



CHARITY COMMISSION
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

Trustees' annual report (including Directors' report) for the period

From: September 1st 2022 To: August 31st 2023.

Charity name: The Olive Tree Church

Charity registration number: 1196158

Company number: N/A

Objectives and activities

	SORP reference	
Summary of the purposes of the charity as set out in its governing document	Para 1.17	The Olive Tree Church is a Single Congregation Local Ecumenical Partnership formed from Blenheim Crescent Baptist Church and St Margaret's Methodist Church, in Luton, Bedfordshire. <i>'Baptists and Methodists United in Christ serving our community'</i>. The partnership was formed in 2016 and formally constituted in 2021, with the adoption of its Constitution on 21 March 2021. The purpose of the Charity is to advance the Christian faith in the Area of Benefit in accordance with the principles and practices of the Participating Churches. In achieving its purpose, the Charity engages in a range of activities, either on its own or with others, including (but not restricted to): - the celebration of public worship; - the teaching of the Christian faith; - mission and evangelism; - pastoral work, including visiting the sick and the bereaved; - the provision of facilities with a Christian ethos for the local community, including (but not restricted to) the elderly, the young and other groups with special needs; and - the support of other charities in the UK and overseas. Luton is acknowledged to be an area of high deprivation, and with its numerous cross-cultural issues, we find that there is tremendous benefit in the work of this church. Members of The Olive Tree believe that it is the core of our mission to serve the community in this situation. The church vision statement includes, <i>'We believe we are called to be a Christian presence and witness in our multicultural area, sharing the good news of God's love and forgiveness with all'</i> and <i>'We aim to be good Christian neighbours and develop deeper relationships with other faiths represented in our neighbourhood'</i>.

Summary of the main activities in relation to those purposes for the public benefit, in particular, the activities, projects or services identified in the accounts.	Para 1.17 and 1.19	It is a privilege to introduce our second annual report, which documents the many and varied ways in which The Olive Tree Church has faced the challenges of the times and lives out its mission to be an inclusive, evangelistic, growing, justice-seeking church. The calling of The Church is to respond to the gospel of God's love in Christ and to live out its discipleship in worship and mission. Most of the work of the Church occurs within or is associated with the local community in Luton. With our local neighbourhood focus, we continued working with our community worker to run and support a range of activities, such as a Ladies Craft Group, Ladies Gym Sessions, English classes, Home Groups and Bible Study Groups, a Stay and Play Toddlers Group and a monthly Messy Church. We also held regular Foodbank collections and a Youth Group, as well as social activities such as an annual Garden Party, Barbecue and Fun Day, Quiz and Ploughman's, Sunday school outings and Fundraising events. Various community groups used our premises, (both the 'Tree' site, previously Blenheim Baptist, and the 'Branch' site, previously St Margaret's Methodist). These included a regular Scouts, Brownies and Guides groups, Karate club and three different Christian churches. We are pleased to report that as planned last year, work was started to update two toilets at the branch site, to become fully accessible. We remain committed supporters of both Baptist and Methodist work and charities together with other charitable causes that fit in with our ethos. We held monthly weekday lunches in support of Christian Aid and a special fundraiser during Christian Aid week, raising awareness of their projects and appeals and encouraging support. Towards the end of this period we appointed a new Baptist Minister in July 2023, and prepared the manse before his official induction in October 2023. The manse had been previously rented out whilst vacant.
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		We also donated or collected items on behalf of a number of local organisations including Youthscape, Luton Foodbank, The Salvation Army Christmas Toy Appeal and Azalea.
Statement confirming whether the trustees have had regard to the guidance issued by the Charity Commission on public benefit	Para 1.18	The Trustees of the Olive Tree Church have had regard to the guidance issued by the Charity Commission on public benefit, such that all of the activities, projects and services provided by the Olive Tree Church are all regarded to be of public benefit in service to the community.

Additional information (optional)

You may choose to include further statements where relevant about:

	SORP reference	
Policy on grant making	Para 1.38	- N/A
Policy on social investment including program related investment	Para 1.38	- N/A
Contribution made by volunteers	Para 1.38	- N/A
Other		- N/A

Achievements and performance

Summary of the main achievements of the charity, identifying the difference the charity's work has made to the circumstances of its beneficiaries and any wider benefits to society as a whole.	Para 1.20	The Olive Tree Church has provided benefit to: - Church members, both old and young, with opportunities to encourage and increase their faith and Christian witness, receiving regular fellowship, home groups, Bible studies, lunch clubs and activities, and prayerful support, as well as support in many different forms where needed, such as hospital and care home visits, lifts to medical appointments, pastoral care and financial help. - Members of the community, with a variety of activities to join and support where needed such as parent and toddler 'Stay and Play' group, English lessons, women's fitness sessions, Craft club, lunch clubs, Youth Group activities, uniformed groups such as Scouts and Guides. - Individuals, for example with food and clothing, or help to pay for transport, or the bills and rent. - Local churches and community groups, by providing our buildings to rent, meet in and use, such as Luton-based 'Oasis', and the Karate Club. - Luton Foodbank recipients, from regular church collections, including at Harvest Festivals. - Various Luton, UK and Overseas charities by regular donations, raising awareness of their work, and supporting where needed, e.g. giving Christmas presents for the Luton charity 'Azalea' to distribute to their beneficiaries and regular 'Christian Aid' lunches.
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Additional information (optional)

You may choose to include further statements where relevant about:

Achievements against objectives set	Para 1.41	- N/A
Performance of fundraising activities against objectives set	Para 1.41	- N/A
Investment performance against objectives	Para 1.41	- N/A

Other		- N/A
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Financial review

