



**Annual Fellowship  
Meeting 9:45am  
22<sup>nd</sup> March 2025.  
Reports**

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## **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 9<sup>th</sup> 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 16<sup>th</sup> 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 11<sup>th</sup>.

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

On Sunday 10<sup>th</sup>, our speaker was Peter Herman, the Newport youth worker and Andy Peck on the 31<sup>st</sup>, 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 14<sup>th</sup>, 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 19<sup>th</sup> 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 5<sup>th</sup>, John Maxwell from Swindon. On the 12<sup>th</sup>, Graham Chewter of the Trinitarian Bible Society. 19<sup>th</sup>, Stephen Gillham from Dorset. Then on 26<sup>th</sup>, 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, 30<sup>th</sup>, 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 14<sup>th</sup> July.

Our visiting speaker this month was Peter Wells on 14<sup>th</sup>.

### **August:**

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

- 4<sup>th</sup> 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!

- 11<sup>th</sup> 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.

- 18<sup>th</sup> 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!

- 25<sup>th</sup> 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 8<sup>th</sup> 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 1<sup>st</sup>, Bob White - Carisbrooke Priory and on the 15<sup>th</sup>, 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: 13<sup>th</sup>, Andy Attrill and the on 20<sup>th</sup>, 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 23<sup>rd</sup> 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 22<sup>nd</sup> 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 8<sup>th</sup>.

Hebron Church held an End of year service on Tuesday 31<sup>st</sup> 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, 12<sup>th</sup>, Alastair Cole and 26<sup>th</sup>, 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 2<sup>nd</sup> 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 8<sup>th</sup> 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 1<sup>st</sup> 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 9<sup>th</sup> 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 19<sup>th</sup> 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](http://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](http://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			
<b>Balance at 31 12 24</b>	<b>71,936</b>			

\* 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)***

*<sup>9</sup> 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. <sup>10</sup> 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. <sup>11</sup> 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, let's 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**