

SECTION REPORTS 2019

Presented at the Annual General Meeting

March 2020

Pastor's Report.

A few weeks ago, I mentioned how easy it can be to settle for mediocrity in our Christian walk. And yet I don't believe God ever destined anybody or any church fellowship to a mediocre life. The Apostle Paul said, "I can do **all things** through him who gives me strength." For Paul at least, it seems there were no limits to what God could do in him and through him. So, what was it that Paul had that we don't? The answer is nothing. His God is the same God, the Holy Spirit that lived in Paul and equipped him is the same Holy Spirit that lives in us and equips us.

I wonder what reasons we might give to God as to why we can go no further. Whatever the reasons, they can never include a lack of power or a lack of resources. As it says in 2 Timothy 3:17 "... we have been equipped for every good work." One of my prayers for 2020, and I trust that you will join me in this, is that the gifts that God has given and equipped every one of us with, may be stirred up and used for his glory in Exwick and beyond. Never underestimate what you can contribute to the church and to God's Kingdom.

Having visited a couple of the big city centre churches over the last few months it's easy to become a little envious of their facilities and resources. However, I've also become aware that God has placed us in an enviable location in the heart of a residential community. We are a true Community church. To state the obvious, God has placed us here for a reason. There are according to the figures about 10,000 reasons, (sounds familiar) many of whom pass by the Parish Hall every day on their way to work or college.

It's been a real encouragement over the last few months to build on the work of the past 26 years and continue to see meaningful links made with those in our community. In recent weeks we've been able to run a parenting course and support local families through some very challenging situations. One mother described Harri's ongoing support in their lives as "life-saving". The fact of the matter is, we could keep ten Young Family Workers busy, so once again let's not limit God in his ability to resource and equip.

At the time of writing we have just begun running an Alpha course at the local pub. This has got off to a great start with the staff being incredibly accommodating. Our aim would be to run Alpha twice a year, building on the momentum of each course with people who have completed Alpha inviting their friends and family to the next.

As I've mentioned in past members meetings, we are now beginning the process of producing a 3/5-year plan for ECC. This will include, amongst others, our plans for premises, staff, outreach and discipleship. This isn't something we want to produce exclusively within the leadership team; we would like you to be involved. So please let us have your ideas.

From the beginning of my time at ECC it has become increasingly clear that a permanent office/meeting facility within Exwick was vital for the work of the church. I'm delighted to say that

we have now secured permanent use of the office at the front of the Parish Hall. I hope to be moving in in the next couple of weeks! My intention is to continue with the drop-in on Monday and Wednesday mornings, but I will now be based in Exwick during most of the week.

There is much more I could say but I want to finish with a big thank you to those members of the leadership team who will be standing aside, at least for a year, at our next AGM. To Maggie, John, Hilary and Michael, we appreciate your hard work and input over the years, and we pray for God's blessing upon your lives and upon your service for him in the months and years ahead.

Thank you for all your encouragement, love and support for both myself and the family.

God bless.
Peter

Secretary's Report

2019 has been a year of growth for Exwick Community Church, not only in terms of numbers but also in terms of our confidence in God's provision. We have welcomed in ten new members, although we have also said goodbye to three. We have been able to support Peter's fulltime ministry with us, and also to take on Harri Sharp one day a week as a Young Families Worker. We have been involved various community and international projects including: the Community Action Day in April, the Shoe Box Appeal, a visit from Czech pastor Radek from Liberec, and a return visit to their Congregation, the Commuter Coffee service in the spring, a gift to the St. Andrews congregation, ongoing Food Bank donations, a collection for Syrian refugees, a collection for a family in Albania who lost their home in the earthquake, support of Chela and Sarah for their trip to Peru, as well as our regular support of other Baptist Church projects in the form of Home Mission, and of missionary work with BMS.

What does 2020 hold for ECC? We are moving to a 10:30 am start on Sunday mornings, with the installation of a new sound system that will make setting up much easier. We are starting an Alpha course, we will be supporting young people going to Spree, and we will have a permanent office space at the front of the Parish Hall. The Parish Hall itself has plans to rebuild, and we will be partnering with them to ensure the new building is fit to serve the needs of the community, as well as being a place we can grow in as a church community.

As Peter has reminded us in his series on the book of Esther, we have been put in Exwick 'for such a time as this' (4 v 14). Whether in want or plenty, may we respond to God's call to be involved in what He is already doing in this place.

