



CHARITY COMMISSION
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

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

From: September 1st 2023 To: August 31st 2024.

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>. The Olive Tree Church continues to thrive and serve through the grace of God.

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 third annual report, which documents the many and varied ways in which The Olive Tree Church lives out its mission to be an inclusive, evangelistic, growing, justice-seeking church. The calling of The Olive Tree Church is to wholeheartedly embrace the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, expressing this commitment through a life marked by love, fellowship, and dedicated discipleship. Our mission is to reflect the love of Christ in all we do - through worship, pastoral care, evangelism, and community outreach. This year we started a new season under our newly-appointed Baptist minister Rev. Michael Anokye (from October 2023) and supported our community worker's training towards a new venture as an author, sharing her life in 'God's Fingerprints', although very sad to see her leave in the Autumn. (September 2023) We have continued with our local neighbourhood focus, supporting this deprived area of Luton, and although our focus has inevitably shifted without a community worker to help run and support activities, we have continued to be active in many areas, with a regular Baby and Toddler group, NHS Childrens Clinic, a monthly Messy Church for local families and a monthly Thursday Christian Aid lunch club. We have also held regular Foodbank collections, supported Home Groups, Bible Study Groups, and build a steadily growing Youth Group. Social activities such as a Barbecue and Cream Tea, Fun Day, Quiz and Ploughman's, Sunday school outings and Fundraising events have also been well attended. Various community groups continued to use our premises, (both the 'Tree' site, previously Blenheim Baptist, and the 'Branch' site, previously St Margaret's Methodist), including a regular Scouts, Brownies and Guides groups, Karate club and three different Christian churches. We successfully installed two accessible toilets on the Branch site, much needed by our wheelchair users so they could be equally involved in activities held there, as well as when at our Tree site. We remained committed supporters of both Baptist and Methodist work and also donated to other charities such as Youthscape. Collections have been made on behalf of other Charities – Christian
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		Aid (at monthly lunches) and Azalea. These monies are passed on to the charities directly.
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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.
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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 with a new Thursday night prayer meeting. Support has also been provided in many different forms where needed, such as hospital and care home visits, lifts to medical appointments, pastoral care and financial help. This year we particularly held a 'Friendship First' course, to better understand our Muslim neighbours. Our youth group has continued to grow, with cooking challenges, bowling trips, countryside walks and various types of games and activities. - Members of the community, with a variety of activities to join and support where needed such as parent and toddler group, NHS Baby clinic, lunch clubs, Youth Group activities, uniformed groups such as Scouts, Brownies and Guides, and Messy Church family activities. - 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 charities by regular donations, raising awareness of their work, and supporting where needed.
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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

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 2024 was £114,500 (Last Year: £123,523). Due to the cost of living, it is likely that utility bills will continue to increase. Unrestricted expenses for the year amounted to £142,611 (LY: £94,821). This (<i>reduction</i>) in expenditure was mainly because of (<i>reduced repair and maintenance costs</i>).
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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. Having considered our mission plans for the future, we now employ a Baptist Minister, holding funds to cover at least 3 years of salary and associated costs, in addition to the cost of employing a Community Worker at the start of the year, meet a reduced Circuit Assessment and cover our normal expenditure and routine repair and maintenance costs for the buildings, including the completion of two accessible toilets. Due to the cost of living, utility bills have considerably increased, although we have now completely paid off the loan to the Methodist Circuit, which previously supported the installation of new boilers at the Branch site. We therefore agree that at this current time it is appropriate that we hold a (<i>higher</i>) reserve of (£114,500) than that typically expected of 6 months expenditure expected, which on the 24/25 budget was roughly (£60,000). At present, The Olive Tree Church holds the (<i>higher</i>) 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 2024), the reserves were: Unrestricted Funds (£114,500) Restricted Funds (£0)
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 continues to steadily consolidate progress with our new Baptist minister, shaping the church and enabling 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.
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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 Michael Anokye	LEP Minister (Baptist) - Chair	From 1 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	Safeguarding		Annual Congregational Meeting
6	Ramon Akib	(Co-opted)		Annual Congregational Meeting
7	Mary Huffman	Community Worker (Co-opted)	(Until XXXX) (Madi - can you fill in when Mary left please)	Annual Congregational Meeting
8				
17				
18				
19				
20				

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



Olive Tree Church
Reports
2024 - 5

Minister's Report

The Olive Tree Church: Reflecting on 2024

The calling of The Olive Tree Church is to wholeheartedly embrace the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, expressing this commitment through a life marked by love, fellowship, and dedicated discipleship. Our mission is to reflect the love of Christ in all that we do—through worship, pastoral care, evangelism, and community outreach. As we enter 2025, we remain steadfast in our vision to transform lives and bring hope to our community.

