



FLEET

United Reformed Church

ANNUAL REPORT 2017

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Most importantly my daughter Hannah and grandson William. I really could not do ministry without their love, support and encouragement. My family is very important to me, and at times has been sacrificial, but both my daughters and family continue to be there for me; that is the Loving nature of God.

I have not mentioned my support group, four people who pray and support me; it is good to know they are there for me if I also need them.

At Christmas, I said that I still feel called to be your minister, for I sense this is where God still wants me to be.

A ministers life is varied, sacrificial, demanding, exhausting, challenging, enriching- and would not do anything else.

I thank God daily for my calling.

Ruth Dillon

Jan 2018

Training and development

- Attend the Ministers Spring school in May
- Attend the day ministers conference in September
- Contributor for 'Daily Devotions' for the wider URC
- Write hymns for particular services and occasions
- Written liturgies for specific occasions (on request)
- Attended the *Brexit worship* and developed resources.
- Sabbatical – *Seeking shalom*- led minister's workshops on my theme.
- Written reflections and study material for small groups.

Most importantly, MASA and LMMR addresses three questions:

- ***What does the church need?***

In 2018, the Elders will be undertaking LMMR (Local Ministry and Mission Review), where with the guidance of an appraisal partner, they will take stock at where they are after five years of ministry with myself as their minister. Are the priorities that were identified five years ago, still the same or have they changed?

- ***My training needs?***

Each year, I take a theme for my development, and over the following months write, pray and develop resources for churches to use. In view of my eye condition, this year I am looking at *Embodied Theology*, exploring God dwelling in the body, in the disabled body, blindness, diseased, mental health, and disfigured body due to surgery. I continue to go for Spiritual accompaniment every 6-8 weeks.

- ***What are 'my' needs?***

In recent months, I have identified three areas, and have been addressing these.

Ministry needs to be open and transparent, however even though I use my diary constantly, (for those who know me, I cannot think unless I see my days in front of me!), there is always a part of ministry that remains invisible, unexpected and therefore unaccountable. I go where God sends me, whether it be through a conversation or a nudge.

AGM - Minster's Report 2017 - Fleet URC

I hope for the day when everyone can speak again of God without embarrassment.

Paul Tillich (1886-1965)

In February 2018, I will have celebrated my fifth 'anniversary' as your minister at Fleet United Reformed Church. In recognition of this, I have just completed my Ministerial review,(MASA), which is quite a long process and includes identifying roles with the two churches of Fleet and Beacon Hill, and other responsibilities within the wider URC and beyond. This is issued as an appendix to this report.

It is good to stop and reflect where we have been, where we are now, and look ahead to the future, for we must never stand still; Martin Luther's ***Semper Reformanda***, (the church reformed, always reforming) also applies to us as 21st century Christians.

Worship.

I continue to lead worship twice a month on Sunday mornings, (1st and 3rd) and conduct the monthly evening service. As 2017 commenced we received six people into membership.

Morning service

The morning services have been a little different this year, as the first Sunday in the month we have been exploring the 10 Holy Habits for Discipleship. Why was this done in a service? One reason that the Elders and myself considered is that we have a 'captive audience'.

Together with 'special services', for example Baptisms, Parade services, celebrating Martin Luther's 500th anniversary and celebrating Constance Coltman's 100th anniversary of her ordination, the Sunday mornings have been full. We continue to celebrate communion on the third Sundays.

Evening service

The theme for the evening services during 2017 have been the '**I am**' sayings in John's Gospel

- I am the Bread of Life (John 6:35)

- I am the Light of the world (John 8:12)
- I am the Gate (John 10:9)
- I am the Good Shepherd (John 10:11)
- I am the Resurrection and the Life (John 11:25)
- I am the Way, the Truth and the Life (John 14:6)
- I am the true Vine (John 15:1)

Although small in numbers, the services are quiet and reflective, and it has an ecumenical feel, with regular Methodists and Anglicans coming to worship with us.

Discipleship

Paul Tillich believed discipleship was paramount for God's people to be effective disciples and communicators,. They could then feel confident to talk about their faith to other people. In 2017, I have explored this in a variety of ways.

Holy Habits

This year, we have explored the 10 Holy Habits, as discussed in Andrew Roberts Book '*Holy Habits*.'

1. Biblical teaching,
2. Fellowship
3. Breaking of bread
4. Prayer
5. Giving
6. Service
7. Eating together
8. Gladness and generosity
9. Worship
- 10 Making new disciples (still to do)

It would be fair to say that this is a new concept of learning about discipleship, as many people cannot attend a regular disciple session. However equipping God's people to be good disciples is important to enable our faith to grow. Next year there will be new opportunities to learn more about growing and nurturing our faith, through the URC *Walking the Way*.

Martin Luther

In October, I held three sessions about Martin Luther 500th anniversary, which included watching a film, a Sunday worship service that reflected on

those who feel oppressed by society, and dare I say the structure and power of the church?

As Tillich as my backdrop, I offer to you the following areas, reflecting on my ministry, including my roles, responsibilities, and contributions to the wider Church. You already know what I do at Fleet URC, so I have not included them again.

I feel loathed just to produce a list of my roles and responsibilities, but it is a tool to answer the three major questions below.

Beacon Hill

- Conduct worship twice a month
- Monthly Services at Whitmore vale (learning disabilities)
- Provide quiet days for local ecumenical churches (twice a year)
- Ecumenical responsibilities
- Developing discipleship
- Develop church and nurse link / partnership with Ocean stars
- Monthly Quiet / Prayer time
- Management committee of the Hub
- Prepare and print the New Messenger (bi- monthly)
- Co- ordinate, edit and produce the annual Ecumenical South West Surrey Lent devotional booklet for nine churches
- Website
- Invisible ministry
- Attend the weekly 'Knit and Knatter' group.
- Chair Elders and Church meetings
- Arrange and conduct Elders away days (as Fleet)
- Pastoral care

Wider roles

- Convener of Synod Pastoral Committee (North East Area)
- Member of Ministries and Learning committee (Wessex Synod)
- Member of Nomination Group (Wessex Synod)
- Assessment for potential candidates for ministry
- Conduct ministerial study weekends/days
- Supervise and mentor students for ministerial / lay training.
- Trainer for 'Dementia friendly church' and 'conducting funerals'.
- Workshop leader at Youth assembly

APPENDIX

Ministers Accompanied Self- Appraisal (MASA)

Every five years ministers are strongly encouraged to undergo MASA. It is part of a 'joint' appraisal, with the church also looking at their needs and priorities. For Fleet URC and Beacon Hill URC, this will to be done in 2018 however, I have nearly completed my appraisal.

