

# STAINBECK CHURCH (UNITED REFORMED)

<https://stainbeckurc.org.uk>

## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> February 2024 held within Morning Worship

## BOOK OF REPORTS for 2023

### SECRETARIES' REPORT

Another year has gone by and we begin our report with good news – *'The Leeds Partnership have been given the scoping to call a new Minister to the Ministry Team'*. In the new year the Steering Group will be approaching Churches to discuss what form this Ministry takes. This is exciting news and we look forward to moving the Partnership on in 2024.

The eight Churches that make up the Partnership have met together once again on Zoom and face to face to share a Lent Course and Advent Course, held at different Churches in the Partnership, led by the Ministry Team.

We celebrated, along with St. Andrew's Roundhay their wonderful Christmas Tree display where all their Church groups and some local businesses in the community decorated a Christmas tree. Brian and I enjoyed some lovely home-made soup and cake when we visited.

Slowly things are beginning to come together with the Partnership. Our Ministry Team are working well making sure that we have help and guidance both from the pulpit and with friends and family in the local community.

During the year at Stainbeck Revd Nicola took the funeral of Robin Dove in January and Revd Angela took the funerals of Jean Kay in July, Gerald Elliff in August and John Coates in December. Revd Nicola baptised Samuel Roger Harmer in March. Sadly, no weddings.

Our Community Café continues apace and is a good space for people to meet and enjoy a friendly chat and enjoy a cup of tea or coffee, wonderful cheese toasties and sandwiches made by our two regular

teams of Janet, Kelly, Lindsey, Louiza and Adrian who work a fortnightly rota. The Café has also been designated a Welcome Space where people can come and get warm, socialise, share food and meet friends. If you would like to help at the Café, please have a word with Brian or myself it would be good to have another team. A big thank you to both teams. We must also thank Maureen Lillywhite and Vanessa Brown who are both available to help people with any problems they are experiencing and point them in the right direction to get some help.

Stainbeck has also been designated a coat exchange for those who need a warm winter coat. This is a Council funded scheme which is running city-wide during the winter months.

Our thanks also to John Harrison who continues to make sure that we have an excellent selection of reading material to choose from out of the book cupboard.

We must remember to thank Emmanuelle Wilson who makes sure every Sunday that there is something for those children who do come to Church, has an activity which they can participate in, whilst the grown-ups listen to the sermon.

Also, our thanks to the Tech Team for making sure that all who wish to be part of Sunday Worship, even if they cannot be there in person, are able to Zoom in from home.

The Church Family were sad to see Liam, our organist, move to Boston, Massachusetts but delighted that he is now happily married to Susana. It has been another joy that Jo Yates has now joined us and we are now further blessed musicly! Welcome Jo!

Once again, please take time to read this booklet. There are many good and exciting things happening, especially our work with InterAct and Thrive.

Our love and prayers from Avril and Brian, we are looking forward to seeing and being with you all in 2024.

*Avril and Brian Bellwood - Joint Church Secretaries*

## WORSHIP REPORT 2023

It is good to report that we have enjoyed our first full year of worshipping as part of the Leeds URC Partnership under the care of the Partnership Ministry Team with the Revd Dr Nicola Robinson as our named minister. We have shared in worship with all the members of the Team during this past year, each bringing their own particular insights and I do believe that we as partner churches are getting to know each other better as we take advantage of all the sharing opportunities that have been offered. We have particularly got to know Nicola (and Maisie!) well now. We have sampled and enjoyed café style worship and a pet service all of which she has introduced to us and, through after worship coffee, a great time of sharing and fellowship when there is at Stainbeck always a long time for conversations, Nicola has got to know our congregation well. She also usually joins Revd Angela at the Thursday Community Café.

Sunday Hybrid Worship and Thursday prayers (currently only on Zoom) have continued on Zoom in a familiar pattern. It has been reassuring to welcome friends back to church in person on Sundays but we would dearly love to welcome more of our friends to join us for half an hour on Thursday evenings. I know I write this every year and I continue to live in hope. Despite all the good activities we join with in support of our community it is worship which makes us a CHURCH. A place where we come to meet with God to learn, to share our stories, our hopes and our fears, our joys and sorrows. In worship we find strength and support to follow through to commit ourselves to our life with family and friends, in our community and with our Partnership friends.

And there have been many good opportunities to share and to grow our faith. There has been Lent (*Finding your Voice* based on the film 'The King's Speech') and Advent courses and a Bible study course (*A Glorious Whisper*); a wonderful peaceful day of reflection at Parcevall Hall in May (Note a date for your diary - April 20th at Mirfield for another reflective day). There was a shared Pentecost Praise afternoon at Wigton Moor, a Churches Together Soup evening in Lent when we heard of community mission; and the wonderful well attended Festival Hymns in the Street in September.