Our Commitment in 2024

In fulfilling our calling, we dedicated our resources and energy in 2024 to:

- Deepening awareness of God's ever-present love and celebrating the profound depth of His grace and mercy.
- Encouraging spiritual growth and discipleship through mutual support, learning, and pastoral care.
- Extending our hands as good neighbours, providing practical assistance and challenging injustice.
- Expanding our evangelistic mission, sharing the love of Christ and welcoming new people into the faith community.

Key Achievements in 2024:

Community Outreach

At The Olive Tree, we believe that sharing the Good News is about forging relationships and demonstrating the love of Christ in action. Our community outreach efforts in 2024 focused on:

- Encouraging members to prepare themselves for:
 - Ø Engaging in street evangelism and personal outreach, inviting people to explore faith in a welcoming environment.
 - Ø Partnering with local organisations to serve those in need, showing God's love through acts of kindness.
 - Ø Organising special community events to share testimonies, preach the Gospel, and create meaningful conversations about faith.

These efforts have strengthened our church's presence in Luton and will allow us to touch many lives with Christ's message of hope and redemption.

Pastoral Care: Supporting and Encouraging Those in Need

Our pastoral care team has been a pillar of comfort and encouragement, offering vital emotional and spiritual support to those facing challenges. In 2024, we:

- Provided home and hospital visits to those experiencing illness, bereavement, or personal struggles.

- Offered counselling, prayer, and companionship to individuals coping with job loss, loneliness, or difficult family situations.
- Established an intercessory prayer team to uplift needy individuals—whether in person, over the phone, or absentia.

This ministry has been a lifeline for many, reinforcing our commitment to being a compassionate and prayerful community.

Thursday Free Drop-in Café: A Hub for Community Outreach

This year we have started a Thursday Free Drop-in Café, where we opened our doors to all, providing a warm, welcoming space for fellowship and support. We hope and pray the this initiative will:

- Foster community spirit, offering a safe place to connect, share stories, and find encouragement.
- Serve as a bridge for those seeking faith or struggling with isolation, allowing us to minister to them in a non-intimidating setting.
- Provide food, conversation, and prayer, creating a tangible demonstration of Christ's love.

We pray that the café will be instrumental in strengthening our bond with the wider community and offering a beacon of hope to many.

Thursday Evening Prayer: Seeking God for Spiritual Renewal

Recognising the power of prayer, our Thursday Evening Prayer sessions became a cornerstone of our spiritual life in 2024. These gatherings have:

- Created a sacred space where individuals seek God's guidance, healing, and restoration.
- Strengthened our church's unity and commitment to interceding for our community.
- Encouraged deeper faith and reliance on God, inspiring personal and collective transformation.

This initiative has not only deepened our congregation's spiritual journey but also provided an opportunity for the wider community to experience God's presence in a profound way.

The Impact of Our Ministry on The Olive Tree Church and the Community

Through our various ministries and initiatives in 2024, The Olive Tree Church has witnessed incredible transformation. The positive impact includes:

- Stronger faith and discipleship as individuals have grown in their knowledge and love of Christ.
- A more connected and supported community where people feel valued, heard, and encouraged.

- A greater sense of purpose as we extend God's love to those around us.

As we enter 2025, we are more committed than ever to our mission. With renewed energy and faith, we will continue to be a beacon of light, sharing Christ's love and serving those in need.

Looking Ahead

With unwavering faith, we expand our ministries and deepen our outreach efforts. We invite every member of our congregation and the wider community to journey with us in faith, service, and love.

May God continue to bless The Olive Tree Church as we embrace the opportunities and challenges of 2025, standing firm in His calling and purpose for us all.

In Christ's love and service,
On behalf of The Olive Tree Church Leadership Team

Rev Michael Anokye

Senior Steward's Report

This year has passed rapidly. The past few months have been particularly busy for both me and the team; their support has been invaluable, making the tasks at hand significantly more manageable.

East year we put together schedule of events. Over the past year we have had several enjoyable events.

Mary Huffman's book launch Saturday 24th February. Coffee morning with cakes. Invitations were sent out to the wider community families to join us.

On 17th March the children of the Olive Tree Church invited all church members and friends to lunch straight after the service to enjoy some time together and to share food and drink prepared by them.

Quiz Night Saturday 18th May at the Tree. The quiz night is a regular feature in our social calendar, and we usually do it by selling a table of 6 tickets and the person brings their friends and family to be in their team. We do it differently each year, but I would say it is easy to manage this way and easier to sell tickets. All donations received go to charity.