Sandy Salisbury

Treasurer's Annual Report 2019

At the beginning of 2019, we decided to take on Peter as our full time pastor. Although we had a lot of money in reserve, we knew that this would be a big commitment. However, the Lord has surpassed our expectations and including a very generous gift from St Thomas Baptist Church, we have actually finished the year with £7,000 pounds more than we started with. Although our closing balance was £58,380, we had planned to spend around £8,000 replacing all the windows in the manse which still remains to be done.

A big increase of almost 38% in giving has given us a tax refund for HMRC of £9,379.96 in Gift Aid this year. In addition our pension debt, which is towards the pensions of our previous pastors, Willie McNicol and John Adams, has been reduced considerably during the year from £36,300 to only £23,000. We pay this debt off at a rate of £296.08 per month in 2019.

We have paid for the use of an office in the Parish Hall for Peter on most Mondays and Wednesdays, which has cost an additional £1,500 but gives us a presence during the week. However we will shortly have the opportunity to hire the office permanently for £225 per month. This will enable us to set up a printer and Internet services as well as being there for many other purposes.

Thank you to all those who have given to the work of the church. It does cost us a lot to enable all of our activities and our reserves will certainly be needed when the new Parish Hall is built. Hopefully this will enable us to reach out to even more people with the gospel.

God bless
John Watts

Friday Friendship 2019

At the beginning of 2019, there was a decline in the number of people coming along on Friday mornings. However, the figures soon picked up and although it still varies we often see around 30 people each week including up to 10 children under pre-school age. This gives an excellent opportunity for Harri, our Family Worker to speak to them.

At the moment we don't meet during school holidays and half term breaks because it's the only opportunity we have for a break ourselves. However, if we had a couple or more regular helpers, we would probably be able to have Friday Friendship every week throughout the year. Some families find it difficult to find anything to go to during the school holidays. At the moment there are only four of us, Peter, Arthur H, Judith and myself. We usually arrive just before 9 am and leave just after 12 noon. We supply teas and coffees for the adults and toys for the children who also have a snack at around 11 am, usually supplied by Judith, Ann or Lin. When we come to clear up there are lots of extra helpers which is really good and we are grateful for their help, especially with the tables, chairs and children's toys. These include John and Dorcas Sumner, Phil and Lin Alford, Andrew and Pauline Guck and Roy and Julie Grove among others.

It is really rewarding to have the opportunity to meet members of the community who don't belong to our church.

John Watts

Messy Church Report

We have had another successful year running Messy Church on the second Sunday of each month from 4 to 6pm.

We follow a different theme each month, sometimes relating to the time of the year. Numbers attending have varied considerably, from 16 to 39 non-ECC people, which includes a number of regulars, most of whom have no church background. The session starts with craft-related activities with more straightforward tasks for younger children and more complex activities for those who are a bit older. There is also normally an opportunity for cooking and sometimes an activity for older children. There are also games and some soft play for the very young. We follow our craft

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with our celebration time and then a hot meal which is done on a rota basis, to ease the burden on those who do it, given it is not an easy task to cater for an unknown number of people each month.

Messy Church does take up a reasonable part of a portion of the congregation's Sunday each month, when it is considered that people start arriving at 3pm to set up (or earlier sometimes to cook) and often do not leave until after 6.30pm. We would like to thank all who are involved in Messy Church for their time, commitment and enthusiasm. Without such a large and able team of volunteers, Messy Church could not take place. New volunteers are however always welcome!

Dave Ovenden

Men's Group Report

We continue to meet for breakfast at The Imperial on the first Saturday of every month, following the prayer meeting. Normally we have an informal chat but we did have a very interesting talk from Pastor Radek from Liberec last May.

In addition to guys from ECC, there are a few who come regularly from St Thomas Baptist Church and a couple from other churches. There are also a few guys who come who do not attend church regularly.

We also have evening meetings from time to time which have included a Skittles match at Broadclyst Social Club. A number of us also took part in the Hospiscare mens walk. Several guys attended Christian Vision for Men's "The Gathering" in a field near Swindon last June for an action packed weekend of activities, teaching, music and food. A good number of us are intending to go this year.

Dave Ovenden

Welcome Desk (+ Offering) Report

Thank you for allowing us the privilege of welcoming you into ECC on Sundays!