Carol singing around the fire pits and the Beckhills both further opportunities to share faith and worship. Were you aware of the Local Synod Forum when our Moderator led mission-based discussion at Headingley St Columba among representatives from churches across the Yorkshire synod? World Day of Prayer at St Andrew's in March – another opportunity and I must not forget the wonderful, noisy, creative, friendly, monthly MESSY CHURCH gatherings part of our ecumenical youth work among the younger children. We are sad that we do not have anyone to deal with small children on Sunday mornings which makes it hard for families to return to join us.

So many opportunities and all advertised, promoted through the website and Outlook, and open to all - perhaps this coming year you could try something new?

I must not close without mentioning the gratitude we all owe to all those who Sunday .... by Sunday - and Thursdays - enable worship to happen for us all...visiting preachers beyond the partnership, the faithful team of thoughtful readers, our incredible Tech Team, those who produce large print copies of the hymns each week, our talented musicians, those who prepare the room – then tidy it all away, those responsible for flowers, for tea and coffee, those who welcome at the door, those who transport people to church.

I cannot begin to mention this large, faithful team by name but know that you are loved and appreciated by the whole fellowship. May God bless us all as our journey into another year together continues.

*Ann Coates – Worship Co-ordinator*

## SUNDAY CLUB REPORT 2023

Sadly we have been unable to re-instate our pre-Covid Sunday Club due to a lack of volunteers. As an interim measure we have a table at the back of church with appropriate activities set out for any younger children attending worship.

Alongside this, Revd Nicola has started to lead occasional Café Worship which is more accessible for families. Watch this space as we continue to explore the possibilities. If you have feed-back for us it would be very welcome.

We also hold a busy, fun-filled MESSY Church on the third Sunday afternoon of each month. This runs from 3.30-5.30pm and finishes with a shared meal. Details on the website or talk to one of the Ministers or Elders.

Please hold our young families in your love and prayers - life is not easy for many.

***Emmanuelle Bastide-Wilson***



## **STAINBECK LUNCH CLUB REPORT 2023**

Over the course of 2023 the lunch club has welcomed new members to our happy band, so much so that 21 members, friends and volunteers sat down together to enjoy a Christmas lunch of turkey and all the trimmings followed by Christmas pudding and custard. Our members all went home with a bag of goodies, Christmas wishes and happy memories of the children from Angels Nursery singing their Christmas songs.

Sadly, Helen Inglis, our cook was unable to do the lunch this year as she was ill – but the rest of the volunteers all pulled together, decorating the table; peeling sprouts, carrots and parsnips and along with the roast potatoes all was ready on time. We understand that Helen is slowly improving and we look forward to her return.

We must thank Helen for her cooking and thorough cleaning of the kitchen and surrounds before starting with the food. Also, Pam [McFetridge, who has been unwell for a long time now feels able to come along and help again on Monday mornings. Both ladies often make a pudding which include a fabulous rice pudding and a light ginger sponge, to name but two. We must not forget Tom Malloy and Brian Bellwood who collect and take home those in our lunch club who need a lift. Sadly, Christine Robson has had to step back as a driver due to an unfortunate accident. Christine is feeling better and she came along to lunch club last week and enjoyed lunch with us all. This year we have also had help from Cathy Murphy who is hoping to come along on a more regular basis and we must also thank Jackie Watt too. A big thank you to Sandra Smith and Marian Strange for their unstinting support over the year.

Sadly, two of our oldest members, Mary Vernon and Maurice Pilsworth are now in care homes. We look forward to a happy and healthy New Year together and our thanks to the Church Family and our Ministers for your prayers and support.

*Avril and Brian Bellwood – Lunch Club Organisers*

## **CHRISTIAN AID 2023**

### **Christian Aid Week, 14th-20th May 2023**



The theme for Christian Aid week in 2023 was what it means to Love your Neighbour. The focus was on Malawi, South-East Africa.

In the daily reflections we learnt about Esther, a farmer in Malawi who grows pigeon peas from which she makes bread. She sells the bread and excess peas and uses the money to pay for her grandson to go to nursery and to enable her children to study and start their own businesses.

By working with Christian Aid's partners in Malawi and others in her community, together they have:

- Secured a fairer price for their peas,
- Added value by making and selling bread made from pea flour,
- Built warehouses to keep peas safe from weather events, and
- Produced a pigeon pea recipe book.

Christian Aid, and its supporters, believe that when we work together to speak up and act for a fairer world, we become people who help and support one another and who find ways to help make the world a place where everyone can flourish. This is one way in which we can Love our Neighbour.

Having had little success raising money via the delivered envelopes in recent years, we decided to have envelopes in church and to run a café including a card stall, book stall and fiendish quiz with all proceeds going to Christian Aid. The café was a great success and, as ever, the Stainbeck congregation were very generous with their time, publicity of the event, baking skills, card making, and gifts of money enabling us to raise a fantastic £1044.40 (including gift Aid). Thank you very much, look out for the Christian Aid café in 2024!