It is an in depth, large, confidential document, and I have an experienced person in the Synod who I meet and discuss the content. However after five years of being your minister, I feel the summary below may give an indication to the demands that Ministry provides me in the pastorate of Fleet and Beacon Hill Hindhead, and the demands of the wider Church. Some of my roles will change from year to year, however I have a responsibility and a calling to undertake roles within the Synod.

At the beginning of my AGM report, I quoted Paul Tillich, a Lutheran Protestant Theologian who has been uppermost in my mind. As I have reflected on the effect my ministry has upon Gods people, and my speaking about the Gospel to which we all adhere, Tillich was interested that the God whom Christians worship, should be accessible to all people, and he wrote a book called *Courage to be*, which is still a core book to read in ministerial training. He discusses that God is not so much a presence, but God is manifested in the structure of beings, that is the *Ground of our Being*. Therefore we should be able more easily about a God who dwells within us, as well as a God who creates and heals to speak about.

Why am I referring to Tillich?

Recently, I re-read the book again in preparation for my MASA review. Even though Theological thinking has progressed, Tillich's book was ground breaking as it led people to discuss God. Surely that is what the Gospel is all about, to engage in conversation, to proclaim the good news, and liberate

his Theology, and a '*Walk with Martin Luther*' evening. This hopefully was able to answer some questions about the Reformation and also the United Reformed Church, its history and heritage. Learning about the challenges and opportunities he made for himself, which still affect us today in the 21st century, all add to assist our understand of discipleship. These three events seemed to be well attended by church members, and also by people from the wider churches in Fleet.

Bible study

This is held every month usually on the second Monday of the month at Church, where I consider the Lectionary readings for the following week.

Mission

Proclaiming Gods Love to all people should be the basis of why we serve God and Gods people, regardless of denomination, age, gender and abilities. If we love and serve God, we must have some responsibilities and include Mission in our discipleship.

Coffee morning

I am usually found most Thursday mornings at the Coffee morning at Fleet URC. Here is a good way to catch up with the community. People come from Fleet, Church Crookham and beyond. The Methodist church, the Baptist church and the Fleet Lions are all regulars together with some friendship groups who meet monthly.

Palani mission

Our partnership with South India has deepened and is a real blessing for the church to recognize its brothers and sisters in Christ, in another continent and different culture. I am hoping to visit Palani Mission in August 2018.

Invisible ministry

For ministers, the unexpected frequently comes along, through phone calls, casual conversations or individuals wishing to see me. This is called 'invisible' ministry, as you cannot plan it, it just happens. One area is my involvement in Funerals. I have conducted nine funerals in 2017. Many have had no connection with the church and have found me through other funerals I have conducted. My involvement in funerals is part of the Mission I do on behalf of the church. The Remembrance and Memorial service held in October is always well attended, and invitations are sent to all the families

(40 in total), that I have been involved with relating to their family /friends' funeral.

Ecumenism

Thy Kingdom come

During 2017, Fleet URC hosted '*Thy Kingdom come*', an ecumenical venture supported by Churches Together. The church was available every day with creative Prayer stations and themes for daily prayer. Members of surrounding churches attended, as well as some users of our premises. I co-ordinated the event.

Churches Together

During 2017 I attended the Clergy Lunches on a fairly regular basis. Sometimes I had other commitments which prevented me attending .. Next year, we will be meeting at 8.30 in the morning, so the day is not interrupted . The focus will be on reconnecting again with established clergy in Fleet and Church Crookham and developing relationships with newer clergy recently moved to the area.

Anna Chaplaincy

I am the chair of Anna Chaplaincy which supports the spiritual needs of older people in homes and those living with dementia in Fleet and Church Crookham. We are part of a larger Anna Chaplaincy network that is supported by Bible Reading Fellowship. My role includes supporting the Anna Chaplain Co-ordinator, chairing meetings with the ecumenical steering group, including Nigel Poole who represents the NHS, and Rev Haydon Wilcox.

Communion at Kings place

I am part of a small Clergy team that conducts communion services at Kings Place. I usually visit every couple of months, where we listen to music, pray, have a short reflection and then have communion in the style of our reformed tradition. This has been well received. I have also given them some of my reflection booklets that have been used as basis for their house groups.

Prayer

As well as my private prayer time, I meet with God every month for prayer at the church. I pray for our congregation at Fleet URC, the community and those situations which I know are challenging people's faith, for example

an-style Christmas decorations that we had made and two rainbows wore ta'ovalas (a traditional Tongan dress (a mat wrapped around the waist and decorated with leaves, seeds and shells).

At the end of this year Rabbit (Collette) had a baby so she has left and our unit helper* Woodpecker (Alison) left when her daughter moved to brownies.

*Fortunately another rainbow mum has become a Unit Helper (Bumble Bee) but we do still need an assistant leader.

Pauline Warner

8th Fleet Brownies

Once again 8th Fleet Brownies have had a busy year. They have worked on many Brownie badges relevant to the length of time they have been at Brownies e.g. Brownie Adventure, Brownie Adventure On, More Adventure and Brownies Go For It. They have worked on a variety of interest badges: - Book lover, Craft, Hostess, Disability Awareness, World Culture and Out and About. They are in the process of working towards Culture and Environment badges. Learning about the area in which they live and recycling.

Highlights for the year include planting Summer flowers in pots at Fleet Hospital and replacing them in the autumn.

Attending and taking part in Church Parades Assisting with the making of the Christingles for the service. In the Autumn they once again ran a successful Tombola stall at the Autumn Craft Fair and raised £180 to donate toward local charities e.g. Parity.

The summer term was spent outside. The girls took part in a bat walk around Fleet pond. Orienteering at Oakley Park, Geo caching which they enjoyed so much they asked to do it again.