In May we celebrated a Baptismal service when Jack, Jacob, Brittani and Ben were baptised.

The Church Barbecue and Cream Tea event took place on Saturday, 3rd August at the Tree. Strawberries and cream were served with some music on the church lawn. There were family games and activities. The barbecue was well-attended, and many people participated in the event.

Harvest Supper 28th September - buffet with a range of foods and desserts. With games for the family and some music. This year the Harvest gifts were donated to the Luton Foodbank.

In November we were pleased to welcome Peace, Marvellous, Mariam, Hannah and Vincent into church membership.

Toy and Nativity Service – 15th 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 candlelight took place on 22nd December it was a joint Carol Service with St. Andrew's Church.

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 – Beryl Fulcher, Arthur Fielding, Kathleen Snoxell and Ron Wright. 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.

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

Madit Grant

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.

While the church has achieved notable successes, it also faces challenges that must be addressed thoughtfully and collectively. Key issues impacting the church's growth and sustainability and proposes actionable steps in alignment with its mission and purpose.

In conclusion, the challenges facing The Olive Tree Church—financial, operational, or spiritual—must be addressed with prayerful discernment and a commitment to unity. By fostering open dialogue, ensuring financial sustainability, and embracing the diversity of worship styles, the church can overcome these challenges and thrive as a Local Ecumenical Partnership.

Let us remember:

"How good and pleasant it is when God's people live together in unity!" (Psalm 133:1)

CAMEO report

The Olive Tree Church Youth Group - 'CAMEO' ('Come and Meet Each Other') is led by Mark and Louise Newport and usually meets on the last Sunday each month from 5.30 to 7.30pm at the Tree site in Blenheim Crescent. We are grateful for the help of Peace and Marvellous Akib as well as the dedication of parents who support their children to come and take part.

Activities for this year have included cooking challenges - making and tasting different types of soup, cooking and tossing pancakes, making scones and smoothies, also going bowling in Dunstable, walking on 'Pegsdon Heights near Hitchin, packing up 9 Christmas shoeboxes for 'Samaritan's Purse' and of course quizzes and playing various games together, including giant 'pick up sticks', 'dipsticks', 'What do you meme?', table tennis, table football and badminton.

This year our young people have also taken part in church services, developing their reading and presentation skills, which we hope to do more of. We will also start to explore the different ways that people help around the church, to see where our young people can shadow others and begin to help out, for example with refreshments and multi-media, learning new skills and experience as they do, which can hopefully build their confidence.

We regularly have a core group of 6-8 children ranging from 9-14 years old from our church families and it's been great to see them growing in confidence and getting to know each other better. Other children joining us from time to time include families from Messy Church and Scouts. Whilst we are in touch with St Andrews, they do not yet have young people to join us. We are also connected to Youthscape, sharing details of activities that our young ones can join in with.

As ever we would welcome your prayers, both for our young people and leaders, and we are always interested in hearing new ideas for activities.

Finally, if you know anyone who is interested in joining us, please call Louise on 07976 743767. Thank you!

Sunday School

2024 has been a really busy year in our Sunday School, where we now have up to 17 children from 14 years to one year old twins regularly joining us. Louise looks after the older children whilst Christina, Loess and I lead the under 10's with great help from Helen, Elaine and Peace. The children get on well together and the older ones have been great at supporting our younger ones.

Every Sunday we follow a programme called Roots from Scripture Union and in our sessions have a mixture of bible story telling, craft, games and thought appropriate to their ages. This year the children successfully led two All Age Services and the Nativity service. They are growing in confidence in reading and presenting and we are very proud of them.

This year Jack and Jacob got baptised and it was great to see them growing in their faith and also joining in our church activities. We lost Brittani and David and their family when they moved to Peterborough. We have recently welcomed Dion to our Sunday school.

We enjoyed going to McDonald's and Smyths Toy shop in December before joining the Carol Service. 14 of us had a fab afternoon.

In 2025 we want to continue to get our young people/ children more engaged in the life of the church and will be leading some more all age services. It is lovely to have such a growing and vibrant Sunday school - a real success in the life of our church.

A big thanks to all our Sunday school helpers and for those who support us looking after the very young children. We are always looking for more helpers so do consider volunteering if you can.

Messy Church

Messy Church meets on the second Saturday of each month and we encourage our church families and those of the wider community to come along. We average 40-55 each time from a wide mixture of backgrounds, culture and understanding of church.

We follow a theme each month with a bible story, crafts, games, food and discussion. During 2024 we have done Messy Fathers, Messy Love, Harvest, Christingle and Messy Palm Sunday to name a few. We have also had some social events like our fireworks Night and our Messy Funday in July.