As usual we are very grateful for people like Maggie, Sandy and John W, and most probably others, (not forgetting those that are recovering from illnesses etc), who have prepared and put away some of the W D Team's items on many occasions.

This quarter's present Welcome Desk Team are:- Lin Alford, Chela Fowler, David Ovenden, Denise Watts, *+ new to the team this quarter- Pam Laskey, great to have you with us Pam!*

Also, thanks to those who help with the Offering.

All of the above including several emergency 'stand-ins' + the amazing Margaret Taylor who serves us this way MOST Sundays! Thank you Margaret, we appreciate you SO much. We have another person about to start too which is wonderful news.

Thank you to those who have covered both on the door and the offering when for whatever reasons the roles are not covered; we are ever grateful to you!

If you would like to join the Welcome Desk Team and/or help with the offering just ask, and we will gladly slot you in; even if for one of the roles and not the other, or just once a quarter for example.

God bless you all
Denise

Worship Team Report.

It's that time of the year again where a huge 'Thank You' is sent out to all those who have been involved in leading our worship in the last twelve months. As usual, we have a diverse team of worship leaders, musicians and singers and a technical/set up team who pull the Service together each week. I said it last year and it bears repeating that without you all we just would not have a service.

Our Technical Team: John W, Trevor, Philip and Maggie.

Easy Worship: Judith, John W, Colin and Jonathan.

The Worship Leaders: John W, John S, Phil, Michele, Maggie, Harri, Sandy, Bex and Peter.

Worship Band: Gillian, Dorcas, Jill, Sandy, James, Sam, John S, Colin, Bex and Alan.

We've also been blessed to have Trevor and Simon Olding join us several times to add to the band and the drums have been especially welcome. We've also been joined by Amelia and Lydia on vocals.

This year we've had the chance to play for a number of weddings and be involved with musicians from other churches, which has been a good experience for us and we look forward to the coming year.

We have been blessed by being able to replace our old music and microphone stands and thanks to a generous gift, everyone who needs books of music are completely kitted out. You will have noticed that we have also been able to upgrade to a newer version of Easy Worship and this is bedding in well. We are excited to see what this year brings as we deliver the upgrade to the sound system in the church. This should fix some niggling issues with leads and will enable us to have better foldback for the musicians so that they can hear themselves better on a Sunday morning.

We are always on the lookout for new talent and, as we explore our spiritual giftings as a community, if you feel led to test your calling in worship ministry, please speak to myself or to Peter.

Graeme

Ladies Breakfast Report

We are a group of ladies who come together on the second Saturday of the month at 9:30 (102 Clyst Valley Road) to enjoy a full English breakfast, chit chat and laugh a lot. We are an inclusive group, open to anyone who wishes to come, with a warm welcome awaiting. We share life's ups and downs together and pray for one another. We always have an inspirational time centred around the teachings and example of Jesus.

We are encouraged to start each day with a grateful heart and to move out of our comfort zones to all that God has for us, and having eyes to see what God is doing around us, being aware of the presence of God in every taste, touch, sound and embrace.

So what are you waiting for? Come and join us!

Some comments from this year's breakfasts: warm, chatty and very welcoming; encouraging; great company; awesome; friendly; cooking is second to none!

Life Groups Report

Around 34 members of ECC are affiliated with one of our vibrant 'Life Groups' and are able to take part on a regular basis, bi-weekly. We have 3 groups, which meet on different days and at different times (when it is best for the individuals concerned) in various people's homes. Each group is made up of people with wide-ranging interests and abilities.

When I asked the various groups how they would describe their group, they said: 'We laugh a lot'; 'we support each other through difficult times'; 'We are very supportive'; 'We have the chance to get to know each other'; and 'We are happy to welcome anyone who would like to join our group'.

At the moment the groups have been following the sermon series, and the Bible readings on Sundays, to study the Bible more deeply and consistently. They pray for and with each other; for their concerns; and spend time chatting and getting to know each other better.

If you can spare the time to join a 'Life Group' you will appreciate the time you spend with your group, and they would love you to join with them. Do ask me if you would like to do so!

If you are really overstretched at present it is possible to be an 'Associate Member'. You would be able to study the Bible passages in your own time, receive prayer requests from your group to pray for, put in your prayer requests and get invited to their social events.

Who could resist?

Maggie

Children's/Young People's Work – Report to follow