Review of the charity's financial position at the end of the period	Para 1.21	The unrestricted income for the year ended 31 August 2023 was £123,523 (Last Year: £113,097). This increase in income was mainly because of increased income from the lettings of the buildings, which had increased by £12,000. Unrestricted expenses for the year amounted to £94,821 (LY: £105,668). This reduction in expenditure was mainly because of reduced repair and maintenance costs. The net receipts for the year amounted to £28,702 (LY: £7,429).
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Statement explaining the policy for holding reserves stating why they are held	Para 1.22	The reserves policy for the Olive Tree Church is modelled on that recommended by the Methodist Church, which is in accordance with the Charity Commission's Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP). The Olive Tree Church receives its income from donations by church members (including Gift Aid), by letting the buildings and renting the Manse, when vacant. We have considered our mission plans for the future and have decided to employ a Baptist Minister, holding funds to cover at least 3 years of salary and associated costs. This is in addition to meeting the Circuit Assessment, normal expenditure (including repair and maintenance costs) and the updating of two existing toilets so that become accessible toilets. We therefore consider that at this current time it is appropriate that we hold a higher reserve of £150,000 than that typically expected of 6 months expenditure expected, which on the 22/23 budget was roughly £50,000. At present, The Olive Tree Church holds the higher level of reserves and these will be maintained by regular donations from the congregation. If required, funding towards specific aims will be requested, and there will be careful monitoring of expenditure.
Amount of reserves held	Para 1.22	As at the end of the financial year (31 August 2023), the reserves were: Unrestricted Funds £152,109 Restricted Funds £1,728
Reasons for holding zero reserves	Para 1.22	N/A
Details of fund materially in deficit	Para 1.24	N/A

Explanation of any uncertainties about the charity continuing as a going concern	Para 1.23	The Olive Tree Church now has a new Baptist minister to continue to shape the church and enable us to meet the challenges of the future in a very distinctive mission field. We have new members and a thriving junior church. As such we have no concerns for this charity continuing as an ongoing concern.
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Additional information (optional)

You may choose to include further statements where relevant about:

The charity's principal sources of funds (including any fundraising)	Para 1.47	- N/A
Investment policy and objectives including any social investment policy adopted	Para 1.46	- N/A
A description of the principal risks facing the charity	Para 1.46	- N/A
Other		- N/A

Structure, governance and management

Description of charity's trusts:		
Type of governing document: for example, trust deed, memorandum and articles of association etc	Para 1.25	The Olive Tree Church is a Single Congregation Local Ecumenical Partnership which was approved by the Baptist and Methodist Church Denominational authorities and the Sponsoring Body: Churches Together in Bedfordshire on 18th April 2018. The Governing Document for the Olive Tree Church is its Constitution, which was finally adopted by the Leadership Team and church members on 21st March 2021.
How is the charity constituted? for example limited company, unincorporated association, CIO	Para 1.25	The Olive Tree Church is constituted as a Single Congregation Local Ecumenical Partnership between Blenheim Crescent Baptist Church and St Margaret's Methodist Church, with allegiance to the Baptist Union of Great Britain and The Methodist Church to serve the Area of Luton.
Trustee selection methods including details of any constitutional provisions e.g. election to post or name of any person or body entitled to appoint one or more trustees	Para 1.25	The Constitution states that the Olive Tree Church is administered and managed by a body of Trustees consisting of A) ex officio Trustees, being the ministers of the LEP, B) Four elected Trustees, elected at the Annual Congregational Meeting and, C) Not more than three co-opted Trustees, appointed by the Trustees. Elected Trustees shall hold office from the end of the Annual Congregational Meeting at which they are selected until the end of the third such meeting after their appointment, but shall be eligible for re-election at that meeting. No person may be elected as an Elected Trustee or appointed as a Co-opted Trustee unless he or she: A) is a Member; B) Is aged 18 or above; C) Is not disqualified from acting as a Trustee by virtue of section 72 Charities Act 1993 (or any statutory re-enactment or modification of that provision); and D) Has indicated his or her willingness to serve as a Trustee. Co-opted Trustees serve until the end of the next Annual Congregational Meeting following their appointment.

Additional information (optional)

You may choose to include further statements where relevant about:

Policies and procedures adopted for the induction and training of trustees	Para 1.51	- N/A
The charity's organisational structure and any wider network with which the charity works	Para 1.51	- N/A
Relationship with any related parties	Para 1.51	- N/A
Other		- N/A

Reference and administrative details

Charity name	THE OLIVE TREE CHURCH
Other name the charity uses	
Registered charity number	1196158
Charity's principal address	42-46 Blenheim Crescent Luton Bedfordshire LU3 1HB

Names of the charity trustees who manage the charity

	Trustee name	Office (if any)	Dates acted if not for whole year	Name of person (or body) entitled to appoint trustee (if any)
1	Rev Joanne Sherwood	LEP Minister (Methodist) - Chair	31 st August 2023 (left)	The Methodist Church
	Rev Michael Anokye	LEP Minister Chair	1 st October 2023	The Baptist Church
2	Madit Grant	Treasurer		Annual Congregational Meeting
3	Helen Owen	Communications		Annual Congregational Meeting
4	Dr Louise Newport			Annual Congregational Meeting
5	Peace Okyere			Annual Congregational Meeting
6	Ramon Akib	(Co-opted)		Annual Congregational Meeting
7	Mary Huffman	Community Worker (Co-opted)		Annual Congregational Meeting
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Corporate trustees – names of the directors at the date the report was approved

Director name	
- N/A	

Name of trustees holding title to property belonging to the charity

Trustee name	Dates acted if not for whole year
The Baptist Union Corporation Ltd	
The Methodist Church	

Funds held as custodian trustees on behalf of others

Description of the assets held in this capacity	The Olive Tree Church does not own any property. Ownership of the buildings used by the charity remains vested in the participating churches namely Blenheim Crescent Baptist Church St Margaret's Methodist Church
Name and objects of the charity on whose behalf the assets are held and how this falls within the custodian charity's objects	- N/A
Details of arrangements for safe custody and segregation of such assets from the charity's own assets	- N/A

Additional information (optional)

Names and addresses of advisers (optional information)

Type of adviser	Name	Address
- N/A		

Name of chief executive or names of senior staff members (optional information)

- N/A

Exemptions from disclosure

Reason for non-disclosure of key personnel details

- N/A

Other optional information

- N/A

Declarations

The trustees declare that they have approved the trustees’ report (including directors’ report) above.

