

Trustees Annual Report

For the Period from: 6th April 2023 to 5th April 2024

Charity Name: PAROUSIA: MILTON KEYNES HOUSE OF PRAYER (MKHOP)

Charity Registration Number: 1196780

The purpose of the charity is:

To advance the Christian religion for the benefit of the public mainly, but not exclusively, through the provision of facilities, weekly rhythm of prayer, educational seminars, lectures and workshops, training and personal support to enable individuals to explore and develop their Christian faith and spiritual direction.

The purposes of the charity was achieved through:

Tuesday Morning Prayers

Weekly prayers on Tuesday Mornings during term time. These are led by Martin Lever who is a volunteer. The prayers are open to the public and people attend in person. The prayer time is also accessed via Zoom. The link is published and one person uses this online facility each week, with other people joining occasionally. Currently, there are ten regular attendees with other people joining on occasion. The prayer time consists of a short time of sung praise and worship, which Martin leads on the guitar, followed by a time of open prayer. The focus for prayers still tends to be for the local communities and Milton Keynes. However individuals are encouraged to pray for issues around the world that they are concerned about and those known to them who are in need of prayer. For future it may be worthwhile having a more formal focus each week to encourage prayer for the wider community and global issues. The worship time closes with a time of fellowship over tea and coffee. Individuals are encouraged to stay and use the art room, library and quiet space to continue their prayer and worship in creative ways. Through out the year four people have stayed on each week to explore their spirituality and spend time with God in this way.

Monthly Creative Prayer and Worship

This year the Charity has offered a time of prayer using a sensory approach. The prayers have been focussed on encouraging people to explore their faith and connect with God through their senses and memories. The intention was to focus particularly on people with Dementia and their carers, however, most people who attended did not have dementia or memory loss. Some attended on their own and

others with carers, however they were all interested and engaged in the sensory, creative prayer time. The prayer time lasted an hour and was regular attended by eleven people including two carers. The prayers are offered on the first Thursday of each month and is led by Ian Pearce who is a Spiritual Director and volunteer.

Daily Prayers and Worship

MKHOP continued to open Monday to Thursday between 10am and 4pm for members of the public to use the facilities and engage in private prayers. The art room, containing a wide range of material, the library and the Quiet Zone continue to be well used. During the year there were seven people who used the facilities for private prayer and worship once a week and another eleven people who used the facilities on average once a month. A further seven people used the facilities to pray and worship on an ad hoc basis.

Church and Community Prayers and Worship

Four churches and four community groups used MKHOP to pray, worship, spend Quiet Days in God's presence and to encourage their members to refresh and restore through deepening their relationship with Jesus. The chapel was used to provide space for church and community teams and leaders to meet for prayer, reflection, 'visioning' days and planning meetings.

Retreat Days

MKHOP hosted four retreat days this year. The creative retreat days were practical and required participants to use tables. This limited the number of participants we could host to fifteen. Each retreat day was full to capacity.

The Lent Retreat, led by Rev. Ayo Audu was inspiring as it encouraged participants to pray using beads. Each person was given a rosary and shown possible ways of using rosary to pray. This was a particularly helpful retreat as it suggested how prayers can be said any where at anytime using the rosary to prompt, support and remind us.

The Labyrinth retreat, led by Fay Rowland was particularly popular with more than fifty people enrolling. We were able to accommodate this demand by holding two Retreat days and workshops. They were very successful days in which participants built a labyrinth using strips of fabric. They were able walk the labyrinth and pray. A range of embroidered/sewn, sand and table top labyrinths were also made and used in prayer based on the Psalms.

The popularity of these retreats suggests that this is an area that should be developed in the future. Another area for future development is that of inviting Speakers on various Christian theology and ethics. The would engage participants in exploring ways in which theology and ethics impact daily life and spirituality.

Hospitality

Hospitality is a key feature of the events that is hosted at MKHOP. It provides opportunity for fellowship and developing new understandings in a relaxed manner whilst sharing food. On a practical level, the provision of a light meal provides the necessary food for the body and so frees people to focus on filling their spiritual hunger.

The work of the charity this year benefitted the public by providing space, time, support for them to creatively reflect on their relationship with Jesus, grow spiritually and develop their Christian faith.

Financial Statement April 23 - April 24

Income	Expenditure	Balance	
		642	Opening
4521.72	294.58		
		4869.14	Closing

Expenditure

Safeguarding: Oversight and Training by ThirtyOne Eight	150
Labyrinth:	74
Provision of food at Retreats:	70.58
Total:	294.58

Commentary

We are extremely grateful for the single large donation we have received in addition to the numerous smaller ones. These generous benefactors have enabled us to offer our courses without financial obligation to all who wish to attend. In addition, we now have the financial freedom to develop the charity further.