Jackie Cresswell

Our assistant leader Ladybird (Rachael) left us but luckily we were joined by Rabbit (Collette).

In the summer term we worked on the Quacktastic Challenge badge. The girls discovered how eggs from different birds differ in size and colour. At the meeting we cooked and tasted ducks, quails and hens eggs. We talked about the importance of leaving nests undisturbed. We learnt how to separate egg whites from the yolks and we made meringues. We visited Jakes Animal Park at Trilakes. We fed the goats, alpacas and sheep. Unfortunately the rain poured down so we ended up wetter than the ducks.

Our other activities in the summer term included a hula hooping session, a scavenger hunt in the park, an evening where we learnt about water safety and had fun playing watery games, and a Princess meeting.

The Rainy Day Challenge badge kept us busy over several meetings during the autumn term. We carried out some rainbow science experiments: we made a rain cloud in a cup; made erupting rainbows and watched what happens when coloured sweets are arranged in milk. We made rainshakers. We painted ceramic wellie boots and planted violets in them. We also planted violets in pots and gave them away to local residents as 'a random act of kindness'.

Our younger leader Hedgehog went to visit Sri Lanka with Ocean Stars Trust (a link between Calthorpe Park School and schools in the Batticaloa area has been established). Hedgehog told us about the project and we found out about Sri Lanka.

For harvest we cut out leaves and wrote on the ways that we can create a better world. We hung them in the church to decorate it for the Harvest Service.

Also this term we found out about the mid-autumn Vietnamese festival of Thung Thu. We played a game that Vietnam children play and we tried some sweet versions of mooncakes.

In November we held a pyjama party during our meeting to celebrate 30 years of Rainbows! The girls found out about rainbows in 1987, made 30th birthday cards to send to other rainbows and ate some birthday cake.

At Christmas we attended the gift service at the United Reformed Church. We had decorated the church windows with shiny stars that we had cut out. We took part in a Girlguiding carol service at The Church on the Heath where we told the congregation about Christmas in Tonga. We showed some Tong-

illness or bereavement. Although we are small in numbers, we faithfully gather, and do so on behalf of the church, in the presence of God. During pastoral visits, which I mainly do on Thursday, and home communions, prayer is the focus of my visit.

Final Thoughts

As we enter another year, we are on the cusp of great possibilities, challenge and nurture. I do not know what global events will face us in 2018, I do not know what events will happen in the lives of the congregation at Fleet URC.

However, this I do know:-

The God who guided Moses to land of plenty;

The God who walked with the prophets;

The God who came down to earth to dwell as an infant and lived a life in the man we call Jesus

The God who conquered death, and brought new life and new starts to all people;

is the God who continues to walk with us on the pilgrim road.

May God, who is our Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer journey with us, as we remember the past, encounter him in the present, and with faith, face the future.

Every Blessing

Ruth Dillon

January 2018

Church Secretary

I took on the position of Church Secretary in September 2012 as our Church in Fleet reached its Centenary and as we moved out of vacancy with Revd Ruth Dillon accepting the call to be our Minister. Thus our journey of faith with Ruth began.

It was agreed that as I was also working full time, I would not be able to complete all the tasks required and would need a great deal of support. I am pleased to say that this support has been forthcoming, thus ensuring that our Church continues as a place of worship and mission. My thanks to everyone for this support.

In 2012 we had 69 members of the church, now we have 72. We have seen Tamyra Sherratt, Evelyn Tyler and more recently Carol Rayner, join the eldership team, bringing new ideas and energies. As a church we continue to grow. In 2017 three people were baptised, Luke Graham Dumbleton, Thea Harper McGhee and of course the adult baptism of Lisa Murphy. Welcome to the family of Christ. I wonder if Luke's happy noises in church are a sign of a future minister.

I have to record the passing of two members. Morag Canham in April and Beryl Sherwell in March. Our thoughts and prayers are with Dennis, Ted and their families.

This year our minister has led us in developing our faith with a week of prayer in May, entitled "Thy kingdom come", celebrating the centenary of Constance Coltman's induction into the ministry, film, talk and sermon on Martin Luther, celebrating the 500th anniversary of his 95 thesis and the beginning of Protestantism. She also led us in a series of sermons on "Holy Habits". The Wessex Synod Moderator Rev Clare Downing led worship with her guitar and over coffee chatted about her role and work thus helping us all to have a clearer understanding of the URC.

I would also like to draw attention to some other milestones in the year. A good friend of the church, Sharon Gardner gave her last service before moving into the ministry, congratulations to her. Both Reg Foxwell and Jill Durbin celebrated their 90th birthdays.

In order to help us develop our faith, a new house group was set up by Meg Nicholson and Liz McClune. Although in its early days some interesting discussions have taken place.

We spent one evening cleaning! We cleaned the windows, polished the chairs in the church, swept the floors, and even cleaned the toilets. The girls felt happy to put the time into giving something back to the church.

The Brownie programme is due to change in 2019 and we had been sent some activities to try. The girls enjoyed DIY, Kitchen Science, and Boxing!

In November we took part in the Remembrance Parade. The girls feel very proud to take part in this every year as they know it is a very serious occasion.

We finished our year with the Fleet District Carol. The theme was 'Colours of Christmas' and we represented yellow. The girls read a funny poem about custard and then all sang a song together. We got a lot of laughter from the audience.

2017 saw us enrol 15 new girls into 4th Fleet URC Brownies, and we are now a large unit of 34 girls.

Hayley Scott.

8th Fleet Rainbows

In 2017 we enjoyed an interesting and varied programme ensuring that we kept our rainbow promise (to think about our beliefs and to be kind and helpful) whilst finding out about our world and having lots of fun.

We did this by working on 3 badges – The Buddy Bag Challenge badge, The Ducktastic Challenge badge, and the Rainy Day Challenge badge.

In our first term we worked on the Buddy Bag Challenge badge. The Buddy Bag Foundation was set up after seeing a scheme in Australia where children who need to go into emergency accommodation in a hurry are given a backpack with essential items as well as cuddly toys and books. Our rainbows found out about it and what goes into the backpack. We enjoyed some Australian themed activities. The girls raised money for the Foundation by doing some jobs at home.