Messy church always finishes with refreshments including much pizza and cakewhich the children love. Do try and come along one month and see it in action.

Our Messy Church has now been running over 10 years and a big, big thanks to all our helpers who support it every month. It's a great outreach activity for the Olive Tree.

Claire

Thursday Prayer Meeting

Our Thursday Prayer Meeting is open to the whole of the Olive Tree Church Family. To join for a powerful time of prayer, fellowship, and sharing testimonies of God's goodness. This is a time to come together, lift each other up, and be reminded of how God is moving in our lives. We ask members to come with an open heart and the expectation of experiencing God's presence and healing. To let each other stand together in faith, celebrate their victories, and lift up any burdens we must bring before the Lord.

Our stories may be the spark that ignites hope and faith in someone else's life. Never underestimate the power of sharing what God has done!

It is good to hear them and to receive whatever messages God speaks through them. We eagerly await God's presence and anticipate God's miraculous work!

We sometime celebrate Holy Communion as part of prayer meeting. This sacred time of remembrance and unity allows us to reflect on God's love and grace.

We meet each Thursday at 7:30 the meeting ends at 8:30pm. And afterwards we have some food and drinks to enjoy together.

As part of our Thursday prayer meeting, each of us is called to be a witness to Jesus Christ. We are all evangelists of the gospel. Jesus said, "You will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." (Acts 1:8). But we are going to step up to create an Evangelism Team.

The Evangelism Team is for those willing to encourage people to become more vital, vibrant witnesses to the love of God and to make Jesus Christ known in Luton and worldwide.

Madit

Treasurer Report

Whilst the Olive Tree Church operates as an LEP the two churches still exist in their own right. St Margarets is still a member of the South Beds District Circuit and as such is still required to contribute to the running costs of the circuit.

When the Olive Tree Church ministry is being undertaken by a Baptist minister the calculation of how much is needed by way of assessment is calculated after leaving the cost of Methodist ministers out of the total circuit costs.

The financial sustainability of The Olive Tree Church requires attention. While paying the minister's salary and related costs is vital, several issues undermine the current financial model:

1. Ministerial Funding Clarity:

- There is insufficient clarity on the funding responsibilities for ministers from different denominations (e.g., Methodist vs. Baptist). This could lead to inequities or financial strain.

2. Disproportionate Financial Contributions:

- The church currently pays a Baptist minister while covering the Methodist Church assessment.

3. Heavy Reliance on Rentals:

- The church depends heavily on rental income to offset its expenses. Any decline in rental revenue could jeopardise its financial stability.

To address these concerns, the following steps have been proposed:

1. Develop Diversified Income Streams:

- Encourage tithing, offerings, and other fundraising efforts to reduce dependency on rentals.

2. Introduce a Financial Sustainability Plan:

- Establish clear guidelines for equitable financial contributions from the Baptist and Methodist churches, ensuring transparency and fairness.

The challenges facing The Olive Tree Church—financial, must be addressed with prayerful discernment and a commitment to unity.

Wednesday House Group

There are 8 members in the Wednesday evening house group, and we have met monthly during the last year, on Zoom during the winter months and at the Branch when the evenings were lighter. We have shared leadership and discussed a variety of themes, using material from Michael's Lent readings and from the Women's World Day of Prayer, as well as other Bible readings chosen by whoever was leading the meeting. As well as reading and discussing the Bible we always spend some time praying for each other and people among our families and friends or within the fellowship who need our prayers. This is an important part of our group as we support and encourage each other. We also met for two social events, a barbecue in Madit and Roy's garden in the summer and a Christmas party at the Branch in December.

Kate Silwood

Social Activities

At the Olive Tree we have a Social Activity calendar to have regular events and activities both for our church members and our wider linked community. We have a small number of us who plan and organise the events. A big thanks to Jess, Rebecca, Madit and Roy, Elaine and Helen and Louise and Loess - and all others who have helped.

In 2024 we have had another Quiz Night with Ploughman's supper at the Branch. It was great to see so many attend and Jess gave them a challenging but fun quiz to work through. We will be repeating this in 2025.

In the Summer we had a Barbecue and Cream Tea in August at the side of the church. It was also lovely to have music played by Roger and Martin. The weather was good and we were able to have it outside. We had games and activities for the children.

In September we had our Harvest Supper where we had some lovely food, some table games and a chance to catch up with people.

Christmas gave us a a great opportunity to encourage our community in to our building and to celebrate together. Our Christingle, Nativity Service and CarolService all were great social and networking opportunities as well as an opportunity to workshop together. It was lovely to have Father Luke and the St Andrews friends join us for the carol service.

