

This was followed by a review of the reports. This generated some responses:

Lois Cooper suggested that the Ladies toilets could be revamped, could the Gents toilets be included in this. Another suggestion was about the special offerings, could they be shown on the Bethany Website?

Andrew Brunt requested that the main pedestrian gate be open so that people didn't need to come in through the car park entrance. Then they can use the new handrailed entrance.

It was noted that some members of the Bethany WhatsApp group were not in regular attendance. Phil Harris will ask members of the group 'who wants to continue'. Similarly, the people on the Bethany email distribution list should also be asked if they want to be kept on the email circulation. Steve Crago will email the people on the list.

We then came to the Any other business part that was led by Phil Harris.

Phil suggested that we could have a Relaxed Church / Mufti Sunday: This could be 2 times a year so we can invite friends and neighbours. Julia Crago said that this could also be done at a Coffee Morning on Saturday with a short epilogue. Phil Edwards said that there should be less singing, or less formal singing. Steve French came to a Coffee morning and sang with us round the piano. Roger Fruen said that having Bread and Wine at a Relaxed Church meeting would be very off-putting to visitors. Could we not have B of B on Easter Sunday because we have it on Good Friday. Phil Edwards did say that he is doing the Easter Sunday morning meeting and has prepared for the B of B as part of it. Lois Cooper said that it would be easier to invite people to a Coffee Morning and on Easter Sunday with a different format.

Ann Pembroke spoke of the Easter Egg hunt that she used to hold at her home (Great Whitcombe Manor). Ann also spoke of the Bethany Carol Singing around the streets of Newport for which we didn't receive money.

Café style church. It was mentioned that there would be separate tables with chairs set round them for a more relaxed atmosphere. This is a possibility as we have done this before.

Phil Harris then spoke about a legacy we have received and how best to use it. Here are 3 items:

- Contingency Fund.
- Toilets.
- Crack in Side Hall ceiling.

Ann Pembroke: asked about Youth For Christ's use the Homestead. We said that there were defined offices. Some other rooms are more flexible shared access.

Phil Edwards: was concerned about the car stuff in the car park. We said that this should all be gone by the end of March. If not, then we will take measures to 'skip' it.

Ann Pembroke: asked if there were others that used the car park. We said that there were 2 cars from the Salvation Army. We also urged members to lock the car park and not to leave the padlock on the number that unlocks it.

At the end of the A.O.B. we had a time of prayer and singing led by Phil Moore (thank you Phil).

A fellowship lunch followed with thanks to Robert and Val Wills for catering the delicious food.

April:

At the beginning of April, the membership password to the Bethany website was changed, any member wanting access to the members pages would be given the new password upon request. The members picture gallery was expanded with many new pictures and photos added.

On Thursday 10th April we were very saddened by the news that Mark Mordey's houseboat had sunk on the River Medina, although some things were able to be saved, much was lost.

We received news that Christine Maxwell, wife of regular Bethany guest speaker John Maxwell had died on Tuesday 8th April, we sent our heartfelt condolences.

A special Easter edition of the Bethany Magazine was produced, with thanks for all those who contributed articles and put their skills to work in producing it.

Easter was celebrated with a Breaking of Bread service on Good Friday, following which members were invited to join the Walk of Witness around Newport organised by Churches Working Together in Newport. Easter Sunday Celebrations were led by Phil Edwards.

A planned Easter Monday picnic at Fort Victoria was postponed due to bad weather.

We had two visiting speakers on Sunday 6th April, Andy Peck and on Sunday 27th April Andrew Hardiman.

May:

On Saturday 10th May we had a special VE 80 Coffee Morning to mark the 80th anniversary of the ending of hostilities in Europe of the Second World War, an indoor street party was arranged with food and drink. Period music played and a rolling slide show of local and national pictures displayed.

A Memory table was set up so members could bring an item from WW2 that had a special memory connected to it, medals, photographs, letters and memorabilia was shared with many moving and poignant memories. We had a 40s themed quiz and an open mic was set up for anyone who had a memory to share could do so. We thank all those who took part and shared their stories with us.

In May we had one visiting speaker on Sunday 11th May Peter Wells.

June:

On Thursday 26th June a large skip was arranged and a general clear-out of Bethany was organised, every last inch of the skip was utilised with the car park area, Homestead and many cluttered spaces and cupboards in Bethany cleared out. With thanks to all those who came along to help.

We were saddened by the news that Alistair Wells had died, his funeral and celebration of life was held on 27th June at Carisbrooke Priory.

We had one visiting speaker this month, Sunday 8th Mike Blackstock from SASRA.

July:

On Saturday 5th July Good News for Everyone had an informational afternoon with an update about their work, followed by a cream tea.

Meg Hewitt has taken over collecting used stamps, they will be passed on to Medical Missionary News,

Medina Community Choir invited Bethany members to attend the final rehearsal for their summer concerts entitled "Sounds Classical" on Monday 14th July.

Our visiting speaker this month was Andy Attrill on Sunday 13th.

August:

On Sunday 3rd August following the morning service a fellowship lunch was held at the home of Lois Cooper in Freshwater. Food and fellowship was enjoyed by all who attended, with thanks to Lois for opening her home to the fellowship.

In August we had a series for four Sundays in August on The Scriptures.

- 3rd August: 2 Timothy 3:16 - All scripture is God-breathed and is useful.
- 10th August: Psalm 19 - Word of creation, word of God, our words.
- 17th August: 2 Timothy 2:15 - Rightly dividing the word of truth.
- 24th August: 2 Corinthians 3:6 - The letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.

We had one guest speaker, Alastair Cole on Sunday 31st.

September:

On Saturday 6th September Clarence Road Evangelical Church hosted an event called "Christian Life and Witness" with Tim and Joy Ayrton, all were welcome to this free event with refreshments.

We were pleased to welcome Stephen and Jean Gillham to Bethany on Sunday 7th September, Jean having successfully undertaken knee surgery in June. A fellowship meal followed the Morning meeting. Thanks to Robert and Val Wills for producing a delicious lunch.

We were saddened by the news that Sharon McNally's father had died, we passed on our sincere condolences to Sharon, Joe and the extended family.

We had two other visiting speakers this month, on the 14th Andrew Hardiman and on the 28th, Peter Wells, the offerings for this week and the next were donated to Tear Fund for Harvest, the total being £786.

October:

John and Ejiro announced the birth of their baby boy on 8th October, he is to be known as Tobi.

We offered our deepest condolences to Liz Day following the death of Andrew. Andrew had for many years tuned the pianos at Bethany and elsewhere.

Visiting speakers: Ian Peters from Youth for Christ on Sunday 5th October.

November:

The SASRA (Soldiers and Aviators Scripture Readers Association) drums were collected from around the fellowship and a total of £292,34 donated to SASRA, with thanks to Lois Cooper for collecting up the drums and arranging the donation.

An Autumn themed coffee morning was held on 29th November, this was an opportunity to take a break from the hustle and bustle to enjoy a quiet time of fellowship over some delicious cakes, scones and the hot drink of your choice. A seasonal quiz and beautiful seasonal decorations added to the relaxed atmosphere.

We welcomed two visiting speakers Bob White from Carisbrooke Priory on the 2nd and Justin Freeston on the 23rd.

December:

Medina Community Choir invited members to attend their Christmas concert rehearsal on Mon 15th December, with refreshments offered afterwards.

The annual Carol Singing around the neighbouring streets took place on Wed 17th, eight members took part with many interactions with locals opening their doors and windows with a spontaneous request to sing for a housebound lady in Chapel Street who loves the Lord and loves to sing but can no longer get to church.

We had the Christmas candle lit Carol Service on Sunday 21st which was led by Robert Wills and aided by many. Steve Crago led the Christmas Day service which started at 10am and finished at 10:45am.

Andrew Hardiman was our visiting speaker on 14th December.

Hebron Church held an End of year service on Tuesday 31st from 9:30pm to 12:30am the next day.

January 2025:

A dedication service was held on Sunday 4th January when we with John and Ejiro prayed for Oluwatobiloba Adriel Adeolu, to be known as Tobi.

Pauline and family announced the death of Clive Burt on 13th January, a friend and neighbour to Bethany for many years.

We were invited to an Island Church Celebration for an evening of worship and teaching at Cowes Community College on Friday 30th January with Pete Greig.

We had no visiting speakers this month.

February:

The Upper Room, or more commonly known as the loft in Bethany now has a light. Its operation is a secret, but if you ask anyone who knows, then you know!

Visiting speaker on the 1st was Bob White from Carisbrooke Priory.

Other events.

Throughout the year, Youth for Christ have held events on various Fridays for young people and it is usually called Catalyst. Also, they have a prayer meeting for all the Churches' youth workers on the Island on Monday morning.

Peter Herman from the Newport Youth Project with YFC held Movie Nights on 4th April, 2nd May, 6th June, 26th September and 12th December.

The Medina Community Choir regularly hold a practice on Monday and Thursday evenings. Hebron Church now use the Bethany building for their meeting on Sunday afternoon from 2pm to 5:30pm.

Bethany Evangelical Church Trustees **(as at 1st January 2026)**

Name of trust: Bethany (Isle of Wight) Trust.
(Charity Commission for England and Wales registration number: 1182622)

S Crago (Secretary; cheque signatory).
S Bollen (appointed person for marriages).
J Peck (cheque signatory; appointed person for marriages).
P Crago.
P Harris.
R Wills.
P Young.

Note: Under the trust's constitution (paragraphs 9-12), the Trustees are appointed for fixed terms, but are eligible for reappointment after these terms expire.

Peter Young having served a 3-year term was re-elected on 01/01/2026 for another 3 years as agreed with him.

Bible Reading Group

The Bible Reading group meets at Bethany in the side hall on alternate Wednesday evenings. It's intended as an outreach and a help for people who don't regularly attend church or want to know more about the Bible. We have found it can also be a useful way to welcome and get to know people who have started coming to Bethany.

We usually don't meet in the winter months. We're just starting again with the first meeting this year on the 4th March.

We aim to meet fortnightly and we're usually up to ten people. We have supper and a relaxing time of fellowship together, then read a Bible passage. This year we're continuing to read the gospel of John. We follow this by a short talk, an open discussion and a prayer time.

Anyone is welcome, especially if they want to bring someone from outside the church fellowship, but we always need to know numbers in advance for catering, so if you want to come or bring anyone, please let Robert, Valerie or Tess know first. Also, please pray for us.

Robert Wills – March 2026

Bethany Church web site 2026

The website report for this year's **Annual Fellowship Meeting (AFM)**, will, I guess, have much the same information as previous years.

A couple of years ago the report tried to explain what "language" the site was written in, how it is formatted and how the information is edited. Last year the report explained the work and effort that goes into maintaining the site, keeping it relevant and up to date. This year I will just remind you of how our website is used.

Our Bethany website should be considered as an open window into the life of our fellowship here in Newport on the Isle of Wight. Hopefully it shows users that Bethany Evangelical Church is a place where we, a small group of Christians, gather in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ to worship God.

It is a primary source of information for visitors and holiday makers, but also contains a great deal of information for our own assembly here at Bethany.

Bethany Members



On the top banner of the opening pages you will notice a **Members tab**. Click this tab **for** access to the secure **Members** area which can be accessed via a secure password entry system.

All the information in this area is specifically for our Bethany family. Here you will find links to who our **Elders** and **Trustees** are and how we can pray for their specific needs. There is access to our **Zoom link** for the Tuesday night **prayer meeting**, our **charitable status**, our **safeguarding** policy and current **AFM report**, **cleaning rotas**, and collections and **offerings**. There is also a **Gallery** tab which has some scary pictures of how young we used to be! Please note all the pictures are produced with permission and can not be downloaded. So to access your members area you will need the **Members** password; please contact me directly and I will add you to the members password database.

