

# **Cornerstone Church Colchester**

## **Annual Report 2023**

### **Report on the Charity's Activities**

#### **Preaching and Teaching**

2023 began with a preaching series in Revelation 1-11, continued in the summer with a preaching series on the Ten Commandments and finished in the Autumn considering Luke's gospel. This was interspersed with an Easter Series in Luke, preaching on the core values of the Church, as well as a range of topics from occasional preachers. The visit of the Rt Revd Lee McMunn was a high point at our inauguration on 14<sup>th</sup> October, when he preached to us that the joy of the Lord is our strength (Nehemiah 8:10).

#### **Kids' Work**

During Sunday services, the children have a talk and then go out for games and activities related to what they have heard. In 2023, there have been talks and activities for the children looking at catechisms, Jesus' miracles, the Ten Commandments, a bible overview and the book 'The Christmas Promise'. Throughout the year, activities have been led by a small team of 9 leaders who are DBS checked and have received training on safeguarding children. On a typical week, around 7 children attend.

#### **Music**

Music at Sunday services has typically been led by a core music group comprising two or three individuals who are Church members, with the aims of leading the congregation in sung worship to praise God and encourage one another, and promoting the messages of the Christian faith. A variety of suitable music has been used, typically selected to match themes that are addressed in a service. One informal 'jamming session' was held with the aim of drawing additional musicians into the music group. Recorded music has also been used for all or part of the music provision in services to allow rest for the music group and to incorporate a range of musical styles. The Church pays for appropriate CCLI licences to meet its needs, and song use is reported through CCLI.

#### **Pastoral Support**

Pastoral support is overseen by the Senior Pastor, an elder, the Women's Pastoral Lead and an Assistant Women's Pastoral Lead. Men's and Women's Discipleship Groups began 2023 following the preaching series in Revelation, continued in the summer considering the Ten Commandments and finished in the Autumn looking at Luke's gospel. The men's group typically numbers between 4 and 9 and the women's group has had around 9 attendees at each session. The discipleship groups have been a place of sharing and support with the challenges of life – marriage, work, friendship and family – and how we put the teaching of Jesus Christ into practice in our lives.

Visitation of those in need in the congregation took place, including the support of those recovering from mental health issues, divorce, relationship strains and parenting challenges. The membership course was run 3 times and 6 new members joined the Church. Monthly celebrations of the Lord's Supper, following the liturgy of the Prayer Book, were held in local homes.

## **Safeguarding**

The Safeguarding Co-ordinator and Deputy Safeguarding Co-ordinator continued to consult with the organisation ThirtyOne:Eight, which provided safeguarding advice, DBS services and training as appropriate. Those holding voluntary roles within certain areas of the Church's ministry and activities that require a level of trust were recruited in line with the Safer Recruitment Policy (including appropriate checks and references), which involved 4 new recruitments. Yearly reviews were carried out for 6 of the 11 volunteers in existing roles, with the remaining 5 volunteers' reviews being carried over to the first quarter of 2024. Safeguarding is a standing item on the agendas of both Church Council and Trustees, and a commitment to relational, plural and accountable leadership enables safeguarding against spiritual abuse by those in power, and protection from those who seek power inappropriately. The Church continues to practice the highest standards of safeguarding, including training appropriate to the voluntary roles people serve in.

## **Men's and Women's Social Groups**

Both men's and women's social groups have been established, aligned to our Church's core values of being welcoming to everyone, committed to developing deep friendships with each other, to share the Christian gospel, and to encourage one another to become more like Jesus. Events are planned to complement other Church activities, including the Men's and Women's Discipleship Groups. For men, these events have included walks, meals together and a retro games evening. For women, there has been a curry, a pottery painting evening and a pub meal. Spending time together at these events allows group members to share news, their faith and prayer requests. Events have been well attended and have provided a bridge between the Church and the wider community.

## **Students**

The Church welcomed students in an intentional fashion in September and a group of between 6 and 9 began to meet regularly on Sundays for food, games and discussion. 1:1 Bible reading with students also began then and the students have begun to contribute to the life of the wider Church community. Two games evenings have been run in a home in conjunction with Friends International, a charity seeking to grow friendship and faith with international students, and whose work has been promoted in other local churches.

## **Evangelistic Focus**

There were several times of evangelistic focus in 2023 for the promotion of the Christian faith. These included a series of 'Passion for Life' events; a breakfast in the Rover's Tye Pub, meetings at The Holy Bagel Cafe, and invitations to these events with conversation about the good news of Christ, both door to door and in Castle Park in Colchester. Training in evangelism took place through a joint event with the Christian Motorcyclists Association as well as through ongoing teaching and encouragement. One Christianity Explored Course was run with four attendees. Other evangelistic events included 'Questions with a Pint', 'Carols with a Pint', and our first 'Live Nativity' at a local outdoor location. We welcome people every Sunday to our services and there have been over 60 visitors, both Christian and not.