***Helen Booth- Christian Aid Organiser***

## **AFTER 8's REPORT 2023**

The After 8's year has been quite a full one, even though the decision was made to start in March, missing out January and February.

We started with an excellent meal at the Beck and Call. We also finished our year with Christmas Dinner at the Beck and Call. This was a good occasion, fun and well attended.

We have had Darts and Dominoes, a Quiz and Beetle Drive nights which were also good fun and popular.

We had days out through the summer months to Ripon, Hebden Bridge and Skipton, all interesting. Unfortunately, we didn't have a Garden visit this year. Transport is becoming difficult.

I would like to emphasize that the After 8's welcome anyone to join our activities. This is not just a lady's group, there are no restrictions. Also, we are happy to receive any suggestions for 2024. Please speak to Doreen Moore or me.

I thank everyone who joined us in 2023 and anyone who helped in any way.

We are looking forward to 2024. Our meetings take place on the third Wednesday of the month. Details can usually be found in Outlook or speak to Doreen Moore or myself.

*Sandra Smith – After 8's Secretary*



# PROPERTY REPORT 2023

The **Management & Property Team (MAP)** meet on the 2nd Monday of each month to discuss all aspects of the Church property. **Membership comprises:** *Brian Bellwood, Adrian Booth, Angela Hughes, David Wilson and Nicola Robinson.*

In addition to dealing with regular and ad hoc management and property issues throughout the year, MAP has focused on three major projects.

## **BUILDING PROJECT**

During the spring Lenica Building Solutions carried out external remedial works including the refurbishment of the steps up from the car park and down to the South entrance, the walls adjacent to the steps, the front boundary wall and the wall in front of the boiler room. The exterior of the building has been returned to a good standard of repair and all issues raised in the previous quinquennial survey have been dealt with.

## **MANAGING ENERGY COSTS**

The MAP report presented to the 2023 AGM outlined the significant increase in electricity costs facing the church as a result of increases in wholesale energy prices. MAP worked with Emmanuelle to secure support from the Synod energy support scheme towards the additional costs. Even with this welcome support from Synod and some limited short term support from central government, the increased prices have placed a significant strain on the church's financial position.

A supplementary electricity meter to enable the consumption of electricity by Angels Nursery to be identified separately from that for the building as a whole was fitted in March. As we had predicted, the largest proportion of the electricity consumption relates to the electricity used to heat the nursery portacabins during the winter and cool them during the summer. The current lease, running until August 2025, is inclusive of all energy costs. However, following discussions with the nursery they very kindly offered to make an ongoing financial contribution towards the electricity costs.

Our gas prices have not yet increased as our fixed contract does not expire until December 2024. However, our gas central heating system was inefficient as the whole building was being heated even when parts were not in use, eg the nursery during evenings and weekends. Over the summer we therefore installed a separate gas central heating system for the nursery areas (other than the electrically heated portacabins).

## **IMPROVING ENERGY CONSERVATION**

We commissioned Mesh Architects to undertake an energy assessment of the church building to identify the areas of greatest heat loss and the greatest scope for targeted improvements to reduce energy consumption. This identified the highest priorities as being the roofs, café room walls and ventilation in key areas such as the café room and toilets, together with the replacement of toilet windows. We appointed PSC Surveying Ltd, quantity surveyors, to prepare a detailed cost plan that we could use when applying for funding from external bodies. The cost of the proposed works is a little over £150,000.

We have begun the process of applying for grants to cover this cost and so far have secured a Vision and Opportunity Property grant of £50,000 from the Yorkshire Synod and a further £25,000 from the Congregational and General Charitable Trust. We are actively exploring other sources of grant funding. In addition, church members agreed to set aside a potential contribution of £20,000 from church reserves. It is proposed that this should continue to be set aside in order to cover any contingencies that might arise during the works.

*Management and Property Team*

## **ECO GROUP REPORT 2023**

During this year we have continued our journey to become an Eco church. We are working for our **Bronze Award**, which asks us to look at all aspects of our church life (and personal lives). This year MAP has taken big steps to reduce our carbon footprint by improving insulation, using LED lighting, using green gas and electricity, improving boiler efficiency, and seeing the building is well maintained. (see MAP report.)

In Outlook, we have looked at Arocha Easy Tips encouraging and enjoying nature and thinking about the natural world. We have tested ourselves with a **Green Quiz**.

We have joined in looking at our Rubbish with **Tearfund Rubbish Campaign** and tried to fill in Bin-Go sheets – very hard to do as there are so many types of rubbish. We had **Christian Aid Café** in May supporting their work in Malawi. We have Helen and Adrian to thank for organising this and helping to raise £995. We came together with **Churches Together in Chapel Allerton and Meanwood for a Soup Evening** also on a green theme. We have also supported **Fairtrade** in our café, using tea, coffee and sugar for all meetings. There have been Fairtrade Easter Eggs and Advent Calendars available.