NB> For Your Information: Your browser may indicate that Bethany site is not secure! Don't worry, it's okay. The reason you may see this is because your browser is trying to protect you from putting in any personal information, such as bank details or personal details - **There is no requirement for you to input any personal details**. You do not need to input any of your personal details or information onto our site. The only interactions are with the **Contact Us** link and the **Members** link both of which are encrypted and are routed through a secure site.

Phil Harris www.bethanyiow.co.uk

Tuesday Night (Zoom) Prayer Meeting

Before the Zoom Prayer meeting on Tuesday, I send out an invitation on Monday by email to 27 addresses (of people who have said that they wanted to continue to receive the invitation) giving the link to the Zoom meeting, and to ask if anything should be prayed for. Various friends may send details of things to be prayed for which I put in to a document. Then on Tuesday at about 5pm, I email the prayer requests to those (about 14 in number) that have asked for these details. Then I send out a WhatsApp message to again give the details of the Zoom Meeting with a link as a reminder and give the reading from the Bible that we will be looking at.

If you have anything for prayer, please let us know.

The format for the Zoom prayer meeting is to have a brief reading from the Bible with a reflection or discussion on it and then to show the list of prayer items to all on Zoom so that they can see it (not everyone has a printer).

One of the scriptures we looked at was Psalm 63, a psalm of David, regarding a time when David was in the wilderness of Judah. David experienced the desert of Judah in his flight from Absalom (2 Sa. 15:23, 28; 16:2, 14; 17:16, 27–29). In that life-sapping heat his thirst was rather for God. David is no longer able to approach the sanctuary, but God does not change. God had previously satisfied the longing soul and would surely do so now.

There is an opportunity for all to pray and at the end there is some time for fellowship. Some like to print off the Prayer Requests so that they can pray for these things throughout the week. Please join us if you can, we would very much like to see you.

Steve Crago

Bethany WhatsApp Group

WhatsApp is a messaging service application available for all smart phones, laptops - Mac, Windows and Chromebook operating systems.

Our Bethany WhatsApp group is used by our fellowship to enable participation in group chats, to provide information, messages and share media.

There are currently 30 members of the WhatsApp group. The only stipulation to joining; access to a smart phone or suitable web access, be in regular

attendance at Bethany Church and consent to allow other group members to know their name and mobile phone number.

Not all of our 30 members are active within the group, some rarely message, some never! However, for those who use the WhatsApp group, generally it is of great benefit and an easy way to keep in touch with our Bethany family. Often a source of information and as occasionally, some of our Bethany Family or extended family face uncertainties, it is used as a platform for our collective prayer and thanksgiving.

Please Note:

If you would like to join the Bethany WhatsApp group please contact me directly and I will add you to the WhatsApp user database.

Phil Harris WhatsApp group Admin

Coffee and Chat

Little seems to have changed in our Coffee and Chat ladies' group over the past 12 months. We still meet every other Thursday morning at Bethany at 10:30am. The number of ladies that meet together ranges from six to fourteen. We usually take a short break in summer and at Christmas.



In April we had an attempt at learning another craft - making flowers from pieces of fabric. Margaret and Sharon kindly taught us how to make these, which was great fun.

Our first Saturday coffee morning was in May. We had a cream tea to celebrate the 80th anniversary of V.E. Day. The second one was an autumn themed one held in November. This is a time when we can invite friends and enjoy a chat over a drink and a piece of cake. It's great seeing the men coming along to these coffee mornings.

As you know we like to go out for coffee, lunch and of course a Christmas meal which we had at God's Providence. One Friday evening in February we were treated to a cheese fondue by Lois, and others brought a selection of homemade desserts.

The title of our group tells you that we enjoy having fellowship together over a cup of coffee or even a hot chocolate, but also reading God's word

together, whether it's sharing our favourite Bible verses or a topic. Here are a few –

The resurrection – Bible verses to prepare your heart for Easter.

What makes you want to get up in the morning? Yes, there are Bible verses.

The Lord's Prayer – Jesus teaching the disciples how to pray.

Advent – Light and Waiting.

All ladies are welcome and we would love you to come and join us.

Julia Crago

ACCOUNTS

BETHANY EVANGELICAL CHURCH – 2025 Accounts

	INCOME		EXPENDITURE	
	2025	2024	2025	2024
	£	£	£	£
General offerings/donations/interest	16,899	15,576		
Gift aid payment (HMRC)		1,993		
Special offerings*	801	609	3,700	2,900
Gifts to speakers			970	1,360
Catering			235	322
Building Fund			291	610
Gas, water & electricity	372	456	9,733	8,549
Books & stationery			474	150
Equipment			54	62
Maintenance/Miscellaneous		34,000	3,157	8,263
Totals	18,072	52,634	18,614	22,216
Income less expenditure	-542			
Balance at 01 01 25	71,936			
Balance at 31 12 25	71,394			

* Special Offerings is the sum of Special Offerings, Missionary Fund, Retired Missionary Fund

Here is the treasurer's report for 2024. Thank you again for trusting me in the role.

People are being very generous, with several giving by standing order. A number of people have signed up to the Gift Aid scheme which has increased the value of their donations. I realise that not everyone is able to do this, but thank you to those who have. Please let me know if you want to and are able to sign up to Gift Aid (if you haven't already) and I will give you the necessary forms.

You will see that the Gift Aid payment for 2025 has not been included in this table. This is due to delays with HMRC making the payment; it should be included in next year's accounts. This is the reason why overall expenditure has exceeded income in 2025.

Helen Edwards (Treasurer)

February 2026

Secretary's report 2026

I would like to direct you to these verses from God's word about God's peace guarding our hearts and minds:

Ephesians 3:16–19 (NIVUK)

*¹⁶ I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, ¹⁷ so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, ¹⁸ may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp **how wide and long and high and deep** is the love of Christ, ¹⁹ and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.*

As we trust in Jesus he makes his home in our hearts. We should be rooted in God's love to keep us strong. And to have the power to understand God's love:

- How wide: Includes all.
- How long: Goes on forever.
- How high: Jesus came down from Heaven.
- How deep: Jesus went to the grave for all of us.

If we want peace about something, then we should pray.

Philippians 4:6-7 (NLT)

Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done. Then you will experience God's peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus.

We don't understand God's love and peace fully but when we thank God for what he has done then our faith is increased.

When prayer replaces worry, the peace of God, which transcends all understanding comes in, and that peace acts as a guard keeping our minds and emotions from being over-whelmed by the sudden rush of fear, anxiety or temptation.

I pray that God will bless you in 2026.

-<>-

Thank you again for all that pray for the Trustees and Elders as we seek to serve you.

I would like to say thank you to Helen Edwards for doing the Bethany finances and Phil Edwards for the Bible readings that we have for each Sunday. Thank you to those who clean and do refreshments, meals and so many other things that aren't so readily noticed. For those that see a problem and just deal with it, thank you.

We are grateful to have seen some more come and join us on Sunday mornings, please welcome them and thank God for bringing them in.

Steve Crago

BETHANY (ISLE OF WIGHT) TRUST

England & Wales - Charity number 1182622

Accounts



**Annual Fellowship
Meeting 9:45am
22nd March 2025.
Reports**

Contents.

Elders' Report, March 2025.....	3
Bethany Evangelical Church Trustees	8
Bible Reading Group	8
Bethany Church web site 2025	9
Tuesday Night (Zoom) Prayer Meeting.....	10
Bethany WhatsApp Group	11
Coffee and Chat	12
ACCOUNTS.....	13
Secretary's report 2025	14

Elders' Report, March 2025

The members of the Oversight at Bethany are Steve Crago, John Peck and Robert Wills.

We would like to start by once again saying thank you for your prayers and your support during the past year.

We continue to have a Sunday morning meeting Family Service at 10:30am which incorporated the 2 meetings we used to have. This is followed by refreshments with Tea and Coffee etc. This is a time when we can have fellowship together and discuss what we have heard in the meeting.

On Average, 36 people attend the Sunday morning services, with the highest number being 54 in August.

The prayer meeting is in "Zoom" with a Bible reading to start, with a comment on the reading and then we look at the list of prayer items that have been raised. People may raise additional things that they know about for prayer. We don't raise personal items for prayer on behalf of others unless we have been asked to do so by them.

There were various things that happened in 2024.

March:

We welcomed Phil Harris who said that he was happy to be a trustee.

We also had the AGM at the trustees and Oversight meeting on 9th March 2024 as required by the Charities Commission for a CIO (Charitable Incorporated Organisation).

We had been asked to look at kitchen alterations. This would cost a lot but at least the cupboards on the North side should be repaired. Also, the idea of a paid Pastor / manager was looked at and we decided that this wasn't what we thought was good to do mainly due to the fact that we would end up with a single leader which from observation hasn't gone well for churches we know. We believe that the strength we have is from a shared leadership under the Lordship of Christ.

The reports were compiled at this meeting which were to be handed out at the Annual Fellowship Meeting (AFM) which was to be on 16th March 2024.

The agenda for the AFM was arranged thus:

9:45am start.

Steve did a talk on Trustworthy Sayings which can be summarised thus:

1. Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. (1 Timothy 1:15), is the foundation of our eternal salvation, God's gracious free gift.
2. Whoever aspires to be an overseer desires a noble task. (1 Timothy 3:1), Servant leadership.
3. Godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come. (Timothy 4:8-9), God likeness but also devotion in action.
4. If we died with him, we will also live with him. (2 Timothy 2:11), dead to sin but alive in Christ.
5. *When the kindness and love of God our Saviour appeared, he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Saviour, so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life. This is a trustworthy saying (Titus 3:3-8).*

We are heirs of eternal life by the Holy Spirit through Jesus.

Robert outlined the leadership structure:

The leadership has a legal requirement that there must be at least 3 trustees. All Elders are recognised by the assembly and are trustees. The Charities commission accept our trust deed and require us to follow it and not to drift

We reviewed the reports and letters. We did respond to the letters with the individuals concerned.

Sharon chaired the Any Other Business:

The "Missionary Spot" in the Sunday morning meeting was raised and though a good idea would be difficult to put in as so much is packed in to this. This will happen if possible.

It was noted that some new people had joined us recently because of the Bethany website and the messages and videos on it.

After this. Phil Edwards led us in a time of worship and singing. This was followed by lunch which was a curry with the alternative of jacket potato which was enjoyed by all. Thank you to Val and Robert for providing this.

The funeral of Jamie Jenner was held at Bethany on the 11th.

Sadly, Clive Adams passed away on Thursday 14/03/2024 after a period of illness.

On Sunday 10th, our speaker was Peter Herman, the Newport youth worker and Andy Peck on the 31st, Easter Sunday.

April:

We could see that various people would like to do Christianity Explored / Alpha and have a Bible Study group. No one wants to start this but do want others to do this. Many of us are busy already.

Paul Crago was asked to look at a replacement for the Public Address speakers in the main hall. The criteria for the replacement PA speakers are that they are just for us (Bethany) and to improve the current system.

Clarence Road Church had asked us if we could loan them some money to help with the refurbishing of their church building. At our April Trustee meeting we said that we could do this and made a loan of £5,000 at 0% interest. We said that we should do this as Clarence Road Church have a similar ethos to us and at one time were an offshoot of Bethany.

We had a visiting speaker on Sunday 14th, David Malam from SASRA (Seamen and Airman Scripture Readers Association).

May:

As a few groups use Bethany, we thought we should do a refresh of the housekeeping agreement and get the groups to sign up to this.

Youth For Christ have said that they would like to refurbish the Homestead toilet and we were happy with that.

Security lights at the front of Bethany, this would help people to see the front door lock as some have trouble with this in the dark.

Stephen Gillham came and spoke on 19th April; he also gave an update of the work of Bible Education Services. After the meeting we had a lunch together.