Claire

22nd LUTON BROWNIES

In March 2024 we celebrated Mother's Day by making cards and paper cones which we filled with chocolates for the Mums.

For St. Patrick's Day we had members of an Irish Dancing group come to teach us some Irish dancing. It was quite difficult but we had some soda bread to keep us going.

After Easter we continued with our celebrations theme with Eid and St. George's Day in April.

Then we started working on the Reflect Skills Builder badge learning about feelings, our local community and celebrations.

At the end of April we visited Wrest Park to splatter paint Artemis, the hare bought by Bedfordshire Girlguiding to go in the Short Tail Trail for Keech Hospice. She was on display in The Mall for all to see and is now visiting lots of units throughout the County.

We visited Woodcroft, our Guide Activity Centre in Bramingham, at the end of May but it was so wet we did our activities inside instead!

We made cards for Father's Day and gave each Dad a bar of their favourite chocolate.

In June we went to Woodcroft to learn how to throw tomahawks. The Brownies actually used smaller ones called "angels" and had to throw them into targets. I am pleased to say that a good time was had by all and everyone came home with all limbs intact.

The Brownies then worked on their Charities badge – each group choosing a charity to raise money for. The ones chosen were The Alzheimer's Society; Keech Hospice; Noah and Street Soccer. Some of the girls came to the Woodcroft table top sale at the end of June to sell their wares. However, we had a big fundraising evening on 9th July when they sold drinks, cakes and other things they had made. They raised £40 each for Keech Hospice, Noah and Street Soccer and £50 for the Alzheimer's Society (as they had a £10 donation).

In July we also visited Bletchley Park as part of a trip organised by Bedfordshire Girlguiding. We did craft activities, learnt a bit of 1940s dancing, code breaking and had time to explore the house and sheds where the code breaking was done. It was really interesting – so much so that the Leaders returned in September for another visit (without the girls!).

We ended our summer term with a funfair evening, doing lots of games like Hook a duck, shove ha'penny and hoopla. Ice cream was also on the menu and enjoyed by all.

In September we started work on the Skills For Your Future Skills Builder badge. We focussed a lot on the money aspect of this – having found the girls had difficulty working out what to pay in the souvenir shop at Bletchley Park. We also learnt about tools and

what they are used for. made slime and learnt how best to cut up vegetables and grate cheese to make fajitas. We also invited some parents along to talk about their jobs. We had a teacher, an optician and someone who works in a laboratory testing vaccines.

We went on an indoor holiday at Woodcroft In October. Our theme was Woodland Adventures and we had a lady from Harlington who looks after hedgehogs come to talk to us. The Brownies brought in kitten food for the lady to take to feed her hedgehogs.

In November we had a Firework Party – including apple bobbing and culminating with sparklers in the car park. It was quite a sight when they were all lit and being twirled around.

Three Brownies proudly carried and escorted our flag in the Remembrance Day parade in Marsh Road, when a poppy wreath from Luton North Division Girlguiding was laid at the memorial in Memorial Road. A special badge was designed by Girlguiding for this event, and the girls who attended were given this badge.

For Parliament week we sent Rachel Hopkins, our local MP, some questions for her to answer, as she was unable to come to our meeting in person. She replied via a video link and was very impressed with the questions asked. We also learnt a little bit about how Parliament works.

At the beginning of December some of the girls went to the cinema for a showing of Moana 2. This was arranged by Luton North Division and around 100 Rainbows, Brownies and Guides attended a private showing on a Sunday morning. It was brilliant and the girls thoroughly enjoyed themselves.

To celebrate Christmas we made paper plate advent calendars with a snowman's nose moving around the plate to the different days in December. We also dipped chocolate biscuits in white chocolate to make Christmas puddings. On the last evening we decorated chocolate swiss rolls to make yule logs – with a dusting of icing sugar for snow!

After Christmas we had our New Year's Party to celebrate 2025 with games, pizza and glow sticks to make us all glow in the dark.

On Saturday 18th January we went to the panto at Stevenage to see Peter Pan. It was brilliant and again we have to thank Jenny Woodham for organising this for us. Next year it is Dick Whittington and his cat – so roll on next year!

We are now working on the Communicate Skills Builder badge and learning different ways to communicate – through pictures and music, listening better and speaking clearly.

Luton North Division again organised a disco at Woodcroft on 31st January and most of the girls went to this. Glow sticks are obviously the rage at the moment and the girls used them to make chains and large hoops to dance with. It was very noisy but brilliant!

Thinking Day is on 22nd February, when we celebrate the birthdays of Lord and Lady Baden Powell and think about all other guiding members throughout the world. This year our Division celebration is on Sunday 2nd March at Parklea Primary School but our unit celebration will be on 25th February.