We made Thinking Day cards and sent them to rainbows in another unit. World Thinking Day is on 22nd February and that was the birthday of The Founder of Scouting Lord Robert Baden-Powell and his wife Lady Olave Baden Powell who was Chief Guide from 1918 until 1977.

4th Fleet (United Reformed Church) Brownies

We started 2017 by undertaking our 'Water Safety' badge. The girls learned what the different kinds of flags at beaches mean, and created leaflets to explain to children how to stay safe when by water.

We also went out for a winter night walk around Fleet Pond. Everyone put on hats and scarves and brought a torch. It was freezing but great fun!

In February we celebrated Thinking Day with 1st Fleet West Rainbows, and learned about Guiding in other countries before saying our Promise by candle light.

Throughout the year, some of our older girls planned and lead meetings as part of their 'Brownie Adventure'. We had marvellous meetings such as Murder Mystery, Animals, and Harry Potter.

The girls had also been undertaking their 'World Cultures' badge, and by March we were decorating Eggs using techniques from other countries.

After Easter we began the 'Rustle, Bustle and Squeak' challenge badges, which are created by South West Region and look at different kinds of Wildlife. We made natural houses for insects and enjoyed bird watching in the fields behind Fleet Pond.

We spent some time looking at the Brownie Promise and the girls asked if they could make gifts for the congregation as part of their 'Community' segment. They spent a whole evening creating some lovely keyrings and gave these out at the next service we attended.

In June we held a sleepover for some of our younger Brownies, and the theme was 'The World of Disney'. We had food from other countries and the girls had to work out where the stories behind Disney films originated from.

To finish the summer term we had a BBQ and water games. The girls also got to mix their own 'Mocktail' which they really enjoyed. 7

In August we went on our Brownie Holiday! We had 3 nights away at Walton Firs Activity Site. The theme was 'I'm a Brownie... Get me out of here!', and we pushed the girls to their limits by sending them down into the dark caves, making them cross a mud assault course, and by cleaning out the 'dunnies'. A wonderful time was had by all and many badges were earned.

When we returned from the Summer holidays we started our 'Circus Performer badge'. The first meeting on this theme was to make juggling balls and to try plate spinning and diabolo tricks.

I am particularly grateful to Margaret Armes for her support with all the administration and glad to report that she has agreed to continue in this role in order to ensure continuity.

I look forward to continuing as an elder with the church and know you will support my successor in the continued work of Fleet URC.

Blessings

Moray Henderson

Church Accounts Year Ending 31 December 2017

The financial report will be issued as a separate document..

John Gibbons

Church Treasurer

Property

Grounds

- a) Contractors continue to attend to the grounds, taking care of the grass cutting and hedge trimming. They also deal with litter and any other work as requested.
- b) Thanks to Brian Coney who continues to maintain the two flower beds at the front of the church.
- c) Flood light that was installed to light car park has been very effective.
- d) The edge of the bricked walkway adjoining the car park surface at the entrance to the church was restructured. The edge now consists of a uniform row of bricks set at an angle. Access is now easier for using walking aids, wheelchairs etc and for those with restricted mobility and vision.

Fire Alarm and Emergency Lights

Fire alarm system and extinguishers all tested and serviced by Hampshire Fire Services as per the contract. Powder extinguisher in Kitchen replaced by CO2 and Foam extinguishers as current recommendations. System tested on a routine basis between formal services.

Electrical System

- a) New ceiling lights fitted to the ladies and gent's toilets.

Heating Systems

- a) Sanctuary heating system serviced.
- b) Hall and meeting rooms heating system had new boiler installed due to corrosion of the heat exchanger of the previous boiler. A new manifold with control valves was installed on the heating water supply to the radiators (except main hall). Also fitted was a magnetic filter on the main water supply pipe and a filter with magnetic core was fitted to the general circulating system.
- c) The new boiler has a 10-year guarantee.
- d) Due to the upgrading of regulations regarding who can work on gas services, domestic or industrial and based on the output capacity of the supply gas meter, it was necessary to employ a plumber with compatible qualifications. Because there are two boilers on the property, the single supply gas meter required falls into the higher or industrial category. Previous plumber had let his industrial certification lapse as his business is predominantly in the domestic sector.
- e) There have been issues with sediment build up in the filter on the mixing valve on the supply to the new manifold. However, with regular cleaning this build-up has reduced considerably.
- f) At the time of writing we await a quotation to have independent room thermostats fitted to individual spaces and respective solenoid control valves fitted on the respective manifold control valves. A full flushing of the heating system will be considered at that time.

Kitchen

- a) The "PROTON" industrial dishwasher water supply softener charged on a routine basis.

Hall and Meeting Room Blinds

Due to wear, new clutches, end assemblies and pull cords have been fitted to all the blinds in the hall, meeting rooms and office. .
All the pull cards have been re-fitted in line with current regulations.

The girls all planted some petunias in May to take home, and we discussed how to care for them. They did very well and we still had some flowering in October!

In June we had a sleepover with the theme 'Teddybears' Picnic'. The girls all brought a nice bear in their luggage and we took them to the park for a picnic tea. The girls went to bed nicely and did a lovely job of making their beds in the morning.

We finished off the summer term with a fun meeting filled with water games. It was a very hot day so the girls enjoyed wearing their shorts and T-shirts and getting wet!

In September we started a new badge called 'Roundabout the World'. This is one of the core Rainbow badges and it teaches girls about energy and recycling. We started by learning about fossil fuels.

We celebrated 30 years of Rainbows! The section first started in 1987 and we had a fun meeting where the girls got to learn about what the uniform used to be, who the mascot was, and we even got to eat some birthday cake.

By October the girls had moved on to renewable energy sources, and had a science-filled meeting where they made water wheels and played with some solar lighting. One evening all the girls brought a bag of rubbish along with them, and they enjoyed separating it into the different types of recyclables. We joined the Fleet Remembrance Parade in November, and one of our Rainbows was chosen to lay the wreath for Girlguiding Fleet, alongside one of our Brownies and a Guide from another unit. She did an excellent job.