In May we had several visiting speakers. On the 5th, John Maxwell from Swindon. On the 12th, Graham Chewter of the Trinitarian Bible Society. 19th, Stephen Gillham from Dorset. Then on 26th, Bob White - Carisbrooke Priory.

June:

Public Address speaker discussion: Do we need 2 or 4 replacements? Paul Crago to get advice on this.

We had one visiting speaker this month, 30th, Andrew Yelland representing WorldShare.

July:

We looked at having a written policy for booking speakers as this may be something that the Charity Commission may want to know about.

Phil is looking in to the feasibility of having a solar powered security camera to monitor the doors and windows of the Homestead and the Bethany back door. Also to have an automatic light for the front door of Bethany so that the keyhole can be more easily seen.

Middle curtain in main hall is broken. Robert to find contact to repair this.

After a long illness, Mick Wharton passed away on Sunday 14th July.

Our visiting speaker this month was Peter Wells on 14th.

August:

In August we had a series for the month called "The message from Ephesians" which had Jesus at the centre.

- 4th August: Ephesians 1:1-12 - Seated on the right foundation -

The Christian life starts not with a 'do' but with a big 'done'. This chapter 1:1-12 looks how believers are blessed with every spiritual blessing in Christ Jesus!

- 11th August: Ephesians 2:11-22 Demolishing Divisions -

In a day where division and hostility abound, the message from Ephesians 2 of how Jesus demolished divisions is needed all the more.

- 18th August: Ephesians 3:12-21 Great Expectations –

Do you live your Christian life with hope, boldness and confidence? Ephesians 3:21-21 focuses on the believers 'great expectations' in the Lord!

- 25th August: Ephesians 4:1-6 Walking in His footsteps -

Jesus told us to learn from Him for He is humble and gentle in spirit. How does this relate to our walk today and our unity with other believers?

On the 8th Hannah Brunt and Steve Griffiths were married. We pray that God will bless them in their life together.

September:

We had 2 visiting speakers this month, on the 1st, Bob White - Carisbrooke Priory and on the 15th, Andrew Hardiman.

October:

A security camera has been sited to view the back door of Bethany and the two front doors of the Homestead. This is working and records human beings moving in the area of vision.

Jacob's car was being worked on with parts from another car parked there by him. After we spoke to him, he had the car removed. The Trustees said that there should be no more car work in the car park.

Visiting speakers: 13th, Andy Attrill and the on 20th, Andy Attrill.

November:

A broken curtain had been fixed and other fittings also by a contractor.

A coffee morning was held for Light for Bulgaria on the 23rd Cakes, crafts and books were available for a donation. Michelle Lineros came and spoke about the work and showed some slides of what was happening with the charity.

December:

We had the Christmas candle lit Carol Service on Sunday 22nd which was led by Robert Wills and aided by many. Phil Edwards led the Christmas Day service which started at 10am and finished at 10:45am. Again, we enjoyed the decorations that Andrew Brunt put up.

Andrew Hardiman was our visiting speaker on 8th.

Hebron Church held an End of year service on Tuesday 31st from 9:30pm to 12:30am the next day.

January 2025:

A PIR (Passive Infrared Sensor) and light has been fitted near the front door of Bethany so that those that have difficulty using a key in the dark can now see. Also, the car park lights were refurbished. Andrew Brunt fitted a pair of hand rails so that people coming off the street through the gates can easily access the right-hand side front door without going through the car park, thank you Andrew.

Visiting speakers, 12th, Alastair Cole and 26th, Bob White - Carisbrooke Priory.

February:

The Upper Room, or more commonly known as the loft in Bethany now has a light. Its operation is a secret, but if you ask anyone who knows, then you know!

Visiting speaker on the 2nd was Peter Wells.

Other events.

Throughout the year, Youth for Christ have held events on various Fridays for young people and it is usually called Catalyst. Also, they have a prayer meeting for all the Churches' youth workers on the Island on Monday morning. On Saturday the 8th February they had an away day event for young people which took place at Bethany and Castlehold. This was instead of using the Urban Saints centre in Ryde and they were having a major refit.

The Medina Community Choir regularly hold a practice on Monday and Thursday evenings. Hebron Church now use the Bethany building for their meeting on Sunday afternoon from 2pm to 5:30pm.

Bethany Evangelical Church Trustees **(as at 1st January 2025)**

Name of trust: Bethany (Isle of Wight) Trust.
(Charity Commission for England and Wales registration number: 1182622)

S Crago (Secretary; cheque signatory).
S Bollen (appointed person for marriages).
J Peck (cheque signatory; appointed person for marriages).
P Crago.
P Harris.
R Wills.
P Young.

Note: Under the trust's constitution (paragraphs 9-12), the Trustees are appointed for fixed terms, but are eligible for reappointment after these terms expire.

Phil Harris joined us as a trustee for 3 years from 9th March 2024 for 3 years. This appointment was made at an Elders/Trustees meeting on the same date. John Peck having served a 3-year term was re-elected on 01/01/2025 for another 3 years as agreed with him.

Bible Reading Group

The Bible Reading group meets at Bethany in the side hall on alternate Wednesday evenings.

It's intended as an outreach and a help for people who don't regularly attend church or don't already know much about the Bible. It's also a useful way for us to welcome and get to know people who have started coming to Bethany.

We usually don't meet in the winter months as it's unattractive for people to come out. We've just started again with the first meeting this year on the 19th February.

We aim to meet fortnightly and we're usually about ten people. We have supper and a relaxing time of fellowship together, then read a Bible passage. This year we've just started reading the gospel of John. We follow this by a short talk, an open discussion and a prayer time. We try to be flexible and responsive to the needs of people in the group. It has to be said that it's not really a Bible study; we keep it at a fairly basic level for people who might not know the scriptures well.

Anyone is welcome, especially if they want to bring someone from outside the church fellowship, but we always need to know numbers in advance for catering, so if you want to come or bring anyone, please let Robert, Valerie or Tess know first. Also, please pray for us.

Robert Wills – March 2025

Bethany Church web site 2025

Phil Harris www.bethanyiow.co.uk

Website Report

When Steve asked for a report on the website for the **Annual Fellowship Meeting (AFM)**, I thought, how can I write anything different from previous years? Last year I took the opportunity to let you know how our website was written, the time it takes and what is required to keep it going and up to date. This year I will just remind you of how our website is used. The Bethany website is an open window into our fellowship here in Newport on the Isle of Wight. Hopefully it will show users that Bethany Evangelical Church is a place where a small group of Christians gather in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ to worship God.

Bethany on the World Wide Web (www)

Bethany website remains a popular source of information for visitors and holiday makers who may search for a Church to attend. Visitors to the website can read about our **Bethany Church history** and our links with the Isle of Wight **Youth for Christ** team together with our support of other various charities and organisations, there are **external links** to many Island-Christian activities and links to **external** Christian organisations. People **contact us** via a secure messaging service and can **find us** via **Google Maps**, check out any news and review the general **service times** and also plan your month with the monthly

Church Diary. Useful links include **What is Christianity** and explains **What we believe**. Via the **Sermons** tab, Sunday services can be listened to again. At the foot of each page there is a link to our **Facebook** site.

Bethany Members

Church **Members** have access to the secure **Members** area which can be accessed via a secure password entry system. Here you will find the **Zoom link** to the Tuesday night **prayer meeting**, an outline of who our **Elders** and **Trustees** are. Our **charitable status**, previous **AFM reports**, **cleaning rotas**, and collections and **offerings**.

Please Note:

1. If you require the **Members** password please contact me.
2. All the words in **bold** above are links you can find on the website.

Phil Harris www.bethanyiow.co.uk

Tuesday Night (Zoom) Prayer Meeting

Before the Zoom Prayer meeting on Tuesday, I send out an invitation on Monday by email to 39 (was 35) addresses giving the link to the Zoom meeting, and to ask if anything should be prayed for. Various friends may send details of things to be prayed for which I put in to a document. Then on Tuesday at about 5pm, I email the prayer requests to those (about 14 in number, was 12) that have asked for these details. Then I send out a WhatsApp message to again give the details of the Zoom Meeting with a link as a reminder and give the reading from the Bible that we will be looking at.

If you have anything for prayer, please let us know.

The format for the Zoom prayer meeting is to have a brief reading from the Bible with a reflection or discussion on it and then to show the list of prayer items to all on Zoom so that they can see it (not everyone has a printer). There is an opportunity for all to pray and at the end there is some time for fellowship. Some like to print off the Prayer Requests so that they can pray for these things throughout the week. Please join us if you can, we would very much like to see you.

Steve Crago

Bethany WhatsApp Group

WhatsApp is a free messaging service application. Available to any user of an iPhone or Android smartphone - or for PC - Mac, Windows and Chrome operating systems.

Our Bethany WhatsApp group was set up to enable our fellowship to participate in group chats, provide information, messages and share media. Together with the Zoom application it was a particular comfort and refuge during Covid.

There are currently 30 members of the WhatsApp group. The only stipulation; Bethany WhatsApp members should be in regular attendance at Bethany Church and consent to allow other group members to know their name and mobile phone number.

Not all 30 members are active within the group, some rarely message, some never - for those that do use the WhatsApp group, generally it is of great benefit and an easy way to keep in touch. Often a source of information and as occasionally, some of our Bethany Family or extended family face uncertainties, it is used as a platform for prayer and thanksgiving.

Please Note: If you would like to join the Bethany WhatsApp group please see me one Sunday Morning.

Phil Harris WhatsApp group Admin

Coffee and Chat

The Coffee and Chat ladies group still enjoy meeting together every other Thursday morning at 10:30am at Bethany. All ladies are welcome. We take a couple of breaks during the year, a short one at Christmas and during July and August.

From time to time, we treat ourselves and visit a tea room or coffee shop, or even have lunch together. And of course, we couldn't resist going for a Christmas meal at The Griffin in Godshill.

November was the time for a Saturday Coffee Morning. As usual some of the ladies made their scrumptious cakes. We used the coffee morning as a fundraiser for the Christian charity group Light for Bulgaria. £410 was raised, including a church donation and gift aid.

Sometimes we like to get a bit creative. In order to do this, we needed the help of Karen Milgate. She taught us how to make Scripture Zines – a small pamphlet that focuses on biblical verses or passages and creating your own design. Here are some photos.



Karen explains it really well –

“We made encouraging Scripture Zines. It was a time to reflect on God's promises, to create while allowing God to speak to us...trying something new which might have felt a little daunting for some. Coffee and Chat gives us space to chat, but also encourage one another, to share God's word and to digest and think about it, whilst enjoying a lovely hot drink and biscuits. It also gives us the opportunity to pray for one another”.

To round off the creative morning we had a take-away fish and chips lunch.

Julia Crago

ACCOUNTS

BETHANY EVANGELICAL CHURCH – 2024 Accounts

	INCOME		EXPENDITURE	
	2024	2023	2024	2023
	£	£	£	£
General offerings/donations/interest	15,576	16,640		
Gift aid payment (HMRC)	1,993	1,831		
Special offerings*	609	1,066	2,900	3,900
Gifts to speakers			1,360	850
Catering			322	330
Building Fund			610	219
Gas, water & electricity	456	288	8,549	9,598
Books & stationery			150	150
Equipment		1,200	62	1,395
Maintenance/Miscellaneous	34,000		8,263	3,516
Totals	52,634	21,025	22,216	19,958
income less expenditure	30,418			
Balance at 01 01 24	41,518			
Balance at 31 12 24	71,936			

* **Special Offerings is the sum of Special Offerings, Missionary Fund, Retired Missionary Fund**

Here is the treasurer's report for 2024. Thank you again for trusting me in the role.

The unusually high figure for the income this year is due to a bequest (a gift left to Bethany Evangelical Church in a will). This is the *Maintenance/Miscellaneous* Income in 2024 shown above.