Signed on behalf of the charity’s trustees/directors

Signature(s)	Madit Grant	
Full name(s)	Mrs Madit Grant	
Position (for example Secretary, Chair, etc)	Church Trustee	
Date	25 th June 2024	



Olive Tree Church
Annual Reports
2023-4

The Olive Tree Church

The calling of the Olive Tree Church is to respond to wholeheartedly embrace the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, expressing this commitment through a life marked by love, fellowship, and dedicated discipleship in the pursuit of the mission of Christ. In fulfilling our calling, in 2023, we dedicated our resources to:

- Improve awareness of God's ever-present love and celebrate the profound depth of His love for us.
- Facilitate the growth and learning of individuals as Christians through a framework of mutual support and care.
- Embrace the role of a good neighbour by extending gift aid to those in need and actively challenging injustice.
- Engage in the transformative work of making more followers of Christ, fostering a community of believers.

In addition, we also achieved the successes below:

Over the past year, we have gathered in the church for various events and programs. We have had the opportunity to come together on different occasions to participate in different programs. On Sundays, we have enjoyed hearing from different speakers on various topics, which uplifts our congregation and has blessed us in many ways.

On the 7th of October, 2023, Reverend Michael Anokye became our full-time Minister, which has also influenced the direction of our ministry. We are focused on renewing our missionary efforts by getting to know Jesus and sharing his message with others. Our mission is to show love in the way Christ did and to introduce others to Christ's life-changing presence, which has helped us work well with other religious groups in Luton.

We provide pastoral care services to individuals who require emotional and spiritual support. Our team of dedicated pastoral care advisors possess essential skills in listening, comforting, encouraging, providing practical assistance, and prayer. We visited many people during 2023 and offered crucial support to individuals going through prolonged sickness or immediate family problems such as sudden job loss. We aim to provide counsel, support, and encouragement to those who need it most by visiting them in their homes and hospitals. We have also set up an intercession prayer team to pray for people in person, over the phone, or absentia and are committed to lifting people in prayer.

In 2023, the home groups of our church played a crucial role in promoting meaningful connections among our members. They provided a nurturing environment for individuals to deepen their faith and enhance their experience in Christ. These groups also helped us reach out to those who were unable to attend physical church services and meetings, particularly those who were bed-bound, allowing them to remain connected to the community.

At the Olive Tree, we believe that sharing the good news of our Lord Jesus Christ is a journey of making friends for God. This mirrors the profound reality that God has graciously made us His friends through His Son, Jesus Christ. We all strive to be fishers of men through our testimonies, preaching, and prayer for healing. Our community is committed to being dynamic, inclusive, and justice-seeking. We work towards transforming people's thinking about their lives and their impacts on the community by actively contributing to the transformative experience of our diverse community, which has been very positive in 2023.

Rev Michael Anokye

Trustees Report

The Olive Tree Church is a local ecumenical partnership of Blenheim Crescent Baptist Church and St Margaret's Methodist Church, in Luton. The partnership was formed in 2016 and formally constituted in 2021.

It is a privilege to introduce this annual report, which documents the many and varied ways in which The Olive Tree Church has faced the challenges of the times and lives out its mission to be an inclusive, evangelistic, growing, justice-seeking church.

The calling of The Church is to respond to the gospel of God's love in Christ and to live out its discipleship in worship and mission. Most of the work of the Church occurs within or is associated with local community within Luton.

Luton is acknowledged to be an area of high deprivation, and with its numerous cross-cultural issues, we find that there is tremendous benefit in this work. Members of The Olive Tree believe that it is the core of our mission to serve the community in this situation. The church vision statement includes, *'We believe we are called to be a Christian presence and witness in our multicultural area, sharing the good news of God's love and forgiveness with all.'* and *'We aim to be good Christian neighbours and develop deeper relationships with other faiths represented in our neighbourhood.'*

As well as our local neighbourhood focus, we are committed supporters of Baptist work through BMS World Mission and Methodist work and charities such as All We Can - the Methodist Relief and Development charity; Action for children and others.

We have monthly weekday lunches in support of Christian Aid and usually have a special fundraiser in Christian Aid week. We try to raise awareness of their projects and appeals and encourage support.

We support a number of local organisations and charities including Youthscape, Luton Town Centre Chaplaincy, Luton Foodbank, Women's Aid, Keech Hospice, The Salvation Army Christmas toy appeal and Azalea.

Our New Minister Michael Anokye, who joined us in October 2023, continues to shape the church and enable us to meet the challenges of the future in a very distinctive mission field.

Madit Grant

Christian Aid Lunch

Each year we support the work of Christian Aid by meeting once a month for a simple lunch to raise money for Christian Aid. It gives everyone an opportunity to meet together. Our lunches consist of homemade soup, bread, tea, coffee, and cakes.

This year some of our ingredients for our lunches have been donated by Oasis, one of our community projects as part their outreach programme.

It's a very informal time and there's plenty to eat and more room for more people to join us, whether they come to church or not. It's an opportunity to enjoy each other's company, food and fellowship and not to be sitting at home on your own.

Madit Grant

Senior Steward

Once again where has this year gone? The past months have been a very busy time for me and the team; without their support the job would be much tougher.

Over the past year we have had a number of enjoyable events;
Quiz Night 4th March at the Branch. Around 90 people bought tickets for this event and it turned out to be a cosy social evening with friends. 14 teams, 5 rounds, questions printed and answers read out by our own Rev Barbara Bond, one of the oldest members of our congregation. We raised £382.00 for the earthquake fund.

Church Barbecue and Cream Tea event on Saturday 24th June was held at the Tree. Strawberries and cream were served with some music on the church lawn. There were family games and activities. An Ice cream van turned up for the children and young at heart.

New Minister – On 7th October we celebrated an important event in our church life a celebration with an induction service for our new minister, Rev Michael Anokye. Michael's life is a compelling narrative, illustrating that God can accomplish remarkable things. This testimony inspires, affirming that God can work through us for His divine purposes.