We have 13 Brownies at present with Kirsty and myself as the Brownie Leaders. However, we now have another Leader, Debbie, whose unit in Slip End closed. As she lives near the Church she decided to come and join us – which has been lovely. We also have Zoha who has recently joined us as a Young Leader. She is really enthusiastic and hopefully will stay for a little while.

Without them we would not be able to do all the activities we do and go on trips, so a big thank you goes out to them for their continued support. Also I must not forget Jenny as she helps us by being our Home Contact when we go on trips and will come to meetings if we need her.

Anne Gibbons 13.2.25

Guides

Our numbers are currently 10 Guides.

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

Know Myself :- Skills Builder Network

Interest Badge Guiding History

UMAs – Lava, The 2 match challenge, I'm good thanks, House of guiding

Express myself :- Skills builder Innovate

Interest Badge Confectioner

UMAs – Build a beast, Make your mark, Prepare to be amazed,

Be well :-

Interest Badge Mixology

UMAs – Message Mayhem, What a rush!, Games maker, No Doubt, Surfs up, Know my strengths,

Have Adventures :-

Interest Badge Backwoods cooking

UMAs – Blackhole breakout, Keep warm in the wild, Sneaky s'mores, Survive the wild,

Take Action :-

Interest Badge Craftivism

UMAs – One small step, A game of no noise, Toads on the road, Awful Adverts,

Skills for my Future :- Skills builder Lead

Interest Badge Investigator

UMAs – Run the Risk, Pets rock,

By completing a Skills builder, and an Interest badge, and 240 minutes of UMAs in the same theme a Guide can achieve a Theme award.

Ameena, Emma, Fatimah, Inaya, and Sajjal all completed their Be Well Theme Award. Emma, and Sajjal both completed their Have Adventures Theme Award.

On achieving two theme awards both Emma and Sajjal have been awarded their Guide Bronze Award.

In October we took the Guides and the Brownies on an Indoor holiday weekend at Woodcroft with a theme of "Woodland Adventures".

We also:

Had a go at throwing tomahawks

Went on a trip to Bletchley Park

Had a fundraising evening and donated the £140 raised to Cancer Research and RSPCA

Attended remembrance day

Went to the cinema to see "Moana 2"

Went to the panto to see Peter Pan

Celebrated Chinese new year

Had fun at a Division Disco

Celebrated Thinking day

Annual Report for Blenheim Scout Troop 2024

The troop have had a busy time during the year covering problem solving and teamwork activities.

We made leather bookmarks and wrist bands and painted T shirts.

The World faith badge was completed and as part of this we had a visit to the Sikh Temple in Cardigan Street. The scouts found out about the history of the faith, the beliefs and rituals and heard a passage read from the sacred book.

They were also taken to see the bedroom at the top of the building where the Holy book is put to bed each evening, the double bed is richly covered. The scouts were also served refreshments and told about the number meals that are served from the kitchen.

Another visit the following week took the troop to the Town Hall where we were shown around by the Mayor, the silver room, a committee room, down the stairs to the front entrance area, we were allowed to go and sit at the back to see a committee meeting in progress. We were allowed to go out on the balcony the scouts enjoyed waving to people walking along George Street. Our final stop was the Mayors Parlour where we were shown his robes and two scouts were invested.

At Easter Paul Oakley finished working with the troop after several years, to take a break from scouting.

Returning after the break the scouts spent 4-5 weeks working on the electronics badge with help from Brendan, Nick Jarman and Richard Spragg all members of the team who organise Jamboree On The Air/Internet for Luton.

We made plastic from milk and Ian Explorer Leader with Griffen unit made candles with the scouts. Tent pitching was practised in preparation for camp.

Knots and lashings were worked on and each patrol made a Sedan chair which was raced, Ian came along again to support with this evening and was back the following week with Jack one of the assistant Explorer leaders when we made A frame walkers and then competed to see which one lasted the longest.

A parent Sara has joined the team to help at meetings, her scout name is Olive.

The group took part in District camp at Paccar in June and the members got to do lots of activities. A Friday evening was spent at Woodcroft Guide centre where shelters were built in the woods and we played wide games.

A ready steady cook evening saw the scouts making up sauces to go with pasta from a selection of ingredients. A hike from Inspire to Lilley and back with the Beavers and Cubs on a warm evening was followed by the final meeting of the term fire lighting and toasting marshmallows. The scouts had now completed the Outdoors in 24 challenge for which they all got a badge.