The Maintenance/Miscellaneous Expenditure for 2024 was also unusually high as it includes a sum of £5,000 lent (interest free) to Clarence Road Evangelical Church (Clarence Road, East Cowes, Isle of Wight, PO32 6ES) to go towards the repairs and modernisation of their building.

People are being very generous, with several giving by standing order. A number of people have signed up to the Gift Aid scheme which has increased the value of their donations. I realise that not everyone is able to do this, but thank you to those who have. Please let me know if you want to and are able to sign up to Gift Aid (if you haven't already) and I will give you the necessary forms.

Helen Edwards (Treasurer)

February 2025

Secretary's report 2025

I would like to direct you to these verses from God's word about being made alive in Christ:

Romans 8:9-11 (NIV/UK)

⁹ You, however, are not in the realm of the flesh but are in the realm of the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, they do not belong to Christ. ¹⁰ But if Christ is in you, then even though your body is subject to death because of sin, the Spirit gives life because of righteousness. ¹¹ And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies because of his Spirit who lives in you.

Before this, Paul writes about those that live according to the sinful nature, who are dominated by it and this ultimately leads to death, not just in this life but also the final death.

But we are not controlled by the sinful nature (the realm of the flesh) if we have the Spirit of God living in us. And because God raised Jesus from the dead, he will also give us a full and satisfying life, and raise us from the dead. This is the hope we have, lets pass it on!

I pray that God will bless you in 2025.

-<>-

Thank you again for all that pray for the Trustees and Elders as we seek to serve you.

I would like to say thank you to Phil Edwards for the Bible readings that we have for each Sunday. Continuing the process by which we read God's word each Sunday which was begun by Don Piper. Thank you to those who clean and do refreshments, meals and so many other things that aren't so readily noticed.

We are grateful to have seen more come and join us on Sunday mornings, please welcome them and thank God for bringing them in.

The number of members of Bethany is about 69.

Steve Crago

BETHANY (ISLE OF WIGHT) TRUST

England & Wales - Charity number 1182622

Accounts



**Annual Fellowship
Meeting 9:45am
16th March 2024.
Reports**

Contents.

Elders' Report, March 2024	3
Bethany Evangelical Church Trustees	9
Bible Reading Group	10
Bethany Church web site 2024	11
Light for Bulgaria Coffee Morning	12
Tuesday Night (Zoom) Prayer Meeting	13
"Coffee and Chat"	13
ACCOUNTS	14
Secretary's report 2024	15

Elders' Report, March 2024

The members of the Oversight at Bethany are Steve Crago, John Peck and Robert Wills.

We would like to start by once again saying thank you for your prayers and your support during the past year.

We continue to have a Sunday morning meeting Family Service at 10:30am which incorporated the 2 meetings we used to have. This is followed by refreshments with Tea and Coffee etc. This is a time when we can have fellowship together and discuss what we have heard in the meeting.

The prayer meeting continues in Zoom with a Bible reading to start with and then we look at the list of prayer items that have been raised. People may raise additional things that they know about for prayer. We don't raise personal items for prayer on behalf of others unless we have been asked to do so.

Typically, over 30 people attend the Sunday morning services.

There were various things that happened in 2023.

March 2023.

The main piano had a broken sustain foot pedal mechanism and was old. A newer replacement was required.

We noticed that our numbers have increased, but we couldn't identify a particular reason.

All infrared heaters were working and a problem trip switch had been replaced. Cost of running the heating is better than we thought it might be.

On the 17th March, SSE put smart meter in Bethany. Homestead meter should be done at some point.

Annual Fellowship meeting 23 March 2023.

Robert did the Bible reading and message. Then there were reports followed by prayer and singing and then lunch. Various issues were raised:

Safeguarding:

Lois spoke about the Safeguarding Policy and asked if a copy could be pinned to the Notice Board. This was done. Roger reminded us that we should be reviewing the Safeguarding Policy every year and included at the AFM. Sharon mentioned that there is training for safeguarding.

Missionary Spot.

In the Family Service we haven't had a Missionary Spot or video about Missionary work for some time. Could this be included? Time constraints make this difficult.

Website use and WhatsApp.

Phil Harris mentioned the use of the Bethany Website and it was also said that visitors and newcomers had used the site to find out about us. One couple had listened to all the January messages before coming to us.

WhatsApp was being used like a prayer chain and more. The only issue with it is that those on the prayer chain who aren't on WhatsApp can miss out on what is happening unless someone rings them.

Home Bible Study group.

Could this be set up? There was a suggestion that this could be in the afternoon while it is still light. The Elders are stretched already with speaking duties as there are fewer visiting speakers. No answer to this and no one has stepped forward to do this.

Ladies Meeting.

The Ladies meeting stopped with the Covid Pandemic and was unlikely to start again as its numbers had diminished before closure.

It was said that the Coffee and Chat Ladies' group was not a replacement for this as it was just a get together to which women could bring friends to and talk perhaps about the difficulties they were having. This group can't be seen as a replacement for the Ladies meeting.

Julia mentioned that there was to be a Coffee Morning Cream Tea on Monday the 8th April celebrating the Kings Coronation. 10:30am.

Issues raised by Andrew:

There weren't enough chairs in the main hall. Seating plan was updated and chairs added.

Craft Afternoon, Jo Bingham may be able to get this going again but Jo and Paul are still visiting parents on the mainland quite often.

A suggestion was made about refreshments in the foyer. This could happen in in the Summer.

The Kitchen was mentioned and it was said the oven space was difficult. But a case for change can't be made just for one event per year.

Home Bible Study groups were disappearing before Covid19, so who would be interested? Probably not many. See comment on this above.

New hymns, we do this when we can but the aim is to choose something appropriate to the subject.

Issue raised by Ann Pembroke:

Ann suggested that we were not following the words of Jesus in how we conducted the Breaking of Bread and that it was something that the Elders did.

The Elders response was that it doesn't have to be served by elders. Also, we don't know how many cups the disciples had. There have been suggestions that each disciple would have their own cup. Further to this, some have said that they would rather have separate cups because of health issues. The trays and small cups were obtained before we heard of Covid and when we first had the Lord's Supper together when the restrictions were lifted, we brought our own glasses to cope with the Covid issue. We don't need to be prescriptive about how this is done, also God sees the heart, and so it is the attitude with which we do this that is important.

-<>-

The special offering held Sunday (26th March) for the Syrian / Turkey earthquake disaster came to £377.95. We sent it through WorldShare who are working in those regions.

April.

On the 7th we had a Good Friday Breaking of Bread followed by refreshments. Then some joined the Walk of Witness in Newport at 12:30pm starting at the Congregational Church. This gave us the opportunity to talk to anyone that asked us what we were doing. Many people joined this from the Churches in Newport and there were refreshments at the end.

We welcomed Sharon Bollen as a trustee to the group. Sharon joined us for the standard 3 year period. Phil Edwards retired from Oversight and being a Trustee.

We have seen an increase in our numbers and couldn't see that we could take any credit for it. We were still doing what we have done before, that is faithfully sticking to God's word whether it is the nice parts or the more difficult parts. We did have a speaker from Tear Fund who felt strongly that God was telling her to say that we should continue doing what we were already doing.

On Monday 10th April we had a little walk at Firestone Copse at 3pm led by Paul Coleman. We were joined by various friends and had a great time with

Paul looking at trees and plants that usually we would have ignored like the lungwort. The weather was good.

We were sad to lose Joyce Wells who passed away on Saturday 29th April at 3:30am after a short illness. The funeral was on 25th May at 12 noon at St John's Church Newport.

Visiting speakers this month: on the 2nd, Andy Peck and on 23rd David Malam – SASRA.

May.

We were still looking for a new piano, various friends were looking for one on our behalf.

We had a Coronation Celebration Cream Tea on Monday 8th May 10am to 12 noon at Bethany. There was cake, cream teas, coffee, tea and a craft table for the kids. A competition to pin the jewel on the Kings Crown and a quiz. The refreshments were free and all were welcomed. It did seem to encourage renewal of friendships.

John Peck mentioned that refreshments after the Sunday morning meeting were working well. Allowed people to chat and catch up with each other and discuss the talk that we had in the meeting.

Numbers creeping up, about 40 people in attendance.

John Peck stepped down from the attendance of the Oversight and Trustee meeting but still remains as a member of the Oversight and is still a trustee.

On Sunday 21st we had a fellowship lunch and Stephen Gillham spoke on the Return of the Lord and also did an update on the work of Bible Education Services.

Visiting speaker this month: on the 21st, Stephen Gillham - Dorset.

June.

We reviewed Bethany's safeguarding policy and signed it. A scanned copy was put on the notice board. This will have to be reviewed annually.

The team tasked with sourcing a new piano had sourced one from Freshwater going for £850. A donor has covered the cost.

The Oversight and Trustees looked at the document detailing the proposal and purpose of the Newport Youth Worker as published by CWTN (Churches Working Together in Newport group) and agreed with it in principle.

Numbers attending had tailed off slightly. Could be due to illness and holidays.

During the year the question came up as to why we don't give out the weekly offerings any more. The main reason is that more than half of the money coming in is through Standing Orders direct from people's banks and to publish just the amount put in the box would be misleading. However, when we have a special offering, that is given out as part of the notices.

This month the congregation number peaked at about 49 people.

Visiting speaker this month: on the 11th, John Maxwell - Swindon.

July.

On Saturday 29th July we had an open lunch at Ann Pembroke's home in the garden. Some went on a tour of Great Whitcombe Manor while others enjoyed the garden. We met some new people and had a great time.

August.

Lois invited us to her cottage in Freshwater after church on Sunday 6th August for a 'bring and share' lunch. Lois provided the jacket potatoes. It was really nice to be together in Lois's Garden again.

We agreed that the piano sounded good and hoped to use it more often.

In August we did a series called "Their walk with God", the subjects being Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph. The subjects linked nicely together and were good. It wasn't however that different to our normal Family Service. We are somewhat restricted by having the Breaking of Bread as part of the meeting.

September.

The Oversight and Trustees discussed the support of the Newport Youth Worker and decided to send £200 to the work and also discuss our support at the AFM in 2024. We also said that we needed more trustees and start looking for a successor for the Secretary.

Visiting speaker this month: on the 10th, Bob White - Carisbrooke Priory.

October.

We had a special collection over 2 weeks (1st and 8th October) for Tear Fund and Food Bank. The money collected to be distributed between the two charities came to £688.

An observation was made that we were missing most(all) of the occasional attenders on Sunday (15th October). We were down to 30 people.

November.

Thank you to Andrew and his team for putting up the decorations for Christmas including a stunning 'curtain' array of lights hanging from the ceiling.

Lois Cooper told us that monies collected from the SASRA drums (Soldiers and Aviators Readers Association) was £272.93. "SASRA provides the serving personnel of the British Army and Royal Air Force with a practical and constant experience of the Christian Faith through living and working alongside them in their units". Several members of Bethany have drums which are used for putting by money for their work.

Hebron Church celebrated their anniversary on Sunday 12th November, one year since they first started meeting in Sunday afternoon in the side hall. They invited us to be part of that celebration by joining them in a lunchtime meal. It went very well and also they gave us a gift of £1000.

Jo and Paul Bingham had a wedding anniversary celebration on Saturday 25th November. There was Barn Dancing, food, quiz and great time reminiscing.

December.

We welcomed Paul Crago as trustee on 2nd December for Bethany (Isle of Wight) Trust. Paul joined us as a trustee for the standard 3 year period. Steve Crago's term finished at the end of the year, Steve said that he was willing to stand again as a trustee. Sharon proposed that Steve should continue as a trustee and Robert seconded.

Visiting speaker this month: on the 10th, Pete Luther - Revive.

Phil Harris revamped the Bethany Website for Christmas to include that activities we were doing. Robert Wills designed a leaflet as a handout about the activities which were:

Candle lit carol service on Sunday evening 6pm December 17th.