Our second sleepover of the year was a joint one with 4th Fleet Brownies, and the theme was 'Under the Sea'. The girls enjoyed creating their own sea creatures using Fimo and putting it in the oven to bake.

We finished the term with the Fleet District Carol service. The theme was 'Colours of Christmas', and we represented red. We put on a play about a Robin who lived by a Postbox.

2017 saw us enrol 11 new girls into 1st Fleet West Rainbows, and welcome a new helper called 'Squirrel' who is volunteering as part of her Duke of Edinburgh award. The girls enjoyed attending three church services at the URC, and especially loved donating food and gifts at Harvest.

Hayley Scott

- Book: Owl Babies, pinecone owls, exploring nature messy play

Alongside our 5 regular parent helpers whom set up and pack away, we are very lucky to have 3 retired volunteers who take it in turns to join us each week and assist in the kitchen as well as meet and greet parents and play with the children. We are always looking for more help in this area.

Session Structure

09:15/30 Set up, 10:00 Start, 10:15 Refreshments served, 11:00 Tidy up time, 11:05 Songs/story, 11:15 End and final tidy, 11:30 Lock up

What days do we run?

Fridays throughout the year closing only on bank holidays and major holidays periods such as Christmas when attendance would be too low.

Attendance

The attendance numbers have been steadily increasing throughout 2017, we are now currently at an average of around 25 families. Entrance fee is £2 per family. Our Christmas party was sold out this year and the popularity of the group is on the rise. We manage our communications via our Facebook page @urctoddlergroupfleet where we inform parents of our weekly theme.

Lindsay Withers

1st Fleet West Rainbows

We started the year with a challenge badge that was created by BGIFC – British Guiding in Foreign Countries. The girls enjoyed learning what life would be like as a Rainbow overseas.

In February we celebrated 'World Thinking Day' by having a joint meeting with 4th Fleet URC Brownies, where we learned about girls from different countries and said our Promise by candle light.

In March we started a badge all about sheep! The girls loved making sheep crafts, playing sheep games, and even visiting some sheep at Trilakes animal park.

After returning from the Easter holidays, we decided to make the most of the longer days by earning some badges based on different kinds of wildlife. We visited Elvetham Heath nature reserve to look at habitats, and we went pond dipping at Oakley Park. We also had a very fun spider meeting at the hall.

Hall Double Push Bar Exit Doors

The latching assembly on the Hall exit doors was contained in a plastic moulding. This moulding had become brittle to the extent that the doors would not lock.

A local retired engineer fabricated new blocks from steel using the plastic mouldings as a template. The reassembled latches for all four doors involved were successfully reinstalled.

Sound System

The routine recording of the services has been suspended.

Cleaning

All areas of the property cleaned on a regular basis. Our cleaner has carried out a deep clean on the kitchen and toilets.

Shed

Temporary repairs on the shed are still keeping most of the wet out. Base continues to subside, and wooden frame is more distorted and there is more deterioration over all due to water damage.

John R. Johnstone

Property Report—Manse

A Manse inspection was carried out in February preceded by a boiler service and gas certification. The gas fire in the lounge was condemned and an electric replacement has eventually been fitted.

Ruth discovered an ingress of water in the downstairs toilet which was traced to faulty plumbing in the bathroom above. This has been rectified.

Brian Armes

Hall and Room Bookings

Bookings for the Hall and Meeting Rooms overall have been at a similar level to last year.

Sing and Sign has continued to use the Small Meeting Room on Tuesday mornings. A new U3A group, Ballroom Dancing for Beginners is planning to

start on Tuesday morning in the Hall. Pilates has taken 1 hour on Thursday afternoon s in the Hall. These bookings will help to make up for the loss of the NCT classes..

The Wessex Trust requires us to implement new procedures for managing our hirings. We have managed to negotiate a more user friendly version of the documentation but there is a lot of work yet to do to put new contracts in place with all our hirers. We have to hope they will not be frightened off by the legal wording of the hire documents.

The income from Hall and Meeting Room lettings is anticipated to be approximately £23,000 when all the monies due have been collected.

Brian Armes

Catering

In addition to the weekly Coffee Mornings reported on separately, our Team in the kitchen provided refreshments for the following events during the year. This varied from tea and biscuits, bacon butties to homemade cakes and more.

24 th March 2017	Church Quiz with Fish and Chip Supper
7 th July 2017	Church BBQ
7 th October 2017	Harvest Supper
2 nd November 2017	Church Craft Fare
7 th December 2017	Rotary Carol Service at Church on the Heath
17 th December 2017	Church Carol Service and Christingle.

Thanks to all who have assisted during this last year.

Moira Johnstone.

Coffee Morning

Thursday Coffee Morning is as popular as ever. More new faces have joined us on a regular basis. Our grateful thanks go to all who have supported us throughout the year.

There is also an on-line facility to receive a regular morning URC Daily Devotions.

The monthly magazine issues contain news from the URC; book and film reviews; a crossword puzzle and a popular letters section, which promotes a lively exchange of views.

“The Month in Numbers” list this month included the fact that:-

- 1 in 5 Proportion of UK adults polled say that they pray at least once a month:
- 9.4% is the proportion of the UK population who were church members in 2017:
- Within the Hallmark and Card Factory groups card makers this Christmas, only 7 out of 580 Christmas cards bore a Nativity scene.

Reform covers a variety of topics in articles and columns from different contributors who draw on their different experiences and interests. A recent regular feature is “Twenty Questions” where different individuals are interviewed.

I found the comments in this month’s “Jumble Sales at the Apocalypse” article on some of the words in hymn tunes we sing entertaining!

Another regular monthly series has invited members of other faiths to explain what their religion means to them.

Evelyn Tyler

URC Toddler Group

The URC Toddler Group is a friendly parent volunteer run group that offers a fun, creative, exploratory environment for children aged 0-4. We run on Friday mornings at 10am. Each session has a different theme incorporating a craft, messy play and a story all thought up by our team of 5 regular parent helpers.

