

“Glenfall” (Cheltenham Network Church)

Church Reports 2013

Be strong and courageous...

1.1 Leader's report – Ashley

It has been another momentous year for us. In many ways our time at St Paul's was a joy. No weekly set-up, a venue full of God's presence, generous hosts, a time to breathe. But I think it also challenged us. The afternoon time slot was not easy for many and the inability to engage in any organised mission became more and more of a frustration. And so it should have ☺. It meant that we clarified our priorities, mission, mission, mission and a location to focus upon.

St Paul's did give us space to develop in many areas. We started to get our heads around café style church. We moved to new teaching material for the kids' groups. Lack of a geographic focus strengthened the development of our network groups (see the later report). The need to share the space at key times strengthened our relationship with St Paul's as we came together for Christmas and Easter services.

All in all we owe a huge debt of thanks to St Paul's and to God for his faithfulness in taking us there. However, we knew that it was only a short sojourn before we needed to find a more permanent solution and after struggling to find a new venue, like waiting for buses, two possibilities came along at the same time. For a couple of years I had been trying to open doors into Bournside School without success. Suddenly it became a viable possibility but not without its challenges. At the same time a door opened at The Rock on Tewksbury Road. The first option would mean hard work and a spiritual battle, the latter was everything we could have wanted in a venue. The challenge was mission! It has been clear for some time that God had been drawing us south and so we chose the harder path and made the move to Bournside. I really give thanks to God that he offered us that choice. To freely pick mission over comfort and to choose to engage in the spiritual process of 'piercing the darkness' at Bournside. I am also immensely proud (in a good way) of you all for the choice you made. Now we must remember when we find it hard work to worship on a Sunday that we are not there for our own sake, but rather we are there to change the atmosphere, to be spiritual thermostats not thermometers. And we can take comfort and encouragement in knowing that God himself has trusted us with this mission.

In some ways 2013 was a calmer year. Jimmy's worship leading gave Dave and Sarah a bit of respite and challenged us gently with new songs. We also saw the Spirit's growing presence at our fortnightly evening services. A huge thank you to Jimmy is due.

Some of the men spent a weekend away in Wales at the start of the year with the highlight the wonderful cooking by Keith Holland and the lowlight having to endure England getting soundly thrashed by the Welsh and watching it in a Welsh country pub! An enormous thank you to Keith for having the vision for the trip and doing the work to bring it about. The men also enjoyed an occasional curry night at B-Ten.

We saw the birth of the King's Kraft Network, the development of the Full Circle network and the restart of midweek youth groups for Rock and Next Gen.

There was a church birthday party at St Luke's, Christmas wassailing at Fusion (again), children's Christmas party at the Niblett's (first time), Christmas carol service with a Christmas Choir (not for the last time!) and a BBQ in my back garden which seemed to be on the hottest day of the year!

We prayer-walked around Kidnapper's Lane in February and had four days of prayer in June. We had our Great Fairtrade Bake-off in March, We dedicated Hetty Power

and Peter Meade. Several members formed a team for the Cheltenham triathlon and large groups were inspired by Robby Dawkins and Christy Wimber at the New Wine Leaders' and Splendour conferences. We were privileged to have Jember Teferra and Simon Guillebaud with us on different Sundays, and Mary Fletcher-Louis as a speaker for a women's morning.

The work on becoming a Bishop's Mission Order continues amid a growing atmosphere of mutual friendship with the churches in the South Cheltenham Team. That friendship enabled us to join the Church in Warden Hill for some wonderful services over Christmas.

On a personal level I had the joy of taking the wedding of a very good friend in Worcester, gave three seminars at New Wine on 'difficult questions' and I continued to develop my theological muscles by working towards an MA at Westminster Theological Centre.

So what is to come? Well in some ways it looks like a time of stability. Our services are settling into a healthy pattern and for the first time in a long time we have no impending move on the horizon. We are looking to appoint a kids'/youth-worker for a day a week and there is the possibility of a worship intern joining us in September. I am in discussions about the possibility of starting an X-site event every two months through Scripture Union and with other churches in the south. We will continue to build our relationships with the South Cheltenham Team of churches and the BMO should be completed by the summer. You should know that the trustees and council have agreed to extend my contract beyond its initial five years and that, God willing, we see ourselves being around for the foreseeable future as we seek together to minister in our new setting, serving both the local churches and the local community. I would say that it is now time to invest ourselves in all that God has given us to do. It has been a hard journey to get here but now it is time to build on the ground that God has lead us to. It is time to look outward with expectation and courage.