Carol singing around the town on Wednesday 21st December at 6:15pm.

Christmas meal Saturday 23rd at 4pm which was organised by Rhoda, Andrew and family.

Sunday 24th our morning meeting was an open time of worship and Breaking of Bread.

Christmas Day (Monday) 10:30am celebration was led by Shelia Dolby (Rhoda's sister).

We didn't have a Craft Afternoon. If we want to have it again, the organisation of it would have to happen earlier.

January 2024.

Visiting speaker this month: on the 21st, Gabby North - Leprosy Mission.

February 2024.

We found that Bethany will have to do a tax return again. Roger Fruen and Becci Bell are happy to help with this.

Numbers at Bethany (29) not so healthy. Many away due to ill health.

John Hassett has been putting up the posters at the front of Bethany for some years, for which we are most grateful. Is there anyone who is willing to take this on?

Other events.

Throughout the year, Youth for Christ have held events on Friday for young people. Also, they have a prayer meeting for all the Church Workers on the Island on Monday morning.

The Medina Community Choir regularly hold a practice on Monday and Thursday evenings. Hebron Church use the side hall of the Bethany building for their meeting on Sunday afternoon at 2pm to about 5pm.

Good News for Everyone (formerly Gideons) had a Strawberry tea on Saturday 10th June 2023 at 3pm.

Bethany Evangelical Church Trustees **(as at 1st January 2024)**

Name of trust: Bethany (Isle of Wight) Trust.

(Charity Commission for England and Wales registration number: 1182622)

S Crago (Secretary; cheque signatory).

S Bollen (appointed person for marriages).

J Peck (cheque signatory; appointed person for marriages).

P Crago.

R Wills.

P Young.

Note: Under the trust's constitution (paragraphs 9-12), the Trustees are appointed for fixed terms, but are eligible for reappointment after these terms expire.

Sharon Bollen joined us as a trustee for 3 years from 15th April 2023. This appointment was made at an Elders/Trustees meeting on the same date. The initial terms for which Steve Crago was appointed expired at the end of 2023, but he agreed to continue as trustee for 3 years from 01/01/2024, and was reappointed (at the Elders/Trustees meeting of 2nd December 2023). Also at this meeting, Paul Crago joined us as a trustee for 3 years.

Bible Reading Group

The Bible Reading group meets at Bethany in the side hall on Wednesday evenings.

It functions as an outreach and a help for people who don't regularly attend church or don't already know much about the Bible. It's also seems to be a useful way for us to welcome and get to know people who have started coming to Bethany.

We usually don't meet in the winter months as it's unattractive for people to come out. We've just started again with the first meeting this year on the 28th February.

We aim to meet fortnightly and we're usually about a dozen people. We have supper and a relaxing time of fellowship together, then read a Bible passage. At the moment we're following Paul's journeys in Acts and dipping for an overview of the letters he wrote later to the places he visited. We follow this by a short discussion and a prayer time. We try to be flexible and responsive to the needs of people in the group. It has to be said that it's not really a Bible study; we keep it at a fairly basic level for people who might not know the scriptures well.

Anyone is welcome but we always need to know numbers in advance for catering, so if you want to come or bring anyone, please let Robert, Valerie or Tess know first.

Also, please pray for us.

Robert Wills – March 2024

Bethany Church web site 2024

Phil Harris www.bethanyiow.co.uk

History

Our Bethany website is 26 years old !

The original Bethany website was conceived and produced in 1998 and was originally designed to offer Bethany a foothold on the ever growing and mystical World Wide Web (WWW).

I remember some of the Bethany elders at the time asked for all the documentation that would be uploaded to the WWW before permission was given ...I took pleasure in providing all the lines of code for their perusal.. !!

Coding Language

Web design and tools for writing script or code in the 90's were expensive, so the first attempt at writing Bethany's website script was written longhand using a web language called HyperText Markup Language (HTML). This code or language originally defined the content and structure of web "pages".

Over the years there have been many iterations of our website together with much innovation in web design and technology. I still write the code long hand (old fashioned I guess) but the language has changed considerably. Now web design requires a specific language for specifying the presentation of a "webpage" called; Cascading Style Sheet (CSS) which is considered the bedrock technology of the World Wide Web alongside scripting languages such as HTML, JavaScript and Extensible Markup Language (XML).

My Report

Well done for ploughing through the above! When Steve asked for a report on the website for the **AGM**, I thought it a good opportunity to let you know how our website was written and what is required to keep it going and up to date.

If you have not already done so please take a look at the website, which has many useful links such as **What is Christianity** and explains **What we believe**, there are links to **news** and our monthly Church **diary** with general notices together with **external links** to many Island Christian activities and links to **external** Christian organisations. Each Sunday our **Sermons** are recorded and can be listened to again. At the foot of each page there is a link to our **Facebook** site.

Church visitors

Bethany website has proved a popular source of information for visitors and holiday makers who search for a Church to attend. Visitors to the website can read about our **Bethany Church history** and our links with the Isle of Wight **Youth for Christ** team. People can **find us** on Google Maps, together with general **service times**. Readers can **contact us** via a secure messaging service.

Bethany Members

The Bethany family has access to this area via a secure password entry system. Here you will find a zoom link to the Tuesday night **prayer meeting**, an outline of who our **elders** and **trustees** are. Our **charitable status**, previous AGM **reports**, **cleaning rotas**, and **offerings** to missionary societies, are all available to view.

Bethany Web

My hope is the Bethany website directs users to recognise us as a group of Christians who believe that the teachings of the Bible and Good News of Jesus Christ is fundamental to us as Evangelical Christians.

Note:

1. If you require the Members password please contact me.
2. All the words in bold and Italic above are links you can find on the website.

Light for Bulgaria Coffee Morning

On Saturday 18th November 2023 we were pleased to host a Coffee Morning to raise awareness and funds for the work of Light for Bulgaria.

The morning included refreshments; tea/coffee and a variety of cakes & cookies; a video from LBF founder Michelle Lineros and there was a table of my own Bulgarian memories and photographs to browse. There was also a craft table to keep children entertained and the craftily inclined occupied making some pre-Christmas crafts.

The coffee morning raised £345.

With thanks to Julia Crago, Jane Salmon, Steve Crago and everyone who donated cakes.

Sharon Bollen

Tuesday Night (Zoom) Prayer Meeting

Before the Zoom Prayer meeting on Tuesday, I send out an invitation by email to 35 addresses giving the link to the Zoom meeting, and to ask if anything should be prayed for. Various friends may send details of things to be prayed for which I put in to a document. Then on Tuesday at about 5pm, I email the prayer requests to those (about 12 in number) that have asked for these details. Then I send out a WhatsApp message to again give the details of the Zoom Meeting with a link as a reminder.

If you have anything for prayer, please let us know.

The format for the Zoom prayer meeting is to have a brief reading from the Bible with a reflection on it and then to show the list of prayer items to all on Zoom so that they can see it (not everyone has a printer). There is an opportunity for all to pray and at the end there is some time for fellowship. Some like to print off the Prayer Requests so that they can pray for these things throughout the week.

Steve Crago

“Coffee and Chat”

The Coffee and Chat group for ladies still meet together every other Thursday morning at 10.30am at Bethany for about an hour and a half. We also enjoy meeting up in coffee shops or tea rooms for coffee or even lunch. On one occasion we went to the Brading Roman Villa and had a great time making a mosaic tile coaster.

Last year was the year of the coronation of King Charles III. To celebrate this, on Monday 8th May, we had a Coronation Cream Tea coffee morning at Bethany where all were welcome to come along.

Ladies, you are welcome to join us any time. The dates that we meet are on the notice board in the foyer at Bethany.

Julia Crago

ACCOUNTS

BETHANY EVANGELICAL CHURCH – 2023 Accounts

	INCOME		EXPENDITURE	
	2023	2022	2023	2022
	£	£	£	£
General offerings/donations/interest	16,640	12,940		
Gift aid payment (HMRC)	1,831	1,168		
Special offerings*	1,066	638	3,900	1,400
Gifts to speakers			850	1,115
Catering			330	194
Building Fund			219	63
Gas, water & electricity	288	372	9,598	4,706
Books & stationery		22	150	232
Equipment	1,200		1,395	1,708
Maintenance/Miscellaneous		154	3,516	2,414
Totals	21,025	15,294	19,958	11,832
income less expenditure	1,067			
Balance at 01 01 23	40,449			
Balance at 31 12 23	41,518			

* Special Offerings is the sum of Special Offerings, Missionary Fund, Retired Missionary Fund

Here is the treasurer's report for 2023. Thank you again for trusting me in the role.

Income was up from that received in 2022, but then again, so was expenditure. In particular, special gifts/offerings (including some gifts intended to be made in December 2022 which were delayed until January 2023, due to the cheque book being held up in the post), and utility bills. There are three reasons for this: firstly the rise in energy prices experienced by everyone in this country during 2023; secondly, the hall is now in constant use, unlike in the previous few years when the hall was closed for extended periods due to Covid-19 lockdowns; and thirdly, for several years our energy bills have been based on estimates (despite us providing the companies with accurate meter readings), and this year, following the installation of smart meters, this has been rectified. This third factor was a one-off correction.

Nevertheless, income this year has again slightly exceeded expenditure.

People are being very generous, with several giving by standing order. A number of people have signed up to the Gift Aid scheme which has increased the value of their donations. I realise that not everyone is able to do this, but thank you to those who have.

Helen Edwards (Treasurer)

February 2024

Secretary's report 2024

I would like to commend to you this verse from God's word about how to be Blessed by God:

Psalm 1:1-3 (NIV/UK)

¹ Blessed is the one who does not walk in step with the wicked or stand in the way that sinners take or sit in the company of mockers, ² but whose delight is in the law of the Lord, and who meditates on his law day and night. ³ That person is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither – whatever they do prospers.

The Meaning of the Word Blessed in this Psalm is happiness that God-given security and prosperity produce. When the Bible says "Blessed is the one...", it means happy or fulfilled. We are blessed when we follow and obey God's word. I wish that you all would be blessed in 2024.

-<>-

Thank you again for all your prayerful support for the Elders as we seek to serve you.

I would like to say thank you to Phil Edwards for the Bible readings that we have for each Sunday. This continues the process by which we read God's word each Sunday which was begun by Don Piper. Thank you to those who clean and do refreshments, meals and so many other things that aren't noticed by all.

We are grateful to have seen more come and join us on Sunday mornings, God is gracious.

The number of members of Bethany is about 69.

Steve Crago

BETHANY (ISLE OF WIGHT) TRUST

England & Wales - Charity number 1182622

Accounts



**Annual
Fellowship
Meeting 9:45am
25th March
2023.
Reports**

Contents.

Elders' Report, March 2023.....	3
Bethany Evangelical Church Trustees.....	7
Bible Reading Group.....	8
Bethany Church web site 2023.....	9
Tuesday Night (Zoom) Prayer Meeting.....	10
"Coffee and Chat"	10
ACCOUNTS.....	11
Secretary's report.....	12

Elders' Report, March 2023

The members of the Oversight at Bethany are Steve Crago, John Peck, Robert Wills and Phil Edwards.

We would like to start by once again saying thank you for your prayers and your support during the past year.

After two years in which the life of the church was severely disrupted by the restrictions and safety measures made necessary by the Covid-19 (Coronavirus) pandemic, 2022 saw us return to something approaching normal life.

Although several of the congregation contracted COVID-19 during the early months of the year, this did not significantly affect the work of the church – its meetings and activities.

However, some of the changes to how we do things adopted during 2020-2021 have been kept, as they appeared to work and were considered by many to be an improvement on how we were doing things before.

Firstly, the weekly prayer meeting has continued to be held on Zoom as it turned out that this is actually better attended than prayer meetings held physically were.