In September, we thought about our **carbon footprints** and how everything we do stacks up to increase the burden on the environment. “How bad are bananas” by Tim Berners Lee was an eye opener. Bananas are very easy on the environment-they last well, they don’t need plastic wrapping, don’t need hot houses, they are carried in bulk by ship, and are a good food. But what about wildfires and wars? We can’t change these directly but we can look at our excesses and make choices.

We also had an **Eco Service** in October when Prof. Colin Beale from Arocha spoke to us on Hope in Creation. We were joined on Zoom by St Matthews and Chapel Allerton Methodists. He emphasised the amazing world we live in and how we can care for this natural wonder and stabilise climate change. There is injustice here for people who suffer hardship and poverty because of it when they weren’t the cause of it.

*If you would like to be part of Stainbeck Climate group, which meets about 3 times a year to share ideas, please let Christine or Helen Booth know. To complete our Bronze Award, we need to develop the grassy area to encourage wildlife. If you have ideas of things we could do, or other things you think we are missing, please get in touch.*

**The Eco Team: Helen Booth, Rev Samantha Sheehan,  
Revd Nicola Robinson and Christine Robson**



2023 feels like a time of establishing and investing. We joined **Leeds Citizens** with the hope of using their tools and experience to help us engage better with different institutions, including the churches, to build community leaders and see change for the common good. I took part in one of their three-day training programmes, as well as another three-day training led by a team from Together for Peace on the Art of Hosting, looking at creating space for conversations that matter. Both were very different, valuable times of learning.

**My Meanwood Community Anchor**, which we chair, was fully established, with local third sector partners meeting together each month to work out what we can do better together to improve and strengthen our neighbourhoods. Through this, we received some Household Support Fund - Government funding via Leeds City Council. The funding was intended to support people with essential household needs, and it was encouraging to receive it with trust that local organisations know their communities well and that we might pick up people who would otherwise slip through the net. With it, we were able to help (often desperate) people with fuel, food, beds and appliances. The money is now running out but proved invaluable throughout the year.

**The Pantry** is now stable with just over 90 members. We had nearly 2200 visits over the year, which equates to food provision for around 90 adults and 50 children a week. However, more than food provision, it remains a place of community. One of our volunteers said that the main reason they volunteer is the feel good factor, which helps their mental health. The connection with others is as important as low cost food and preventing food waste.

Connection is also a key theme of the **Men Shed**, which is now so busy, we're trying to work out how we fit everyone in each week. My favourite quote of the year came from the partner of one of our members. It speaks for the work of the Men Shed as a whole: *"I've watched someone I care*

*about very much come out of the doldrums in such a short amount of time. He comes back a different person. [The Men Shed] has been fantastic, thank you.”*

And, of course, connection remains at the heart of all our other activities. Maureen has organised a number of trips through the year, bringing together volunteers, church folk and others from the local area; **Holy Trinity Community Café** is a much valued **Welcome Space**; **Meanwood Olympics** is a real favourite for people of all ages to come together in the summer months; we’ve hosted events at Easter and at Christmas at Stainbeck, part of our “**Asset Based Community Development**” on the Beckhills and making a great connection with Meanwood Primary School; and the after-school drop in with **THRIVE** has brought over 20 young people through the doors each week, hanging out together on their way home from school.

On the subject of the drop in, it’s worth mentioning our young volunteers. It’s been really good to support under 18’s volunteering at the pantry and as leaders of the drop in. In 2023, we established a regular celebration event, bringing them together, thanking them, celebrating them and rewarding them (badges for length of service given). We’re looking forward to the new building being in place so that we can begin (finally!) to develop this initiative more fully. Watch this space!

My main takeaway from 2023? Connection is key. A connected person is generally a healthier, happier and more resilient person than someone who is isolated or feels alone. The data shows it and we know it in our hearts. InterACT remains a place for connection to happen, and who knows what sparks will come from there.

***Vanessa Brown - InterACT Co-Ordinator***

## LEEDS CITIZENS 2023

2023 saw a bit of a difference in our interactions with Leeds Citizens in relation to **Team Beckhills** who met on 11<sup>th</sup> January (9 residents), 8<sup>th</sup> February (5 residents), 19<sup>th</sup> April (8 residents) and the final TB meeting on 10<sup>th</sup> May (5 residents).

People invited to different meetings included:

- The site manager from the Taylor Wimpey site to give regular updates on the work and potential disruption to Beckhill residents. The end date for the entire site works is expected to be May 2025.
- Phil Sage from Leeds Citizens to give updates on the wider work e.g. with Carr Manor High School - working with the students to deliver community organising skills training and the bus campaign.
- Cllr Dowson in relation to how the Section 106 money would be spent on the estate.
- Cllr Rafique – questions in relation to bin collections and fly tipping.

