

Ascension Church Reports for APCM 2013

Ascension Arts is an outreach project celebrating God's gift of art and creativity. It involves our local community taking part in the Brighton Festival in May and opens up the church to visitors from all parts of Brighton and Hove. In 2012 we had twenty participants, three workshops and a sell-out show from BTG. It also raised £505. (Margaret)

Catering, including coffee/tea. The new kitchenette has been a great success on Sundays especially helpful for older folk not having to traipse down 2 flights of stairs! It is so much more relaxing having coffee upstairs and makes fellowship more enjoyable. The downstairs kitchen now has a new cooker and dishwasher which is a huge help for the Friendship Lunches and other church events such as Messy Church and Maundy Thursday meal and communion. We now have 2 separate venues that can be used by the wider community and if necessary concurrently, and the church can be hired out in the most efficient way possible. (Margy)

Events for the church family can also be great for inviting friends and sharing faith. John Barclay hosted an inspirational 'Evening with Henry Olonga' (March 2012) with 90 guests who heard his testimony and singing. The Brighton Theatre Group brought "Broadway Big Sing" to a full church in May. We regularly have a Maundy Thursday meal, a Back to Church Sunday with BBQ, usually a Harvest meal but not in 2012 because of timing, and a New Year Supper (Feb 2013) this time with an Auction which raised £1400 towards our Refurbishments. (Margaret)

Fabric Committee consists of Rev Andy Bousfield, Rev Mathew Phillip, Terry Careford, Derek Eastwood, Olive Ridge and Anne Streeter. The properties for which we are responsible are the Ascension, the extension including Malcolm Young Room, 32 Fairview Rise, and whilst we benefit, 5 Grangeways. Please see the APCM report for individual work undertaken. To each and every contributor to the life of the Church, a very big thank you! (Olive)

Families Events that have taken place over the past two terms have included two Messy Church events and two Family Film Time events. Both events had healthy numbers, and were well received. Further back Emma held half-term and holiday events and concluded with a successful Olympic-themed summer holiday club. Our recent Easter club had poor numbers. Please pray for us as we review and tailor our events to best serve our community. (Gareth)

Finances. We ended the year on budget (well actually just over by £8!) with a deficit of £21,000. We lost a few donors but income (down 2%) and expenditure (up 1%) is overall fairly similar to 2011. The annual deficit was up by £1,300. We spent £46k from our development fund (legacy fund) to make improvements at the Ascension and the Minister's house. Our funds have been topped up by one £500 legacy, £1,000 into our building fund, and £12,000 into our worker fund supporting Gareth. 2013 to date has shown a healthy increase in our projected income after our giving day, with new congregation involved as well. We have plans to further improve the Ascension worship this year with additional building work funded by legacies and appeals. (Simon)

Focus Group. Jean Careford and Jan Lank stepped down; Sandie Treby and Derek Eastwood joined. The work of the group is reflected in these reports. Andy, Olive, Mathew, Simon and Sandie are also on the PCC. (Andy)

Friendship Lunches have continued to be popular. We now have over forty people registered with us and, on average, thirty eat with us each month. The Christmas lunch was the highlight of 2012; in addition to all the traditional fare, everyone enjoyed singing carols together. Plus, we were invited to Lions Dene to sing carols giving us the opportunity to meet other residents and share the Christmas story. Do pray for this outreach. (Olive)

Hall Hire. We have a new regular booking by 'Slimming World' and increased revenue thanks to the availability of the church space with the kitchenette, though most hirers and all social events continue to use the MYR. (Andy)

Health & Safety. This year has seen the placement of seven new types of information notice (e.g. "Restrictions on Ladder Use"); the implementation of an incident book for "Robbery, Verbal Abuse and Assault"; and, the use of a H&S checklist system (monthly, quarterly, six-monthly and on-going). Some of these, together with various safety checks, and recent hot water installation, have contributed to the smooth running of our new kitchenette. Councillor Ken Norman has been active on our behalf in the on-going problem of disabled access – a Council obligation but without current funding. On a brighter note is the thought that we must be open to the H&S needs of our growing number of children. (Derek)