The Harvest Festival Service was led by Robin Wright. This year the Harvest gifts were donated to the Luton Foodbank.

Toy and Nativity Service – 10th December. Gifts of toys went to the Salvation Army Christmas toy appeal as in previous years. We also collected to buy gifts for the ladies supported by Azalea.

A Christmas Carol Service by candle light took place on 13th December in the afternoon, at which our musicians were led by Mark Newport.

Carol Singing at Elstow Manor, Wixams – 20th December, Members of the Olive Tree Church went along to Elstow Manor for the first time for an enjoyable 45 minutes of carol singing with the residents.

We have been pleased to welcome new people coming to Sunday services but we also have to record those of our fellowship who have died during the year – Pauline Pedder, John Roberts, John Rogers, Joanne Wood and Barry Harvey. They have all served the Olive Tree in different ways and we are grateful for their contributions to the life of the church and give thanks to God for their service.

In February we were pleased to welcome Michael and Irene Anokye and their children Michelle, George, Aidan and Angel into membership of the Olive Tree Church.

Our weekly worship services have been led by our minister Rev Michael Anokye and visiting preachers from both Baptist and Methodist churches.

Madit Grant

HOME GROUPS

Monday Home group.

Six of us meet twice a month at my house from 7.30 till 9.

The first half of the year we studied Mark's gospel, reading a couple of chapters a night and discussing its relevance to us and what God might be saying to us through it. The last 3 months we used the questions Michael gave us on his sermons- exploring the DNA of a growing church and looking at our response.

Our evenings begin with a drink and catch up time. We then have a short act of worship.

The Bible study follows. We finish with a time of prayer - the focus varies depending on what we've studied and the needs of the group, church and the wider world.

We all find it beneficial being part of the group, where we can support each other in times of happiness and times of challenge. We'd love you to join us

Elaine Sharpe

Wednesday House Group

The Wednesday evening house group has continued to meet fortnightly on Zoom during the last year. After completing a study of Mark's Gospel, we used a Cover to Cover Study Guide on the Seven Miraculous Signs in John's Gospel. We have recently started using Michael's notes and questions connected to his sermons. As well as reading and discussing the Bible we always share news and pray together, and these are important aspects of our group as we support each other. We also met in the Oasis room at the Olive Branch for a social get-together during December.

Kate Silwood

Thursday Afternoon Group 2023

At the beginning of the year we met on alternate Thursday afternoons on church premises and continued studying the Psalms into the summer term. After a long summer break, we met again in September when John Rogers said that he would no longer be able to attend meetings. John was originally responsible for the group and requested that it should be specifically for Bible study and not a Home or Cell group. His loss has made a big difference to the group.

In September we decided to look at the themes we normally consider in Advent and spent several sessions on John the Baptist and the nativity stories. We have continued to meet at church after Christian Aid lunch and now that we have only 8 members, we are trying to meet in someone's home on the other Thursday in the month.

Barbara Bond

The Olive Tree Church Fellowship Club

Our Fellowship Club met on the 4th Tuesday of the month during 2023. There are 26 on our membership list although attendances are usually between 18 and 20.

We follow the usual pattern at every meeting. We meet in the hall from 10.15am and enjoy coffee or tea and biscuits - thanks to Jenny Woodham. The meeting commences at 10.30am and during the year we have welcomed seven speakers who entertained and enlightened us on a variety of subjects.

In February Kevin Varty took us back to the days when we listened to the radio as he played different signature tunes and songs. In April Alan Campbell showed us some beautiful paintings of Luton – painted in the 1950s when Luton was changing and the Arndale was built.

In June David Longman took us further afield and showed us pictures of his travels in Myanmar and later in the year David visited us again and entertained us with his tales about Bedfordshire Churches. The title “Poor Nell and the Marshall of Hadleyville” intrigued us but it all became clear when he showed his beautiful pictures.

We were taken back to the past again when Kevin Varty gave a presentation on the life of Joyce Grenfell. This certainly made us realise that she was a very talented and funny lady.

We welcomed a return visit from two helpers from the Azalea organisation. It was good to hear that they are still working hard in Luton to give help and support to those trying to walk “free from exploitation”. We usually find time for two of our favourite sessions – a Beetle Drive (lots of laughter) and a visit to Wardown Museum Cafe (lots of talking and laughter)

There was laughter again during a visit in August by Barbara Donaldson and her four singers. The meeting was entitled “Bring-along, sing-along – a lighted hearted miscellany” and we were asked to bring some item or memory which made us happy. We certainly had such a happy morning as we were encouraged to join in Barbara’s cheerful songs.

We always have our own services at Easter and Christmas and these are very special times. We are indebted to those who help to make these occasions very moving. Kate Silwood took our Easter Service and Mark Newport provided the music. At Christmas Robin Wright led the worship and Gloria Lathwell played for us. On both occasions members helped by reading the bible passages and singing the hymns and carols.

We have enjoyed some very interesting sessions during 2023 but what is more important is the sharing of news, the chatter and the laughter – and the ending prayer when we think of those with worries, health problems or concerns.

The committee is very grateful to all who help to make our meetings go well – welcoming members, arranging the room, giving lifts, helping with the refreshments etc. The present committee – Wendy and Arthur Fielding, Pat Gillespie, Jenny Woodham, Betty Traynor and Betty McKean – have over the last 20 plus years really enjoyed planning meetings, welcoming friends and members from church and the community. However, we are all getting older and have decided that, after our Easter Service on Tuesday, 26th March, we can no longer carry the responsibility for running the Fellowship Club. Hopefully in the future others may feel inspired to take up the task of offering fellowship and friendship to church and community.

Betty McKean

Cameo

Our CAMEO Youth Group (which stands for 'Come and Meet Each Other') usually meets on the last Sunday each month from 5.30 to 7.30pm. Mark & Louise Newport have recently got it going again, this time with the help of Peace and Marvellous Akib.