2017 has seen themes such as;

- Book :Cave Baby, Stencil & stamping prehistoric animals, Dinosaur crunch messy play
- Book: Handa’s surprise, fruit printing, fruit soup messy play,
- Book: Wow said the owl, Finger painting, coloured rice messy play

The Angel Bombing was a great success. Over 3000 angels were knitted or crocheted. I would like to thank our congregation for their support. We donated 310 Angels. Our thanks also go to Beacon Hill who joined this knitting frenzy and helped to swell the total.

Christmas Lunch at The Harlington Centre again went well this year. Val & Brian Cox and Pam Hasted represented us this year. There were approximately 35 guests who were served a splendid Christmas meal, followed by a 10 minute "pantomime" ably performed by a team of volunteers. At 3pm all listened to the Queens Speech. Father Christmas then made an appearance with gifts for all guests. Val, Brian and Pam said it was a very enjoyable afternoon.

Part of Churches Together constitution states they need to periodically review their strategy and work. To this end a survey was circulated to all the Churches involved.

The results of the survey have been subject to discussions by the local clergy and lay representatives.

To date, there will be no further Churches Together initiatives in 2018, but individual churches are invited to lead any chosen projects, ecumenically. There is hope that this fallow period will renew our energies.

Thank you for your support.

Darrell Henderson

FACCTS

The staff of FACCTS have continued to work with the pupils and staff of all our local schools leading clubs and taking assemblies. They are helped by a loyal group of volunteers from various churches.

We pray we will have some additional directors early in 2018.

Nicola Hamilton

Reform Magazine

During 2017 there were **12** subscribers to the Reform magazine. This does not include those members of the Congregation that subscribe on line.

In June, we welcomed Delanie and two young people from the Methodist Church who represented Ocean Stars 'a charity rebuilding lives in Sri-Lanka'. Delanie gave a brief talk. £165 was raised.

It was decided to take a break for three weeks in August. Bee organised to meet at three venues.

Our Christmas coffee morning was again a great success. There were table quizzes, name-the-doll and carol singing. Our thanks to Nessie for playing the piano.

A big 'thank you' to our happy team of bakers and helpers and to Bee for her bric-a-brac and book stalls, which all add to our coffers.

Val Cox

Sunday Lunches

Firstly, we must convey our grateful thanks for the great job Katy has done in the past year/ It is much appreciated by all who attend. We have an average of 20 people, many from other churches or non-church attenders.

The Christmas lunch was a great success again and we look forward to the first lunch in March.

Cynthia Searle

Craft & Gift Fair 4th November 2017

Revd Ruth Dillon warmly welcomed the visiting Crafters with a prayer and words of welcome to open his event.

Again, the event was well attended by Crafters old and new showing their different crafts and skills. This year as per previous ones we received glowing reports of the variety of crafts and the very friendly and warm atmosphere.

Our Catering team worked hard making and serving their delicious home-made soups and cakes. Val Cox was Super Chef where the Bacon Butties were concerned, always a favourite, in fact one husband who drops his wife off to this event, put his order in the night before!

The 8th Fleet Brownies supported us again with their Tombola stall and guess the name of the panda competition Jackie Cresswell and her very willing Brownies worked very hard and donated their takings to one of our Charities.

The help offered by volunteers to man the welcome table, working in the kitchen, getting the venue ready for the day and importantly putting it all back in place at the end of a long and busy day was much appreciated. Christine Gibbons did a brilliant job of designing and printing the posters and flyers. Thanks to those who helped spread the word for this event by delivering flyers and displaying posters. This is an important part of the event and more help is needed for 2018.

We had a large spread in the local paper which was lovely.

A date for our next Craft & Gift Fair will be held on Saturday 3rd November 2018 if we can get a car park for our “Crafters” to park as we need to keep our car park clear for customers. If you know of any that is in easy walking distance can you let me know please or this event will not happen.

One more thank you to Moray Henderson who every year repairs, makes, places and collects signs all around Fleet and roads leading to us to get the word out there.

All our efforts helped to raise over £1341.00.

God Bless

Darrell Henderson

Fleet URC on the Web

Church Website: www.fleet.urc.org.uk

It has been another good year for our website, and we continue to have positive comments about our church's presence on the web. Earlier in the year I made some changes in response to feedback from the 2016 iChurch Award judges. For instance, there is now an interactive church calendar, an image gallery with recent pictures, and a section devoted to our minister and elders. The URC's on-line Daily Devotions may now also be accessed from our website.

although typing error showing Tamyra Skerratt, makes it appear I am writing under a pen name.

Thank you so much for your ongoing support for Commitment for Life and the additional fundraising for their partner Christian Aid.

Tamyra Sherratt, Commitment for Life Link Person

Churches Together

Fleet Angels was nominated to receive a “High Sheriff Award” from the High Sheriff of Hampshire. This event took place in the Great Hall Winchester on 15th March. Whilst Fleet Angels did not seek recognition for what they do, this award is very much deserved.

Easter services went very well with a Sunrise service held at 6am on Tweseldown and led by the Parish of Fleet

There are some encouraging figures from Hart Foodbank for the year to March 2017: Over 940 three day emergency food supplies were provided to local people in crisis

Over the year, local people have donated 15 tonnes of food to this cause and over 90 people volunteered. Local schools, businesses and faith groups have supplied vital support to this cause enabling us to give three days' nutritionally balanced foods and support to people in crisis.

Our Church, led by Ruth, hosted “Thy Kingdom Come” prayer initiative. This was carried over the 5 days for personal prayer with 5 stations arranged to cover Forgiveness, Persecuted Christian, The Light of Christ, The Holy Spirit and Thy Kingdom come. Each day our Church was open from 10am – 2pm with a led prayer at noon.

Saturday the Church was also open for reflection and prayer from 6pm to midnight.

On Sunday 19th November at St Philip & James, Fleet Angels are celebrated their 10th Anniversary this year.

During the last 4 years CAP, Debt Management Centre in Fleet has been approached for help by 28 local people. Unfortunately the CAP team stood down at the end of 2017. This project has now closed

Christian Aid 2017

The house-to-house collection in May raised £675 and our thanks as ever to our collectors. A new venture this year was a collection at the railway station, on the five weekdays, and this resulted in £300. The Cake & Plant Sale in May was held in the Parish Hall at All Saints Church and raised £622. Christ Church, Gally Hill Road, hosted the Christian Aid service but dwindling numbers have thrown the future of this service into doubt. The grand total for all the collections and sales in Fleet during the week was £7,564.