The summer break was extended and scout meetings did not resume until the start of October and most evenings have been spent working on clauses for challenge badges to try to enable some of the older scouts to complete Chief Scout Gold award before they leave. This has included healthy habits, learning code breaking to become spies completing a mission and performing an entertainment.

Griffen Explorers leaders helped out again by covering two weeks looking at map reading and using a compass as part of the Navigation badge and they have offered to organise an orienteering activity in the Spring probably at Dunstable Downs to complete the badge.

Thanks to the parents who help out on a rota and Sara, to John (Beech) for taking on extra with planning and preparation and special thanks to Ian, Jack and Stuart from Griffen explorers for supporting with activities to enable the troop to continue to stay open as the volunteers that had said they would be able to help in the Autumn did not materialise. The troop is desperately in need of a team of people to step up and take on scouting roles to enable it to continue until the summer and beyond, please see if you can think of people we could approach and if so contact either Brendan or myself.

Janet Owen (Cedar)

- 1 The Olive Tree Church is a local ecumenical partnership comprising the Blenheim Crescent Baptist Church and St Margarets Methodist Church. The Partnership, which had been operating informally for some years, was legally instituted on 1 April 2021.

It has been agreed that the LEP would operate on a 'single purse' principal with all monetary accounts under the control of the Trustees of the LEP. All income and expenditure would be reflected in the LEP accounts but in accordance with the regulations appertaining to each Church the ownership of Church buildings remains with the individual churches.

In the event of a dissolution of the LEP it is agreed that General Funds held as at the date of dissolution would be distributed as follows:

- a) The unspent funds attributed to each Church in respect of legacies bequeathed to the Baptist and Methodist Churches be returned to the denominational funds. The interest earned on unspent legacy monies is to be attributed to the relevant legacy funds and any administration costs in respect of the funds is to be charged to such funds. The leadership team is to attribute how the monies in the legacy funds are to be spent.
- b) The original amounts invested by each Partner Church in respect of funds held as at 1 April 2021, after the deduction of the legacy funds held as at 1 April 2021, will be returned to the Partner Churches
- b) In the event of either a surplus /deficit arising on General funds over the term of the Partnership this will be distributed equally between the Partner Churches

Legacy funds form part of the General fund but it is decided that these funds be identified by way of note as between the Partner Churches.

The balances on Legacy Funds as at 31 August 2024 were as follows

Blenheim Crescent Baptist Church	£17,865
TMCP account- Methodist legacies	£1,257
Olive Tree Church	nil

Discretionary Funds form part of general funds

These are monies put aside for certain purposes but should they not be needed they can be used for other expenditure.

At 31 August 2024 discretionary funds were

Youthwork	£8,737
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In the past a youthworker was engaged and funds were obtained from external sources and also church funds were set aside. Due to Covid and personal circumstances the youthworker decided to leave. Some monies may yet be repayable to the Methodist Circuit - the amounts have to be ascertained.



THE OLIVE TREE CHURCH

St Margarets Methodist Church and

Blenheim Crescent Baptist Church

worshipping together

42-46 Blenheim Crescent
Luton
Beds
LU3 1HB

23 November 2024

Dear David

The Olive Tree Church

SFA for the year ended 31 August 2024

I enclose a signed copy of the accounts for the last financial year.

Kind regards

G.A.

Glynis P Thompson

D Hallworth Esq.,
7 Windsor Close
Flitwick
Beds
MK45 1PT

THE METHODIST CHURCH
STANDARD FORM OF ACCOUNTS

The Olive Tree Church (LEP Baptist and Methodist Churches)	Church
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FOR THE YEAR ENDED
31 August 2024

South Bedfordshire	Circuit	Circuit no.	34/4
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Registered Charity - Charity Registration number

1196158

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

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(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:

Rev 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 2024

**The Olive Tree
Church (LEP Baptist
and Methodist
Churches)**

Church

SECTION A		Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Totals this year	Totals last year
		£	£	£	£
a1	RECEIPTS	Note			
a2	Offerings and Tax recovered	54,599		54,599	61,258
a3	Bank and CFB interest and Investment income	3,090		3,090	1,944
a4	Lettings	51,955		51,955	63,003
a5	Other receipts	4,856		4,856	4,155
a6	TOTAL RECEIPTS	114,500		114,500 (a7)	130,360

SECTION B					
b1	PAYMENTS				
b2	Circuit Assessment or Share	13,853		13,853	23,076
b3	Donations	6,895		6,895	6,600
b4	Repairs and Maintenance	37,041	1,544	38,585	13,349
b5	Utilities (Insurances, water charges, heating & lighting)	34,609		34,609	26,212
b6	Property employment costs	6,165		6,165	12,312
b7	Other payments	44,048	70	44,118	26,912
b8	TOTAL PAYMENTS	142,611	1,614	144,225 (b9)	108,461