Whilst for a while we consistently had just two participants, exploring different types of games - board games, 'parlour' games, electronic games, racket games etc... they have gradually been joined by others, such that typically 4-8 come along each month ... though with new faces each time ... we would now have 14 if everyone turned up!

Our latest activities have all centred around cooking challenges... making pizzas, different types of soup ... & pancakes! It's been great to see people growing in confidence, showing their parents what they have cooked & daring to try each other's creations!

Ages currently start a bit earlier than previously, at 9/10yr, with families from Messy Church, Scouts & of course those who come to church. We are also making connections with St Andrews and Youthscape. At the moment we mainly meet at the 'Tree' Blenheim Crescent site, but activities are being planned at the 'Branch' site too. We are looking forward to the weather warming up so we can meet outside too, for picnics, play rounders and fly kites together!

We are always interested in new ideas - & of course your prayers - and If you are interested in joining us, please call Louise on 07976 743767. Thank you!

Mark & Louise Newport

Sunday School

2023 was a great year for our Sunday School as we have had a number of new children and young people join us regularly and now have 16 if they all turn up. We have been able to have an 11 year plus group with Louise. Elaine, Peace, Loess, Christina and I have led the under 10's. It's so lovely having so many children.

We have followed Roots material each week which is based on a specific theme and has activities, bible readings and craft for the children to follow. The children have also taken part in some All age church services.

At Easter we all went to Mead Farm for the day where we saw some new baby lambs we could feed and we also enjoyed the activity centre and slides. At Christmas we had a visit to Smyths Toy shop followed by a successful visit to McDonalds. It was great fun.

We are looking for more help in the Sunday School as we have more diverse ages - so if you think you could help maybe one Sunday a month please let me know.

The Olive Tree children are really bonding and growing up together so please do take time to get to know them - they are not shy!

Claire

Messy Church

We hold Messy Church one Saturday a month and it is open to our Olive Tree families and families from our wider community. We average about 40-45 people each month and most of the families have become regulars from a range of cultures and backgrounds.

We have a theme based on a biblical story and do lots of messy activities, games and stories. We provide light refreshments and drinks.

This year we have done Messy New Beginnings, Messy Love, Messy Harvest, Messy Palm Sunday to name a few. In July we finished the year with a Messy Fun Day with face painting, bouncy castle and Pizza and Ice Cream.

At Christmas we held a Messy Christingle and some of the families also joined us for our nativity service.

We are in need of more helpers to support this. So, if you can offer 2 hours once a month on a Saturday, please let us know. You can help with craft, do reception, serve food or help with drinks. If you can come, we can find you a role.

Messy church is a great way for us to reach out to our community and we are now starting our eleventh year.

Claire

22nd LUTON BROWNIES

It has been a busy year again for us.

Last March the Brownies decided they would like to invite their Mums to our meeting for a cup of tea and cake to thank them for all they do for them. They made invitations and cakes the week before and then decorated the cakes for their Mums the next week. The Mums also had a bunch of daffodils to take home.

To celebrate Easter we made cards and chicks with crème eggs in for members of the Church. The girls also made some chicks for themselves to take home!

We had a Coronation Party in May for the new King. We made cakes and decorated the hall with bunting. A good time was had by all.

A treasure hunt ended our half term and the girls had clues to find letters which spelt out a Skills Builder – Have Adventures.

For Father's Day we made cards and invited the Dads along to help the girls gain their Aviation Badge. They had to make paper planes and see who could fly them the farthest. There was a lot of competition amongst the Dads!

We then worked on the Camp Skills Builder and learnt about what to take to camp, how to pack it, the parts of a tent and camp fire safety. We went to Woodcroft on 4th July but it was really wet so we stayed inside and did UMAs (unit meeting activities). We went back on 18th July when the weather was kinder to us and actually lit a fire and toasted marshmallows to make smores. Yummy!

On 2nd August we decided to visit Woodcroft for a family evening and invited everyone to come along. We had a lovely time and lit a fire to again toast marshmallows!

In September we worked on the Influence Skills Builder and learnt about communicating with other people more effectively. One of the sessions was about a role model and we took the opportunity to visit the Mayor at the Town Hall in November to coincide with Parliament Week. We sat in the Council Chamber and the girls were able to ask the Mayor lots of questions before he took us to his parlour and showed us all the silverware given to the town from other countries over many years. We had our photo taken with the Mayor and also on the grand staircase in the entrance of the Town Hall.

We went on an Indoor Holiday from 3-5 November with the Guides to Woodcroft, our Guide Activity Centre at Bramingham. Our theme this year was All around the World. The girls completed crafts from many countries and sampled different food – including sushi. They also had time outside to explore the woods.

At the end of November we decorated pots and planted daffodils so that the girls could gain their Grow Your Own Badge. They took them home and they are all growing well. We had some bulbs left over so have planted them and left pots around the Church, which will hopefully flower soon.

Some of the girls went to the cinema in Luton for a showing of “Wish” the new Disney film at the beginning of December. This was arranged through Luton North Division and around 135 Rainbows, Brownies and Guides attended for a private viewing on a Saturday morning. It was brilliant and the girls thoroughly enjoyed themselves.

The girls painted “positive” pebbles just before Christmas – the idea being that they put something on their pebbles to make them feel happy.

After Christmas we had a New Year Party to celebrate the coming of 2024.

On Saturday 13th January we went to the panto at Stevenage and saw “Sleeping Beauty”. It was brilliant and we thank Jenny Woodham for organising this for us. We are looking forward to “Peter Pan” next year.

We are celebrating festivals this half term and learnt about Robert Burns on 23rd January. We had a Burns Night dinner with soup, Haggis, neeps and tatties plus shortbread, which the girls decorated. Some tried the haggis but a lot were a bit reticent.

Most of the girls attended the Luton North Division disco on Friday 2nd February and had a really good time. They had glow sticks and bought sweets - so they were full of sugar when they went home! We celebrated Chinese New Year by making lanterns and learning more about the origins of the Chinese Zodiac. We played a game with chopsticks – moving Maltesers from one saucer to another and trying not to drop them on the floor. We also had some prawn crackers and noodles – which were also eaten with chopsticks.