The annual Carol Concert in December was held at St Philip & St James Church. It raised £844 and we are very grateful to Fleet Choral Society for their continuing support. It is much appreciated.

Dates for your diaries: the Cake & Plant Sale will be held on Saturday 12 May 2018 from 10-12 noon in the Parish Hall at All Saints Church, Church Road. All contributions of plants and/or cakes will be very gratefully received.

We are always looking for more helpers and would be very pleased to hear from you. Please contact Linda Storey or Liz McClune.

Linda Storey, Liz McClune

Thursday House Group

The Fellowship Meeting is now up and running, meeting on the fourth Thursday of the month from 7.30 to 9.15 pm. We finish with tea or coffee and cake and intend to change the venue every so often. The detailed format may be changed but so far we seem to be on the right way forward.

If you wish to know more please telephone me on 01252 687075

Meg Nicholson.

Commitment for Life

Linda Mead of CforL shared first-hand stories of CforL's work during Fleet URC service on 28th Sept. 2017. Linda asked to share a photo on CforL Facebook of bulletin board and me holding prayer/magazine used for our fundraising effort this year as an idea other churches might consider. Very humbled and honoured, Linda also chose one of the prayers I wrote for the Fleet URC newsletter to include in 2018 Prayer Partner for May 2018,

When the Windermere Centre closed the future of the iChurch project became uncertain, but it has now been confirmed that it will form part of the work of the Communications Committee of the URC, based in Church House, London. Rebecca Gudgeon has stepped down from the post of iChurch Coordinator, which is a personal sadness for me as she was always very supportive and helpful, both as a trainer and in day to day problems. Natasha Springer, who already works in the Communications Department at Church House, has been appointed as her replacement, and I look forward to developing a good working relationship with her too.

Please continue to support our church website. The more people who access it regularly, the higher it will appear in search engine rankings. As always, I welcome your comments and suggestions to help our church website become the best it can be.

Church Facebook Page: www.facebook.com/fleeturc

Church Twitter Account: www.twitter.com/fleeturc

Social media allows people to create, share or exchange information, ideas and pictures or videos in virtual communities, and therefore is ideally suited to church outreach.



I have continued to 'tweet' regularly throughout the year about our activities at Fleet URC. We have increased our number of followers to 120, which includes local URC congregations, individuals and organisations. Follow the link above to join in.



The Fleet URC Facebook page continues to be very popular and posts are regularly shared and viewed by upwards of 100 people – especially where there are photos. Many people are more likely to look at our Facebook page than our church website to keep up to date with our news. Our number of followers keeps growing, which means that our church congregation is far larger than the number of people who actually attend our church. What a great potential for witness!

Christine Gibbons

Footsteps

For first part of the year, we continued to use ROOTS as the framework of our Sunday sessions for which we typically have between 6 and 10 children attending. Sometimes we carried out activities as one large group or, depending on the topic and the number and age range of those children and young people attending, we had parts of the session where we had two different activities exploring the theme. We always try to start and end the session as whole group.

Through the year, Footsteps has done lots of thinking, praying, sharing, planting, cooking and, of course, making! Some highlights included: paper helicopters showing God's blessings falling down on us, discussing reconciliation and forgiveness, painting with blowing bubbles, making braille letters with beads and modelling clay, Palm Sunday pipecleaner figures, creating Easter gardens with clay caves plus the egg hunt around the church, marshmallow bridges representing Jesus bridging the gap between us and God, bird feeders to reflect God's love for all creatures, creating a "place of rest" under the tables with cushions and lights, planting rocket seeds to distribute to the congregation...

During 2017, Footsteps have also co-ordinated the decoration of the church windows for Easter, Harvest and Advent with able assistance from the congregation as well as the Brownie and Rainbow packs. "He is Risen" signs were distributed, coloured in and decorated for Easter Sunday and put up on the windows with the aforementioned pipe cleaner figures; leaf shapes declaring those things for which we are thankful were displayed for Harvest and the stars theme for the Advent period was reflected on the windows and interior glass doors of the church.

In March, we presented the Old Testament characters that were created last year to the congregation. The posters have since been made available as a resource to Synod.

Returning after the summer holidays, Footsteps took a different approach where we spent a few sessions reviewing how the group was working and what the children and young people thought could be improved. As part of this, we looked at "For Every Child", a book which presents the statements of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in a child friendly format, and the URC Charter for Children in the Church which sets out the URC's commitments with regards to children and young people. We found that the language for the charter was not easily accessible for the children (or the

Monday Morning House Group - Bible Study

In 2017 the House Group Bible studies have included some of Jesus Parables, Paul's Journeys, the Psalms and the Gospel of Mark. We mostly follow study books written by specialised authors (Cover to Cover Series for example). Each topic usually extends over six or seven sessions.

The morning is divided into two halves – the first half commences with prayers led by different members of the group, followed by our study time also led by various members. We usually conclude with Prayers of Intercession for those who are known to the group who are unwell or facing difficult problems. National and International problems are also remembered.

The group learnt about 'Open the Book' project from one of the members who is part of the local team. This initiative offers primary school children an opportunity to hear the major stories in the Bible, from a team of Christians drawn from local churches, who present the stories during assemblies/acts of Collective Worship. Started in Bedford in 1999 it is now accepted in over 2000 schools countrywide.

Do-it-yourself mornings can be fun times as each one (usually everyone!) brings along something to share (not often food but sometimes!). One of our D.I.Y. mornings took place at "The Elvetham" to celebrate a member's 90th birthday. This provoked questions from the Hotel staff, which enabled us to explain what a Bible Study/House Group is all about. The Group were well looked after and enjoyed homemade shortbreads cooked the morning of our visit.

The second half of the morning is a time for tea, coffee, hot or cold water (members preference) and biscuits. This is a much more relaxed time when we share things that have happened during the week. Perhaps visits members have made to London for a Show, the Christmas Tree Festival at St Philip & St. James, etc. Often there are a few funny stories.