Thank you to all who have worked so hard to make this last year such a good one. Let us all continue to pray that we would stay in the centre of God's purposes.

Love and blessings
Ashley

2.1 Trustees Report 2013, Angus Johnson

2013 has been (another) year of transition. It is expected that in 2014 that with the church services being in a new geographical area and arrangements for working within the Church of England becoming clearer this will enable a clear strategy and more effective ministry.

The main Sunday services were held in the afternoon at St Paul's church until the summer. Whilst we are very grateful to St Paul's for making their facilities available, the time and location proved to be less popular for both the existing members and visitors.

In September 2013 the timing and venue were switched to mornings at Bournside School Sports Centre, using the drama studio for the main service. This has been more popular with existing members and some visitors have been along. The new location is amongst the parish churches of South Cheltenham. The styles of these churches is generally more formal and traditional than the contemporary informal style of Glenfall. There has been a strong welcome from the other churches in the area, including three shared services over the Christmas period. Relationships are beginning to be established, with expectation of partnering arrangements as the churches seek to be effective together in pursuing common Christian goals.

Throughout the year the small group meetings, networks and prayer groups continued to develop and provide benefit.

At the end of 2013 the change of name from 'Glenfall' to 'Cheltenham Network Church' was proposed and discussed. It has and since approved by the Church Council.

The Bishops Mission Order (BMO) that will confirm Cheltenham Network Church's status within the diocese and the Cheltenham Deanery has proceeded, albeit with no great pace, during 2013. There are questions of technical detail and the hope is they will be resolved early in 2013 along with briefings to relevant churches in South Cheltenham. The formal consultation can happen in parallel and it seems likely that it will take until summer 2014 to complete. In the meantime the church can develop appropriate strategies for its new environment.

Financially the Trustees are monitoring the situation closely as based on the most recent information in 2013, predicting forward into 2014 expenditure would exceed income by a few thousand pounds, drawing on reserves. Our hope is that this will not be the case as costs are carefully controlled, the existing church members are made aware of the situation and with the re-launch of the church in the South of Cheltenham the church will again grow with an associated improvement in income.

3.1 Council and Leadership Team

Currently the Church Council is made up as follows:

Leader – Ashley Collishaw

Elected members:

Jane Plant

Catherine Walker

Carole Whyborn

John Robinson

Terry Young

Frank Booth

Sue Fisher

Angus Johnson

David Meade

In addition ex-officio members are:

Chris Hughes (treasurer and trustee)

Dick and Susie Tallents, representing the Trustees

(NB Angus is also a trustee)

This year Carole, Catherine and Jane all come to the end of their three year term. Huge thanks to them for their hard work and dedicated service on the council.

As we agreed last year the council created a sub-committee to oversee our giving. In keeping with Biblical principles, CNC is committed to give away 10% of its income each year. The council representatives on the giving sub-committee are Frank Booth and Carole Whyborn and the two non-council members in 2013 were Sue Brown and Dave Hatten.

4.1 Prayer

Prayer continues to be foundational for us. We continued the pattern of monthly Thursday night prayer meetings which were a mixture of 'Play and Pray' and straight 'pray'. Our weekly prayer meetings every Tuesday and Saturday have sustained the spiritual life of the church throughout another year of change. Huge thanks go to all

involved in these meetings. At the start of the year many church members, young and old, engaged in a very muddy prayer-walk around Kidnapper's lane and in June we held four days of continual prayer as the leadership considered the possibilities for a new venue and prepared for an autumn move. The PrayerNet email network has allowed us to rapidly respond to needs within the church and beyond and we now have nearly sixty recipients on this mailing list. As we made the move to Bournside we also re-focussed ourselves upon Prayer-Ministry and Frank and Grace Booth have taken on the oversight of this key area. They have brought together a team of leaders to make sure that every week, at every service, there are people available to pray with others.

Thank you to all who have made (and continue to make) these things possible.

5.1 Worship Report

We've seen a lot of changes over the past year, as a worship team as well as a church, and we are very grateful for the way God has been leading us. Jimmy was with us until July, giving us a welcome sabbatical. Changing venues and service times and learning to use a new PA have all made interesting challenges. We've lost several people from the team, including Lyndsay, Hannah, Abi and Alison, and welcomed Helen in. We are delighted to have Martin leading regularly.

We've been excited and encouraged by our new, monthly worship evening – Heart of Worship, held each second Wednesday in St. Paul's. Each evening has been encouraging and appreciated by everyone who has attended.

Since September we have started to hold a monthly whole group practise for all the musicians involved on Sunday mornings. These have been enjoyable and helpful in developing the core repertoire of the worship group and developing our skills as a team.