13th February is Pancake Day and we will obviously be having pancakes!

Our Thinking Day celebrations are a bit late this year owing to half term. Thinking Day is on 22nd February – the joint birthdays of our founders Lord and Lady Baden Powell – and it is a time when we remember all Girl Guides and Scouts around the world. We will have a Thinking Day campfire at our meeting on 27th February and our Division celebrations are on Sunday 3rd March.

We have 14 Brownies at present with another one starting at the end of February. Most of the Brownies are continuing to go to Guides so their numbers are increasing rapidly.

Kirsty and myself are the Brownie leaders. Lauren has returned to university and Sue now helps Fiona with the Guides. Khadijah – our Young Leader – is studying for her A levels so has also had to leave us. We have had people come along to help but they have not been with us very long. Jenny will always help out and is our Home Contact when we need one.

I would like to thank all the leaders for their help and support over the last year as without them our activities could not take place.

Anne Gibbons - Brownie Leader

Guides

In the past year our numbers have increased to 11 Guides.

Within the 6 themes we have worked on various Skills Builders and Unit Meeting Activities (UMAs) including

Know Myself :- Skills builder Network

UMAs – The two match challenge, Particularly peckish penguins, Treasure hunters, Directors cut, World centre welcome, Votes for women, Wartime Guides, Balloon frenzy,

Express myself :-

UMAs – Pass it on, Knock Knock, Storytelling silhouettes, Wait...What?, Superpower pairs.

Be well :- Skills builder First Aid

UMAs – Equal everything, Totally ga-ga, Ready steady teddy.

Have Adventures :- Skills builder Camp

UMAs – Help, Black hole breakout, Warm in the wild, Intergalactic snacks, Get carried away.

Take Action :- Skills builder Influence

UMAs – Painting under pressure, Global goalie, Man on the moon, One small step, Drawing distractions.

Skills for my Future :- Skills builders Live Smart and Lead

UMAs – Paper pilots, Run the Risk, Instruction disruption, Fizzy fun.

Over the August bank holiday we joined with St Augustine Guides and took a small group to the Wellies and Wristbands camp at Foxlease in Hampshire. Wellies and Wristbands is a festival for Guides and Rangers. There were live bands on stage each evening. During the day there were all kinds of activities including archery, kayaking, geocaching, wall climbing, bouncy castles, science tent, shelter building, craft tent, zip lining, and many more.

In September Anne Gibbons won BBC three counties radio award for volunteering.

In November we took the Guides and the Brownies on an Indoor holiday weekend at Woodcroft with a theme of “around the world”.

We also celebrated the Coronation

Mother's day and Father's day

Went to the Town Hall for Parliament week

Attended the Remembrance Day parade at the memorial in Marsh Road

Went to the cinema to see “Wish”

Went to the panto to see Sleeping Beauty

Celebrated Thinking day

Fiona Watson 22.2.24



Beaver Section Report 2023

Each meeting starts with a coming in activity that beavers can join in with as they arrive. This is often a craft type of activity linked to the theme for the week. This is followed with games and the main activity. Finally we have a joint game with the cubs taking advantage of the larger number of children in the combined group for some team games.

The programme has been full of indoor and outdoor activities towards the beaver challenge and activity badges. For the Outdoor challenge they have found out about local wildlife, made bird feeders, built shelters in the woods near Bide-A-While for their teddies and pitched tents.

Activities for the Adventure challenge have included putting the Green Cross code into practice during a walk around Biscot, joining in a hike with the cubs around Warden Hill, climbing trees, and during the summer an evening on the beach with sandcastles and volleyball and then a night of water games. At the end of the summer term we had two joint activities with the cubs which included caving and pedal carts (in the rain!) at Bromham and then several wide games in the arboretum at Wardown Park

The world challenge has seen the beavers celebrating the pre-Lent carnival in Denmark (Fastelavn) and later St Patrick's Day. During a meeting to celebrate King Charles coronation, each beaver wrote a letter to the king and queen to congratulate them, followed by afternoon tea, with homemade party poppers and a chance to renew their promise to the newly crowned King. In November the beavers had an evening to reflect on Remembrance and they painted poppies on stones to take home.

Many of the starter activities contributed to the creative section of the Skills challenge. The beavers also visited Wardown Park and found out about its history. At the end of the year, they made wooden lanterns and Christmas crackers.

Several evenings have been spent working on the teamwork challenge to encourage the beavers to work together and included a meeting where each beaver chose and led a game. The beavers have also completed six activity badges during the year. These were Creative, Space, Gardener, Emergency Aid, Safety and Camp Craft. The last of these included a day visiting the scout camp in September during which they learnt to light fires, cook a pudding to have after their packed lunch and had a range of other activities in the woods. The Space badge was completed during a sleepover in the church hall in the Easter holiday.

At the start of July we joined in the group family hike which was a circular route from Studham via Whipsnade to Dunstable Downs. This was an all day event and was joined by many parents. Unfortunately, we had to cancel the beavers night hike in the autumn due to torrential rain.

Beavers took part in three events organised by Icknield district. These were the Jamboree on the Air/Internet and swimming gala in October and Christingle in December.

Although we do not have a new leader yet, we have some good news concerning the start of the formation of a new leadership team for the beavers. Kelly Knapp has been helping me to run the beaver meetings throughout the year and has recently agreed to take a leadership role with the colony as a Section Assistant. Her help and support is hugely appreciated.

Four Beavers gained their Chief Scouts Bronze award: Thushi, Ibrahim, Dhruv and Zoe. Congratulations to all of them on achieving the top award for beavers. At the end of the year we have five beavers.

Brendan Owen - **Group Scout Leader**



Cub Section Report 2023

The cubs have had another busy year completing a lot of activities for their badges.