Home Groups meet in five locations. Valley Drive, Brangwyn Avenue, Redhill Drive, Highview Way, and Windmill Drive (a group newly hosted by Derek & Marian). Groups follow their own choice of material, though the E100 Bible overview course this winter was taken up by some. We are trying to think of these as Neighbourhood groups that pray for and serve their part of the parish as well as providing pastoral support for church members. (Andy)

Long Lazy Day Away. About 55 of us attended Great Walstead School for our first whole parish away day. The two churches shared in a wide range of activities including worship, tennis, boules, swimming, adventure playground, walks in the woods, and sitting and chatting or reading a book. It was such a success that we plan to return Sunday 9 June 2013. Why don't you consider coming? (Olive)

Men's Ministry. The Men's Breakfast group met on a monthly basis at the Eldred Avenue deli for a cooked breakfast and discussion. We have worked our way through the book issued at the 2012 London Men's Convention entitled "The Big Fight" which covers a number of issues that Christians face in today's society, and we plan to attend the Convention again this year and see what comes out of it to inspire our meetings for another year. (Keith)

Mission Support. We continued, in 2012, to support Barnabas Fund (£300), Bible Society (£300), Brighton Evangelical Alliance and Soul by the Sea (£160+£500), Clovis & Ivanete [though no longer with WEC] (£800), Brighton & Hove City Mission (£400), Church Pastoral Aid Society – our Patrons (£300), Hope Home (£400), M&G, Off The Fence Antifreeze (£300), Polish Radio CCM (£300), Street Pastors, Tearfund (£200) and Churches Together in Patcham (£40). It is our policy to give 10% of our income to missions that are in keeping with our aims as a church. These figures are represented. Additional funds may have been sent. We have a monthly mission Spotlight. (Andy)

Pastoral Care. Everyone at 'The Ascension' has at least one church member who prays for them. We thank God for this opportunity to 'grow love' between us. The ministers now keep a confidential record of pastoral visits for their protection. Olive Ridge trained for Lay Administration of Communion and is taking communion out. (Helen)

Prayer. A small number of us meet monthly for a church prayer meeting and weekly at Gweneth's to pray for the local community. At a Communion service we offer prayer ministry afterwards. It is our desire to work on the prayer life of the church in our current Mission Action Plan (MAP). (Andy)

Refurbishment Project. £46k was spent on a new Kitchenette, heating to the church hall, improving our audio visual experience, and improvements to 32 Fairview Rise. We have plans in 2013 to improve our sanctuary area, the entrance to church, and do some redecorating especially in the halls. We have limited funds for this. (Andy)

Strategy Group work on things like our Mission Action Plan and prepare Vision night presentations. For our MAP2012 please see the website. We have progressed in these areas: 1) **prayer** by roads has rolled out and a prayer think-tank was launched, 2) **refurbishment** continues, 3) we had a **finance** drive in February, and now demonstrate our giving symbolically once a month at communion, 4) **encounter**: we are trying out new music options, and have new small groups, 5) **support**: we started a conversation about new women's activities, and a pastoral team meets to pray through the electoral roll, 6) **outreach**: we have new initiatives for families through appointing Gareth (Andy)

Sunday Groups. The group that takes place during our 10.30 service has changed a lot in the past 2 terms. We now have enough children to sustain a regular weekly group (Explorers), and we have changed the teaching material to offer more consistency. We also now have a teen session once a month (Dig Deeper) to give those teenagers teaching specific to them. Please pray that this work continues to strengthen in every aspect. (Gareth)

Thursday Club is a monthly meeting for retired members of the church and community. There is a talk or quiz or some other activity followed by afternoon tea and plenty of chat, and we hold a special Christmas service. It's such a settled and elderly group now that perhaps it may be easier to run in my home? (Jean)

Tiny Tots the new name for Squibs, is our weekly Toddler group that takes place on a Wednesday. Recent developments have included the launch of an afternoon session and a review of all health and safety. We have a growing waiting list for the morning session, and we would appreciate prayer on how to handle this wisely. (Gareth)

Zoom Club is lunchtime group that takes place in Westdene School. On average, we get 15 children coming each week, and teaching topics for the past two terms have included a focus on discipleship and also Jonah. We get a lot of year 2 and year 5 children, so please pray as we consider this dynamic. (Gareth)