This year was the first time we have had a choir for our carol service. It was well received and enjoyed by all who took part. A huge thanks to everyone involved.

Moving to our new Sunday morning venue raised interesting challenges including needing a very portable PA, quick set-up times, and dealing with quite a dead acoustic space. This is proceeding well, and we are currently working to create a regular PA team to help with set-up and tidy away.

The three of us who currently lead the worship have enjoyed the different style and feel of the evening services at Brizen Hall. These services have been good opportunities to take the worship deeper, and we are continuing to work to go further.

Through all these changes and challenges, we have continued to work to make our worship more spirit lead and filled. We feel the worship has continued to be a central and vital part of our church life. We continue to be a worshipping church family eager to seek God. It is a privilege to be a part of this journey.

Thanks;

Thanks to our words team – Alex, Susie, Fiona, Sheila, Bev and Judy.

Thanks to Lyndsay for all of her hard work and dedication over the years – we miss her on the team.

Thanks to Jimmy and his family for the hard work he put into the worship life of the church over his year with us.

Thanks to the musicians who have moved on – Alison, Abi and Hannah.

Thanks to Martin for his leading, and also his willingness to serve as a musician and encourager.

Thanks to all our musicians – Ed, Chris, Helen, Peter and Rae.

6.1 Mission & Community, (3 faces)

Often 'mission' can be a confusing term, meaning different things to different people. For some Christians there is only one mission and that is to bring other people to faith. Whenever they hear the word mission they hear 'evangelism' and judge any church mission work on whether people become Christians. For others mission is about going out and caring for a broken world, engaging in social action, hands on. When they look at a church's mission they want to know things like 'how have the poor been helped?', 'how have we healed the broken hearted?', 'who have we lifted up?'. For some mission is about transforming society, challenging unjust structures, fighting the big issues that cause so much brokenness and pain. All three of these aspects of mission are true Biblical faces of Christ's call to us. So to make sure we are engaging fully in the work of the kingdom we think it would be good to specifically engage with each.

1. **Outreach** **(Hospitality & Evangelism)**
2. **Care** **(Social Action, Mercy mission)**
3. **Campaigning** **(Peace and justice)**

Some of the things we do will, of course, cover more than one of these areas.

6.2 Outreach (Hospitality and Evangelism)

If we are honest this is an area where not a huge amount has happened. During our time at St Paul's I think most people needed time to catch their spiritual breath. We were much more inward looking as we recovered from the huge changes of the previous year. We did some inviting and some key events by individual members in their own houses and there were wonderful stories of personal evangelism but it was generally a quiet year for outreach. We did no Alpha course and little strategic organised mission. I think this was necessary for a year but now we must get back to our prime mission. Expect this to be a priority for us from now on and going forward.

6.3 Care (Social Action, Mercy Mission)

6.3.1 YMCA Network, Lyndsay Wyer

The YMCA network has been quietly maintained over the last 12 months. We continued to use the new/temporary facilities to prepare three meals for the residents in April, May & June 2013. These were of limited success in that while the few residents who came to them appreciated what was done, numbers were very limited and the restricted facilities made the whole evening more challenging. After discussions with the team, and Lidia Bojczuk at the YMCA, we all felt it was right to not plan any more similar evenings for the time being, and wait to see what the new facilities bring when the extension to the YMCA opens in Spring 2014.

In the meantime, we have continued to help some residents with furniture and kitchen utensils. We also provided cakes at Christmas time, along with £5 gift vouchers for each resident.

As always, huge thanks to the CNC team who have remained supportive and enthusiastic throughout: Pete Barnes, Beryl Francis, Annie Green, Dave & Judy Hatten, Bev Hughes, Angus Johnson, Fiona Jones, Sarah Meade, Rob & Catherine Walker, Carole Whyborn.

The link with Cheltenham YMCA remains open, and we are waiting to see what will happen next.

6.3.2 Food bank, Carole Whyborn

Our donations are shared between Trinity and CCP. During 2013 I have been able to take a donation approximately six times to each of these. Donations come mainly in the form of goods left in the foodbank box on Sundays, but I have also been given cash donations which I have used to buy further goods.

We also took part in the CCP Hamper Scamper project at Christmas, and this year we were able to give 12 completed hampers plus some additional items to go towards the general project. Our hampers were donated by our core network groups and individual families, also cash donations which were sufficient for one complete hamper. Many thanks to all who took part, I have already had thanks from CCP.