**Leeds Citizens Delegates Assembly 20th March** (well attended by Stainbeck and Team Beckhills) 240 people met at Carr Manor High School and the evening was excellently co-chaired by 3 students from the high school. Assurances were given by First Bus and Tracy Brabin, the Mayor of West Yorkshire, to work with Leeds Citizens to improve the bus network.

**Bins** Missed bin collections, litter, fly tipping and lack of recycling remain a big issue on the estate. Many missed collections are correctly reported but no collections are made in response leaving the residents feeling ignored.

Following the meeting on 9<sup>th</sup> Nov 2022, the council have been mapping the estate and have been preparing an information leaflet for residents. *The leaflet was not produced until July and has not been delivered to the residents.*

Team Beckhills invited Paul Lyons from the Council to do a walk around the estate with residents on 9<sup>th</sup> Feb. Paul took notes, made calls and got missed bins collected. This is only a one-off solution; we need an everyday workable solution for this and the other pedestrian estates across the city.

Team Beckhills had their last meeting in May to decide whether they wanted to become a Residents' Association rather than a campaigning group. After much discussion, it was agreed that a community group would be formed, as this is more inclusive so can involve the residents in the new houses and in the Miles Hill, houses bordering the Beckhill Estate.

The new group, **My Community United**, has 2 aims –

- to bring back the joy and sense of community
- but also to continue tackling the litter issues.

It will be supported by InterACT (*ie* Stainbeck Church with its partner churches) and Leeds Citizens (*ie* InterACT, Stainbeck and Carr Manor Community School) for the focus on litter issues.

11<sup>th</sup> October (8 residents) – topics discussed included the new Youth building, community garden, Festive Afternoon tea assisted by Meanwood Primary School, Beckhill Gold, Community Champions, free little libraries in the estate and purple bag litter picking to build pride on the estate,

**My Community United** tried meeting during the café in the Oct half term holiday as the 6.30pm-8pm slot is very difficult for parents with young children.

**Leeds Citizens Bus campaign** – supported by the West Yorkshire Mayor - aims to get a more reliable, fairer bus system across the city.

*Helen Booth - Leeds Citizens Representative*



We're marking the end of the year in lots of different ways across Thrive and are currently looking forward to trampolining, a talent show, pudding

party and Messy Church Nativity! We have been part of the St Matthew's Christmas tree festival and decorated the Thrive tree with young people's words, sharing what they value about being involved with Thrive.

Earlier in December we enjoyed our second Volunteer Celebration which brought together young volunteers from across Thrive and our partner organisation, InterACT. We hosted a meal at the Barn Café in Meanwood Valley Farm and some of the older young people led games for everyone. We built our own pudding sculptures as a tribute to young volunteering, before eating them!

It is encouraging to see young people of different ages, from different schools and part of the projects, coming together and seeing that others are having an impact on the local area through giving their time. We celebrated 14 young people from across four different groups; some of whom were on their second year and others who had just begun – it's an exciting area of our work to see growing and we look forward to what next year will bring!

We finished the year at **MESSY CHURCH** with our second MESSY Church Nativity. It was a joy to be able to share in the good news of Jesus at Christmas, as children and adults dressed up and we told the story of the nativity together. And of course, we all enjoyed some Christmassy treats afterwards! This term has been a busy one at Messy Church, as we have welcomed new families and regulars have brought along friends to join us. We have thought about what it means to love our neighbours and be a light in the world, both locally and in other parts of the world impacted by climate change. We are always in need of more volunteers at Messy Church – baking, packing up, washing up, leading an activity – if you would like to join us, do please get in touch.

This term at **Totally Tuesday** has seen us heading off on our annual residential to the West End Centre near Thruscross Reservoir. It is a beautiful place to be and everyone enjoyed being outdoors and



exploring. It was a great time of connection as we spent the time having fun – completing team challenges, eating together, baking, enjoying games led by the young volunteers and exploring what it means for God to be Trinity. We were encouraged that some of the new Year 5s settled so quickly that they joined us! Our sessions this term have had wide ranging themes – Star Wars to serving, Christmas to bullying. TT is special for the way that the group listen to one another and share their opinions so openly – there’s always good conversation. The young volunteers are growing in relationship with the group and it’s great to see them independently picking up responsibility and making sure everyone feels included and welcomed each evening.

We have had a really encouraging start to this year at **WOW** with lots of new members coming along as well as welcoming back many of our current group. It has been really good to see new relationships being built. Relating to this, we spent the first half term discussing friendships, how to choose good friends, maintain those relationships, and when things go wrong. This last half term the focus has been around decision-making, careers, and school subject choices. As part of this, we are looking forward to being able to question a panel made up of people from a wide range of careers next term; about the route they took to their career and what they enjoy about it. Also in the new term we are excited to be going on our West End residential and taking inspiration from TT, we will be introducing young leaders to WOW who will be involved with our group games and small group sessions. It is really great to see the enthusiasm and engagement from our group as it continues to develop.