Secondly, we have kept to holding a single Sunday morning service per week at 10.30am which includes the Breaking of Bread (as opposed to holding a separate Breaking of Bread service prior to the main Family Service). The new arrangement has a number of advantages. The previous two service arrangement risked splitting the congregation into those who only attended the first service and those who only attended the second. Also, it had been noted with the old system that if one did attend both services it made for a long morning and one had to do a lot of singing. Another advantage of the new single service is that it discourages the preacher from speaking for too long (well, that's the theory anyway).

Typically over 30 people now attend the Sunday morning services.

Several people have expressed regret about losing our traditional open Breaking of Bread service. We are not expecting to return to that (at least in the foreseeable future) but there is a place for such Breaking of Bread services to mark special church occasions. Two times our traditional Breaking of Bread services were held in 2022 – one on Good Friday (April 15th) and one on Christmas Eve.

Here is a summary of events during the past year:

March

On 13th March we were visited by Aurel Vidal of the International Mission to Jewish People) who spoke to us in the Sunday morning service about his work amongst Jewish people in France (and in particular, Paris).

Annual Fellowship Meeting

Our Annual Fellowship Meeting was held on 9th April 2022.

The devotions and worship time were meant to be taken by Phil Edwards, but he was unable to attend due to contracting Covid-19, and his message (from Ezra 3:8-13 and 1 Thessalonians 5:5-18) was instead read out by Steve Crago.

During this meeting the *Church's Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy* was reviewed and accepted. It was subsequently signed off at the next Oversight Meeting on 07/05/2022. As part of this Sharon Bollen was reappointed as Church Safeguarding Officer.

April - June

Anne Adams went to be with the Lord on 10th April. Her funeral was held at Bethany on Thursday 19th May.

In the months April to June we had a number of visiting speakers on Sunday mornings, some of whom are representatives of missionary organisations. These were:

David Malam (SASRA) on 24/04/2022
Graham Chewter (Trinitarian Bible Society) on 08/05/2022
Stephen Gillham (Counties) on 22/05/2022
John Maxwell on 12/06/2022

On the weekend on 18-20th June we were visited by a group of overseas students from Friends International in Guildford. On the Saturday we welcomed them with a buffet lunch; on the Sunday Hugh Griffin of Friends International led the morning service; and on the Monday some of the congregation joined the students on a walk from Freshwater to Alum Bay.

July

Since December 2007 the Bible readings and subjects preached upon in the Sunday morning services had followed a programme of systematic teaching and readings intended to cover all parts of the Bible. The idea behind this was to avoid the danger of just hearing messages from the familiar and "comfortable" portions of scripture, and not to shy away from unfamiliar or challenging passages. The programme was produced by Don Piper up until 2015 and continued by Phil Edwards thereafter. This scheme

was completed on 31st July by Roger Fruen when he spoke on Joshua's farewell address from the book of Joshua chapters 23 & 24.

September

In September we commenced a new series of messages in the Sunday morning services, with readings taken from Matthew Chapters 4-7. This includes "The Sermon on the mount" - practical teaching by Jesus, aimed at teaching His disciples how to live their lives day by day in a way that pleases God.

Following the recent conversion of the Trust which runs Bethany from a Registered Charity to a Charitable Incorporated Organisation, we received a request from HMRC requiring us to fill in a Corporation Tax form covering the year 2021. This was submitted on 2nd September. Many thanks to Roger Fruen and his sister Becci Bell (who is an accountant) for their invaluable assistance in completing this online form.

Note: Bethany was not, of course, required to pay any tax. Indeed, HMRC gives *us* money via the Gift Aid scheme (see the Treasurer's report).

On 18th September Pete Luther and Marie Andrews of Revive came and spoke to us in the Sunday morning service about their work.

Operation Christmas Child shoebox appeal

Once again, this year Operation Christmas Child gave people the option to "Pack a Shoebox Online", and we know that a number of people in the congregation took up this option (as they have done for the last couple of years).

December

In December Phil Edwards announced to the rest of the oversight that he would be retiring (not standing for reappointment) as a Trustee in April 2023, and that he would be standing down as a member of the oversight at the same time. In practical terms the congregation may not notice any difference - he will still be active in the church, preaching and leading services after this date (much as another former member of the oversight, Roger Fruen, does).

Christmas

This year saw our Christmas programme of events return to something approaching normality. Although there was no December Craft morning, more of the other traditional events took place.

On Saturday 17th a fellowship Christmas dinner was held at 4.30pm and enjoyed by all. Many thanks to Rhoda and Andrew who organised this. Thanks also to Sharon Bollen who organised the quiz.

We held our 6pm Candlelit service of nine lessons and carols on Sunday 18th December. This service was successfully live streamed on Zoom.

On Wednesday 21st at 6.15pm a small group of singers went carol singing around the streets of Newport. This seemed to be appreciated by all who heard it (especially when they discovered that we were not collecting money) - including two men from Vectis radio, who (on the street) interviewed Steve and Phil, and who broadcast the interview plus a rendering of "Silent Night" on their program on 23rd December.

As Christmas Day was a Sunday this year, it was decided to hold a separate traditional Breaking of Bread service on Saturday 24th at 10.30am and keep the Sunday service as a short Family service. The Service on Christmas Day was led by Phil Edwards.

It had been planned to have a party on New Year's Eve, but this had to be cancelled due to important other commitments of some of the key people.

January 2023

For many years members of Bethany have been collecting postage stamps for the Leprosy Mission which they sold to raise funds. In January we learned that they would no longer be doing this, and would not be accepting stamps after March 2023.

Many thanks to all who have collected stamps for them over the years. The Leprosy Mission posted this "thank you" on their website, which we reproduce here:

"We want to say a huge thank you to everyone who has collected stamps to raise funds for people affected by leprosy. We know that so many of you have spent precious time collecting, cutting and trimming with great care. Over the years you have raised thousands of pounds and transformed lives across Africa and Asia - all with stamps! It's been a joy to receive bags and parcels at the office, all packed and posted with love.

Good stewardship of funds and resources is at the forefront of everything we do, so that we can send as much money as possible to help those with leprosy. In the last couple of years, the value of stamps has greatly reduced. Now that bar-coded stamps have been introduced, stamp value has been further decreased. Sadly, we have now reached the point where used stamps no longer raise the money they did in years gone by."

February 2023

Roger Moore went to be with the Lord on 2nd February. His funeral was held at Bethany on Friday 17th February.

Bethany Evangelical Church Trustees **(as at 1st January 2023)**

Name of trust: Bethany (Isle of Wight) Trust.
(Charity Commission for England and Wales registration number: 1182622)

S Crago (Secretary; cheque signatory).
P Edwards.
J Peck (cheque signatory; appointed person for marriages).
R Wills.
P Young.

Note: Under the trust's constitution (paragraphs 9-12), the Trustees are appointed for fixed terms, but are eligible for reappointment after these terms expire.

The initial terms for which Robert Wills and Peter Young were appointed expired in 2022, but they agreed to continue as trustees for 3 years from 31/12/2022, and were reappointed (at the Elders/Trustees meeting of 15th October 2022).

Phil Edwards will not be standing for reappointment this year, and will retire as a Trustee on 13th April 2023.

Bible Reading Group

After Covid around the end of 2021, Tess started a small group in her home for people who wanted to know more about the Bible. This group began reading the gospels of Matthew and Mark.

In 2022 that group moved to meeting at Bethany on Wednesday evenings. We'd had such a group before, for some years since an Alpha course.

Now the group functions as an outreach and a help for people who don't regularly attend church or don't already know much about the Bible. Recently it also seems to be a useful way for us to welcome and get to know people who have started coming to Bethany.

We aim to meet fortnightly and we're usually about a dozen people. We have supper and a relaxing time of fellowship together, then read a Bible passage (at present continuing the gospel of Mark). We follow this by a short discussion and a prayer time. We try to be flexible and responsive to the needs of people in the group. It has to be said that it's not really a Bible study; we keep it at a fairly basic level for people who might not know the scriptures well.

Anyone is welcome but we always need to know numbers in advance for catering, so if you want to come or bring anyone, please let Robert, Valerie or Tess know first. Also, please pray for us.

Robert Wills - March 2023

Bethany Church web site 2023

New Look

At the beginning of 2022 Bethany website received a major face lift and a new fresh look which includes loads of useful links such as **What is Christianity** and explains **What we believe**, there are links and **news** and **future events** specifically for Bethany information including our **monthly diary** and **general notices** together with **external links** to many **Island Christian activities** and links to **external organisations**. The **Sermons** on Sunday are recorded and can be listened to again via the **Sermons** link, some even have **videos**. At the foot of each page there is a link to our **Facebook** site.

Church visitors

Bethany web site has proved a popular source of information for visitors and holiday makers who search for a Church to attend. Visitors to the website can read about our **Bethany Church history** and our links with the **Isle of Wight Youth for Christ** team. There is a link to help people **find us** on Google Maps, together with general **service times**. They can **contact us** via a secure messaging service. Through this website resource we have been pleased to receive a number of holidaying/visiting Christians where we have shared time and have worshipped together.

Members link

Members of Bethany have access to this area via a **secure password** entry system. Here you will find a **zoom link** to the Tuesday night prayer meeting, an outline of who **our elders** are and specific **items of prayers** for them as they endeavour to guide Bethany on our behalf. There are links identifying our **charitable status**, our **Church trustees** and links to our **AGM and reports**, **cleaning rotas**, and **offerings to missionary societies**. There is a link to one of our own members receiving the MBE for her work as a **missionary**, the presentation was from the late Queen Elizabeth. There is a **picture gallery** of members past and present and a County Press article of the **1976 opening of Bethany** Evangelical Church in Union Street.

Bethany Web

My hope is the website directs users to recognise we are a group of Christians who believe that the teachings of the Bible and Good News of Jesus Christ is fundamental to us as Evangelical Christians.

Note:

1. If you require the Members password please contact me.
2. All the words in **bold and Italic** above are links you can find on the website.
3. If you have photos you would like shared in the picture gallery please contact me.

Phil Harris

www.bethanyiow.co.uk

Tuesday Night (Zoom) Prayer Meeting

Before the Zoom Prayer meeting on Tuesday, I send out an invitation by Email giving the link to the Zoom meeting and to ask if anything should be prayed for. Various friends may send details of things to be prayed for which I put in to a document and then email out to those (about 9 in number) that have asked for these details. Then Tuesday I send out a WhatsApp message to again give the details of the Zoom Meeting with a link as a reminder.

If you have anything for prayer, please let us know.

The format for the Zoom prayer meeting is to have a brief reading from the Bible with a reflection on it and then to show the list of prayer items to all on Zoom so that they can see it (not everyone has a printer). There is an opportunity for all to pray and at the end there is some time for fellowship.

Steve Crago

“Coffee and Chat”

You may remember that the ladies Coffee and Chat started meeting via zoom in October 2020, during the Covid pandemic.

For about a year now we have been meeting every other Thursday morning at Bethany where we have a drink and a chat, and also share a bible reading. It has been nice to renew friendships with those who were at Bethany in the past and also make new friends. The numbers can vary between five and eleven.

Every now and then we enjoy meeting up at a tea room or coffee shop, we even had a picnic last summer.

Two additional coffee mornings were held on a Saturday - 26th March and 4th June, where everyone (including the men) were welcome to come along. The late Queen's Platinum Jubilee was the theme for the 4th June. Cakes and a quiz seem to go well together! Having a coffee morning on a Saturday enables those who are working during the week to come along too. It's also a time when we can invite friends and enjoy a chat over a drink and a piece of cake.