We value the part each member plays. We miss Sheila Durbin and her input into the Group and hope she will soon be well enough to join us again. We also miss Peggy Batchelor who like Sheila has been a member almost from the start of the Group. Most weeks there are an average of nine / ten people unless sickness, holidays or visiting families who are poorly prevents some from coming. This adds up to somewhere near 90% each week.

Paddington Bear visited the group, greeting each member as they arrived and was photographed with the group during the session.

Phyllis Tuckwell Fleet Support Group

The Support Group has again had a busy year in 2017 kicking off with a lively concert featuring the Hampshire Constabulary Band under the direction of Major Pete Curtis and with Amanda Goldthorpe Hall adding a note of glamour to the occasion. This was followed by an Italian festive dinner with singer at Al Fresco in March.

A very well attended Ritz style tea was held at the Elvetham in May with violinist Kai Choi, a Plant Sale with tea in June. followed by the Street Collection also in June. The Church on the Heath was the venue for a new venture – a Swing Band concert with Junction 4 Big Band. The Group ran stalls at Hartley Wintney and Dogmersfield Fetes. A tea with a difference was held in August– an event, where craft items were on sale. In October the ever-popular Salesian College concert was held, featuring the Hart Male Voice Choir with two young school choirs making guest appearances. The year was rounded up with another Wine Workshop on Bordeaux wines- in November with wine expert Nina Cerullo, and the Christmas Concert at the Catholic church of our Lady – Carols by Candlelight performed by Hart Voices under the direction of Roy Rashbrook with school choirs from Crondall Primary School and Parsonage Farm Infant School. The group raised a total of just over £20000 plus for Phyllis Tuckwell Hospice Care. It is a sobering thought to realise that this represents the amount of money the Hospice needs to raise **every day** for its ongoing inhouse care and treatment in the community. Volunteers are always needed to help with our programme in Fleet so please contact our Chairman, via the Hospice in Farnham (01252 729400

Future dates for your diaries are:

10 February	Hampshire Constabulary Band concert
20 March	Paradiso supper-
14 May	Tea at the Elvetham
3 June	Plant sale and tea with a difference
9 June	Street Collection
14 July	Dogmersfield Fete
21 September	Farnborough Hill Concert
20 October	Champagne at the Blitz concert]
December	Carols by Candlelight

Vera Mosley.

adults!) so spent some time exploring the meaning behind the words and rewriting the charter so that we can all understand it more easily. The children produced a display of the rewritten Charter plus the expected behaviour and rules for Footsteps sessions that they had all proposed and agreed.

The Charter for Children:

1. Children and adults are just as important as each other at church.
2. Children and adults can join in with all aspects of church life.
3. All people, young and old, can learn at church.
4. All people, young and old, belong equally to the church community.
5. All people, young and old, can serve and help each other.
6. The call to share God's love and the Christian message comes to all people, whatever their age.
7. The Holy Spirit can speak to and through people of all ages, young and old.
8. All people, young and old, can discover and develop their skills and talents at church.
9. At church, people of all ages, young and old, should do as many things together as they can.
10. All people, young and old, can talk directly to God through prayer.

In Footsteps we have agreed to:

- Listen to each other
- Behave well
- Respect each other
- Share ideas
- Take part and join in
- Use technology appropriately

We were asked to take our updated Children's Charter poster to the November meeting of Wessex Synod where it was presented not only to Synod but also to the newly appointed Head of Children's and Youth Work

for the URC, Sam Richards. She showed great interest in the work especially as a rewrite had been planned to be one of the first jobs on her “to do” list so perhaps our young people have saved her a job.

During Advent, we prepared for leading the church service on Christmas Eve as well as decorating the Christmas tree decorations which were given out at that service to match in with the stars theme for Advent. The Church’s Christmas card cover also reflected the theme, with individual star pictures completed by the members of Footsteps. Despite a limited time for practice, the service on Christmas Eve went very smoothly and the children read and performed confidently as well as surprising the congregation with their musical abilities.

To finish, on behalf of everyone in the church, but especially the children and young people of ‘Footsteps’, their leaders and helpers, we would like to say a heartfelt thank you to Darrell Henderson for all her help, support, encouragement and dedication over the years that she has worked with our young people. We also thank Maureen Coney, who has stepped up her role to assist with running Footsteps sessions on a Sunday. Our thanks must also go to the helpers whom we appreciate for their ongoing assistance, their talents and giving their time regularly on a Sunday morning. If anyone else feels they would like to join us as a regular or even one-off helper, please let us know as you would be very welcome. Also do come and see what we have been doing each week, with no further obligation!

Helen Bailey

Cradle Roll Report

This year, two children and one adult have been baptised by the minister. In March, we welcomed Luke Graham Dumbleton, brought by his parents Matthew and Becky and in November, Thea Harper McGhie brought by her parents Tom and Nikki. In September we celebrated the adult baptism of Lisa Murphy. We welcome all of them into the fellowship of the church.

Each year, to commemorate recent baptisms and blessings, anniversary cards are on behalf of the church. These are sent every year until the child's fifth birthday. During 2017 cards have sent to the following children:

Eden Rose Cheyne
Isla Beth Chevalier
Florence Aimée Chevalier

Ava Isabella Daniel
Jake Peter Hermanson
Amelie May McGhie

Helen Bailey

Flower Report.

Our church, happily, continues to be decorated each Sunday with a display of fresh flowers contributed by a church member in remembrance of perhaps a wedding anniversary, family birthday or some significant event in their life. It is always a joy to see these colourful reminders of the wonderful world we live in and the fellowship of our church family. After their time in church, the flowers will again bring joy when they are distributed to members with a celebration or to the sick or housebound among us or to a guest preacher. This another element which is much appreciated. Please continue to keep the flower rota list full of your contributions.

Liz McClune and I continue to share most of the flower arranging duties, but we would be very happy to further share this task with anyone who would like to help. Speak to us if this is the case.

Sandra Smith.

Organ Notes

Many thanks to our team of organists. There were two dates not covered last year but the preacher for one of them brought his own CDs for the hymns and Sidney Shore found us an organist from Woking, so all was well. Thanks go to Maurice for yet again playing for us on Christmas Day. We are very lucky to have such a good team.

Liz Mc Clune.