In January they started the new Money skills activity badge. This covered many aspects of money management from currency and budgeting, to spending habits, charity donations and scams and internet security. The best password they created would take over 1500 years to crack! Through the year several evenings were dedicated to teamwork, teambuilding and team leadership as part of the Teamwork and Team Leader challenge badges. The next badge to be completed was the Astronomer. As well as looking at stars and the moon, the cubs enjoyed making rocket launchers! The badge was completed during a sleepover in the church hall in February half term holiday. Some of the highlights included an edible model solar system and finding out about life on the International Space Station. They discovered that ordinary tasks like washing your hair and exercising on a treadmill are rather different when you are weightless. At the end of term we had a hike over Warden hills.

Another popular badge was the chef badge. The first week we spent an evening with activities looking at food hygiene and kitchen safety along with different cooking methods. Each six then planned a two course meal. The following week, it was time to don the aprons to prepare, cook and eat the meal. We had assistance from a good number of parents to make sure everyone was safe and they of course enjoyed the meal too.

As the weather got warmer, meetings were often outside. Cubs laid and followed tracking trails in the woods above Popes meadow, learnt how to play Bowls and had a USA

Independence Day evening learning how to play baseball and enjoying the post-game BBQ.

Later in July we went to the campsite at Bromham to complete some more adventurous activities for the Adventure Challenge. This included caving and pedal Karts. The first group on the pedal karts were the lucky ones as it was dry but heavy rain during the evening made the kart track very muddy for the second group whilst the other group remained dry inside the caving complex! For the last meeting of the term, we went to Wardown Park and played some wide games with the beavers.

Most of the pack and quite a few parents took part in our summer family hike which was a day out walking around Studham, Whipsnade and Dunstable Downs where we stopped for lunch before returning on a different route to the start point.

A rather unusual badge was the YouShape Award which consists of four badges which requires the cubs to think of something they want to change, plan how to do it, lead and finally represent it to other people. As part of this, each six ran an entire pack meeting. Most of the cubs completed the final part during our Summer 3 Day Event which introduced

the local community to scouting activities during August. We are the first pack in the district to complete this badge.

In September the cubs tried out some life skills - ironing their necker, making a hot drink (and washing up) and window cleaning (the lower half of the church hall windows were much clearer after their efforts!). We then moved on to complete the Scientist badge with six different experiments. With Jamboree on the air approaching we linked this to the Communicator badge with coded messages and invisible ink. In November the activities were linked to parts of the World Challenge badge with themes of Remembrance, Diwali, Scouting in Japan and a Highland Games night to celebrate St Andrew's day. The final badge for the year was the Entertainer badge. The cubs chose to perform Jack and the beanstalk as a pantomime show for their parents. One night was spent making the scenery and props which included a 4m high bean stalk, a large throne seat for the giant and a cottage for Jack and his mother.

During the year the cubs took part in the district swimming gala and Jamboree on the Air/Internet events.

Three Cubs gained their Chief Scouts Silver award: Adam, Nathan and Raiyan. Well done to them for achieving these top awards. At the end of the year we have 18 cubs although three of those will be moving to scouts in January.

There is still no leader for the Cub section and meetings are led by Brendan (Hathi) and Chetana (Raksha) supported by Ambiga (Baloo) and parents on a rota. In September we welcomed Saima (Bagheera) who has joined us for 6 months. She lives locally and a volunteering placement is part of her degree studies.

Brendan Owen **Group Scout Leader**

Scout Troop annual report 2023

It doesn't seem possible that it is a year since I was last writing a report!

Scout meetings cover varying themes in order for scouts to work towards gaining challenge badges as well as interest badges.

Teamwork activities and problem solving are regular activities as working together is an important life skill and the scouts have to be reminded there is no I in team.

The scouts took part in an evening at Barton Springs organised and run by the District Explorers which covered a variety of activities.

We have made: biscuits, paper bricks, bee houses and to complete the model maker badge, Warhammer models from a kit.

We have learnt: first aid, about different tools what they are used for and how to use them, how to carry out tasks with different disabilities to improve understanding, mental health how to prevent problems and help people who have issues, about the Holocaust on Memorial day.

We deciphered codes with morse and semaphore, went litter picking around the church grounds. The scouts planned an evening themselves and then ran it as part of youth shaped scouting.

The troop took part in the District swimming gala, Jamboree on the Air, Remembrance Day parade and the group family hike from Studham to Dunstable Downs and back. A leader and a couple of Explorers who went to the World Scout Jamboree came along and talked about their experience and showed off their souvenirs, hopefully inspiring applications to go to Poland in 2027.

Outside we have pitched tents, lit fires and made toasted sandwiches, played games with water. To celebrate St.Patrick we had jacket potatoes, cakes, leprechaun juice and all things Irish, another evening we held a repair shop night.

Scouts set themselves a personal challenge and several actually completed it, gained the Environmental Conservation badge and at camp completed the Survival skills badge when most of the meals were cooked without utensils.

The crisp packets that have been donated were turned into 9 blankets which were taken to Noah along with 7 sleeping bags given to the group which were not needed as spares, these were all made into packages with some chocolate and had a gift tag with a message tied on. 3 scouts completed Chief Scout Gold Awards well done Lydia, Kaleb and Yasir.

My thanks to: the parents who have helped out on the rota and Ambiga, Beech (John) and in particular Oak (Paul).

Paul is leaving the troop at Easter, we really appreciate all the time he has given to the group and this means we need help to ensure meetings can run.

I am planning to step down as the scout leader in the summer.

Janet Owen - Scout Leader.

THE METHODIST CHURCH STANDARD FORM OF ACCOUNTS

THE OLIVE TREE CHURCH (LEP Baptist and Methodist Churches)

Church

FOR THE YEAR ENDED

31 August 2023

South Bedfordshire

Circuit

Circuit no.