We have a regular commitment to schools work and were in **Carr Manor Community School** this term to support a group of Year 7 girls in their transition into High School. We offered space over six weeks using creative activities to explore identity, feelings, our connections to others and support needs, which were warmly welcomed by the school and young people: We've had glowing reviews all round from the group about how much they've enjoyed the sessions. It is great to see the girls grow in friendship and support of one another, which builds their capacity for settling well into the school. We are exploring with the school how best we can offer support for the rest of this year.

The new young volunteer team at **DROP-IN** this term have been brilliant – it's been great seeing them get stuck in! They are full of ideas of what to do and have made a few tweaks to how we do things, which helps the group run well – our debrief time creates a great space for reflection. We are bustling each week and the group who regularly come along seem right at home and appreciate the welcome and activities that are offered. We regularly have new young people join us, who are quickly included in the games, activities and craft that happen.

We have received planning permission to place a modular building in the grounds at Stainbeck and are gathering quotes for the foundation work, which should begin in the new year. It is good to be taking steps forward with this, as we look towards developing work with young people in this area and building on the connections that have been made at drop in.

There has been much learning and reflection taking place, as we are working with **Scope** towards their **Inclusive Activities Award**. They have already commented that Thrive are '*a shining example of inclusivity and making people feel included*', and we are looking forward to taking their action points forward so that we can do more of this!

Thank you for your interest in and support of Thrive, and the children, young people and families who make us who we are!

*Hannah, Helen and Sarah, Thrive staff team*  
[hannah.dey@thriveleeds.org.uk](mailto:hannah.dey@thriveleeds.org.uk)

Now in January we can see this new initiative taking shape!



# FINANCIAL REPORT 2023

**Treasurers:** *Emmanuelle Bastide-Wilson, Suzie Hamlin*

**Banking:** *Hilary Wilson*

## 1- Receipts

Total receipts: £117,917.71 (£39,484.45 restricted, £78,433.26 general fund)

### a. Donations

Donations for the year have totalled £24,587.60 and between Gift Aided Donations and GASD we have been able to claim £2,867.19 from HMRC with a further £955 (to be confirmed) to be claimed from the last quarter of 2023.

Thank you to all those who were able to make a donation this year for choosing Stainbeck Church, it is very much appreciated, it allows us to do all the things we do together.

### b. Room Hire

Room lettings have raised £14,210.75. £932 of this sum are payments for the last quarter of 2022. A further £2491.10 was invoiced in early 2024 for the last quarter of 2023. This shows that our building is enjoyed and well used by many community groups. Thank you to Avril and Brian for handling lettings, there is now good communication between all of us.

## 2- Payments

Total receipts: £219,925.84 (£59,961.15 restricted, £159,964.69 general fund)

### a. Our ministry - the Leeds Partnership

Stainbeck Church is part of the Leeds URC Partnership and as such we have contributed £548.26 per month as our share of the ministry team cost for a total of £6,579.12 for the year. This means that we contribute to ministers' expenses, manse expenses and help towards the rental of West Park Manse alongside the other participating churches. Please read report from the partnership to find out or remember what has happened this year!

## **b. Our work in the community and with children and young people – InterAct and Thrive**

Our contribution to Thrive Leeds has been of £2,250 from church fund, £2,000 a Leeds General Purpose Fund grant and £15,000 from Synod Mission fund towards the Meanwood Youth Project. This last amount is part of a £27,000 over 3 years grant towards costs.

Our Contribution to InterAct has been of £2,500 from church funds. Please read the reports of our many and varied activities in the community and with children, young people and families in both Thrive Leeds and InterAct reports.

## **c. Donations to Charities**

This year we have raised funds for the following charities:

Food Pantry	January/February 23	174.50
Leeds Faith in Schools (LFIS)	March/April 23	197.97
Turkey/Syria Earthquake	Special Appeal	183.00
St George's Crypt	July /August 2023	495.55
Lineham Farm	September/October 23	498.32*
Martin House	November/December 23	559.67*

\* Payments for these were made in January 24.

Note that in June, we included all donations made to the church whatever format they are made in our calculations - this explains why from July onwards donations to charities are increasing.

## **d. Routine maintenance and Property expenses**

The MAP group continue to do an amazing job at ensuring the building is looked after regularly with checks, services and routine repairs being done regularly.

Some of the biggest expenditure for the church this year has been to tackle our energy bills. MAP organised to install a separate gas boiler for the nursery and appointed an architect to operate an energy survey of the building to allow the church.

27/09/2023	102322 - MESH	3,600.00
27/09/2023	102322 - SAFEGAS e	11,880.00
11/08/2023	Lenica invoice INV-2488	34,127.62

### e. Utilities

Utilities have continued to be the biggest expenditure for Stainbeck at present representing 42,226.37 with electricity representing £29,154 and gas £12,398 of this amount.

