

Trustees' Annual Report

For the period: 6 April 2024 to 6 April 2025

Charity name: PAROUSIA: Milton Keynes House of Prayer (MKHOP)

Charity registration number: 1196780

Objects of the Charity

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, a 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.

Activities and Achievements

The purposes of the charity were achieved through the following activities during the year.

Daily Prayer and Worship

MKHOP continued to open Monday to Thursday between 10.00am and 4.00pm, providing members of the public with access to the facilities for private prayer and worship. The art room, containing a wide range of materials, and the library were particularly well used.

During the year, seventeen people used MKHOP for private prayer and worship at least once a month, with others attending on an ad hoc basis.

Tuesday Morning Prayers

Weekly prayers, led by Martin Lever, were held every Tuesday morning between 9.30am and 10.30am. A regular group of around ten people attended each week, with others joining occasionally.

The prayer time consists of a short period of sung worship followed by open prayer. The focus is primarily on praying for the local community, while also including wider national and global issues. A time of fellowship, with drinks and biscuits, follows the prayer session.

Monthly Creative Prayer and Worship

MKHOP continued to offer a monthly interactive, sensory and creative prayer session on the first Thursday of each month. This is led by Charmaine Howard and Ian Pearce, both of whom are spiritual directors.

Although the group was originally established as a space for people living with dementia and their carers, the majority of attendees do not have dementia and value the interactive and sensory nature of the prayer time. The group has a regular attendance of eleven people, plus two carers.

Church and Community Prayer and Worship

The charity supported churches and community groups by providing a space away from the busyness of work and daily life, enabling participants to reconnect with God and rest in God's presence.

During the year, seven churches and community groups used the facilities regularly for leadership prayer and reflection, retreats, away days, and Alpha courses.

Retreats

The charity facilitated three retreat days during the year.

A Beginner's Guide to Contemplative Prayer

This retreat, led by Ian Pearce, was fully booked. It helped participants to centre themselves, meditate, pray, and rest in the stillness of God's presence. Participants were introduced to tools and techniques to help still the mind and develop a contemplative prayer practice.

Noticing the Presence of God

This retreat was oversubscribed and was led by Michelle Audouard, who is trained in spiritual direction and Christian mindfulness. Participants were offered a range of practical ways to engage with God, notice God in the present moment, in nature, and in everyday life, and to cultivate the habit of living in God's presence.

Two participants were deaf and were supported by an interpreter. Verbal feedback on the day indicated that this was a very successful event.

Bible Art Journalling

This retreat day was also oversubscribed. It was a practical retreat led by Deborah Gregg, who guided participants in using a range of artistic expressions to meditate on the Bible. Techniques such as mark making, drawing, lettering, stamping and painting were used to help participants connect with God's word, reflect, visualise, and express their personal spiritual responses. The retreat was accessible to all and did not depend on artistic skill.

Public Benefit

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

Parousia: Milton Keynes House of Prayer (MKHOP) Financial Statement April 2024 - April 2025	
Income	
Donations	1105.47
Total income	1105.47
Expenditure	
Bible Art Journalling	325.18
Soul Mark Trust Course	720.00
Website Maintenance	283.99
Total Expenditure	1329.17
Balance	
Opening	4869.14
Closing	4645.44