## **Roots & Shoots**

We started Roots and Shoots in May 2023. It is an outdoor after-school club for preschool and primary school aged children and their parents/carers. Initially we only had families connected to Cornerstone coming, but from September we also invited others as well. We have had contact from 12 children and their families. At the sessions we introduce the children to nature through outdoor activities. We also have a snack time and a short Bible talk. Roots and Shoots has been a good way to introduce families to the Church.

## **Food Bank**

In keeping with our Church's objectives of care for our members and society, particularly those suffering hardship financially in the current climate, each week at our services we collect donations from our congregation of items that Colchester Foodbank are asking for. The foodbank volunteers are always appreciative of the donations we give.

## **Leadership and Governance**

Cornerstone Church Colchester was established as a CIO in February 2023. The Trustees have met 4 times in 2023, where questions were asked to ensure that the CIO has been fulfilling its objects and that decisions of the Church Council reflect the will of the Trustees. Renewal and clarification of the Church Rules and relevant policy documents was achieved, with ongoing updates due to continue into 2024 as relevant. At the first Associates Meeting ('Associates' are members of the Church) on 30<sup>th</sup> April 2023, the structure of the leadership of the CIO was made clear and questions were invited from the Associates. These questions were fed back to the Trustees and, where appropriate, actions were put into effect.

Day to day leadership of the Church is overseen by the Church Council which includes Elders and Deacons along with other Church members. The Elders and Deacons met 12 times to lead the Church spiritually and in plurality. The Church Council met 13 times and effected the pastoral organisation of the Church.

The Church Rules define many areas of how leadership and governance within the Church functions, in conjunction with the Constitution. The Church has policies approved by both the Church Council and Trustees within the following areas; Finance, Data Protection, Health & Safety, Catering With Care, Fire Safety, Safeguarding, Safeguarding Against Spiritual Abuse, and Safer Recruitment. Work is ongoing in drafting an Employment Policy, which is due to be approved in early 2024. The Church also has Standard Operating Procedures in the following areas; Children's Work on a Sunday morning, Compiling Services using 'Presenter', and Supporting Mission Partners. Additionally, Terms of Reference are set for; Elders & Deacons, the Events Planning Task Group, and the Finance Subcommittee. An important part of the Church's governance within Health & Safety is risk assessment of all Church activities/events. In September 2023 the Church Council set out a plan for how each of these policies will be reviewed each year - work on reviewing these documents in turn is therefore ongoing through the last quarter of 2023 and into 2024.

## **Finances**

The finances of the Church are overseen by the Treasurer and Treasurer's Assistant with support from the Finance Sub-Committee. Church finances are managed through Stewardship and held in a Church bank account. The Senior Pastor is currently self-employed and is therefore not paid by the Church at present.

## **Report on the Charity's Finances**

The Church's financial position remained strong during this year, and despite the poor economic situation within the UK during this year our financial income has allowed us to plan to recruit our senior pastor on a part time basis from the beginning of the new financial year on 6<sup>th</sup> April 2024. This is earlier than we had originally anticipated.

The charity received an income figure of £20,870. The charity's expenditure was £10,552.

Cornerstone Colchester benefits from the fact that most funding comes from Church members and external supporters, primarily through regular monthly giving via our Stewardship Giving account.

There is no dependency on grants or other types of funding from external sources.

Those contributing by monthly standing order can choose the level of their support with no minimum amount set.

Supporters can also give via a physical donation box. This is dual checked weekly and signed before being paid into our bank account.

Our General Fund receives all income and uses it to cover the running costs of the charity. The charity has no investments, fixed assets, or loans. It makes no grants and spends nothing on fundraising. We have no recruited members, and all posts are currently filled by volunteers.

We give 10% of our total income from 2023 away to other selected local, national, and global charities.

We have had an independent examination completed and the report can be found in a separate document.

Reports approved by Church Council on 01/03/24 and Trustees on 04/03/24.

# Cornerstone Church

## Income and Expenditure Account for the year ended 31st December 2023

	£	£
Income:		
- Unrestricted funds		20,870
Expenditure:		
- Bibles and Scripture Literature	355	
- Catering	202	
- Children's resources and materials	36	
- Equipment	872	
- Guest speakers	160	
- Insurance	230	
- Licences and subscriptions	976	
- Miscellaneous	90	
- Live nativity expenses	326	
- Donations to Anglican Mission in England	760	
- Marketing	153	
- Staff expenses	1,152	
- Staff and volunteer training	250	
- UK mission partners	1,550	
- Venue costs	3,440	
		<u>10,552</u>
Excess of income over expenditure		<u><u>10,318</u></u>

## **Report to the Trustees of Cornerstone Church on the accounts for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> December 2023**

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity for the year ended 31st December 2023.

### **Responsibilities and basis of report**

As the charity 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 Charity's accounts carried out under section 145 of the Act. 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.

### **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 giving me cause to believe that in any material respect:

1. accounting records were not kept in respect of the Charity as required by section 130 of the Act; or
2. the accounts do not accord with those 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 to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Signed:



Name: Kate Prestwich

Member of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales

Date: 16/3/24