Yorkshire Synod created a fund to help churches with these costs and we are grateful to have received the following amounts. Thank you to Adrian for all the work put in to apply for this.

06/04/2023	UNITED REF CH TST	3,000.38
	UNITED REF CH TST	
30/06/2023	UNITED REF CH TST	3,053.49
	UNITED REF CH TST	

In December 2023 following a meeting with the owners of the nursery, the nursery has offered to regularly contribute to the extra energy costs. So far two payments of £3,000 (in December and January have been affected) which will be very helpful indeed.

### 3- Manse Account

As building and utility costs have continued to cause cashflow issues we resolved to draw funds from our Manse account held by the YCU to cover in-year costs and future energy expenses.

11/05/2023	YORKS.CON.UNION	B	10,000.00
	FUNDS REQUEST		
11/08/2023	YORKS.CON.UNION	B	58,275.38
	BUILDING WORKS		
11/08/2023	Direct payment of Lenica invoice INV-2488		34,127.62

This leaves at 31/12/2023 £38,717.78.

### 4- Stainbeck as treasurer to the Leeds Partnership

Stainbeck has acted as treasurer to the Leeds Partnership this year, collecting contributions from churches and paying expenditure as agreed by the churches. The carry forward balance for the Leeds Partnership is £2,951.52. A full account of expenditure and income is available.

**Stainbeck Church United Reformed - Total Receipts & Payments Account for the year ended 31/12/2023**

	<b>General Fund</b>	<b>Restricted</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Receipts</b>			
1001 GA Donations	10,370.50	-	10,370.50
1002 Other Donations	12,927.85	1,250.00	14,177.85
1003 Income Tax Recovered	2,867.19	-	2,867.19
1004 Church Group	-	-	-
1005 Other Income	1,052.44	-	1,052.44
1006 Room lettings	14,210.75	-	14,210.75
1007 Nursery lease	25,000.00	-	25,000.00
1008 Community Café	2,235.86	-	2,235.86
1009 Proceed from Manse	-	-	-
1010 Grants received	6,863.13	2,000.00	8,863.13
1010 Legacy	2,900.00	-	2,900.00
1011 Leeds Partnership	-	36,234.45	36,234.45
<b>Total receipts</b>	<b>78,427.72</b>	<b>39,484.45</b>	<b>117,912.17</b>
<b>Payments</b>			
<b>People</b> 2001 Organist	1,410.00	-	1,410.00
2002 Preaching Fee	1,152.20	-	1,152.20
<b>Worship</b> 2003 Ministerial expenses	-	-	-
3001 Worship resources	498.72	-	498.72
3002 Mission and Ministry	18,624.00	-	18,624.00
3003 Outlook	277.27	-	277.27
3004 InterACT	2,500.00	-	2,500.00
3005 Work in the Community	71.21	600.00	671.21
3006 Charities	717.27	-	717.27
3007 Leeds Citizen	-	-	-
3008 Community Café	997.19	-	997.19
3009 Thrive	2,250.00	17,000.00	19,250.00
3010 Leeds Partnership Expenses	6,579.12	-	6,579.12
3011 Leeds Partnership	-	41,473.15	41,473.15
<b>Property</b> 4001 Repair and renewal	53,304.70	888.00	54,192.70
4002 Routine maintenance	6,460.78	-	6,460.78
4003 Cleaning	5,115.00	-	5,115.00
4004 Utilities	42,226.37	-	42,226.37
4005 Telephone/internet	323.16	-	323.16
4006 Waste Disposal	4,375.97	-	4,375.97
<b>Office</b> 5001 Stationery	220.62	-	220.62
5002 Postage	149.68	-	149.68
5003 Professional Fees	6,019.60	-	6,019.60
5004 Licences & Subscriptions	828.16	-	828.16
5005 Insurances	4,217.20	-	4,217.20
5006 Publicity	35.03	-	35.03
5007 Office Printer Expenses	1,510.81	-	1,510.81
5008 Bank charges	100.63	-	100.63
<b>Total payments</b>	<b>159,964.69</b>	<b>59,961.15</b>	<b>219,925.84</b>
<b>Net receipts / (payments)</b>	<b>(81,536.97)</b>	<b>(20,476.70)</b>	<b>(102,013.67)</b>
Transfer	(0.00)	-	(0.00)

Balance brought forward	151,748.33	23,190.22	174,938.55
<b>Balance carried forward</b>	<b>70,211.36</b>	<b>2,713.52</b>	<b>72,924.88</b>
<b>Made up of:</b>			
HSBC Current Account	12,679.20		
HSBC BMM	21,171.77		
Cash	356.13		
	<b>34,207.10</b>		
<b>YCU - Manse account</b>	<b>38,717.78</b>		

**Please note that larger copies of these accounts are available**

## Looking Back/Looking Forward

The **Leeds URC Partnership Ministry Team** have looked back over the past year and looked forward to the year to come. We focussed on 5 key areas: Quiet days. Bible studies, shared worship, serving across the Partnership and participation in worship.