Julia Crago

ACCOUNTS

BETHANY EVANGELICAL CHURCH - 2022 Accounts

	INCOME		EXPENDITURE	
	2022	2021	2022	2021
	£	£	£	£
General offerings/donations/interest	12,940	8,875		
Gift aid payment (HMRC)	1,168	958		
Special offerings	638	218	1,400	2,480
Gifts to speakers			1,115	315
Catering			194	
Building Fund			63	3,377
Gas, water & electricity	372	168	4,706	4,322
Books & stationery	22		232	200
Equipment			1,708	
Maintenance/Miscellaneous	154		2,414	1,971
Totals	15,294	10,219	11,832	12,665
income less expenditure	3,462	-2,447		
Balance at 01 01 22	36,987			
Balance at 31 12 22	40,449			

Here is the treasurer's report for 2022. Thank you again for trusting me in the role.

Income was up from that received in either 2020 or 2021. People are being very generous, with several giving by standing order. A number of people have signed up to the Gift Aid scheme which has increased the value of their donations. I realise that not everyone is able to do this, but thank you to those who have.

Unlike in 2020 and 2021, income this year has exceeded expenditure. However, please note that the balance is inflated by the fact that over £1000 of outgoings were delayed until January 2023, due to the cheque book being held up in the post during December.

Secretary's report

I would like to commend to you this verse from God's word:

This is about hope and encouragement and the work of the Holy Spirit in us.

2 Corinthians 1:21-22 (NIV/UK)

²¹ It is God who makes both us and you stand firm in Christ. He anointed us, ²² set his seal of ownership on us, and put his Spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come.

Paul has been discussing his travel arrangements concerning his coming to the Corinthian church. They seem to think that Paul isn't good at keeping his promises. And this leads Paul to think about promises. Paul assures them that he will come to them but had refrained before because it would not have been good for them. So he wrote a letter addressing the issues that they have, but also says that with God's help, he will come to them.

Then he thinks about God's promises and that God has commissioned us and enables us to stand firm for Jesus. And why should we do this? Because he has placed the Holy Spirit in our hearts, the first instalment of everything he has promised us. We are a work in progress but one day we shall see Jesus and will be transformed and will be like him.

Thank you again for all your prayerful support for the Elders as we seek to serve yourselves. Also to all who work behind the 'scenes', we thank you.

We are grateful to have seen more come and join us on Sunday mornings, God is gracious.

The number of members of Bethany is about 66.

Last thing, I should mention the other activities that happen at Bethany. Youth for Christ operate out of the Homestead and occasionally use the Bethany building, the Medina Community Choir is using the Bethany building on Monday and Thursday evening and the Hebron Pentecostal Church are using the side hall for a prayer meeting on Sunday from 2 to 5pm.

Steve Crago

BETHANY (ISLE OF WIGHT) TRUST

England & Wales - Charity number 1182622

Accounts



**Annual Fellowship
Meeting 9:45am
9th April 2022.
Reports**

Contents.

Elders' Report, March 2022	3
Bethany Evangelical Church Trustees	10
Home Groups	10
Bible Reading Group	11
Tuesday Night (Zoom) Prayer Meeting	11
Bethany Church web site	12
"Coffee and Chat"	13
ACCOUNTS	14
Secretary's report	15

Elders' Report, March 2022

The members of the Oversight at Bethany are Steve Crago, John Peck, Robert Wills and Phil Edwards.

We would like to start by once again saying thank you for your prayers and your support during another exceptionally challenging year.

Obviously, the past year has again been dominated by the Covid-19 (Coronavirus) pandemic and many of our activities have been suspended. Nevertheless, it has still been an eventful year.

Here is a summary of events during the past year:

January - early May 2021

After Christmas (2020), due to the large increase in the number of Coronavirus cases on the Isle of Wight, we decided to close the hall and meet only via Zoom. During this period our Sunday worship comprised an online (Zoom) Sunday meeting with a Breaking of Bread at 9:45am, which had been enjoyed by many in the previous lockdowns.

One change was made to the format this time, though: Steve Crago kindly paid to have the maximum meeting time for Zoom extended beyond 40 minutes, which allowed us to include a time of Bible teaching in the meeting and enjoy a time of fellowship afterwards.

These meetings continued weekly (with different people leading) until meetings in the Bethany building recommenced in May.

When Steve Crago was the Sunday speaker, He also prepared a YouTube video of the Bible message for the benefit of those unable to attend the Zoom meeting - a practice he has continued after we started meeting again in the Bethany building.

We were, of course, able to continue with Tuesday night prayer meetings on Zoom. These meetings have continued weekly even after the end of the lockdowns and are now a permanent fixture on the Church calendar; the Zoom meetings have been far better attended than the physical meeting used to be!

During this period (and also later in the winter months) occasional Friday Quiz nights were held on Zoom, with quizzes set by either Phil Harris or Phil Edwards. These allowed us to see each other and chat and relax together informally.

During this period we tried to keep in touch with the members of the fellowship by the production of roughly fortnightly e-mail newsletters (thanks to Steve Crago for masterminding that) and by means of WhatsApp conversations (thanks to Phil Harris for setting up the group). This, together with the Tuesday night prayer meeting on Zoom (which, of course, we were able to continue) and the Quiz nights helped us maintain a sense of belonging and fellowship.

We were, however, aware that some people in the fellowship aren't online in various ways. As we weren't able to visit during lockdown we tried to keep in touch by posting out newsletters to those who didn't have e-mail and by use of the telephone. It was so encouraging to see members of the fellowship (not just, or even especially, the Elders) recognising the need to "bear one another's burdens" in this way.

Grace Fry went to be with the Lord on 27th April. Her funeral was held at Bethany on 25th May.

May

On 23/05/2020 we were able to resume our Sunday morning meetings in the Bethany building. The meetings were the same format as that introduced during the autumn of 2020 (i.e. a single meeting per week on Sunday mornings at 10.30am) and subject to the same social distancing and Health and Safety restrictions as before. Initially the meetings just comprised prayer, Breaking of Bread and a Bible message.

Initially there was no singing. The only music was either pre-recorded or (occasionally) instrumental music played on solo guitar.

For the Breaking of Bread, people were asked to bring their own cup, bread and wine (non-alcoholic if required). However, for those who had forgotten, one or two bread rolls were provided inside paper bags, and miniature bottles of red wine were provided and put in place at least three days ahead of any Breaking of Bread meeting (and not subsequently handled).

July

From 25/07/2021 the singing of hymns and worship songs recommenced, but with the recommendation that members of the congregation kept their face masks on during the singing. (Everyone complied with this recommendation).

Matthew Brunt passed away on 1st July. His funeral was held at Bethany on 30th July.

Questionnaire (July-August)

As, due to Covid-19, we were not comfortable holding an Annual Fellowship Meeting this year, at the end of July the Elders sent out a questionnaire to the congregation to gauge their opinions on how we want to structure our meetings and other Church issues. The questions asked were:

1. Have you usually been able to attend Sunday services when they've been running?
2. What have you missed in our Sunday services during Covid? What have you found good?
3. Should we continue with our present kind of all-in-one Sunday service, or go back to having separate Breaking of Bread and Morning Worship, or do something else entirely?
4. Do you have specific comments on the service times?
5. Would you be happy to have bread and wine provided and brought round instead of bringing your own? (Pre-cut bread and wine in individual cups). If "yes", alcoholic or non-alcoholic wine?
6. How could pastoral care be improved from now on? (We recognise that it's not just the elders who do this).
7. Which online opportunities (web site, Facebook page, Zoom meetings, YouTube videos, email newsletters) during the lockdowns did you find most useful? What uses should we make of online media in the future?
8. Should the weekly prayer meeting continue on Zoom or become an actual meeting at the church?
9. How can outreach be improved from now on?
10. As a church, what have we generally got right or wrong during Covid?
11. Would you want to attend a fellowship meeting to think about these issues, either in September/October or early next year?
12. Are there any other comments you would like to make?

The responses were collated and assessed. A summary [based on the one circulated to the fellowship in August] is given below:

It has certainly been a challenging couple of years. However it has not only given us the opportunity to try doing new things (using new - to us technology such as Zoom and on-line videos) but has also forced us to re-evaluate everything that we do at Bethany – something that was, perhaps, long overdue.

We're encouraged that Bethany has come through the Covid pandemic and the lockdowns fairly well. Even though for a few extended periods "Bethany had left the building", Bethany and its work carried on. Admittedly it started slowly, but perhaps that was inevitable considering the suddenness with which the pandemic came upon us.

During this time, it has been encouraging to see members of the fellowship (not just, or even especially, the Elders) using their various gifts to maintain and encourage the fellowship, even in the periods of lockdown when we were forced to completely isolate. This is where the old "Brethren" (Biblical) tradition of "every member ministry" has been of great benefit to us: we are not divided into doers and spectators; Bethany is not just something we "do" on Sunday – it is who we are – we are a community – a family.

Granted, it is inevitable that there are almost certainly things that, with hindsight, we could have done differently, but it's not clear exactly where we could have done much better. We made good use of communications technology early on: by email newsletters and WhatsApp conversation we mostly kept the fellowship "in touch" with a feeling of belonging. Zoom quiz nights, prayer meeting and Breaking of Bread services worked well.

We were concerned about those who were not connected in these ways and we still are, but we hope that phone calls and posted copies of the newsletters filled this gap.

The fellowship have mostly embraced Zoom and we're therefore now able to plan to use it more in the medium future. We offer to help anyone who wants to do this and needs help getting set up. The weekly prayer meeting will continue on Zoom as it turns out that this is actually better attended than a physical meeting would be. The web site www.bethanyiow.co.uk, Facebook page and individuals' YouTube channels continue to be important too.

Technical issues meant that when Sunday meetings restarted in the building, we weren't able to successfully stream live services on Zoom. [A live streaming of a service was not successfully achieved until December – see below].

The responses in this survey helped us formulate a plan for Sunday morning services. The present combined format, seating arrangements and 10:30 start time seem popular and logical, so we have continued with them, with bread and wine being brought round as soon as we assessed that it was safe to do so.

Several people expressed regret about losing our traditional open Breaking of Bread service. We don't think we can return to that in the foreseeable future, but there seems to be a place for it to mark special church occasions such as Good Friday.

It's heartening that most respondents think that pastoral care is working reasonably well. We aren't in the role of a government agency or health service and can't offer professional help, but we do try to learn one another's needs, visit, phone and pray for each other. The intention is to "bear one another's burdens" as the Bible says, as far as we can. This seemed to continue even through lockdown and wasn't carried on only by elders; thanks to everyone in the fellowship who spent time serving others or told us of particular needs.

There's a continuing concern for those who might feel isolated because they're alone and not online so we can never go fully "virtual". However, the WhatsApp group and weekly Zoom prayer meeting have turned out to be instrumental in sharing news and trying to make sure we haven't missed anyone.

Coming to outreach, it was noted that this isn't just centred on the church building: it's a responsibility of individual Christians to always be ready to explain the hope we have and show Christ's love to others in practical ways. In the building, we think Sunday mornings as we're developing them are fairly welcoming and good for presenting the gospel to visitors. Having a "Christianity Explored" or "Alpha" course could be good in 2022, but we didn't think it was wise to start one going into the winter.

This survey was a great help to us in learning what people think about the way forward and it's given a strikingly united picture. Because of this – and due to the practical difficulties – it was decided to leave having a Fellowship Meeting until spring 2022.

August - September

Reg Lupton passed away on 20th August. His funeral was held at Bethany on 10th September.

October

From 10th October we felt it was safe to provide and distribute the bread and wine for Holy Communion (Breaking of Bread) to the congregation. The bread was pre-cut into individual cubes and the wine was provided in individual cups (with a proportion of the cups filled with an alcohol-free alternative). The bread and wine was taken round to the congregation by two (face-masked) stewards, to minimise interaction.

Heating

Back in May 2021, John Peck was obtaining quotes for replacement heating systems. These ranged from individual electric radiators, Infrared radiators to a centralised electric Powermatic System (We had a gas Powermatic before). Powermatics are very expensive and so the search was limited to an infrared type of heater. Even with infrared heating, new and heavier cabling would be required. Also the balcony would need heating.