34/4

Registered Charity - Charity Registration number

1196158

If not a registered charity Her Majesty's Revenue and
Customs Gift Aid number

(The HMRC number is equivalent to a registered charity number in terms of evidence of charitable status and may be used to give to donors or grant funders wishing to see evidence of the organisation's charitable status. Methodist charities in England and Wales that are not registered charities are excepted from registration under Statutory Instrument 2014 No.242)

Minister:

Reverend Michael Anokye

LEP TRUSTEES

Mrs Madit Grant

Mrs Louise Newport

Ms Peace Okyere

Mrs Helen Owen

Treasurer:

Mrs Madit Grant

ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2023

**THE OLIVE TREE
CHURCH (LEP
Baptist and
Methodist Churches)**

Church

SECTION A		Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Totals this year	Totals last year
		£	£	£	£
1	RECEIPTS	Note			
2	Offerings and Tax recovered	58,170	3,088	61,258	61,293
3	Bank and CFB interest and Investment income	1,944		1,944	152
4	Lettings	63,003		63,003	50,885
5	Other receipts	406	3,749	4,155	2,663
6	TOTAL RECEIPTS	123,523	6,837	130,360 (a7)	114,993

SECTION B					
1	PAYMENTS				
2	Circuit Assessment or Share	23,076		23,076	25,704
3	Donations	6,600		6,600	7,348
4	Repairs and Maintenance	13,349		13,349	22,726
5	Utilities (Insurances, water charges, heating & lighting)	26,212		26,212	22,203
6	Property related & direct employment costs	12,312		12,312	14,205
7	Other payments	13,272	13,640	26,912	41,388
8	TOTAL PAYMENTS	94,821	13,640	108,461 (b9)	133,574

SECTION C					
1	NET RECEIPTS/PAYMENTS FOR THE YEAR	(a6-b8)	28,702	(6,803)	21,899
2	Total funds brought forward from last year		128,252	3,686	131,938 (c6)
3	Sub total	(c1+c2)	156,954	(3,117)	153,837
4	Transfers and adjustments		(4,845)	4,845	(c7)
5	TOTAL FUNDS AT END OF YEAR	(c3+c4)	152,109	1,728	153,837 (c8)

SECTION D					
FOR INFORMATION ONLY: MONEY RECEIVED AND PASSED ON TO EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS					
1	(these amounts are not to be included in total receipts/payments figures)		£		£
1	Balance brought forward from last year				4
2	Offerings/Gifts - received for external organisations		2,417		1,181
3	Offerings/Gifts - passed to external organisations		1,942		1,185
4	BALANCE STILL TO BE PAID	(d1+d2-d3)	475		

SECTION 5

Please follow the Guidance Notes to complete this page

[illegible]

SECTION F

STATEMENT OF ASSETS AND LIABILITIES

CHURCH - CASH FUNDS HELD at 31 August 2023

CHURCH - CASH FUNDS HELD BY CHURCH		CHURCH - CASH FUNDS HELD BY CHURCH		CHURCH - CASH FUNDS HELD BY CHURCH	
1	Cash in hand		28		
2	Bank Current Account	54,148		17,876	
3	Bank Deposit Account	51,611		102,289	
4	Central Finance Board	3,989		10,654	
5	Trustees for Methodist Church Purposes	22,364		23,018	
6	Other funds				
7	SUB TOTAL - Church accounts	131,938	(a6)	153,837	(a8)
8	Total funds held by Internal Organisations (the closing balance total from above) (a12)		(a11)		(a12)
9	TOTAL CASH FUNDS HELD BY CHURCH	131,938	(a)	153,837	(x)

SECTION C

OTHER ASSETS and LIABILITIES

OTHER ASSETS AND LIABILITIES			
g1	Investments (Include Endowments)		
g2	Land & Buildings (see notes re insurance value)	6,879,912	8,077,534
g3	Other Assets	201,456	226,640
g4	Loan(s) - show amount outstanding at year end	12,000	6,000
g5	Other Liabilities		

It include only Funds held at the Central Finance Board

14 include only Funds held at the Central Finance Board
15 include only Funds held at Trustees for Methodist Church Purposes

01 Include any other investments (not the cash element of TMCP trusts accounts this is included in line 15)

Declarations and Scrutiny

I confirm that these Receipt and Payment based accounts for the year to 31 August 2023 have been prepared from the records of the Church and that they include all funds under the control of the Church trustees.

Signature of treasurer *[Signature]* Date..... *9.11.2023*
Name and address of treasurer *MRS MAURIT GRANT*
..... *38 MONTROSE AVENUE, LUTON* Post Code..... *LU3 1HR* .

Presentation to the Church trustees

I confirm that the annual report and accounts for the year ended 31 August 2023 were/will be* presented to the meeting of the Church trustees held on ..*26TH NOV 2023*.....

Signature of the Chair of the meeting *[Signature]*
Name of the Chair of the meeting *NICHOLAS AMOBYE* Date *9.11.2023*

Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees of the

THE OLIVE TREE CHURCH (LEP)

Charity Number 1196158

Responsibilities and basis of report

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the *OLIVE TREE* Church for the year ended 31 August 2023 set out on pages *1* to *2*. As the Church's trustees, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ('the Act').

I report in respect of my examination of the Church's accounts carried out under section 145 of the Act and, in carrying out my examination, I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

* delete or circle as appropriate

THE OLIVE TREE CHURCH (LEP Baptist and Methodist Churches) No 1196518

Independent Examiner's Statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination (~~other than that disclosed below~~*) which give me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- the accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Act; or
- the accounts do not accord with the accounting records.

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

I ~~have~~/have not* obtained independent verification of all investments with the Trustees for Methodist Church Purposes or held in other trusts, bank balances and funds at the Central Finance Board of the Methodist Church which are individually in excess of £10,000 (ten thousand pounds) at the balance sheet date.

Signature of independent examiner J. W. Crane

Name of independent examiner JOHN WILLIAM CRANE

Relevant professional qualification of independent examiner RETIRED ACCOUNTANT

Name of firm (where appropriate) N/A

Address 23 DAWKINS ROAD

LUTON, BEDS Post Code LU4 9SD

Date 16.11.2023

* delete or circle as appropriate