



**Annual Fellowship  
Meeting 9:45am  
21<sup>st</sup> March 2026.  
Reports**

## **Contents.**

<b>Elders' Report, March 2026</b> .....	3
<b>Bethany Evangelical Church Trustees</b> .....	10
<b>Bible Reading Group</b> .....	10
<b>Bethany Church web site 2026</b> .....	11
<b>Tuesday Night (Zoom) Prayer Meeting</b> .....	12
<b>Bethany WhatsApp Group</b> .....	12
<b>Coffee and Chat</b> .....	13
<b>ACCOUNTS</b> .....	14
<b>Secretary's report 2026</b> .....	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 Spirits 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 Aryton, 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 1<sup>st</sup> 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](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 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 80<sup>th</sup> 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**

	<b>INCOME</b>		<b>EXPENDITURE</b>	
	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)*

*<sup>16</sup> I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, <sup>17</sup> so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, <sup>18</sup> 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, <sup>19</sup> 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**