One perhaps inevitable effect of the Hamper Scamper is that donations tend to drop off a little in the New Year, both for us in CNC and across town generally; some of you may have seen the recent Echo article showing the empty shelves at CCP. Thank you to those who continue faithfully to make regular donations, and I would like to encourage all of us to consider regular (not necessarily large!) donations. The box is there each Sunday, usually in the coffee room, or at the back of the drama studio.

6.4 Campaigning (Peace and Justice 2013) Susie Tallents

- The second reading of the On-line Safety Bill Baroness Howe was publicised and members were encouraged to write letters supporting it.
- Anti-Slavery Day was promoted, highlighting people trafficking.
- We supported the YMCA Sleepy event, raising money for their building fund.
- Manda Stewart is running the London marathon in aid of Asthma UK
- Fair Trade Fortnight: Bev organised a Fair Trade stall using stock from Global Footsteps.
- There was a Fair Trade themed cafe style service, with the inaugural Great Glenfall Fair Trade Bakeoff competition. This was very popular, with many entries: the prize winners were:

Zach Collishaw, Ruth Niblett, Bryony Collishaw, Ollie Burgess, Team Tucker, Zach Walker, Angus Johnson, Fiona Brown, Lindsey Power, Tim Niblett, Dom and Ed Plant

Well done to all who took part, and a big thank you to Bev and the judges Angela and Sue.

- We also promoted the government consultation for on-line safety for children

Well done to everyone who got involved.

7.1 Discipleship, pastoral & family

7.1.1 CNC Children's work, Neil Plant

We have started using the ENERGISE material for all groups –see the website <http://www.energize.uk.net>. It is readily adapted for each age group –giving new insights into the Christian Faith. Our aim is to increase their Christian faith and bible knowledge, as well as having fun within their peer groups.

The children's groups are currently sharing rooms, but we are hoping to get an extra room to enable more space for the Children's work. We are able to use Bournside's outside facilities – when the weather is clement.

CNC are seeking to employ a part-time Youth Worker this year.

I would like to thank all our leaders & helpers for the valuable work they do in teaching our children. Their support is very much appreciated.

Ashley has recently started a Youth Group, which meets on Wednesday evenings every two weeks. Please contact Ashley or Neil, if you would like to get involved in this important aspect of our church ministry.

7.2.1 Pastoral Care, Ashley

It is amazing to think it is only just over a year since we started talking about networks. In such a short time there has been a real explosion of life and creativity. Networks allow members to initiate groups based around their passions and gifts. By developing Networks we have already seen a wide range of different groups come into being and that has given opportunity for the individual skills and abilities of the membership to be released.

Currently we have 7 networks operating as traditional style small groups (Core networks) but in addition we have:

WOTS (Bible Study)
Charlton Kings Cluster
RockNet and NetGen (midweek discipleship groups for 11-18 year olds)
Tuesday and Saturday Prayer Networks
Early Shift (businessmen's breakfast network)
YMCA
Book Club
Kraft Club
Old Farts Fitness Club (OFFC)
IHA-UDP Supporters
Voluntary Sector Network (VSN)
Full Circle (support network for those caring for aging parents)

The church is very intentionally shaped around day-to-day pastoral care being picked up by Network leaders (particularly the 'core' networks) and I continually discover unsung acts of care and support that have been quietly ministered through the groups. Well done and thank you for the way you care for each other.

There are also a couple of people in particular who keep their eyes and ears open for those in need, or those with something to celebrate, and make sure that it doesn't go missed. Thank you for your hidden but wonderful ministry among us.

7.3.1 Training

This year the New Wine Leadership conference was held at Trinity in Cheltenham and a large group took advantage and were inspired by teaching from a variety of great speakers. A group also went to hear Rob Parsons speak on bringing up children in the church. Ashley also attended the HTB Leadership conference at the Albert Hall.

7.4.1 Men's and Women's ministry

In the last year the women have enjoyed the Book Club, film nights, women's teaching days and the Trinity Splendour events.

For the men the Old Farts Fitness Club has gone from strength to strength and now out of the 20 or so regular attenders more than half are non-church goers. We also managed our usual curries. The real highlight of the year was the men's weekend away in march.

7.5.1 Social

In addition to the men's and women's ministry events we have enjoyed a variety of social events with a church birthday party at St Luke's, a summer barbeque and another Christmas 'wassail' and quiz. These events continue to be a place of welcome and connection for friends on the edge of church. Huge thanks to everyone involved in making these a success.