SECTION C					
c1	NET RECEIPTS/PAYMENTS FOR THE YEAR	(a6-b8)	(28,111)	(1,614)	(29,725)
c2	Total funds brought forward from last year		152,109	1,728	153,837 (c6)
c3	Sub total:	(c1+c2)	123,998	114	124,112
c4	Transfers and adjustments				(c7)
c5	TOTAL FUNDS AT END OF YEAR	(c3+c4)	123,998	114	124,112 (c8)
					153,837 (c6)

SECTION D			
FOR INFORMATION ONLY: MONEY RECEIVED AND PASSED ON TO EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS			
d	(these amounts are not to be included in total receipts/payments figures above)	£	£
d1	Balance brought forward from last year	475	
d2	Offerings/Gifts - received for external organisations	1,119	2,417
d3	Offerings/Gifts - passed to external organisations	1,283	1,942
d4	BALANCE STILL TO BE PAID	311	475
	(d1+d2-d3)		

2 of 5

The Olive Tree Church (Baptist and Methodist LEP)

SUMMARY OF CHURCH ACCOUNTS AND INTERNAL ORGANISATIONS REPORTING TO THE CHURCH COUNCIL

SECTION E

Please follow the Guidance Notes to complete this page

Summary of the Church accounts for the year ended 31 August 2024 and Internal Organisations reporting to the Church Council/Church Meeting. Note that the funds of an Internal Organisation would normally be Restricted funds unless it could be clearly shown that they could be used for any Methodist purpose. This section must be completed to arrive at the gross income and expenditure totals of the Church. If gross income exceeds the Accruals threshold, then the Accruals method of accounting AND A DIFFERENT FORM must be used to report the accounts (see Methodist website). Please refer to the guidance notes regarding transfers between the District and connected District Organisations.

	INTERNAL ORGANISATIONS	Receipts	Payments	Net Receipts/ Payments	Adjustments	Opening balances	Closing balances
e1							
e2							
e3							
e4							
e5							
e6							
e7							
e8	Sub total of Internal Organisations funds					(e11)	(e12)
e9	Church accounts (totals brought forward from page 2 - totals column)	114,500 (a7)	144,225 (b9)	(29,725)	(c7)	153,837 (c6)	124,112 (c8)
e10	TOTAL CASH FUNDS HELD BY CHURCH	114,500	144,225	(29,725)		153,837 (x)	124,112 (y)
	Continue on a separate sheet if necessary and bring the totals forward	TOTAL RECEIPTS	TOTAL PAYMENTS				

SECTION F

STATEMENT OF ASSETS AND LIABILITIES

CHURCH - CASH FUNDS HELD at 31 August 2024

	OPENING BALANCES	CLOSING BALANCES
f1	Cash in hand	
f2	Bank Current Account	21,203
f3	Bank Deposit Account	78,393
f4	Central Finance Board	320
f5	Trustees for Methodist Church Purposes	24,196
f6	Other funds	
f7	SUB TOTAL - Church accounts	124,112 (c8)
f8	Total funds held by Internal Organisations (the closing balance total from above) (e12)	(e12)
f9	TOTAL CASH FUNDS HELD BY CHURCH	124,112 (y)

SECTION G

OTHER ASSETS and LIABILITIES

	At 1 September 2023	At 31 August 2024
g1	Investments (include Endowments)	
g2	Land & Buildings (see notes re Insurance value)	8,540,176
g3	Other Assets	237,518
g4	Loan(s) - show amount outstanding at year end	
g5	Other Liabilities	

f4 Include only Funds held at the Central Finance Board

f5 Include only Funds held at Trustees for Methodist Church Purposes

g1 Include any other investments (not the cash element of TMCP trusts accounts this is included in line f5)

124,112
311 c/c
124,423

Name of Church - Olive Tree Church (Baptist and Methodist LEP)

Declarations and Scrutiny

I confirm that these Receipt and Payment based accounts for the year to 31 August 2024 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..... *15.10.24*

Name and address of treasurer *MADIT GAWANT*

..... *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 2024 were/will be* presented to the meeting of the Church trustees held on *12th JANUARY 2025*

Signature of the Chair of the meeting *[Signature]*

Name of the Chair of the meeting *MICHAEL ANOKYE* Date *20/10/2024*

Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees of the

The Olive Tree Church

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 2024 set out on pages 1 to 3. 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

Name of Church - The Olive Tree Church (Baptist and Methodist LEP)

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 22 DAWLISH ROAD

LUTON, BEDS Post Code LU4 9SD

Date 31.10.2024

* delete or circle as appropriate