In July it was found that with the heating we wanted, we would require 3 phase mains. John contacted SSE for a quote. Along with John, Julia and Steve visited St Martins Church in Wootton which had 22 infra-red heaters. The heat could be felt as soon as the heating was turned on.

We needed to have a working system by October 2021.

In August after talking to the Infrared radiator manufacturer, John discovered that we did not have to have 3 phase electricity. This was just a well as Union Street would have to be closed and the road dug up so that a 3 phase cable could be laid. The cost of this was quite prohibitive.

The Infrared Heater Company said that we could have 6 or 8 2Kw infrared heaters. They did say that we could have non glow heaters but these would be less efficient and would cost an extra £90 more each.

We decided to go for the 8 2Kw infrared heaters.

In September the heaters arrived. Also an extra one for the balcony. Garry Jones (the electrician) said that for cleaning infrared lamps, a feather duster should be used. There should be no ball games so that the heating bulbs are not damaged. Work to install the heaters began.

Concerning the gas pipe going round the building, it was decided to leave as is. Also as it is made of steel it won't be worth much.

October: In use the heaters were found to be too close and rather hot, so heaters were raised and angled up incrementally to make the arrangement more comfortable.

One heater (2nd back from piano) kept activating one of the trip switches. An extra cable was put in to see if this improved the situation.

In November we found that the heater still tripped. John asked to have it referred to the manufacturer.

On Saturday 11th December we were due to have a Coffee Morning in the hall in Bethany. We had turned on all of the heaters and were just vacuuming the floor when all the heaters and lights went out. The main fuse had blown. John (Peck) came in to check and then he called the SEB to come and look at it, as this fuse can only be replaced by the SEB. Meanwhile, we moved the Coffee Morning to the Homestead which seemed to be enjoyed by all. The Engineer arrived during the Coffee Morning and he found that though the housing for the fuse said that it should be 100 amps, it was in fact 60. 60 amp fuses can take brief overloads but not for long. The 60A fuse was replaced with a 100A. Apparently (according to Jeremy Fry) a 60A mains fuse was common practice in the 90s but these days even domestic housing has a 100A fuse.

Concerning the problem heater, we are waiting for a replacement bulb as the manufacturer agrees that there is a fault.

Operation Christmas Child shoebox appeal (December)

Again, Operation Christmas Child gave people the option to "Pack a Shoebox Online", and we know that a number of people in the congregation took up this option (as they did the last time).

We became the drop off and storage point for the shoeboxes which we didn't do the previous year. We didn't have the usual large number of shoeboxes which was understandable. John Peck became the contact for the deliveries, and when the time came to load the boxes on to the van, John Peck and Helen Edwards were able to help.

Christmas

Due to Covid-19 restrictions we were not able to hold all of our usual Christmas activities this year. However, this year we were able to have a Christmas tree (thank you Val and Tess) and the Hall had Christmas decorations both inside and out (thank you Andrew).

Also we were able to hold our 6pm Candlelit service of nine lessons and carols on Sunday 19th December. This service was successfully live-streamed on Zoom.

As Christmas Day fell on a Saturday this year, it was decided not to have a special service that day. The Christmas Sunday service on 26th September was led by Steve Crago.

Bernice Sheen passed away on Christmas Day.

Bethany Evangelical Church Trustees **(as at 1st January 2022)**

Name of trust: Bethany (Isle of Wight) Trust.
(Charity Commission for England and Wales registration number: 1182622)

S Crago (Secretary; cheque signatory).
P Edwards.
J Peck (cheque signatory; appointed person for marriages).
R Wills.
P Young.

Note: Under the trust's constitution (paragraphs 9-12), the Trustees are appointed for fixed terms, but are eligible for reappointment after these terms expire. Reappointments are for a period of 3 years after which the trustee must either retire or be reappointed again. S Crago and P Edwards were initially appointed for 4 years (term ending 31/12/2023), R Wills and P Young were appointed for 3 years (term ending 31/12/2022) and J Peck was appointed for 2 years (term ending 31/12/2021). John Peck has agreed to carry on as a trustee and was reappointed (at the Elders/Trustees meeting of 28th August 2021).

Home Groups

At the start of the first Covid-19 lockdown in March 2020 all face-to-face meetings were suspended, both those at the Bethany building and those meeting in homes.

Prior to that there were three home Bible study groups: two meeting in Newport and one in East Cowes (although one of the two Newport groups had not met for some time before the lockdown started).

None of these home groups have met since then, and there are no plans to restart them - it is felt by the leaders of the three groups that they have served their purpose, and served it well, but that (as they stood) they have had their day.

However, we have not abandoned the principle of midweek evening meetings, or even home Bible studies; we recognise that we need to be adaptable. We are considering having some outreach meetings later in the year (when circumstances allow) - perhaps involving the "Christianity Explored" or "Alpha" courses. "Recently, Tess started a Bible study group at her home and Robert Wills has helped with this when required. (For more about this, see Robert's "Bible Reading Group" report below.)"

Phil Edwards

Bible Reading Group

Before the interruption of Covid, the Bible Reading group was an outreach which met on alternate Wednesdays in the side hall. Its main purpose was to encourage Bible reading in an informal setting for people who were not already accustomed to it.

This stopped during Covid so instead I continued preparing the short Bible readings and presented them as video talks on YouTube. These are all in a YouTube "playlist" which can be found online here: tinyurl.com/2usv7x59 .

However, around the end of 2021 Tess started a small group in her home for people who wanted to know more about the Bible. This was really quite amazing; the idea came from people who wanted it rather than Tess herself. This group began reading the gospels of Matthew and Mark.

Now the members of that group and some of the old 2020 group are looking forward to meeting at Bethany again, on Wednesday evenings as we used to. We hope that this will have already got going by the time of the annual fellowship meeting, as the first session is planned for 30th March. After that, it will probably be on the second and fourth Wednesdays of each month.

We're planning to use a similar format to before, having a simple supper together at 7pm, then reading a Bible passage (continuing the gospel of Mark) followed by a short discussion and a prayer time. It will be flexible though, and responsive to the needs of people in the group.

Anyone is welcome but the group is really intended as an outreach and to help people who don't already know the Bible well. We need to know numbers in advance for catering purposes, so if you want to come or bring anyone, please let Robert, Valerie or Tess know first. Also, please pray for us.

Robert Wills

Tuesday Night (Zoom) Prayer Meeting

Before the Zoom Prayer meeting on Tuesday, I send out an invitation by Email giving the link to the Zoom meeting and to ask if anything should be prayed for. Various friends may send details of things to be prayed for which I put in to a document and then email out to those that have asked for these details (about 5 usually). Then Tuesday I send out a WhatsApp message to again give the details of the Zoom Meeting with a link as a reminder.

If you have anything for prayer, please let us know.

The format for the Zoom prayer meeting was to have a brief reading from the Bible and then to show the list of prayers to all on Zoom so that they can see it (not everyone has a printer). We are gradually expanding the first part so that we can pause and think what the scriptures are saying to us. There is an opportunity for all to pray and at the end there is a bit of fellowship. We don't use breakout rooms (a feature of Zoom) any more but this does mean that only one person can talk at any one time. In spite of this we do manage to have fellowship with each other after the meeting.

Steve Crago

Bethany Church web site

www.bethanyiow.co.uk

Window on Bethany Evangelical Church

I consider the Bethany website as a window on our Church, where people can look in and see Bethany!

Clicking the links to "What is Christianity" and "What we believe", I hope directs people to viewing us as being a group of Christians who believe that the teachings of the Bible and Good News of Jesus Christ is fundamental to us as Evangelical Christians.

Holiday Church

Our Bethany web site has proved a popular source of information for holiday makers who search for a visiting holiday Church. Visitors to the website can read about our Bethany Church history and our links with Isle of Wight Youth for Christ team. There is a link to help people find us on Google Maps, together with general service times. They can contact us via a secure messaging service. Through this resource we have been pleased to receive a number of holidaying Christians and shared time and worshiped together.

Bethany Members

Bethany members who access the website will see the monthly diary/notices, find the latest Covid-19 restriction news, catch up on sermons, some sermons have video links, which is particularly useful if you have missed a few Sundays, or just to listen again. The members area is password protected – (if you don't know the password – please see me, Steve, Phil E or Robert). The members area offers a zoom link to the Tuesday night prayer meeting, It identifies the elders of our church and offers links for specific items of prayers for them and the work they endeavour to do on our behalf. There are links identifying our charitable status; it shows who our Church trustees are and links to our AGM and reports, cleaning rotas, offerings to missionary societies we provide funds

to – such as Echoes of Service. There is a link to one of our own receiving the MBE from the Queen! There is a picture gallery! Some of the photos are a bit scary (how young we all looked), also the County Press report of the 1976 opening of Bethany Evangelical Church in Union Street.

New fresh look!

At the beginning of 2022 our website has received a major face lift and a new fresh look. Please take a tour of your website, I hope you find it worthwhile.

www.bethanyiwow.co.uk

Phil Harris

“Coffee and Chat”

A ladies Coffee and Chat zoom was started in October 2020 during the COVID 19 restrictions. About 6 of us zoomed every other Thursday morning with our mugs of coffee to chat and share a bible verse. The group was (and still is) not restricted to Bethany members, which meant that we could meet with Bethany friends from the past.

Since last summer, several times, we have enjoyed going out for coffee. Sometimes we have even ended up having lunch too!

We're now thinking of meeting at Bethany, which we did for the first time a few weeks ago. We keep in contact with each other via WhatsApp.

I'd like to think it is a group where we feel we could invite Christian or non-Christian friends to.

Julia Crago

ACCOUNTS

BETHANY EVANGELICAL CHURCH – 2021 Accounts

	INCOME		EXPENDITURE	
	2021	2020	2021	2020
	£	£	£	£
General offerings/donations/interest	8,875	6,268		
Gift aid payment (HMRC)	958	613		
Special offerings	218	711	2,480	1,025
Gifts to speakers			315	385
Catering				104
Building Fund		299	3,377	4,885
Gas, water & electricity	168	2,318	4,322	3,908
Books & stationery		15	200	200
Equipment				
Maintenance/Miscellaneous			1,971	2,494
Totals	10,219	10,224	12,665	13,001
Expenditure excess	-2,447	-2,777		
Balance at 01 01 21	39,434	42,211		
Balance at 31 12 21	36,987	39,434		

Here is the treasurer's report for 2021. Thanks again for trusting me in the role.

Overall, income and expenditure were both very similar to what they were in 2020. As in 2020, there was a lot of expenditure required to sort the heating system for Bethany. People are still being very generous, with several giving by standing order.

Helen Edwards (Treasurer)

March 2022

Secretary's report

I would like to commend to you this verse from the Bible:

1 Corinthians 1:17 (NLT)

17 For Christ didn't send me to baptize, but to preach the Good News - and not with clever speech, for fear that the cross of Christ would lose its power.

Wait a minute, this is Paul the Apostle writing and he is saying that he doesn't want to use clever speech when he preaches. Paul didn't want to show how clever he was, instead he wanted to point people to the Cross of Jesus and then it would be the work of the Holy Spirit to show the hearers their need of Jesus. In our personal witness, we don't need to be clever, we just need to tell the truth, and let God speak to the hearts of people around us.

Thank you again for all your prayerful support.

The number of members of Bethany is about 67.

Grace Fry went to be with the Lord on 27th April.

Matthew Brunt went to be with the Lord on 1st July.

Reg Lupton went to be with the Lord on 20th August.

Bernice Sheen went to be with the Lord on Christmas Day.

Last thing, I should mention the other activities that happen at Bethany. Youth for Christ operate out of the Homestead and True Vine Young People meet there on Monday evening. Also The Medina Community Choir are using the Bethany building on Monday and Thursday evening.

Steve Crago