8.1 Financial Report, Chris Hughes (treasurer)

The end of year balance shows an increase to the General Fund of some £2000. However, this includes £5000 given for the provision of a youth worker in the future making the true position into a deficit of £3000. Some of this resulted from some regular giving having to reduce due to personal circumstances during the year and also by our own giving going up from 7.5% of income in 2012 to 9.7% last year. Rent was lower as we were only giving St Pauls £100 per week but now we have moved to Bournside it is £130 pw, which is still about the 'going rate' for the facility that we have. We are also paying £60 per month for the two evening services at Brizen Hall, so rental costs will increase in 2014. Ministry costs and the Diocesan quota will also increase by approx. £1,800. In January we have received increases of £200 in monthly giving which will help to cover these extra commitments. Generally we are spending all that comes in before considering our 10% giving target.

On the positive side we have 'reserves' of £5637 allocated for mission work and the building fund now stands at £11491. We did use some £1800 from the building fund to buy necessary equipment to enable us to use our new venue better i.e. portable PA and various storage items to make it easier to set up each week.

Ethiopia

Donations and other income totalled £22,599, up £3000 on the previous year. £32,500 was transferred out to Ethiopia leaving a small balance of £3,950 at the end of the year. We are pleased that most of the money given in donations has now been used for the poor in Ethiopia. In the past there have been quite high bank balances held in the UK and it is good that these have been put to good use.

We also held a small bank balance of £183 at the end of the year for Jember's personal expenses.

9.1 Mission Partners

9.1.1 Andy, Ching-yee and Jonah Castro, Dave Hatten

April – May

During this period they were refocussing on returning to England and applying for Ching-yee's visa to come in September. They were also busy on the minority people's Dialect Survey Book. Meanwhile Andy began to hand over responsibility for the Regional Associate Director and Vice Director of the Research Institute roles.

June – July

In May/June they had a real answer to prayer when Ching-yee's visa to the UK arrived and they were able to leave the flat in China, which they were borrowing, in time for the couple to move back just when they needed it. They had a short holiday in Taiwan and then spent a few weeks with Ching-yee's parents in Malaysia. In July they returned to England and found a flat in Sheffield ready for the start of Andy's course at the University. They also announced that Ching-yee was pregnant again and due around Christmas.

August - September

Jonah had his 2nd birthday in August. They settled into Sheffield and made preparations for starting Andy's course as well as attending their debrief at SIL.

October – December

Andy started his course, Teaching Chinese as a foreign language at Sheffield University. He and Ching-yee also continued some work for SIL; in particular seeing through the publication of the minority people's survey book.

January – Present

They are continuing to find their feet in Sheffield, settling into a Church and making new friends. Good news was that on January 8th Samuel Noah was born. So they have had quite a few changes in quick succession.

Future

Now that Ching-yee has a visa to be in the UK, they would like to apply for UK citizenship for her. She will need to be resident here for five years, so Andy and Ching-yee are not looking for another overseas assignment during this period. The course that Andy is taking will give them some 'breathing space' to consider where God might be leading them in the future. After the course Andy will probably be looking for work in the UK so that Ching-yee can be resident for the five years. They are hugely grateful for the wonderful support, both financial and prayer, over the years from Cheltenham Network Church (Glenfall).

Minority People

Finally, what about the Minority people group they have been working with? Work continues to happen amongst them and we are delighted to report that some other mission organisations are reaching out to this forgotten people. Please continue to lift up the mother-tongue translator. She has completed one book (which has been checked by a consultant) and she has drafted two more. Please ask for more people to join her, in particular for people who speak the central dialect. Please pray for China - a country with both huge needs and tremendous potential.

9.1.2 IHA-UDP, Barrie & Gill Wyatt and Sheila Johnson

Glenfall hosted the annual conference for supporters of IHA-UDP, the project founded and co-ordinated for the past twenty three years by Jember Teferra. During that time three slum areas in Addis Ababa have been upgraded, meeting the needs of over 53,000 people, and providing housing, social / income generation and health care facilities as well as enabling the community to fight for their rights instead of being fatalistic (as they were when the project started). In recognition of her work over those years, Jember was presented with an engraved silver plate.

Jember and her family were able to stay in Cheltenham for the weekend and attend Glenfall's annual mission service where she was able to share some of the more recent exciting developments.

- despite many challenges, the projects have made excellent progress in becoming independent and self-sufficient as planned
- the Ethiopian government has issued a certificate enabling the institute (the only social work institute in Addis Ababa) to continue operating - all 360 social work students that have been trained have found employment and 3 have set up their own NGOs
- the sponsorship schemes have migrated smoothly and are still producing fantastic results - 6 students went to university during the year