### Quiet Days

The day at Parcevall Hall on Friday 28th April was a valuable exercise for the Ministry Team in working together and in the growth of teamwork in the Partnership. This was financed by the URC Education and Learning Committee's Discipleship Development Fund. It enabled 27 of us from across our 8 churches to explore the theme of '*The Spring within us*', with many opportunities for quiet reflection and to listen and to get to know each other and build bonds. People were encouraged to discover what is in store in future and what might be taken away to build on as we worshipped together and shared communion.



Following the enthusiasm to organise another **Quiet Day** we have now booked **Saturday 20th April 2024** at **The Community of the Resurrection, Mirfield**, for from 30 to 60 people.

## Bible Studies

Over the past year, Bible studies across the Partnership have included:

- Finding our Voice (Lent 2023) - using the film: *The King's Speech* alongside the Bible to explore the ways we can face our fears and find our voice
- A Glorious Whisper (September/October 2023) - exploring how the Word of God is speaking (or getting through) to us within our daily lives.
- To Live Again (Advent 2023) – a time for reflection, based on, and inspired by the film, *It's a Wonderful Life*.

With each Bible study course, there have been options to take part on Zoom and in person in a church building. These occasions of coming together have provided opportunities for us to share our own faith and our corporate church journeys, wrestle with Bible passages and their relevance to our lives and world today and ask questions.

This year, we are planning to follow the Christian Aid Course during **LENT**. As always feedback and thoughts are very welcome. We are also looking at opportunities to use different church venues each time we run a course - fitting with a particular church's availability. We will also continue to have one session on Zoom.

## Sharing Worship

Moving forwards, we should like to build to the small beginnings and successes of shared worship opportunities over the past year for our



Partnership. Events such as the **Pentecost Picnic** celebration held at Wigton Moor or the **Pet Blessing services** held at Headingley St Columba and Stainbeck. Pentecost in particular seems a most appropriate time to celebrate the unity of our

churches, and we hope to build on this for 2024.

New initiatives within and across our eight churches are always encouraging. Equally, it is good to share opportunities of existing times



of prayer or worship that might have been already going within our churches for some time, but which we might now generously share with others:

Each Advent St Andrew's holds a **candlelit Service of Remembrance**, when those who have been recently bereaved (and Rare not necessarily regular worshippers) are specifically invited to spend time in reflective worship and a light a candle in memory of a loved one. In a similar vein, Stainbeck held a **Blue Christmas Service**, aimed to support those who struggle with difficult memories during the Advent and Christmas seasons.

West Park and Headingley St Columba are actively exploring opportunities to **worship together**. Elsewhere we might look to explore the possibilities of a Taizé style act of worship.

Building on the success of the Synod Big Days Out, we might also look to explore the possibility of a partnership **Fun Day Out**, which would have a shared act of worship at its heart.

Worship and prayer is at the heart of driving all that we do as Christian communities in each of our eight locations. We want to explore opportunities of moments when these times might be a shared blessing to us all.

### **Serving across the Partnership**

One of the joys of team ministry is that together, along with lay leaders and other clergy, the eight churches can receive the word in many different ways. As a team we all use and share our gifts as fully as we can and it has been good to learn about the different approaches each church takes in worship and discipleship. We have endeavoured to visit each of the churches for Sunday worship at least once each and for the most part have succeeded in the aim and have attended other meetings and events as we've been able.

Along the way the ministry team have joined many churches at their social and community events, both in person and online via Zoom. This has led to a deeper sense of understanding who our congregations are and our role within and around them.

The one thing the team would like to reiterate is that we need to be invited to things if you wish us to participate. We welcome all invitations, to lead worship and join in with events and celebrations across the city, as we're sure you would welcome our companionship and giftings.

### **Participation in Worship**

It has been encouraging to share in worship with churches across the Partnership this year and I think we have begun to see some of the benefits as we engage together. Little by little we are beginning to share resources and expertise. What next?

Looking forward as a Ministry Team we would like to offer one-off (stand alone) opportunities to explore ways in which we can participate in worship within our own fellowships. This is not about another 'Starting to Lead Worship Course'. Rather this is to look together as a group at different aspects of worship. What resources are available? How do we choose? How does this all come together on Sunday morning? Informal sharing. Hymns and worship songs? Prayers – so many ways to pray? Introducing and reading The Word? Using the microphone effectively? Even perhaps technology? Creative ideas for Café Church? Spread across the year – different venues? What about it? Whatever the outcome simply the experience of sharing is of benefit to all of us.

Yours in peace,

***Geoff Ellis, Angela Hughes, Tim Lowe, Nicola Robinson, Alex Walker  
Leeds URC Partnership Ministry Team***